

Jan Gunnar Hoff HOME solo piano

HOME can be seen both as a homage to and as a statement of belonging to northern Norway, with its naked landscape and its Arctic location. The title can also allude to a quest for identity, both from a personal and from an artistic perspective. All these sentiments and aspirations find expression in the music on this album. Many of the pieces here are interpretations of well known themes, while others are original compositions by Hoff. Some of the pieces are completely improvisatory.

HOME kan sees på som en hyllest og tilhørighet til Nord-Norge, med det nakne landskapet og den arktiske beliggenheten. I overført betydning kan det være en søken etter identitet, både i et personlig og kunstnerisk perspektiv. I tillegg til rene improvisasjoner inneholder albumet tolkninger av kjente låter og Jan Gunnar Hoff's egne komposisjoner.

HOME

Jan Gunnar Hoff

Recorded in DXD 24bit/352.8kHz

■ 5.1 DTS-HD MA 24/192kHz ■ 7.1.4 Dolby Atmos 48kHz

■ 2.0 LPCM 24/192kHz ■ 7.1.4 Auro-3D 96kHz

+ mShuttle MP3 and MQA



2L¹⁶⁸

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audio



dts-hd
Master Audio

AURO



DOLBY ATMOS

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- 1 **What Might Have Been** 5:26
Mike Stern / arr. Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 2 **Hike** 4:03
Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 3 **Magma** 4:04
Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 4 **Barndomsminne fra Nordland** 4:14
Adolf Thomsen / arr. Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 5 **Kanskje** 3:12
Terje Nilsen / arr. Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 6 **Summertime** 4:21
George Gershwin / arr. Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 7 **Moon River** 3:40
Henry Mancini / arr. Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 8 **Bruremarsj fra Beiarn** 4:23
Johan A. Aronsen / arr. Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 9 **Free Flow** 4:49
Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 10 **Meditatus** 4:50
Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 11 **Hope** 3:31
Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 12 **Detour** 4:28
Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 13 **Vaapstenjeanoe** (Big River) 4:12
Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 14 **Survival** 3:50
Jan Gunnar Hoff

HOME can be seen both as a homage to and as a statement of belonging to northern Norway, with its naked landscape and its Arctic location. The title can also allude to a quest for identity, both from a personal and from an artistic perspective.

In May 2021 Morten Lindberg got in touch with me and asked if I could make a solo recording in Stormen Concert Hall in Bodø. With open minds and very few pre-conceived ideas we went ahead and, broadly speaking, took things as they came – the way we felt at the time, the actual piano and the concert hall itself determining what we recorded for two days in August that year. Some of the resulting pieces are completely improvisatory, while others are interpretations of different melodies and themes.

This album does not aim to present a particular genre, with all the expectations such a commitment might carry, but rather to give each number its own shape and style. When you interpret text-based songs instrumentally it's best to keep a sharp focus on melody, rhythm and phrasing. By freeing the phrasing of the melody from the constraints of a fixed tempo, I can put more strength and intensity into my interpretation, and broaden and embolden the melodic material. An example of this is my version of northern Norway's unofficial national anthem *Childhood Memories from Nordland*, which comes in many shapes and sizes for choirs and ensembles. I felt there was something missing – I wanted the theme, the dynamics and the tempo to flow more freely, giving more space in which to convey the pride and sense of deep reflection that this beautiful work encompasses.

In 2019 I was asked to perform an instrumental version of Terje Nilsen's song *Kanskje* (Maybe) at a memorial concert for Terje in Bodø. First, I made a detailed transcription of the vocal melody. Then I worked on an orchestration for the piano which gave the melody and harmonics depth and credibility. During the actual performance I added a few spontaneous variations and improvisations on the theme, while remaining faithful to the structure of the song and maintaining a steady tempo.

Magma was a commission, and I composed it in 2006 in the beautiful surroundings of Skjerstad, not far from Bodø. I remember that I had written the main parts of the work, but needed a theme that could start and round off the whole composition. It was after my wife and I were on a long mountain walk that the theme came to me. I sent the complete work to the guitarist Mike Stern, who was to play the guitar part, and excitedly awaited his response. He understood immediately the songlike nature of *Magma*, interpreting and playing the theme in his characteristic style. The concert performances that we remember most vividly took place in Kyiv in 2007 and 2008.

Meditatus is an excerpt from my jazz mass of the same name. This work was awarded the Edvard Prize in the church music category in 2005, with the jury giving this accolade: "The simple and movingly beautiful theme draws the listener into a familiar musical landscape where one can safely shut one's eyes and be entranced. Melodic lines bear a single, unified thought through the work."

