



Pierre Dørge  
*presents*  
New Jungle Orchestra

GUNNAR HALLE  
THOMMY ANDERSSON  
PIERRE DØRGE  
AYI SOLOMON  
JAKOB MYGIND  
MORTEN CARLSEN  
MARTIN ANDERSEN  
KENNETH AGERHOLM  
IRENE BECKER  
ANDERS BANKE

**SteepleChase**

### **TEN FOR TEN BY TEN = THIRTY!**

Pierre Dørge and New Jungle Orchestra are celebrating a generation of international music-making. That longevity, allied with their perennial freshness of sound, places them right up there with great enduring bands of the past - Basie, Herman, Kenton, Ellington. Ensembles that reinvigorated themselves over the decades, while remaining true to their original purpose.

The comparison between Dørge's N.J.O. and the Ellington orchestra is pertinent since Duke was and is a constant inspiration to Pierre. And both men provided most of the material for their aggregations, always composing with specific soloists in mind.

Thirty years, three decades, is a wide wedge of a lifetime for any group of creative artists to stay together. To remain as a unit for so long, the stimulation and demands of the repertoire have to be exceptional. And every member must feel satisfied that he/she is making a full contribution to the evolution and development of the whole. A player who feels marginalised will soon seek opportunities elsewhere.

A vital core of four musicians have been with the N.J.O. from the start. Of course there were personnel changes along the way, so that now the ensemble is truly multi-generational. But there is an ongoing stable foundation that can accommodate an occasional infusion of new voices. The present line-up is virtually unchanged since Pierre returned to the SteepleChase fold in 2007 with the orchestra's

brilliant CD *"Jazz Is Like A Banana"* (SCCD 31636).

While the NJO's continued existence is now assured, it was not always so. The first 13 years were a struggle. Often a gig would pay quartet wages to a group of ten. In those circumstances it was love of the music that sustained the ensemble. As Pierre observes, the turning point came in 1993 when the orchestra was chosen as a state ensemble, representing Denmark on royal visits at home and around the world. For instance when Danish royalty went to South Africa at the invitation of Nelson Mandela, the N.J.O. was there too.

Suddenly Pierre and his colleagues were in terrific demand, playing 80 concerts a year, and a growing audience was attracted to the band's unique blend of jazz, folk and classical elements merged into a vibrantly exciting, international whole. *"I never set out to be a bandleader,"* says Pierre. *"I was interested in composing and arranging and I obviously wanted to hear my music performed. But then I found out you had to negotiate fees, make travel arrangements and deal with a whole lot of administrative stuff. In the first year none of us talked about money, but finance has to be a factor if musicians are turning down other jobs to play with you."*

Then there were the social and musical problems that inevitably arise in every band. *"One guy doesn't want to play Ellington tunes, another wants to play only Ellington material."*

*Someone else demands that we should concentrate on free jazz. So, as a leader, you have to try to keep everyone happy. My philosophy was that we should use all the best elements from the many different styles of music, combining them in our own way.*

*"When writing, I have tried to employ the most powerful side of each musician's character, and to set them a challenge. I also try to put myself in the place of the audience and think about what would be interesting and pleasing to their ear. When we have added new players, it has provided fresh inspiration, stimulating different ideas and possibilities which are reflected in the writing. It is important to stay open-minded in music."*

The N.J.O. made its debut at the Music Cafe, Copenhagen, on 24 September, 1980, so in September 2010 that 30-year milestone was being marked by a week's celebratory tour of Denmark, and release of this outstanding anniversary CD, the orchestra's 22nd recording. The band was due to play a number of these pieces during their September progress.

For this collection, Pierre decided to structure each composition to focus on a particular member of the orchestra. *"I spoke to each musician and asked if they had any special preferences or wishes about which side of their style they would like me to portray. They approved of the idea and I received very positive feedback.*

*"My concept was to create 10 pieces of music, as 10 abstract pictures, each of them as*

*an image of an individual, creative, New Jungle musician. They responded with their special wishes for the individual piece. I knew that the music would not shine unless the composition inspired and challenged each individual's creativity. I can write the music, but it is the musician who is the true creator of the spontaneous expression in the music - the here and now."*

Pierre shared his thoughts on the pieces and their performances in the following commentary:

**Balada Para El Trompetista:** The opening is based on traditional jazz harmonies with the airy sound of **Gunnar Halle's** expressive and unique Norwegian "mountain hut" trumpet echoing both Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis - subtle reminiscence of two great jazz trumpeters.

**Für Kontrabas:** Today's best Danish scene jazz bassist according to my taste is a Swede, **Thommy Andersson**, who can play the heaviest bass roots and make an infinite number of bass sounds, patterns from the jungle. The skeleton of this bass tour de force is a Beatles song. A very few fragments from this song pop up in the horns' accompaniment.

**Potato Head:** I wrote a potato head arrangement for nine musicians and improvised the guitar lines. I did not discuss this with the guitarist!

**Igor Abedungola:** Voice and percussion contributed by our African brother **Ayi Solomon**

from Accra. I tried to guide Ayi into a European Dadaistic universe. You could say that this is spiritual Afro soul going dada.

**Sankt Jakob:** Our tenor and soprano saxophonist **Jakob Mygind** is rooted in the Danish song tradition. This song shows the beauty of Jakob's soprano sax contrasting with his growling tenor, and turning into a high pitch state of heavenly love. He is our soul brother from the northern part of Denmark.

**Rata Tata Lang Ra:** Directions for a jazz drummer framed by the Jungle ensemble. **Martin Andersen** is freewheeling with his mallets on the tom-toms. He improvises spontaneously between fragments of melodic rhythm patterns.

**Blessing Bones:** Like a shadow of a bluesy, atonal lullaby, this is a heartfelt trombone prayer expressed by **Kenneth Agerholm's** blessed 'bone.

**Little Claus And Big Claus:** The masterly contrasts of the screaming Hungarian taragot and the enormous force of the mature saxman, **Morten Carlsen**, are displayed in this performance.

**In A Mystery Mist:** A fantasy/sketch of a never ending choral that floats on the river passing the king of elves and his elfin maids. **Irene Becker** is the lithe improviser conjuring up the mystery morning mist.

**Waltz Für Basklarinette:** The finale of the individual portraits is a tribute to my favourite instrument - the bass clarinet. **Anders Banke** developed his own unique style on the

instrument in the setting here of a grotesque waltz.

Rounding off these messages from the New Jungle are earlier missives which Pierre has recast. He explains that **Xongly** moves at ostinato in 5/4 metre with an indian-like folk melody. *"It was recorded on one of my early albums for SteepleChase called Ballad Round The Left Corner (SCCD 31132)"*

And finally **Mirjam's Dada Dance** which, Pierre recalls, was a song he wrote for his daughter. It was first recorded for SteepleChase in March 1977 - long before the birth of the N.J.O. - as part of the album "Real Tchicai". That date, incidentally, marked the first meeting of Dørge with producer Nils Winther - the beginning of a long and lasting friendship.

So after 30 years, 21 albums, scores of scores (actually upward of 800), hundreds of concerts, countries galore, tens of thousands of miles, Pierre Dørge and New Jungle Orchestra are still going strong; even stronger than ever. A generation of music-making continues to expand for the pleasure of a truly global audience.

*Mark Gardner  
(Contributor to England's Jazz Journal since  
1962)*

*Dette projekt er bl.a. muliggjort af DMFF med støtte fra KODA's Nationale Midler*

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