

- 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

side A

- 1 **Summertime** 4:21
George Gershwin / arr. Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 2 **Moon River** 3:40
Henry Mancini / arr. Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 3 **Bruremarsj fra Beiarn** 4:23
Johan A. Aronsen / arr. Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 4 **Free Flow** 4:49
Jan Gunnar Hoff
- 5 **Meditatus** 4:50
Jan Gunnar Hoff

side B

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

Jan Gunnar Hoff

2L-168-LP

Jan Gunnar Hoff

HOME

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Recorded in STORMEN konserthus, Bodø, Norway, August 2021 by Lindberg Lyd AS 33 1/3 RPM 180g clear vinyl

recording producer and balance engineer MORTEN LINDBERG editing MORTEN LINDBERG and JAN GUNNAR HOFF Piano Technician FRANK HADDON Steinway D-model
mix and mastering MORTEN LINDBERG photo TRYM BERGSMO graphic design MORTEN LINDBERG portrait photo TOM MELBY pressed by TAKT
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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."

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, 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.

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.

Jan Gunnar Hoff





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2L-168-LP
rec/BEM

STEREO 33 1/3 rpm
side B

Jan Gunnar Hoff HOME