Vaapstenjeanoë is the south-Sami name for the River Vefsna – a single word in Sami can be both informative and poetic. I call this song *Big River* in English. The melody in this work was inspired by the mighty waterway and its course through a varied landscape – but it is also an inner journey.

My solo concept of the classic *Summertime* is some way from the original by George Gershwin. I establish a faster tempo, and try to develop lines and ideas within a firm structure. After a while, I go some way into breaking the content into fragments, but return to the main theme. In this version the rhythmic element takes precedence over the melodic, in contrast to what happens in *Moon River*, where I linger on the melody, slowly energizing it with freer rhythms.

I first performed *Bruremarsj fra Beiarn* (Wedding March from Beiarn) with Susanne Lundeng and Merit Hemmingson in 1990, as part of a jazz and folk music project. Merit had made a first-rate harmonization of the wedding march, and my own arrangement builds on this.

Free improvisation can lead to different perspectives and takes, but it can also engender compositions. This is how *Survival* and *Hope* came about, products of improvisations which I have written down and made into songs. *Hike* is a free journey in tonal and rhythmic terrain, while *Free Flow* starts percussively and then glides into a melodious and searching mood. In *Detour* I start very quietly and establish a sense of forward movement before I transform the music's character in the final passage and introduce a pedal point, cranking up the drama and intensity.

What Might Have Been is a ballad written by Mike Stern. I asked Mike a few years ago what lay behind the title, and he answered, "Nothing special". The ballad was a general comment on life.

These, then, are a few of my thoughts on **HOME**, and some insights into the background of the tracks on the album. Each listener must find out where their own inner journey takes them and how they interpret and respond to each track, and, of course, to the artistic coherence of the whole album.

 March 2022



HOME kan tolkes som en hyllest og tilhørighet til Nord-Norge, med det nakne landskapet og den arktiske beliggenheten. I overført betydning kan det være en søken etter identitet, både i et personlig og kunstnerisk perspektiv.

Morten Lindberg kontaktet meg i mai 2021 om muligheten for å gjøre en soloinnspilling i Stormen konserthus i Bodø. Med tildels blanke ark gikk vi til verket og lot i stor grad situasjonen, klaveret og konsertsalen definere hva som ble spilt inn i løpet av to dager i august samme år. Noen stykker er helt improvisert mens andre er tolkninger av kjente låter og egne komposisjoner.

Hensikten med albumet er ikke å presentere en bestemt sjanger, med de forventningene og begrensningene som ligger i dette, men å gi hvert enkelt avsnitt en utforming og presentasjon som oppleves som meningsfull i seg selv. Det å tolke tekstbaserte låter instrumentalt krever et nært fokus på melodi, rytmikk og frasing. Ved å la fraseringen være fristilt fra et fastlåst tempo, kan jeg legge mere kraft og intensitet i tolkningen og utdype det melodiske materialet. Som improviserende musiker vil mange av disse faktorene variere spontant med framføringen. Et eksempel på en slik tilnærming er min tolkning av Nord-Norges uoffisielle nasjonalhymne, *Barndomsminne fra Nordland*, som finnes i mange versjoner med kor og ensembler. Jeg ønsket å tilføre en dimensjon der temaet, dynamikken og tempoet flyter friere, og dermed gir større rom for å formidle stoltheten og etertanken som ligger i denne vakre komposisjonen.

I 2019 fikk jeg i oppdrag å gjøre en instrumentalversjon av Terje Nilsens låt *Kanskje* på en minnekoncert for Terje i Bodø. Jeg transkriberte først vokalmelodien i detalj. Deretter jobbet jeg med å finne en orkestrering for piano som ga melodien og harmonikken dybde og troverdighet. I selve framføringen tilfører jeg endel spontane variasjoner og improvisasjoner over temaet, mens jeg holder fast på låtstrukturen og et fast tempo.

Bestillingsverket *Magma* ble komponert på naturskjønne Skjerstad ved Bodø i 2006. Jeg husker at jeg hadde skrevet hoveddelene i verket, men manglet et signaturtema som kunne starte og avslutte hele komposisjonen. Min kone og jeg gikk en lang fjelltur og da vi kom ned fra fjellet satt temaet i hodet. Jeg sendte hele verket til gitaristen Mike Stern, som skulle være solist, og var spent på hans reaksjon. Han oppfattet umiddelbart det sangbare i melodien og tilførte sin særegne signatur. De største konsertopplevelsene med *Magma* hadde vi i Kyiv i 2007 og 2008.

