

Sinne Eeg

DREAMS

Released on October the 27th 2017

Stunt Records

SINNE EEG is a singer's singer. With her perfect intonation, impeccable sense of time, and mellifluous timbre, the Danish vocalist has earned the admiration of fans and fellow musicians around the world. An international star in Europe and Asia, Eeg is poised to break out in the U.S. with her newest CD, DREAMS.

Eeg is no stranger to this country. She's been coming here for years, doing the hard work of touring coast to coast in clubs large and small. Although she often travels with stellar pianist and countryman JACOB CHRISTOFFERSEN, her first U.S. fans were the musicians she met and performed with along the way. She's also gathered a considerable coterie of jazz vocal aficionados who have sustained her musical peregrinations around the country.

Although jazz has become popular around the world and local jazz scenes have cropped up in far flung corners of the planet, America is still admired as the homeland of the genre, and many think that the distinctly American inflection of the music is best expressed by American musicians. That's why Eeg chose to record DREAMS with a mostly American band in Brooklyn, New York. It's also her first CD released on an American label, ArtistShare, which is home to jazz luminaries including Maria Schneider, Billy Childs, and Jim Hall.

DREAMS is Eeg's ninth CD as a leader. Her last CD, the critically acclaimed and award-winning Eeg-Fonnesbæk, a duo project featuring only vocals and bass, was her first album distributed in the U.S. On DREAMS, she's once again joined by her longtime collaborator Christoffersen, with the rest of the ensemble comprising some of the most respected names on the U.S. jazz scene today. Eeg first met drummer JOEY BARON, who has played with a Who's Who of jazz greats, when he gave a master class at The Danish National Academy of Music in 2002. LARRY KOONSE is a widely respected L.A.-based guitarist whom Eeg met on a gig in Japan around five years ago. The two became friends and musical compatriots, and Eeg has since performed with him numerous times in Europe and Asia, as well as around the States. Eeg was thrilled to have SCOTT COLLEY in the band. She has been a fan of the bassist for many years. Not only has he been a sideman with



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many well-known headliners, he's also childhood friends with Koonse. According to Eeg, "It's important to perform with great musicians, but it's also important to perform with people you genuinely like. I find it essential to have a good rapport with the band, as I do with the guys on this CD. Musicians can have a lot of ego, which can make the music suffer, but when you genuinely like each other, it's easier to listen to one another as co-equals. You can drop your ego, immerse yourself in the song, and allow the music to speak through you. It's almost like meditating."

Eeg is firmly rooted in the traditions of the great jazz vocalists, but approaches songs from the Great American Songbook with a more modern sensibility. She's been a longtime fan of Sheila Jordan, whose version of "Falling in Love With Love" motivated Eeg to record her own inimitable take on the song. And she's always admired Sarah Vaughan's rendition of "What Is This Thing Called Love." Eeg and Christoffersen wrote an arrangement for the tune, but when they were in the recording studio, the band decided to just wing it and improvised the arrangement on the spot, breathing fresh life into the standard. Eeg doesn't often dabble in political or social commentary in her music, but she added some new lyrics to "Anything Goes" that make the tune almost painfully contemporary.

Indeed, Eeg is also a formidable songwriter, and six of the tunes on this disc are her own compositions. Her writing encompasses a variety of styles, from romantic ballads as in "Love Song," a tune she wrote for her new husband just a day before she and the band went into the studio, to groove-based funky tunes like "The Bitter End." Eeg also has an affinity for waltzes and wrote the music for "Head Over Heels." For this tune, she asked Mads Mathias, the Danish vocalist, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist, to write the lyrics. Eeg recorded "Time to Go" as a duo with just vocal and piano on a previous CD, but wanted to give it a broader treatment on this project. The song reflects her sadness when she realized that her long distance relationship with a man based in Shanghai, where she frequently performed, could never work out.



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Eeg is a true jazz musician at heart, and she's not content to just rehash old approaches to style and technique. Although she's a consummate storyteller, she wanted to push herself in a new direction and wrote "Dreams," a lovely, wordless ballad that casts the singer as another instrument in the band. "Aleppo" is perhaps her biggest departure as a lyricist. She wrote the song after seeing a documentary about the suffering of children in Aleppo, Syria, which has been at the heart of the civil war there. Eeg relates, "It broke my heart seeing these children who are so traumatized by war that they can't even cry anymore. I just needed to express my feelings about it. I haven't written about political or social issues before, but with everything happening in the world these days, I think I'm going to be writing more and more about these topics."

ABOUT SINNE EEG

Sinne Eeg is considered the preeminent jazz vocalist in Scandinavia. She's the recipient of numerous awards, including the Danish Music Award (Denmark's Grammy Award), which she won four times for Best Jazz Vocal Album in 2007, 2010, 2014, and 2015 for her albums Waiting

for Dawn, Don't Be So Blue, Face the Music and the aforementioned Eeg-Fonnesbæk. She's also the first vocalist to receive the Ben Webster Prize, as well as the Prix du Jazz, awarded by France's Academie du Jazz. In 2016 she received The Queen Ingrid Honorary Grant – the first time this prestigious award was given to a jazz musician -- and had the honor to sing onstage with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for the three daughters of Denmark's Queen Ingrid, Her Majesty Queen Margrethe, Her Royal Highness Princess Benedikte, and Her Majesty Queen Anne-Marie.

