



TURTLE records®



yuri honing
with large ensemble
conducted by henk meutgeert
memory lane



Musicians:

Yuri Honing - soprano and tenor saxophones

Emily Beynon - flute

Maarten Ornstein - clarinet and bass clarinet

Jacob Slagter - French horn

Keiko Iwate - violin

Fred Pot - cello

Frans van der Hoeven - double bass

Achim Kaufmann - piano

Joost Lijbaart - drums

Conducted by Henk Meutgeert





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1. Prism (Keith Jarrett)
 2. Infant Eyes (Wayne Shorter)
 3. Chan's Song (Herbie Hancock and Stevie Wonder)
 4. Together (Yuri Honing)
 5. Hermitage (Pat Metheny)
 6. New York State of Mind (Billy Joel)
 7. Sands (Yuri Honing)
 8. For Turiya (Charlie Haden)

Arrangements (in order of significance):

Prism, Infant Eyes, For Turiya & Chan's Song: Henk Meutgeert & Rob Horsting

Together, New York State of Mind, Sands & Hermitage: Rob Horsting & Henk Meutgeert

Publishers: 1: Cavelight Music, BMI/AMRA, 2: Miyako Music Co., BMI, 3: Hancock Music, Co., 4: Absolute Sound Music, Co., 5: Pat Meth Music Co., BMI, 6: Joelsongs, BMI, 8: Liberation Music, BMI

For this album, Yuri Honing (born 1965) recorded compositions that for some reason were important in his teens, hence the title. It's a selection of eight pieces, or in Yuri's words: "The time-span of one set".

"Keith Jarrett is and always has been my 'kitchen sink': after a nights playing I clear my head with Jarrett. Together with Jack DeJohnette and Gary Peacock he presented a fresh view of the piano trio and -starting from the Bill Evans tradition- added some things of their own." Yuri was always particularly fascinated by Jarrett's compositions and especially admired the trio before they started playing standards. 'Prism' is from that period. "It is well constructed, it's fresh and it contains sensible changes. Jarrett illustrates his fine sense of voice leading."

Yuri always preferred Stan Getz' version of 'Infant Eyes', written by Wayne Shorter. It helped of course that he heard and saw Getz playing the tune on the balcony of a Montreux Hotel where he stayed in the adjoining room, together with his parents. Getz of course was there for the jazz festival. Yuri and his parents planned to go mountain hiking, and that Yuri got to see his 'hero-to-be' playing in a bathrobe, was pure coincidence. "I love Lester Young's school. Young and Johnny Hodges were the greatest before the second world-war, and it was Getz who carried on their tradition."

Not many people know that Herbie Hancock composed his 'Chan's Song' with Stevie Wonder. "As far as I could track it down, Wonder never recorded the song himself either," Yuri adds. "Hancock is important to me, and always has been. Especially in my teens with all that hip stuff from Headhunters to V.S.O.P.: the old Miles band with Freddy Hubbard on the horn." Yuri still marvels at that fantastic rhythm section of Tony Williams, Ron Carter and a fabulous playing Hancock. But it was singer Bobby McFerrin, sitting in at a Steps Ahead concert, that led him to this song. "I was amazed by McFerrin who could sing along with this complicated tune by Steps Ahead after hearing only one line. He could immediately sing harmony, clear-cut, no fuss. Later, I remembered his name when I saw the movie 'Round midnight' in which he sang 'Chan's Song': no words, very high, very exact. Finally I got the opportunity to use this song."

'Together' was Yuri's first serious composition, back in '84. He wrote it for no particular reason, other than that he assumed he had to try this too. "This melody slipped out and I added some harmonies that were characteristic of those days. Back then I believed in the complexity of misleading bass notes and hidden melodies that were actually very obvious. Funny thing is that I still like this tune after all these years."

Yuri recorded Pat Metheny's 'Hermitage' simply because he loves Metheny's unique sense of melody. And like all good guitarists, Metheny avoids the trap of fast licks. And this tune has a melody you won't ever forget after a first hearing. "Plus you think it has always been around!" Yuri hastens to add. "What I call the Mozart effect: you hear it and think: 'God, I know this!'"

