



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

www.grapevine.is

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

+ COMPLETE CITY LISTINGS - INSIDE!

Issue 04 - April 9 - May 6 - 2010

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JÓNSI & NICO GO ERUPT!

Champagne & latex gloves
at The Leather Bar

Jónsi of Sigur rós has just released his first solo album, GO. It rules. Grapevine joined Jónsi and his Go collaborator Nico Muhly for a celebration, some champagne and a bit of trúinó at Reykjavík's Leather Bar. **READ THE SORDID DETAILS INSIDE.**

Editorial | Haukur S Magnússon

Haukur's 22nd Editorial

On what I think about Icesave, Kreppa, Icelandic Bankers, Icelandic Businessmen, Icelandic Politicians, THE BLACK REPORT And How It Will Probably Skirt Over Important Issues, Private Armies, Magma Energy, Privatisation Of National Resources, Iceland's Rotted And Corrupt System, Iceland Being Part Of The Coalition Of The Willing That Invaded Iraq Back In 2003, War Crimes In General, A Borderline Racist And Homophobic Society, "Let Them Eat Golf Course" and the Eyjafjallajökull/Fimmvörðuháls Eruption

Well, you see... oh screw it. They're all pretty disgusting and awful and horrible, except for the eruption, which for now is super-awesome. Let's just play some backgammon. Your move.



On Cover:
Jón Þór (Jónsi) Birgisson
and Nico Muhly
**Cover Photo and
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Ingibjörg Birgisdóttir

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You may not like it, but at least it's not sponsored. (No articles in the Reykjavík Grapevine are pay-for articles. The opinions expressed are the writers' own, not the advertisers'.)

Get Albums That Rule For Free

Also, a luscious tee



Hey you! Yes, you! Are you reading this on our day of publication – April 9? Do you like good music? Fancy some free stuff?

Alright. Now here's your chance. The first five people that bring copies of this very note to the Smekkleysa store on Laugavegur (101 Reykjavík, but of course) will receive the following:

- 1 (one) copy of Jónsi's excellent new album, **Go**
- 1 (one) copy of Nico Muhly's equally excellent album, **Mothertongue**
- 1 (one) cool new Reykjavík Grapevine t-shirt in whatever size you desire.



Hurry up! Someone's probably on their way to pick up all that sweet stuff RIGHT NOW! Why are you still reading this? Hurry!

This excellent giveaway is brought to you by the good people of Smekkleysa and Bedroom Community, in conjunction with your pals at the Grapevine. Only one item per person. That's final. Don't be rude to the clerk at Smekkleysa store. He is awesome. Also, don't be rude in general.



TRACK OF THE ISSUE

Benni Hemm Hemm

Retaliate

bennihemmhemm

Download Retaliate at www.grapevine.is

Fans of Icelandic music need no introduction to Benni Hemm Hemm, for he is LEGEND in the local scene. And for good reason – his oeuvre of music is consistently great, his songs are catchy and crafty and his persona is top notch. Big up Benni! However, the good man has been missing from the Reykjavík scene for a while now (and miss him we have), as he went and moved to Edinburgh, Scotland for some reason.

Benni didn't quit making great music though, as is amply displayed on his new EP, the turboriffic Retaliate, available on 10" vinyl and CD in Iceland, Europe, Japan and the US through Kimi Records. He's singing in English too! Download the EP's title track from our site and hear for yourself!

Comic | Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir



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When it's cold outside our offers becomes hot!

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If you don't recognise **Sixt rent a car**, you are up for a surprise. Sixt is one of the largest car rental company in Europe and the **biggest one in Germany**, where the brand name was established in 1912. While you enjoy the Icelandic winter, we like to offer you a warm **20% discount** on all Sixt Iceland rental cars this winter*. The only thing you need to do is to tear this coupon off and hand it to our staff, whenever you call us to pick you up.

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DAY TOURS TO ALL THE MOST EXCITING PLACES IN ICELAND

RE-15 - 09:00

South Shore Adventure

☀️ ❄️ 🌊 All Year

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN



Iceland's South coast is ideal for nature lovers of all kinds. Spectacular scenery, striking waterfalls, stunning views of glaciers, black lava sand coastline, charming villages and impressive rock formations all day long.

PRICE **11200** ISK
PRICE ~~15400~~ ISK

Book now on www.re.is

RE-04 - 09:00
The Golden Circle
☀️ ❄️ 🌊 All Year
MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN
09-17

Don't miss out on the fascinating experience the Golden Circle gives you. Walk around the world famous Geysir area, where geysers explode and pools of mud bubble. Visit the magnificent Gullfoss waterfall along with a visit to Þingvellir national park, the original site of the oldest existing parliament in the world.

PRICE **9800** ISK

Book now on www.re.is
Book now by calling 580 5450

RE-44 - 09:00
Gullfoss - Geysir & Langjökull Snowmobiling
☀️ ❄️ 🌊 Seasonal
THU FRI SAT SUN
09-19

Our Gullfoss – Geysir & Langjökull Snowmobiling tour puts you in touch with some of Iceland's most famous and exciting natural phenomena. Piece de resistance an exhilarating 1 hour snowmobile ride across endless white snowfields.

A valid driver's licence is required.

PRICE **24500** ISK

Book now on www.re.is
Book now by calling 580 5450

RE-24 - 12:30
Gullfoss - Geysir Direct
☀️ ❄️ 🌊 All Year
MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN
12:30-18

In one afternoon you spend your time encountering across-section of Iceland's natural wonders and geological phenomena: the historical Þingvellir national park, Geysir geothermal area and the amazing Gullfoss waterfall.

Due to road conditions during the hardest winter months the stop at Þingvellir national park might be skipped.

PRICE **8600** ISK

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Relax at the Blue Lagoon
☀️ ❄️ 🌊 All Year
MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN
FLEXIBLE

There is no better way to start or end your Iceland adventure than by bathing in the famous Blue Lagoon.

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RE-81 - 09:00
Take a Walk on the Ice Side
☀️ ❄️ 🌊 All Year
MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN
09-19

Want to see and feel something completely different? Why not take a walk on a glacier and experience a surface that you have never been able to walk on before! Take a tour with us and try something new - a once in a lifetime experience for most.

