



FIKA

ELYSIAN FIELDS

‘One cannot dispute that an instrument has never come so close to resembling the human voice as the viol has, which indeed is only distinguished from it by the fact that it cannot utter any words.’

Jean Rousseau, *Traité de la viole*, 1687



FIKA ELYSIAN FIELDS

The Scandinavian Project

Susie Bishop - voice & violin

Matt Keegan - saxophones

Matt McMahon - piano

Jenny Eriksson - electric viola da gamba

Siebe Pogson - bass guitar

Dave Goodman - drums

Produced by Matt Keegan

Cover image: ‘Pink Lake’ by Nils Gunnar Zander

I went to South Australia many times to find dry salt lakes and particularly a pink lake. I had seen a picture of a pink lake a long time ago and I could not believe how fantastic it looked. I had to see one! When I finally found a pink lake in the dry landscape of South Australia, I thought it was extraordinarily exciting and beautiful, particularly how it changed colour during the day light. Here was another colour you do not find in the Swedish landscape! To walk on the salt, however, was like walking on melting ice, like the ice on a winter lake when it starts to melt...I painted my Pink Lake in 2014, nearly 10 years after I saw the pink lake in reality. (Nils Gunnar Zander)

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As a concept, Fika (pron. 'fee-ka') probably started life with my acoustic ensemble, The Marais Project. Several years ago, group member, Tommie Andersson, who is Swedish, and I put on a concert of Swedish music. This led to a CD of classical, folk, baroque and jazz from Sweden called Smörgåsbord. As well as being one of Australia's top lutenists and guitarists, Tommie is an expert on Swedish folk music. He made some gorgeous arrangements for that project, one song of which we also feature on Fika. My grandfather was Swedish, and I still have relatives there – many of whom are fine amateur musicians. I revelled then and now in the opportunity to explore this aspect of my background.

Scandinavian repertoire started creeping into Elysian Fields' set list quite early. This was partly due to the fact that Susie Bishop has links to Sweden via her partner and visits often. She also sings in Swedish and plays the violin beautifully - the fiddle being the backbone of much Scandinavian folk music. We launched a Scandinavian Project at Foundry616 in 2018. The program was a mix of composed works by band members, folk song arrangements and charts by Scandinavian jazz artists. We continued to add to this repertoire and in January 2020 we hit the studio. We did not know it then, but the world was already under the grim shadow of Covid-19.

As our gigs started to get cancelled and cashflow dried up, we made the decision to dig deep and finish the project. There is a reason for this. Fika is often translated in English as a coffee break. In reality, it means more than that. Fika is about making time for friends and family, to share a cup of coffee and a bite to eat. You can't do fika alone although ironically, as I write this, many people are isolated or separated from those they love. Long before the current crisis we wanted to create a beautiful recording that would bring people together, as fika does. This music is our offering to the world.

Jenny Eriksson



THE BAND

Susie Bishop is a versatile multi-instrumentalist and vocalist. She completed her Masters in Music at the Royal Northern College of Music in 2010, majoring in Opera. In 2019 she was an associate artist with Pacific Opera and in 2020 she was recipient of the Prue Kennard scholarship for opera. Her professional career spans classical, world, jazz and folk with both violin and voice. Her current projects include world fusion sextet Chaika and her song-writing duo collaborating with her sister, Laura. She has guested with Monsieur Camembert, Miriam Liebermann, The Marais Project, the Song Company and numerous other high-profile artists.

Matt Keegan regularly performs throughout Australia and around the world. As a project leader of 20 years' experience, Keegan has produced and released 8 albums that feature his prolific work as a composer, arranger and saxophone soloist. In 2011 he won the prestigious MCA Freedman Fellowship for jazz. He is the artistic director of the international, intercultural ensemble The Three Seas. In 2018 he was a recipient of the APRA AMCOS Art Music Fund award. Fika is the first album he has produced for Elysian Fields.

