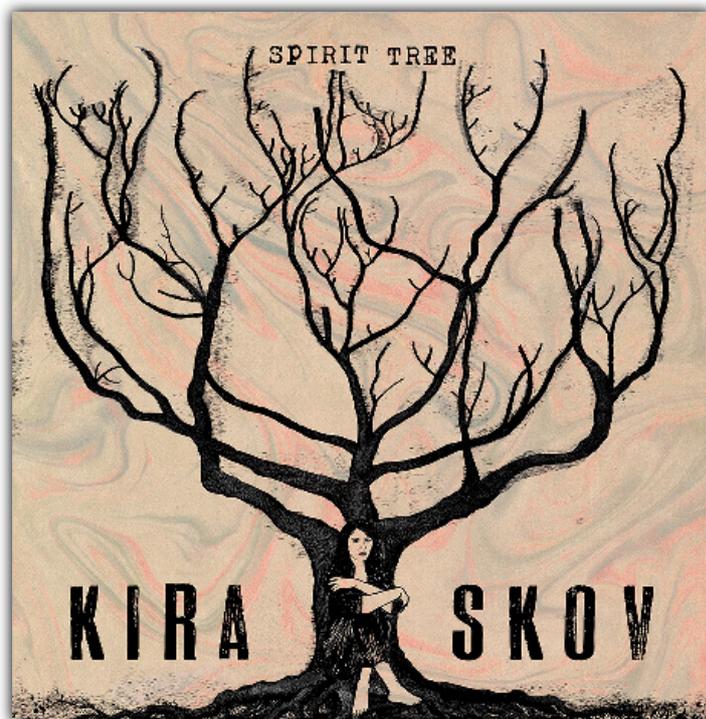


Kira Skov

SPIRIT TREE

An album of duets released
on May the 14th, 2021

Stunt Records



Stunt Records CD og LP

STUCD 21021

STUCD 21022



Last year, when the pandemic struck and sent the whole world into a lockdown as well as entire populations into isolation – Kira Skov felt compelled to reach out with her music. And so, the Danish singer and songwriter did just that, making contact with vocalists and instrumentalists she had worked with in the past, as well as others she had admired from afar. A new project was born and despite the sometimes-vast geographical distances between the musicians, they set out together to search for and forge meaning in an otherwise meaningless time.

The ambitious venture was a success, with everyone approached coming aboard. The powerful resulting album of duets is now ready for release and features wonderfully personal contributions from familiar and fresh musical personalities including Jenny Wilson, Mark Lanegan, Bonnie “Prince” Billy, John Parish, Bill Callahan, and Lionel Lininana, as well as Mette Lindberg, Marie Fisker, Stine Grøn, and Steen Jørgensen.

“The album came into being through, and as, a musical exchange – in the sense that I’ve sent the songs around to people as audio files, with the different guests adding vocals as we went. The ground-tapes were all recorded live in Copenhagen. I’m very happy that everyone wanted to join,” Kira shares.

The Danish singer – who has built up a large and loyal audience in her home country throughout a musically diverse 20-year career – values collaboration in her music.

She’s already worked with Bonnie “Prince” Billy, Tricky, Lenny Kaye, and Trentemøller, among others, but until now had never cultivated such a musically communal album as this new collection of duets, entitled SPIRIT TREE.

“There’s a common theme on the record that manifests itself both sonically and thematically. In a way, it’s a family tree, in that I work with some people who have left their mark on me and my music over the years. The pandemic made me think about what is most important to us... what is it that connects us when we are all forced to be alone. These songs are written with that in mind,” she says.

For this recording, Kira is once again joined by the band which has maintained a steady presence on her albums and tours over the last few years: Silas Tinglef on drums and guitar, Anders “AC” Christensen on bass and piano, Oliver Hoiness on guitar and keys, Maria Jagd on violin, and the bandleader and songwriter herself on vocals and guitar. The songs were recorded at STC Studio by Mads Møldgård, with Kira Skov and Silas Tinglef co-producing.