PRICE **19900** ISK

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RE-06 - 09:00
The Wonders of Reykjanes & Blue Lagoon
☀️ ❄️ 🌊 Seasonal
MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN
09-17

Don't miss out on discovering bubbling hot springs, dramatic lava fields, migratory birding cliffs, lonesome lighthouses and last but not least the Blue Lagoon*.

*Admission to the Blue Lagoon is not incl.

PRICE **13500** ISK

Book now on www.re.is
Book now by calling 580 5450

RE-08 - 09:00
Saga Circle
☀️ ❄️ 🌊 All Year
SAT
09-18

This tour is perfect for all Saga enthusiasts. On this tour we take you around the area where one of the Icelandic Sagas took place - along with enjoying spectacular landscape. Come and follow in the footsteps of the Vikings with us.

PRICE **14500** ISK

Book now on www.re.is
Book now by calling 580 5450

Special Internet Offer*
Online discount code:
GV050410

RE-05 - 13:00
Reykjavik Grand Excursion
☀️ ❄️ 🌊 All Year
MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN
13-16

Get a detailed and comprehensive introduction to Reykjavik's past and present. Reykjavik's unique proximity to nature, with salmon river Elliðaá running through it, green valleys and outdoor swimming pools, makes this city second to none in the world.

PRICE **3900** ISK
PRICE ~~4900~~ ISK

Book now on www.re.is

RE-80 - 09:00
Glacier Snowmobile Adventure
☀️ ❄️ 🌊 All Year
MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN
09-19

Take a ride to the top of the world on a snowmobile and see the amazing Sólheimajökull from above the larger Mýrdalsjökull glacier and be pleasantly surprised by the magnificent views.

This tour is not recommended for children. A valid driver's licence is required.

PRICE **28900** ISK

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* In order to activate the special internet offers you need to enter the online discount codes when booking on www.re.is
Special internet offers on this page can be booked through 6 May 2010.

For further information and details on tours please refer to our brochures.

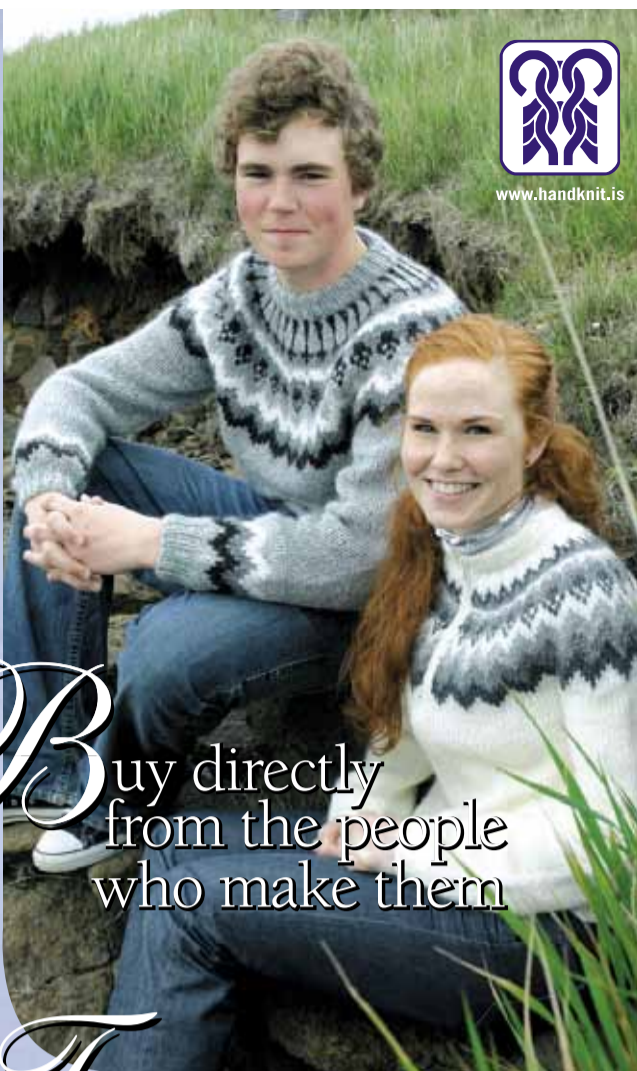
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4 Letters

Learning Icelandic

Bob Cluness didn't mention in his letter where he has studied Icelandic and that surely makes a difference. Friends who took courses at a private school were shocked by the blatant incompetence of some of the teachers, and although I have been generally pleased with my Icelandic for Foreign Students studies at the University of Iceland, the program certainly could be improved.

There is an unfortunate attitude among many foreigners I meet that one learns Icelandic by being taught it, by sitting in a classroom and listening to teachers. I know people who have lived here for years and absolutely refuse to buy a dictionary. Who never go to Icelandic films or plays because "I wouldn't understand it." Who have never read an Icelandic book, even in translation. Who only attend English-language church services. Who have lived here for a long time and have visited fewer cultural institutions – the National Museum, Culture House, the art galleries – than the average tourist sees in a few days. Who would rather watch American television than expose themselves to the many – often free – public events where they might learn something about Icelandic society and pick up some Icelandic. People who ask, "Where's that?" when I mention a free concert at the Ráðhús or Dómkirkja.

Icelandic is difficult, but English must be too for someone moving to America from Asia or Africa. One's attitude to language learning, as with anything else, makes all the difference.

Kristófer Jónatansson

Dear Kristófer,

thank you for your letter. Your point seems to make a lot of sense, what with one's attitude weighing in heavily when it comes to learning stuff and whatnot. However, with a name like Kristófer Jónatansson, you just had to know Icelandic from the get-go, right? Otherwise you'd never be able to pronounce your own name and stuff. Right?

Could it be Icelandic is just an insanely super-hard language, what with all the consonants and rolling pirate arrrrrrs and conjugations and stuff? We have no idea, what with being native speakers and all. But judging from your foreign friends, this might be the case.

Is Iceland the most irresponsible nation on earth?

You are like immature children. You tried to compete with the big boys and failed. Now pay your debts like adults.

How dare you try to make the UK out to be the bad guys.

You are freeloaders of the western world. Why bother to have a referendum on an orphan agreement. Do you like wasting money? F

Dear F,

thank you for your letter. It was... well. Very curt. And fun! In fact, it was so fun that we read it out loud to one another while blowing our Icesave funded overdrafts on fancy new diamond encrusted top hats to go with our fancy new diamond encrusted tuxedos [via eBay], which we will wear to the opening of the Icesave-funded, diamond encrusted music and conference centre, Harpa. Hand me my monocle...

