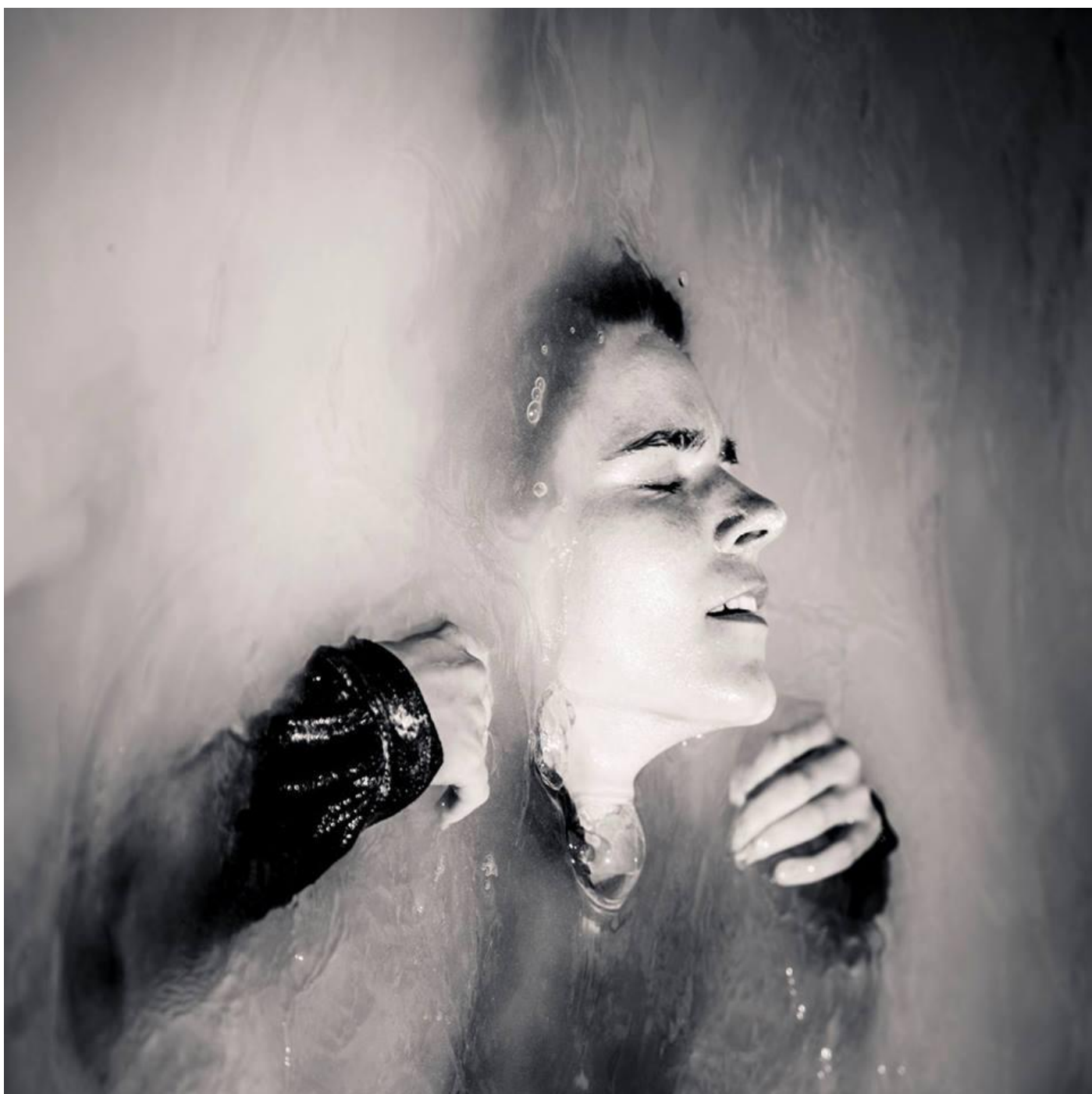


**Im Gespräch mit:
Mirja Klippel (engl./dt.)**



As in real life, music also has a "love at first sight". Or here the acoustics. These include the talented singer/songwriter Mirja Klippel, who has enchanted with sound and voice with the upcoming debut album "River of Silver". To make her debut on CD & vinyl, she called a Kickstarter campaign into life. For this she need the help of music lovers. We introduce Mirja in an interview:



Photo: KIMWENDT.COM

Hello Mirja how are you at the moment?

