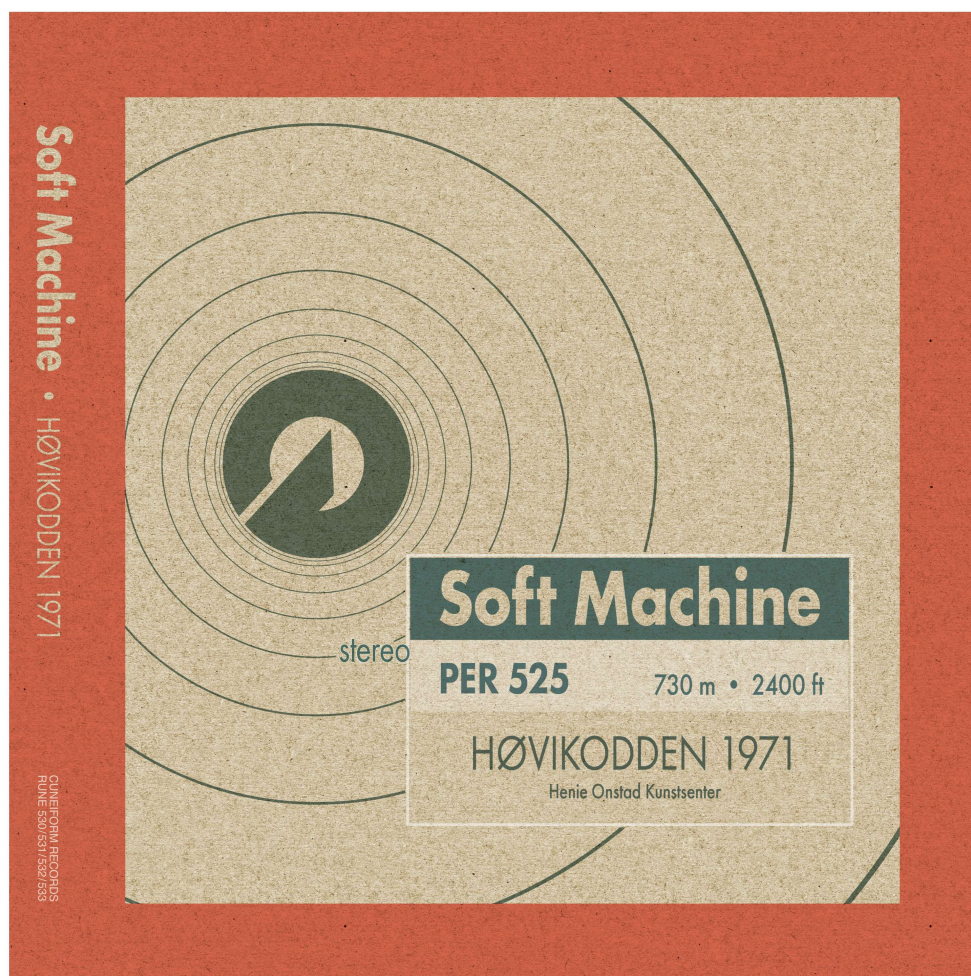


HØVIKODDEN 1971

SOFT MACHINE

– VINYL, CD & DIGITAL –

COMING OUT
ON
CUNEIFORM RECORDS
MAY 31, 2024



with Pink Floyd and the Jimi Hendrix Experience,
to being one of the
originators of electric jazz/rock by early 1969,
Britain's **SOFT MACHINE**
were restlessly creative.

