

# Danish Review

Issue 2

Summer 2013

**Danish Coffee Culture**

**Meatless Meals in Copenhagen**

**Mixing Languages: Nephew**

**A Trip to Christiania**

**Reviews of Contemporary Danish Books**



# Danish Review

## The Team

This magazine was created at UCL, London, by Teaching Fellow Jesper Hansen, together with PhD student Pei-Sze Chow. We were helped by a dedicated team of MA and PhD students without whose help we could not have made the magazine: Sara Cass, Harry Evans and Tom Hoctor. I want to send them my most sincere thanks!

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# Danish Review

## Editorial

Welcome to Danish Review 2013, whose focus is markedly different from last year's. This year's focus is very much on Copenhagen: Food, Music and Drugs.

I was a little concerned when I first heard about the various topics for this year's Danish Review: would they be interesting? Would they be relevant? Would they be nuanced or just your average clichés?

With the magazine being finished I am no longer the least bit worried. I have never before thought about vegan-Copenhagen, and though I knew about hip cafés I never realised just how much thought and expertise were required to get me my daily cup of coffee.

And that is what I hope Danish Review can continue to do: show sides of Denmark from different points of view, not just from that of the curious traveller for whom everything is shrouded in mystery, but from people who are knowledgeable about the culture but see it from the outside.

I hope you will enjoy the magazine,

Jesper Hansen  
18 July 2013

## Danish Review aims to:

Act as a point of reference for students of Danish around the world;

Tie more closely together and form an early career network of people studying Danish and people working with Danish around the world;

Allow students of Danish the opportunity to publish their work before they have a PhD;

Allow people who are interested in an area to come forth and write about their knowledge.



Cover image: 'Copenhagen seen from the City Hall clocktower at night', 2008  
Photographer: Bill Ebbesen

## The Coffee Collective

Harry Evans interviews winner of the World Barista Championship 2006 and co-owner of The Coffee Collective Klaus Thomsen. Where is contemporary Danish coffee culture heading?

Danish culture has recently taken a turn towards that of 'hipsters', with cycling and grød - literally porridge: a recent trend to create speciality porridge, with unique and bizarre combinations taking hold, especially in the nation's capital. In fact, Danish - and, more broadly, Scandinavian - culture has recently been infallible in its trend-setting possibilities. One only has to look at Sarah Lund's jumpers and Nordic furniture to see this phenomenon at work. The take-up for speciality coffee - with its devotion to sourcing the best beans, roasting them with superb attention to detail and brewing in weird and wonderful instruments - has been comparatively slow in Denmark.

'London has been very lucky', Klaus Thomsen tells me in his impeccable English. 'There are so many cafe chains'. In fact, Klaus started his coffee days in a Starbucks in London: an ironic, if unsurprising start to a prestigious career. 'This was in 2001 and I didn't know better back then!' In fact, London as a whole didn't know

better about quality coffee, but Klaus contemplates, 'having a Starbucks or Coffee Republic on every corner started getting people interested in coffee'. This, in turn, laid the groundwork for a really successful speciality coffee business environment. In Copenhagen, however, 'people don't go out as much for lunch. There's not this culture of popping out of the office at lunchtime to get a coffee and some food'. This is changing, Klaus mentions, and more and more people are taking time at lunch to sample coffee in Copenhagen.





Klaus has the experience to speak knowledgeably about these developments, as he became co-owner of his first coffee shop in Copenhagen five years ago together with three colleagues. Since then The Coffee Collective has grown to three shops across Copenhagen and has gone from strength-to-strength as a roaster, now being served in coffee shops in London, next to some of the best beans available. Despite this expansion, Klaus insists that it was never their intention to become too big. *'We don't want to be huge; for us it's all about creating new and exciting coffee experiences. In Copenhagen, there's a real danger for us of flooding the market'*. Copenhagen is a moderate-sized market, but the mechanisms in place for the coffee industry are gargantuan and so if The Coffee Collective worked to full capacity, it would have to accept lower standards of beans, and potentially not be able to treat farmers with due consideration. *'So we're very selective in who we provide beans to, and there are only a few coffee shops with the same attention to quality coffee as us'*. The coffee that is roasted by The Coffee Collective is served in their three shops, but also provided to other coffee shops that meet exacting standards. *'We want to be top-tier'*, Klaus says, unashamedly, and also maintains that top-quality coffee is undersold, even at twice the price of regular coffee. *'If you*

*compare it to fine wine, or even craft beer, speciality coffee is sold at too low a price for the amount of attention and labour that goes into it'*. At The Coffee Collective coffee roasting starts with ethics: *'We direct trade with all our growers, and if we do use an exporter or other services we always make sure it is on a separate contract. That way we know exactly how much money is going to the farmers'*. This also ensures a good relationship between the farmer and the roaster, which means that Klaus and The Coffee Collective know they are getting the best beans. The selection of the beans is a highly labour-intensive task, though, and this is reflected in the premium rate that The Coffee Collective pay at least 25% above the Fairtrade price, and often much more than that. *'But it's about creating awareness of coffee as a luxury product and we need to tell the story of the beans so people know why it is that they're paying what they pay'*.

