

NILS FRAHM

ALL MELODY

In the process of completion, any album not only reveals what it has become but, maybe more importantly, what it hasn't become. *All Melody* was imagined to be so many things over time, and it has been a whole lot, but never exactly what I planned it to be. I wanted to hear beautiful drums, drums I've never seen or heard before, accompanied by human voices, girls, and boys. They would sing a song from this very world and it would sound like it was from a different space. I heard a synthesiser which sounds like a harmonium playing the *All Melody*, melting together with a line of a harmonium sounding like a synthesiser. My pipe organ would turn into a drum machine, while my drum machine would sound like an orchestra of breathy flutes. I would turn my piano into my very voice, and any voice into a ringing string. The music I hear inside me will never end up on a record, as it seems I can only play it for myself.

Luckily, I love all these million tiny decisions that you have to take on the path from imagining music to materialising it. Or, whatever arrives in your hands at this point, suddenly replaces all the possibilities of the new work by its sheer existence. Whatever was soft and flexible turns into something firm. I will have to start imagining again...

After my last concerts in 2016, I was offered to move my studio into Saal 3 at Funkhaus Berlin. The historical East German Funkhaus was built from 1953–1956, and it contains some of the most incredibly sounding recording rooms built to date. Not one of the original 6 music studios was like the other, all made for orchestral music, pop music, experimental music or just voice-over recordings. Every application related to electroacoustics could be found in there, somewhere. It wasn't only a place where the very first audio scientists began to think systematically about studio acoustics, it was also a test-bed for

designing and building all the broadcasting equipment on site. I like to imagine it as a beautiful project in difficult times, as never again so much money, knowledge, and dedication was put into a topic so dear to me.

Today, I am the host of Saal 3, the chamber music complex of Funkhaus designated to solo performances. Lucky me! In 2014 I recorded the Victoria soundtrack here, and I remember being overwhelmed by the most inspiring acoustics I've ever come across. Making it my studio put me into a year of building and renovating a historical space. In my mind, it needed to be absolutely perfect, not just for recording my work, but also to be an inspiration for other studio owners and the small Funkhaus community. After we did new cabling, electricity, woodwork, and new acoustic treatment in the control rooms, we started building a custom mixing console. Matthias Hahn has been building hand-crafted and hand-picked studio gear for my studio and live setup since 2011, and ever since we have been dreaming of building our own "mixer". It became an obsession. Together with Benjamin Maus, an expert for programming and creative electronics development, they kicked off a twelve-month lasting engineering marathon to finish the piece in time for the album mixdown.

In these last two years, I had the time and fortune to realise so many of my musical passions. The old Funkhaus consists of 3 old reverb chambers, rooms you can send music into through a speaker. The reverbed sound is then picked up by microphones and sent back to the control room, which was the first way to produce ambience in recorded music. In my imagination, it still sounds better than any other analog or digital reverb which was produced later in time. I was able to use it all over the place, often being so moved by its sound that I

