



**LARGE
UNIT**

2015



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Ears

HINKELS

DIAMOND GALLERY











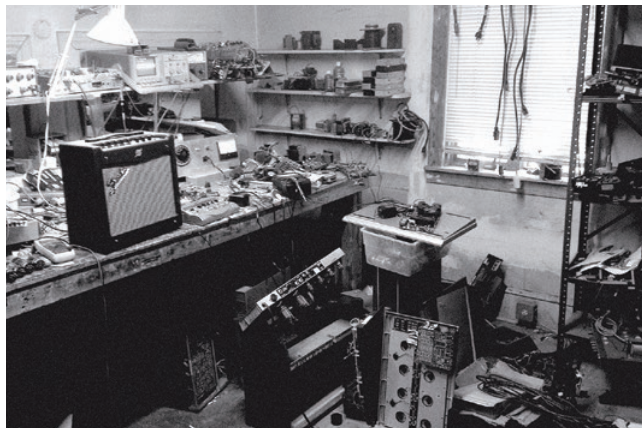
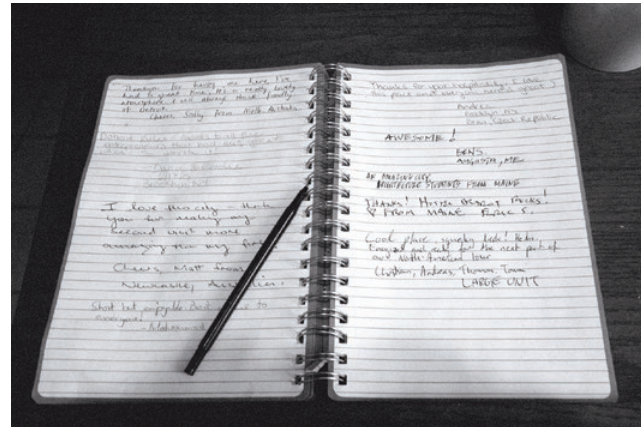
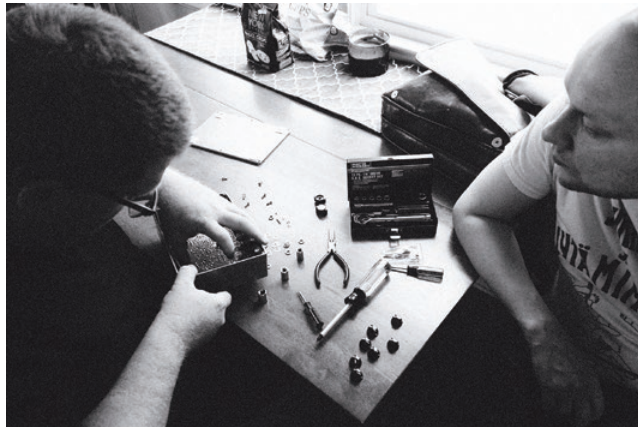






Photo: Peter Gannushkin



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Photo: Peter Gannushkin





Photo: Peter Gannushkin



If someone would have told me five years ago that this band would happen - playing with this particular group of musicians, drumming alongside Paal, touring all over, eating, swimming and singing karaoke together on the other side of the planet – I probably wouldn't believe it. I guess most people have the experience of dreaming about or imagining something for the future, and when they actually get whatever it is that they want, it doesn't feel that special. It's probably replaced with new desires. I remember standing outside the venue in Seattle with Thomas and Jon Rune, this was the last concert. I think we all felt the same, being in this band and making music under these circumstances truly feels more than fortunate. Shaking our heads in disbelief of what we are experiencing together, laughing, staring into the pavement, climbing a tree, saying bye-bye to audience members that were too excited to express anything (and in that way expresses it perfectly). Living the dream! And I think it's an important point for this group that we are experiencing together, because there's not much ego. Egoism in music can be problematic to say the least, which becomes even more of a problem in a large group. On the other hand, playing in a group of this size gives great opportunity to tune into the frequencies of the collective intuition, the strongest force of all. Almost impossible to DO, because it doesn't happen at will, it just happens (at least in my experience). And I have felt that force in this band, in the beginning only for a moment at the time, later longer stretches and sometimes entire concerts. This is what we live for. Nothing can be more rewarding than creating energy and music in the moment, let the sounds flush and blow out like they should in the "now".

