

Arne Domnérus (1924)

A few days before Christmas 2004, alto saxophonist, clarinetist and orchestra leader Arne Domnérus turned 80. "Best of Dompan" was released just in time for that occasion. It's the first complete collection from the more than 50 year-long recording career of this jazz legend. He made his first recording in 1949 and the latest one in November 2004!

He started his first professional orchestra as early as in 1940 – at the age of sixteen. In those days, dance music was closely related to jazz and rich in harmonies, rhythms and it had a great scope for improvisation.

Since then, Swedish jazz has been focussing on Arne Domnérus who has played with everybody: Lulle Ellboj and Arthur Österwall, Tore Jederby and Rolf Ericson, Simon Brehm and Thore Ehrling, Alice Babs and Monica Zetterlund, Putte Wickman and Lars Gullin, Georg Riedel and Jan Johansson, Bengt Hallberg and Rune Gustafsson... often at the former Mecca of Swedish jazz, Nalen, the dance hall where he led his own orchestra for many years. In 1949 he was also a member of the legendary Parisorkestern and a year later he toured Sweden with Charlie Parker who then thought that "Dompan plays almost as well as I do".

Since the mid 60s, Arne Domnérus has had a number of smaller groups, and set the tone as a member of the Radio jazz group and in later days he has joined the jazz musicians of the younger generation, like Jan Lundgren and Ulf Johansson for instance. He has often performed in churches through the years and doing that, he has found a new forum for jazz. Besides that, he has toured the US regularly as well as Japan and the rest of Europe and thus become something of an ambassador of Swedish jazz.

His most famous recording is "Jazz at the Pawnshop" which to this date has sold half a million copies around the world (it has sold especially well in Japan), making it the most widely spread Swedish jazz disc ever. So far. "Best of Dompan" ought to become a strong rival. Or to quote the text on the cover: "For more than 50 years, as long as Swedish jazz has existed, Arne Domnérus has appeared in the spotlight on the Swedish jazz scene, as a soloist, as an orchestra leader and trendsetter".

That is why it has been possible to compile this double CD which, in short, is an unbeatable collection of jazz classics and popular tunes! Take for instance Karl-Bertil Jonssons Julafton, Topsy theme, Body and soul, Take the A-train, Visa från Utanmyra, Ta av dej skorna, En gang I Stockholm, Nocturne, Herkules Jonssons låt and Gammal fäbodpsalm! All in all, "Best of Dompan" comprises 35 tunes that remind you in an effective way of how modern Arne Domnérus has been throughout his life as a musician.

Johan Scherwin / Jazz Facts