



PIROUET
PRESS RELEASE

PIROUET Records

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HENNING SIEVERTS DOUBLE QUARTET



PIROUET

Henning Sieverts Double Quartet

VÖ: June 3rd 2016

Pirouet Records · PIT3092

Loren Stillman alto & soprano saxophone

Silvain Rifflet tenor saxophone, clarinet

Florian Weber piano

Pascal Schumacher vibraphone

François Thuillier tuba

Henning Sieverts bass, cello

Jochen Rueckert drums

John Hollenbeck drums

1. Bass Twins
2. Cantus Five
3. Hexa Countdown
4. Drum Twins
5. Vipia Twins
6. Firm Chant
7. Cantus Seven
8. Sax Twins
9. Hexa Circle
10. Hexa Twelve
11. Hidden Hexa
12. Ebird
13. Fasoldo
14. Ursin
15. Bass Twins (Reprise)

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SPIRITUAL TRANSITION

Henning Sieverts reflects over 600 years of the Bavarian Irsee Monastery history with original compositions that transmute past polyphonies into a rich amalgam of symmetries. The “twin” instruments of two saxes, piano and vibes, bass and tuba, drums and percussion are divided and regrouped into a double quartet: sax, piano, bass and drums, encounter sax, vibes/marimba, tuba and percussion, as pieces for duo, quartet, and octet explore the continuity of past and present.





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Henning Sieverts: **Double Quartet**, Sievert's fourth album for PIRouET, is an offshoot of the bassist/composer's musical vision for the 2014 edition of the yearly Tonspuren Festival at the Irsee Monastery in lower Bavaria. While researching over 600 years of this former Benedictine Abbey's history, Sieverts unearthed a Mass composed in 1614 specifically for the Abbey's festival of St. Benedict. Sieverts chose two elements from this festive Mass, a cantus firmus, an archaic *leitmotif* in the *Pro Offertorio* movement of the mass, and a hexachord, a symmetric six note scale composed of four whole tones with a half tone

dividing the scale between the 3rd and 4th note. Sieverts incorporated these elements as leitmotifs in his own compositions. Henning emphasizes that "They permeate my Irsee music in every creative form possible." The music at the monastery spanned three days; on two of these days a string chamber orchestra was integrated into the double quartet. A Saturday evening "lounge" concert featured the double quartet by itself. All three were inspired by the music composed and sung by the Irsee Monks. The day after the concerts the double quartet traveled to Munich and PIRouET's *Kyberg Studio* to record this impressive ▶





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► work. Henning pointed out that, “The eight musicians recorded in one room, and there were no overdubs. The results were so satisfying simply because the musicians were concentrated and listened so intently to each other. Besides that, the studio’s sound and ambience is fantastic!”

Born in 1966, composer, bassist/cellist Henning Sieverts now numbers among the elite player/composers in jazz. Backed by classical training and years of work with top international players, he has played on over 130 CDs, 15 under his own name, and has participated in tours on six

continents. His long list of awards includes *best jazz bassist* at the *International Society of Bassists’* competition, winner of the *New German Jazz Prize* as soloist on both cello and bass, and Germany’s prestigious *Echo Jazz 2010 award* as best bassist for his playing on his PIRouET CD *Blackbird*. He also moderates and produces jazz programs for the *Bavarian Radio* and teaches bass, cello, and composition at the *Munich University for Music and the Performing Arts*. Henning chose the musicians specifically for the Irsee project; it was a one-time collaboration of a group of especially talented and innovative players from Europe, ►





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► Germany and the USA. They were “some of my favorite musicians on their respective instruments—but it was also important that they fit together aesthetically, that their sound and musical styles intermeshed without being too homogeneous. I didn’t want things to get boring. There needed to be a healthy mixture of ‘blind understanding’ and constructive tension.” It was important that the instrumental pairings worked as complementary partners, not as much through their similarities as through their divergent strengths. For Henning, “I couldn’t have dreamed of a better outcome—eight great musical personalities bound their

passion and intellect together in a common cause.” The saxophone duo comprises Frenchman Sylvain Rifflet who worked with Joey Baron, Kenny Wheeler, and Hermeto Pascoal, while Brooklyn-based Loren Stillman “...is that special player, one who is totally free” (Bud Kopman, All About Jazz). Sieverts pointed out that Luxembourgian vibraphonist Pascal Schumacher and German pianist Florian Weber “never got in each other’s way—something that’s not easy with two harmony instruments.” Henning felt especially lucky to have American John Hollenbeck and German Jochen Rueckert, two world-class drummers who left their ►





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▶ egos at the door; “...sometimes I thought I was listening to a single percussion organism.” He commends French tubaist Francois Thuillier for his grooving, virtuoso, sensitive poetic touch; “I couldn’t have wished for a better *bass brother*. He was everything I could have hoped for in a playing partner.”

