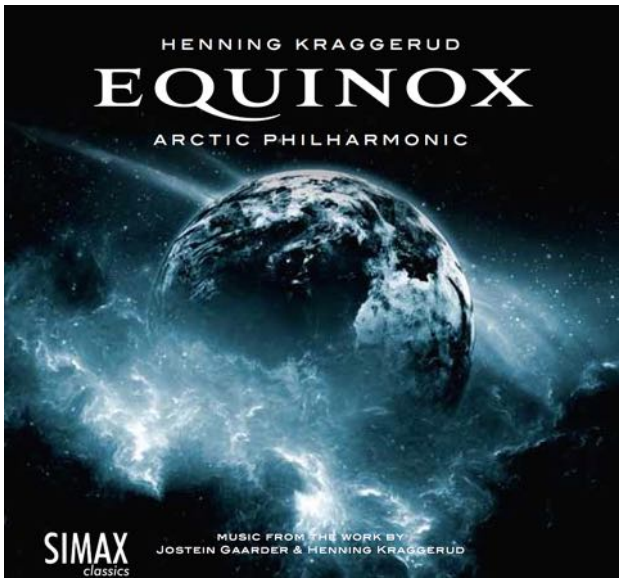
EQUINOX

HENNING KRAGGERUD
composer and violinist

JOSTEIN GAARDER
narrator (performances in Norwegian only)

CLARE HAMMOND
pianist



An exploration of time, space, identity, memory and loss in a work for violin, piano and narrator, accompanied by texts from Norwegian author, Jostein Gaarder.

Since the 17th century, theorists, philosophers and composers have discussed the intrinsic properties of musical keys, and their links to time and space. These discussions and ideas inspired Henning Kraggerud and the world-famous author of *Sophie's World*, Jostein Gaarder, to collaborate on *Equinox*.

Equinox comprises four concertos - Afternoon, Evening, Night and Morning - with 25 postludes in all. These postludes are written in 24 keys and depict 24 hours and 24 time zones, taking the listener on a kaleidoscopic tour across the world and time, and journeying through the circle of fifths, beginning in C major. The postludes are by turn joyful, mournful, effervescent and heart-wrenching.

Jostein Gaarder has written an original accompanying 24-part narrative, 24 keys to a world before it slips away, charting a man's journey through time from the Meridian Line in Greenwich, London, which features in live performances of *Equinox*. As he awaits a potentially serious medical diagnosis, the protagonist decides to make the most of his 24 hours of freedom by visiting every time zone.

Equinox can be performed in two halves with narration and lasts two and a half hours. If performed without narration, it is played in a single span lasting 75 minutes. For performances in English, Henning Kraggerud and pianist Clare Hammond are joined by actor Simon Callow, who has just recorded the narration for SIMAX records.

Equinox was premiered in its orchestral version in 2014 at the opening concert of the Northern Lights Festival in Tromsø, and later performed in Norwegian with Jostein Gaarder in Bodø and the Risor Festival. The work has since been played by the NFM Symphony Orchestra, Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra, Auckland Philharmonia and Tonkünstler Orchestra.

"Hearing [Henning] play as a Prom encore the tenth of his 24 'Postludes in All Keys' ... opened a window on a magical world ... [the music] is endlessly resourceful and surprising ... from meditation to lopsided dance, it is extraordinary. I can't wait to hear the whole thing in action."
David Nice / BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

"Henning Kraggerud… shows in a masterly way the universality of the language of music... These short compositions create the perfect connection between contemporary musical language and a classical artistic form and concept." (*****)
Karol Rzepecki / MUZYKA 21

"[The music] is beautiful, varied, full of unexpected turns and touching… It is precise as well as generous and spacious - and a fantastically good listen."
Anki Gerhardsen / AVISA NORDLAND

HENNING KRAGGERUD, violinist, composer / www.henningkraggerud.com

Henning Kraggerud is Artistic Director of the Arctic Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra. His extraordinary reach as an artist is a result of his versatility and passion for music, as well as the genuine quality to his playing and the beauty of his performances. His teaching and educational writings provide fascinating insights into his multi-faceted approach to music-making, while his composing, arranging and improvising – frequently bringing his own works into the concert hall – recall the spirit of the old masters such as Josef Suk and Eugène Ysaÿe.

Henning's eminence as a soloist and play/director have led to invitations time and again to many of the world's most significant orchestras, most recently the Royal Danish Opera Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Danish National Symphony, and Tonkünstler Vienna orchestras.

Henning is a prolific composer whose works are performed by many prominent musicians and orchestras around the globe. His largest-scale work to date is entitled *Equinox: 24 Postludes in All Keys for Violin* and String Orchestra. Commissioned, premiered and recorded by the Arctic Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra with Henning as soloist, the work was composed as a musical counterpart to a story specially written by world-famous author Jostein Gaarder, and has been hailed as "a fascinating composition to return to over and over again" (MusicWeb International).

Henning is a Professor at the Barratt Due Institute of Music in Oslo, and International Chair in Violin at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. He plays on a 1744 Guarneri del Gesù, provided by Dextra Musica AS. This company is founded by Sparebankstiftelsen DNB.

SIMON CALLOW / http://www.dalzellandberesford.com/client/simon-callow

Simon Callow is an actor of extraordinary versatility whose critically acclaimed stage appearances are complimented by his work as a theatre director, musician and writer. He is well known for his work in film, including *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994), *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) and *A Room with a View* (1985), and his one-man stage shows, including *The Mystery of Charles Dickens* by Peter Ackroyd and Being Shakespeare.

Simon has written biographies of Oscar Wilde, Charles Laughton and Orson Welles and, as a devotee of classical music, has contributed articles to Gramophone magazine. In 1999 he was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for his services to acting.

CLARE HAMMOND, pianist / www.clarehammond.com

Acclaimed as a "pianist of extraordinary gifts" (*Gramophone*) and "immense power" (*The Times*), Clare Hammond is recognised for the virtuosity and authority of her performances. In 2016, she won the Royal Philharmonic Society's 'Young Artist Award' in recognition of outstanding achievement and in 2020 she was engaged to perform at the International Piano Series (Southbank Centre). This season she appears with the CBSO (Michael Seal) and BBC NOW, performs at the Aldeburgh and Husum Festivals, and gives live broadcasts for BBC Radio 3, and Danish Radio with violinist Henning Kraggerud.

Performances during the pandemic included recitals for the Wigmore Hall and Aldeburgh Music, a live recital broadcast for BBC Radio 3 Lunchtime Concerts from St David's Cardiff, and broadcast recordings of Moussa and Carwithen with the BBC Symphony Orchestra (Geoffrey Paterson) and BBC Concert Orchestra (Gavin Sutherland). During 2020-21, Clare was engaged to perform with the Britten Sinfonia (Ryan Wigglesworth), Sinfonia Varsovia (Jacek Kaspszyk), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Christoph Altstaedt) and the BBC Symphony Orchestra (Dalia Stasevska).

Clare's discs for BIS have been widely praised with her latest, Variations, receiving extensive critical approval. The disc was commended for its "shimmering pianism and lightly-worn virtuosity" (BBC Music Magazine) and "artistry of the highest order" (*Musical Opinion*), while *Crescendo* (Belgium) hailed her as "one of the most exploratory pianistic personalities of our time". Clare's discography includes world premiere recordings of over 45 works. Clare completed a BA at Cambridge University, where she obtained a double first in music, and undertook postgraduate study with Ronan O'Hora at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.