

## SONDRE LERCHE

Born and raised in Bergen, a small West Coast Norwegian city, Sondre fell under the spell of the records his older brother and two sisters played - Norwegian pop sensation A-Ha, the Beach Boys, Elvis Costello and Prefab Sprout all made an indelible mark on Lerche's musical consciousness. "I felt the need to take a step from being a passive listener and get more involved," Lerche recalls. "I decided to learn an instrument." Lerche chose guitar. "When I was 12, struggling with classical guitar lessons, my Brazilian teacher started playing these amazing tunes by Tom Jobim. Learning those harmonies and chord voicings, blending Brazilian folk and cool jazz, really opened my eyes." In fact, so much that Brazilian pop influences the music Lerche writes to this day.

"At 14 I was playing open mikes at a club where my sister worked, terrified and excited to be playing in public." Lerche's solo performances attracted producer HP Gundersen, who signed him to Virgin/EMI before he was 16.

Lerche recorded *Faces Down*, in 2000, but its release was held up to allow the singer to finish high school. The album was praised for its inventive arrangements, Lerche's smooth vocals and first rate songwriting, a collection that harked back to the classic pop sounds of The Beatles, Burt Bacharach/Hal David, 60s bossa nova and classic American saloon songs. *Faces Down* won Best New Artist at the Norwegian Grammys (Spellemannprisen) in 2002 and was listed among Rolling Stone's top 50 albums of 2002. *Two Way Monologue*, another collection of tidy, well-crafted pop followed in 2004. Lerche's vocals were more confident, swooping from a mellow tenor to playful falsetto ornamentations, with songs marked by lush melodies and expansive pop arrangements. 2006's *Duper Sessions* was more acoustic and band focused than its predecessors, but Lerche's attention to craft remained intact and the album charted in the Billboard Jazz Contemporary Top 5.

Lerche has toured extensively throughout the US and Europe the last couple of years and he is currently gearing up with the Faces Down to bring the live power of *Phantom Punch* to a venue near you. As the album ably demonstrates, Lerche will follow his muse wherever it takes him. "I'd like every album, every song, to be as much of a contrast to the next one as possible, whether it's tempo, mood, instrumentation or energy," he says.

Lerche has recently followed that muse to the world of film, creating the score for the Buena Vista comedy *Dan in Real Life*, starring Steve Carrel of *The Office* and *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* fame.

Just another step in what promises to be a long and rewarding career for both the artist and music lovers the world over.