

## Esbjorn Svensson Trio - From Gagarin's Point Of View (1999)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 21 November 2011 11:53 - Last Updated Saturday, 18 October 2014 20:47

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01. Dating 02. Picnic 03. The Chapel 04. Dodge The Dodo 05. From Gagarin's Point Of View [play](#) 06. The Return Of Mohammed 07. Cornette 08. In The Face Of Day 09. Subway [play](#) 10. Definition Of A Dog 11. Southwest Loner Musicians: Esbjörn Svensson - piano, keyboards, percussion Dan Berglund - bas, percussion Magnus Oström - trummor, percussion.

The Esbjorn Svensson Trio is (one of) the best piano-trio's in the world. They prove the statement that it's impossible for jazz to renew itself, without changing it into something completely different to be totally wrong. The trio has been together for a long time, and that you can hear: they really listen to each other. They have to, because they tend to put so much space or silence in their music, that it would be very hard to play when they didn't.

A lot of jazzcombinations change their strength a lot, and not always in their advantage. At jazzfestivals you here a lot of theme-solo-solo-solo-boringdrumsolo-theme-jazz, and that's alright when the individuals are interesting enough, but a lot of times it's simply not good enough. Somtimes the reason of that is that the bands are so good that they can change their personal a lot, but it doesn't always do the music good. And this is one of the differences between E.S.T. and some other jazzbands you could hear live.

And then there's their tendency to use 'classical' or folkthemes in their music. E.S.T. does that right too: they're not trying anything but to make great music. They're not playing Bach on a banjo (wich is nice, but doesn't really get to you), but they just look (or listen!) for good themes as a base for their music. That's what they do best and that's what makes all of their albums since From Gagarin's Point Of View worth bying.

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What makes the music even better is that they seem to bring a lot of elements of their own Scandinavian musical culture into jazz. Maybe that's the explanation of the feeling you get when you see them play live: they really feel what they're playing. And that makes it possible for the audience to feel it to.

E.S.T. is a piano-bass-drums trio, but they sound bigger than a normal trio. Together with the great sound of acoustic instruments they sometimes put in some electronic elements, but they never overdo it. Most of the time they use it as a contrast, to keep the balance between 'the beauty and the beast'. A slightly distorted piano can sound like a recording from 1920 and that effect should even be a plus for the traditional jazz-audience.

Esbjorn Svensson is a great pianoplayer. He can set a mood; he plays real good solo's; he almost lives his music. He's able to play very quietly and very loud and sometimes he does both thing within one tune but than a few times. He's very divers in his playing.

The drummer always gets to you. Sometimes he starts of unobstrusively but somewhere he likes to take the song over to give the tune a groove that can't be denied. By Thor, it's not all silence and quietness! Once again it's about the contrast.

On the album Strange Place For Snow you can hear a tune that has the bassplayer doing a very fast riddle together with the piano. The man on the bass used a line 6 pod (for guitar) on the two live shows I saw in Den Haag and Amsterdam to get some special effects. Very normal, considering what's being done in popular music. Also a great musician!

If you don't know anything about E.S.T. it doesn't matter what album since From Gagarin's Point Of View you buy. The ingredients are the same: beautiful themes, contrast, silence, some electronics, acoustic jazz, building up to climax etc.

Sometimes it's very irritating to see that good musicians don't get recognised enough for the things they are doing. And most of the time not because of the people being to stupid to recognise greatness or beauty, but because of comercial and not cultural considerations. When a lot of American jazzmusicians have that problem, what about Scandinavian? E.S.T. must be heard. Buy the album (or another one of E.S.T.) and spread the gospel of Scandinavian jazz! ---  
A.J.H. Woodcount "FJB/O!-music", amazon.com

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