

- 1 **The Amorphous Balloon** 4:31
- 2 **Elegy of Skies** 4:36
- 3 **Rein** 5:36
- 4 **Fire** 3:21
- 5 **The Wife Waltzes Too** 4:33
- 6 **Islands and Mountains** 4:46
- 7 **Strive** 5:25
- 8 **Mercy** 4:16
- 9 **Elegy of Skies 2** (in memoriam) 2:40

Total Time 39:44

All compositions by Sverre Gjørvad, except track 8 by Paddy McAloon  
 Recorded July 1 – 3, 2020 by Kristian Svalestad Olstad at Kysten studio, Tromsø, Norway  
 Tenor saxophone recorded August 11, 2020 by Magnus Frykberg at Break My Heart Studio, Stockholm, Sweden  
 Mixed August 2020 by Kristian Svalestad Olstad at Room 225, Tromsø  
 Mastered September 7, 2020 by Morten Lund at Lund's Lyd, Oslo, Norway  
 Produced by Sverre Gjørvad  
 Executive producer Odd Gjelsnes  
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SVERRE GJØRVAD

Elegy of Skies

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SVERRE GJØRVAD

# Elegy of Skies



"It is all there, but it is not.  
 Amorphic, or specific, some of it imaginable.  
 Contours, structures and textures... shapes and substances.  
 Drama  
 It is about telling stories."



Photo: Jonas Lehniger, Jessen

Sverre Gjørvad is a storyteller, and has been at least since he played in the band Storytellers, established in Trondheim in 1992. What it means to be a storytelling drummer and composer may be an open question, but on this album the stories are told using melodies and atmospheres. Thus begins an answer to the question of how to tell stories as a composer: you have musicians who translate your compositions into stories. The musicians on this album are the same ones that played on Voi River from 2019: Herborg Rundberg on piano and pump organ, Kristian Svalestad Olstad on guitar,

and Dag Okstad on bass, and in their interaction you can hear that they know each others.  
 The melodic and the atmospheric are two extremes on a continuum, but these compositions on the album contain both ends. "An Amorphous Balloon" with its long-held chords and bowed bass is on the atmospheric side, where the drums establish space as much as time. "Elegy of Skies" is different, and opens with a solo melody in bass. A piano chord almost stops time, but the bass reappears and the instruments

enters into a form of questions and answers. The melody is characteristic for one of Gjørvad's compositional strategies, what I am tempted to call a reflexive naivety.  
 "Rein" is partly inspired by David Monrad Johansens "Rensdyr" (Reindeer), and here come to the fore: a Nordic or Northern dimension of Gjørvad's stories surrounded by organ, with discreet drumming, and bass fundament, the melody becomes the carrying dimension of the cover. This may not be surprising for a pop song, so it at the same time makes perfect sense together with the melodic dimensions of the original compositions.  
 The playful opening theme of "Fire" develops into a musical dialogue. The different instruments move in and out of focus, and the composition feels like a conversation between them, but the kind of conversation that they some times complete each other's sentences. A different kind of conversation seems to be at stake on "The Wife Waltzes Too." The drums lay a whispered and whispering foundation for melodic interactions as if the instruments are dancing. The song moves seamlessly from the composed to the improvised parts, as if there is no clear distinction between them. The solos make the song sound like four voices telling the same story from different perspectives.

As if to emphasize that this is an album by a drummer that is also a composer, the last track, "Elegy of Skies 2 (in memoriam)" opens with atmospheric drums and percussion, together with percussive piano figures. But after listening to the whole album, it is striking how melodic Gjørvad's drumming feels. Thus, the meeting between the album and the atmospheric throughout the album teaches us to listen differently, to listen for melodies where they may not be obviously present.  
*Erik Steinskog, September 2020*