The singles “We Won’t Go Quietly” with Bonnie “Prince” Billy and Dusty Kate (an homage to Dusty Springfield and Kate Bush) with Mette Lindberg have already been released to hungry ears and critical acclaim in the lead-up to SPIRIT TREE, which will be released in its entirety on May 14th on Sundance / Stunt Records.



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Kira Skov takes us through the songs on Spirit Tree

We Won't Go Quietly – featuring Bonnie 'Prince' Billy

I wrote this song during the first part of the lockdown, in solidarity with the movement that followed the public murder of George Floyd. It's both a protest song and a reflection on the human trauma loop, in which history repeats itself over and over again. We deliberately chose to preserve the raw sound from the original demo recording. I tried to create a mood of 'a window, open to the world...' with people shouting and cars driving by. The song was recorded with a single microphone in the small country house where I ended up writing a lot of the material for this album. There's a roots-music-mentality in the production, and we decided to work with it, building on the original demo recording. We reconstructed the B-part of the song, and sent it to Bonnie "Prince" Billy (Will Oldham) who added vocals from his home in Kentucky. Will's voice has a very special energy – there's something ethereal about his singing, and I knew he was a perfect choice to convey the unifying message in the lyrics. He also appeared on THE ECHO OF YOU, where we sang the title track and Lilac Sky together.

In The End – featuring Steen Jørgensen

I've worked with Steen several times and I think he's one of the most significant voices we have in Denmark. He started out in the iconic punk group "The Sods," but over the years he has grown to become quite the crooner, a tradition that harkens back to later-period Leonard Cohen. They both share a bit of the same deep, powerful masculinity in their voices. The song illustrates the dance between the man and woman and the energy it triggers with a slight wink.

Dusty Kate – featuring Mette Lindberg

A tribute to two iconic singers, Dusty Springfield and Kate Bush, in a duet with Mette Lindberg (The Asteroids Galaxy Tour). As musical figures, Dusty and Kate have both had an impact on me as a songwriter and singer, as well as leaving their own unique and significant marks on music history. The idea for the song came one evening at my house where we had a little party with friends sitting around and singing. Mette's vocals reminded me of Kate Bush and she sat there, so beautiful, like a shining light, inspiring me in the moment and through the next day, when I finished writing the song. I think it's a perfect fit.

Pick Me Up – featuring Stine Grøn

Stina Grøn, who is one half of the highly celebrated duo, Irah, has an almost supernatural voice. It's something very special that one could almost call "world singing" – unspe-

cified and outside of linguistic conventions. It's impossible to say exactly where it belongs or comes from – there's something eastern about it, with a touch of Bulgaria or the Balkans. We sing the whole song together in an arrangement that lays her voice around mine like a blurred shadow. It's more sounds than words, but has a beautiful effect. It's a great gift to have Stine along on this song.

Idea Of Love – featuring Mark Lanegan

I've been a big fan of Mark Lanegan's voice for a long time, although I had never had any direct contact with him before just recently. When we hooked up, he was very positive – he loved the project, and wanted to be a part of it. Instead of recording a new track, we decided on Idea of Love, which Mark really liked. This song is originally found on WHEN WE WERE GENTLE from 2013 and is the only song on the record that wasn't composed for this release. I think this interpretation exudes a bit of late Johnny Cash from his American Recordings, and the song fits well with Mark's voice.

Horses – featuring Jenny Wilson and John Parish

I didn't know Jenny beforehand but have always been a fan of her as a performer and artist. The song has a lightness and optimistic tone to it, alternating between major and minor sections where John Parish's voice appears in a smoldering low-end plea. The outreach piece is inspired by Martin Luther King's speech with the iconic line: "I've Been to the Mountaintop." I think it has an uplifting, rebellious mood. The chorus of voices and the groove is both gloomy and almost danceable at the same time.

Tidal Heart – featuring Marie Fisker

Marie and I go way back. We have been friends since my early teens and have always shared something special. In 2014, we released a duo album entitled THE CABIN PROJECT and have developed an interplay in which our voices merge and become one as they move around each other. It's liberating to sing together. Tidal Heart is another song about wanting to indulge in love, but not quite being able to. We all have a that tidal mechanism embedded within us. I think it's a beautiful song that plays itself.