"Back in high school I had a friend who had a Billy Joel album and the song 'Just the way you are' contained an impressive alto sax solo by Phil Woods which I just couldn't execute myself. I still played alto in those days and was impressed." Yuri discovered that Joel was a fine songwriter and learned to like what he feels in his most gutsy song: 'New York state of mind'. "It really reflects the feel of New York and I like the lyrics too. Even though some harmonies are a bit spineless, it is very convincing to me and that's pretty rare when it comes to pop songs." Initially it seemed a bit difficult to translate it into a jazz-composition, but arranger Rob Horning came up with the brilliant idea of putting it into 3/4.

'Sands', the second original, does not refer to the famous Sinatra album with Count Basie, although Yuri too knows all the Sinatra jokes by heart. It's just a title. And while writing it, it never occurred to him that the opening melody somewhat resembles 'Miles Ahead', the famous Miles Davis/ Gil Evans composition. "That was something subconscious. The piece is from a period in which I wrote out every single part for everyone, even the drummer, because I was involved in rhythmic variations and alternate melodies."

Charlie Haden's 'For Turiya' was recorded for the album 'Folk Songs' with Jan Garbarek and Egberto Gismonti: three crucial musicians for Yuri in his teens. "Even though I'm not a religious man, to me it smells like religion and I keep hearing it as if it were a chorale. Henk arranged it as a chorale too. It is a good piece to end the record with." (RB)

"There's only one time... the first time."

This album is a stranger in the discography of Dutch saxophone player Yuri Honing. Usually, Yuri is seeking out new possibilities in jazz repertoire or jazz saxophone playing, and records albums that due to their rather provocative content, present more rather than just answering them, like this cd does. Perhaps therefore, 'Memory Lane' is an unusually pleasant and accessible album, which doesn't mean this music was easy to perform. The compositions and arrangements demand the utmost care in dynamics, tone quality, phrasing and ensemble playing.

Yuri didn't want to make a 'Honing with strings'. "We've got 'Parker with strings' and Wynton Marsalis' 'Hot House Flute' and that will do," he claims. "I actually created this particular line up one voice at a time. Strings are only one aspect of an ensemble. I longed for woodwinds and I wanted something special. So I started with the French horn." From there, Yuri tried to avoid cliché and forced the arrangers into new and ingenious forms by inventing a compelling instrumentation. He thought about using a bassoon, a sound he considers one of his personal favorites, but chose the less dominant clarinet instead, blending better with his horn. Blending actually is a crucial aspect of this ensemble. Even though the combination appears rather rare, the flute merges exceptionally well with the saxophone. Together with Honing's own jazz quartet, these additional colors make a very comfortable whole.

Making up the sound is one thing. Arranging the music within it is another ball game. Yuri chose one of the key figures in jazz, Duke Ellington, assisted by Rob Horning, labored to get this form right, and showed a great understanding of the possibilities and boundaries of this particular kind of instrumentation. "This music only works if you do it perfectly right. To perform this repertoire only reasonably well, it is messed up. You can't do it without excellent musicians, excellent arrangements and a meticulous conductor," explains Yuri. "Henk is a very serious and strict man who, regardless of age and status will strip anybody a good stripping-down when necessary. With Henk, it is never personal and always about the music. That's why I wanted him to direct." Not to mention that he could conduct his own arrangements which were written by Duke Ellington with assistance, Henk advised Yuri to ask Emily Beynon to play the flute. He knew what she's capable of, gave her a crucial role in the ensemble, and wrote scores with her playing in mind. Same thing with horn player Jacob Slagter, like Emily and both star players, a member of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. It is well known he's one of the best in the instrument world and the plan of working with him had been somewhere waiting in a drawer for years. Both Yuri and Henk were very pleased to have him on the album; Henk writing an essential part for him, steering the dynamics of the ensemble that at times gives the feeling of a large symphonic orchestra.

