

The online newspaper News.

- Record review

🎲 A lovely tribute



François Houle at the center of his great Genera Sextet. Photo: Sheldon Suter

Several of us in the Norwegian jazz community had the pleasure of meeting Ken Pickering, the man behind the Vancouver Jazz Festival, on several occasions here in Norway. He was a man with a clear vision who passed away in 2018. Here he is honored by a close friend and a band for whom he was a birth assistant.

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Tor Hammerø

Ken Pickering (1952-2018) was, quite simply, a visionary who left a powerful footprint. He helped establish the Vancouver Jazz Festival and was artistic director for 32 years. Among other things, it meant that he opened the doors to a number of European and Norwegian musicians and bands on the other side of the fjord and in that way ensured that the opportunities for these to meet a new and larger audience became a reality.

Many have a lot to thank Pickering for. His good friend the clarinetist François Houle, also from Vancouver, once asked Pickering for advice on putting together a new band and a better curator than Pickering would be hard to find.

Pickering suggested a cohort consisting of Canadian bassist Michael Bates, Swiss trombonist Samuel Blaser, French pianist Benoît Delbecq, Canadian drummer Harris Eisenstadt and American trumpeter Taylor Ho Bynum. It turned out to be a very good proposition and the band toured and made their recording debut on the Songlines label. Genera, as the band was called, also played at Pickering's funeral.

Fortunately, the band has continued its existence. Ho Bynum has been replaced by Swiss Marco von Orelli on cornet and trumpet, but otherwise the cohort as suggested by Pickering.

On this great tribute, for which I suspect Houle of having written all the music without making it clear on the cover, we get a unique, melodic, yet open, slightly melancholic and searching musical landscape that I feel convinced that Pickering would have greatly appreciated. To a large extent, these are musicians we don't know very well here at home, but I promise that here we are talking very high class both collectively and solo. In other words, this is a tribute worthy of the legend and visionary Ken Pickering.



François Houle Genera Sextet - 'In Memoriam' - Clean Feed Records/
Musikkoperatorene



Photo: Private

About Tor Hammerø

Jazz and football are important ingredients in life. Part of the reason could probably be that I come from Molde. Has lived in Oslo since the 1980s and worked at TV 2 as a security guard, commentator and reporter. Likes pineapple soda, which is natural when you come from Norway's most beautiful city.

I write daily about music - both pop, rock, world music, shows and country, but largely jazz. I also review books. It will mostly be fiction and a lot of crime.

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