There is no special playing order to the pieces; rather, they are set up more as a musical arc, while the *twins*’s short duos play important transitional roles as miniature splashes of color between the actual compositions—compositions that present the listener with ever-changing symphonic landscapes.

Freely improvised, *Bass Twins* introduces the album as it explores the deeper ranges of sound. At times bordering on the mystic, to these ears, it reverberates with images out of the Mongolian steppes and the Tibetan monasteries. The *Cantus Five*, *Cantus Seven*, the miniature duos *Vipia Twins* and *Sax Twins* are all based on the cantus firmus from the original 1614 Irsee Mass. The Afro-Cuban inflected *Cantus Five* explores the rhythmic combinations implicit in a 15/8 time signature, while *Cantus Seven* delves into the magical possibilities of 7, ending in what Sieverts describes as “controlled chaos”. *Vipia Twins* is a reflective, romantic one minute piano-vibe duo, while on *Sax Twins* the two saxes weave in and out as they exchange lines and meld musical ▶





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▶ personalities in a duet of astounding beauty. With a melody based on symmetric mirror-image scales, and a heavy archaic groove, *Firm Chant* reflects Sievert's version of what a modern cantus firmus sounds like.

Hexa Countdown, *Hexa Circle*, *Hexa Twelve*, and *Hidden Hexa* are compositions based on various hexachords. The minimalistic beginning of *Hexa Countdown* breaks into swing propelled by two combined hexachords functioning as a twelve-tone row highlighted by Weber's exploratory piano solo and exquisite ensemble interchanges. *Hexa Circle* weaves a richly imagined sound tapestry as it flows around the circle of fifths in varying instrumental combinations, while *Hexa Twelve* once again combines two hexachords into a 12-tone row—this one in a symmetrical mirror image that reflects a lyrical jazz waltz. *Hidden Hexa* contains a 12-tone row with a completely different sensibility. After a wild beginning, the melody flows into a jigsaw of orchestral sounds and feelings.

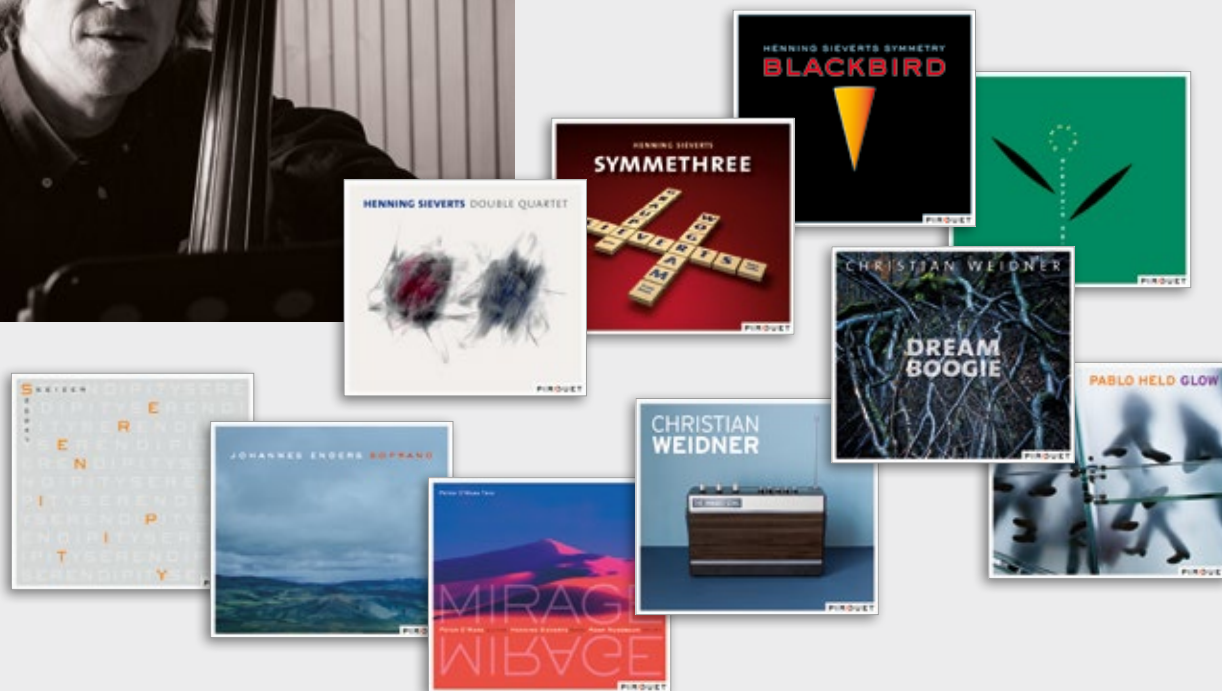
On the beautiful *Ebird*, freely improvised solos soar over the haunting refrain, while Fasoldo fascinates with a simple three note entrance and swinging melodic juxtapositions between the depths (bass/tuba) and the heights (soprano/clarinet). *Ursin* reverberates with a seemingly simple bass ostinato that conceals some complex melodic/rhythmic overlays and a savage freely improvised rock feel. The album ends as it began, with Bass Twins Sieverts and Thuillier playing their minute of magic.