Do y'all mind holding a minute, F? We have to take a call on our gold plated iPhones.

So, yeah. You were saying? What, us? Irresponsible? That impossible! ANYWAY. Could you spare some quid? We feel like taking our fancy private jet for a spin, but our platinum cards aren't working for some reason. So just a couple thou for some gas money would be great. We're good for it. Promise.

Dear citizens of Iceland.

I listened to a news report on the B.B.C. this morning on the public outrage in Iceland about the bailouts for your banks. I was heartened to hear that possibly 75% of your populace will vote against your governments choice to use your money to cover the banks mistakes. What great moment for Democracy!! Many here in the U.S.A. are likewise outraged. However our media and government is so tightly controlled, by the same influences that gambled all the money in the first place, that we are not permitted a final say. We are allowed to grumble only so much until the next big media event takes our attention away.

My knowledge of Iceland is admittedly limited. I once read a book "Independent people" which filled me with admiration for your country. The end of the B.B.C. added a scare about how this vote will make it more difficult for

FREE GRAPEVINE TEE HEE HEE!

We've got a new prize for all your MOST AWESOME LETTERS. And it's a scorcher! From now on, whoever sends in the issue's AWESOME LETTER will receive a cool new Reykjavik Grapevine T-shirt, featuring the majestic G that adorns our cover. So you should make sure to keep writing us fun and/or interesting letters. Natch.

This new Grapevine tee surely is the shiznit! It was designed by our very own art director man, Höður Kristbjörnsson, and it's good for posing in front of a mirror, impressing folks with your impeccable taste or picking up men or women of all ages (no minors). DON'T PANIC if your letter wasn't picked AWESOME LETTER. You can still get a tee for a low, low price over at Havarí on Austurstræti.



MOST AWESOME LETTER:

This is Zakarías from Caterpillarmen writing. we released our debut, adopt a monkey, last year. it sounded bad, but there is more to the story than those three words.

when we got the offer from brak records to distribute it, Baldvin Esra apparently didn't think it sounded well enough. he wanted a third party to remaster it...I suppose in an effort to make it "marketable" or "competitive" or whatever. typical loudness wars vomit.

at this time we had spent a lot of time and hard work to make it sound as good as possible. he told me about his plans, and because I didn't tell him, "don't you fucking dare ruin our fucking record by paying some jackass to floor a compressor", he went ahead and did exactly that.

It's all my fault. I didn't have the guts to stand up to mr. label man.

that is not to say that I have anything against Baldvin, or what's-his-name. it is only to say that they don't know what sounds good.

we have never earned one króna. I don't know if what's-his-name got paid, but if he did get paid, even the measliest sum, then he got paid more than we have ever gotten paid to sit down and take a shit on our hard work. ironic? that's the word, right?

anyway, I feel I have made my point.

the original masters you can find in my dropbox, <http://bit.ly/CATRPLR>, the way the record was supposed to sound.

Dear Zakarías or whatever you're called,

thank you for your letter. While we don't know what went between you and your label man and your compressing agent, we do know that unleashing a work of art to the world is a complicated, nerve-wracking and often difficult task. Doubly so if it's your virgin offering.

Talking about this all after the fact is doubly hard.

Then giving the results of all your strife away for free on the letters page of a free magazine, well, that's pretty amazing.

So you won AWESOME LETTER T-shirt extravaganza. Readers: go check out Caterpillarmen's album, the way they wanted it to sound. Zakarías: never again allow a record you haven't heard to go to print with your name on it.

your country to be able to join the European union. To which I say larger is rarely better. I hope the independence of Iceland can be a lesson to the rest of the world. To live within your means and enjoy life, not to get dragged into the greed filled societies of most of the world.

Best wishes from America,
A.J.Steen

Dear AJ,

thank you for your sweet letter. It's cool to hear you enjoyed Independent People, and your views and opinions seem pretty spot on. You sound like a pretty awesome guy. So I'll ask you to pardon the following outburst – it's not really directed at you.

You write: "I hope the independence of Iceland can be a lesson to the rest of the world. To live within your means and enjoy life, not to get dragged into the greed filled societies of most of the world."

To which we must reply: HAHHAHAHAHA!

HAHAHAHAHAHA!

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

HA!

Sorry. You were saying? Oh yeah, that Iceland somehow is an example of folks living within their means, enjoying life while not getting dragged into the greed-filled societies of the rest of the world. HAHHAHAHAHAHA!

HAH!

Thanks again for the letter, sir. Check out Halldór Laxness' The Atom Station if you ever have the chance. And drop by our office for some champagne and Kobe burgers if you're ever around.

Hello,

I'm one of those folks you like to call an "American Jackass" who thinks Iceland is fabulous. I'm jazzing up an Iceland Biking Tour website for one of your own pillars of the community, and would like to include some info on your "Inside Reykjavik" guidebook, if it's still available – like how much it costs and how to order it. Also, when was it last updated? Your guide keeps getting recommended in the blogs I've read, so I think it would be useful (and hilarious, yet informative) reading for potential visitors to your city. Can you help me? More importantly – if you can ignore the fact that I'm a USA Jackass -- WILL you help me? By the way, you don't have any hard evidence that I, personally, am a jackass (You haven't been talking to my ex-husband, have you?) so give me the benefit of a doubt, OK?

Thanks -- I hope.

Cheers,
Elizabeth Tilley

Dear Elizabeth,

who called you an American jackass? It wasn't us, anyway. We don't define jackasses based on nationality – only jackassery. Of which you seem to have little to spare. At least judging by your letter. You might have been a jackass to a waitress this morning, who knows (and if you were, shame on you! Do you know how hard waiting tables can be? It's HELLISH?)

In any case, you can still buy the book from

its publishing house, Forlagið, over at www.forlagid.is (it's in Icelandic, but you'll probably find it). The thing is admittedly great, as it was written by our most excellent former editor Bart Cameron. It – dare we say – provides some of the best insight into Reykjavik living one can find on print. However, it was published four years ago (that's like, eight centuries in blog years) so some of the info might be outta date. REST ASSURED THAT WE ARE WORKING ON A NEW ONE. We'll tell you more about it when we get around to it.

While visiting the eruption, if you happen to drop your keys into the lava flow, don't even think about retrieving, 'cause man...they're gone!