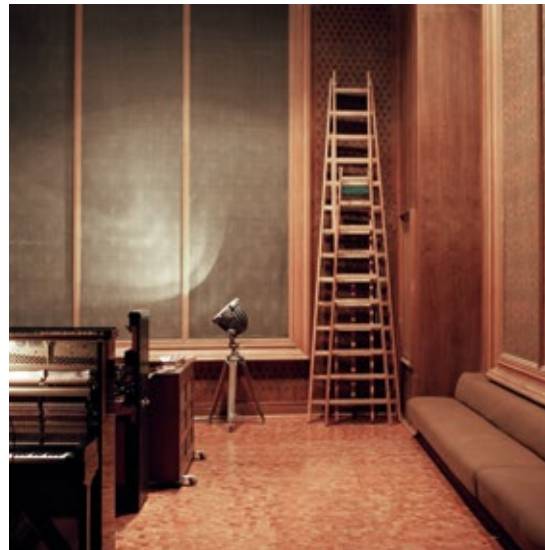
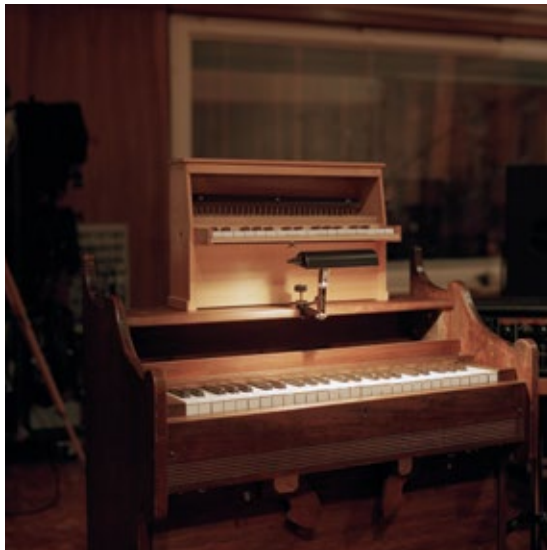
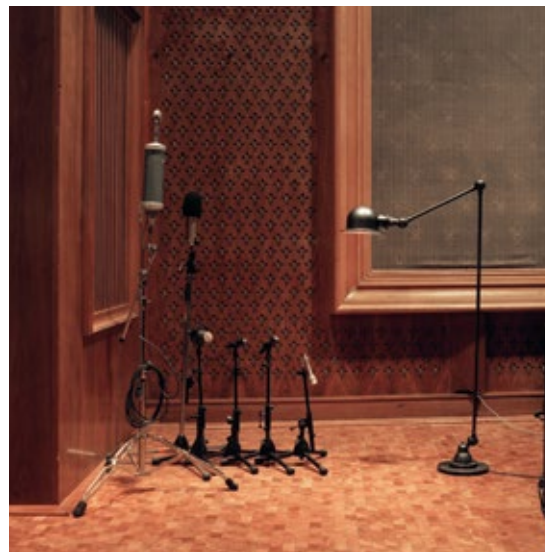
forgot about working at all. My self-made pipe organ found its own little isolated room here, where I could record this very quiet instrument under ideal circumstances. I found out that it is able to produce fantastic percussive sounds when you would feed it with very very short midi signals. I took the unfinished album to a small improvised studio in Mallorca where my friend Tobias discovered an old dry well by accident, which had a very long artificial reverb of beautiful quality. Again we built a reverb out of it, and we had to go out there many times to send more tracks of the album through it. Working with all these possibilities made working on this album a rich experience. I decided that my old studio under my bed (Durtun Studio) wasn't needed anymore, so I took it down and merged it with Saal 3.

Beautifully, all these places contain space for friends. I wanted human voices on this record, and I knew this for some time. Together with Chris Sharp from the Barbican and Kieran Brunt, we formed Shards, a choir ensemble based in London in 2016 for the Barbican festival *Possibly Colliding*. On this occasion, we played a live concert together that I will never forget. I was lucky enough to get them over to Berlin later on for some incredible days of recording in the freshly setup Saal 3. Now that I had broken my unspoken rule of never including featured artists on my solo albums, I felt free to invite more guests to the recording sessions. Some new music in my head arose... I heard different sounding percussions, a trumpet, strings and a deep bass marimba. I was able to sit back and listen to them playing music I was never able to realise on my own. And the more I listened to them, the less I would play. This record includes what I think sticks out and describes my recent musical discoveries in the best possible way I could imagine.

Nils Frahm



The control room of Saal 3 in Block B at Funkhaus in Berlin. This room became a second home for me during the last year. ALL MELODY was mixed on KONSUL 1, a custom-made mixing board, built around traditional Danner broadcasting modules. KONSUL 1 was built by Matthias H. Franz Hahn and his team during 2016 and 2017. Working on this desk changed the tone of my productions for the better, which I appreciate a lot. I am looking forward to growing old with it.



top In the back room you can see my custom-made "Peterson-Maus-Hahn" touring organ which has been on the road with me since 2015. I had a great time using it all over this record, mostly to create percussive sounds, like on the track HUMAN RANGE or in the second half of SUNSON. The most prominent appearance of this versatile instrument can be found on KALEIDOSCOPE. The organ is similar to a traditional church organ but can be controlled via Midi in order to make it sound out of this world. The organ is close-mic'd, similar to my piano recording technique.

bottom A toy piano on top of one of my harmoniums. I like to make acoustic instruments sound like a synthesiser, and the synthesiser to sound like a human voice.

top And the old lamp said, "Be patient, little microphones, one day you will all be grown up!"

bottom The recording room has space for my entire collection of instruments. I was able to set up my whole museum and keep it all ready to record during the past couple of years. The ceiling is up to 22 feet high and the key to a natural and balanced acoustic. None of the walls nor the ceiling have parallelities, so you never hear ringing frequencies. For the first time, I did not need to close-mic my instruments. I was able to enjoy the ambience of the room.



