

## THE PIANO: EYE OF THE STORM

One day in early 2001 multi-instrumentalist and composer Morten Kærnså was tidying out and came upon an old poster created by Peter Bundgaard for one of Kærnså's minor projects in the '80s. In that period Kærnså played with the extremely popular pop-rock band Sneakers, but he also wanted to have a small, uncomplicated and mobile band. Consequently he started a jazz-oriented trio with his brother Rasmus on bass and Klaus Menzer on drums under the name Morten Kærnså's Transmissions Trio. As fate would have it, the trio developed into the popular band Moonjam, whose records were also highly successful - not least the series "Songs for Saxophone".

"When I saw that poster I felt an urge to return to the starting point, which meant composing for a trio, with myself as main soloist", Morten Kærnså explains. "Also because we had gone as far as we could with the saxophone in Moonjam. So we recreated the Transmission Trio in 2001 and began gate-crashing around town during Copenhagen Jazz Festival that year. For instance we played a really fine and successful gig outside a popular café at a busy street corner with lots of traffic all around. A sort of musical guerrilla attack. The audience welcomed us with open arms, and we had a great time. So we decided to record the repertoire we had at the time, and we did so in about a week at a place north of Copenhagen. The result was good enough for us to use it in order to get jobs at small venues - the sort that are best suited for this kind of music."

"In the spring of the same year I had bought a small house in Sweden, miles from anywhere, and the house became home base for what turned into The Piano. We could develop the music without any interference, and we were never in any hurry. In the beginning it was about returning to the time before the Beatles and the Stones, to the serious light music of the late '50s and early 60's - like Oscar Peterson, Erroll Garner and the whole bossa nova movement. Music from our childhood, where mum had her hair in rollers when we came running home from the playground for a snack. And most of what we heard on the radio was the so-called 'music for 40-year-old youngsters'. Jazz and kitsch all at once."

"Then suddenly we were faced with a positive dilemma. When we were well into the process, theatre director Peter Langdal asked us to participate in a musical at the Edison Scenen with rappers Clemens and Al Agami, and not least Nellie Ettison, who sang the leading part. She is a real pop singer and has worked with Filur and many others, but she also became involved in The Piano, for she doesn't just look great, she's also a fantastic singer. She ended up singing on five tunes that are more modern and pop-oriented than the instrumental ones. And to make it all the more confusing, Al Agami not only helped with the lyrics, he also raps on one of the tunes."

"The project was named The Piano because that's my instrument, and because I'm in the spotlight in many ways, but another main reason is that the word has a poetical dimension to it. It would really be great if you could hear all the songs and stories that are hidden in an old piano. There's a bit of karma about it, including the frame and strings and everything. And then there's something autobiographical about it, for I have lived with that piano ever since I could reach the keys. The piano has been a determining factor for my whole life, as it happens."

"Eye Of The Storm should be heard as a musical radio play or a film for the ears, so to speak. As the different genres are right next to each other, the sequence is extremely important. And we have taken great pains with the intervals in order to make it all fit well together. The Piano started out as a jazz trio, and then paid a visit to pop land, but now we have ended up somewhere in between. I'm sure some people will object to that, but I feel that it really works. All of it."

Morten Kærnså: piano/vocals/keyboards & percussion  
Klaus Menzer: drums/percussion & berimbau  
Rasmus Kærnså: bass/double bass  
Nellie Ettison: vocals

**The Piano: Eye Of The Storm**  
**SU 9060-2, Sundance Records**