

JOHANNES WALLMANN

ELEGY FOR AN UNDISCOVERED SPECIES

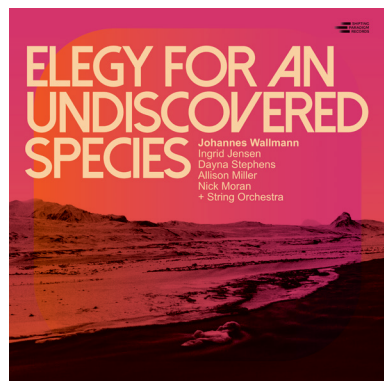
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Johannes Wallmann's *Elegy for an Undiscovered Species* is the Wisconsin-based German-Canadian pianist's ninth album and his most ambitious effort to date: a full-length album of new music for jazz quintet and string orchestra. The 19-piece ensemble is fronted by two returning collaborators of Wallmann's, New York trumpeter **Ingrid Jensen** and tenor saxophonist **Dayna Stephens**, and powered by a rhythm tandem of drummer **Allison Miller** and bassist **Nick Moran**. Two years in the making, the album was recorded at the Hamel Music Center in Madison in late February 2020 – just prior to the Covid shutdown – and will be released June 25, 2021.



Born in Germany and raised on Canada's Vancouver Island, Wallmann studied jazz piano and composition at Berklee College of Music and at NYU while establishing himself as a versatile and in-demand sideman and an innovative composer and bandleader in New York and later in Oakland, CA. In 2012, Wallmann moved to Madison to lead the University of Wisconsin's jazz studies program. *Downbeat* has called him "a remarkable pianist and composer [...] his evocative compositions are brimming with melodic cogency and rhythmic pull," named his 2015 album *The Town Musicians* an "Editors' Pick," and described his playing on his 2018 album *Day and Night* as "confident, muscular and elegant." Wallmann's work embraces advocacy for human and environmental rights, and the *Wisconsin Gazette* called his 2018 album *Love Wins* "one of the most interesting and accomplished jazz albums to come out in recent years. *Love Wins* has taken the uniquely American art form to the next step of its creative journey."

The six long-form compositions of *Elegy for an Undiscovered Species* showcase Wallmann's arranging skills as he weaves catchy but idiosyncratic melodies, playful but often with a tinge of melancholy, through the peaks and valleys of extended solos, shimmering orchestral textures and harmonic and orchestral transformations en route to their inevitable climax and resolution. Groove is always at the center of each piece, whether it's the driving ostinato of the title track (a musical protest against the Anthropocene Extinction), a wistful Bossa Nova in 3/4 ("Longing"), the swirling 15/4 funk of "Expeditor," or the cheekily titled waltz "In Three," which reveals its meter only gradually.



Throughout the album, the stars are given room to blow. With the many existing connections between the quintet musicians, the ensemble's chemistry is hardly surprising, but Wallmann integrates the string orchestra as an equal melodic voice. The result is a tapestry of styles, grooves and influences tastefully blended into a complex and engaging whole.

TRACK LISTING

1. Elegy for an Undiscovered Species (11:04)
2. Two Ears Old (9:35)
3. In Three (8:37)
4. Expeditor (9:53)
5. Longing (7:02)
6. The Greater Fool (10:32)
7. Two Ears Old (reprise) (1:23)

PERSONNEL

Johannes Wallmann – piano
Ingrid Jensen – trumpet
Dayna Stephens – tenor saxophone, EWI
Allison Miller – drums
Nick Moran – bass
String orchestra: Kaleigh Acord (concert master), Maynie Bradley, Mercedes Cullen (principal), Glen Kuenzi, Chang-En Lu, Anna Luebke, Richard Silvers, Mary Shin, violins; Emma Cifrino, Pedro Oviedo, Rachel Riese (principal), violas; Hannah Kasun, Cole Randolph (principal), Ben Therrell, cellos; Michael Dolan, conductor

Label: Shifting Paradigm Records
Catalog Number: SP-164
UPC: 192650290273
Street Date: June 25, 2021

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