

# Katolický týdeník 13

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## Colorful Continent of hymns and psalms



*The whole continent of praise and thanks is presented on the album *Continent* by the singer Janne Mark.  
Photo: Zuhai Kocan*

Milan Tesarř

**Janne Mark, a Danish singer, has long been involved in the interpretation of sacred music - both ancient and modern. Now she's current with the album *Kontinent*.**

**T**he German music publishing company ACT focuses mainly on European jazz. In 2018, they took the Danish

author of Christian songs Janne Mark, who recorded the album *Pilgrim* (The Pilgrim) in collaboration with Norwegian jazz trumpeter Arve Henriksen, under their wings. Last year, from spring to late summer, behind the scenes of a pandemic, the couple worked on the sequel. The album was released under the title *Kontinent* and offers listeners sensitively processed hymns as well as modern hymns, where the intimacy of the solo performance is intertwined with spontaneously created orchestral arrangements.

Janne Mark has long been dedicated to old and modern sacred music. For example, the new album included the Scottish Christmas lullaby "Táladh Chríosda" (Christ's Lullaby), allegedly preserved from the 7th century, as well as the hymn "Kingsfold", known from many Anglo-Saxon songbooks in various textual variants (here in version: "I heard Jesus say, 'Come to me and rest ...').

These centuries-tested prayers on the album are complemented by several of the singer's own, i.e. completely contemporary hymns, as well as two compositions by Arve Henriksen with his recitation.

All the songs on the album are connected by the fragility of the presentation. Henriksen worked as a producer in the studio so that the accompanying instruments do not drown any parts of the singer's voice, and at the same time form the most dignified background to the message being conveyed. The basic colors are Henriksen's trumpet, which in some moments resembles a flute, and in the hands of Nils Økland the so-called Hardanger violin, a special Norwegian instrument, compared to ordinary violins equipped with extra strings that are not played, but which vibrate naturally and resonate. The harmonic component is created by Henrik Gunde, who alternates the piano with the harmony, and by Henriksen himself, who wrote the whole brass orchestral parts in some compositions - supposedly spontaneously in the studio. Even in this case, however, the result is decent, as they, in combination with the harmonium, underline the message, but do not overwhelm the human voice as the main instrument of the album. The same goes for doublebass and drums, which rather only color the whole production.

The album *Kontinent* is sung in several languages, but there is no need to understand every word - like many we do not understand every word of Latin prayer. The fervor of the prayer is evident from the singer's recitation and from every tone of Henriksen's trumpet. By the way, it is interesting that jazz techniques, including the most basic, improvisation, are completely at the service of spiritual content. And also in the service of the strong melodies on which the album stands. According to the singer, it is the strong melodies that break the boundaries and find their way into people's hearts. The album *Kontinent* is sung by her as a soloist, very intimate, but it could also serve as an inspiration for singing together as soon as possible.

**Janne Mark & Arve Henriksen: *Kontinent* (ACT Music 2020), available at [actmusic.com](http://actmusic.com), [Deezer](#), [Spotify](#) or [Youtube](#)**

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