

RECORDINGS IN NATURAL CAVES

FAROE ISLANDS

Introduction

The Faroe Islands are situated in the North Atlantic about halfway between Iceland and Norway. Concerts were held in sea caves on three islands in this Danish archipelago. Hestur is a small island located near the middle of the archipelago north of Sandoy Island and to the southwest of the capitol town, Tórshavn, which is on Streymoy Island. Nólsoy Island is located not far east of Tórshavn and it has huge sea caves and tunnels.

Regarding concerts in huge sea caves in the Faroe Islands – “Some years ago Kristian Blak, the composer, and Birgir Enni, the skipper of the boat ‘Norðlýsið,’ began arranging concerts in various caves around the Faroe Islands. The music played in these caves, accessible only by small boats, makes special use of the natural acoustics found within the caves. The concerts are part of the Summartónar programme. The concert-excursions includes sailing with the schooner “Norðlýsið” to the island of Hestur or Nólsoy, depending on the weather, and then entering the caves in smaller boats: an unforgettable musical experience. Reservations are required, as a limited number of tickets may be sold for each “Norðlýsið” excursion.” (Nordlysid n.d.)



Klæmintsgjógv Photo by Captain Birgir Enni



Kristian BLAK

And specifically regarding the Klæmintsgjógv sea cave (see CD below) – “In 2010 Queen Margrethe II of Denmark visited the Faroe Islands, and one of the events she visited was a grotto concert in Klæmintsgjógv (Gorge of Klæmint) by Kristian Blak and other musicians. The cave is 50 meter high and the sea in the cave is around 400 meter deep. There are some places inside the cave where the musicians can stand with their instruments and give a concert to the audience in the boats.” (Anon. 2013) Photos taken by Captain [Birgir Enni](#) and by [Kasper Solberg](#) show that the musicians and some of the audience place themselves on rock ledges near the back of the cave.

Ref: Anon. n.d., Kristian Blak, Biography, [Wikipedia](#)

Captain Nordlysid n.d., Concerts in the Caves of the Islands Hestur & Nólsoy, [nordlysid](#)

Harris, Craig n.d., Kristian Blak, Biography & Discography, [Allmusic](#)

Klaemintsgjógv

Hestur Island

RIC-FO1 Faroe Islands 1998

KLAEMINT *

RIC – World – Instrumental – Cave Pic Cover

Selections:

1. Arc-en-Mer – 6:46/ 2. Gevjo ljoð – 1:48/ 3. Helen – 4:47/ 4. Interlude – 2:27/ 5. Stev – 2:46/ 6. Clemént – 2:07/ 7. Filsni – 3:13/ 8. Sjósalmur – 2:46/ 9. Lyoid a – 4:19/ 10. Surface – 2:06/ 11. Lop – 2:03/ 12. Nogen Hestes Styrke – 2:42/ 13. Klaemint – 5:32/ 14. Lag no 14 'ónefnt' – 2:17

Comp: Kristian BLAK

Perf: Kristian **BLAK** (keyboards, percussion, & vocals)

Heðin Ziska Davidson (guitar)

Ólavur Olsen (trumpet)

Michael Blak (bass)

Heri Jakobsen (náverlur)

Prod. Co: Plátufelagið Tutl; Tórshavn, Faroe Islands

Rec. Eng:

Rec. Date: May-August 1998

Time: (see above)

CD: KLAEMINT

a. Tutl HJF 55

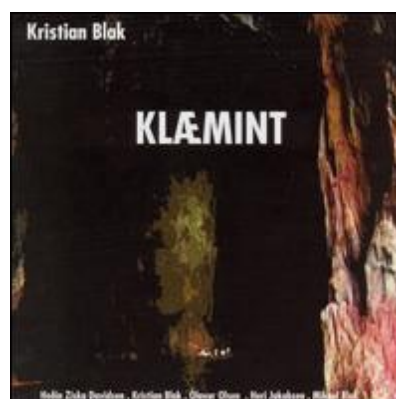
b. Orchard 4312

Notes: This is a 14-part suite, based on traditional Faroe Islands music, was written by Kristian Blak. The last track here is simply the sound of water lapping against the cave walls. On all the tracks the sound of the sea moving inside the cave can be heard in the background.

Ref: Harris, Craig n.d., Kristian Blak, Biography & Discography, [Allmusic](#)

Kristian Blak, Klaemint CD, [Allmusic](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLES)

Kristian Blak, Tutl Label, Website, [tutl](#)



RIC-FO2 Faroe Islands 2001

LIGHT WHEN DARK *

RIC – Free Jazz – Instrumental – Cave Pic Cover

Selections:

1. I Believe You – 3:30/ 2. GROTTOCATTA # 1 – 1:41/ 3. Gandabagur – 3:09/ 4. GROTTOCATTA # 2 – 1:32/ 5. Grotimol – 5:32/ 6. St. James Infirmary (Primrose) – 4:50/ 7. You Are My Heart – 2:36/ 8. GROTTOCATTA # 3 – 3:27/ 9. GROTTOBLUES – 4:35/ 10. Stick 'N' Stone – 0:37/ 11. Crosscurrents – 3:16/ 12. Se Nu Stiger Solen (Ring) – 1:30/ 13. CAVEBIRDS – 3:38/ 14. Prelude – 4:04