Telling this story begins in The Coffee Collective shops, where a focus is put on weaving this narrative into the queue of customers. Klaus provides training for all baristas, so that they can truly play out their role as priests of the temple, answering questions and imparting enthusiasm to the customers. *'I understand that not everybody wants that. Some people*

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**We don't want to be huge; for us it's all about creating new and exciting coffee experiences. In Copenhagen, there's a real danger for us of flooding the market.**

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*just want to come in and order their drink and not care about the coffee. But if that's all you want, then there are plenty of other coffee shops in Copenhagen that do that; we're about creating an experience'*. It would be

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© The Coffee Collective

wrong to take this nonchalance for apathy as The Coffee Collective make attempts to engage with anyone interested in learning more about the art of good coffee. In London and Copenhagen, *'there are strong coffee traditions. The Copenhagen coffee tradition is much more one of filter coffee, and we've found that people are willing to experiment more with new filter coffee than in London'*.

Filter coffee is a purist method of drinking coffee and attempts to get right at the heart of the coffee, *'and this is something people can do at home, and we want to be able to show people that'*. Brewing filter coffee uses relatively cheap equipment to bring out the hidden flavours of coffee. This is achieved by using lightly roasted beans of a high quality and the consumption of finely-balanced filter coffee is often proclaimed as a quasi-religious experience! However, in London and the UK, filter coffee has been treated with relative suspicion by a coffee-drinking population that have grown to love their morning latte. According to Klaus, this aversion to filter coffee does not exist in Copenhagen where the tradition has not grown out of Starbucks but, instead, *'it has come from the traditional brewing techniques in the home'*.

The focus in The Coffee Collective's shops is on high quality coffee however it is made. In attempts to further this, each of the shops has its own unifying concept that is subordinate to the primacy of coffee. In this way, each coffee shop can be taken as its own exploration into different ways of experiencing coffee. *'We started with Jægersborggade and the idea here was that we didn't want people to walk in and meet a bar, we wanted them to meet a person'*. As Klaus points out, The Coffee Collective were *'creating an industry'* and as such it was important to engage new clients, and the founders of The Coffee Collective saw



the bar as a literal barrier to that. *'What we wanted to avoid was the stress of being rushed into choosing something. In a busy environment people often get to the till and feel like they have to make a quick decision'*. As a result, customers don't have the time to ask about different choices and explore new decisions. At the Jægersborggade shop, removing the bar is supposed to lower the tension and thereby increase the attention that can be afforded to the coffee.

*'It was a new idea, and we didn't know how it would play out in Copenhagen'*. The focus on coffee as well as breaking down the boundaries between barista and customer was not uncontroversial. *'But we found that the shop did well. However, it didn't take long for people to comment "it's lucky it's quiet. It would be too difficult to achieve [this level of focus on coffee] in a busier shop". But we wanted to prove that it could be done, and so we opened the Torvehallerne shop'*.

Torvehallerne market is a haven for food lovers in Copenhagen and has built on Denmark's recent success as a food destination. The bustling quality-centred environment was the perfect place to take the experiment to a new level. At Torvehallerne, *'the focus is on the raw product. There*



© The Coffee Collective

is a bar, and it's really fun working next to four colleagues'. Torvehallerne produced the milieu for the experiment to succeed and The Coffee Collective found that they had been crowded from day one. *'But we wanted to show that even though it was busy, we could still produce consistently amazing coffee, even hand-brewed'*. The filter coffee was intended to be hand-brewed in front of the customers, *'so people could see how easy it was to turn the raw product into great tasting coffee'*. It was part of the originality of The Coffee Collective that each shop could adapt to its surroundings. Torvehallerne doesn't provide the same ambience as Jægersborggade, and the concept was adjusted to reflect this.

However, on the other side of the business, the opening of Torvehallerne, as well as increased demand from other coffee shops meant that the roaster situated at the Jægersborggade space was starting to hit capacity. In order to expand, it began to become clear that a bigger roasting area was needed. *'A warehouse on Godthåbsvej came onto the market, and it was a good size for roasting. But it was very soon after opening Torvehallerne, was it too soon?' As it turned out, the move was*

a very positive one, and the expansion has allowed The Coffee Collective to look at exporting to London.

But the roastery was to be matched with a new coffee shop, and as such a new concept. *'We don't just want to sell a lot of coffee. Godthåbsvej is set up like a restaurant. At-seat service'*. Those readers who frequent coffee shops will realise how challenging this model would be, requiring far more staff, and each of those staff to be well-trained. *'People come in and sit down, and they have time to take a look at the menu'*. And this menu, Klaus adds, *'lists tasting notes. This way people can order by taste'*. Identifying different flavours in coffee, such as spices, aniseed, chocolate, is a careful art. When I ask Klaus whether this can put preconceptions in people's head, he replies, *'I believe taste can be objective, not just subjective. If people know what it is they're trying they can decide what they like. They might enjoy a certain coffee with a strong acidity on one occasion, and the next time they'll know that that's what they like'*. The at-seat service complements this goal by placing the barista in a role as sommelier. *'At Godthåbsvej, the coffee is brought over and the flavours are*

*explained'*. This is all a part of telling the story of the coffee, to raise the awareness surrounding it.