HØVIKODDEN 1971 captures them during two
consecutive nights not long before the longest lived and best
known version of the band
– 'the classic quartet' of **ELTON DEAN**,
HUGH HOPPER, **MIKE RATLEDGE**, and **ROBERT WYATT** –
was about to end.

listen/ share a track via SoundCloud:



Bio information: **SOFT MACHINE**

Title: ***Høvikodden 1971*** (Cuneiform Rune 530/531/532/533)

Format: CD box set / VINYL box set / DIGITAL

www.cuneiformrecords.com

FILE UNDER: **ROCK / JAZZ-ROCK**

Soft Machine's two concerts at the **Henie-Onstad Art Center** near **Oslo, Norway**, on **February 27 and 28, 1971** were special in several respects. The circumstances, of course, were unusual: in a museum space, as part of an art exhibition by the **Boyle Family**, and **Mark Boyle's** films were projected during the performances. But more significantly, both shows were recorded, and superbly at that, providing a rare glimpse into how, at this stage in the band's existence, the music could change significantly from one night to the next, even when the setting didn't.

Mark Boyle, with his partner **Joan Hills** and their **Sensual Laboratory** light-show, had accompanied Soft Machine on many of theirs gigs in 1967–68, initially in the **London underground clubs**, then abroad in **Europe** and, most memorably, in North America on a tour supporting the **Jimi Hendrix Experience**. Since parting ways in March 1968, there had been a couple of reunions of which this was the next to last.



Soft Machine med M.Boyle 27-28.02.1971.foto.bærumfotokl

Soft Machine likely owed the opportunity to perform in Norway to their association and friendship with Boyle, as they were still relatively unknown in the country. Indeed it would be five years before a band bearing that name (but containing none of the same musicians) would again visit **Norway**, as part of a European tour supporting **John McLaughlin's Shakti**. This being said, a small but dedicated contingent of local Soft Machine enthusiasts did exist, and indeed demand for the Saturday concert was sufficient for a second one to be added on the Sunday.

In the audience for both concerts was fan **Hans Voigt**. "I'd discovered **Volume Two**—still my favorite of their albums—about a year before. It was love at first listen! Within a short time I also acquired the first album and **Third**. I was totally hooked! When I heard rumors that they were coming to Norway, I couldn't wait. The concerts gave me *almost* all I wanted—I say 'almost' because they didn't play "**Moon in June**," and Robert no longer sang much at that point. Meeting the band before and after the concerts, I got the impression that although the performances were fantastic, the atmosphere within the band wasn't the best. Later that year, as you know, Robert left the band...."



Robert Wyatt photo by Einar Braathen

Voigt would later play a crucial role in unearthing the tapes of both concerts. “I knew they’d been recorded. A colleague of mine at the **Norske Teatret**, where I worked as stage manager in the '70s, was sound engineer **Meny Bloch**, and I actually remembered seeing him at the gigs with his tape machine connected to the mixing desk.” The German-born Bloch was hired for important recordings at the art center. For these he used a **Studer A62 2-track recorder** and a pair of **Neumann microphones**. “I got in touch with the library, and someone there located the actual master tapes; the new transfers from **Norway’s National Library** are exceptional, and have been further improved by expert mixing and mastering.”



The performances follow the long-established Soft Machine tradition of two continuous sets, plus an

after the July 1971 US tour. The lion's share of the set came from *Third* and the newly-released ***Fourth***, with a few extras—"Neo-Caliban Grides," soon to appear on **Elton Dean's** self-titled solo album; "**All White**," the only new composition in the set (and the only one to utilize Ratledge's newly-acquired **Fender Rhodes piano**); and "**Pigling Bland**," which, despite appearing alongside "All White" on 1972's ***Fifth***, actually dated back to 1969, having been written as a new ending for the septet arrangement of "**Esther's Nose Job**."

Fourth showed the band at a crossroads, its contents ranging from "**Teeth**," **Mike Ratledge's** last (and arguably most successful) attempt at ambitious episodic structures, to the out-and-out free improv of "**Fletcher's Blemish**" (notwithstanding the occasional unison riffs that pop up here and there), while **Hugh Hopper's** sidelong, 4-part "**Virtually**" explored a middle ground.



