Arve Henriksen - The Nature Of Connections (2014)

1 Blå Veg 3:57 2 Hambopolskavalsen 5:22 3 Budbringeren 6:16 4 Seclusive Song 3:52 5 Hymn 7:40 6 Aceh 4:39 7 Keen 5:13 8 Arco Akropolis 3:41 9 Salm 2:06 Cello – Svante Henryson Double Bass – Mats Eilertsen Drums – Audun Kleive Trumpet, Piccolo Trumpet, Piano – Arve Henriksen Violin, Hardingfele [Hardanger Fiddle] – Gjermund Larsen Violin, Hardingfele [Hardanger Fiddle], Viola d'Amore – Nils Økland

There are musicians who defy compartmentalization based on ever shifting interests and styles. Fewer are those like trumpeter Arve Henriksen whose organic nature precludes musical definition. Throughout his career as a leader on the Rune Grammofon label, he has created collections that seem bound together only by his presence. The delicate Asian influences of Sakuteiki (2001), the electronics of Strjon (2007) and the poetically haunting Places of Worship (2013) bear little resemblance to each other save the sometimes intangibly recognizable presence of Henriksen. The Nature of Connections adds yet another dimension to Henriksen's growing portfolio with its combination of evocative folksiness and classical influence.

In the group dialogs that make up The Nature of Connections, Henriksen is often content to participate from the periphery. In this democratic outing, we are well into the third track before being reminded that this is the trumpeter's album. Similarly, Henriksen contributes only one writing credit in the nine pieces here with the others being shared (along with arranging credits) among the broader group, plus a contribution from Supersilent keyboardist Ståle Storløkken. Henriksen employs two violins/fiddles, a cello and a double bass and rounds out the group with one time Food and current Tord Gustavsen Ensemble bassist Mats Eilertsen and drummer Audun Kleive—who along with being a past collaborator—was formerly a member of Jon Balke's Magnetic North Orchestra.

"Blå Veg"—Henriksen's writing contribution—is a classically influenced chamber piece that sets

the stage for three subsequent pieces ("Hambopolskavalsen." "Budbringeren" and the more darkly toned "Seclusive Song") that share a distinctive Celtic touch. There are few elements of conventional jazz on The Nature of Connections but Storløkken's "Hymn" and "Keen" stand out in that respect; the latter benefitting from cellist Svante Henryson's creative improvisation. As expected however, jazz sensibility is not a Henriksen priority. More typical of the tone here is piece like "Arco Akropolis," a convergence of classical and folk elements that build slowly and dramatically over the short course of the piece and then fade away.

The Nature of Connections is the only purely acoustic Henriksen collection to date. It would be inadequate to simply describe it as lyrical and atmospheric, though it is both. The aesthetic nature of these pieces asks the listener look forward rather than hoping to become lost in a memorable hook. What each track presents is an individual personality but from a higher level and from the integrated interpretations of all the musicians and in that regard Henriksen has created yet another extraordinary collection. ---Karl Ackermann, allaboutjazz.com

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