Raising awareness isn't just about creating an industry though. Klaus is part of a wider Nordic push towards a higher profile for speciality coffee. Other Nordic roasters, such as Koppi in Sweden and Tim Wendelboe of Norway produce coffees of as high a quality as The Coffee Collective. This effort means communication across the borders to other roasters in Scandinavia, but Klaus is careful not to put this down to some 'Nordic Model'. *'This isn't just about Nordic roasters, it's not even pan-European. This is about international cooperation. We work with roasters across the world, and share ideas and coffee regularly'*. This

internationalism starts in Scandinavia, *'but there's a tendency to lump Nordic roasters together. It's really about the international exchange of knowledge and goes beyond the Nordic region. We work with other roasters in London - Workshop Coffee Co. and Square Mile Roasters for example - and send each other coffee. We're all linked by a shared interest in quality coffee'*.

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**Harry Evans** is currently completing an MA in Scandinavian Studies at UCL.

He also writes the coffee blog [www.nocoffeeleftbehind.com](http://www.nocoffeeleftbehind.com).

He can be contacted via Twitter @hevans567.



## THE COFFEE COLLECTIVE A/S

Godthåbsvej 34B  
2000 Frederiksberg

THE COFFEE COLLECTIVE JÆGERS-  
BORGGADE

Jægersborggade 10  
2200 København N

THE COFFEE COLLECTIVE TORVE-  
HALLERNE

Israels Plads  
Vendersgade 6D  
1363 København K

## Social media

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/thecoffeecollective>

Twitter: @coffeecollectif

# The Search for Meatless Meals

Danish cuisine is not all about open-faced sandwiches, pork, potatoes and gravy.

Nancy Liu goes meatless in Copenhagen

When I think of Danish cuisine, I tend to picture plates of smørrebrød (open-faced sandwiches), frikadeller (Danish meatballs), and herring in curry sauce. But then one day, my Danish fiancé and I decided to transition into eating an exclusively plant-based/vegan<sup>1</sup> diet for health reasons. This meant that we would no longer eat any meat or fish and that we would also exclude eggs and dairy products.

We made this decision while he was visiting me just outside of NYC where there are many vegetarian and vegan foods option available. We were sure that we could do this 100% with home-cooked meals when I visited him in Denmark, but we were uncertain about our options if we were to go out to eat at a restaurant.

After spending several weeks in the suburbs of Copenhagen, I am pleased to report back that there are indeed

<sup>1</sup> While veganism is a lifestyle philosophy, for the purposes of this article, 'vegan' is meant to describe the plant-based diet that vegans consume.

options for folks who are searching for healthy, meatless meals.

## Homemade meals

We focused our food shopping on organic vegetables, fruits, whole grains, almond or soy milk, and nuts. We generally shopped at either Irma or Kvickly, which are two large supermarket chains. Irma had a slightly larger selection of organic products and was the only place where we could consistently find pre-made meatless foods.

In Irma, we found frozen pre-made falafel and veggie burgers which tasted great and were suitable for vegans. However, the frozen meat substitutes, such as soy sausages and spaghetti Bolognese with 'fake meat' sauce, contained egg whites and so are only suitable for vegetarians. If one is looking to avoid egg products in these foods, one word to look for on the packaging is 'æggehvide' [egg whites].

We made smoothies every day from a combination of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables. We subscribed to a delivery service called Aarstiderne. Every week, they would deliver a fresh case of organic fruits and vegetables right to our doorstep. The quality of the fruits and vegetables was generally good and the contents varied depending on what was harvested recently.

**One food that I thought I would not be able to have again is the 'fransk hotdog', a sausage encased in a baguette filled with sauce or ketchup.**

To supplement our diet, we made sure to take certain vitamins and also added flaxseed to our smoothies, for Omega-3. The only place in our town to find ground flaxseed was Matas, which is a drugstore chain. We also ordered some vitamins from online shops as it was difficult to find vegan supplements, especially B-12 in the store. Specialty items, such as nutritional yeast, (which is used in recipes to create a non-dairy cheese taste) were only found in online shops.

In comparison to New York, I found there to be a lack of plant-based dairy and meat substitutes available in the supermarkets in Denmark. For instance, in New York, it is easy to find plant-based versions of margarine, sour cream, mayonnaise and cheese and it is also easy to find tofu, seitan or other meat substitutes. In Denmark, most of these items are mostly only available online. However, it is possible to create nutritious and tasty meatless recipes with just the wares available in the supermarket. It just takes a bit more planning and sometimes some creativity with recipes.

## Eating Out

Copenhagen has been getting a lot of attention in the media for its fantastic restaurants which are trendy and cutting edge. Meanwhile, vegan and

vegetarian diets are making their way in to the mainstream culture through movies and social media. Documentary films such as *Forks Over Knives* (2011)

and *Earthlings* (2005) have been making their rounds and gaining exposure for vegan diets from health and ethical perspectives, respectively. So it is no wonder that vegetarian, vegan, raw and organic foods are also making their appearance in Copenhagen.

This was the real test for us, as we enjoyed eating out quite a bit in New York. One food that I thought I would not be able to have again is the fransk hotdog. This is basically a sausage encased in a baguette filled with sauce or ketchup. I was surprised and pleased when we found one stand called DØP (*Den Økologiske Pølseman*) that sold a vegan version made from tofu. It tasted great, had a pleasant texture and the baguette bread was extremely good. I was glad to see this option available and hope that more of the hotdog stands will offer veggie hotdogs.



