

# Frode Gjerstad Trio

**Paal Nilssen-Love**, drums

**Øyvind Storesund**, bass

**Frode Gjerstad**, clarinets, alto sax

After two decades of trios with various international musicians, this is Frode Gjerstads first all-Norwegian trio. And it is a significant move towards a Nordic improvised sound. In the past, he has played in trios with Hamid Drake, William Parker, John Stevens, Johnny Dyani, Kent Carter, Wilber Morris and Rashid Bakr.

This trio has two new recordings just out: "First Last" on Falcata-Galica. A studio recording from November -99 when the group was quite fresh. And a live recording from September 2000 in Oslo, "The Blessing Light" on Cadence Jazz Records. This CD is dedicated to the late British drummer, John Stevens.

The trio has so far toured and/or played festivals in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Kroatia, Italy, USA and Canada.

## Ben Watson, Hi-Fi News:

This trio has a freshness which the big names in London and New York find it hard to muster these days.

## Glenn Astarita, All about Jazz:

This band often performs with a distinct sense of spiritualism to coincide with an abundance of hearty soloing and curiously interesting three-way dialogue.

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Paal Nilssen-Love first started playing with Frode Gjerstad about 10 years ago, when he was 15. Since then, he has become one of the most active musicians of the new generation in Norway. He has also played and recorded with international sax-players Mats Gustavsson, Joe McPhee, Ken Vandermark and Ian Bellamy. He has also played with super-guitarist Pat Metheny.

Øyvind Storesund plays the acoustic bass with the group "Cloroform" where they combine improvisations, sampling, hip-hop and modern electronic sounds. Together with Paal, he also plays with Frode Gjerstads "Circulazione Totale Orchestra".

FRODE GJERSTAD has for many years been the most dedicated free jazz player in Norway.

He is one of the few Norwegian musicians playing modern improvised music outside the «ECM-school». He has chosen to play mainly with international musicians because there is no tradition in Norway for playing this music. However, a number of younger musicians are now picking up on the music.

He has played with many of the best European players like Barry Guy, Derek Bailey and Peter Brötzmann as well as US players Borah Bergman, Rashid Bakr, Wilber Morris, Billy Bang, William Parker, Hamid Drake, Kevin Norton and Bobby Bradford.

His relationship with John Stevens which started in -81 and lasted up until his death in -94 was of great importance both musically as well as on a personal level. Through Stevens, he was

introduced to some of the finest British improvisers and got to know their way of playing quite well.

They co-lead the trio "Detail" starting with Johnny Dyani on bass. After Johnny died in '86, with Kent Carter on bass.

He has also been active, running a group of very young Norwegian musicians, the Circulazione Totale Orchestra where he started the group dealing with electric instruments and modern rock-oriented rhythms. He has used the band to present his own compositions as well as a workshop and place for young people to get to know free improvisations.

The band presented a commissioned work at the Molde Festival in '89 with a 13 man band combining free improvisations, compositions as well as rapping and scratching. (Three horns, three bassists, three drummers, accordion, guitar a rapper and a DJ).

The Circulazione Totale Orchestra is at the moment a 7 piece band with two drummers, two acoustic basses, guitar, trumpet and himself on sax. A powerful everchanging band.

He has received several grants from various foundations and has been very active in the Norwegian Jazzmusicians Federation as well as in the committee for the Norwegian Contemporary Music Federation. Voted Jazz Musician of the Year in Norway, 1997.

**HiFi News:** (England) Ben Watson

In the early 1980's alto saxophonist Frode Gjerstad led a superb trio, Detail, with Johnny Dyani, bass and John Stevens, drums. Unjustly overshadowed by his compatriot Jan Garbarek, Frode Gjerstad is a more vital player, less dependant on Getz/Trane cliches. Here the New York rhythm-section is superb, laying down a groove simultaneously brutal and sensitive. Welding such a profusion of idias into emotional coherence is not easy. When achieved, hipsters call it: top-notch living jazz.

**Jazziz, USA,** -Sam Prestianni

Frode Gjerstad may be the heaviest Norwegian alto saxophonist you've never heard of His melodic phrases are punchy and surprising, soaring, at times beyond the Milky Way. This album exemplifies the health and wealth of energetic, contemporary free jazz.

**Cadence, USA** , Stuart Broomer:

Gjerstad has a voice of his own: he is a singer and a storyteller with his horn, with a talent for extended improvisations in which motifs are developed incrementally.

**Cadence, USA,** Michael Rosenstein:

Gjerstad has a a crying alto tone that has a searing emotional directness. starting with simple, insistent themes he skillfully builds extended improvisations out of fleet, leaping lines colored with a chilling, soulful directness. He plays with the command and authority of a mature musician who has honed a personal voice, while continuing to push in new directions.

**The Oregonian, USA,** Bill Smith

As Gjerstad searches the soul of his instrument and Drake and Parker awaken the silence behind him, the three achieve a primal squawl, that echoes not only the raging beauty of John Coltrane, but at times, the raw and ancient glory of the Master musicians of Jajouka