Comp: Karsten VOGEL (all except 6 & 12) & (5 & 10) with
Kristian BLAK

Perf: Karsten **VOGEL** (alto sax)

Kristian **BLAK** (keyboards)

Prod. Co: Plátufelagið Tutl; Tórshavn, Faroe Islands

Rec. Eng:

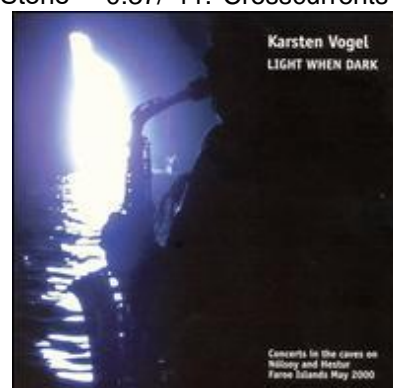
Rec. Date: May 2000

Time: (see above)

CD: LIGHT WHEN DARK

a. Tutl HJF 73

b. Orchard 8478



Notes: Several pieces of free jazz sax performed inside two Faroese sea caves, one on Nólsoy Island (cave name unknown) and the other, Klaemintsgjógv Cave, on Hestur Island. It is not known which pieces were recorded in each cave. Five of these pieces appear to have been inspired directly by the cave settings including the sea birds flying about. (See under Jazz Free – *Grottocatta*, etc.)

“During the last few years, Birgir Enni, skipper of the vessel “Norðlýsid”, and Kristian Blak have arranged trips with musicians and audiences to caves, into which - weather permitting - one can enter in smaller boats. These events have taken place in collaboration with the festival Summartónar, which brings visiting musicians, together with local performers, to these very special ‘concert halls’ utilizing the natural sounds and unique acoustics of the caves as integral parts of the music.” (Anon., n.d.)

For the cave-inspired music on this album see under Jazz Music – Avant-garde – *Grottocatta*.

Ref: Anon. n.d., Karsten Vogel, Light When Dark CD, [tut!](#)

Karsten Vogel, Biography, Website, karstenvogel.dk

Karsten Vogel, Light When Dark CD, [Allmusic](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLES)

Karsten Vogel, Light When Dark CD, [Amazon.fr](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLES)

RIC-FO3 Faroe Islands 2005

ANYBODY HOME *

RIC – Jazz – Avant-garde – Instrumental – Cave Pic Cover

Selections:

1. Anybody Home – 2:47/ 2. Three-Stop for a Troll – 1:34/ 3. Rainbow Dance – 3:02/ 4. Four Clouds Drumming – 1:22/ 5. FAROE CAVE SONG – 1:29/ 6. Lundi Talk – 0:42/ 7. HULEMUSIK [Cave Music]– 11:42/ 8. Lovely Rita and Friends – 3:39/ 9. [Forward And Backwards – 14:42 – Studio]/ 10. Earth And Water Meditation – 8:45/ 11. Drunnhvita Elevator – 3:11

Comp: Kristian BLAK, John TCHICAI, Sunleif RASMUSSEN, Peder RIIS-JENSEN, & Heðen Ziska

DAVIDSEN

Perf: John **TCHICAI** (tenor & soprano sax, percussion, & vocal)

Kristian Blak (vocal)

Sunleif Rasmussen (percussions, & vocal)

Peder Riis-Jensen (claves)

Heðin Ziska Davidsen (cow horn)

Prod. Co: Plátufelagið Tutl; Tórshavn, Faroe Islands

Rec. Loc: Klaemintsgjógv Cave & Studio

Rec. Date: June 26, 2000

Time: (See above)

CD: ANYBODY HOME?

Tutl 809972 (Tks 1 to 11)

Notes: This is the third album of jazz recorded in sea caves in the Faroe Islands.

“These concerts have taken place in collaboration with the festival Summartónar, which brings, in addition to local performers, visiting musicians into these very special concert halls, utilizing the unique acoustics and the natural surrounding sounds in the grottos as integral parts of the music. In 1984 the first grotto concert with music by Kristian Blak, Concerto Grotto, was performed in another cave – Líðargjógv, Sandoy – by the group Yggdrasil, featuring John Tchicai, and recorded on the same occasion.” (Anon. 2005)

One of the tracks on this CD, “Forward And Backwards,” was not recorded in the cave, but in a studio on another date, Sept. 17, 1990.

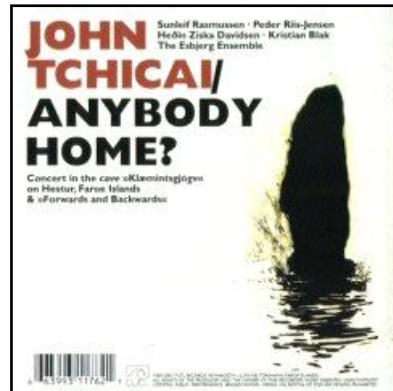
For the cave-inspired music on this album see under Jazz Music – Avant-garde – *Faroe Cave Song*.