Matt McMahon won the Wangaratta National Jazz Piano Award in 1999, and the Freedman Jazz Fellowship in 2005 thus establishing his place in Australian jazz. He leads his own band, The Matt McMahon Trio, with bassist Jonathan Brown and drummer Simon Barker. Matt co-leads the Band of Five Names with trumpeter Phil Slater and drummer Simon Barker and has recorded several albums with these groups. He has performed or recorded with many well-known artists including Vince Jones, Wynton Marsalis, Dale Barlow, Greg Osby, Phil Slater, Joseph Tawadros, Katie Noonan, Veronica Swift, Daoru, and Steve Hunter. He also appears on many albums with these and other musicians.

Jenny Eriksson is one of Australia's best-known acoustic viola da gambists and the only performer in her country who plays the electric version of her instrument. She trained as a cellist at Sydney Conservatorium and then undertook post graduate study on the viola da gamba in Holland for three years. She plays a Ruby electric instrument made for her in The Netherlands by Jan Goorissen. She formed Elysian Fields in 2015 with the support and encouragement of Matt McMahon and Matt Keegan. She also leads the early music ensemble, The Marais Project and the Musica Viva in Schools group, Da Vinci's Apprentice.

Siebe Pogson learned piano and cello from an early age and took up electric bass at high school. In 2014 he graduated with a Bachelor of Music Studies at Sydney Conservatorium majoring in classical piano with Gerard Willems. At high school he studied jazz piano with Kevin Hunt while his initial electric bass lessons

were undertaken with Saul Richardson then subsequently with Steve Hunter and Anthony Wellington. Siebe is the founder of jazz-funk five-piece, Funk Engine, who have released three CDs of his original charts. He also plays in the Soul Messengers.

Dave Goodman Jazz critic John Clare described Dave Goodman as 'one of the leading drummers in the country' and '[one of] the most intriguing drummers recording anywhere'. Combining technical mastery with profound musicality, Dave's drumming is celebrated for its powerful melodic sensibility and, most importantly, its distinctive voice. Chief influences include Jack DeJohnette, Peter Erskine, Roy Haynes, Steve Gadd, Idris Muhammad, and Bill Stewart. 'I love them fundamentally because they are uniquely creative, groovy, and original in playing only the essence of what each piece of music requires,' Dave explains. 'I aspire to this in my own work.'

THE MUSIC

1. Living

Jan Gunnar Hoff was born and lives in Bodø, Norway, a town of some 50,000 residents just above the Arctic Circle. He has a global reputation as a pianist and composer and is a Grammy-nominated performer. Jan Gunnar describes himself as standing at a point of intersection between his classical music background and the genres of jazz, folk, funk, and rock. He has released 20 albums and written 250 works as a composer, soloist and co-leader. He is an official Steinway and Sons Artist. I was originally introduced to Hoff's music by



Sydney bass player, Dave Ellis. I find Jan Gunnar inspirational as, like me, he has more than one style: the cool, modal Scandinavian jazz of Living and jazz-fusion, as evidenced in the Acuna/Hoff/Mathisen trio. Jan Gunnar wrote to me: 'I composed Living in the month of December, the darkest period of the year in northern Norway. Yet there are the northern lights and the spectacular views and landscapes of the north. Sitting in my country composer's cabin, I got the inspiration from the fjord view of trying to compose a pentatonic and singable main theme for a larger commission, also called Living. Living was first presented at a performance in Bodø concert hall in January 2012 with prominent Nordic jazz performers Marilyn Mazur, Anders Jormin and Arve Henriksen.' (Jenny)

2. Frid på Jord (Peace on Earth)

Frid på Jord was written by one of Sweden's best-known and most successful contemporary folk singers, Sofia Karlsson. Karlsson grew up in Stockholm and attended the folk music department at the Royal Conservatorium of Music. Frid på Jord is often heard at Christmas time in Sweden. Matt McMahon's arrangement maintains the simplicity of the original while adding jazz harmonies and sensibility.