While the two sets from the second night (February 28, 1971) have been released before, they have been unavailable for over a decade. Cuneiform Records' ***Høvikodden 1971*** box set is the first time that the entire two-night stand has been released. Half of this set is previously completely unreleased material by the classic Soft Machine quartet of Elton Dean, Hugh Hopper, Mike Ratledge and Robert Wyatt, essential material for Soft Machine fans.

As for the set's sound quality, *Høvikodden 1971* is an excellent, stereo recording of the band performing in a relatively small hall. While the instruments are not perfectly balanced, there is no other recording by Soft Machine that sounds as much like the band are performing *right* in front of you! Additionally, Cuneiform was able to improve in a modest but definitely noticeable way the not-perfect balance between the instruments on this complete presentation of both night's performances.

Released in May 2024 to celebrate the **40th Anniversary of Cuneiform Records'** May 1984 founding, *Høvikodden 1971* is one of the most sumptuous projects that the storied label has ever released. The box set is published in three different formats: a limited edition LP box set; a limited edition CD box set; and a digital set via Bandcamp. Each physical set contains 4 albums of

is available in either a standard or high definition digital format, and includes all four albums, liner notes, photos and artwork.

Over the past four decades, Cuneiform Records has released numerous archival recordings by Soft Machine, as well as solo and other projects by its band members **Robert Wyatt**, **Elton Dean** and **Hugh Hopper**. In addition to its Soft Machine releases, the label's extensive catalogue includes archival and contemporary recordings by an impressive selection of other British jazz and rock artists, including **Chris McGregor's Brotherhood of Breath**, **Harry Miller's Isipingo**, **John Surman**, **Empirical**, **Led Bib**, **Paul Dunmall**, **Mujician**, **Graham Collier**, **Nucleus**, **National Health**, **Lol Coxhill**, **Michael Gibbs** and many more. The *Høvikodden 1971* box set is a fitting tribute to a British band that detonated boundaries between jazz and rock, by a record label that, for over 40 years, has championed music that transcends and progresses beyond genre borders, releasing innovative, cutting-edge music from around the world.



photo credit:

ALBUM CREDITS

Elton Dean : alto sax, saxello, Hohner pianet

Hugh Hopper : bass

Mike Ratledge : Hohner pianet, Lowrey Holiday Deluxe organ, Fender Rhodes

Robert Wyatt : drums, vocals

Original recordings engineered by **Meny Bloch** at the Henie-Onstad Art Center, Høvikodden, Norway, February 27-28, 1971.

Mixed and mastered by **Ian Beabout** at ShedSounds Studio.

Photos: Baerum Photoclub, **Einar Braathen**, **Guro Bjørnstad**, **Svein S. Hole** and supplied by the **Henie-Onstad fotoarkiv**.

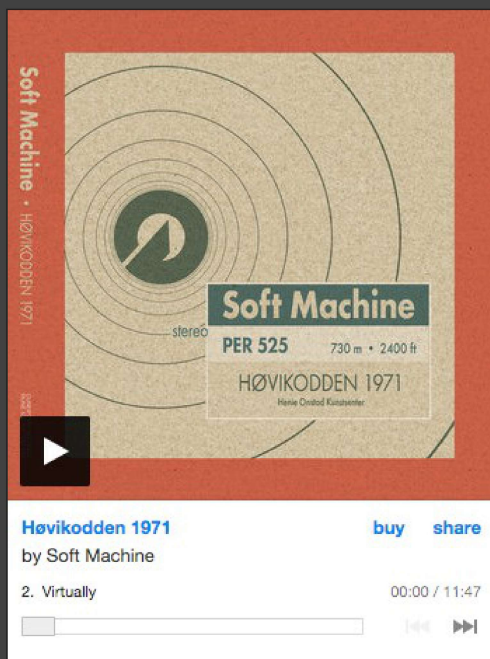
Design by **Chester Hawkins**.