## Facts about Plant-based diets

**Vegetarian (Lacto-Ovo):** Diet that excludes meat from all animals and fish but includes eggs and dairy.

**Vegan:** Vegetarian diet that also excludes eggs and dairy. Foods that use animal products in production can also be excluded, such as sugar or wine.

Aside from dietary considerations, veganism is a lifestyle philosophy which does not advocate the use of any products derived from animals.

**Raw Vegan:** Vegan diet that excludes foods cooked above a certain temperature (between 40 degrees to 46 degrees Celsius).

**Flexitarian:** Diet comprised of mostly vegetarian foods with occasional meat consumption.

Source: Wikipedia, Raw foodism

We found an eatery in Copenhagen called 42°Raw which features raw vegan dishes, smoothies and desserts. One can eat-in, though the seating is casual, but it seemed that people also came by to order take-out. I ordered the mushroom risotto which was served warm. It had a creamy texture and felt like comfort food, despite being raw food. My fiancé ordered the vegan lasagna which was not served warm. It was a bit too oily for his taste, but I thought it was delicious. It had the texture of regular lasagna and I thought it was interesting how the 'noodles' were made from some kind of squash or zucchini. I hadn't tried any raw vegan food up to this point and I found it to be a pleasant introduction to raw foods.

A couple of weeks later, we were invited to a birthday party with a large number of attendees. We went to Riz Raz for the brunch buffet. I had read that Riz Raz was known for their many vegetarian buffet options. The brunch buffet consisted of food for vegetarians and some foods for vegans as well. There was an assortment of fruits, cheeses, bread, vegetables, salad, hummus and falafel for non-meat eaters. There were more options for vegetarians than vegans but there was enough food overall. Riz Raz is a great choice for groups with a mixture of dietary preferences and offers a reasonable price.

We went out on a few date nights as well and looked for places with a pleasant ambiance. The first place we tried was Firefly Garden. The restaurant had a very modern, trendy look whilst maintaining a generally cozy feeling. I ordered the beet, ginger and carrot soup which was served with raw vegetable chips and my fiancé ordered the winter spinach salad. The salad combined many ingredients, such as butternut squash, carrot, and seaweed. I had never thought before that a salad could have so many flavors, textures, and ingredients and be so filling and so was quite impressed. For dessert, I had the warm apple and pear cup and my fiancé had a cookie served with either soy or almond milk. Both desserts tasted great and were the perfect ending to a very enjoyable evening out.

We spent a cozy day at Tivoli and wanted to eat at Grøften, which was our favorite restaurant there. Fortunately, they offered a 'daily vegetarian' dish on their Christmas menu. We were presented with 3 or 4 large spring rolls which were made with mushrooms and carrots and had a nice crunchy texture. The salad included mixed greens, nuts and pomegranates and looked like it belonged in an organic vegetarian

## Restaurants

**Vegan, vegetarian or vegetarian friendly restaurants listed on Happy Cow (a popular vegetarian website)**

**Copenhagen: 24**  
1 per 23000 inhabitants

**New York: 250**  
1 per 32000 inhabitants

**London: 169**  
1 per 47000 inhabitants

[www.happycow.net](http://www.happycow.net) (23/03/2013)

restaurant. I was amazed at how good the dish was given that Grøften is not known for vegetarian dishes and I believe that the dish was actually vegan. I hope that Grøften will continue to offer this or other vegetarian/vegan dishes on their normal menu.

The last place that we visited before the end of my trip was Ambrosias Have which features an all-you-can-eat, mainly vegan, buffet. There was an abundance of choices and items that were not vegan were clearly marked. The buffet changes every week and ours included soup, curried vegetables, brown basmati rice, potatoes in a ginger and sesame sauce, salad, hummus, beets, bread and a pumpkin tart for dessert. The soup was dhal, and was tasty and quite filling by itself, especially with a serving of bread. The atmosphere was casual and the food was delicious, freshly made, and priced right. I think it would be very good for people who want to try an assortment of vegan/vegetarian foods without spending too much money.

Overall, I was pleased with my experience, given that the traditional

foods in Denmark tend to be meat-oriented. Denmark has a decent selection of organic, plant-based options available, but there are definitely some opportunities for growth such as with the lack of meat and dairy substitutes in local supermarkets. It would be nice to see more of these options made available easily in the supermarket or perhaps at a specialty store. Personally, I don't mind buying food online but it is nice to be able to actually see the items before you purchase them, especially if you want to always be able to read the labels.

There were a few cafes and restaurants that we did not have a chance to try yet in Copenhagen and I will make a point to do so in the future. I would love to see more restaurants that are not specifically labeled as vegetarian or vegan to include at least one plant-based meal where the dairy items can be easily removed, or else made with dairy alternatives. All in all, I was pleased with my experiences both at home and eating out during my first visit while following a vegan diet. I am looking forward to continuing my exploration of restaurants in Copenhagen and to see how things progress with meatless options at home.

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*Nancy Liu has recently relocated to Denmark from the U.S.A. She currently works in Human Resources at an international company in Copenhagen.*



# Nephew: Danish or English?

Apart from slang and swear words, most Danish bands sing either in English or in Danish. But what happens when you mix the two languages in the same song? [Sara Cass](#) looks at the evolution of Nephew and their use of language(s).

