



Etta Scollo

Nirgendland (Nessunluogo)

Artist:	Etta Scollo
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The connection between language and music is as old as human history. In rituals, religious ceremonies, or storytelling, language and music merge into a unity that goes far beyond the mere transmission of information – a tradition that spans from antiquity to the present day. In language and music, people and their life paths meet, discovering connections where once there was estrangement.

The new album „Nirgendland (Nessunluogo)“ by Etta Scollo, released by Jazzhaus Records in January 2025, follows in this tradition. In it, Etta Scollo translates the poetry of Mascha Kaléko into music to commemorate the 50th anniversary of her death. The story of Etta Scollo's encounter with Kaléko's work began in 2007 in Catania, Sicily. In a small bookstore, the singer discovered a bilingual poetry collection by Mascha Kaléko, whose poetry captivated her. "I always carried the book with me and felt as if her poems accompanied me like a good friend," says Etta Scollo about the experience. The idea to musically interpret Kaléko's poetry took years to mature until Scollo found the right setting to honor the poet. With the support of cultural institutions like the renowned Villa Massimo in Rome, where the artist spent a two-month residency, the concept was distilled and shaped further - also with the invitation of guests like actress Eva Mattes, with whom Scollo recorded two duets for "Nirgendland (Nessunluogo)". The ideological support from the Exilmuseum Foundation in Berlin also played a significant role in realizing the album.

The central focus of the album is the question of home and identity - themes that permeate Kaléko's life and work and are deeply rooted in Etta Scollo's artistic exploration. Kaléko, who fled to the USA in 1938 to escape the Nazi regime, endured the painful experience of exile and the associated sense of uprootedness. For Etta, who has moved between different cultures and places since her youth and now lives between Sicily and Berlin, Kaléko's verses also resonate with her own life choices and quest for belonging - albeit in a different, modern, European-democratic context. "Zur Heimat erkor ich mir die Liebe," reads one of Kaléko's poems most meaningful to Scollo, "Die frühen Jahre," which Scollo set to music as the first piece for "Nirgendland (Nessunluogo)". This line became the anchor for the entire project.

The title song, "Nirgendland" inspired by Kaléko's poem "Kein Kinderlied" forms the heart of the album. In it, Kaléko writes: " Die Wälder sind verschwunden, die Häuser sind verbrannt. Hab keinen mehr gefunden. Hat keiner mich erkannt. Und als der fremde Vogel schrie: bin ich davongerannt. Wohin ich immer reise, ich komm nach Nirgendland." This song, performed a cappella, deals with the loneliness and disorientation that Kaléko experienced during her exile. At the same time, it is a powerful

commentary on our present political reality, subtly yet noticeably resonant throughout the album. „Nirgendland (Nessunluogo)“ thus becomes a musical memorial against division and for remembrance.

Musically, „Nirgendland (Nessunluogo)“ is a work that unites various styles and genres, as Etta Scollo seeks the sound shape in each poem that suits Kaléko's words. Through jazzy tones, elements of chanson, and intense vocal pieces, Scollo and her distinguished guests span an arc that reflects the diversity and complexity of the poems while allowing each piece to feel like a musical diorama, granting access to Kaléko and her world. Artists like clarinetist Tara Bouman, cellist Susanne Paul, and German songwriter Dota Kehr each make unique contributions to this album, characterized by a sense of community



and collaboration. Internationally renowned musicians such as Belgian vibraphonist Els Vandeweyer and actress Maddalena Crippa also shaped the unique sound of „Nirgendland (Nessunluogo)“.

Scollo is especially moved to thank Carmen Würth, who has followed and continuously supported her work since a first encounter in Palermo 20 years ago. The project "Homage to Mascha Kaléko" is a personal concern of hers. Only one man and one choir join this group of women: Ferdinand von Seebach, who revised the compositions and layout of the scores and contributed as a guest pianist, and the choir of the Albert Einstein Gymnasium and its director Wolfgang Gerhardt Acquarone, who lent their voices in Italian and German to the piece "Inventar" - a poem about the catastrophic impacts of war on the future of younger generations.

„Nirgendland (Nessunluogo)“ is much more than a musical album or a setting of literature born out of admiration. It is an artistic project that Etta Scollo sees as one of the central milestones of her career. Her multifaceted interpretation of Mascha Kaléko's poetry demonstrates how timeless and powerful the poet's words remain. In music, these words become a language that transcends boundaries - „Nirgendland (Nessunluogo)“ is an intimate and yet universal work, where Kaléko's words find a new home in Scollo's music, reaching far beyond the exile of personal experience.

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In 2025, Etta Scollo will also present „Nirgendland (Nessunluogo)“ as part of her live performances featuring prestigious guests. The currently confirmed dates are the following:

19.01.2025	DE, Berlin – Gorki Theater (Premiere with Corinna Harfouch)
19.02.2025	DE, Freiburg – Jazzhaus
20.02.2025	DE, Karlsruhe – Tollhaus (with Corinna Harfouch)
28.03.2025	DE, Neuhausen – Schloss Neuhausen
03.06.2025	DE, Künzelsau – Carmen Würth Forum (with Corinna Harfouch)



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