I'm good, thanks for asking. There's been a lot of practical things to do with the release lately, and I'm now slowly gliding from the practical mode back into songwriting mode. It feels good.

You have a little dream come true, in October your debut album "River of Silver" will be released. Are you a little excited?

I'm super excited to share this music with everyone. It's such a relief to see the circle closing, know that I did everything I could, that the ready album is capturing exactly what I wanted it to express. I'm also really looking forward to the release tours – they are like the icing of the album cake.

How did you get to music? Which points were the decisive factors for a career as a singer / songwriter?

I have always been making music, and I come from a musical family. When I was 12 I knew I was going to be either a singer or a trainer for young horses. I also wrote poems from early on, and always longed to combine the writing with music. Still, finding the way to do it, in a way that was satisfying for me, took a very long time - I only really started that about 5 years ago.

It happened as a result of some kind of burn out I guess. I was about to graduate from yet another music school, feeling extremely empty, wondering what I was doing music for and where my life was going. I had spent so many years just preparing for the day when I would feel that I was a good enough a musician to write my own songs, and that day just didn't seem to be coming. I had to stop wasting my time and focus on what I really wanted to do, to face my fears and throw my soul out there.

From Unknown to Denmark's singer / songwriter in 2016



Who gave you the support to keep writing in the beginning? Who did you play the early songs for?

As a teenager I was too shy to show my poems to anyone, but I was still very productive. It was a way for me to handle my feelings. I wrote a poem to remember a feeling or a moment, to describe it exactly, and the satisfaction that came from managing to capture something precisely was what got me hooked into it. On my new album I have one song, „Jar“, which is based on one of the poems I wrote back then.

When I started writing songs five years ago I first played them to my partner Alex. Having him join me and play together with me was the best feedback I could hope for, a kind of quiet acceptance, without any fuzz. In the beginning, though I craved to see what kind of emotions my songs would awake in people, both good and bad feedback made me anxious. I still think it's much more interesting to hear people describe what they see or feel when they hear my songs, than to hear simply whether they like something about them or not. I need to not have other people's preferences to mess my head up when I'm writing. My task is to describe what I see as clearly as I can, no matter what it is.

Can you remember the first time you wrote a song? Describe it to me.

Well, if I go back in time to the very early times... I was always singing a rather annoying kind of song in the sauna when I was a kid. I must have made it when I was about five years old. Partly in Finnish, partly in gibberish, it was a chant to encourage my big sisters to go swimming in the lake with me, as that was all I wanted to do, while they were in the sauna warming up.

You were honored in 2016 as Best Singer / Songwriter in Denmark. How surprised were you yourself? Did you expect that?

It came completely from out of the blue. My first EP „Lift Your Lion“ was just out, and there was an open call for musicians to send their releases to be reviewed by the awards committee. I had somehow convinced myself that there was no category for me there, and I had only lived in Denmark for 2 years, so I thought I couldn't apply anyway. I wouldn't have even sent my music there unless it was for Alex. It felt to me like the Danish music scene was opening their arms to me and welcoming me in, and I'm very thankful for that.

The debut: River of Silver



For years together on stage: Mirja and Alex Jønsson.

For years together on

Let's talk about your debut. Tell a little about the genesis. What are your sources of inspiration? How was the work in the studio?

Silver is an element that symbolises, among many things, clarity, transparency and clairvoyance. On the album, there's a feeling that the narrator sees everything, sees through things. In the same time it's a very personal album. I describe in both lyrics and music what I see, the pictures that come to me, some kind of visions. We wanted the duo's live sound to be the starting point of this album – the interplay between Alex and me – so we basically recorded my vocals and both of our guitars simultaneously, like we would play it live. Later we added some overdubs, still with a principle of „less is more“, and a transparent sound.

How was the work with the guest musicians? Did you have a relaxed time? Tell a little anecdote.

