

JIHYE LEE Orchestra- DARING MIND **Motéma/ Pias- VÖ: 26.03.2021**



Motéma Music is proud to announce the release of *Daring Mind*, the sophomore album by the **Jihye Lee Orchestra**, which streets on **March 26, 2021**. Produced by Lee, in collaboration with the innovative composer and Secret Society bandleader **Darcy James Argue**, and with renowned trumpeter **Sean Jones** as a key contributor, Lee's Motéma debut showcases the South Korea native's personal and adventurous storytelling approach to large-ensemble jazz over the course of nine spellbinding compositions.

As a follow up to her widely-acclaimed 2017 debut *April*, *Daring Mind* presents selections from Lee's 'Mind' Series, including her BMI Charlie Parker Jazz Composition Prize-winning "Unshakable Mind" and her Manny Albam Commission "Revived Mind." The album reflects her struggles, doubts, joys, and hopes while living in the amazing city of New York. The compositions explore the human mind, heart and soul, the various states of the human psyche from confusion to rage to enlightenment.

Lee describes composition as a form of record-keeping for herself, as the documentation of her life, the process of finding musical equivalents to the images, thoughts and emotions in her mind. She writes first and foremost for herself, to release her feelings, which makes her music deeply personal. "My goal is to invite listeners into my creative world, to relate to my stories, and to reflect on the truth that as humans, we share similar struggles and triumphs regardless of where we come from. It is my hope that we can create genuine connections with each other through art," she says.

A native of South Korea, Lee had no jazz or classical training growing up, and she first found success in Korea performing as an indie pop singer. She graduated from Dongduk Women's University with a degree in Voice Performance, discovering her love of large-ensemble jazz only after beginning her studies at Boston's Berklee College of Music in 2011. Confidently she began to explore her own identity and voice within this exciting, historically rich medium, winning Berklee's Duke Ellington Prize just months after declaring her Jazz Composition major (and again the following year). Though she could never have anticipated this new path, she has followed it to greater heights, moving to New York in 2015 and earning a master's degree at Manhattan School of Music under the guidance of the great Jim McNeely. "Her music is imaginative and creative," says McNeely. "And she's not afraid to take some exciting chances in her writing."

Navigating the transition from pop singer to jazz composer has given Lee a different angle on jazz composition, providing her not only with a lyrical melodic sense but also a way of imagining characters in every composition, and writing memorable themes with which people can identify. Her first instinct is not to find chords and melodies — Lee is not herself an instrumentalist — but rather an idea, image or message, and then find a way to express it through musical elements. All of this and more is realized on *Daring Mind*.

Daring Mind begins with “**Restless Mind**”, which emulates the bustle of New York City with its twisted rhythmic feel and repetitive notes. Featuring Sean Jones and trombonist **Alan Ferber**, the vibrancy and beauty of a pre-COVID city that never slept is on rich display in this dazzling opener. Following is “**Unshakeable Mind**”, winner of the 2018 BMI Charlie Parker Composition Prize. Inspired by the competitive environment of the New York music scene and the effects it has on one's own psyche, “Unshakeable Mind” explores the nature of a determined and persevering spirit, with strong solo and ensemble support from alto saxophonist **Ben Kono**. The gorgeous “**Suji**” comes next. Written for one Lee's dearest friends, this bright composition features only major chords played through chamber-like instrumentation. Kono once again plays a leading role here, as does pianist **Adam Birnbaum**.

Gears shift on the fourth track, “**I Dare You**”, which was commissioned by American entrepreneur Matt Mullenweg. “Since I am not a traditional swing big band style composer, sometimes I face the famous question ‘what is jazz?’” states Lee. That same question arose in an interview with Wayne Shorter by Max Dax in 2014, and his answer is “To me, jazz means: ‘I dare you!’” This is the title of this song and in many ways the inspiration of Lee's entire approach to jazz. “I believe that jazz is not a style or genre, but a daring spirit, being creative by cultivating your instincts.” Tenor saxophonist **Quensin Nachoff** shines on this track which is full of sonic surprises.

The BMI Manny Albam Commission piece “Revived Mind” showcases soloist **Mike Fahie** on trombone. This colorful composition is an homage to nature and Earth, to rebirth and rejuvenation. Track 6, “**Struggle Gives You Strength**” was originally written for Carnegie Hall's NYO Jazz and once again features Sean Jones. On this uplifting and inspiring composition, Lee comments: “Struggle is an essential part of life and it molds us into beautiful individuals with character.”

The final third of *Daring Mind* features the bluesy “**Why Is that**” with solos by Jones and alto saxophonist **Rob Wilkerson**; the dissonant tri-tone filled odyssey “**Dissatisfied Mind**” which ruminates on the negatively that can intrude ones' thoughts; and “**GB**”, a stunning closer inspired by love found and lost. Highly cinematic, the beauty and joy of happy memories slowly gives way to crushing breakdown, before reluctant acceptance sets in. As an aspiring film music composer, this vivid track particularly showcases Lee's great potential in that arena.

With the release of *Daring Mind*, Jihye Lee makes a major statement that will likely propel her, deservedly, to the top echelon of contemporary jazz composers and bandleaders. Late last year, it was announced that Lee earned a 2021 ASCAP Foundation & Symphonic Jazz Orchestra commissioning prize, further defining a clear next step in her bright future. The first single “Struggle Gives You Strength” will be released on February 5th, and the second single, “Revived Mind” will release on March 5th.

Label: Motéma Music Catalogue Number: MTM-0385

Tracklisting:

Relentless Mind (feat. Sean Jones, Alan Ferber) 6:18

Unshakable Mind 9:57

Suji 8:53

I Dare You 5:49

Revived Mind 6:44

Struggle Gives You Strength (feat. Sean Jones) 5:57

Why Is That 5:50

Dissatisfied Mind 5:54

GB 9:24

Produced by Darcy James Argue and Jihye Lee All compositions by Jihye Lee

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Personnel:

Guest artist : Sean Jones (Trumpet)

Reeds: Ben Kono, Rob Wilkerson, Quinsin Nachoff, Jeremy Powell, Carl Maraghi

Trumpets: Brian Pareschi, John Lake, Sean Jones, Alex Norris

Trombones: Mike Fahie, Alan Ferber, Nick Grinder (Mark Patterson 2,5), Jennifer

Wharton Piano: Adam Birnbaum, Haeun Joo 2,5,8

Guitar: Sebastian Noelle

Bass: Evan Gregor

Drums: Mark Ferber

Press Representation (G/A/S):

chateau du pop PR

Constanze Pfeiffer

Bergstrasse 38

D- 88690 Uhldingen

p: +49 7556 9287450

m: +49 177 5142328

www.chateau-du-pop.de

info@chateau-du-pop.de