



**As Of Not**  
**Jerome Cooper/Kresten Osgood (ILK Music)**  
**Tidens Strøm**  
**Laura Toxværd (ILK Music)**  
**Så Stopper Festen**  
**Nacka Forum (Moserobie)**  
 by Robert Iannapolo

Since the turn of the century, Danish drummer Kresten Osgood has been involved in nearly 90 recordings as leader and sideman. He's a drummer for all seasons, comfortable crossing stylistic boundaries, and also a very adept piano player. His range of international collaborators is amazingly wide: Dr. Lonnie Smith, Paul Bley, Sam Rivers, John Tchicai, Michael Blake and others. He always adds a unique energy. Below are three recent recordings that are a great demonstration of this.

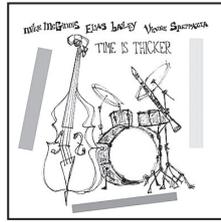
Vinyl-only *As Of Not* is credited to Osgood and late drummer/multi-instrumentalist Jerome Cooper, the latter one-third of The Revolutionary Ensemble, one of the finest trios of the '70s (reuniting in the new millennium). Cooper subsequently played drums in various bands but his own music took on an unusual cast as he incorporated chirimira (a Latin American reed sounding like a Middle Eastern shawm), piano and electronics. Cooper also took to composition as a means of expression as much as improvisation. He and Osgood struck a friendship in the mid-2000s and Cooper was invited to Denmark to conduct workshops, during which time they realized Cooper's title piece. It features Cooper on the above-mentioned instruments and Osgood on drums and piano. It's a seven-part suite spread out over four sides of an LP. The piece begins with a passage of sustained stasis over an electronic drone and carefully placed piano. Midway through Osgood starts playing a motif matched by Cooper on balafon for a minimalist interlude. "Part 2" extensively features chirimira over wandering piano lines and an electronic rhythm. The one drawback is that some of these electronic rhythms are rather clunky but as the piece develops, it's what's placed over the top that lifts it out of clunkiness; "Part 4" is an excellent example of that. Cooper clearly was going for something universal and succeeds for the most part. And Osgood is there along with him. The two were a good team to realize this music.

Osgood appears on alto saxophonist Laura Toxværd's *Tidens Strøm*. Although his presence isn't forward in the quintet, it's crucial to the music. Toxværd scored this with an unusual instrumentation of tuba, accordion, saxophone and drums plus singer Marta Laurette Friis, who delivers the six songs with a folk-ish quality and matches the instrumentation well. Toxværd's gritty solos give the music a primal energy and Osgood is subtle but very effective. Drums are well recorded and their resonance fills out the group sound nicely. *Tidens Strøm* is a successful recording, which, while short (27 minutes), stands alone.

Nacka Forum has been together for six albums, the quartet stable except for a change at its fourth album with Osgood in the drummer's chair. Taking in composition, varying styles, freewheeling improvisation and humor, it seems a perfect fit. For their sixth release, *Så Stopper Festen*, the group delivers an Ornette Coleman-ish ballad "Reboleira" by bassist Johan Berthling and frenetic freebop of reedplayer Jonas Kullhammar's "OhSoGood". Osgood has two compositions, "Haltefanden" and "Big L"; the latter starts out sounding like Tony Williams' Lifetime with Osgood delivering a fractured organ solo and when the horns enter, Lifetime with horns seems to be a good idea (too bad it never materialized). The compositions are succinct, mostly in the six-minute range, diverse

and packed with the energetic solos characteristic of this band. *Så Stopper Festen* is as good as anything Nacka Forum has come up with thus far.

For more information, visit [ilkmusic.com](http://ilkmusic.com) and [moserobie.com](http://moserobie.com). Osgood was scheduled to be at Downtown Music Gallery, Soup & Sound and The Stone at The New School.



**Time is Thicker**  
**Mike McGinnis (Open Stream Music)**  
 by Mark Keresman

It's relatively rare that a reedplayer focuses solely on the clarinet — Benny Goodman and John Carter come to mind. While Mike McGinnis is also a saxophonist, he relies on the straight-reed instrument entirely on *Time is Thicker*, a trio set with bassist Elias Bailey and drummer Vinnie Sperrazza. This type of format can be a naked listen, yet the full-bodied production and caliber of the performance make it a compelling date.