When one thinks of Danish music, the bands that come to mind are generally the few that have international recognition, such as Mew, Alphabeat, Nekromantix, and Aqua. However, this is not representative of Danish music as a whole, and in particular, leaves out one of the most recognized bands in Denmark – Nephew. While unheard of on the international level, almost any Dane will be able to tell you that Nephew is a popular rock band in Denmark. Nephew has been releasing albums since 2000, and they are still making music today, having recently released their latest album *Hjertestarter* (2012). Nephew's popularity is mostly confined to Denmark with fans scattered in Germany and Norway, and beyond these three countries, the band is relatively unknown. This is rather unfortunate, as Nephew not only makes popular music in Denmark, but the band itself helped innovate the concept of songs that blended both Danish and English together. Nephew's unique blend of languages began as early as their first album and has continued to this day, even though their tone, lyrics, and even

genre have changed over the years.

Nephew's first album, *Swimming Time* (2000), is almost entirely in English. There are a few Danish phrases here or there, but they are regulated to a role of emphasis, and generally fade into the background of the songs as a whole. The songs themselves all have English titles and mostly English lyrics. However, this album is musically very different from any of Nephew's other albums. Though still a rock album, the majority of the songs are slow with a soft and deep tone. The subject matter of the songs makes little sense, but all carry undertones of a serious message, even if the lyrics don't match the mood set by the music. Absent in all of the mellow tones are both the synthetic keyboard and synth-rock sound that Nephew adopted in their later albums. Giving someone this album and claiming it represents Nephew would mislead a listener. This doesn't mean that it isn't a good album, but the Nephew of today doesn't exactly fit the Nephew that is presented in *Swimming Time*. Even between the first album

and their second this is the case, as the band changed their sound and presentation of their music drastically.

The real heart of Nephew's work can be seen in the albums that came after *Swimming Time*. Nephew's second album, *USA DSB* (2004), is the first album that presents a mix of Danish and English, it is also the best example of Nephew mixing the two languages together into their music rather than separating them. Unlike with *Swimming Time*, Danish has become the main language while English is regulated to single lines or verses only. Furthermore, this marks the beginning of Nephew's song titles being mostly in Danish. The evolution of Nephew's sound and tone begins here as well. The synth keyboard makes its first appearance, bringing a more upbeat sound to the tracks it appears on, like 'Milk & Wine' and 'En Wannabe Darth Vader'. As hinted by these new song titles, the subject matter of the album has also changed. Gone are the mellow, deep tones to be replaced with humorous, often nonsensical topics. Though the language has changed, many of the lyrics continue to make little sense. It is the complete change of tone that sets *USA DSB* apart as the true beginning to Nephew's sound.

Nephew's third album, *Interkom Kom Ind* (2006), represents another change in tone, continuing Nephew's progression away from *Swimming Time*. This time, the synth keyboard and lead singer Simon Kvamm's keytar – a small keyboard-synthesizer that is worn like a guitar – are present throughout the entire album. However, unlike *USA DSB*, *Interkom Kom Ind* has a harder, heavier rock sound to it. The humor is still present, particularly in songs like 'Science Fiction og Familien' and 'Mexico Ligger i Spanien', but the

tone of the humor set by the music is darker, as though someone is telling you a joke with a serious, straight face. The use of Danish has only grown, as the entire album is almost entirely in Danish. *USA DSB* had a slightly more intimate blending of the two languages, but in *Interkom Kom Ind* the majority of the song titles are in Danish, and the one song that isn't – 'Sway' – is still sung in Danish, with only a few non-Danish lyrics. This in conjunction with the previous two albums would seem to imply that Nephew has been progressing towards using more and more of their native language in their music. One would expect that after *Interkom Kom Ind*, Nephew would continue to make albums in Danish and not in English, especially considering that their popularity is

**It is the complete change of tone that sets *USA DSB* apart as the true beginning to Nephew's sound.**

mostly in Denmark. However, this is not the case.

Nephew's fourth studio album, *Danmark/Denmark* (2009), goes back to the formula of *USA DSB* in many ways while still retaining its own independent sound and identity. The humor returns in full force with songs like 'Police Bells and Church Sirens', which has great lines like 'Well I'm a fan of days in bars and nights in school', and 'Va Fangool', which outlines a meeting between Simon Kvamm and Tony Soprano. The upbeat synth rock has returned to replace *Interkom Kom Ind*'s more serious tone, and the result is a more polished version of the sound first presented in *USA DSB*. *Danmark/Denmark* is the best example of Nephew's use of Danish and English, with the best equal mix of the two languages of all five studio albums. Six



of the twelve song titles are in English, four are in Danish, and one title is the same word in both Danish and English (the final song title, 'Va Fangool', is in Italian). There are a few songs that are entirely in Danish, a few that are entirely in English, and several which are a mix of the two. This is the album I turn to most often when trying to introduce newcomers to Nephew's style and sound, particularly when it comes to their mixing of languages. The music is not only an excellent example of Nephew's typical 'sound', but it also portrays the band's well-established quirkiness and humor in most of the songs. This isn't to say that every song is a mix of Danish and English, or meant to be taken with humor in mind. For example, one of the songs, 'Det Her Sker Bare Ikk', is entirely in Danish, and seems to carry quite serious implications. This is apparent in the song title itself, which roughly translates to 'this can't be happening'. This and a few other songs on *Danmark/Denmark* indicate that Nephew didn't completely move away from the tone they set in *Interkom Kom Ind*. On the contrary, they seem to have embraced it, and mixed it with the tone from *USA DSB*, just as they mixed their Danish and English. The end result is an album that truly encompasses their development and evolution as a

band, and leaves one wondering where Nephew could possibly go from there.