On the day of the recording, the music was new for everybody. "I like that pressure," explains Yuri. "The more the better. True 'Take one guy'. There's only one time; the first time." Just two days prior to the recording Henk handed Yuri the scores and he only read through them thoroughly, not wanting to play the music before the recording. "I only practiced my soprano. I had played it for over three years and needed to blow out the dead spiders."

Although all musicians were very capable of playing from first reading, Henk and Rob had kept the arrangements reasonably simple in order to give them enough room for musicality. As a big band director, Henk knows that good playing demands clear and transparent arrangement. "Think of all the classic Neil Hefti scores in the Count Basie days," Yuri clarifies: "You could hear them on sight. You really need a damn good reason to use complexity, which tends to get in the way of the music, unless of course your name is Ellington, or Stravinsky."

'Memory Lane' is the first album in which Yuri gives way to the lyrical, romantic corners of his personality. "I wanted to be tremendously beautiful at every moment, striving for a certain poignancy. This music is to move people, and not just to show them know a thing or two about music." Yuri admits that there was a time when he was a little embarrassed to be so outspoken. "This is new for me. I'm getting older and wiser and am less and less ashamed of who I really am. That's a very important music, although you must choose the right moment to express that, so that it's worth listening to. While people often like to hide behind complex improvisation, the importance of credibility increases if you play music that has a foundation that everyone can understand. With this music there's no way out, and I am so happy that the right people showed up for the right construction, and that it all worked out."

Musicians

Yuri Honing is first and foremost a musician. Being a saxophone player is almost secondary. Therefore it is very comfortable for him that he no longer 'feels' the instrument while playing. He dives into a direct conversation with what's happening around him without thinking about which chord, or a good or bad reed. "It's like leaving without luggage and being able to move around unbounded," he explains.

Yuri jumped out of his seat when he heard Emily Beynon play for the first time. She was interested and enthusiastic when he asked her to join him for this recording, but he never knew she was this good. "You never hear her changing registers when she goes to the next octave! Uncanny. Her sound is so pure and full, I was really baffled by her playing."

Maarten OrNSTEIN is someone Yuri mainly knows through playing together on several projects and recordings of bass player. Overwater. He was the right man for the job, not only because he's very much at home in today's composed music, but also as a reader and player on clarinet and bass clarinet. Plus, he can really carry a solo.

French horn player Jacob Slagter never misses a note, which is really something, considering he's playing "A fifteen meter piece that is put into a curl: a bloody awful instrument," as Yuri puts it with great admiration. "Jacob has an excellent sense of dynamics, never plays too soft or too loud. He provides both depth and bass to the music."

Keiko Iwate is one of the first violin players of the Concertgebouw Orchestra, and has an excellent reputation. "Even though he plays an accompanying role and Henk did not use the violin for leading parts of the arrangements, I was thrilled that she was there," Yuri emphasizes.

Cellist Fred Pot is an old friend of Yuri's parents. A true musician, always eager to play, anytime, anywhere, with anyone. When playing a smaller role than he is accustomed to. His experience with the renowned Concertgebouw Orchestra, "is a great asset on the album," Yuri adds. "He plays a couple of great lines. And the cello is one of my favorite instruments. It is really a great saxophone: it has the same register. At the conservatory, I actually studied Bach's cello suites on tenor and they fit! Yuri even mimics the stroke of the bow with the muting of the saxophone. Unfortunately I've never had the time to really dig into the suites. It would cost me a year of my life."

Frans van der Hoeven is a true virtuoso professional. In quartet line-ups with Joost Lijbaart and Achim Kaufmann, Yuri has been playing with him for two years now. "On this cd you hear him playing sort of tiny solos through the arrangements all the time. In this way he adds movement to the ensemble during moments where it tends to get a little stationary."

