

UTE LEMPER – „Time Traveler“

Artist:	Ute Lemper
Title of the album:	Time Traveler
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Life is a song and it wants to be sung. Ute Lemper, the New York-based German singer and dancer, is renowned for her interpretations of Brecht Weill songs; she slipped into the skin of Marlene Dietrich and has made a name for herself worldwide as a musical performer and specialist for the repertoire of the 1920s. The richer the versatile artist's palette became, the more she became longingly aware of what else was slumbering inside of her, waiting to be shared with the world. More than anything else, the need to sing about her innermost self was becoming increasingly more urgent. "Time Traveler" is not the first album on which Ute Lemper sings her own material and yet, since the story of this collection of songs already began 23 years ago, it is a turning point in her self-perception. In many ways, the year 2000 was a new beginning for Ute Lemper, a year in which she freed herself from the cocoon of her historical repertoire and found herself in her songs. The album "Punishing Kiss" from that year still consisted of songs that other artists had specifically tailored to her. "I thought to myself, there's no reason at all why I can't sit down at the piano and write myself" she says, recapping that turning point. While working on "Punishing Kiss," she met her future husband Todd Turkisher, who had his own studio in New York's Chelsea district. There, Ute Lemper's first self-composed songs were created and recorded on an analog tape machine. For various reasons, however, these songs were not released at the time. They disappeared into the basement, gathering dust for the time being. The album "Between Yesterday and Tomorrow", with original compositions by Ute was eventually released in 2008. However, these were not the songs written eight years earlier. Subsequently, she set texts by Charles Bukowski, Pablo Neruda and Paulo Coelho to music for three very different albums and other projects followed.

By mere chance, the boxes of tapes that had disappeared two decades earlier reappeared in her in-laws' basement in 2021. But the original tape machine no longer existed and the songs could not be played back. As luck would have it, a cassette with a backup copy turned up and, upon hearing these songs again, Ute and Todd embarked on their journey back through time. Thrilled, they arranged for the original tapes to be digitized. "We listened to the songs and agreed that it was worth trying to revive them," the singer recounts today with euphoria, as if she had discovered this hidden treasure only yesterday. "However, this wasn't possible with all of the songs, some of which were just too antiquated. But others still had a contemporary pulse that

interested me. We did tweak some of these songs in terms of production but even then, it was clear to me that we couldn't make an album from these old pieces alone. Then one morning I felt the impulse to write new songs again, there was a spark of intuition, additionally inspired by age. The first song that came was 'Time Traveler,' because, for me, going back and unfolding this 23-year-old crease in time really is time travel."

Ute Lemper doesn't don a mask here but delves into the panopticon of her own life with all its highs and lows, translating joys and pain, longings and their fulfillment into words and music. Through the songs, many encounters with herself at different points in her life became possible. "I've lived through a lot in the past 23 years, spinning incessantly around my own axis, but all of that has to be reflected upon from the perspective of the present." With "Time Traveler" Ute Lemper accomplishes the



unusual feat that, for listeners, the 23 years which lie between the individual songs aren't obvious at all. The present in the past and the past in the present merge as if by osmosis. In the three old songs, Ute Lemper has partially changed the depth of focus lyrically and musically; on the other hand, the seven new songs fully engage with life experiences without corrupting them. She leaves it to the listener to identify the joints between the layers of time for themselves.

"As you get older," she says Ute Lemper about the way her own two respective life and personality phases interpenetrate, "you constantly uncover new secrets, and these secrets can be so much better illuminated in lyrics and music. The Ute of old learns from the new Ute that less is always more, and that the quiet is always more fascinating than the loud. The lyrics must contain secrets which allow listeners to rediscover secrets of their own. I still carry the young Ute in me but have the opportunity now to allow her more room.

