

Kathrine Winfeld Sextet

ALDEBARAN

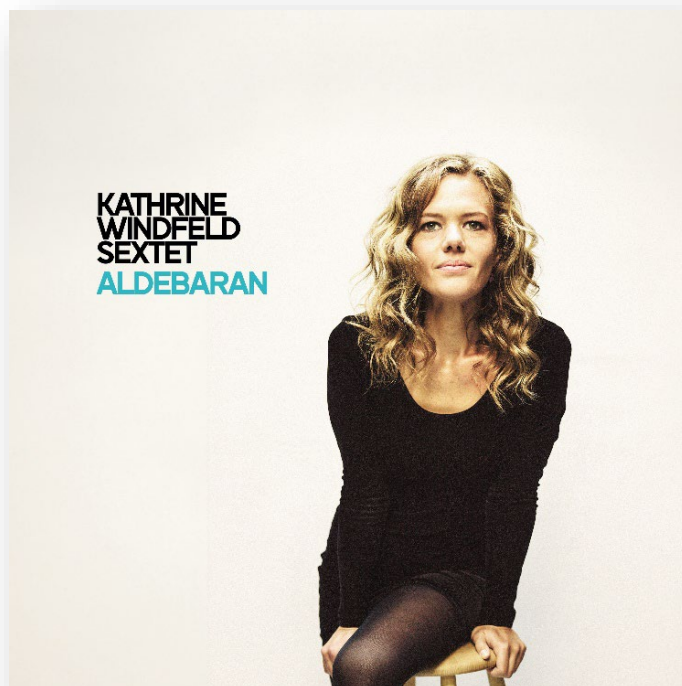
Released on LP, CD and in digital distribution

Stunt Records

Kathrine Winfeld returns for her fifth release as a leader - and the first with her dream team sextet! The lauded instrumentalist and composer pivots out of her celebrated big band setting to explore a smaller group that allows her to stretch out more as a pianist and improviser, using new song frameworks as vehicles to showcase the creative voices that have become her primary focus for the past few years. ALDEBARAN arrives on the 30th of March, 2024, on Stunt Records.

In February 2020, star Danish pianist, composer, and arranger Kathrine Winfeld walked on stage at the prestigious Quaglino's Brasserie in London to accept another award to add to her collection. Among hundreds of candidates, Winfeld would take home the 'Rising Stars Jazz Award, European Edition,' and part of the prize included a tour with performances at several major European jazz festivals. Over the past few years, she and her sextet have visited a dozen countries on a musical journey that boosted the group with a relatively new and elevated lineup. The positive reaction to the group inspired her to release the new music, and the sextet went into the studio in Copenhagen in September 2023. The result is ALDEBARAN, Kathrine's first self-titled album of original music created for a small group and an album that presents new facets of a complex artist.

Kathrine Winfeld (b.1984) graduated from the Malmö Academy of Music in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in jazz piano. Just a few years earlier, she founded the Kathrine Winfeld Big Band (KWBB), which debuted in 2015 with AIRCRAFT. LATENCY would follow in 2017, and then ORCA in 2020. Awards and recognitions began rolling in, and Winfeld was launched into international stardom, earning a much-deserved reputation as an inventive composer, arranger, and big band conductor. Over her four first releases, she proved that she mastered the large group sound in terms of historical legacy, but also managed to renew the genre. Her compositions and arrangements alternate between the powerful and the poetic, between ballads and dense grooves - and everything else she can extract from the group with her affinity for quirky time signatures and harmonies.



In 2022, she received the Ben Webster Prize, one of the most prestigious Danish musical awards. The committee behind the presentation stated: "Her music is complex, rhythmic, and energetic, with clear roots in jazz history. The artistic level is sky-high, and Kathrine Winfeld's contribution to jazz in Denmark cannot be overstated." Downbeat magazine said that the music on the album LATENCY "could pass for a top-notch American Big Band." All About Jazz has placed her "in the vanguard of new arranger-composers and bandleaders." Her name is mentioned alongside Mary Lou Williams, Toshiko Akyoshi, Carla Bley, and Maria Schneider, and the Frankfurt Radio Big Band, the Danish DR Big Band, the UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra, Brazilian orchestras, the Swedish Bohuslän Big Band and the classical Aalborg Symphony Orchestra have called upon her for collaborations.