With drummer Joost Lijbaart, Yuri traveled and played all over the world for almost thirteen years. A true companion and a great player, but that's not the reason Yuri likes playing with him. "He's simply the best drummer around. At least I don't know of any other who can play the variety of music he can. He hits hardcore free jazz very well, knows his chops in straight ahead jazz and in modern classical music, is a good reader and a very decent and versatile classical percussionist, well at home with complex Indian, African and modern classical rhythms. You can tell him to play near-mimic silent, and make it sound great too. Which is exactly what I need on this cd."

"It took me a while until I found an accomplished piano player. Then reed player Michael Moore told me that Achim would be a great fit," says Yuri. Achim is from Germany and when he came to play in Amsterdam for a week, Yuri was convinced immediately. "Apart from having a fine ear, a great touch and great musical knowledge, he is seriously influenced by Paul Bley and very much into Misha Mengelberg, both pianists I personally deeply admire and recently worked with. So I put great trust in Achim."

As we at Turtle Records do in Yuri Honing and this ensemble.

I'll be seeing you,

Rob Becher

Fade In:

Wide Angle Master Shot. City edifices rise majestically behind the bustling outdoor café bordering a green expanse of idyllic park. The music of the orchestra floats lyrically from the bandstand, the breeze softly animating the trees.

Cut To:

Close Up. The reedman's expression, eyes closed, engrossed in playing he holds back, gently caressing each note.

Slow Zoom Out:

The impressive figure with the sax, evening sunlight glinting from his horn, burnished tones and colors.

Track up (crane shot):

Continue Zoom Out. The full expanse of the orchestra; sounds cascading beyond the boundaries of the stage envelope the gathered crowd.

Cut To:

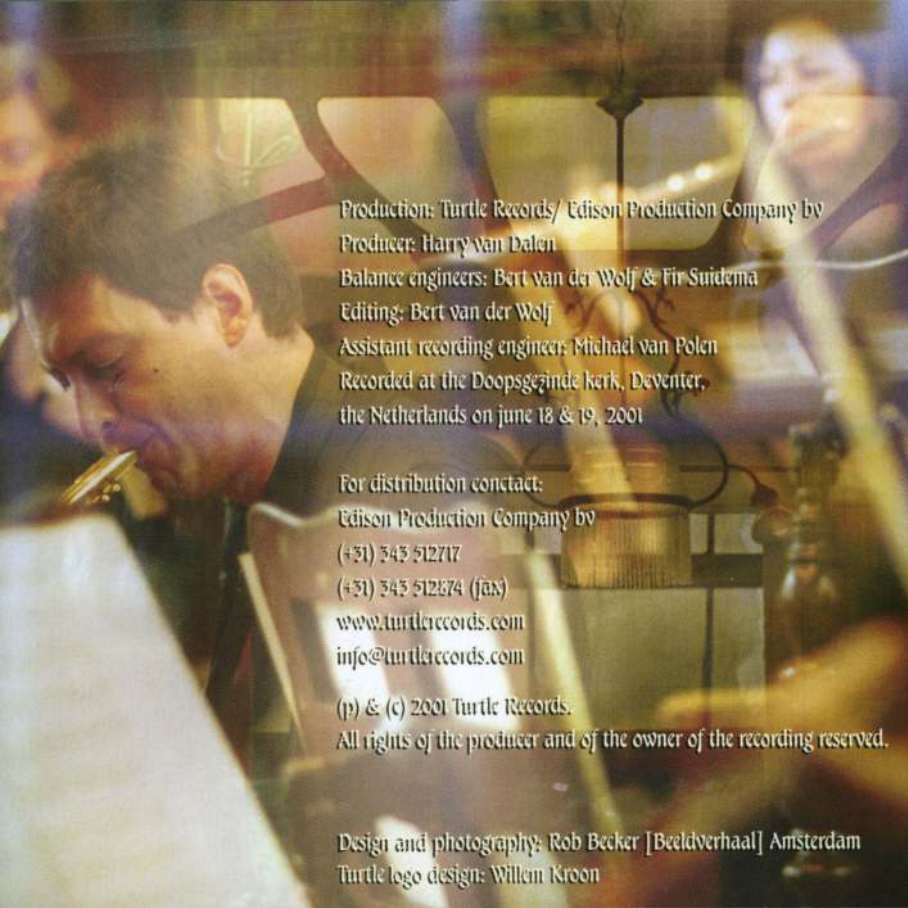
Medium Two Shot. Nestled close, the lovers' affectionate gazes harmonize with the music's romantic mood.