With her new album, Ute Lemper emancipates herself musically from all categories. Depending on socialization and personal preferences one can hear these songs as pop, rock, jazz, soul or chanson, all of these at once, or simply just as Ute Lemper. She is no longer ready to live up to any expectations, but rather draws inspiration from songs that she herself enjoys listening to. This includes references to artists and bands like Hiatus Kaiyote, John Legend, Joni Mitchell, Sarah McLachlan, Annie Lennox, Erykah Badu or Robert Glasper but without attempting to copy any of them.

All songs are one hundred percent Ute Lemper. In some pieces she takes risks in terms of production and sound, initially luring the listener onto a completely wrong path, such as in the title track; in others she conceals small



surprising details in the production, putting the songs, herself and not least of all the auditory perception to the test over and over again.

"Time Traveler" is a very personal album, but its message extends far beyond Ute's own life experience. As society narrows our perception down to a moment that seems to be ever shorter, we forget the importance of taking the past on board and learning from it. "Progress is gaining more and more speed, and we are not encouraged to look in the rearview mirror," postulates Ute Lemper. "As soon as we embed our lives a little bit more in the past, we learn some interesting things. The more I involve myself with the young Ute, the more I can grasp why I do all of this in the first place."

With "Time Traveler," Ute Lemper has given a wonderful gift to herself. And yet, first and foremost, it is an album that functions like a signpost. In the unsparing self-honesty with which, in a most accessible way, Ute Lemper reflects on her life, it's possible for most listeners to find themselves as well.

UTE LEMPER – Time Traveler

1	Time Traveler	04:06
2	In My Flame	04:40
3	Moving On	03:58
4	Magical Stone	04:36
5	At The Reservoir	04:53
6	Little Face - The Sequel	04:09
7	Man With No Face	03:45
8	Envie d'amour	03:23
9	Cry In The Dark	03:29
10	The Gift	03:46

All musc & lyrics Ute Lemper

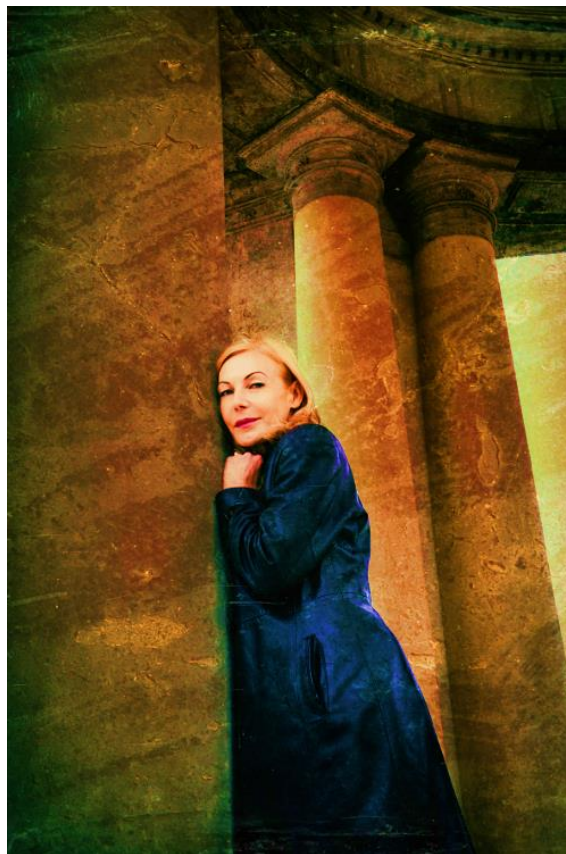
Produced by Ute Lemper & Todd Turkisher

Original Analog Recording at Todd's Studio, NYC
summer of 2000, are engineered by Todd Turkisher
and Ute Lemper

All new recordings 2021-2022 In our living room,
NYC. Analog time travel tape transfers by Steve
Rosenthal at The Magic Shop, Brooklyn, NY.

Additional present time production/editing Alex
Poeppel 2021-2022 and Ari Raskin 2022

Mixed by Kevin Killen, Ute Lemper, Alex Poeppel, Todd Turkisher 2022



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