CM

Dear CM,

indeed. Also, remember to bring warm clothes and to pack a heavy lunch, dinner and midnight snack. And to not get close enough to the lava to drop your keys in it. It's fucking lava, man. All hot and stuff. Just remember.

Dear Grapevine,

I am just home in the UK after 5 fantastic days in your amazing country, my first visit.

Everywhere we have been we have been humoured and helped, well informed and impressed by everyone; at our hotel, on organised tours, on public transport and in bars, shops, museums, galleries and restaurants.

In addition to the stunning natural phenomena and scenery, you also provided wonderful snowfall for us, which made up for hidden Aurora Borealis!

On our Golden Circle / snow mobile adventure I stupidly left my camera in the snow suit provided for the ride. Through your letters page I wish to say a huge Thank You to Cabin Hotel and Mountaineers of Iceland Adventure Tours staff for their help and the amazing prompt return of my camera, delivered back to the hotel for me. It's wonderful to find such help and honesty.

On arriving home I asked my taxi driver what had been going on in my home town whilst I was away. His reply; "Bugger all!"


Whatever would visitors to the UK think if that was all the taxi driver had to offer. We have a lot to learn from you and your pride in your country.

Time to start planning (and saving for) my next trip to Iceland, a very special place
Regards

Anne Bird

Dear Anne,

thank you for your letter. It's good to hear you had a nice time over here – we can only BEG YOU to tell all your friends and acquaintances about it so we can feast on their sweet, sweet money. Anyway, we gotta tell you: you shouldn't be so harsh on your local cab drivers. Have you any idea how boring that job must be?



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Iceland excursions

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AH90 Volcano in Action

The people of Iceland are used to the forces of nature, since there have been constant reports of volcanic activity throughout the history of our beautiful island.

We drive along the south shore to Hvolsvöllur. From there we turn off the main road and head to Fljótshlíð, where we stop to view the volcanic activity at a safe distance away from the eruption. Our guides give you a good overview of the geology of the area and about volcanic eruptions.

Tour AH90 Details

Daily Departures
Pick up: 17:00 - Departure: 17:30
Duration: 6,5 hours
Included: Bus & English Guidance
Price: 8.600 ISK - € 55,-
Youth: 50% off - Child: Free



8.600 ISK
€55,-



Picture taken 21 March 2010

Picture taken 3 April 2010



28.400 ISK
€170,-

AH91 Volcano up Close

Tour AH91 Details

Daily Departures
Pick up: 15:30 - Departure: 16:00
Duration: 10-12 hours
Included: Super Jeep & English Guidance
Price: 28.400 ISK - € 170,-
Youth: Full adult fare - Child: 25% off
Minimum 4 pers

Are you the adventure type? Do you want to witness the forces of nature and see the volcanic eruption up close?

From Reykjavik we drive in a Super Jeep to the Mýrdalsjökull glacier and continue over the icecap towards the eruption site. Conditions allowing, we can even get so close that you can almost touch the flowing lava – even though we wouldn't recommend it!

We will be at the eruption site at twilight, giving you the best possible view of the eruption site.

Challenge your senses! Feel the earth shivering, hear the incredible noise, see the streaming lava flow and smell the creation of new land.

After the excitement of the eruption we head back down from the glacier and back to Reykjavik.

AH11 Golden Circle Afternoon

This popular excursion introduces you to some of the best known historical sites and natural phenomena in Iceland.

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€55,-



Geysir area



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Blue lagoon

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Is The Stripping Ban A Good Idea?

On how Iceland's middle class activists don't want the sex industry in their own back yards

The government of Iceland has outlawed all businesses that profit off of the nudity of employees, most notably strip clubs, leading the Guardian's Julie Bindel to proclaim it "the most female-friendly country on the planet." Meanwhile, strippers, sex workers, and sex worker advocates across the world are wondering where our opinions fit in. According to Fríða Rós Valdimarsdóttir, an Icelandic specialist working in the field of human trafficking and prostitution prevention, it is "highly unlikely" that the strippers at the centre of the debate were consulted for their views on the proposed change in legislation.

"Sex workers seldom take part in public debate," she tells us. "There is no formal spokesperson or union. Most likely, this is because most women working in the sex industry are forced to live double lives in a small society like Iceland."

This seems like a poor excuse for failing to take into account the perspectives of the population of women who will be most impacted by the ban.

RECESSION STRIPPING

According to Guðný Gústafsdóttir, spokeswoman of the Feminist Association of Iceland, a survey made on a large group of strip-dancers in Iceland showed that "...their accommodation was poor and their income in the clubs low. Not to mention the long and hard working hours."

Perhaps if these dancers had been included in the conversation around the proposed ban, they might have pointed out that such conditions apply to many types of employment. In this recession economy, many strippers and other sex workers are struggling and having to work long hours to make ends meet, but many choose to continue working in the sex industry because the pay and conditions are still preferable to other jobs available to undocumented immigrants with few formal qualifications, as many of Iceland's strippers apparently are. This is particularly true for women, since the sex industry is one

of the only industries in which women are able to earn more than men.

BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY AS A STRIPPER IS AN UPHILL BATTLE

In parts of the world where strippers have united to stand up for their rights, they have generally attempted to improve working conditions by voicing their opposition to labour violations, such as lack of basic wages and benefits, and illegal fees and fines charged by club managers. In no cases have strippers fought to shut down the strip club industry altogether. Fríða Rós Valdimarsdóttir thinks that current attitudes in Iceland would make it hard for strippers to have much success in organising to improve working conditions.

"Sex work is not considered a real or 'proper' job in Icelandic society," she tells us. "I remember one interviewee telling me about a stripper that was trying to find out to which labour union her employer had paid the fees he subtracted from her salaries. Whichever union she rang she was simply laughed at. This indicates that the view in Iceland is that it is ridiculous to get the rights and benefits you deserve as an employee if you work as a stripper."

Being taken seriously as a stripper is an uphill battle all over the world, and certainly in some cultures more than in others. It is perhaps not surprising that Iceland's strippers don't have a formal union or spokesperson, considering the increased stigma and risks that sex workers, who are also undocumented immigrants, face in coming out and publicly standing up for their rights. However, it is the responsibility of the feminists who claim to be speaking on their behalf to fully consider the potential impact of this legislation on this marginalised group of women, rather than using their lack of political clout as an excuse not to seek their input.

