

## Jacob Karlzon – “Wanderlust”, Warner Music

Jacob Karlzon’s new album “Wanderlust” takes us on a musical quest which is both graceful and fluid yet deeply emotional. The beauty of his piano melodies and harmonies are like psalms, singing lines which draw from a rich compositional history but are also timelessly ‘present’. “Wanderlust” breathes out hope and adventure opening up musical spaces for love and contemplation, spontaneity and structure. It is both contemporary and timeless at the same time.

The journey upon which Jacob Karlzon takes us, starts with the album title “Wanderlust”. “Wanderlust” is composed from two German words meaning ‘to meander’ and ‘desire’. It is used in English to describe the joy of travel for travelling’s sake, travel without a clear destination. The word “Wanderlust” could have been invented for Jacob, a Swedish pianist and composer who approaches music bravely but carefully, with adventurous humility on every album. He knows that each time he sets out to compose and improvise he takes risks and needs to take care to attend to his deeper feelings. Karlzon has been committed to this form of ‘undefined music’, with all of its appeal to the subconscious, soul, spirit, humanity and reliance on human empathy, since his first tenuous piano experiments in his parents’ living room.

Born in 1970, at the beginning of a decade whose musical and cultural achievements still reverberate around us today, he heard sounds and was touched by many kinds of contemporary music which resonated with his own musical DNA. Storytelling, song-writing, the craft of the jazz composer used to retell a musical tale anew but beyond traditional jazz narratives, is typically Jacob Karlzon. If you ask him to define himself as an artist, he will reply: “*Alternative Musician*”. This is a deliberately imprecise formulation, because nothing limits a free spirit like him more, than to give in to a journalist’s compulsion to define the genre of his art. Karlzon plays jazz, thinks rock, speaks like a philosopher through the keys of his Steinway - musically sophisticated and highly inviting.

Anyone who listens to the first notes of the opening movement of “Wanderlust” will find new meaning in the earlier language of his album “Open Waters”. A contemplative piano motif rises above an electronic beat, initially reserved but increasingly gaining intensity over the course of the composition. The pulses create melodic and rhythmic expectations before an improvised piano part breaks out of the structure and leads to a prog-rock-like crescendo. Karlzon calls the opening track to his new album “Art Of Resistance”. It is about music as resistance, music in opposition to the ubiquitous suppression of individual views and needs. It’s ultimately about love, love as the ultimate expression against oppression, love as resistance.

*“Before the composition reached its final form, I thought a lot about how democracy is being dismantled in some European countries”,* says Karlzon, describing the process of creating the track, which concludes the album.

*“There have been a lot of recent examples of authoritarian oppression against which we all have to make a stand. One form of oppression usually follows another which ultimately limits us all.”*

Each musical line up to the middle of the track stands for the struggle for personal freedom in the face of doctrinal bondage. When Rasmus Kihlberg intervenes on acoustic drums and bassist Morten Ramsbøl joins him, their individual voices rise freely as a counterweight to the 'repressive compositional structure'. However, Karlzon does not want "Wanderlust" to be heard as some kind of political statement. The contemplative but resolute content of the 12 tracks can be perceived however, as a wake-up call for humanities capacity for sensual experience. In doing this "Wanderlust" defies and resists any simple attempt at definition.

"Wanderlust", which Started its journey in 2020) signals a (self-)reconciliation in Karlzon's inward-directed journeys. From his musical microcosm, it constantly meanders between triumphs of fine motoric skill and profoundly meaningful musical statements. Its his view of the macrocosm reflected back in the microcosm and vice versa.

*"We humans are interesting beings"* he reflects.

*"If we are all too open, we can lack structure. If we feel too restricted by structures, our minds begin to look for ways to open up and escape. Nelson Mandela is a good example of the brain's ability to rewire during decades of captivity. He was a radical when he was locked up, and came out of prison as a symbol for reconciliation. "*

With the fragility of our existence in sight, the Norwegian trumpeter Mathias Eick, in conjunction with Karlzon's trio, plays out humanities mysteries in "Lullaby For Runaways". Strings add a multidimensionality to the elegiac "Promises Kept" with Dominic Miller adding a voice of hope on nylon strings. More edgily arranged than his last album "Open Waters", Karlzon sometimes puts beauty into context by offering the exact opposite creating an energy and humour reflected in the self-parading "Your Latest Comeback". Thanks to Jacob Karlzon's immense narrative skills, "Wanderlust" plays out a story about humanity, life, freedom and the constructive power of the human mind, driven by a pulsating magic that reverberates with us from the first to the last note.