All the overdubs with us and our guests were recorded by Gustaf Ljunggren in his little studio in the heart of Copenhagen. It's basically a tiny room full of instruments. He would grab anything from a bass clarinet to an organ, trying out how it would fit together with the duos sound. Two instruments that I had never even heard of a year before, actually ended up on the album. One of them is the old waldzither I bought last year, and the other one is a mandocello that Gustaf plays on several tracks. It really fitted in the atmosphere of the album, and being in the same instrument family with waldzither it somehow ended up tying everything together sonically.

On double bass, we had Jens Mikkel Madsen, the frontperson of the awesome indiejazz band „I think You're Awesome“. Alex has played with him for many many years. I am so happy that these people agreed to work with me – they are both super talented and really easy to be with.

You and Alex Jønsson have been playing together for a few years now. What do you appreciate most about him? Alex is an extremely sensitive musician. He always listens to the whole rather than just himself – with him, music is never about ego. Like me, he's some kind of a minimalist. For him, the music and the message of the song always comes first. I really appreciate that.

I had the pleasure to listen to "River of Silver" completely. I must confess that music and voice have charmed me immediately. How much do you practice singing a week? How often do you play guitar for you during the week?

Thank you for the kind words, I'm happy to hear you enjoyed it!

How much I rehearse varies a lot. To me rehearsing, as a word, sounds very technical, it reminds me of

mecahnic and repetitive work. Of course some things need to be rehearsed so well that they become automatic – I studied music full time for ten years and played classical piano for a long time, so I have had my fair share of rehearsing in the past. I'm also a self-taught guitarist, so I sometimes need to practise the guitar and the waldzither a lot to get the things to sound the way I hear them in my head, and to feel confident enough to sing in the same time. However, nowadays most of my practise is directed towards the expression: I practise engaging my mind in my playing, I practise being present, and I practise moving away the physical and mental obstacles that hinder the voice. It's a very holistic kind of practise. Joni Mitchell once said singing is like method acting, that resonates with me. I practise finding the right mindset for each tune.

Which instrument would tempt you to learn?

Many instruments regularly do. I like to go and admire different things at old instrument shops. I guess it's mostly the string instruments that tempt me. In february I started to play the violin, as Alex got his granddads old violin in the house. It's nice to play an instrument that you know is so difficult that you know it will take you at least a decade to learn to play it, and yet you will never really be good at it. It's a kind of a zen practise – how to hold the instrument, how to use the bow, the easiest and lightest way possible.

Together 9 songs find their place on the album. All speak from the heart and soul of Mirja Klippel. Which song do you personally associate most with and why?

I don't know! It depends completely on my mood. They're all close to different parts of me.

A huge amount of meaning to what I'm doing



There is a [Kickstarter campaign](#) with very innovative rewards for your album. From private lessons, a private dinner with you or together baking Karjalanpiirakka. Incidentally, what I think are really great ideas. How important is the contact with people or lovers of your music?

It gives a huge amount of meaning to what I'm doing. To be able to reach into someones being through music is what makes it all worth it. Music is communication, and to always do it alone is a bit like shouting to the wall. That can be good therapy, but not something to dedicate your life to.

Do you think it's hard to stay down-to-earth with increasing success?

Haha.. I don't think I'm in any danger of that yet. It is of course exiting to get the album out and, for the first time, have some people to help me make some noise about it. But ultimately my goal is just to make a living with writing, recording and performing my own music. I love touring, and if more people find me, I can tour more in

the future.

You are a native of Finland and now live in Denmark. Do you sometimes miss Suomi? And if so, what exactly? I miss the nature. In Denmark there's also some beautiful nature spots, but in Finland those areas are vast – you are in the nature, a tiny part of it. You feel small, and that's sometimes what I miss.

What are your other goals? Do you already have plans for the future?

I have started a new project, that will first be heard in Copenhagen in December. I'm writing music with the starting point that my parents are selling my childhood home, a small farm in the middle of the woods by a lake, which in many ways is my inner landscape. Some of the songs will be in Finnish, and songwriting in Finnish is something I haven't tried since I was a teenager. My waldzither will be following me on this one too.

Many thanks Mirja for your time and the answers. And Terveisiä Saksasta. The interview was conducted by André Schönauer

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