A BLACK AND WHITE DISTINCTION

Debates about the ban have centred on the issue of whether it will drive the strip club industry underground, with Matthew Yglesias at Think

Progress pointing out that this is unlikely to happen within Iceland, since it is such a small country that it might actually be possible to monitor and control the industry in this way. Similarly, Jill Filipovic writes on Feministe that the ban is unlikely to lead to "an epidemic of underground strip clubs" and that she's "not sure that strippers will now face the kinds of immediate dangers that sex workers who sell sexual services negotiate every day" in countries where prostitution is banned.

"The middle class politicians and activists of Iceland don't want the sex industry in their own back yards as a daily reminder of gender inequalities. They do not seem overly concerned with the livelihoods or wellbeing of the immigrant women who work in these clubs."

Such a black and white distinction between strippers and prostitutes, however, demonstrates a lack of understanding of the fluid nature of sex work. Many strippers sell sexual services beyond just taking their clothes off, whether within strip clubs or outside work, whether with clients they meet in strip clubs or with clients they meet outside work. Banning strip clubs merely limits women's options for where and how they can make money selling sexual services.

A CLASS ISSUE

Whether or not the ban drives strip clubs—or sex work—underground within Iceland, it seems highly unlikely to stop anyone from working in the sex industry. If the women working in Iceland's strip clubs were trafficked, they have debts to pay to

their traffickers, who are not likely to wait around while they pay them back by doing whatever low paying jobs exist for undocumented immigrants in Iceland—they will likely be trafficked to another country to work in the sex industry, probably accumulating more debt in the process. If these women migrated to Iceland by themselves to work in the sex industry, they will find a way to migrate to another country to work in the sex industry, spending their own hard-earned cash or getting themselves into debt—or possibly debt-bondage situations—in the process.

It seems that Iceland's strip club ban is more of a class issue than a women's issue. The middle class politicians and activists of Iceland don't want the sex industry in their own back yards as a daily reminder of gender inequalities. They do not seem overly concerned with the livelihoods or wellbeing of the immigrant women who work in these clubs. Guðný Gústafsdóttir's proud claim that "the ban is one step on the way to eliminate sexual violence in Iceland" only makes this clearer. Does she really believe that the women who will lose their jobs as a result of the legislation and likely end up migrating to work in the sex industry elsewhere will be any safer from violence as a result, or is this legislation really intended to benefit the "good" women who don't take their clothes off for money?

It's no wonder that many sex workers doubt that the mainstream feminist movement has their best interests at heart. ♡

Rachel Aimee was a co-founder and editor-in-chief of Spread Magazine, a U.S. publication by and for sex workers, from 2004 to 2008 and worked as a stripper from 2003 to 2009.

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✉ RACHEL AIMEE & KATRIN REDFERN
📧 JULIA STAPLES

I Believe In Jesus. Now Give Me My Free Shit!



For many years during my childhood, I was a fully committed Christian. Stop laughing, it's absolutely true! I attended church very, well, religiously. I read large parts of the Bible, prayed at night and didn't swear at all. Shit, I didn't even say the word "sex" as I thought saying it would damn my soul. Yup, religion sure had its theocratic tentacles wrapped around me. Then I turned 14, looked out my window and thought, "This is all bollocks. I can't do this anymore!" I went to my local church and told them I wouldn't be coming back. And it hasn't given me any problems. Well apart from issues with clowns and autoerotic asphyxiation.

Why all of this reminiscing about my religious past? Well Easter has just passed, where we celebrated the fact that Jesus apparently suffered a massive health and safety accident by getting himself nailed to a bit of wood. We're also smack right in the Icelandic confirmation season.

Ah yes, that point in an Icelandic child's life when he or she is sent to church-school to learn about Jesus for the winter, then attend a big service where they sing some tasty hymns and stand up to proclaim their never-ending devotion to the great bearded one in the sky.

But the fun doesn't end there. Afterwards, a lavish party of Caligulean proportions is thrown by the kids' families. Not only is the saintly sprog likely to receive bucketloads of money from friends and family members, but they'll also receive hugely expensive gifts, such as golden motorbikes or a unicorn weaned on the tears of Björk. All in all, it is a glorious ceremony to celebrate a young person's love for Jesus.

Except, as many people know but maybe don't accept, that all of this is hypocritical bullshit. Most of the children involved neither are nor will be regular churchgoers, and most don't believe in God either. I'm sure many Icelanders will say that this is a long held tradition that brings families together. But the real message I seem to garner from all of this is "lie about something you do not care about and get tons of free shit and money for it". And people wonder how certain Icelanders can breezily make statements on one thing when they believe the exact opposite. It's because they start when they're young!

And that's just something I can't seem to get my head around. Like many other nations, Iceland is moving towards a post-religious society, where religion can be freely practiced but the majority of people, well, can't be arsed, really. And yet so many people feel compelled or pressured to perform this ceremony without asking if it's really needed in their lives.

"But Bob," I hear you cry, "why the grouchiness? Surely if families are dumb enough to blow their savings on this, then surely that's their prerogative?" Well, it doesn't take a genius to point out that the gradual but never-ending squeeze of the Kreppa means many families are finding it harder to afford these up and coming confirmation parties and gifts. Ask yourself, fellow Icelander, if burying yourself under mountains of debt to entertain several family members you don't even like while little Unnar gets to ride on a combination jet ski/laptop that YOU'VE bought is worth watching him take part in something that at the end of the day he doesn't even really care about? Something tells me that many of you won't even bother asking this question.

By all means have a confirmation if you and your children are people of faith. But personally, when I have children, I'm going to spend my money for something they believe in. Oh and clown self-defence lessons. Those bastards are sneaky.... ♡



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Analysis | Egill Helgason, Political and Social Commentator



Tourist Eruption Takes Heat Off Government

Through the foreign media we learned that there was an emergency in Iceland. True, the main airports were closed, the inhabitants of a whole region in the south of the island had to be evacuated. The alarmists at Fox News even picked up some dubious science and prophesied imminent danger for the whole globe.

And, well, the volcanic eruption in Fimmvörðuháls, a popular hiking trek between the glaciers of Eyjafjallajökull and Mýrdalsjökull, dominated the news in Iceland for some days.