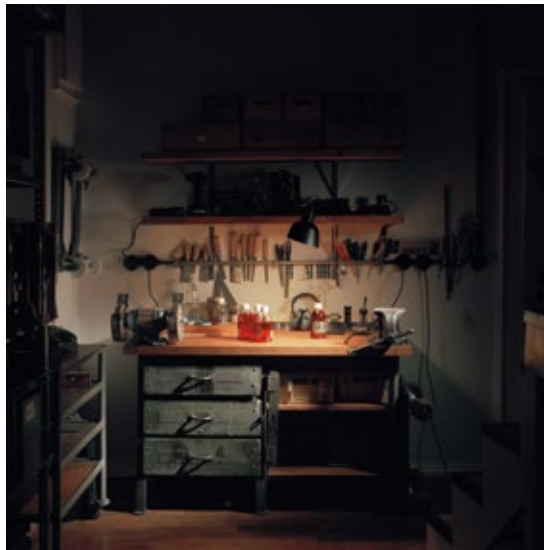
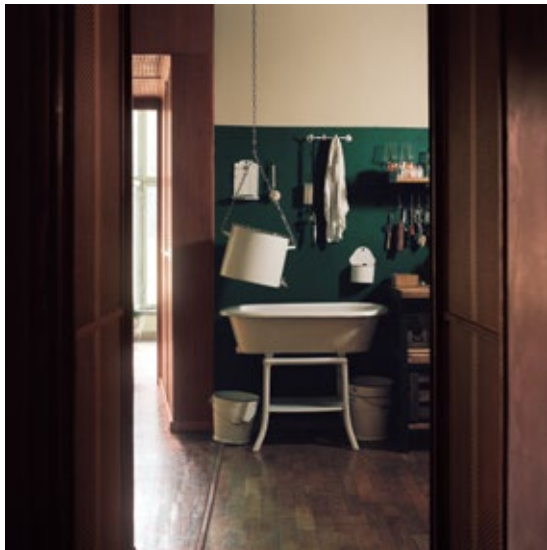
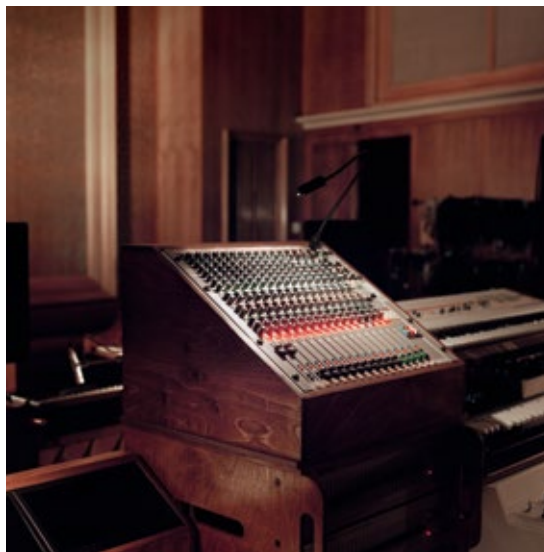
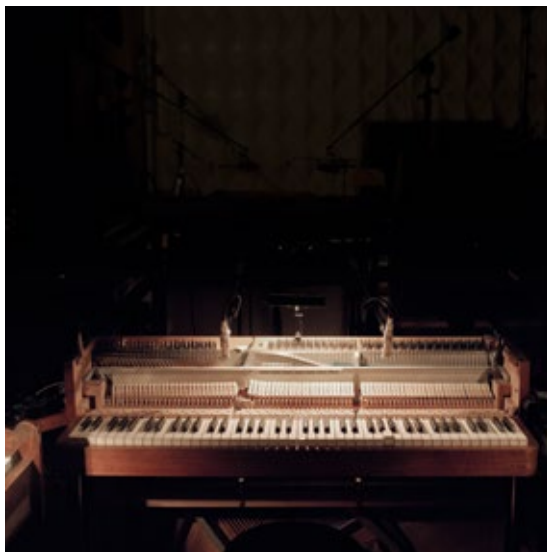
Sometimes the smallest instruments have the biggest sound.



My studio is now reconnected to the big reverb chamber of Funkhaus. It was a storage space for the last 30 years, which broke my heart. Any natural reverb sounds more convincing than an artificial reverb. How does it work? Take one speaker and two microphones, set them up, send music through the speaker into the chamber and listen to what the microphones hear. Listen to the reverb on this record, and it is most likely created in that room.