(Lyrics by Sofia Karlsson)

I stjärnfull natt de ljöd så klart
Frid på jord, frid på jord
Det klingade väl underbart
Frid på jord, frid på jord
Försonaren kom med hopp och frid
Men i min själ var natt och strid
Ej fann jag under min levnadstid
Frid på jord, frid på jord

Må den trötte finna en hamn
Ro hos Gud, ro hos Gud
Så ljuvlig som en moders famn
Lov ske Gud, lov ske Gud
Du julens klara ljus och frid
Mig lys igenom mörkrets tid
Och för mig hem till min himmels ro
Frid på jord, frid på jord

(Translation by Tommie Andersson)

On a starry night it sounded so clear
Peace on earth, peace on earth
It resounded so wonderfully
Peace on earth, peace on earth
The Redeemer brought hope and peace
But in my soul was night and struggle
During the course of my life I did not find
Peace on earth, peace on earth

May the weary find a port
Rest with God, rest with God
As sweet as a mother's arms
Praise be to God, praise be to God
Your bright Christmas light and serenity
Shine for me through times of darkness
And take me home to my heavenly rest
Peace on earth, peace on earth

3. Vi ska ställa till en roligare dans (We going to put on a fun dance)

Vi ska ställa till en roligare dans is a round dance, a dance-singing game, which was considered suitable for boys and girls to get acquainted under 'morally proper' conditions. The song was first documented in Södermanland, a county south of Stockholm, in 1823-35. It is a part of an older living tradition and is particularly used for dancing around the Midsummer pole. (Tommie Andersson)



(Original Swedish)

Vi ska ställa till en rolig dans,
och vi ska binda både krona och krans
till dansen.

Vi ska ställa till en rolig dans,
och vi ska binda både krona och krans
till dansen.

Hej hopp - en rolig dans!
Hej hopp - båd' krona och krans
till dansen.
Hej hopp - en rolig dans!
Hej hopp - båd' krona och krans
till dansen.

Vacker är du, när du dansar och ler,
och vacker, när du på din käresta ser,
du lilla!

Vacker är du, när du dansar och ler,
och vacker, när du på din käresta ser,
du lilla!

Hej hopp - du dansar och ler!
Hej hopp - på kärestan ser,
du lilla!
Hej hopp - du dansar och ler!
Hej hopp - på kärestan ser,
du lilla!

4. Låt till Far

(Tune to my father)

I initially got to know Låt till Far via Swedish-born, Sydney resident, lutenist and guitarist, Tommie Andersson. Tommie and I recorded his arrangement as a baroque trio on The Marais Project's CD, Lady Sings the Viol. Tommie then added three more movements and created The Swedish Folk Song Suite which appeared on The Marais Project's Smörgåsbord recording. Låt till Far was composed by Pers Erik Olsson in 1965 on the day that his own father would have turned 100. In Sweden, this kind of fiddle tune would typically be performed by a small orchestra of violins. Matt McMahon used Tommie's trio arrangement as a starting point for his version, also in trio form (violin, viola da gamba and piano). As there is no text, it is a kind of song without words. (Jenny)

(Translation by Tommie Andersson)

We are going to put on a fun dance,
and we will tie both crown and wreath
for the dance.

We are going to put on a fun dance,
and we will tie both crown and wreath
for the dance.

Heigh-ho - a fun dance!
Heigh-ho - both crown and wreath
for the dance.

Heigh-ho - a fun dance!
Heigh-ho - both crown and wreath
for the dance.

You are beautiful, when you dance and smile!
and beautiful when you look at your sweetheart,
Oh little one!

You are beautiful, when you dance and smile!
and beautiful when you look at your sweetheart,
Oh little one!

Heigh-ho - you dance and smile!
Heigh-ho - look at your sweetheart,
Oh little one!
Heigh-ho - you dance and smile!
Heigh-ho - look at your sweetheart,
Oh little one!

5. När som jag var på mitt adertonde år (When I was in my eighteenth year)

När som jag var på mitt adertonde år is a traditional Swedish folk song from the county of Dalarna, north west of Stockholm. I've heard versions sung by Dalarna-born soprano Margareta Jonth (1975) as well as Britt Röjås (1991). As to the text, there are a range of variations, as commonly happens in folk music. The version I sing tells the story of a young girl who falls in love with a beautiful boy who, unfortunately, holds another girl in his arms. This love, she sings, surpasses any other love that she has known, including that of her parents and siblings. She and her lover will, however, be united in heaven. (Susie)



(Original Swedish)

När som jag var på mitt adertonde år,
det var en vacker gosse som föll uti min håg.
Den tänkte jag för evigt att få äga.
Men denna min tanke rätt snarelig försvann,
det var en annan flicka som lades i hans famn.
Den liknar han vid rosande blomma.
Nog än jag hållit fader och moder så kär,
samt syskon och vänner, som älskat mig här,
så går dock denna kärlek över alla.
Tack för att du varit min endaste tröst
och tack för alla stunder jag vilat vid ditt bröst.
I himmlen skall vi åter bli förenta.