To the population this came as a relief from the incessant nagging, gloom and ill feeling that has increasingly characterised local discourse since the economic collapse in October 2008. The Icesave scandal, on top of the media agenda for almost a year, was suddenly quite forgotten—just a few days after a high profile national referendum, closely followed by foreign media, that was supposed to be a turning point in Iceland's struggle with its creditors.

However, it was not—and the issue seems to be just as muddled as before.

But an eruption—that is something you can feel and see, something tangible and clear-cut, with brilliant images, physical danger; opportunities for media people to shine with violent nature as a backdrop.

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A small and cute eruption

The media in Iceland love their volcanic eruptions. And they are very good at reporting them, as there were numerous eruptions in the last 60-70 years, more so than in other periods of Iceland's recent history.

However there never was a real emergency. The alarm was due to overzealous members of the National Emergency Centre, who foresaw a scenario where aircrafts would be engulfed by clouds of ash coming from the eruption and farms being flooded by melted ice, rocks and debris from the area around

the volcano.

This could happen with a major eruption of a volcano of the magnitude of Katla in the south of Iceland. Katla is due to erupt sooner than later, the last famous outbreak in the mountain occurred in 1918. But this definitely was not a catastrophe. Indeed Ómar Ragnarsson, Iceland's most famous reporter of natural phenomena—as well as an environmentalist, pilot and popular entertainer—said that this was a "small and cute" eruption, "one of the smallest" of the twenty or so he had witnessed.



But of course volcanic outbreaks in Iceland can be deadly serious. The most famous one is the eruption of Lakagígar, close to the glacier of Vatnajökull, in 1783. This resulted in a period of unspeakable hardship, generally referred to as Móðuharðindin (The Mist Hardships), because of the smog engulfing the country at the time of the eruption. Scientists now believe that extreme weather in the northern hemisphere, both in Europe and America, in the aftermath of the eruption was due to fumes spewed out by this volcano. A poisonous cloud spread over Europe; the emissions of sulphur dioxide are estimated to have been 120 million tonnes, three times the annual European output in recent years.

The population was decimated, possibly a fourth of it died in the ensuing famine and more than half of the livestock. People who had lost their livelihood roamed around the countryside begging for food. At this period Iceland was probably the poorest, most desolate country in Europe. The time of Móðuharðindi is generally considered the lowest point in the nation's history.

Some spectacular eruptions

Since then there have not been eruptions of this magnitude, and in fact very few lives have been lost in volcanic outbreaks in Iceland in recent history. Some eruptions have however been quite spectacular.

The eruption of Hekla, Iceland's most famous volcano, in 1947 lasted for a year and is in some ways the first real media outbreak; pictures of its clouds reaching high into the sky were ingrained on the minds of Icelanders. In 1963, there was an eruption in the sea just south of Iceland, lasting for three years and creating the island of Surtsey, a paradise for geologists. The 1973 eruption of the Vestmannaeyjar Islands was not big, but it posed real danger as it happened next to a thriving fishing town with more than five thousand inhabitants.

It is maybe the finest moment of the Icelandic republic when the inhabitants of the islands were rescued overnight and given shelter in homes on the mainland. The town was eventually saved, through great effort—including using water to cool the lava flow from the volcano—and this is still a shining example of national solidarity.

A tourist eruption saves the government

Back to the present outbreak of Eyjafjallajökull, which is now being referred to as a "tourist eruption"—good for attracting tourists and bringing sorely wanted foreign money into a country suffering from a total collapse of its currency, unemployment unheard of since the 1930s, internal strife and an unprecedented lack of confidence in a nation that usually has rather high ideas of itself.

Maybe it would be an overstatement to say that the eruption saved the government in its moment of greatest peril, but it sure took some pressure off it. After the Icesave referendum on March 7th, the government was perceived as being on its last legs. The government leaders, Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir of the Social Democrats and finance minister Steingrímur J. Sigfússon of the Left Greens, had not bothered to show up for the vote. The bill they had supported—stating how vast sums of money should be reimbursed to British and Dutch owners of savings accounts in the bankrupt Icelandic Landsbanki—was voted down by an unheard majority of 93 percent.

The polls showed that their left wing government, in place for little

more than a year, was as unpopular as the centre/right wing government that presided over the great collapse. Luck seemed to have completely abandoned the coalition parties.

But then suddenly it returned in the guise of the eruption, which happened shortly before a long awaited Easter break—after this winter of discontent—when people either go travelling or turn their gaze inwards, to their families.

There were also other factors. The opposition sort of overplayed its hand when it started calling for the government to resign after the referendum. People more or less thought: The government is not good, but they are not the bunch to tell us so. For there is a general dislike of politics and politicians in the country—and it is not quite forgotten that the present opposition parties, the Independence Party and the Progressive Party, created the conditions for the collapse in 2008, the privatisation of the banks and the overblown financial markets.

Fish fight

Another group of people, not exactly popular, also went too far, unwillingly helping the government.

One of the main disputes in Iceland is a very long and drawn out struggle over fishing quotas. In a country where fish is the main source of wealth, this is very important. In stages, some twenty years ago, governments decided to literally give the fishing quotas to ship owners of that period, instead of, for example, renting out these resources. This created enormous riches in the hands of a few people. It is now estimated that 70 percent of the fishing rights in Icelandic waters are in the hands of 70 people who consider the quotas their private property, even if the law states that the Icelandic nation is the rightful owner of the fishing stocks.

This has for a long time been like a festering sore on the political body, but previous governments have been too weak or unwilling to do anything about it. The quota owners are also probably the fiercest interest group in the country.

What happened is that some years ago monkfish increasingly started to be

found in the sea around Iceland. The present government decided to rent out monkfish quotas instead of giving them rent-free to quota owners—who could then rent them out themselves—as is done with most species in the Icelandic waters. Under pressure from The Federation of Icelandic Fishing Vessel Owners (LÍÚ), the Confederation of Icelandic Employers (SA) answered by withdrawing its support for a stability pact between them, the labour movement and the government.

This gave the government an opportunity to shine. Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir gave a rousing speech declaring she would not cave into the demands of the quota lobby. It was the best day her regime had had for a long time.

But then, this is a very vacillating government. So a bit later, when it came to distributing quotas for mackerel, another recent and growing species in Icelandic waters—maybe due to global warming—the Minister of Fisheries decided to do almost exactly the opposite, giving almost all the quotas to the ship owners, thereby making the government's policies totally unintelligible.

