



Olga Konkova · Jens Thoresen *OLD SONGS*

Dear Listener.

For the 2nd time around I'm thrilled and honored to be asked to write liner notes about this duo extraordinaire. Their first album, "December Songs" released in 2016, is a true masterpiece in every way, but impressively, they have already managed to produce another one. In fact the recording you are about to listen to is even further up the scale of musicality, creativity, beauty and art.

The recipe of their collaboration is the same as on the first release: breathe new life into old and famous tunes. Last time they picked Christmas carols, on this one they put jazz standards under surgery, meaning reharmonizing the chords, changing melodies, using different feel, tempi and grooves than the tunes normally are played in. Both Olga and Jens are masters in creating those "new compositions".

I can't express in words how much I love and appreciate the work of these two amazing musicians. The richness in sound, harmony, improvisation and interplay gives a wonderful synergy effect and makes the 2 instruments merge into something much larger than the sum of its parts.

The album opens with Thoresen alone and immediately grabs your attention with a full bodied jazz guitar tone of excellence. Throughout the album his lyric melodic lines are elegantly executed and

his chord voicings sounds fresh, hip and complex. Him being a real rhythmic authority gives a deep grounded, forward motion to the music and his trebly high pitched notes here and there give sparkle of light. In the tune "Blue In Green", which is by the way one of my all time favourite standards, Jens performs the whole track by himself, showing the vast broadness of his musicianship, playing on many different facets in an outstanding way. Konkova also has her solo performance tune, "Sol", and it's the closing of the album. Her interpretation of "Here Comes the Sun", by George Harrison and "The Beatles", is no less that ingeniously done. The virtuosity, the independence between left and right hand, the groove, flow and power is sensational. It's a roof lifter moment.

In comparison with the expressive "Sol" and the rest of the tracks, Olga plays a different role in the duo: her comping is more relaxed, her melodies are slower and haunting, always reacting to every single little move the music takes. Her presence in the music and the improvisational capacity she has is monumental.

I sincerely hope Olga and Jens will keep on making duo recordings in the years to come.

Thank you for the wonderful music the two of you.

Yours Sincerely, Per Mathisen



Olga Konkova (born 08.25.1969 in Moscow and moved to Oslo in 1994) with her fifth album on **Losen Records** and the second in duo with the guitarist Jens Thoresen.

On Losen Records: **LOS 102-2 «My Voice»**, 2010 (with Wenche Losnegård, Paolo Vinaccia, Per Hillestad, Knut Hem) **LOS 106-2 «Return Journey»**, 2011 (solo piano) **LOS 134-2 «The Goldilocks Zone»**, 2015 (trio with Gary Husband, Per Mathisen). **LOS 157-2 «December Songs»** 2016. (Duo with Jens Thoresen)

Her discography includes top quality albums on different labels and she has performed at major jazzfestivals and clubs with musicians such as Gary Husband, Bill Bruford, Marilyn Mazur, Adam Nussbaum, Knut Riisnæs and many others, and toured around the world several times in different settings. Besides being a regular member of Ensemble Denada and several other band formations she is steadily playing with her own trio and a new quartet (w / Tore Brunborg). We will surely hear more from her duo, trio and quartet, both live and on record in the future.

Jens Thoresen (04.28.1969) is a busy guitarist, composer and arranger. Jens, like Olga is a regular member of the big band Ensemble Denada. He is a freelancer who has composed a lot for TV, radio, theater and film. Whether it is pop, rock or jazz, Jens Thoresen is the guitarist many is calling up to have in the team. He has toured around the world with different bands and musicians. He has also collaborated with Nick Kershaw, Chesney Hawkes and Michael Jay.

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