



OPTICS  
ILK140 CD  
5706274001938

**Optics** is the 6th release from 29 year old pianist Søren Kjærgaard. The project has matured in his mind for several years and marks a turning point in his career. He has performed and collaborated internationally with artists like Tim Berne, Herb Robertson and Michael Blake, but this date is his first international recording as a leader.

The trio features drummer Andrew Cyrille and bass player Ben Street. Cyrille is a living legend and one of the true masters of improvised music. He has collaborated closely with artists like Cecil Taylor, Oliver Lake and Walt Dickerson in some of the ground breaking projects from the 60's up until the present day.

Ben Street is regarded as one of the most sophisticated upright bass players on the present scene, effortlessly encompassing raw power, elegance and a singing tone. Coming from New York he performs and records with artists like Kurt Rosenwinkel, Danilo Perez and Paul Motian.

**Optics** was recorded in June 2007 at the legendary Sear Sound studio in New York. It was recorded live to analog two track tape by James Farber and mastered at Sterling Sound by Greg Calbi. Furthermore **Optics** was recorded in one room without separation to create an authentic sound and a clear communication, unbroken by walls or glass.

The result is a three dimensional sound that brings out all the subtle shades of sonorities. It takes the listener into the room, creating a surging atmosphere throughout the set from the first to the last note. An atmosphere of vibrance and space. Of electrically charged silences and the awakening sense of exploring new musical landscapes. The three musicians had only met once prior to the date and yet there is a natural and organic flow in the music. Most of the record was done in first takes.

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Søren Kjærgaard > Piano  
Ben Street > Bass  
Andrew Cyrille > Drums  
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#### Track list

1. Optics > 13:58
  2. Dear Mr Sear > 3:00
  3. Cyrille Surreal > 8:00
  4. Elegy > 7:40
  5. Mallets > 5:11
  6. Gyamtso > 4:06
  7. Work Of Art > 8:42
  8. Radio House Requiem > 6:19
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The opening piece **Optics** is a 13 minute suite in four parts. The thematic opening is followed by an airy passage where Cyrille is exploring the open harmonies in an intensely minimalistic performance. The third part is a choral featuring the eclectic playing of Ben Street, before finishing with a waltzing contrapuntal treatment of a simple two-part melody. In **Cyrille Surreal** we hear the trio in two layers: a first take and a second overdubbed take. The piece starts with a piano introduction and the first trio take. Then gradually throughout the piece the overdubbed trio crescends on top of the pumping bass ostinato, creating piano polyfonies and 'cyrillic' whirl winds. **Elegy** is a peaceful ballad of serene intimacy. **Dear Mr Sear** (dedicated to the genius of Walter Sear), **Gyamtso** (dedicated to the spirit of Torben Ulrich) and **Mallets** (a duo by Kjærgaard and Cyrille) are improvised pieces. **Work Of Art** features another duo interplay by Cyrille and Kjærgaard. This track is perhaps the dynamic peak of the album showing a fiery and more virtuosic side of the two musicians. The title was born right after the take when Cyrille exclaimed: "That's a work of art. Can't beat that!" The album closer **Radio House Requiem** is a swan song for the national Danish Radio (DR). DR has been undergoing violent cutbacks as a result of debts arising from the construction of a new Media City in Copenhagen. Because of this huge budget deficit DR has been downsized from being a cultural stronghold with room for the niches (like jazz and improvised music) to become a streamlined media station. DR used to be known for its presence on even the smallest venues, documenting and broadcasting from the Copenhagen jazz scene, and thanks to DR and its staff of great producers we can listen back to invaluable tapes of Albert Ayler, Don Cherry, Gary Peacock, Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon, Ben Webster, NHØP, Paul Bley, Henry Threadgil and many more - richly and inexhaustingly documented from the early 60's up until recently. Today there is only one jazz host left in DR with a minimal budget. There are no live jazz broadcasts, news, interviews or profiles of musicians and composers anymore. The few weekly hours of broadcast containing jazz are restricted to automatized playlists. The jazz program has become mechanical and inorganic like the rest of the new Media City. Radio House Requiem had its first performance at the Danish Jazz Awards 2007 and was broadcasted live by DR Jazz Live in one of their last live jazz productions.

»Eclectic and stylistically all encompassing, Kjærgaard is the quintessential postmodernist. Kjærgaard is a rising talent worthy of the inevitable acclaim. Those looking for a new voice on the keys are advised to delve further into his ever growing discography.«

[Troy Collins, Cadence Magazine, 2006]

»Kjærgaard confines himself to the keyboard, at times waxing rhapsodic in unpredictable serpentine shapes, at others spinning Zen tone-webs of surprising span«

[Tom Greenland All About Jazz, 2007]

»You hear the decisiveness and the vibrations which makes him a soulful musician. He is a very promising young man, who has recieved the Danish National Radio Jazz Award for his pioneering accomplishments and as a forerunner for a whole new generation.«

[Alex Dutilh, Jazzman, 2006]