This is the case with many matters. The government has problems agreeing on anything. The larger party in the coalition, the Social Democrats, might be said to be quite coherent in its focus on joining the European Union and collaborating with the International Monetary Fund, policies that are not exactly popular at the moment. But the Left Greens are all over the place. They do have a pragmatic pro IMF faction, but the party also encompasses anti-globalists, people who generally dislike capitalism—who in some countries are termed as the "loony left"—environmentalists, but also a farmer's faction with strong nationalistic leanings.

This prompted Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir to say in a recent speech that to work with the Left Greens was like rounding up cats which, of course, in the present climate of suspicion, created a minor crisis within the government. 🐾



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From New Year To New Mountain

It is 1 AM. My phone is going crazy. Emails and Facebook messages are flying around. Why? A volcano is erupting, I am a volcanology student, and this is the most exciting thing since... well, the last time something erupted.

Our excitement was excusable, though. Many of us came to study in Iceland because of this possibility. We'd all been following the events beneath Eyjafjallajökull since 2010 began, hoping to see some action. But what had we been watching, exactly, and what has happened since then? Well, sit yourself down and prepare for a brief and hopefully somewhat interesting lesson in volcanology...

EARLY TREMORS

It started around New Year, when earthquake activity began to increase in the area of Eyjafjallajökull, in southern Iceland. This was particularly exciting since the volcano in question hadn't erupted since 1821-23. GPS satellite measurements showed that the volcano was actually inflating—pressure was building up inside, causing it to bulge outwards. A so-called intrusion event was probably taking place: magma, molten rock, was pushing up into the volcano from below. In early February, the groundwater became acidic due to gases from the magma seeping up through the rock. Despite these signs, chances were it would be just another benign intrusion, which would never reach the surface—as happened here most recently in the summer of 2009.

In early March, earthquake activity literally went off the chart: a huge 'earthquake swarm' had begun. Something unusual was going on. Debate amongst scientists was hot. This seemed like something different from

the event in 2009, but volcanology is a fickle subject and it's always impossible to say for sure what a volcano is going to do. After a couple of weeks, the earthquake swarm died down. It looked like things might be coming to a halt.

ERUPTION!

Then, on the evening of March 21st, quite the opposite happened. Volcanic tremors began—a sort of constant shaking of the ground—which means that magma is on the move. The earthquakes were getting closer to the surface, too. Finally, at about midnight, the first report was made of light being seen coming from the glacier. The student communications bomb began. Information came trickling in throughout the (sleepless) night, but come daylight a better picture formed of what was going on. A volcanic fissure (basically a crack in the ground) about a kilometre long had opened up on the ridge between the Eyjafjallajökull and Mýrdalsjökull glaciers, fountaining lava a couple of hundred metres into the air and forming spectacular lava flows.

The initial official reaction was one of caution but it soon became clear that the eruption was small and not beneath the glacier, which was frankly quite a relief: a jökulhlaup (glacial meltwater flood) would almost certainly have been the most dangerous product of such an eruption.

The weather in the first few days hampered attempts to actually see anything, but things soon cleared up and it became easier to observe what was going on. Roads and even the hiking trail along Fimmvörðuháls (which the fissure basically cut in two) eventually opened up, allowing for much better access, even by the general public.

PRETTY SMALL, SUPER EXCITING

In the weeks after the first fissure ripping open, the eruption has remained pretty small, but extremely exciting. It's unusual to be able to view an eruption so well, especially an Icelandic fissure eruption. A couple of beautiful lava falls—basically waterfalls of lava (!)—have formed, cascading down into valleys near the eruption site. A second fissure opened up a couple of weeks after the first, pouring out even more lava. And all of this activity is beginning to form an impressive little hill up on Fimmvörðuháls, one that will soon need a name...

The Grapevine managed to get two of us on a snowmobile trip to the volcano a couple of weeks after it began, courtesy of the kind folks at Iceland Rovers and Snow.is. Even as someone who studies these things, it was incredibly humbling to get so close and to bear witness to what is going on up on that ridge—it's impossible to comprehend until you see it for yourself, really. Even if you make the 10+ hour hike to and from the site, it is still mind-blowing and absolutely worth the effort (and warm clothing!). As for our tour up there: it involved super jeeps and snowmobiles, was well organised and got us exactly where we wanted to be!

So what will happen in the future? Well, no one can really predict how long this will last, but at the time of writing it seems to be going strong. There is certainly the possibility of more fissures opening, even beneath Eyjafjallajökull glacier, which could produce a jökulhlaup. It's also worth keeping an eye on the much larger neighbouring volcano, Katla. The last time Eyjafjallajökull erupted, Katla followed suit 18 months later. The two volcanoes appear to be linked somehow, so an eruption at Katla (which is statistically "overdue," although this is a terrible method of volcano forecasting) should not be ruled out.

But for now, don't worry. Sit back, relax and enjoy—it's not often you get to see the Earth's power so beautifully (and accessibly) displayed! ♥

James Ashworth is currently studying for a B.Sc in volcanology and Earth sciences at the University of Iceland.

✍ JAMES ASHWORTH
📷 JULIA STAPLES



James' Top 5 Icelandic Eruptions

Amazing as the current eruption is, it's still really rather small—at least compared to some of the incredible eruptions Iceland has seen throughout its history. On average, an eruption here occurs about every 3-4 years. Here are my picks for the top five.

1. Laki (Grímsvötn), 1783-74 AD

The Laki eruption was a fissure eruption much like the one we are so fixated with now, except it was larger. A lot larger. The Laki fissure system extended a massive 27 kilometres, and erupted for 8 months straight, pouring out huge floods of lava. The large amounts of ash and poisonous gas produced had the effect of killing about a quarter of the Icelandic population, mainly due to failing crop and livestock production. It is also attributed with helping to start the French Revolution, again due to crop failure.

2. Eldgjá (Katla), 934 AD

Another huge flood lava eruption, the Eldgjá fissure opened up in 934 AD and produced the largest volcanic canyon in the world—about 57 kilometres long, and up to 270 metres deep and 600 metres wide at some points. The effects of the Eldgjá eruption are less well-known than those of Laki, but there is no doubt that this was a massive event. There is evidence of it having triggered climatic changes as far away as China, leading to thousands of deaths.

