

ARILD ANDERSEN QUINTET

LONDON JAZZFESTIVAL 2013

QUEEN ELISABETH HALL

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Music for grown ups with open hearts and minds, the melodic appealing, dynamically sensitive and sometimes rhythmically fierce concert went down a storm with a full house.

Michael Tucker.

Entertainment and the feel-good factor were no less present, albeit in very different register, in a generous hour-and-a-half set – featuring lucidly constructed and rarely over-long pieces, all of original material – from Arild Andersen's new quintet. Andersen runs this group as an occasional supplement to the regular trio he has with Italian drummer Paolo Vinaccia and Scottish saxophonist Tommy Smith (and which played a burning session at Ronnie Scott's a couple of nights or so previously). Sometimes Andy Sheppard might be in the frame, and sometimes the trumpet player could be Paolo Fresu or Mathias Eick, depending on availability. For this concert, which opened with the haunting arco-led *Reparate* from Andersen's forthcoming ECM album *Mira*, together with Smith Andersen brought the Swiss trumpeter and flugelhorn player Matthieu Michel, Polish pianist Marcin Wasilewski and French drummer Patrice Héral. Michel's track record includes recordings with George Gruntz, the Vienna Art Orchestra, Susanne Abbuehl and Eivind Aarset. He stuck to flugelhorn throughout and impressed consistently with his tempered yet dynamically confident and essentially melodic phrasing: especially so given that this was his first performance with the group.

Héral's connection with Andersen goes back well over a decade to exploratory recordings on ECM and Stunt Records. Throughout the set, their empathy and understanding were in plentiful evidence. Executed (on his new lion-crowned bass) with characteristic glee and sensuous commitment, Andersen's dazzlingly fleet pizzicato lines elicited quicksilver response from a drummer who knows how to exploit the full dynamic range of his kit – and then some, courtesy of sensitively employed electronics and the zestful talent for Indian-inflected vocalizing which capped the closing number. With modal and harmonic elements in the mix, Wasilewski offered rubato, up-tempo, and also funky lines (all on regular piano apart from one ostinato foray on keyboards) while Smith complemented an increasingly authoritative, practically sculpted lyricism on tenor (especially in the upper registers) with an affectingly folkish outing on shakuhachi flute. Music for grown-ups with open hearts and minds, the melodically appealing, dynamically sensitive and sometimes rhythmically fierce concert went down a storm with a full house which included Andersen's old playing partner, drummer John Marshall.