6. Meditatus

A version of Meditatus appears as Kyrie I in Jan Gunnar Hoff's mass for jazz ensemble and choir, titled Meditatus. The mass, which has been performed in several countries, received the prestigious 2005 Edvard-prize (named after Edvard Grieg). Hoff arranged this song for piano and voice on the CD, Terra Nova, featuring Norwegian mezzosoprano, Marianne Beate Kielland. With the approval of Jan Gunnar, my arrangement makes use of elements from both the choir and solo voice versions including sections for improvisation. (Jenny)

(Translation by Tommie Andersson)

When I was in my eighteenth year,
I fell for this handsome boy.
I thought he would be forever mine.
But this thought of mine was soon to disappear,
there was another girl put in his arms.
He likens her to a rose in bloom.
Though I have treasured my father and mother dearly,
as well as siblings and friends who have loved me here,
this love for him surpasses them all.
Thank you for being my only consolation,
and thank you for all the times I rested at your chest.
In heaven we shall again be united.

(Text from the Latin mass)

Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison.

Dona nobis pacem.

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy.

Grant us peace.

7. Cold Soul

Cold Soul is about the majesty and spiritual quality of some of the Scandinavian landscapes that Matt Keegan experienced when he lived and studied in Sweden for a year.

'There is something magical and beautiful about the scenery in the wintertime.' (Matt Keegan)

The chart (a musical term for a piece of music) is one of two works Jenny Eriksson commissioned Matt to write for Elysian Fields' Scandinavian Project, which was the starting point for Fika.



8. The Tragedy

This track is the first movement of a larger three-part work commissioned by Jenny Eriksson and mostly composed while I was living in New Orleans. I also wrote the lyrics to the first and third movements, the second being an instrumental. There are no direct Scandinavian connections except I am 1/8th Swedish on my mother's side. I've also visited Sweden several times, and Norway once, and have met my relatives. (Siebe)

(Lyrics by Siebe Pogson)

Together we were strong, fighting the world, we took it on.

Nothing could stop us, no one could halt our minds and our hearts being joined as one.

With joy comes doubt, with doubt comes fear we'll lose what we have to jealousy, pain and the unexplained.

The world's a beast, not gentle or kind. Change can come any time; can't things be fine?

Burst! From the void it came, reality has no shame.

Will I see you again? See you again this life?

Alone I venture now, no one to hold my hand or stroke my soul.
It seems so final. Can it be final? Can I be at peace again? I must be soft, not hard.
It's not his fault, he did everything he could have done.
It is his fault, he could have foreseen, forget the times he was close by your side.
Lies! I just want you here! I have been such a fool.
Will I see you again? See you again this life?

9. Believe Beleft Below

I only heard Esbjörn Svensson Trio (e.s.t.) once when they visited Australia for the Sydney Festival. Soon after that tour pianist and band leader Esbjörn Svensson died tragically in a diving accident. Listening to e.s.t. that night had a profound effect on me. I was already interested in jazz but was not sure how to find a way into the genre. After all, the viola da gamba is best known as a refined instrument of the French baroque court of Louis XIV! In addition, I was not convinced that a miked up acoustic viola da gamba would work in a jazz context - I was not at the time aware of the existence of the electric gamba. I loved everything about e.s.t.: the resonant, modal harmonies, the long sweeping phrases and the sound production quality. Here was an amplified band that sounded like a chamber music ensemble. I went on to record one of Svensson's charts on The Marais Project's CD, Smörgåsbord. Believe Beleft Below sits beautifully on the electric viola da gamba. I've arranged the chart to take advantage of the voice-like quality of the instrument in harmony with Susie Bishop's gorgeous soprano and Matt Keegan's superb sax. (Jenny)

(Lyrics by Josh Haden)

If we meet again I'll tell you how I feel.
I'll tell you from the start, I'll tell you love is real.
How everything we say, and everything we do
Has been preordained to bring true love to you.
Nothing else is pure, nothing else is right
You will know for sure, once you've seen the light.
If we meet again, I'll tell you how I feel
I'll tell you love is real.