Andreas Wildhagen



Humor on tour can often be a cryptic thing for "outsiders" and focus on minimal topics as persons in the cultural sphere, impressions of dialects, gestures or simply guttural sounds.

When a friend of mine, who is also a musician, gets back from a tour, the first thing his wife usually asks about is how has the humor been? Really bad, he could off course say, but then he has to try and explain what the humor has been like. This can be quite hard talking to someone on the outside. Often the humor will seem totally imbecile, stupid and not funny at all. I would say that this could apply to the 2015 Large Unit tour of the US. There was a lot of driving and plenty of time in the cars to kill. I don't know if it was due to a childhood dream of becoming a truck driver, but I came across a website called www.truckercountry.com. This is a website about truck driving, covering many topics, one of them being trucker slang. So I passed out a list of some 200 phrases and words of trucker slang to the entire band and let it sink in. Of these here are some of my personal favorites:

- Alligator (a piece of tire on the road, usually a recap from a blown tire)
- Back door (something behind you)
- Back it down (slow down)
- Bear (a law enforcement officer at any level)
- Bear bite (a speeding ticket)
- Bird dog (radar detector)
- Donkey (Behind you, ex; Bear on your donkey!)
- Hammer down (go fast, step on it)
- Hammer lane (the left, passing lane of traffic)

Of these "Hammer down!" became the most popular by far. So every time the 11 piece band left or arrived at a gas station, diner, car, bus, restaurant, beach or venue, there would be a small symphony of "hammer down's!" being hollered in different bad impressions of American dialects to every one else's pleasure. During a normal working day I would say that the band averaged about 200 "hammer downs". On previous tours the Large Unit humor has often seem to revolve around different (bad) impersonations of musicians, dialects and just guttural sounds, so I'm eagerly awaiting the next tour, and to see what comes out off it on and off stage.

Klaus Ellerhusen Holm



INTERVIEW WITH PAAL NILSSEN-LOVE, SEPTEMBER 2015 BY LASSE MARHAUG

It seems like 2015 was the year Large Unit really came into full force. 45 concerts for a 12-piece band in a six-month span, that's a lot even for a regular size band. What made you go for three full tours in such a short period of time?

Since the very first meeting with the guys and the very first concert in Molde, July 2013, I wanted to get this band on the road! We first did a short tour of Norway in spring 2014 and also recorded what became the album "Erta Ale". We were also lucky to do a handful of concerts at international festivals abroad where press gave us good reviews. I was planning to do at least two solid tours of Europe in 2015 but when I realized the rumor was out and there was interest in Canada, I also thought we should do a proper tour of North America in the same go.

That's kind of crazy.

Yes, I can see the insanity of doing all of this within one year, but it's a working band and not a project. A band needs

experience from the road in order to develop. The music changes and people interact in a completely different way if you're out for more than a week or so. I'm ambitious and was determined we could pull it off – and we did. It also forced me to write more material for the group.

In Large Unit you are band leader, composer, booking agent, producer and you play the drums, and you did these three tours packed in between a tight schedule of tours with other bands plus organising two festivals. Surely putting together the Large Unit tours must have been a monumental task. How did you manage?

It's a lot of work, but I like working a lot and it keeps me going. I'm a complete control freak and have a hard time trusting anyone to do what I do with the same dedication. I have all the contacts for booking gigs and for these tours I was out early fishing for them. Fortunately most presenters were interested in having us. The most difficult thing was making a tour that

made sense travel-wise. That was a logistical puzzle.

What are the financial challenges connected to bringing a band like this on the road?

Winning the lottery! Thing is that we're still extremely fortunate to have funding for music and arts in Norway. Without the financial support from Ministry of Culture, Music Norway, Jazzforum and Fond For Lyd og Bilde – who all supported the European and North America tour – it would simply be impossible to pull it off. There was also the Bielecki Foundation in the US and even some private funding from fans in Milwaukee. The fees from the presenters were quite decent and I could pay the musicians an okay fee. You got to think in a different way and lower the expectations of income with 12 musicians on the road. What cost the most was of course the overseas travel, but we also had expenses for visas, rental cars and hotels in the US.

