

Free jazz, with structure

Norwegian trumpeter Didrik Ingvaldsen brings his unorthodox style to Jazz Dock

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By Darrell Jónsson - For the Post | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [Post comment](#)



Courtesy Photo

Ingvaldsen combines styles and influences ranging from Miles Davis to African polyrhythms.

"It's like ski jumping - once you've gone out, there is no way back," says jazz trumpeter and bandleader Didrik Ingvaldsen about the double-edged sword of improvisation and structure he brings to his work. Born and raised in Norway, Ingvaldsen has compiled credentials that span the globe, from conservatory studies at Juilliard to participation in the NYC downtown jazz scene, lecturing at the United Kingdom's Leeds College, and teaching brass music in Tanzania and the Faroe Islands.

Sometimes compared to Don Ellis and Don Cherry, both for his trumpet style and tasteful approach to experimentation, Ingvaldsen appears with his quartet this week at Jazz Dock for what promises to be three nights of

hot jazz and cool surprises.

As heard on his 2006 independently produced CD Compact Transparency I & II and his previous work with the Norwegian ensemble known as Pocket Corner, Ingvaldsen has a knack for exquisite playing blended with plenty of urban edge and 21st-century jazz sophistication. Speaking of the precarious balance that drives his work, Ingvaldsen says, "Most of the time I am using compositions as a stepping stone in my music. In a way, this guides the improvisations in a certain direction. When improvising, I am thinking of the whole tune as a painting, where you can see/hear everything simultaneously. There is no timeline, as when you play chord sequences. I treat the improvisation as a white canvas, and decide where to put fragments, shapes, phrases, rhythms, lines and other elements from the composition. Along with the energy the other musicians give me, this becomes the music."



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The painterly approach Ingvaldssen describes is partially inspired by his formative years of listening to Miles Davis' late '60s and '70s ambient jazz fusion. Unlike Davis, though, Ingvaldssen uses energetic free jazz to enliven longer works, throwing dense improvisational fire on finely tuned arrangements. These musical choices, Ingvaldssen says, "are deliberately made, but more important is that this is the way I hear music. There is never complete freedom. We must relate to something - rhythms, themes, intervals or simply each other. There is a fine line between listening and not listening. If everyone just listens, it will be silence. Trumpeter Lew Soloff once said, 'If you judge while you're playing, the very act of judgment itself interferes with the positivism of the statement.' So, if everyone is listening and judging all the time, it can get very boring. 'Go for it!' is my message."

Didrik Ingvaldsen Quartet

When: Aug. 6, 7 and 8 at 10

Where: Jazz Dock

Tickets: 200 Kč, available at the door

Although Ingvaldssen says pastoral Norwegian folk music has never been his cup of tea, he acknowledges an occasional melancholy seeping into his work that may expose his Scandinavian roots. But a more cogent indicator of how his background feeds Ingvaldssen's synthesis can be found in what he learned while teaching in Tanzania.

"I found the rhythmic concept of African music interesting, and I must admit that there were quite a few tunes that came out with this particular 6/8 rhythm during those years," he says. "Also, not to be afraid of being repetitive is an interesting concept - if it's done the right way. There is far too little repetition in free jazz."

For the three gigs at Jazz Dock this week, Ingvaldssen will be accompanied by Radim Hanousek on saxes, Mikael Olsson on bass and Martin Kleibl on drums. As for what to expect, Ingvaldssen says, "First of all, it is impossible to play this music the same way more than once. So, in that aspect, every night is different. We have quite a big repertoire that we choose from, and another thing is that we can change the form. One night we can play tune after tune; another night we may play everything together like a suite with no stops between songs. I also sometimes use electronic equipment, effects like wah-wah and different sound generators."

All this may at first sound like a recipe for musical anarchy. But jazz fans need not fret about whatever noise or ideas Ingvaldssen and company have in mind. Besides all the skill these players bring to the stage, there is one timeless principle that will be at work each night: that magic jazz thing Ingvaldssen describes as "if it feels right."

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