Over four albums and multiple international tours, her work with the KWBB brought with it the much-deserved reputation she currently enjoys. Still, throughout her career, she cultivated a sound with smaller groups - as both a side person and in her own name. She won the 'Rising Star' award in 2020 for her grasp of big band music, but the sextet would go on tour and evolve into her dream team.

Polish trumpeter Tomasz Dabrowski (b.1984) has been a valued asset on the Danish jazz scene for several years. His compatriot, saxophonist Marek Konarski (b.1992), studied at the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Odense and performed with several prominent Danish musicians before relocating to his home country. Saxophonist Hannes Bennich (b.1994) is one of Sweden's bright new talents. His compatriot, bassist Johannes Vaht



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(b.1988) and Danish drummer Henrik Holst Hansen (b. 1989), have played extensively with each other and developed an intense collaboration over a decade in the Kathrine Windfeld Big Band.

"All three horn players are sublime," Windfeld says. "They play with tremendous authority and are grounded, with an open line to the spiritual sides and sounds of music and improvisation. They are individuals, and despite their beautiful differences, all have an ear for the collective, creating pure magic for me. After a decade together, the rhythm group has evolved into a strong trio. My music can be demanding, but they can handle it! They are so versatile and master everything from free passages to uptempo swing, quirky time signatures, and airy grooves."

Windfeld emphasizes that the sextet is more than just a watered-down alternative to the big band. It allows individual voices to shine through. And despite being best known for her big band work, it's important to remember that she is, first and foremost, an instrumentalist. She has carved out space to explore her piano playing with this group on the new album.

Windfeld is a sensitive and engaging storyteller, and the mood on ALDEBARAN differs from her previous releases. The stories and narratives have all been carefully laid out, even though the music, like life, is more complex. Kathrine describes herself as an emotional person who desires to be present and create with immediacy through trust in the material and her musicians. "ALDEBARAN gives me the space to express myself as a slightly more

mature woman and musician. I've become better at following the path into becoming the artist I want to be - someone who fascinates and moves but also surprises, teases, and even provokes."

In *First Speech*, the music alternates between short and long phrases as in spoken lines. The shining star ALDEBARAN is also known as the Red Eye of the Bull in the zodiac constellation of Taurus. The album's title track haunts with latent desperation, threatening to explode. It's a restless piece, while the follow-up - *Burnout* - signals the opposite. A calmness about burning out can create delicate sensitivity - and gratitude that the same sensitivity is intact despite lacking energy and drive.

Jupiter is a power track with a groovy edge, while *Sea Widow* refers to the pristine deep-sea areas whose nature has been left alone and allowed to flourish. It's a tribute to the beauty of the ocean and a melancholic description of loneliness. *Holding On To Gas Balloons* is about pursuing dreams that never become realized. *Offroad Excursions* takes the listener on a wild ride with harmonies that constantly go off the rails. Kathrine's right and left hands are sometimes in two different keys, the theme is immediately catchy but also off-kilter, and the highway's centerline is constantly crossed melodically, rhythmically, and harmonically. Windfeld visited a festival in Lviv, Ukraine, before the Russian invasion in February 2022. It was a warm experience, which she now acknowledges with a personal and subdued greeting in *Letter to Lviv*.

FIRST SPEECH / ALDEBARAN / BURNOUT / LETTER TO LVIV / OFFROAD EXCURSIONS /
HOLDING ON TO GASS BALLOONS / JUPITER / SEA WIDOW.

Kathrine Windfeld: piano. Tomasz Dabrowski: trumpet. Hannes Bennich: alto- & tenor sax.
Marek Konarski: tenor sax. Johannes Vaht: bass. Henrik Holst Hansen: drums.

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