Montage:

Vignettes of strings, woodwinds, close-ups of the lovers faces, composite shots from various angles.

Cut To:

Opening Master Shot-Tracking Left. The lovers still engrossed, the other patrons applaud.
Roll Opening Credits: The following Titles are Superimposed. Yuri Honing's Memory Lane...



Production: Turtle Records/ Edison Production Company bv
Producer: Harry van Dalen

Balance engineers: Bert van der Wolf & Fir Suidema
Editing: Bert van der Wolf

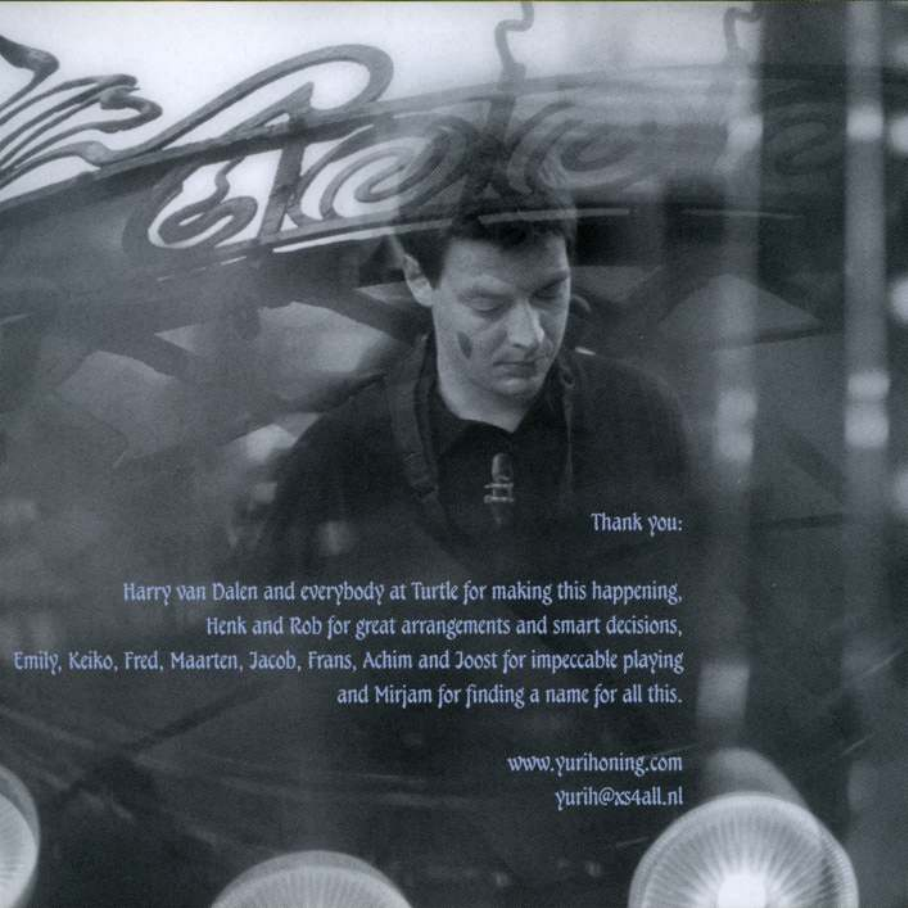
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Thank you:

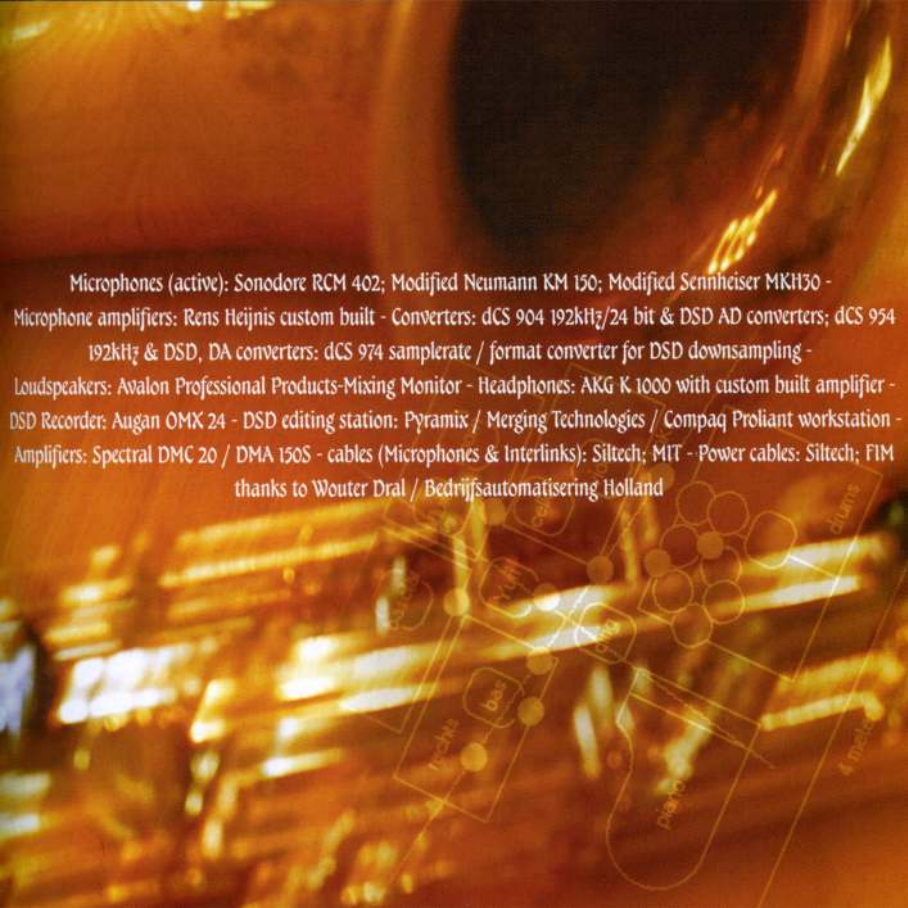
Harry van Dalen and everybody at Turtle for making this happening.

Henk and Rob for great arrangements and smart decisions.

Emily, Keiko, Fred, Maarten, Jacob, Frans, Achim and Joost for impeccable playing
and Mirjam for finding a name for all this.

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Microphones (active): Sonodore RCM 402; Modified Neumann KM 150; Modified Sennheiser MKH30 -
Microphone amplifiers: Rens Heijnis custom built - Converters: dCS 904 192kHz/24 bit & DSD AD converters; dCS 954
192kHz & DSD, DA converters: dCS 974 samplerate / format converter for DSD downsampling -
Loudspeakers: Avalon Professional Products-Mixing Monitor - Headphones: AKG K 1000 with custom built amplifier -
DSD Recorder: Augan OMX 24 - DSD editing station: Pyramix / Merging Technologies / Compaq Proliant workstation -
Amplifiers: Spectral DMC 20 / DMA 150S - cables (Microphones & Interlinks): Siltech; MIT - Power cables: Siltech; FIM
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DSD
Direct Stream Digital

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This hybrid Super Audio CD can be played in any standard CD player, as well as in a modern SACD player. It is constructed with two independent layers. Both contain the same musical program and deliver 'state of the art' audio quality, but the 'High Density' layer is recorded with 'Direct Stream Digital' technology (DSD). It therefore delivers approximately 4 times more bandwidth (100 kHz) and a far better spatial imaging and resolution of the stereo image than the standard 'CD layer' and contributes to less distortion of the signal.

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