

# MORTEN HAXHOLM AETHER ALBUM PRESS TEXT

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Cover art: <https://t.ly/8xDYW>

After seven albums in a modern New Yorker jazz sound, touring Denmark and abroad, I felt a deep need to present music that sounds like 'me' - and the place I come from.

The album was composed with thoughts for my family and friends, the place I grew up - and for this band's specific sound. A music that moves in the quiet and the deep - this album is composed based on the same basic premise/dogma: the ballad.

Ballads with spherical lightness in the simple melodies, with harmonic references to indie rock in the chordal concept called "modal interchange", born in an eclectic field between electronic music, surf, indie and acoustic jazz.

Aether is a deep exploration of the 'quiet', but also challenging the concept: can a 'slow burn' be played with such a lightness, that it is still perceived as a ballad - how much can you stretch the format dynamically and in terms of tonal density.

The album is composed as one coherent whole - with tracks that mirror each other, transitions between the tracks, alternating grooves and soundscape - all held together with a consistent harmonic and dynamic dogma. I hope it will be met by curious ears - perhaps in its entirety - out in the world.

Here a short description of each track from my perspective.

## "Hilda"

The first single from the album - and the second song I composed for this project - is a ballad with an airy soundscape and an equally intense and intimate presence.

The spherical, airy and dark ambiance conjures images and evokes memories from my childhood in the countryside - the vast horizon by the sea, the leafless trees in the autumn forest.

Named after my grandmother, who lived a long quiet life with her own calm presence.

## "Tundra"

The both solid and angular piano chords manifests like mountain rocks, stable and unshakable - and a melody that blows like the wind over the rocks: snow swirling around in winding spirals. The cold and bleak imagery is further emphasized by additional manipulated sound layers - the original sounds: violin bow on guitar and a tape echo hum obscured into a mellow ambiance.

## "Vesper"

A quiet evening song, a classic example of the musical chordal system called

'modal interchange' and a long evolving dynamic buildup over the entity of the track. I love the band's elegant work with dynamics, sound and interaction: the many voices of the instruments, intertwining in a contrapuntal organic flow.

## **"Ephemeral"**

Is an open sounding rubato ballad, where the theme has a built-in reference to the classical composer Messian's symmetrical (M3) scale. The guitar figure in the theme provides a percussive effect: a small insect, a random organic fragment scraping against the varnish. An uneasiness, something out of place - that creates tension, and wonder, in the ballad format.

## **"Cinnober"**

A free intro mirroring the precious track Ephemeral's intro and outro, this time led by spacious piano chords, mixed with processed field recordings (rain in a bamboo bed), tape echo rumbling, breathing through the saxophone and various effects. The song itself is composed within the framework of 'modal interchange', and like most of the songs on the album, primarily composed purely on the bass - in the search of minimalism. The chorus especially is a personal favorite, with its almost anthem-like melody. Named after the Danish name for the mineral 'cinnaber'.

## **"Malibu"**

A dream of cruising down along the California coast, summer and adventure on the horizon. Cliché perhaps - but couldn't you dream of that too? Dream along here.

The trip starts quietly (after all, it is a vintage open sports car), but as the trip progresses, the landscape opens up more and more, and it turns out that - even though it is a vintage sports car - the engine's got some torque; and we cruise at a good speed towards the sunset.

## **"Whirl"**

Investigates the experience when life whirls you around, and everything almost falls apart - and you eventually have to let go of something in order to find peace again.

Also inspired by Elvin Jones' amazing drumming on Coltrane's Ballads, and the idea that you can play from an intense, quiet (perhaps even understated) ballad approach, but still have tempo, groove, and a dynamic development.

A true studio first take with all the freshness and energy that such a take entails.

## **"The Chalice and the Rising Sun"**

A small suite of three tracks that match each other in mood. The title is a poetic, somewhat dreamlike Dadaistic film, set in a few frames: a dark room - a chalice that is slowly filled by the light of the sunrise, drunk by the listener, and all becomes dark again. A fitting 'fade to black' ending to the album.

## About the album

VINYL/LP released 15<sup>th</sup> DEC 2023 // CD available now (released 1. SEP 2023)

ARTIST: MORTEN HAXHOLM

ALBUM TITEL: AETHER

### LINE UP:

Lubos Soukup - Sax & Clarinet

Rasmus Oppenhagen Krogh - Guitar

Nikolaj Hess - Piano on #2,3,4 & 9

Søren Gemmer - piano on #5 & 6

Steffen Nordenstam - additional guitars, efx and samples on #2 & #5

Jakob Høyer - Drums

Morten Haxholm - Bass, Doublebass & Compositions

Recorded at The Village, Vanløse by Thomas Vang January 2021

Mix by August Wanngren

Mastering by Thomas Eberger & Stockholm Mastering

Picture by Daniel Buchwald

Cover art by Mikkel Dysted

Co-producer: Lubos Soukup.

Music published by Peter Bek at Zack's PUBLISHING  
Distribution by Peter Bek at Zack's MUSIC

HIGH RES PRESS PICTURES: <https://t.ly/zlqe2>

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