

Nils Petter Molvær

Biography

Nils Petter Molvær (NPM), Norwegian trumpet player, composer and producer, connects multiple music styles - jazz, ambient, house, electronic and break beats, as well as elements from hip hop, rock and pop music - and effortlessly melts them into convincing soundscapes of deep intensity.

Born in 1960 on the little island Sula (Norway), NPM was introduced to jazz from an early age by his musician father. After playing in school bands and local clubs he left Sula in 1979 to study music at the conservatory of Trondheim, where he developed his unique style and started to gain a reputation as one of Norway's emerging new talents.

His interest in both acoustic and electric music shows the ease with which he handles the conventions of pop, rock and funk, alongside those of modern jazz. These unique sensibilities soon established him as a much sought after musician in Oslo. After his intermezzo with the Norwegian jazz combo Masqualero, NPM was introduced to Manfred Eicher, who integrated him into his cast of musicians and studio sessions with ECM artists such as Robyn Schulkowsky.

NPM completed his debut album as a leader in 1997, "Khmer", which focuses on a previously unknown blend of improvisation and hypnotically spinning beats, receiving extraordinary public and media response, and was honoured with the German Record Critics Award and a Norwegian Grammy. ECM for the first time in its history released singles from an album. "Khmer: The Remixes" with remixes of The Herbaliser, Mental Overdrive and Rockers Hi-Fi was released based on the success with "Khmer".

The eagerly awaited follow-up to "Khmer", released by ECM in May 2000 entitled "Solid Ether", intensified NPM's dialogue with club culture. The idea behind the "Solid Ether" concept is that a piece of music is never really finished and that composing and producing are an ever-evolving process. "'Ether' does not exist, so how can it be solid? It's a paradox - like life".

True to this belief NPM had the tracks of "Solid Ether" remixed by like-minded artists such as Funkstoerung, Bill Laswell, Joakim Lone and Jason Swinscoe/Cinematic Orchestra, and the resultant "Recoloured - The Remix Album" was released in April 2001. "I like space and poetry. The trumpet needs space to create its own language and poetry can be minimalistic and express things precise. The remixers on this collection create that space and express themselves in a precise but minimalistic way. They are looking for clarity, the essence of sound."

NPM's album "np3", released by Universal Music Group in 2002, sees him continuing the concepts that were developed through "Khmer" and "Solid Ether" by putting

significant differing elements together to combine contrasting structures. A strong presence on "np3" is NPM's soulful and creative use of new music manufacturing technology. "All these new tools are in themselves both positive and negative. The question is all about timing - when to stop the 'moment' and then freeze it and squeeze it." Time changes, sound changes, music changes "Being from a generation that didn't grow up with the traditional standards, this is a taste of my tradition.." To enhance the 'musical travel' experience that this is meant to be, NPM has added small ambient islands that bind the whole production together. "np3" was followed by the beautiful DVD "Molvær live".

"NP3" was remixed by artists such as Bugge Wesseltoft, Funkstörung, Matthew Herbert, Clive-Lowe/DeGo, Bill Laswell and Martin Koller, and released as "Remakes" in 2005. A critic proclaimed that: "Remakes confirm once again that Nils Petter Molvær's music upholds its quality from here to eternity, and that it is a small kingdom for the world's best sound manipulators".

In the end of year 2003 NPM receives the highly sought after culture price "Buddy", in its decision the jury states: "NPM has developed a personal and distinctive musical expression and has marked himself as an instrumentalist and composer and is one of the musicians in Norway with the strongest international career".

NPM is well known for his unique live performances, and born out of the successful world tour in 2002, "Streamer" was produced by the recordings of the amazing live performances at London's legendary Marquee and Tampere Jazz Festival in Finland. "Streamer" was released in 2004 and has been called a celebration of NPM's live performances and received great reviews.

NPM is a hard working musician, composer and producer, always working with new projects. In the same period as he starts working with his coming studio album he produces music to Henrik Ibsen's "Ghosts" on assignment of Riksteateret (National Theatre Productions). NPM also produced music to the French downbeat comedy "Edy" directed by Stephan Guérin-Tillié with the well known and acclaimed actors Francois Berléand and Philippe Noiret. The director says "Edy's" three main pillars are the two main actors and NPM's music, which play a central role in the motion picture. "Edy" will be in movie theatres all over France from November this year and other European countries next year.

Rikskonsertene (The National Producer of Live Performances) assigned NPM to compose a solo performance. This composition became a creative fusion of music, light and video. NPM performed alone on stage with his trumpet, supported by digital sound, light and video designs. NPM toured Norway and some selected cities in Europe during the winter 2004 with this project.

NPM's new studio album is named "ER". The record contains a wide spectre of music expressions from the soft and downbeat productions to the strong and powerful ones. Nils Petter Molvær has taken a new direction with "ER" even if the soundscapes will be recognised from his previous releases. This time he has given more creative space to programmers like Knut Sævik, DJ Strangefruit, Reidar Skaar and Jan Bang. "It's important to use people in what they're good at."

We have heard vocal tracks also on Nils Petter Molvær's previous releases; in "ER" they have been given more space. In the beautiful vocal track "Only These Things Count" we can hear Sidsel Endresen's characteristic voice together with Eivind Aarset on guitar, Magne Furuholmen on acoustic piano, Ingebrikt Flaten on acoustic bass and Nils Petter Molvær's trumpet in a strong and emotional ballade.

Common for the eight tracks on "ER" is Nils Petter Molvær's strong visual melodies and his personal and distinctive trumpet playing, which is more in focus than on his previous records. Some of the productions are slightly 'toned down' to give even more space to the trumpet and the melodic structures.