Emails in the fifties? Anything modern looks out of place at Funkhaus.



top Who would have thought that the only piano used on this record is actually a pianette which I bought in Denmark for some music rehearsals back in the day. I bought it for 50 Euros, put it in my car and brought it to Carsten Schulz who turned it into a jewel. We think it is a miracle how inspiring this piano is. It tells you what you should play on it. The piano becomes the composer, the composer becomes the listener.

bottom The most important instrument in any studio is the kitchen, admit it!

top More mixing desks? Most of the album was played in one take. I set everything up as I would do when I am playing live shows. I was playing and improvising for hours, recording all of it. Finding the magic moments became the more difficult task. Susanne Stephan spent the last year helping me build and design furniture for the studio. All the beautiful wood. Thank you!

bottom The second most important instrument on this album is my workshop...



I still remember the day when I traded my first digital master keyboard for a Fender Rhodes, a Juno 60 and a Moog Prodigy. These instruments have been with me since my school days.



And if you ever need a cable...

All music written and produced by NILS FRAHM at Saal 3, Funkhaus Berlin, during 2016 and 2017 and played on pianos, harmonium, celeste, percussion, mellotron, pipe organ, juno, sh2, taurus, drum machines, ps3100, 4voice, modular, effects.

12 piece choir ensemble SHARDS conducted and co-arranged by KIERAN BRUNT
soprano LUCY CRONIN, BETHANY HORAK-HALLETT, HÉLOÏSE WERNER
alto KATE HUGGETT, SARAH LATTO, ROSE MARTIN
tenor KIERAN BRUNT, OLIVER MARTIN-SMITH, SAM OLADEINDE
bass DAN D'SOUZA, JOHN LAICHENA, AUGUSTUS PERKINS RAY

cello ANNE MÜLLER
viola VIKTOR ORRI ÁRNASON
trumpet RICHARD KOCH
bass marimba SVEN KACIREK
drums and percussion TATU RÖNNKÖ
timpani, gongs, bass drum, melodic percussion SYTZE PRUIKSMA
processed guitar, unheard sounds ERIK K. SKODVIN

recording, mixing by NILS FRAHM
assisting engineers TERENCE GOODCHILD, MATTHIAS H. FRANZ HAHN and ANTONIO PULLI
piano technician CARSTEN SCHULZ
mastering by ZINO MIKOREY
all tracks published by MANNERS MCDADE MUSIC PUBLISHING LIMITED
design by TORSTEN POSSELT at FELD
photographs by LIA DARJES

Everything you hear on this record has been recorded specifically for this occasion. It is all played or made with real things.
To preserve its essence, this album has been carefully mixed and mastered at lower volume in order to keep all of its original dynamics.

