

## Arild Andersen

### Electra

**Arild Andersen:** bass, loops; **Arve Henriksen:** trumpet; **Eivind Aarset:** guitars; **Paulo Vinaccia, Patrice Héral:** drums, percussion; **Nils Petter Molvær:** drum machines; **Savina Yannatou, Chrysanthi Douzi, Elly-Marina Casdas, Fotini-Niki Grammenou:** vocals

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*“Thine is a fatal course of grief, passing ever from due bounds into a cureless sorrow; wherein there is no deliverance from evils. Say, wherefore art thou enamoured of misery?”*

Sophocles, Electra

Like so many of the Greek tragedies, Sophocles’ “Electra”, with its themes of endurance of suffering and chains of bloody retribution, remains as pertinent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it was when it was first staged, around 420 B.C. It was with this in mind that Greek theatre director Yannis Margaritis, who counts filmmakers Angelopoulos and Tarkovsky among his major influences, asked Norwegian bassist Arild Andersen for a “very modern” score for his new presentation of the tale of the young woman “whose life is a torrent of woes dread and dark, a torrent that surges through all the months.”

For this work with the Spring Theatre group, presented under the auspices of the Cultural Olympiad 2001-2004, Arild Andersen rounded up Norwegian and Greek associates old and new, guiding them through a spacious soundscape, conceived and produced by the bassist at a variety of locations. Andersen, 60 this year, regards “Electra” as a summing up of the directions he has taken in recent years, with an emphasis on structure and arrangement.

Greece has been increasingly important in Arild Andersen’s itinerary over the last decade. A sequence of tours from the late 1990s onwards (initially alongside Markus Stockhausen) brought him into contact with a wide range of musicians. Vassilis Tsabropoulos, subsequently pianist with the Andersen Trio on the albums “Achirana” and “The Triangle” was one. Singer Savina Yannatou, who had just begun her association with ECM (refer to “Terra Nostra” and “Sumiglia”) was another. Yannatou agreed to sing Sophocles’ ‘lyrics’, supported by the Greek chorus of Elly Casdas, Chrysanthi Douzi and Fontini Grammenou.

In a sense, however, the principal singer on the disc is Arve Henriksen, the Norwegian trumpeter whose liquid “vocal” tone, now influenced as much by shakuhachi and duduk players as by the trumpet tradition, is in the foreground of almost every track. Henriksen is a member of the groups of Trygve Seim and Christian Wallumrød (whose new album “A Year From Easter” is released concurrently with “Electra”), and previously appeared also with Jon Balke’s groups on ECM.

Another trumpeter appears in a less familiar role. Nils Petter Molvær was introduced to the world via Andersen’s Masqualero band when he was barely in his twenties. Now Molvær returns to the Andersen circle to programme the heavy drumbeats of “7<sup>th</sup> Background”, a piece somewhat in the spirit of Molvær’s “Khmer” and “Solid Ether” discs. If Molvær seems a reference elsewhere, attribute it to the presence of Eivind Aarset, Molvær’s lead guitarist for

most of the last decade, before concentrating on his own Electronique Noir group. Aarset has also recorded for ECM alongside Molvær in Marilyn Mazur's band. Andersen's Electra compositions sometimes encourage him to play in the spirit of one of his earliest influences, Terje Rypdal.

Italian born drummer Paolo Vinaccia has been an active participant on the Norwegian scene for a quarter century, previously recording with Andersen and Rypdal for ECM (on, respectively, "Hyperborean" and "Skywards"). For the first time on disc he is partnered here with fellow Andersen associate Patrice Héral, the French drummer who has worked with Arild in the KARTA band (with Rypdal and Markus Stockhausen).

And, of course, there is plenty of Andersen's powerful, imaginative bass playing. One of the so-called "Big Four" of Norwegian jazz, and an ECM recording artist since 1970, he has influenced successive generations of players. Andersen has been highly valued by international jazz musicians, too, working with everyone from Sam Rivers to Sheila Jordan, Roswell Rudd, Don Cherry, George Russell and many others. "Electra" is his 16<sup>th</sup> ECM album as a leader. He has also appeared on ECM discs with Jan Garbarek, Terje Rypdal, Bill Frisell, David Darling, and Robin Kenyatta.

"Electra", the album, is to be launched with a special release concert at Cosmopolite, Oslo on April 13<sup>th</sup>. On July 18<sup>th</sup> the Arild Andersen Group plays the "Electra" music to launch this year's Molde Jazz Festival. Further dates are in preparation.