

- 1 HOPE 7:12
- 2 UPLIFT 4:25
- 3 CHANT 6:37
- 4 EFTIR ALLT 4:57
- 5 HÆGUR DANS 4:38
- 6 APRIL DREAMS 6:24
- 7 CONTINUATION 6:15
- 8 DESEMBER 6:01
- 9 ESCAPED 6:04

Total time 52:33

All compositions by Ingi Bjarni Skúlason
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Mastered March 2024 by Ívar Ragnarsson, Reykjavík
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Executive producer Odd Gjelsnes
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INGI BJARNI HOPE

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Hilmar Jensson / Anders Jormin / Magnús Trygvason Eliassen



MAGNÚS

INGI BJARNI

ANDERS

HILMAR

As I sat down to write these liner notes, I looked at the song list of the album. I noticed that seven out of the nine pieces were written in 2021, the year my mother passed away. After some reflection, I realized that these pieces are, in one way or another, connected to the process of grieving my mother. This was not something I intentionally planned when selecting compositions for this project, or even when I was composing the pieces. I was just focused on the music, not necessarily on how it came about. So this realization is a bit special to me. Recently, I have indeed noticed that my subconscious plays a big role in my life. In my music making I let my intuition lead the way.

My mother was quite poetic and often published parts of her unreleased poems on social media. In one of her poems, she wrote (translated from Icelandic to English): *"Is life always a gentle waltz, with a clear path and no troubles ahead? The winter of life may indeed be long and hard. But my dear friend, you can do better. With hope in your heart, you are capable of everything."* It is my wish to express a feeling of hope with this music – hope for peace, hope for closure, and hope for happiness. So *Hope* is the most appropriate title for the album.

The album starts with the spacious title track, *Hope*, with a beautiful bass intro by Anders Jormin, where he hints at the bass melody of the song. *Uplift* is also a song connected to the theme of hope, an uplifting tune that changes between the meters of 11/8 and 6/4 with a strong, yet subtle, melody inspired by folk music. The third piece, the highly lyrical *Chant*, starts with an improvised piano intro. Then the singable melody starts. This is truly a piece that could be sung, even without lyrics. Singing has a healing power, so perhaps this is a chant for healing.

Eftir allt was written during an artist's residency at the historic Hólar Cathedral in Iceland in the summer of 2021. The title translates to "after everything". This is the only song I have written inside a church, which seems fitting for this album since my mother was very religious. The slow dance, *Hægur dans*, was written with a specific drum beat in mind for Magnús Trygvason Eliassen to explore. But later, the beat goes astray, and collective improvisations take over. Once, I improvised a piano piece daily for a whole month and shared them on YouTube. *April Dreams* is a dreamy blues from one of these improvisations. It has a peculiar melody based on intervals. The song features great soloing by both Hilmar Jensson and Anders Jormin.

Life continues even though there are bumps along the way. *Continuation* explores sweet folk music melodies but spices them up with expressive free improvisation. *Desember* is a song written in December, but it is definitely not a Christmas song! *Desember* symbolizes the end of the year and is about accepting how things are. To leave things on a slightly more energetic note, the album ends with *Escaped*. I chose that name because one morning I felt an overwhelming urge to create, as if the music needed to escape from within me.

Ingi Bjarni Skúlason, September 2024