Eeg was raised in the Danish countryside in a very musical family. She began playing music at the age of four and decided to make music her career when she was still a teenager. After many years of serious study, she was accepted to the prestigious the Danish National Academy of Music. She attended the Academy for six years, studying classical piano and jazz vocals. Coursework at the Academy is very rigorous and gave her the deep understanding of music and superb harmonic and rhythmic techniques that shape her performances today.

Liner Notes by NEIL TESSER

A year or so ago, on a chilly autumn evening, I stopped in at Chicago's legendary Green Mill nightclub to hear the Danish jazz vocalist Sinne Eeg, during one of her periodic visits to the U.S. With me was the wizardly pianist Jon Weber, who has a nearly phonogenic memory for music he's heard and has worked with plenty of singers in his long career, and who, like me, had never heard Sinne in person. After one tune, he looked at me with an expression that mirrored my own, as if to say: "We don't need to hear any more; she's the real deal." But we wanted to hear as much more as we could.

The real deal. Start with the sound of her voice: emerald tones both light and dark, sometimes throaty or biting clear. It's a voice both intimate and enveloping, resonant throughout her considerable range, with an exquisite flexibility: the music glides effortlessly, showing no sign of strain or stress. This same ease characterizes Sinne's sense of time, and of the subtle disruptions of the beat that constitute the elusive asset called swing. One barely notices her command of swing, because she does nothing to call attention to it; the rhythm flows as naturally as breath. Her phrasing (a separate but related concept) offers more to admire: she juggles the length and complexity of her musical lines with the flair of those legendary instrumentalists who served as her main influence. Now add in her interpretative skills – her ability to communicate thoughts and emotions with the musical equivalent of a raised eyebrow or a joyful leap. When she sings "What Is This Thing Called Love," you may wonder if you've ever truly heard these lyrics before.

And when you get to the top of the pyramid – the ability to improvise; to create new melodies and develop them into short compositions all their own – Sinne has few peers among modern vocalists. After her lilting solo on "Falling In Love With Love," you won't need to hear any more; but again, you won't want to stop. Growing up, Sinne didn't plan to become a solo singer. "I was very shy," she explains, "and besides church choir, I didn't sing in front of people until I was 18," even though she did play various instruments. But her high school music program required the students to sing for each other in class; and when they did, she recalls, "I thought, 'I'm not the worst at this.' I realized I could actually make music with my voice, and that for me it's much easier than on an instrument. The ability to connect, to convey all the little details you might imagine – some people can do that on instruments, but I can't." We're all the luckier for that. Sinne writes her own music, and sometimes the words as well, and these songs take her in different directions from the standard repertoire that she handles so winningly. Her own writing reflects more modern concerns than those found in tunes by Cole Porter and Rodgers and Hart; they tell new and engaging stories. But two songs on Dreams explore territory that Sinne herself had consciously avoided in the past.

One of these, the title track, has no lyrics at all. "I had wanted to record something without words for many years," says Sinne, "but I thought I was too much a singer" (as opposed to a pure vocalist). "So I felt it would be fun to do something in unison with the guitar, and for me to be a little more in the background of the band. The song is based on Northern European folk and classical music. We have a vibe and a way of approaching the beat that's just a little different from American jazz musicians. Embracing our cultural roots gives us something in common."

On the other hand, "Aleppo" seeks something in common with people far removed. It offers a message inspired by the devastating events in Syria, and specifically by one of the war's young victims, numb and silent in a photo seen by people the world over. "I'm a very political person," says Sinne, "but up till now I've been a little afraid to speak my mind in music. This is the first time I've dared to write a song about what's happening in the world." Hope that it won't be the last. The band that appears on Dreams lives up to the album title. Sinne has worked often with pianist Jacob Christoffersen and guitarist Larry Koonse and, she says, "I feel so extremely privileged to have worked with these amazing musicians for years now. And I have been dreaming of making music with Scott Colley and Joey Baron; it's a project I've been working on for three years. To be able to gather these four musicians in the recording studio is really a dream come true for me." Almost 175 years ago, Sinne's countryman Hans Christian Andersen published "The Nightingale," his story of a songbird beloved by her owner, the Emperor of China. Sometime after foolishly replacing the bird with a mechanical reproduction, the Emperor grows ill; Death stands by his bedside. The machine's ersatz warbling is useless: the mechanism has broken; it has no power to heal the sick, to lift the soul. But the nightingale returns, singing a song so compelling that Death itself gives up the ghost. Andersen's nightingale was the real deal. So is this one.

Sinne Eeg (voc), Jacob Christoffersen (p), Larry Koonse (g), Scott Colley (b), Joey Baron (d).

The Bitter End / Head Over High Heels / Love Song / What is This Thing Called Love / Falling in Love With Love /
Dreams / Aleppo / Time to Go / I'll Remember April / Anything Goes.

STUCD 17112 & STULP 17111– Sinne Eeg– DREAMS – CD + LP + Digital.



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