Meditatus er et utdrag fra min jazzmesse med samme navn. Verket fikk Edvardprisen i 2005 og juryen innledet sin begrunnelse slik: «Med et enkelt og betagende vakkert tema blir lytteren lokket med i et velkjent musikalsk landskap hvor man trygt kan lukke øynene og bare la seg henføre. En helhetlig tanke blir båret frem av sangbare linjer».

Vaapstenjeanoë er det sør-samiske navnet på «Vefsna storelv». Samisk språk kan med ett enkelt ord være både informativt og poetisk. Til denne melodien har jeg hentet inspirasjon fra det mektige vassdraget og dets ferd gjennom ulike landskap. Men det er også en indre reise.

Mitt solokonsept på klassikeren *Summertime* er et stykke unna originalversjonen til George Gershwin. Jeg etablerer et høyere tempo og prøver å utvikle linjer og ideer over en fast struktur. Etterhvert fragmenterer jeg innholdet noe, men vender tilbake til hovedtemaet. Det melodiske er underordnet det rytmiske i denne versjonen, i motsetning til *Moon River*, der jeg dveler med melodien og bygger det langsomt opp med friere rytmikk.

Bruremarsj fra Beiarn framførte jeg første gang i et jazz- og folkemusikkprosjekt med Susanne Lundeng og Merit Hemmingson i 1990. Merit hadde gjort en fin harmonisering av bruremarsjen, som jeg har bygd videre på i mitt eget arrangement.

Fri improvisasjon kan lede til mange ulike vinklinger og også til komposisjoner. *Survival* og *Hope* er improvisasjoner som jeg har skrevet ned og lagd låter av. *Hike* er en fri reise i tonale og rytmiske terreng mens *Free Flow* starter perkussivt og glir over i en melodøs og søkende atmosfære. I *Detour* starter jeg helt nede og etablerer en framdrift før jeg endrer karakter i sluttsekvensen og introduserer et orgelpunkt med dramatik og høyere intensitet.

What Might Have Been er en ballade signert Mike Stern. Jeg spurte ham for noen år siden om hva som lå i tittelen. Han svarte: «nothing special», ingen spesiell hendelse. Låten var en generell betraktning, om «hva som kunne ha vært».

Dette var noen av mine tanker og historier rundt innholdet på **HOME**. Så er det opp til lytteren å definere hvor den indre reisen går og hvordan låtene og musikken på dette albumet oppfattes og oppleves, enkeltvis og som helhet.

Jan Gunnar Hoff mars 2022







2L (Lindberg Lyd) records in spacious acoustic venues; large concert halls, churches and cathedrals. This is actually where we can make the most intimate recordings. The qualities we seek in large rooms are not necessarily a big reverb, but openness due to the absence of close reflecting walls. Making an ambient and beautiful recording is the way of least resistance. Searching the fine edge between direct contact and openness; that's the real challenge! A really good recording should be able to bodily move the listener. This core quality of audio production is made by choosing the right venue for the repertoire, and balancing the image in the placement of microphones and musicians relative to each other in that venue. There is no method available today to reproduce the exact perception of attending a live performance. That leaves us with the art of illusion when it comes to recording music. As recording engineers and producers we need to do exactly the same as any good musician; interpret the music and the composer's intentions and adapt to the media where we perform. Immersive audio is a completely new conception of the musical experience. Recorded music is no longer a matter of a fixed two-dimensional setting, but rather a three-dimensional enveloping situation. Stereo can be described as a flat canvas, while immersive audio is a sculpture that you can literally move around and relate to spatially; surrounded by music you can move about in the aural space and choose angles, vantage points and positions.

Morten Lindberg balance engineer and recording producer

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 2.0 LPCM 24/192kHz  7.1.4 Auro-3D 96kHz

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This recording was made by Lindberg Lyd AS with DPA microphones and HORUS converters to a PYRAMIX workstation on Ravenna AoIP with Genelec ONE monitoring. Digital eXtreme Definition is a professional audio format that brings analogue qualities in 24 bit at 352.8 kHz sampling rate.

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- 1 What Might Have Been
- 2 Hike
- 3 Magma
- 4 Barndomsminne fra Nordland
- 5 Kanskje
- 6 Summertime
- 7 Moon River
- 8 Bruremarsj fra Beiarn
- 9 Free Flow
- 10 Meditatus
- 11 Hope
- 12 Detour
- 13 Vaapstenjeanoe (Big River)
- 14 Survival