Adam Heron, Alain Mongeau, Alexander Schneider, André de Ridder, Andrea Belfi, Andrea Heil, Andreas at Schnittstelle, Andreas Gottschald, Anja Caspary, Anna Jaskiewicz, Anne Müller, Aram Coen, Ariane Holz, Arne Fischer, Arthur Jeffes, Asterix Westphal, Augustus Perkins Ray, Barry Grint, Ben Czernek, Ben Kamsma, Ben Lukas Boysen, Benjamin Maus, Benoit Toulemonde, Bernd Rohde, Bethany Horak-Hallett, Blue Kirkhope, Cafe Sant Angelo, Carsten Schulz, Catherine Manners, Chad Crouch, Chris Ergen, Chris Sharp, Christopher Willits, Claudia Gödke, Conrad Hensel, Damián Romero, Dan D'Souza, Daniel at Wavemeister, Daniel Fernandez, David Klavins, David Poege, Dawn of Midi, Devendra Banhart, DJ Shadow, Dustin O'Halloran, Eberhard Ross, Efterklang, Eike Eikermann, Erik K. Skodvin, Erwin Strich, Everyone at Accente, Everyone at Agentur Grimm, Everyone at Erased Tapes, Everyone at FELD, Everyone at Finetunes, Everyone at Forte Music, Everyone at Funkhaus Berlin, Everyone at Indigo, Everyone at Konkurrent, Everyone at Manners Mc Dade, Everyone at Noodles, Everyone at Redeye, Everyone at Salzbrenner, Everyone at Steinberg, Everyone at Xtended, Fabrice Martin, Felix Adelman, Francesco Donnadello, Frank Michelmann, Frank Schültge Blumm, Frederic Gmeiner, Gerhard Steinke, Gilles Peterson, Glenn Max, Greg Haines, Hans Jürgen Weidemann, Harriet Moss, Helen Rosello, Héloïse Werner, Herr Huhn, Holger Jackisch, Ines Barking, Janek Sprachta, Janice Wong, Jason Beck, Jean Szymczak, Jeffrey Caston, Jens at Taste & Technik, Jeroen Vrijhoef, Joachim Kiesler, Johanna Hoehne, Johannes Huhmann, John Laichena, Jon Hopkins, Jonathan Weiss at OMA, Jordan Verzar, JR, Judy Miller Silverman, Julia Foster, Julian Rosefeldt, Julian Schoen, Julie Blake, Juste Survilaite, Kai Hilpert, Karl Morse, Karsten Schuhl, Kate Huggett, Kate Lesta, Kate Price, Keiran Brunt, Keith Kenniff, Kelly Tivnan, Kirsten Dehlholm, Klaas Schippers, Klaus Und Bettina Neubauer, László Széll, Laura Beschi, Lea Pittman, Lia Darjes, Liam Muralev, Lucy Cronin, Lupo, Malthe Ivarsson, Marije Brouwer, Mario Garcia Torres, Martin Offik, Martyn Heyne, Mary Anne Hobbs, Matthias at Vintage City, Matthias H. Franz Hahn, Mattias Nilsson, Max Jurisch, Michael Bock, Michael Muller, Michael O'Neal, Michael Zierenberg, Mikael Pass, Mikael Simpson, Monique Recknagel, Nico de Rooij, Noodles & Noodles, Oke Göttlich, Ólafur Arnalds, Oliver Doerell, Oliver Martin-Smith, Paul Glancy, Pepijn Caudron, Perry Harrell, Peter Broderick, Peter Dietz, Peter Drefahl, Peter Liversidge, Peter Petersohn, Pierre Temple, Renaat Vandepapeliere, Richard Koch, Richie Hawtin, Rick Rubin, Rob Lowe, Robert de Niro, Rose Martin, Ruby Wasmuth, Rudi Linhard, Sabine Armengol, Sam Oladeinde, Sam Valentin IV, Sarah Latto, Scott Kaplan, Sean Horton, Sebastian Burford, Sebastian Schipper, Sepp Singwald, Simon Keeler, Sofia Ilyas, Stefan at Clicks & Clocks, Stephanie Piehl, Steven Thomassen, Stuart Bailes, Susanne Stephan, Sven Kacirek, Sven Vâth, Sytze Pruiksma, Tahsin Erkan, Tatu Rönkkö, Terence Goodchild, Terukuni Makabe, Thilo Wierzewski, Thomas at Schneiders Laden, Tim Palmer, Tobias Götz, Todd Walker, Torsten Posselt, Uli Baronowsky, Uwe Fabich, Vance Galloway, Viktor Orri Árnason, Woodkid, Wyndham Wallace, Zeki Klaviertransporte, Zino Mikorey – thank you all.

Special thanks to my dear wife and my wonderful family.

Without Nina Frahm, Felix Grimm, Robert Raths and Arne Römer this album would have been much harder to achieve. Thank you for your critique and ongoing inspiration.

A1 THE WHOLE UNIVERSE WANTS TO BE TOUCHED

choir SHARDS all other instruments NILS FRAHM

2 SUNSON

bass marimba SVEN KACIREK viola VIKTOR ORRI ÁRNASON drums and percussion TATU RÖNKKÖ all other instruments NILS FRAHM

3 A PLACE

choir SHARDS viola VIKTOR ORRI ÁRNASON cello ANNE MÜLLER percussion TATU RÖNKKÖ all other instruments NILS FRAHM

B1 MY FRIEND THE FOREST

bass marimba SVEN KACIREK cello ANNE MÜLLER all other instruments NILS FRAHM

2 HUMAN RANGE

trumpet RICHARD KOCH choir SHARDS viola VIKTOR ORRI ÁRNASON cello ANNE MÜLLER drums and percussion TATU RÖNKKÖ
bass marimba SVEN KACIREK timpani, gongs, bass drum, melodic percussion SYTZE PRUIKSMA all other instruments NILS FRAHM

3 FOREVER CHANGELESS

bass marimba SVEN KACIREK all other instruments NILS FRAHM

C1 ALL MELODY

bass marimba SVEN KACIREK all other instruments NILS FRAHM

2 #2

bass marimba SVEN KACIREK all other instruments NILS FRAHM

D1 MOMENTUM

choir SHARDS timpani, gongs, bass drum, melodic percussion SYTZE PRUIKSMA all other instruments NILS FRAHM

2 FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

trumpet RICHARD KOCH cello ANNE MÜLLER bass marimba SVEN KACIREK all other instruments NILS FRAHM

3 KALEIDOSCOPE

choir SHARDS all other instruments NILS FRAHM

4 HARM HYMN

all instruments NILS FRAHM

