

DXD 352.8kHz/24bit Direct Metal Master 180g audiophile grade vinyl 33^{1/3} rpm

LIVING is Jan Gunnar Hoff’s first solo piano album. His personal blend of different styles and influences is presented in its purest form — simply music.

Hoff is a Norwegian jazz pianist, arranger and composer. Some of his pieces are meditative and expressive, while others have a strong rhythmic nerve, creating contrast and variation in the programme.

Jan Gunnar Hoff has worked extensively as a bandleader and solo artist since 1992, developing his distinctive musical style. His compositions have been performed in collaborations with Mike Stern, Pat Metheny, Alex Acuña, Audun Kleive, Maria João, Mathias Eick and many others.

LIVING is a journey that carries Hoff’s artistic identity further into his own musical terrain, enhanced by the crystal clear recording from Sofienberg Church in Oslo.

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|---|-------------------|------|--------|
| 1 | Living | 5:45 | |
| 2 | Coming My Way | 3:10 | |
| 3 | Brytning | 3:49 | |
| 4 | Valse de Décembre | 4:53 | |
| 5 | Fly North | 3:58 | side A |

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|---|------------------------|------|--------|
| 1 | Mountain High | 3:21 | side B |
| 2 | Sommernat | 4:57 | |
| 3 | Feberdigte | 4:02 | |
| 4 | Å eg veit meg eit land | 4:54 | |
| 5 | Sacrifice | 5:34 | |

All compositions by Jan Gunnar Hoff except “Å eg veit meg eit land” by Blix/Thomsen



Recorded in Sofienberg Church, Norway, August 2012 by Lindberg Lyd AS

recording producer and balance engineer MORTEN LINDBERG recording technician BEATRICE JOHANNESSEN editing MORTEN LINDBERG and JAN GUNNAR HOFF
mix and mastering MORTEN LINDBERG vinyl pre-mastering and DMM disc cutting HENDRIK PAULER pressed by PALLAS GERMANY photo and graphic design MORTEN LINDBERG
2L-092-LP made in Norway 20©13 Lindberg Lyd AS

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LIVING is Jan Gunnar Hoff's first solo piano album. His personal blend of different styles and influences is presented in its purest form – simply music.

Jan Gunnar Hoff is a Norwegian jazz pianist, arranger and composer. He was born in Bodø in 1958. His career as a jazz musician started in a piano trio in 1976. In 1992 he made his debut as a solo artist and composed a suite in four movements for the occasion. The concert was a great success and the music was recorded for his first CD *Syklus*, described by the press as “the vitamin injection of 1993”. Since then Hoff has made a number of albums in his own name and composed 180 works for different ensembles. He received the Edvard Prize (named after Edvard Grieg) in 2005 for his jazz mass *Meditatus* and was composer of the commissioned work for Vossa Jazz the same year.

Jan Gunnar Hoff has worked extensively as a bandleader and solo artist since 1992, developing his distinctive musical style. His compositions have been performed in collaborations with Mike Stern, Pat Metheny, Alex Acuña, Audun Kleive, Maria João, Mathias Eick and many others. As a sideman Hoff has contributed to numerous recordings in different genres. He was the arranger and leader of *Quiet Winter Night*, Grammy-nominated for best surround sound in 2013, an album where he successfully merges elements of jazz, folk and popular music.

LIVING is a solo piano journey that carries Hoff's artistic identity further into his own musical terrain, enhanced by the crystal clear recording from Sofienberg Church in Oslo, August 2012.

“Hoff's writing and playing possesses an almost pop-like clarity and concision, but with a far richer vernacular.”
– John Kelman, Allaboutjazz.com



I started playing the piano at the age of 10. Early on I began improvising on the classical pieces that my piano teacher gave me. I made minor variations in the melodies and learnt a lot of music by ear. A few years later I listened to artists like Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Rick Wakeman, Deep Purple, Ketil Bjørnstad, Oscar Peterson, Keith Jarrett and Weather Report. Edvard Grieg was also a major influence. I have always felt as being part of a crossover tradition somewhere between jazz, classical and popular music. The melody for me is the strongest part of music.

I spend a lot of time searching for thematic substance and try to develop this into tunes or larger compositions. In order to make the melodies “come alive” I seek to express emotion and passion in the performance itself. There is also a strong link between improvisation and composition. Many of my pieces emerge from improvising on the piano or are captured from a sequencer session. I start writing a lot of small sketches, then choose which ideas to develop further.

The material on this album represents different periods and aspects of my composing. “Brytning” is part of a suite written for the the Arts Festival of North Norway in Harstad 1992. This was a classical arena where I made my debut as a solo artist. “Mountain High” (1995) has a similar latin feel. I remember writing this piece in a mood of disappointment, trying to compensate real life with music, climbing upwards. The title track “Living” is an excerpt from a commission for Bodø Jazz Open in 2012. It is like a constant flow, a desire to keep moving and still be alive. “Sacrifice” is another excerpt from the same project and was an attempt to take out something deep that overrides the song or jazz format, in the shape of a simple piano theme.

“Å eg veit meg eit land” (My homeland so dear, way up in the north) has been called “The Northern Norway Provincial Anthem”. It was written as early as 1896 by Elias Blix; the melody was composed by Adolf Thomsen in 1901. This hymn is also known as “Barndomsminne frå Nordland” (Childhood memory from Nordland). “Fly North”, too, grasps some of the pride I feel at being part of the North. “Valse de Décembre” is written in December, which is a very dark period in Northern Norway. This can sometimes trigger a special mood. “Florence” is inspired by a trip to Italy and was part of my commission *Pictures* for the Nordland Music Festival in 2011.

“Sommernat” and “Feberdigte” are inspired by Knut Hamsun's beautiful poems from his collection *Det vilde kor* and were part of a project in 2009 for the 150th anniversary of the birth of Hamsun.

“Coming My Way” describes a moment when something happens or “comes your way” – something that turns your life around forever. I composed this melody early one morning in June 2011 and the text just came along with it:

Like a winter song you were there, quiet tales were told it was coming my way, for the first and the last time. Like the falling leaves we made ground, as if time stood still it was coming our way, for the first and the last time

As the seed has grown we are still around there, as the years go by and things fade constantly, in the wake of the seasons we get stronger and stay, in ourselves, for the sake of all that's passed on...

Special thanks to my family, Morten Lindberg, Norsk Kulturråd and Odd Erik Vartlestad.

Jan Gunnar Hoff 2013

