

Teitur & Aarhus Jazz Orchestra

SONGS FROM A SOCIAL DISTANCE

Released on CD, LP and digital

Arlo&Betty Recordings/Stunt Records

On a sunny, early summer's day in 2020 – the first summer season of the pandemic – author Roy Freirich drove from his home in Malibu, California, to his local post office to mail a book to his Faroese musician friend Teitur. But when he arrived and a postal worker informed him of the astronomical cost of shipping the book halfway around the world, he decided against it and drove home again – book-in-hand.

A different, more budget-friendly form of correspondence would continue between the two creative minds, involving the author sharing his life experiences during the pandemic. Passages from the emails were mined and refined by Teitur, who crafted them into lyrics and used them as inspiration for the music he wrote for the Aarhus Jazz Orchestra on their new collaborative album, SONGS FROM A SOCIAL DISTANCE. The writing process began in the tumultuous year of 2020, reflecting the then-current state of things – the first summer of the corona pandemic raging along with all of its frustrations, fears, insecurities, rules, and insistence to keep a social distance. And of course, this was accompanied by Donald Trump's campaign for re-election and an extended period marked by political uprisings and protests on behalf of racial justice and equality.

The Aarhus Jazz Orchestra has played its way into a role as one of Denmark's foremost professional big bands, whose mission is to push the boundaries of the big band genre, expanding and exploring its potential.

That ever-expanding mission is why Teitur got the call for the project. He's a singer, songwriter, musician (best known for his work on piano and guitar), composer, and arranger who moves freely between



Cd



Lp

various musical styles and genres with an unparalleled depth of understanding and tasteful grace. Over two decades of critically acclaimed artistic activities, he's captivated critics and melted the hearts of audiences around the world, while working with his own groups, as well as on TV and film projects, and within the framework of classical music. He even took a detour to appear on the TV-2 celebrity reality series 'Toppen af Poppen' (The Top of the Pops).

Teitur shares a bit about his perspective, inspirations, and what drives him into new situations and projects:

I'm a big fan of institutions that break down conventional expectations of what music should sound like. I'm provoked by opinions about what genres are and what I can and can't do as a singer. To me, it's a gift that you can mix things up without prejudice and achieve wonderful results that way. It's not about everything being equal, it's about immersing yourself in the music.

During the pandemic, I had a desire to write a 'corona' piece, and Roy's lyrics gave me an entry point to that. At the same time, the premise was clear to me – the music should not have the classic, typical big band sound. It had to be challenged.

On SONGS FROM A SOCIAL DISTANCE, the music for voice and big band revolves around the frustrations and bumps in the road that arose in what should have been just another trip to the post office.



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As one of the texts states:

*I touched my face
my face
If I had virus on my face, it's on my hands now*

*or the other way around
my hands, my face
my mask is fogging up my glasses*

Another selection offers a glimmer of post-pandemic hope:

There will be places to go again

*People to hug
Parties to have
Laughter to share*

Glasses to lift

Music to hear

SONGS FROM A SOCIAL DISTANCE was recorded in the Aarhus Cathedral – a decision made deliberately in order to include the spatial sound of the location as a participant in the production. The aim is not to lift the listener up into the highest pitch. It's not up to Teitur.

I like to write songs that are about the ordinary. I don't go for extreme emotions. I like the everyday things in life and the fact that you can play and find that in music.

Teitur Lassen (b. 1977), took the world by storm with his debut album POETRY & AEROPLANES released in 2003 by American Universal Music.

It marked the beginning of a career that has been musically diverse and internationally celebrated. Guardian music critic Jude Rogers once called Teitur's music "never less than extraordinary" in a 5-star review in the top-shelf UK publication.

In between his own albums and projects, Teitur has written songs for Corinne Bailey Rae of England, composed film music for Hollywood productions, and collaborated with composers and arrangers including Nico Muhly and Van Dyke Parks, among many others. He's composed music for string quartets and baroque ensembles and opened the Orange (main) Stage at the Roskilde Festival in Denmark.

The DR (Denmark's Radio) Symphony Orchestra and Girls' Choir have approached him for collaborations, and as a singer, he was given a role in composer John Frandsen's 'Requiem.' In 2021, in the thick of the corona epidemic, he was named a Knight of the Order of the Dannebrog.

Anders Ørbæk is the manager of the Aarhus Jazz Orchestra and shares some insight into the background of the project:

We are always interested in exploring what a big band can sound like. It's part of our agenda, and we felt that Teitur, with his musical vision, could help to lift it. He's not only good at writing songs, but he's also good at thinking in musical wholes. He has a super good ear and knows exactly what he wants with the group and how it should sound.

When we work with singers as soloists, it's often the case that they come and sing a bit as they usually do, and the band just plays along. That's not the case here at all. The music is very cohesive and the vocals are part of the overall musical expression. It's incorporated into compositions that have been written for the big band from the very beginning.

Teitur (voc), Mads Bærentzen (p), Mark Solborg (g), Frederik Sakham (b), John Riddell (d). Katharina Brien, Johan Toftegaard Knudsen, Michael Bladt, Cesar Joaniquet, Michael Olsen (Woodwinds), Lars Vissing, Jan Lynggaard Sørensen, Lars Søberg Andersen, Jakob Sørensen (trumpets), Stefan Friis Ringive, Tobias Stavngaard, Niels Jakob Nørgaard, Henrik Resen (trombones). Conducted by Søren Møller

GMAIL NEEDS MY PASSWORD AGAIN / FORGOT MY SUNGLASSES / TURN SIGNAL / I TOUCHED MY FACE / POST OFFICE / FORGOT MY SUNGLASSES II / FILLING OUT A FORM / EVERYTHING IS SOMEWHERE ELSE / THERE WILL BE PLACES / FORGOT MY SUNGLASSES III

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