



## Juhani Aaltonen & Heikki Sarmanto

### Conversations

TUM CD 024-2

CD-1: 01 *When I Was With You* / 02 *So Much Happened...* / 03 *What We Cannot Imagine* / 04 *...It Happened Today* / 05 *Le Petit Soldat* / 06 *Just Like A Dream* / 07 *You and the Night and the Music* / 08 *Evening Prayer*

CD-2: 01 *From Nothing* / 02 *No Work Bound Me* / 03 *Free Souls* / 04 *The Sea In The Moonlight* / 05 *War Trane* / 06 *Peace Talks* / 07 *Alone Together* / 08 *Evening Haze*

**Juhani Aaltonen** tenor saxophone

**Heikki Sarmanto** piano

**International Release:** December 13, 2011

*Conversations* presents two Finnish jazz icons, **Juhani Aaltonen** and **Heikki Sarmanto**, in an extended musical conversation – an open dialogue. It is a collection of 16 improvisations either created spontaneously in the studio or by using Sarmanto's compositions and even two standards as a launching pad – nearly two hours of improvised music altogether. *Conversations* is not their first duo album but it is without a doubt one of their very best, reflecting nearly five decades of shared musical history and their love for improvisation.

Aaltonen and Sarmanto first played together in the early 1960s and at this point they know each other so well that words have become unnecessary in their musical communication. Sarmanto says: "When we perform together as a duo, I often feel that we do so almost as one." This is what makes **Conversations** such a special collection: there is a focus on spontaneous but still strongly melodic, at times even romantic, improvisation that the two master musicians have both increasingly returned to during this latest stage in their careers.

Aaltonen and Sarmanto first played together in 1964 when Sarmanto asked Aaltonen to join his quartet for the taping of a studio performance for *Tesvision*, the first television channel in Finland. Even before this, they had both attended a legendary concert by the late John Coltrane at Helsinki's Kulttuuritalo in November 1961 that made a huge impression on each of them. So, in a way, this record celebrates their shared path over the last five decades.

Saxophonist and flutist **Juhani Aaltonen** (b. 1935) has long since established himself as one of the most important musicians on the Finnish and European jazz scene with his collaborations with Henrik Otto Donner, Heikki Sarmanto, Edward Vesala, Arild Andersen and many others. In the past decade, he has focused on leading his own groups, including the *Juhani Aaltonen Trio* and *Quartet*. During this period, he has released five albums for TUM Records as a leader: *Conclusions* (Juhani Aaltonen Quartet, 2009), *Illusion of a Ballad* (Juhani Aaltonen Trio, 2006), *Reflections* (with Reggie Workman and Andrew Cyrille, 2004), *Strings Revisited* (with Henrik Otto Donner as well as Workman and Cyrille together with *Avanti! Chamber Orchestra*, 2003) and *Mother Tongue* (Juhani Aaltonen Trio, 2003).

Pianist and composer **Heikki Sarmanto** (b. 1939) has been a leading figure in Finnish jazz as a pianist and bandleader since the mid-1960s and has been internationally acclaimed for his symphonic, orchestral and jazz ensemble works as a composer. As a young musician, Sarmanto participated in two of the most important early recordings of Finnish modern jazz, Christian Schwindt's *For Friends And Relatives* and Esa Pethman's *The Modern Sound Of Finland*. Soon after these sessions in the mid-1960s, Sarmanto decided to devote himself fully to contemporary jazz and has been leading his own groups ever since. He has also become known for his large scale orchestral projects, often with Aaltonen as the principal soloist, including *New Hope Jazz Mass* premiered in New York in 1978 and most recently the *Winter War Requiem* premiered in Tampere in 2009. Together, Aaltonen and Sarmanto have recorded 30 or so albums.

To celebrate the release of **Conversations**, Juhani Aaltonen and Heikki Sarmanto will perform as a duo at **Restaurant Laulumiehet** in Helsinki on December 8, 2011 at 7 P.M.

**Media Contact:** Ann Braithwaite, Braithwaite & Katz Communications; +1-781-259 9600, [ann@bkmusicpr.com](mailto:ann@bkmusicpr.com)

**Distribution (U.S.):** City Hall Records; +1-415-457 9080; [www.cityhallrecords.com](http://www.cityhallrecords.com)

**Distribution (Finland):** Töölön Musiikkitukku Oy, Martti Heikkinen; +358-40-502 0104; [sales@toolonmusiikkitukku.com](mailto:sales@toolonmusiikkitukku.com)



**TUM Records** is a Finnish record label that began operations in May 2003. TUM produces high-quality music recordings and selectively organizes concerts and events, such as the TUMfest in Helsinki. The focus of TUM is on improvised, jazz-based music, placing particular emphasis on free expression and the performing artists' own music. In addition to providing younger musicians with exposure and a musical platform, TUM promotes more experienced musicians whose work is not favored by the commercial trends of our time. TUM covers feature works by leading Finnish artists.

**TUM Records Oy, Eteläranta 14, FI-00130 Helsinki, Finland. Additional information: Petri Haussila +358-40-7676 320.**