Ref: Anon. 2005, John Tchicai, Anybody Home? CD, [tut!](#)

John Tchicai, Anybody Home? CD, [Allmusic](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLES)

John Tchicai, Anybody Home? CD, [Discogs](#)

John Tchicai, Biography (in French), [Wikipedia](#) & (in English), [Wikipedia](#)



Líðargjógv

Sandoy Island

RIC-FO4 Faroe Islands 1984

CONCERTO GROTTO *

RIC – Jazz – Combo – Instrumental – Cave Pic Cover

Selections:

Side One – 1. ENTRÉE [Entrance] / 2. EAU COURANTE [Running Water] / 3. LA COLOMBE [The Dove] / 4. GIGUE RÉELLE [Real Jig]

Side Two – 1. VOYAGE AU CENTRE DE LA TERRE [Journey to the Center of the Earth] (Tchicai) / 2. AIR / 3. PIGEONNERIE [Pigeon House] / 4. SORTIE [Exit]

Comp: Kristian BLAK

Perf: YGGDRASIL

John Tchicai (tenor sax, double ocarina, & vocal)

Kristian Blak (piano, double ocarina, & vocal)

Lelle Kullgren (guitar, bamboo flute, & vocal)

Anders Hagberg (flute, percussion, & vocal)

Anders Jormin (bass, wooden whistle, & vocal)

Karin Korpelainen (drums, tin whistle, & vocal)

Sharon Weiss (kaval, percussion)

Prod. Co: Plátufelagið Tutl; Tórshavn, Faroe Islands

Rec. Eng: (In cave) Ole Christian Hansen

Rec. Date: Aug. 1984

Time: (See above)

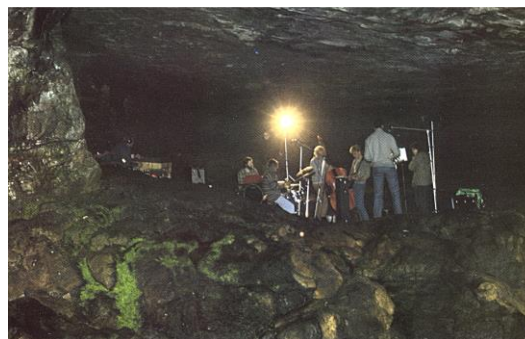
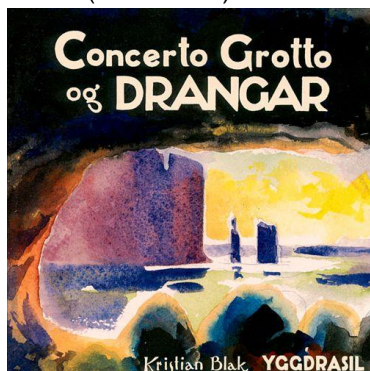


Photo by Philippe Carré



1. LP: CONCERTO GROTTO

Tutl HJF 18

12' 33rpm (Sides 1 & 2) (Gatefold cover)

2. Reissue on CD: CONCERTO GROTTO OG DRANGAR (1999)

Tutl HJF 33 (Tks 9 to 16)

Notes: This suite of 8 jazz pieces was inspired by and composed to be played live in this huge fissure sea cave on Sandoy Island in the Faroe Islands. This was the first album of jazz recorded in a cave in the archipelago.

Sandoy is a medium-sized island located near the middle of the archipelago. This sea cave is in the cliffs on the south coast of Sandoy (see map). "Sunlight creates interesting effects on the cave walls, especially in the late afternoon when the sun shines directly into the cave. Rock



doves make their home in the cave. A nearby cave is called Dúgvuholið – Dove Cave. ...The cave has provided inspiration for the composition, and the special light and sounds of the cave, of the rocks and of the sea, are themselves integral parts of the music." (Liner notes)

Prior to this cave concert Kristian Blak had recorded real nature sounds of waves, streams, wind, and the cries of crows all to be later mixed in the finished recording. Then he decided that

it would be better to go out into nature and record everything there. Obviously he could not control the nature sounds in this case like he could in the studio. At Líðargjógv one can see and hear the ocean all the time. The seawater reaches to the very back of the cave. (Blak 1994)

For the cave-inspired music on this album see under Jazz Music – Avant-garde



– *Concerto Grotto*.

Ref: Anon. 2005, Kristian Blak, Concerto Grotto og Drangar CD, [tutl](#)

Concerto Grotto Concert 2013, Announcement for June 15, 2013 Concert at Potsdam, [musikfestspiele-potsdam.de](#)

Blak, Kristian, Letter dated 12 Dec. 1994, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands
Kilmack, Bill, In the Media, *NSS News*, v. 48, n. 3, Mar. 1990, p. 79
Kristian Blak, Biography, [Wikipedia](#)
Kristian Blak, Concerto Grotto og Drangar CD, [Allmusic](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLES)
Yggdrasil (Band), Biography, [Wikipedia](#)

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