

# JONAS KNUTSSON & HORN PLEASE

**Horn Please!** Country & Eastern CE 08

You might think that Swedish folk dance tunes on six saxes would be, well, a brassy noise, a wall of



blart. That would be fine in its way, but the emphasis here is on the sweet vocal tone of soprano saxes, supported by and interwoven with alto, tenor and baritone all playing with the immense subtlety and deep knowledge of the material.

Sax has had a role in Swedish roots music right next to the fiddles since the days of Filarfolket and early Groupa, and seven of the folk-rooted saxists of the time – Jonas Simonsson, Sten Källman, Thomas Ringdahl, Anders Rosén, Jonny Wartel, Kjell Westling and Roland Keijser, all well known in roots bands of the day – formed the massive of Bröderna Blås, playing *polskas*, *hallings* and their kin. In those days the folk-sax sound was mostly the husky honk of tenor and below.

Today's sextet tends to the higher frequencies, the seductive sylph-tones of soprano saxes. It's led by Jonas Knutsson, who is both a leading jazz player and a frequent folk collaborator with Lena Willemark and Ale Möller on Nordan and other groupings, and with Ola Bäckström and Johan Hedin in Triptyk. With them he usually plays soprano, but for much of this album he goes lower on alto or baritone while the others take the soprano lines.

The others are Åsa Johansson, Daniel Carlsson, Alexandra Särström, Klas Toresson, and Hanna Wiskari, she of the strongly recommended trio [ni:d] whose percussionist, Petter Berndalen also brings his acute sensitivity to the rhythms of traditional material to the Horn Please! crew, joined in the rhythm section by bassist Bengt Johansson.

The tunes are played as tight and structured as any fiddler, but with multiple lines and rhythmic offsets that can open out into more improvisational blowing sections that snap-twist back to polska or spread into lyrical melodies. They're mostly traditional Swedish, with a smattering by band members, and a couple of Carnatic traditional tunes that stem from Knutsson's long involvement in Indian music with drummer Bengt Berger and others; for the first of these all six play soprano in unison. The album closes with an airily spacious treatment, by Knutsson's delicately expressive soprano over ringing bass harmonics, of a *joik* tune learned from Johan Anders Bær.

Musicianly, natural and accessible. (Not a great title though.) [www.countryandeastern.se](http://www.countryandeastern.se)

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