On the briskly invigorating opener "Get In the Car", McGinnis sticks mostly to his instrument's middle range, getting all kinds of mileage out of a warmly woody tone and fluid execution while Bailey and Sperrazza create a persuasive yet not overbearing forward motion. The Chano Pozo-Gil Fuller bebop anthem "Tin Tin Deo" has a swell, sly bluesy statement of the theme, otherwise darting in a deceptively carefree way, Bailey taking a piquant solo. "Bow Legged Releve" begins with what could be a collective free improvisation but then settles into a groove in which McGinnis dances about amid growing winds stirred by Bailey and especially Sperrazza. Closer "Just One of Those Things" is given a surging fare-thee-well treatment — McGinnis swirling and dashing, making with a bit of Dixieland-styled phrasing in his solo. Sperrazza is volatile here, lavishing rolling crashes and cymbal splashes over his crackling bursts while Bailey anchors with a lively, sinewy throb. This concludes the platter with a hearty restatement of the theme and the laughter of the players.

*Time is Thicker* is an album of lively contrasts. There are moments of cerebral intellectual mien and good-humored swagger. This combo is making jazz that can appeal both to old-school hepcats and artsnobs alike.

For more information, visit [openstreammusic.com](http://openstreammusic.com). This project was scheduled to be at Café Bohemia.



**Alles Hat Seine Zeit**  
**Jürgen Kupke/Hannes Zerbe (JazzHausMusik)**  
 by Anna Steegmann

Clarinetist Jürgen Kupke (who turns 60 this month) and pianist Hannes Zerbe both grew up in East Germany and studied at the Hanns Eisler College of Music in East Berlin. They made a name for themselves, toured with Willem Breuker, Elliott Sharp, Phil Minton, Leo Wright, to name a few, and released several

recordings. *Alles Hat Seine Zeit* (Everything has its time) is their first album as a duo. This is change for Zerbe, known for his Hannes Zerbe Jazz Orchester. Kupke is a clarinet virtuoso and his instrument takes center stage most of the time; Zerbe, a hugely talented pianist, seems happy in the background.

*Alles Hat Seine Zeit* is mostly jazz with dashes of New Music. Zerbe composed 9 of the 16 tracks, Kupke 1, 2 are co-written and the pair breathe new life into tunes by Carla Bley, Francois Jeanneau and Hanns Eisler. Opener "Vorspiel Winterschlachtsuite" (Winter Battle Suite: Prelude), a slow and sorrowful piece, will pull at the heartstrings of the most cynical of minds and hook the listener. Eisler's "Der Kirschdieb" (The Cherry Thief) is stark and haunting, his "Vom Sprengen des Gartens" (Sprinkling the Garden) delicate and lively. Zerbe and Kupke reveal a special affinity for Eisler through the lens of chemistry developed in 35 years of collaboration. The majority of tunes are languid and lyrical; others like "Zeit 1", "Up and Down" and "#13" are wild flights where piano moves into the foreground and clarinet is played at whirlwind speed. Bley's "Ictus" has unexpected twists and turns.

Whether you prefer the faster, more experimental tunes or the slower melodious ones, you will be enchanted by *Alles Hat Seine Zeit*.

For more information, visit [jazzhausmusik.de](http://jazzhausmusik.de)



**Down The Hill**  
**Alexandra Grimal/Giovanni di Domenico (s/r)**  
 by Kurt Gottschalk

Alexandra Grimal's text for the title track of her new duo CD with pianist Giovanni di Domenico gives a good indication of the shifting moods of the music the two create. "And I went down the hill / and I ran down the stone / and I climb the trees / where you were" she sings in part. It's a strange evocation of an unclear mood. The scene seems to be a passing moment, running to catch up with an unnamed other. Was it anxious? Playful? Is she expressing joy? Malaise? Moods intermingle without clear division in the verse as in the music, the way they do on some (not all) days and are met without resistance. There's a strong uncertainty about it.

Grimal, who turns 40 this month, sings the words as if no one is listening, like internal narration. It's one of a handful of songs on which she sings (two are hers, the third by poet Goffredo Muratgia). For the most part, she's heard on soprano saxophone. As an instrumentalist, Grimal has received some acclaim (including in these pages) but less attention, at least on these shores. A wonderful duo with bassist Joëlle Léandre released last year should have helped to set that straight, as should this beautifully fragile and occasionally plaintive record. Di Domenico is an equal part of the ambiguous afternoon being conjured (it certainly doesn't come off as evening music). The pianist has an uncanny knack for projecting simplicity even when not playing it, easily shifting between pensive and sprightly. His credits include two previous duos with Grimal.

*Down The Hill* is an unhurried effort, even when sprinting. 12 tracks in close to an hour succeed in being expressive yet unspecific. It's available as a CD as well as download. There's far worse ways to spend an hour and, of late, seeming far more hours to be spent.

For more information, visit [alexandragrimal.bandcamp.com](http://alexandragrimal.bandcamp.com)