Some Kind of Lovers – featuring Bonnie "Prince" Billy

A love song. A snapshot of the fleeting moment when love is there and one can see what could be, but also realizes that it will never happen. It encapsulates the fleeting encounter which is stated in the title. Not an enduring affair, but a moment with its function.



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Love Is A Force – featuring Stine Green and Bill Callahan

Thematically in line with the two previous tracks. A reflection on love as a force. It can be both destructive and has the power to lift the darkness. We try to illustrate this in the music, in a meeting between two polar opposites. One can almost hear the disintegration of relationships and conventions in music. It moves from something smoldering and ominous to something bright and spherical. Stine's light voice and Bill's iconic dark timbre function as positive commentary, eventually arriving – with a sense of wonder – at what we thought we would have learned, but which in reality isn't permanently understood, even as we grow older.

Deep Poetry – featuring Lionel Liminana

I wrote the music for the first part of this song with Silas Tinglef. We sent the material to Lionel, who then wrote his part by responding in his native French tongue. The goal was that he should come up with a commentary that would be added to the song. Lionel says he can't sing, so he does more of a close-speaking role. I really like his contribution!

Burn Down The House – featuring Marie Fisker

A song about sunken love that also becomes a showdown with time – burn it all down and move on. Melodically, it is built up like a classic evergreen. Billie Holiday hovers into Tom Waits singing Waltzing Matilda. It's somewhat jazzy and rocking, swampy. Lady Day has left her mark.

Ode To The Poets – featuring Mette Lindberg

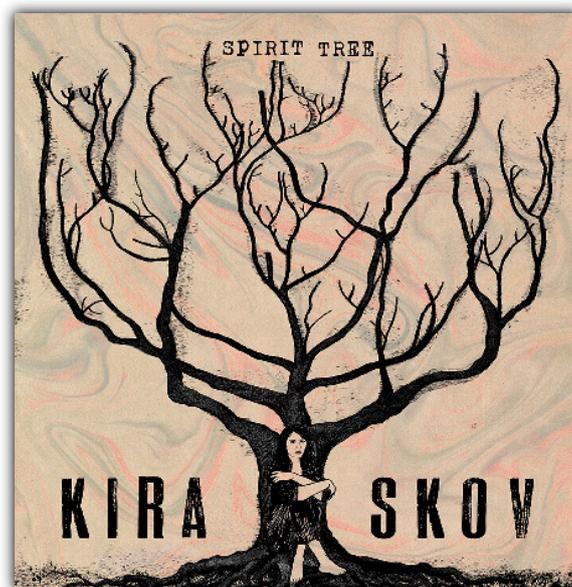
The song emerged as an imagined dialogue between Jack Kerouac and Dylan Thomas. The two poets speak from different universes and both have something to say from their respective times and places. It's a tribute to various poets and writers who have been important to me – summing up the energy of this album as a form of family tree, grown out of various sources of inspiration. I think it makes sense that it's Mette who sings a song about "The Grand Old Men" because she has that lightness in her and thematically, we build from our homage to iconic woman, here giving it up for the strong male literary voices.

Marie – featuring John Parish

A declaration of love to my sweetest friend, Marie Fisker. Slightly naïve and unpretentious in its form. A simple song, perfect for John's voice, so I ended up just singing on the choruses and am very happy with the way it turned out.

Theme for Lenny – featuring Lenny Kaye

It's not a song, but rather a theme I wrote and which now functions as the conclusion to the record. Lenny Kaye has been a dear friend for many years and is an incredibly wise and knowledgeable guy. He's music historian who has written several books about the American music culture and who, in addition to being a regular guitarist for Patti Smith throughout her career, has also written for Rolling Stone Magazine for more than 30 years. Here, he performs a form of Spoken Word with free association over the theme of "duets." It's a nice ending that sort of sums up the whole project to me!



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Kira Skov – Biography

Kira Skov (born in Copenhagen 1976) moved to London to pursue her musical dreams at the age of 17. It was there she met Eve, a guitarist twice her age at the time, with whom she travelled to the US and formed Butterfly Species – a band that included Danish drummer Laust Sonne. After four years, Kira left the band and returned to London, where she recorded with guitar legend Jeff Beck and began writing her own songs.