What practical challenges does

travelling with such a big band bring?

Thankfully I've got some experience touring with large ensembles, so I kind of knew what obstacles could occur. I had everything planned way in advance; from where to have breakfast, dinner, bars and even record shops. I had it all mapped out. But of course, as soon as you get on the road and see that some people have their different habits and needs. The key to surviving on the road is having a good sense of humor, patience and respecting each other's pace. I'm glad people were patient when we were given four beds in four different rooms at a hostel with strangers, or when I by mistake had cancelled some of the rooms elsewhere, or when one of the guys went to bed without leaving the car keys with some of us who still had bags in the car... those kind of things demand quite some patience and I believe this band has that. Thank God!

Were people in the band given different responsibility outside of music? Did everybody help out?

All of the members did a tremendous job helping each other with absolutely everything. We had a ton of merchandise with us, and a few guys set up the merch table every night and dealt with sales and talking with the audience. It helped a lot. I had to tell everyone else a few times to help out, but in general it all went smooth.

Did you sense that everybody felt that this was something special?

Yes, I would say so. Especially the guys hanging out after the gigs were all extremely generous and open about how much they appreciated the time we were having together. For me this was a very special trip. I've done loads

of tours in North America the last 10-15 years. Some of the guys had only been to New York, Chicago and maybe a few trips between Philly, DC and New York. So I had the pleasure to show them what's in between all the bigger cities, like the college towns, Appalachia region, white poverty, red neck country, Motor City, Waffle House, Hop Leaf in Chicago, record stores in Milwaukee and so on. And we all met presenters that were as dedicated as us. It was special for everyone involved.

Was it all work and no fun?

It was a lot of work before, during the tour and even after doing accounts etc. I was pretty much prepared and on top of things. It was more fun than most tours I've done before. I enjoy putting together tours and I knew it was going to be a blast. This band takes having fun serious – we did a lot more than just travel and play. I mean, which other band goes swimming in Lake Eerie? All dancing back stage after the last gig? Singing karaoke at a Korean barbecue after doing a 6hr concert? I loved it all the way!

There were some changes in the line-up of band since last year. How did you pick the new musicians?

Some quit because of the music, some because of family and I respect both. It was easy to ask Tommi Keränen to do electronics, and he proved to be very easy to work with. He read the scores well and was extremely humble to the music. His contributions were outstanding, especially when we – for practical reasons – had to put him in front of the band. After going through the list of saxophone players, Klaus and I decided on Julie Kjær, and I realised at the first gig that she was the right choice. Her playing is great! She really

shines on stage. And I must admit that having a woman in the band is nice. It's like the birthday parties when you where a kid, of course you didn't only want guys.

Do you consider Large Unit a project or a band?

It's a band. I realised that on the very first gig in 2013.

Is having a constant line-up a goal, or do you accept that the line-up might be more fluid?

So far there's been three replacements, and you never know if people's family situations or if their musical interest change. I don't mind the band changing and evolving, but I would love to keep the present group going for a while. We'll see. You never know. I can imagine that I'll be bringing in more people and expanding the group. In August we played at Oslo Jazz Festival and we had two Brazilian percussionists join us for a concert and recording. That was amazing!

Did you play the same set-list every night, or did you shuffle it around?

That's one thing I learnt on the very first tour, after we'd done three gigs and thought we had a good set list, playing the same order of songs those first three gigs I noticed that people were anticipating the next tune or solo, so I began changing order of soloists and the order of songs. We've now gotten to the point where I'll re-arrange absolutely everything for every gig. It keeps people alert and the music fresh. With 14 gigs in 16 days there's no way I want to play the same shit every night.

You already have more pieces of music than you're able to fit into one evening,

why did you introduce new material on the tours instead of just playing the “Erta Ale” tunes?

There are several reasons bringing in new material to the band. When the band started I had written about eight compositions and we did one tour of Norway, recorded “Erta Ale” and most of the tunes were with us on festival concerts in the same period. It worked, but the band had changed a little, people wanted more material, I heard new things in the group that I wanted to bring out. I also find it inspiring writing for the group. We're still tossing the old material around, but the new tunes are slightly different and demands different thinking. Hopefully it also reflects some of the directions the band could go in the future.

Would you consider having members of the band, or even people from the outside writing pieces?

