



OJKOS feat. Andreas Rotevatn: alea iacta est

01. Innsegling 01:21
02. Breidablik 1 01:54
03. Breidablik 2 03:14
04. Elegi Karmosin 03:54
05. It's South African time 03:50
06. It's West African time 03:50
07. Dikt til H 05:33
08. The Khorovod Prayer 05:24
09. Helter Skelter 2 06:01
10. Snow in Treschow 04:49

Henriette H. Eilertsen	Flute & alto flute (solo on track 9/10)
Rakel E. Paulsen	Flute
Marie Rotevatn	Clarinet / Bass Clarinet
Tina L. Olsen	Baritone Sax
Richard Köster	Trumpet (solo on track 5)
Jakob E. Myhre	Trumpet (solo on track 8)
Lyder Ø. Røed	Trumpet (solo on track 4)
Johannes F. Solvang	Trombone
Andreas Rotevatn	Trombone (solo on track 1/6/8)
Steffen Granly	Tuba
Kristoffer Håvik	Rhodes / Moog (solo on track 3)
Arne Martin Nybo	Guitar
Mike McCormick	Guitar / Laptop (laptop solo on track 9)
Alexander Hoholm	Bass
Knut K. Nesheim	Vibraphone / Percussion
Henrik Lødøen	Drums

Composed by: Andreas Rotevatn
Produced and mixed by: Andreas Rotevatn
Mastered by: Morgan Nicolaysen

ODINCD.... EAN:

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As Julius Caesar crossed the river Rubicon with his army in 49 B.C., he allegedly uttered the words “alea iacta est” – “the die is cast”. Crossing this river with an army was illegal, and it was considered an irreversible act of war. Therefore the expression has become synonymous with reaching a point of no return or an act that can't be undone.

Far from the civil war of Rome, trombonist and composer Andreas Rotevatn still had a feeling of reaching a point of no return when he embarked on the establishment of an orchestra of jazz composers – OJKOS - in the spring of 2018. After joining forces with 4 colleagues with an inclination towards both performing and composing, they had an open call for members from the Oslo area of Norway. The group was formed, and in October 2018 OJKOS - an acronym for “the Orchestra of Jazz Composers in Oslo” - had its first concert, performing all new music composed by the members of the orchestra.

Besides the somewhat technical reason for the name, OJKOS (or οἶκος) is also the ancient Greek name for family or household. One aim within the group of young, professional musicians, besides making a breeding ground for new ideas and modern music, is that OJKOS is supposed to be a safe space – a home – for freelancing artists.

Establishing the orchestra was one thing, but another point of no return for Rotevatn was when he had the position of artistic director for OJKOS in March 2019. Now he had to create new music and follow his own musical instinct, leaving second-guessing behind. After the music was composed and rehearsed there was no backing out, and the premiere day came: “It was definitely a feeling of being in the middle of a die cast. When standing on the stage of the National scene for Jazz in Norway, Victoria, and presenting my own music for the first time. What would the audience think, would the die land on a 1 or a 6? But at the same time it was such a relief, and safe experience, doing it together with musicians my age, and all a part of this big musical family” Rotevatn remembers about the experience.

The overhanging aim for Rotevatn when composing is creating music that is *accessible, yet advanced*. Seemingly somewhat of a contradiction. But many of Rotevatn's biggest inspirations has managed this feat: the ensnaring music of Igor Stravinskij; the pompous music of Gustav Holst; the colourful collaboration between Miles Davis and Gil Evans; the surprisingly catchy works of minimalist Steve Reich; the epic jazz-rock of Camel; the irresistible collaboration between Rod Temperton and Quincy Jones; to more recent game changers in global electronic music - Daft Punk and Avicii.

In the three opening tracks, *Innsegling* (Norwegian for “sailing into shore”) and *Breidablik 1 & 2*, Rotevatn's favourite chord voicing with a bunch of perfect fifths make up the basis for the compositions. Since this at one point was the most beautiful voicing in Rotevatn's ears, the title for the songs came from the name of the house where the most beautiful of all the Norse Gods lived – Balder.

Following the tune *Elegi Karmosin*, where the three trumpets of OJKOS were asked to play as if they were “old Russian women out on the cold tundra”, are two songs more or less inspired by music from different parts of Africa. Both obscure South African pop-references, diatonic brass chords and pentatonics from the western part are mashed up into a musical journey – linked together via a bus ride in the minimalistic landscapes of Steve Reich. And the titles, *It's South African & West African time*, are nothing more than a pun on the concept of the more slow and relaxed attitude towards time sometimes encountered on the African continent.

Then two slow, meditative pieces are presented: the bright *Dikt til H* (Poem for H), and the more somber *Khorovod Prayer*. About these two Rotevatn says: "In the first of these two pieces I wanted to extract beauty within dissonance. Even though all 7 notes of a mixolydian scale are played as a cluster chord, it can still be the framework for a sort of love poem. The second one is a tune where I found inspiration in both a section of the *Rite of Spring*, and a Davis/Evans tune - *Prayer* from *Porgy & Bess*. I do not know if there is a connection between the works, but I do know Miles Davis was a big fan of Stravinskij".

The second to last piece derives its name from the track *Helter Skelter* on The Beatles' *the White Album*. According to Hippie lore, this was one of the tracks that made mass murderer Charles Manson be sure that an apocalyptic race war was imminent. Following this epiphany he sent some of his loyal LSD drenched group members out on a killing spree. The opening melody of *Helter Skelter 2* is actually sung by Manson (and auto-tuned in the studio), and the samples in the middle are all from news broadcasts about him. After this intense *bad trip*, the album culminates in a warm, gospel-esque meditative breath - *Snow in Treschow*.

An important part of Rotevatn's composing process is what is done in the studio afterwards. Since Rotevatn also produces and mixes his own music, he can plan for final elements and compositional tools to be added after the band is done recordings. "Playing around with panning, effects, volume, reversed audio, added digital elements and pitch is a large part of the composing process, and I often don't really feel like the composition is complete before it has been recorded in the studio. I like to think of an orchestra conductor to be somewhat similar to the producer in the studio: they both have the overview and try and make a perfect balance of all the different elements of the music. Maybe that is also why I don't get as provoked as some when DJs like Avicii become super stars on a stage – I see them as a merge of sort of a digital conductor and a composer, and the studio is their orchestra".

Another very important part of the composing for OJKOS is to have access to a steady orchestra with monthly concerts. In that way all the members of OJKOS get to know each other musically. "When composing for each other, we do write highly personal parts that suit the players. Something that has been preferred by many jazz composers, like Duke Ellington" says Rotevatn. "So when composing the music on *alea iacta est* I specifically wrote parts and features for the different strong musical personalities of the band".

Within this album is a musical journey, through genres and impressions. What happens when all members of a 16 pc orchestra have the ability to think like a composer? The hypothesis is that even though the orchestra is large, the members have experience in thinking about the bigger picture, and know when to give space to the others, and when to fill the space with new ideas. An organic and living family of musicians, working together towards a common goal of creating new music and finding new ways of interplay.

So, here it is, the debut album of OJKOS. Once again the die is being cast, this time through the release of *alea iacta est*.