



Bio information: **I.P.A.**
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Scandinavian Supergroup I.P.A. Expands Its Instrumental Palette with *GRIMSTA* A Program That Goes Deep into the Woods for New Sonic Adventures

Keeping an all-star collective ensemble going is a steep challenge in the best of times. I.P.A., a quintet that brings together some of Scandinavia's most esteemed improvisers, has created a striking new album in the worst of times. The group's sixth release overall and third for Cuneiform, *Grimsta* is an emphatic statement about the ineluctable power of musical communion; it's a project bristling with energy sparked by shaping new works together in real time.

Featuring Oslo's **Atle Nymo** on tenor saxophone and bass clarinet, Buddy Prize-winning Norwegian bassist **Ingebrigt Håker Flaten**, Trondheim drummer **Håkon Mjåset Johansen**, Swedish trumpeter **Magnus Broo** and Stockholm vibraphonist/soprano saxophonist **Mattias Ståhl**, I.P.A. sounds energized and fearless on *Grimsta*, a program that explores a wide array of kinetic jazz idioms. In many ways, Broo's title track sets the agenda, with his pulsing trumpet riding high and low-register currents powered by Ståhl's riotous vibes and Nymo's insistently rumbling contra bass clarinet line. Named after an ancient forest near Broo's house in Stockholm, it's an expansive blast of acoustic metal jazz that quickly gathers momentum.

The album opens with Broo's "Ballet," a vividly jagged tune that feels like an alternate track from Eric Dolphy's seminal Blue Note album *Out to Lunch* (with Ståhl's vibes mapping the sonic terrain). Relatively concise at four minutes, the piece moves from a compressed drum solo to a round of statements, with each player elaborating on the previous commentary, punctuated by pregnant pauses building tension that's never quite released. "Magnus has his own character as a composer, very distinct, and clear," says Ståhl. "His best one's are like a sharp knife, and this is one of them."

Ståhl contributes two pieces to the session, starting with his woozy jazz ballad "Stray," a lovely late-night theme in honor of Billy Strayhorn that unfolds twice without opening up for solos. With its unusual odd-length phrases it's a sing-song melody that seems destined for a lyric. His other tune, "Empathy Fog," rides a unison horn line like that brings Thelonious Monk to mind, particularly his shuffle dance when the band was cooking.

Nymo brought three pieces to the session, starting with "Epic," a raw, multi-section piece marked by deep contrasts. Arranged in the studio, it's a quintessential I.P.A. performance in the way it plays with space and density, keying on a duo vibes/tenor sax passage. "Flow For Feste" reveals yet another instrumental palette for the quintet, with Ståhl taking up soprano sax to create riffing three-horn lines inspired by the Ethiojazz Nymo has been engaged with in recent years. The album closes with "Pop," another brief piece suspended on a gentle two-note bass and contra bass clarinet drone.

After so many months not playing together, *Grimsta* captures the quintet's excitement at getting back to work. "The album came about out of the urge to make some new music," Atle says, noting that almost every piece was a fresh addition to the repertoire. "We don't know what the others will write, what they'll bring in," Ståhl adds. "In spite of us meeting us for a few gigs before the recording, it felt like a fresh beginning."

I.P.A.'s origins go back to 2007 when Nymo, Flaten and Johansen released their electrifying interpretation of Don Cherry's 1966 album *Complete Communion*. When Broo joined forces with the triumvirate the

following year, I.P.A. was born. The quartet introduced itself on Norway's Bolage label with two critically hailed albums, 2009's *Lorena* and 2011's *It's A Delicate Thing*. By 2014's *Bubble*, which came out on the top-shelf Swedish indie Moserobie, vibes master Mattias Ståhl had expanded the band to a quintet and All About Jazz proclaimed the ensemble "one of the best kept secrets in the fertile Nordic musical scenery." With I.P.A.'s 2016 Cuneiform debut *I Just Did Say Something* the quintet raised its profile in North America, earning widespread praise and due respect.

While all the players are committed to an array of bands and projects, the five musicians in I.P.A. have found kindred exploratory spirits in the group. With *Grimsta*, the players have taken another step into the void, bringing new sounds into the world informed by their multiplicity of connections, influences and relationships. "Everyone is contributing," Ståhl says. "There's not an obvious leader in the band. We all bring something different into the band and out of each other. That's what I find so cool."

For more information on I.P.A.

www.atlenymo.com/i-p-a/ - www.facebook.com/IPAJAZZ

I.P.A. PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS

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