**Kira Skov takes us through the songs on Spirit Tree**

***We Won’t Go Quietly* – featuring Bonnie ‘Prince’ Billy**

I wrote this song during the first part of the lockdown, in solidarity with the movement that followed the public murder of George Floyd. It’s both a protest song and a reflection on the human trauma loop, in which history repeats itself over and over again. We deliberately chose to preserve the raw sound from the original demo recording. I tried to create a mood of ‘a window, open to the world…’ with people shouting and cars driving by. The song was recorded with a single microphone in the small country house where I ended up writing a lot of the material for this album. There’s a roots-music-mentality in the production, and we decided to work with it, building on the original demo recording. We reconstructed the B-part of the song, and sent it to Bonnie “Prince” Billy (Will Oldham) who added vocals from his home in Kentucky. Will's voice has a very special energy – there’s something ethereal about his singing, and I knew he was a perfect choice to ***convey*** the unifying message in the lyrics. He also appeared on THE ECHO OF YOU, where we sang the title track and *Lilac Sky* together.

***In The End* – featuring Steen Jørgensen**

I’ve worked with Steen several times and I think he’s one of the most significant voices we have in Denmark. He started out in the iconic punk group “The Sods,” but over the years he has grown to become quite the crooner, a tradition that harkens back to later-period Leonard Cohen. They both share a bit of the same deep, powerful masculinity in their voices. The song illustrates the dance between the man and woman and the energy it triggers with a slight wink.

***Dusty Kate* – featuring Mette Lindberg**

A tribute to two iconic singers, Dusty Springfield and Kate Bush, in a duet with Mette Lindberg (The Asteroids Galaxy Tour). As musical figures, Dusty and Kate have both had an impact on me as a songwriter and singer, as well as leaving their own unique and significant marks on music history. The idea for the song came one evening at my house where we had a little party with friends sitting around and singing. Mette's vocals reminded me of Kate Bush and she sat there, so beautiful, like a shining light, inspiring me in the moment and through the next day, when I finished writing the song. I think it’s a perfect fit.

***Pick Me Up* – featuring Stine Grøn**

Stina Grøn, who is one half of the highly celebrated duo, Irah, has an almost supernatural voice. It's something very special that one could almost call “world singing” – unspecified and outside of linguistic conventions. It’s impossible to say exactly where it belongs or comes from – there’s something eastern about it, with a touch of Bulgaria or the Balkans. We sing the whole song together in an arrangement that lays her voice around mine like a blurred shadow. It’s more sounds than words, but has a beautiful effect. It’s a great gift to have Stine along on this song.

***Idea Of Love* – featuring Mark Lanegan**

I've been a big fan of Mark Lanegan's voice for a long time, although I had never had any direct contact with him before just recently. When we hooked up, he was very positive – he loved the project, and wanted to be a part of it. Instead of recording a new track, we decided on *Idea of ​​Love*, which Mark really liked. This song is originally found on WHEN WE WERE GENTLE from 2013 and is the only song on the record that wasn’t composed for this release. I think this interpretation exudes a bit of late Johnny Cash from his American Recordings, and the song fits well with Mark's voice.

***Horses* – featuring Jenny Wilson and John Parish**

I didn’t know Jenny beforehand but have always been a fan of her as a performer and artist. The song has a lightness and optimistic tone to it, alternating between major and minor sections where John Parish’s voice appears in a smoldering low-end plea. The outreach piece is inspired by Martin Luther King's speech with the iconic line: *“I’ve Been to the Mountaintop.”* I think it has an uplifting, rebellious mood. The chorus of voices and the groove is both gloomy and almost danceable at the same time.

***Tidal Heart* – featuring Marie Fisker**

Marie and I go way back. We have been friends since my early teens and have always shared something special. In 2014, we released a duo album entitled THE CABIN PROJECT and have developed an interplay in which our voices merge and become one as they move around each other. It’s liberating to sing together. *Tidal Heart* is another song about wanting to indulge in love, but not quite being able to. We all have a that tidal mechanism embedded within us. I think it's a beautiful song that plays itself.

***Some Kind of Lovers* – featuring Bonnie “Prince” Billy**

A love song. A snapshot of the fleeting moment when love is there and one can see what could be, but also realizes that it will never happen. It encapsulates the fleeting encounter which is stated in the title. Not an enduring affair, but a moment with its function.

***Love Is A Force* – featuring Stine Green and Bill Callahan**

Thematically in line with the two previous tracks. A reflection on love as a force. It can be both destructive and has the power to lift the darkness. We try to illustrate this in the music, in a meeting between two polar opposites. One can almost hear the disintegration of relationships and conventions in music. It moves from something smoldering and ominous to something bright and spherical. Stine's light voice and Bill's iconic dark timbre function as positive commentary, eventually arriving – with a sense of wonder – at what we thought we would have learned, but which in reality isn’t permanently understood, even as we grow older.

***Deep Poetry* – featuring Lionel Liminana**

I wrote the music for the first part of this song with Silas Tinglef. We sent the material to Lionel, who then wrote his part by responding in his native French tongue. The goal was that he should come up with a commentary that would be added to the song. Lionel says he can't sing, so he does more of a close-speaking role. I really like his contribution!

***Burn Down The House –* featuring Marie Fisker**

A song about sunken love that also becomes a showdown with time – burn it all down and move on. Melodically, it is built up like a classic evergreen. Billie Holiday hovers into Tom Waits singing *Waltzing Matilda*. It's somewhat jazzy and rocking, swampy. Lady Day has left her mark.

***Ode To The Poets* – featuring Mette Lindberg**

The song emerged as an imagined dialogue between Jack Kerouac and Dylan Thomas. The two poets speak from different universes and both have something to say from their respective times and places. It’s a tribute to various poets and writers who have been important to me – summing up the energy of this album as a form of family tree, grown out of various sources of inspiration. I think it makes sense that it’s Mette who sings a song about “The Grand Old Men” because she has that lightness in her and thematically, we build from our homage to iconic woman, here giving it up for the strong male literary voices.

***Marie* – featuring John Parish**

A declaration of love to my sweetest friend, Marie Fisker. Slightly naïve and unpretentious in its form. A simple song, perfect for John’s voice, so I ended up just singing on the choruses and am very happy with the way it turned out.

***Theme for Lenny* – featuring Lenny Kaye**

It's not a song, but rather a theme I wrote and which now functions as the conclusion to the record. Lenny Kaye has been a dream friend for many years and is an incredibly wise and knowledgeable guy. He’s music historian who has written several books about the American music culture and who, in addition to being a regular guitarist for Patti Smith throughout her career, has also written for Rolling Stone Magazine for more than 30 years. Here, he performs a form of Spoken Word with free association over the theme of “duets.” It's a nice ending that sort of sums up the whole project to me!