That question is answered with Nephew's most recent album, *Hjertestarter*. The album is a return to the spirit of *Interkom Kom Ind*, but like *Danmark/Denmark*, *Hjertestarter* has forged a new identity and tone for Nephew as a band. The synth rock tones of the previous albums are regulated to a background role in most of the songs, particularly in the album's titular song. Only four of the ten songs have obvious synth work within them, none of which use the sound to indicate the humor of the song or eccentricity of the lyrics as had been done before. The serious synth rock has made a return to Nephew's music, but like *Danmark/Denmark*, it feels even more polished than *Interkom Kom Ind* in the creation of a specific tone. In addition, this is the first of Nephew's albums to be entirely in Danish; all of the song titles are in

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***Hjertestarter* is a return to the spirit of *Interkom Kom Ind*, but like *Danmark/Denmark*, *Hjertestarter* has forged a new identity and tone for Nephew as a band.**

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Danish, as are all of the lyrics. While individual lyrics themselves may be funny or seem to carry the trademark Nephew quirkiness, it is clear that the album itself is made with a different purpose in mind. The end result is an interesting deviation from the tone set by *Danmark/Denmark* that once again begs the question of what a sixth Nephew album might bring and how the band might further evolve from this point.

Looking at both the change of tone and use of Danish and English throughout

Simon Kvamm, Roskilde Festival 2010, Photographer: Bill Ebbesen

## Discography

**Swimming Time: 2000**

**USA DSB: 2004**

**Interkom Kom Ind: 2006**

**Danmark/Denmark: 2009**

**Hjertestarter: 2012**

Nephew's career leads to an interesting picture of Nephew's development. Based on the four albums to follow *Swimming Time*, one can assume that Nephew's use of Danish denotes a tonal shift in their music. This doesn't necessarily mean that every song in Danish is meant to be serious; songs like 'En Wannabe Darth Vader' and 'Superliga' are both in Danish and both not meant to be taken seriously. However, what is apparent is that when Nephew makes an album with mostly Danish songs and mostly Danish lyrics, the album will have a more serious tone than the albums that mix Danish and English together. Both *Interkom Kom Ind* and *Hjertestarter* have the heavier, thoughtful tone of Nephew's five studio albums, and both are entirely in Danish. Similarly, *USA DSB* and *Danmark/Denmark* have more quirky and funny songs, and both have a nearly equal mix of Danish and English. The albums that mix Danish and English could be intended for a more international audience, whereas the albums that are entirely in Danish are meant for a Danish audience. However, this could be a mere coincidence, and it is true that this theory doesn't allow for *Swimming Time*'s mostly serious tone and English lyrics. However, it is interesting to note that with a change in how language is used, such a connection can be made between the albums, and whether or not this pattern continues depends on

Nephew's next studio album release. Either way, Nephew is a continuously evolving and growing band, and worth listening to if you are hoping to break into Danish rock music as a whole.

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# A Trip to Christiania

As you walk down Prinsessegade there is a slow but appreciable shift in the visual surroundings. As you reach a brick archway mostly obscured by trees, critical mass is reached...

Tom Hoxtor takes you on a trip to Christiania.

Gone are the crisp suits and fashionable jeans so de rigueur in the rest of the city; they are now replaced with canvas backpacks and dreadlocks. Welcome to the Free State of Christiania.

As soon as I mentioned that I was interested in visiting Christiania I was immediately bombarded with advice. As is frequently the case in situations like this, almost all of it was contradictory. This made me realise very quickly that almost all suggestions I received were inextricably linked with people's reactions to the place. It was those who enjoyed it who recommended having a beer at Nemoland or the best place to sit by the lake. People who had more mixed views about it advised me not to take too much cash and to leave my phone at the hostel. But why this ominous advice? A little background for the uninitiated is in order.

Christiania was founded in 1971 at the height of the Danish student movement. The Free State stands, partly obscured from sight, in the

middle of Christianshavn, one of the most beautiful and historic parts of Copenhagen. The area which is now Christiania was an old military barracks when it was reclaimed by a motley group of hippies, anarchists, artists and students who were struggling to afford homes in Copenhagen and felt disenchanting with politicians. In response they simply took the land and created a settlement where they could set the rules.

And set them they did. Controversially, cannabis use has almost always been tolerated in Christiania. Although the



Photographer: Bruno Jargot

Free State has periodically tried to purge itself of the harder drugs which came in with the weed dealers, success has been variable. The whole project was and is enormously contentious, but despite the best efforts of the police, politicians of all persuasions and the violent and reckless behaviour of some groups within the Free State, Christiania is still going strong more than forty years later. However, it faces challenges to this day – perhaps the most critical of which is that it is being forced to pay for the land that it occupies. With this fascinating history should be no surprise that the Free State is a major tourist attraction and a fascinating social experiment. I had to see it!

