

## Jacob Karlzon - NOW

**Times are changing, and inevitably so is music. However, musicians of a special kind are needed to stay in step – and in tune – with these changing times. One of these visionaries is the Swedish pianist Jacob Karlzon.**

**On NOW, Jacob Karlzon tells a story.** The pieces belong together like in a suite, and yet they are so different that each one also stands alone. In their contradictory entirety they can describe a complete day with all of its happy and frustrating moments, its light and shadow, its shifts between chaos and calm. In every song he finds a new way of fusing electronic elements like synthesizers and computers with the acoustic bedrock of his piano, accompanied by Dan Berglund (also known from Esbjörn Svensson Trio and Tonbruket) on the double bass, and long-time collaborator Robert Mehmet Ikiz on the drums. For the pianist there is nothing contradictory about taking a fish out of the river and then putting it in the freezer. He can enjoy a mountain stream by day and in the evening still go on Facebook. In his radical positivism he reveals himself to be a “virtual romantic”. “We live in high-tech times. I’m always thinking about the crossover points between technology and nature. We are and remain organic beings. Technology is part of our environment. How can we use it to save our planet? That’s exactly what I want to ask in my music. It’s always about combining both worlds.”

**The crossover points between analogue and digital moments stand out in Karlzon’s music as much as the hinges between pop and jazz and the seams between memory and visions of the future.** Karlzon’s background is in jazz, but also grew up with hard rock and ’80s pop music. NOW is a completely new style of CD, because it does not just follow the conventional album concept, but deliberately plays tribute to the playlist experience. “I’ve never been interested in the jazz tradition as such,” explains Karlzon. “But what does still interest me about jazz is how it functions as a form of communication. You can express exactly the same thing one way on one day, and completely differently the next day. It will never be the same. But ultimately it always remains music.”

**Karlzon himself describes NOW as a melancholic dance album, although his melancholy is anything but backward-looking.** Our world, he sums up succinctly, is changing. As an artist he has a choice to mourn the supposedly good old days or to find a way of positively dealing with the way things are permanently changing. “I have to accept things for the way they are, and many things are unfortunately not changing for the better. Personally I find it better to concentrate on the positive aspects of these changes. I don’t want to exclude anybody; I want to involve as many people as possible. My music isn’t complicated. I don’t want to aim our music at insiders who know everything about a particular genre. Instead I want to invite people from different generations and backgrounds to enjoy our music.”

**The formula that Jacob Karlzon could conform to in his music does not yet exist.** Together with his producer Lars Nilsson he is entering uncharted waters. He sees his studio as a laboratory in which every imaginable influence from life and art flows together and triggers a reaction. “It’s more important to me that my music makes sense than that it obeys certain rules.” Jacob Karlzon is an artist with an unerring instinct for what is doable, and NOW is his musical credo.