Back in Denmark, she formed Kira and the Kindred Spirits and released her debut album HAPPINESS SAVES LIVES in 2002. The singer and band were instant rock revelations and began five years of extensive touring, with two more hit albums on the horizon: 2005's THIS IS NOT AN EXIT and KIRA AND THE KINDRED SPIRITS from 2006. The band members went their separate ways after the third album together, and Kira set out on a solo career which would lead her through an impressive array of musical constellations with celebrated variation in genres, timbres, and collaborators.

In 2005, she released the album FAITH in collaboration with Swedish producer Tore Johansson (Franz Ferdinand, Cardigans) under the name The Gospel, which led to her being discovered by trip-hop legend Tricky in 2007 and then signing with BROWNPUNK (his record label with Chris Blackwell). Kira was the lead vocalist in Tricky's band on their 2008 world tour.

With the band The Ghost Riders, she released THE RAIL TRIAN, THE MEADOW, THE FREEWAY AND THE SHADOWS in 2008, as well as LOOK UP AHEAD and a mini-album entitled RUN WHERE NO ONE GOES, both from 2010. The following year she changed directions and interpreted jazz standards on the Billie Holiday tribute album, MEMORIES OF DAYS GONE BY.

Kira's successful solo career continued to grow, building musical and critical momentum on two full-length, John

Parish-productions: WHEN WE WERE GENTLE from 2013 and MAY YOUR MIND EXPLODE A BLOSSOM TREE in 2015.

Between the two recordings, she released EPIPHANIES OF GRANDEUR, a cinematic and atmospheric album with guitarist Peter Peter (from Sort Sol) under the Ingmar Bergman-inspired name Persona.

In 2014, another collaboration – this time with friend Marie Fisker – gave life to a celebrated project and self-titled album called The Cabin Project when they travelled into the deep woods of Canada to record with producer Mark Howard.

Then, in an old Russian Orthodox Church in Estonia, Kira recorded the highly acclaimed album IN THE BEGINNING (2017) together with Estonian-born jazz saxophonist and composer Maria Faust. The dark and sacred-themed recording featured soaring songs and arrangements with music and lyrics inspired by the local folklore – a culture (and an album) that continues to resonate outside of time and space.

That same year, Kira Skov lost her husband and musical partner, bassist Nicolai Munch-Hansen. The grief sparked by his death inspired her next album – an intimate declaration of love and personal artistic milestone, entitled THE ECHO OF YOU (2018).

For her next recording, Kira once again broke new ground by singing in her native Danish language for the first time. I NAT BLIR VI GAMLE, her 14th release, continued honest, musical mourning in emphatic and accessible emotional expression.

This spring, in 2021, Kira Skov turns the page into her next great musical chapter with the release of SPIRIT TREE – an album of duets, born of and in the isolation of a pandemic, offering songs and sounds to aid us all in remembering and celebrating the most important things in life.

*Kira Skov: vocal - Silas Tinglef: Drums and guitar - AC, Anders Christensen: Bass -
Oliver Hoiness: Guitar keys - Maria Jagd: violin - Nicolai Torp: piano -
Tobias Wiklund: trumpet - Ned Ferm: saxophone - Mads Hyhne: trombone*

Vocal featurings:

*Bonnie "Prince" Billy - Stine Grøn - Steen Jørgensen - Bill Callahan - Mette Lindberg - Mark Lanegan
John Parish - Jenny Wilson - Marie Fisker - Lionel Liminana - Lenny Kaye*

WE WON'T GO QUIETLY - IN THE END - DUSTY KATE - PICK ME UP - IDEA OF LOVE - HORSES -
TIDAL HEART - SOME KIND OF LOVERS - LOVE IS A FORCE - DEEP POETRY - BURN DOWN THE HOUSE -
ODE TO THE POETS - MARIE - LENNY'S THEME

STUCD 21022 - STULP 21021 - Kira Skov - Spirit Tree - Stunt Records/Sundance Music ApS.



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