As well as seeking advice from people who had been there I also looked in guides and read up on the place in general. While on the bus between Aarhus and Copenhagen I thumbed my friend's *Lonely Planet* guide to Denmark for tips about what to see once we got there, and, in particular, to see what advice it had about visiting Christiania. It was disappointing. Although *Lonely Planet* had a few interesting tips about the Free State, the majority of the entry was a discussion about Christiania's reputation. The website for Copenhagen's police was little better. A search for Christiania turns up reports about drug raids, and a number of daily reports, but little of real interest about

the place as a political or social entity. Unsurprisingly, a Danish book about Christiania was much more positive and had more of a sense of fun and adventure than the police website. I had no idea what to expect, although I imagined a place somewhat like a cross between Camden Town in London and Amsterdam.

## 'Have Fun. Don't Run. No Photos.'

The smell of weed hits you as soon as you walk through the archway into the Free State. The next thing you notice are the signs displaying the three rules to having a good time in Christiania: 'Have Fun. Don't Run. No Photos'. As you proceed through the cobbled part of the Free State there are various stalls, but things really get weird on Pusher Street. Here, as if to spite Copenhagen's Police, there are tents and tables everywhere selling weed. There is also an enormous shack draped in the flag of Greenland (and run by Greenlanders, more on them later) for the same purpose. The dealers are not shy either, there is a huge amount of cannabis on show and as we walked along they entered into lengthy and detailed chats with customers. These conversations were a little surreal, as they were conducted with a connoisseurial air almost as though the participants were discussing a fine port, but contained phrases like: 'Do you like to bong? This one is good to bong' and 'With this one you won't remember the last 24 hours'.

On the other side of Pusher Street is Nemoland and beyond that is one of the most picturesque green spaces in Copenhagen, complete with a large lake and the amazing architecture which has been the result of Christiania as a spatial experiment. As we walked around the lake and discussed what



Photographer: Stephan Ertman

This authentic cannabis stand 'Den blå Hashbod' is now in the National Museum. It was built in 1996 and was decorated on the inside by the artist William Skotte Olsen and on the outside by John Vestermark Rasmussen.



we'd seen in the bustling centre of the Free State we passed a Children's Play Area. It had a sign: *'This is a Children's play area. No Hangout on Weekdays'*. Outside a teenage girl sat doing her French homework, dictionary at her side. I was totally amazed. As we walked we passed many groups of people sitting by the water smoking, drinking and generally chilling out. We also saw families with pushchairs in full rambling gear totally unthreatened by all that was going on around them! This certainly seemed like the atmosphere of tolerance and respect that Christianians had been hoping for in 1971.

On the second day of our trip we headed for Nemoland to sit and play cards while sucking up the atmosphere with a bottle of beer brewed in Christiania. The majority of people who sat around us were tourists, like us. Additionally, they were almost all male, like us. In the evening we had arranged to meet some friends and friends of friends and head to Woodstock, a Greenlandic bar inside the Free State. As we were running late my friend called ahead to people arriving separately, two women and a man, to tell them to wait, saying: *'On his own he isn't enough to defend them'*. Once we got there I realised he was only half-joking.

When we arrived the revelry was spilling out of the door, and as we walked in the first sight that greeted us was a man so inebriated he was virtually prone on top of a fellow reveller. The hubbub of drunken chatter was almost, but not entirely, drowned out by the efforts of a Greenlandic folk band. As it was so full we got some beers and sat at a table outside. My brother mentioned at this point that as he walked in somebody had said to him: *'Nice scarf. Are you planning to hang yourself?'* It was probably a good idea not to stay inside! This was the first time that I had felt a little threatened in Christiania, and I was glad to leave with all my teeth. It also caused me to reflect a little further on something I had noticed in the time we had spent there over the preceding days: there are very few women in Christiania. There was almost none in Woodstock, although there were some Greenlandic women. However, even during the day I observed the same phenomenon and it set me wondering, why?

I think the answer is that social and political experiments such as Christiania are often designed and/or effectively run by men. For example, take the latter two of the Free State's three rules: *'Don't Run, No Photos'*. These rules are explicitly designed

## Facts about Christiania

The entrance is from Prinsessegade on Amager (closest metro station is Christianshavn).

Approximately 1000 residents.

Covers 34 hectares (84 acres).

Created in 1971 in an abandoned military area.

Until 2004 the selling and buying of cannabis was open and silently accepted by the authorities - all other drugs were and are seen as counter to the Christiania-spirit.

In 2004 the government began a process of "normalization" which has led to several conflicts between police, residents, cannabis-dealers and buyers.

in order to reassure the Free State's drug dealers. From what I have been told the penalty for violation is forcible ejection with a minor beating thrown in for good measure. I suggest that the combination of ubiquitous drug use and the somewhat tense and highly masculine atmosphere in Christiania puts women off, at least as visitors from outside.

This brings me on to my final observation about the Free State. What fascinated me about Christiania was its founding principles of equality, freedom and community. Ironically though, as a tourist, I wasn't really able to see that in action, although I saw plenty of other things which reassured me that Christiania could be a very relaxed and friendly place. On the other hand, I also saw plenty which made me think that the relaxed attitude

to drugs and the resultant influx of petty criminals (and no doubt more serious ones too) made it difficult to realise the Free State's primary goals. My final reflection is this: it is ironic that a place which broke away from state oversight in pursuit of freedom can be so threatening to women, when in the rest of Copenhagen women are able to walk home alone at 5am mostly securely and unthreatened.



