

ORD

Hemligheter på vägen

The first time listening to *Hemligheter på vägen* (Secrets on the Way) I was cycling along Hornsgatan in Stockholm. It was evening. The breadth of notes and stanzas in my headphones shut out the city noise. Amidst the scattered sounds of the quintet ORD and the starlit voice of Jenny Willén, I suddenly see a man walking along the right hand sidewalk. He is carrying the insides of a piano. It sways in his grip as if an ordinary suitcase. The whole piano action mechanism with hammers and all is hanging there; it looks so easy and his luggage creates so many questions. In that precise moment. When did they meet for the first time, the words and the music? Did it take place in the beginning of time? Were they young when they first met? Or were they already advancing in age and brimming with millions of lives and stories?

Pianist Karin Johansson has set music to some of Tomas Tranströmer's poems for her band ORD. Vocals, horns, and bass converse freely around the piano. Some parts are free improvisations, often with a prepared piano. ORD was formed a few years ago, and *Hemligheter på vägen* is the band's first album.

There is a text of Tranströmer's from the short memoir *Memories Look at Me* that has inspired Karin particularly for this album: *"I carry inside myself my earlier faces, as a tree contains its rings. The sum of them is me. The mirror sees only my latest face, while I know all my previous ones."* I look at the photo of the album cover. It pictures a girl in a doorway. She looks straight into the camera. It is an image of Karin Johansson when ten years old.

We carry all our different ages and memories with us, they walk next to us each day, but there are gaps between moments of recognition. Karin Johansson and her four fellow musicians are listening in with a finely tuned presence. They help us on the receiving end to stop, see, and simply listen. And I can't help wondering what the poet and pianist Tranströmer would have been thinking or feeling if he had been able to sit in on their conversation.

Aside from Tranströmer, Karin Johansson has set music to two of her own texts as well as one text by Jenny Willén. *Hemligheter på vägen* will be released on CD and digitally on World Poetry Day, 21 March 2022, and on vinyl later this coming spring. World Poetry Day is founded by the UN organisation UNESCO to support the freedom of speech and the human right to write and create.

Karin Johansson – piano, prepared piano, composition and arrangements
Jenny Willén – vocals, voice
Niclas Rydh – trombone
Gunnel Samuelsson – bass clarinet, tenor saxophone
Hasse Westling – double bass

Karin Johansson may also be heard in the duo with Lisen Rylander Löve; in Quagmire with Nina de Heney and Henrik Wartel; in the duo with Finn Loxbo; Jonny Wartel 4; and in many other collaborations.

Press release: Jenny Svenberg Bunnell, illustrator and artist

Artist

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Hemligheter på vägen

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