Good question. I don't think so. It's already enough responsibility for me to write the music, deciding what pieces to play and how to play them. If I were going to decide on which of the member's pieces to play, that would be wrong for me. It's a very democratic group, but in a way it's easier if I deal with the music.

You also had nights where people played in smaller constellations? Why did you do that? How did it affect the music of the main band?

I've arranged and composed the tunes so that all members are put into smaller units within the group, playing with, off and against each other. There are several combinations of the group that I find interesting and all members are good improvisers, and I believe that setting up independent trios or

duos will push all members into new territories. It also gives me new ideas for composing new material. Also, the audience get to hear each member in a slightly different context.

How do you feel the band developed over these tours?

The band has grown a lot since the beginning. People are more confident in each other and themselves and they're taking more chances than before. Some guys in the band have really blossomed and shown some incredible playing which I had't heard before. So great! The band is now extremely tight and powerful.

You normally play 250 gigs a year, what makes Large Unit special out of all your projects?

I believe that the social aspect is important if you're going to take a band on the road. I see myself 10-20 years ago in some of the guys, and I get inspiration from their approach to the music and life on the road. We're 12 musicians and it's a gallery of personalities. Within the group there's some of the most humble and patient musicians I've ever worked with, and there is an extreme dedication to the music and the band, which makes it special to me.

What is the reason for documenting the 2015 tour with this book?

I think the audience should be let in on some of the life on the road. They read Twitter and Facebook messages, of course see us play but I think it's nice to make a more substantial documentation rather than just a bunch of random photos that disappear into the digital void. I realised that Christian takes really good photos. He's got an

eye for composition and manages to capture some special moments. All of the people in the band were taking photos but they were more holiday style and quit trashy (including mine), Christian's stood out.

And what about the two CDs?

Almost all the shows were recorded and instead of cramming all of them into a box set I thought we'd make something more special. The first CD is the second night in Montreal when we broke the group into smaller units. It's a side of the band that hasn't been documented before. The second CD is the very last gig of the tour, which was in Seattle. The band is in full fire and there's some rearrangements of the older pieces. It's not a pristine hi-fi recording, but it captures the intense energy of the band and shows how much the music had evolved by that point.

Where do you see Large Unit going in the future? Does a big ensemble have longevity, or is this a mountain you have to climb and then scale down?

Large Unit will go on. As long as the members are willing to walk with me, then I'll keep going. Of course I won't be surprised if someone has to quit for family reasons, or makes other priorities. It's fine if the band evolves and changes from time to time. But, it's also a question of money. We've managed to do quite a lot in a very short amount of time and that's thanks to the support money we have in Norway. Hopefully we'll be fortunate and receive some more. But yeah, this feels like the beginning of it.



LARGE UNIT 2015

Julie Kjær – alto saxophone and flute
Klaus Ellerhusen Holm – alto and baritone saxophone
Thomas Johansson – trumpet
Mats Åleklint – trombone
Per Åke Holmlander – tuba
Ketil Gutvik – electric guitar
Tommi R. Keränen – electronics
Jon Rune Strøm – electric and double bass
Christian Meaas Svendsen – electric and double bass
Andreas Wildhagen – drums
Paal Nilssen-Love – drums
Christian Obermayer – live sound

CD1: SMALL UNITS

1. Tommi Keranen & Andreas Wildhagen
2. Thomas Johansson & Mats Åleklint & Per Åke Holmlander
3. Julie Kjær & Ketil Gutvik & Jon Rune Strøm
4. Klaus Ellerhusen Holm & Christian Meaas Svendsen & Paal Nilssen-Love

Recorded on the 21th of June 2015 at Casa Popolo,
Suoni per il Popolo, Montreal, Canada
Recorded by Mathieu Bélanger
Mastered by Lasse Marhaug

CD2: LARGE UNIT

1. Fortar Hardar
2. ANA
3. Circle in the Round
4. Erta Ale II
5. Fendika

Recorded on the 28th of June 2015 at Poncho Concert Hall,
Earshot Jazz, Seattle, USA
Recorded by Klaus Holm
Mastered by Lasse Marhaug

