

Drummer and bandleader Stefan Pasborg is based in Copenhagen.



Pasborg Aims To Keep Vinyl Vital

STEFAN PASBORG IS AN ENTHUSIASTIC vinyl advocate. Beginning in 2018 and continuing into next year, the Danish drummer is releasing a series of six recordings that will be available only as vinyl LPs—no streaming, no downloads, not even any CDs. Pasborg, who is much in demand throughout Europe, decided that vinyl was the only sensible way to release new music. By making it harder to access the music, he hopes that those who buy the LPs will devote more attention to his artistry.

"I'm trying to recapture the feeling I had as a kid," he said by phone from his Copenhagen apartment. "When I went down to the vinyl shop and looked at 25 albums, I knew I only had the money to buy two. If I bought an album and I didn't like it at first, I kept listening to it because I had already spent my money, and I would often learn to love it. Today, when people listen to a streaming service, if they don't like the first part of the first track, they won't listen to the end of the song. I truly believe music deserves time and patience."

The music on the six LPs varies widely, with different personnel and a different theme for each title. The series includes a fusion trio playing Spaghetti Western themes on *Morricone*; a jazz quartet playing rock standards on *Love Me Tender*; an organ trio playing holiday music on *The Xmas Album*; a trio improvising over

Krautrock loops on *Man-The-Man*; a jazz piano trio revisiting Danish folk tunes on *Polkadelic Bebop Trio*; and Pasborg, unaccompanied, improvising in real time on *Solo*. What unites the six discs is their origins in Pasborg's pre-professional youth.

When he was growing up in Copenhagen, he fell in love with the Booker T. & The MGs and Elvis Presley records that his parents played; they were as much a part of his childhood as the Danish folk songs he learned in elementary school. His mother, a ballet dancer, inspired a love for Igor Stravinsky, and his father, a doctor and documentary filmmaker, inspired an interest in Ennio Morricone. As a teenager, Stefan loved the Doors and Led Zeppelin, but also Art Blakey and Cecil Taylor. Pasborg's godfather, Alex Riel, happened to be one of the top jazz drummers in Denmark. When Pasborg was 3, Riel gave the toddler a drum kit and soon became his teacher. Today, the 78-year-old legend and his 34-year-old protégé are friends and frequent collaborators.

"I love rock 'n' roll, but I also love to improvise, to tell a story on the drums," Pasborg said. "I'm less interested in being the backbone of a rock group; that's not my thing. Another album that meant a lot to me was Tony Williams' *Emergency!*, with [organist] Larry Young and [guitarist] John McLaughlin. That was the exact

combination of improvised music and the sound of Hendrix's guitar that I wanted. My organ trio, Ibrahim Electric, was based on that album and Booker T. & The MGs. For me, music should be a combination of everything I love: surf music and Charles Mingus, John Coltrane and Elvis Presley."

At the 2004 Danish Music Awards, Pasborg won honors for best new artist and best debut album. He continued to record as both a leader and a sideman, contributing to *Occupy The World* (TUM), trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith's 2012 collaboration with Finnish big band Tumo, and *Duo* (ILK Music), a 2016 program of duets with Gambian kora player Dawda Jobarteh that features arrangements of tunes by Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman and Albert Ayler. With his new series of vinyl-only releases, Pasborg aims to bring back the careful attention that unusual music often provokes.

"We are losing so many things when we go away from physical recordings," Pasborg said. "It used to mean something when you gave a friend an album. When you get an all-you-can-eat buffet, you get full in a not very satisfying way. You eat a little pizza, a little sushi and you don't really taste the food. I believe in the importance of choosing. I'm trying to give a little more emphasis to the experience of listening to a particular record."

—Geoffrey Himes