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## Fabriksnoter

Glenn Christian

Not translated  
 Publisher: Ovbdat  
 Published in 2012

32 pages  
 ISBN: 978-87-994016-3-5

Reviewed by Jon Arnfred

*Fabriksnoter* (*Factory Notes*) was published in 2012 by Glenn Christian (b. 1976). Christian is a highly productive author who has until now published six books of poetry since the debut in 2008. For most Danes, a factory is something long since outsourced, an old-fashioned industrial way of producing 'things' that now resides south of the border or, more likely, in Asia. In contemporary Danish society, the factory has been replaced by the office, heavy machinery by computers, and routine by flexibility. But even though *Fabriksnoter* depicts the experience of factory work, I believe it describes a fatigue that could just as well arise from spending your days in an office. On one page it says:

*Under mig, gulvet. Dette hav af jord i store bølger*

*Mine sko, i tyk læder op til knæet*

*ligner to snørede hove. Jeg nærmest humper rundt*

*Underneath me, the floor. This ocean of earth in large waves*

*My shoes, thick leather up to the knees*

*resemble two laced hooves. I almost limp along*

I believe these lines could be a metaphor for the entire collection: the factory occupies the subject to the extent that his uniform is difficult to extricate from his own body.

*Fabriksnoter* is composed of two different sections, one consisting of note-like sentences like the ones just above, and another section consisting of poems with more classical line breaks:

*Han er lige blevet*

*fundet på*

*til at tage*

*weekenden med*

*det giver ekstra*

*lyder løggen*

*He has just been*

*come up with*

*to include*

*the weekend*

*it gives extra*

*is the lie*

The 'I' of the first section is easily read as the 'he' of the second section. So the same kind of experience is described from a first-person and a third-person perspective in the two different sections of the book. It appears most of the notes are jotted down by the subject while at work, and consequently there has not been sufficient time to make them easy to comprehend, as when he writes:

*Et fremstillet behov, er nu kaffen inden arbejde*

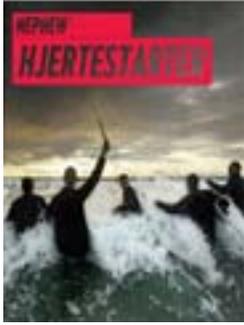
*A manufactured need, is now the coffee before work*

Usually in this sentence, one would place the grammatical object '*et fremstillet behov*' after the grammatical subject '*kaffen inden arbejde*', and the fact that it is not gives the impression that the sentence was not even meant to be read by anyone but the writer himself, that they are personal notes on his own alienation and deterioration. In the poems of the second section, however, the worker is denoted by a 'he', thereby introducing a distance allowing the subject to present his misery to the reader.

*Fabriksnoter* is in itself a very well-constructed piece of work. In addition, I think it is a very timely book; Christian lets us imagine a mode of working antithetical to what we find in prevailing discourse in Danish society. According to this discourse, work is inherently good and healthy, essential to self-fulfilment. However, not all work deserves to be viewed in this light; one example is exactly routine labour coupled with a Ford-like atmosphere of productivity. Christian is himself a very productive writer, and *Fabriksnoter* is accessible, at times difficult and beautiful, and at times absurdly fun reading.

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## Hjertestarter

Nephew

Published in 2012  
Copenhagen Records  
CD, LP and Download

10 Tracks

Reviewed by Sara Cass

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Nephew's fifth studio album, *Hjertestarter*, is a departure from the tone set by their last album *Danmark/Denmark* (2009). While *Danmark/Denmark* had more upbeat, humorous songs with a few somber ones dispersed throughout the track list, Nephew has moved away from the humor to a more serious and somber tone.

*Hjertestarter* is reminiscent of Nephew's third studio album *Interkom Kom Ind* (2006), though while it had songs like 'Science Fiction og Familien' and 'Mexico Ligger i Spanien' to lighten the tone of the album as a whole, *Hjertestarter* is more focused on producing rock songs without the humor and jokes.

The titular song 'Hjertestarter' is easily the best on the album, with its pounding drums and Simon Kvamm's vocals blending together to create a wonderful sense of unease in the main chorus, while the verses soften the guitar chords and communicate a form of redemption.

The album becomes upbeat with 'Klokken 25', though the heavy rock guitar is rarely heard throughout the rest of the album. Worth mentioning also is the fifth song 'Tak Du', which demonstrates expertly mixed background vocals, pulling off both a sober and upbeat tone, though not simultaneously.

The album is fairly short at just ten songs, and it is begging to be extended by just one or two more numbers. Despite this, the album is a wonderful example of Nephew's evolution as a band and definitely worth listening to if you are familiar with *Interkom Kom Ind* and Nephew's other albums.

*Hjertestarter* is not the best introduction to the band, however. I found it enjoyable and worth repeated listens, but for a listener interested in Nephew's more serious and somber music, *Interkom Kom Ind* stands out as the better album in comparison.

If you have never listened to Nephew before I would recommend starting with another one of their albums first. For the dedicated fan or the casual listener, however, there is much to like in the new sound Nephew has put forth.