Release coordination and direction by **Steven Feigenbaum** for Cuneiform and **Hans Voigt**, who coordinated the logistics and permissions needed from **Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter** for this release and materials and the accompanying photographs.

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Listen to / Pre-Order Soft Machine's *Høvikodden 1971* on Bandcamp:

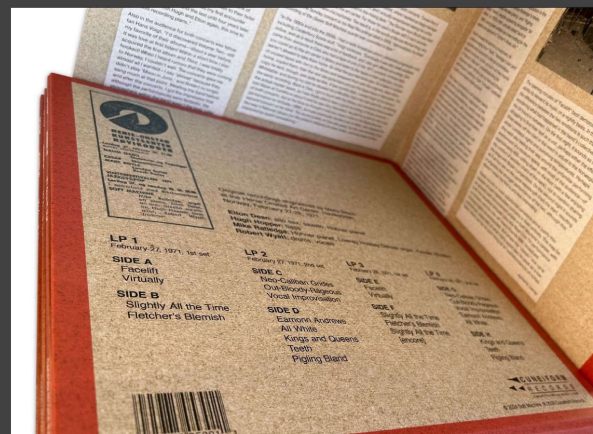
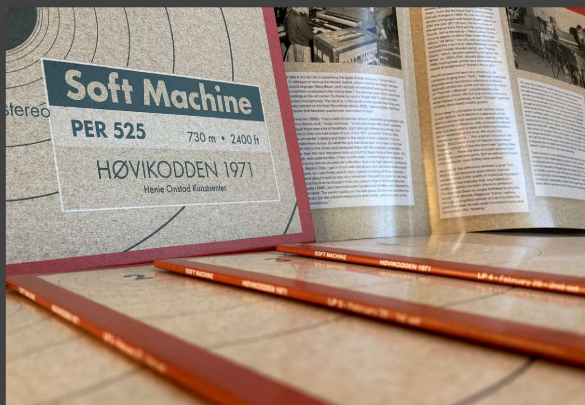
Standard Resolution / CD/ LP



Digital High Definition



SOFT MACHINE *HØVIKODDEN 1971* LP BOX SET



~ ~ ~

SOFT MACHINE *HØVIKODDEN 1971* CD BOX SET





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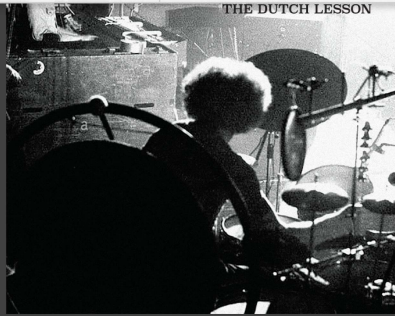
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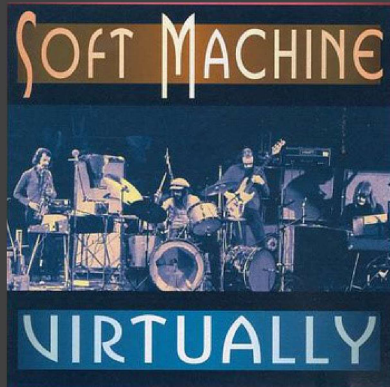
Soft Machine Releases on Cuneiform Records

[The Dutch Lesson](#)

[Facelift France and Holland](#)



Virtually



NDR Jazz Workshop



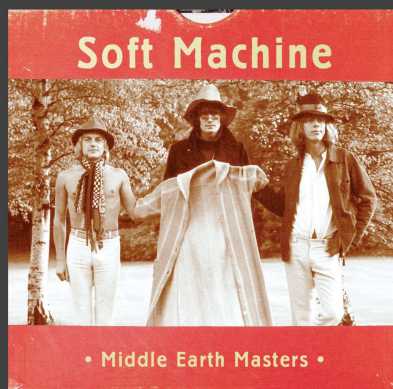
Switzerland 1974



Backwards



Middle Earth Masters



Live In Paris