Imbedded with influences from European liturgical and Renaissance music, twelve-tone rows, polyrhythmic complexities, and the swing and passion that permeates American jazz, Henning Sieverts' *Double Quartet* exemplifies what makes European jazz so vital, and places it at the exploratory forefront of serious contemporary improvised music. ■





Discography Henning Sieverts on Pirouet Records



as leader

- 2016** Henning Sieverts: **Double Quartet** (Loren Stillman, as, ss · Silvain Rifflet, ts, cl · Florian Weber, p · Pascal Schumacher, vib · Françoise Thuillier, tuba · Henning Sieverts, b, cello · Jochen Rueckert, dr · John Hollenbeck dr) · **PIT3092**
- 2012** Henning Sieverts: **Symmethree** (Henning Sieverts, b,cello · Ronny Graupe, g · Nils Wogram, tb) · **PIT3061**
- 2009** Henning Sieverts Symmetry: **Blackbird** (Henning Sieverts, b, cello · Chris Speed, cl, ts · Johannes Lauer, tb · Achim Kaufmann, p · John Hollenbeck, dr) · **PIT3040**
- 2007** Henning Sieverts: **Symmetry** (Henning Sieverts, b, cello · Chris Speed, cl, ts · Johannes Lauer, tb · Achim Kaufmann, p · John Hollenbeck, dr) · **PIT3022**

as sideman

- 2012** Christian Weidner: **Dream Boogie** (Christian Weidner, as · Achim Kaufmann, p · Henning Sieverts, b · Samuel Rohrer, dr) · **PIT3065**
- 2011** Pablo Held: **Glow** (Menzel Mutzke, tp · Sebastian Gille, ts, ss · Niels Klein, bcl, ts, ss · Kathrin Pechlof, harp · Hubert Nuss, cel, harm · Henning Sieverts, b, cello · Dietmar Fuh, b · Robert Landfermann, b · Jonas Burgwinkel, dr · Pablo Held, p) · **PIT3053**
- 2010** Christian Weidner: **The Inward Song** (Christian Weidner, as · Colin Vallon, p · Henning Sieverts, b · Samuel Rohrer, dr) · **PIT3052**
- 2004** Johannes Enders: **Soprano** (Johannes Enders, ss · Oliver Kent, p · Henning Sieverts, b · John Hollenbeck, dr) · **PIT3011**
- 2004** Jason Seizer: **Serendipity** (Jason Seizer, ts · Marc Copland, p · Henning Sieverts, b · Jochen Rückert, dr) · **PIT3008**
- 2003** Peter O'Mara: **Mirage** (Peter O'Mara, g · Henning Sieverts, b · Adam Nussbaum, dr) · **PIT3002**

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