To the Vikings in my life, my love and thanks to:

Family and friends:

My grandfather, Knut Axel Eriksson; my Dad, John Axel Eriksson & Aunt, Margaret O'Mara; Roland & Inger Alvinger; Gun & Dick Norrefalk; Maj & Ulf Bergman; Åsa & Axel Burkett; Lars & Aja Lemby; Pär & Hélène Ahlberger; Nils Gunnar & Monique Zander; Maria Lundblad; to the next generation of my very special Swedish relatives: Carin, Sissela, Emma, Ola, Johan & Stefan, your partners and children.

Musicians:

Jan Gunnar Hoff; Mats Norrefalk; Esbjörn Svensson (deceased); Tommie Andersson; Tord Gustavsen; Leif Henrikson; Sofie Livebrant.

Honorary Vikings:

Jan Goorissen; Ritchie Belkner; Matt Keegan; Llew & Mara Kiek; Peter Rechniewski/Foundry616; Michael Lawrence-Slater; Michelle Stewart; Sarah Chance; Wendy Cobcroft; Lyndall Gerlach, Fine Music Sydney.

The band:

I love you guys, you're amazing! You've enriched my life.

Special thanks to Susie Bishop & Johan Delin for coming up with the CD title.



Susie Bishop

Matt Keegan

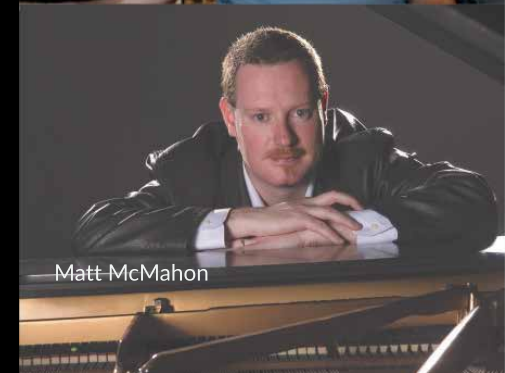


Jenny Eriksson

Siebe Pogson



Dave Goodman



Matt McMahon



Artworks

Nils Gunnar Zander was born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1944 and studied at Konstfack University College of Arts, Craft and Design from 1964 to 1970. His earlier work was based in ceramic sculpture, but painting has absorbed him since meeting the colours and shapes of the Australian outback. For the last 25 years he has divided his time between Stockholm and Melbourne. Nils Gunnar Zander's works consistently circle themes such as Earth, Desert, Mankind and Silence. In encounters with the Australian landscape's lines, shapes and colours, he creates paintings that portray a disintegrated but still human nature. He has exhibited widely in Europe, Australia and Asia. Jenny first came across Zander's art when she attended an exhibition of his paintings in Stockholm several years ago. By chance, Nils was at the gallery that day, so she introduced herself and they became friends. She has since performed at his Stockholm studio.

All paintings by Nils Gunnar Zander - Copyright

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The Scandinavian Project

- 1 **Living**
Jan Gunnar Hoff (arr. by Jenny Eriksson) 5:41
- 2 **Frid på Jord** (Peace on Earth) 8:48
Sofia Karlsson (arr. by Matt McMahon)
- 3 **Vi ska ställa till en rolig dans** (We are going to put on a fun dance) 3:14
Swedish folksong (arr. by Susie Bishop)
- 4 **Låt till Far** (Tune to my father)
Pers Erik Olsson (arr. by Tommie Andersson/Matt McMahon) 4:07
- 5 **När som jag var på mitt adertonde år** (When I was in my eighteenth year)..... 5:07
Swedish folksong (arr. by Susie Bishop)
- 6 **Meditatus** 5:57
Jan Gunnar Hoff (arr. by Jenny Eriksson)
- 7 **Cold Soul** 4:57
Matt Keegan
- 8 **The Tragedy** 7:20
Siebe Pogson
- 9 **Believe Beleft Below** 5:15
Esbjörn Svensson (arr. by Jenny Eriksson)

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