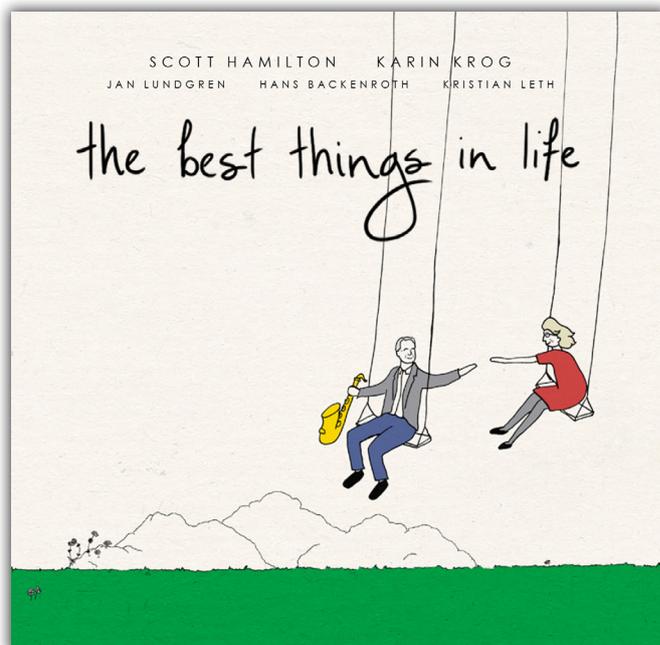


Scott Hamilton
Karin Krog

THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE

Stunt Records



Stunt Records CD
STUCD 15192



It is a common phenomenon to fall in love with a voice. Some even say that for a voice to have integrity in jazz, one must fall in love with it. In the '60s and '70s many people fell in love with Norwegian vocalist Karin Krog. She introduced young audiences to jazz. They suddenly realized that while Sweden had Monica Zetterlund, Norway had Karin Krog – and Denmark did its best to bring these stars to Copenhagen. Ever since, she has mesmerized crowds with her classic jazz vocals as well as her versatility. For Karin Krog is immune to genre boxes. She collaborates with the finest Scandinavian artists and with international stars in a wide range of styles (including Steve Kuhn, Archie Shepp, John Surman, Dexter Gordon, Kenny Drew and Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen). Her phrasing and intonation are easily recognizable, and she seems to have taken Billie Holiday's statement of "hating straight singing" to heart. Karin is naturally compelled to change a song and make it her own. Her interpretations are always deeply personal while also so obviously right.

When asked by American tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton to take part in a tribute recording for Billie Holiday's would-be 100th birthday, Karin was very pleased. But soon Karin and Scott broke the boundaries of the original project.

Scott agrees that as long as one has a story to tell, the choice of tune is less important.

Jazz isn't always about innovation. It is equally important to keep the flame kindled, and no one does this better than Scott Hamilton. Active since the '70s, he has kept closer to his initial starting point – swing – than Karin Krog. His love for and knowledge of the music from the '30s and '40s and the tenor giants of the period are genuine. Emerging at a time when jazz-rock owned the scene, he didn't follow in the wake of the modernistic masters of the day, preferring a much less trendy path. He has since matured to become the Scott Hamilton we listen to now – a musician all his own: unpretentious, with great musicality and integrity, devoid of enlarged ego, sensitive, and with a genuine joy in playing.

Karin's voice is as full of vitality as ever, and her approach to the tunes presented here is refreshing and new. And just like Scott's playing – straight from the heart. They are a fine match and obviously agree that the music is at the center. It is a pleasure to hear these mature artists in great form in close interplay with two Swedes, pianist Jan Lundgren and bassist Hans Backenroth, and Danish drummer Kristian Leth.



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On top of a repertoire of standards, this album also features a rare jazz specialty, “vocalese” – the use of recorded jazz solos as basis for a new set of lyrics. Karin tells about Don’t Get Scared, that back in the ‘50s, she started learning a vocalese version based on solos by Stan Getz and Lars Gullin with lyrics by Jon Hendricks. After a gig in Oslo, tenor saxophonist Lucky Thompson hung out at Karin’s home with a few friends. She played King Pleasure’s version and explained that she had a problem understanding some of the words. Lucky sat patiently at the piano writing down the whole story. At the time, she didn’t know that he himself performed on the recording! She also told Scott that she knew a version with lyrics to a Lester Young solo from a recording of Sometimes I’m Happy. He knew the version and suggested a vocalese based on Slam Stewart’s

bass solo. Karin has the old 78, and with help from British sax player John Surman, they took it apart and put words to it. A dedicated Slam Stewart fan, bassist Hans Backenroth transcribed the solo and played it to the new lyrics.

In her cover notes Karin comments on each tune and also observes that Scott already seems to have recorded everything from the Great American Songbook. However one tune stood out: The Best Things In Life Are Free. “I had always yearned to record it – what better opportunity than now?”

THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE... A song and an album reminding us what is most important in life and what great jazz can do.

Karin Krog (voc), Scott Hamilton (ts), Jan Lundgren (p), Hans Backenroth (b), Kristian Leth (d).

*The Best Things In Life Are Free / I Must Have That Man / Will You Still Be Mine? / How Am I To Know? /
Ain't Nobody's Business / Don't Get Scared/We'll Be Together Again / Sometimes I'm Happy /
What A Little Moonlight Can Do / Shake It But Don't Break It.*

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