THE BOOK

Art director and editor: Lasse Marhaug
Co-editor: Paal Nilssen-Love
Photos by Christian Meaas Svendsen and Peter Gannushkin [noted]
Caligraphy: Terry Nilssen-Love
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2015 CONCERTS

8th March: MUKU, Artacts, St. Johan, Austria
29th April: Rote Fabrik, Zurich, Switzerland
30th April: Mediawave, Komarom, Hungary
1st May: Cafe Oto, London, UK
2nd May: Cafe Oto, London, UK
3rd May: Oorstof, Sound in Motion, Zuiderspreshuis, Antwerp, Belgia
4th May: Eringer Schloss, Dortmund, Germany
5th May: Jazzkeller, Hofheim, Germany
6th May: Manufaktur, Schorndorf, Germany
7th May: Bimhuis, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
8th May: Porgy and Bess, Vienna, Austria
9th May: Maijazz, Stavanger, Norway
13th June: Issue Project Room, First Unitarian Congregational Society, New York NY, USA
14th June: Creative Differences, The Windup Space, Baltimore MD, USA
15th June: Kings, Raleigh NC, USA
16th June: 701 Center for Contemporary Art, Columbia SC, USA
17th June: Downtown Arts Center, Lexington KY, USA
19th June: Burchfield Penney Art Center, Hallwalls, Buffalo NY, USA
20th June: Suoni per il Popolo, Montreal QC, Canada
21st June: Suoni per il Popolo, Montreal QC, Canada
22nd June: Ottawa Jazzfestival, Ottawa ON, Canada
23rd June: Trinosophes, Detroit MI, USA
24th June: Sugar Maple, Milwaukee WI, USA
25th June: Constellation, Chicago IL, USA
27th June: Vancouver Jazzfestival, Vancouver BC Canada
28th June: Earshot Jazz, Poncho Concert Hall, Cornish College of Arts, Seattle, WA USA
14th August: Oslo jazzfestival, Nasjonal Jazzscene, Oslo, Norway
27th October: Fasching, Stockholm, Sweden
28th October: Jazz Evidence, Energimølla, Kongsberg, Norway
29th October: Spriten Kunsthall, Grenland Jazzforum, Skien, Norway
30th October: Voxhall/Atlas, Århus, Denmark
31st October: Tampere Jazzhappening, Tampere, Finland
1st November: DOM, Moscow, Russia
2nd November: Pardon To Tu, Warsaw, Poland
3rd November: Pardon To Tu, Warsaw, Poland
4th November: Museum of Contemporary Art, Alchemia, Krakow, Poland
7th November: Jazzfest Berlin, Berlin, Germany
8th November: Pøkk, Blæst, Trondheim, Norway

