



## Jan Gunnar Hoff Group featuring Mike Stern

Nuclear fusion is a reaction in which two or more atomic nuclei come close enough to form one or more different atomic nuclei and subatomic particles.

If you have ever wondered what 'fusion' sounds like musically...then wonder no more. It is laid out, immaculately, in this most special album. We hear fusion in all its glory, the crossover between jazz, funk and rock performed with perfect precision. This is achieved not only with excellence of composition and inexorable instrumental virtuosity, but also by choice of studio, production and mastering techniques. Best of all - the album sounds fresh, vibrant and it's American superstar guitarist guest Mike Stern is, having recovered from a serious accident, back on top form.

The collaboration between pianist Jan Gunnar Hoff and guitar legend Mike Stern started in 2006 with Hoff's commission Magma for the Nordland Music Festival. In 2006-2008 the Jan Gunnar Hoff Group toured with Stern in Norway, Ukraine and Estonia and their CD Magma was released; a much appreciated album where Stern played a significant role. There was another successful tour in 2016 when Audun Kleive (drums) and Per Mathisen (bass) completed the Mike Stern & Jan Gunnar Hoff Quartet.

Stern and Hoff's plan for their 2018 project was to present compositions from both parties and find a 'common ground' for the new album. Hoff wrote 5 new tunes

while Stern contributed 3 selections from his previous solo albums. During the band's tour in March 2018 the material was further developed and arranged for this new recording.

The result is a varied album that showcases a great musical collaboration between Mike Stern and his superb Norwegian counterparts Hoff, Kleive and Mathisen.

### Some Day

The album opener is an appealing and memorable theme played by guitar/keys leading to a lovely solo from Mike and an equally lovely acoustic piano solo from Jan Gunnar.

### City Z

A "Milesy" jazz/rock blockbuster driven by Audun's superb drumming and Per's immaculate bass playing. Basically built over one chord, the groove-based track offers total freedom for soloists Jan Gunnar and Mike to trade thoughts.

### Her Song

An uplifting ballad with a theme stated by Per's fearless fretless Jaco-esque bass. Mike replays the theme, solos and sets the stage for delightful solos by Per and Jan Gunnar.

### Seven Thirty

A tune originally recorded on Stern's album Odds or Evens (1991), with more spectacular soloing from Mike and Jan Gunnar.



### **Mike 6/4**

This track in a walking 6/8 time (if you walk quickly!) delivers a stunning rock-fused solo by Mike and a stimulating, cascading acoustic piano solo by Jan Gunnar.

### **Common Ground**

A heartwarming ballad composed by Mike who solos first and is shadowed by an enchanting acoustic piano solo by Jan Gunnar. This is reflective and relaxing music.

### **All You Need**

Mike Stern's charming, feel good tune with the theme performed by unison guitar/keyboards and vocals from Mike. This leads to a characteristic Mike Stern solo, as melodic and blues-tinged as ever! The theme is restated

### **MIKE STERN**

To a generation of contemporary jazz guitar aficionados, Mike Stern is regarded as one of the true guitar greats of his generation. A player of remarkable facility whose searing lines are informed mainly by bebop and the blues while also carrying a rock-tinged intensity. Stern made his mark with Miles Davis in the early '80s before launching his solo career in 1985. Since then Stern has released 17 recordings as a leader, six of which were nominated for GRAMMY® Awards.

### **JAN GUNNAR HOFF**

Jan Gunnar Hoff is a Norwegian jazz pianist, composer and arranger. He received the highest distinction in Norwegian jazz, the Buddy award in 2013 and holds status as a Steinway & Sons Artist. As a solo artist and co-leader Hoff has released 19 albums. He has composed 250 works for different settings, including commissions for major festivals. Hoff has performed worldwide with artists like Alex Acuna, Mike Stern, Pat Metheny, Maria Joao, Marilyn Mazur and works as a professor at the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø and at the University of Agder in Kristiansand.

followed by a dexterous synth solo by Jan Gunnar. Back to the theme, which by now, we can already sing along with!

### **Point Blank**

Hot stuff! The closer track presents a theme specified by a guitar/keys unison which makes way for short displays of utter brilliance by Per, Mike and Jan Gunnar underwritten by the tightest bass and drums in the West!

Jazz/rock firepower, blues, synthesis, combination, mixture, blending, and integration – this is music impeccably performed by four of the very best musicians on the planet. Enjoy!

*David Fishel*

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### **PER MATHISEN**

Per Mathisen is regarded as one of Norway's best and most versatile bass players. He has toured and performed all over the world with artists such as Hiram Bullock, Bill Bruford, Mike Stern, Gary Husband, Marilyn Mazur, Geri Allen, Adam Nussbaum, Gary Thomas, Terri Lyne Carrington and many more. Mathisen is a member of Ensemble Denada and several Norwegian and international line ups. He has released a number of albums in his own name, contributing regularly as a composer.

### **AUDUN KLEIVE**

Audun Kleive's musicianship as a drummer and percussionist is highly respected among his peers and has gained him an established reputation as a vital force in Norwegian and international jazz. Kleive's integrity and artistry is reflected as a participant in well over 100-plus recordings and he has provided the rhythmic foundations for such varied musicians as Terje Rypdal, Jon Balke, Charles Lloyd, and Marilyn Mazur. Kleive received the Buddy award 2017 and continues to be a source of inspiration for an entire younger generation of jazz musicians.

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**LOS 196-1**



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