THANK YOU

Zurich Switzerland: Fredi Bosshard of Verein Fabrikjazz and Taktlos; Komarom Hungary: Orsolya B. Csete of Mediawave; London England: Hamish Dunbar, Fielding Hope, John Chantler, Onyee Lo, Billy Steiger, David Laskowski, Shaun Crook of Cafe OTO; Antwerp; Belgium: Christel Kumpen and Koen Vanderhout of SoundinMotion, Wim Lippens, Iwan Cotton, Ousmane Niang, Samba Hane of Suiderpershuis, Mariske Broeckmeyer; Dortmund Germany: Hans Schreiber og MUSIC Information and Documentation Center RUHR; Hofheim Germany: Ester Arvay of Jazzkeller; Schorndorf Germany: Andrea Kostka, Sabine Reichle, Werner Hassler, Benny Munz and of Club Manufaktur, Schorndorf DE; Amsterdam Netherlands: Huub Van Riel, Alexandra Mientjes, Yvonne Timmer, Philip ten Brink; Vienna Austria: Chhristoph Huber, Barbara Bruckmüller, Julian Preuschl, Ronald Matky, Norbert Benesch of Porgy Bess; Stavanger Norway: Helleik Kvinnesland, Hasse Andersen, Ahsley Stubbart, Kjersti Rui Nygaard, Tom Mortensen of Maijazz; New York NY USA: Lawrence Kumpf, Bob Bellerue, Matthew Walker, Amirta Kidambi of ISSUE Project Room; Robert D. Bielecki of Bielecki Foundation, Steve Swell, Eivind Opsvik, Vicky and Daniel Love, Mariel Berger; Baltimore MD USA: Bernard Lyons of Creative Differences; Raleigh NC USA: Michael Perros, Paul Siller of King's Barcade; Jeb Bishop and Jackie Cellini for having the band stay at their place in Durham; Columbia SC USA: Ross Taylor, Columbia Nordic Club, Fred and Dixon Monk of Columbia World Affairs Council, Paul Grant, Wim Roefs, Paul Schultz, Justin Weinberg, Sheldon Paschal, Papajazz Record Shoppe, Tom Law, 701 Center for Contemporary Art; Lexington KY USA: Ross Compton of Jazz Outside the Spotlight Series, Cody Putman of WRFL 88,1FM Radio Free Lexington KY, Ben Allen of University of Kentucky and WRFL, Celeste Lewis and Tom Willis of Lexington Arts Center, Gumbo Ya-Ya's; Buffalo NY USA: David Kennedy, Steve Baczkogski of Hallways Inc, Burchfield Penney Art Center; Montreal QC Canada: Mauro Pezzente, Daniel Pelissier, Peter Burton at Suoni Per Il Popolo, Sala Rossa, Casa Popolo, Marilyn Tarabulsy, Mathieu Bélanger; Ottawa ON Canada: Doug Millar, Benjamin Emond, Cathrine O'Grady, Adi Cajo, Jacqie Mackay, Grant Young of Ottawa Jazzfestival; Detroit MI USA: Rebecca Mazzei, Joel Peterson of Trinosphes; Milwaukee WI USA: Adrienne Pierluissi of Sugar Maple, Catherine Pierluissi, Tim Daisy, Ken Vandermark, Keith Berg, Mary Hedblom, Top Shelf Guitar Shop; Chicago IL USA: Mike Reed, Steve Marquette, Dave Rempis, Tim Daisy, Ken Vandermark, Ellen Major, David Zuchowski, Wendy; Vancouver BC Canada: Ken Pickering, Marijka Asbeek Brusse, Rebecca Mulvihill; Seattle WA USA: John Gilbreath, Karen Caropepe of Earshot Jazz; Stockholm Sweden: Magnus Palmquist of Fasching Jazzclub; Kongsberg, Norway: Tor Dalaker Lund of Jazz Evidence, Christian Børke; Skien, Norway: Hanne Christensen, Tom Erik Lønnerød, Elle Flogstad, Per Eilif Haraldsen of Spriten Kunsthall and Grenland Jazzforum; Århus, Denmark: Kenneth Kristensen of Atlas and Voxhall; Tampere, Finland: Juhamatti Kauppinen, Pasuri Katariina, Koivusalo Elja of Tampere Jazzhappening; Moscow, Russia: Embassy of Norway and Tanja Feodoritova, Kirill Polonsky, DOM Cultural Center, Vladimir "Big" Glushko, Dmitry Gomzyakov aka Zonder Zond, Boris Lyulinsky, Anton Ponomarev, Alexander Pantyushkov; Warsaw, Poland: Danielle Radtke, Magdalena Dudek; Krakow, Poland: Marek Winiarski, Marcin Sojka, Lucjan Towpik and Olek Witynski & Jacek Zakowski of Alchemia; Berlin, Germany: Richard Williams and Nadin Deventer of Jazzfest Berlin; Trondheim, Norway: Karl Bjørå, Andreas Winther, Axel Skalstad, Signe Emmeluth, Vegard Bjerkan of Pøkk; Sergio Merino, Marta Fontanals, Sebi Suarez, Riccarda Cato, Natalia Boltneva, Peter Gannushkin, Håvard Gjelseth, Kim Hiortøyt, Petter Furuset; Eldbjørg Raknes; Jan Ole Otnæs; Per Ravnås; Børre Mølsted; Kasper Værnes; Lasse Marhaug; Arild S. Mørk; Kjetil Brandsdal; Terry Nilssen-Love; Ny Musikk Oslo; Swerve Harris; Alison Loerke; Bill Meyer; Peter Margasak; Bill Shoemaker; Andrey Henkin; Pete Fenech; Laurence Donohue-Greene; Fond For Lyd og Bilde; Music Norway; Norsk Kulturråd; Norsk Jazzforum; Fond For Utøvende Kunstnere.