3. Hekla, 1104 AD

Hekla is infamous as being the Icelandic gateway to hell, and perhaps its most destructive eruption occurred about 900 years ago. Thankfully, most Hekla eruptions are fairly peaceful (at least after the first 6 hours or so), but this time it produced a very explosive eruption, sending ash and tephra (small pieces of volcanic rock) high into the atmosphere. This then came back down on over half of the country. Many houses and villages were buried and had to be abandoned.

4. Krafla, 1975-84 AD

Krafla's most recent eruption was much smaller than those above, but makes this list because it was just so damned beautiful. Consisting of nine separate eruptions, this was one of the first times that a large fissure eruption could be observed, analysed by scientists, and filmed by cameramen. Plus it actually yielded some important scientific observations that are still useful to this day and aid in our understanding of these complex beasts.

5. Heimaey (Vestmannaeyjar), 1973 AD

Heimaey makes my list because, despite being a small eruption, it has such an amazing story attached to it. Almost without warning a fissure opened above the town of Heimaey on January 23rd in the middle of the night. Luckily a storm had kept the fishing boats in the harbour overnight, and so everyone could be evacuated safely. Then many of the island's 4000 or so residents came together to battle the lava flows with cold water pumped from the sea, saving their harbour. Much of the town was buried beneath ash, tephra and lava but the island quickly got back on its feet. ♥

The Politics Of Destruction



Now that the Icelandic people have overwhelmingly rejected the IceSave bill, we have to ask ourselves: what have we accomplished?

Certainly, the Icelandic negotiators are in a stronger bargaining position, but what will that translate into? A percentage point or two on the interest that we will eventually have to pay to cover the British and Dutch depositors' losses? Is that what has kept the entire country's attention for months, while more important matters languished? Will that be enough to cover the increased interest rates Iceland will have to pay to acquire funds on international capital markets after its sovereign rating is downgraded to junk bond status? Will it pay for the lost opportunities that will result from the continuation of currency controls?

At best, this will be a wash. At worst, it will set back our recovery by months. We all feel better about having stuck it to "The Man," but I'm honestly not sure who "The Man" is. Gordon Brown? I'm not on speaking terms with the British Prime Minister, but I'd bet this barely registered on his radar. The Landsbanki executives and shareholders? They're still out enjoying their ill-gotten gains in complete freedom.

The reality is that the minority political parties, especially the Progressive Party, have decided to demolish what's left of Iceland's international reputation in a desperate attempt to garner political points. After the election results were announced, Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson, chairman of the Progressive Party and founder of the InDefence group that led the petition drive to hold the referendum, gloated on television, pontificating that the referendum proved the people did not trust the governing coalition, calling for new elections this spring.

The Progressive Party has no plausible new ideas for rescuing the country from the mess that it had a big hand in creating, so it has decided to pull the Social Democrats and the Left-Greens down to its level. Its plan for a 20% across-the-board reduction of mortgages was laughed off by all serious parties. Its public announcement that Norway was going to give us all the money we needed was as surprising to the Norwegians as it was to the rest of us. But as the saying goes, if at first you don't succeed...

Inflaming the Icelandic public against IceSave was like shooting fish in a barrel. Of course, no one wanted to pay for the machinations of the incompetent Landsbanki crew. Finance Minister Steingrímur Sigfússon and the rest made the rational assessment that speedy resolution of this matter was essential to the country's recovery, and that more important matters needed their attention. Antagonizing the British and the Dutch, delaying the IMF aid, and helping Iceland's international reputation swirl further down the toilet are not likely to benefit the nation in the long run.

When all that matters to you is your own success, however, why not play with the feelings, fortunes, and futures of others?

Predictably, one upshot of the recent debate—and the media's habit of presenting only the pro-Iceland side—is that the majority of Icelanders now feel that they should not have any liability for any of the debts rung up by others. The Icelandic taxpayers who repudiated responsibility for the IceSave debt have no qualms about foisting that responsibility onto the British and Dutch taxpayers. Icelandic investors who bought bank stock after the Danske Bank report predicted a collapse of the Icelandic banks now denounce the IceSave depositors for gambling for a higher rate of return. Icelandic armchair pundits who blame this whole mess on the Americans' failure to regulate mortgage-backed securities argue that they should not have to pay for the homes they bought when the Reykjavík real estate market was peaking.

Fortunately, reasonable Icelandic voters have seen through Sigmundur Davíð's shenanigans, and the popularity of the Progressive Party continues to slide. Unfortunately, like the banks in late 2008, this leads only to more and more desperate and destructive measures. Sigmundur Davíð may claim a victory, but what have we, the Icelandic people, won?

Any more "victories" like this and we'll be living in turf huts eating rotten skate before you know it. ♥



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Further information: www.borgarleikhus.is

17.-28. April 2010

German Film Festival for children, teenagers and families at the Reykjavik City Library.
Further information: www.borgarbokasafn.is

21.-27. April 2010

Mýrin - Children Book Festival Reykjavik.
German guest: reading, exhibition and workshop: Wolf Erlbruch.
Further information: www.myrin.is

16. May - 20. June 2010

Works of German photographer Friederike von Rauch in The Museum Hafnarborg,
Reykjavik Arts Festival 2010. Further information: www.hafnarborg.is

20. May 2010

Opening: Works of the German artists Nikolai von Rosen and Florian Wojnar (Future 7) in
The Living Art Museum, the Reykjavik Arts Festival. Further information: www.nylo.is



GOETHE-INSTITUT



Feature | Interview



Nico And Jónsi GO ALL IN!

...and Grapevine got to sit in!

It's nearing midnight on Saturday, March 13, 2010. After a strenuous Icelandic Music Awards ceremony, the Grapevine feels like going home, watching *Back To The Future II* and kicking back with some popcorn. Which would be the smart thing to do.

However, Grapevine isn't very smart. So Grapevine opts for a post-ceremony beer at Kaffibarinn. Where Grapevine stumbles upon the giggling pair of Jón Þór Birgisson – Jónsi of Sigur rós – and composer Nico Muhly. The two are in high spirits, and we get to talking.

"Too bad we can't do that interview we've been talking about," Nico blurts out. Grapevine's heart sinks. "What? That's our feature for next issue!?"

"I'm leaving for Bandaríkin tomorrow at two. Didn't you get my e-mail?" Nico replies. "We could always do it now, though. Are you guys up for that?"

Jónsi and the Grapevine nod in unison. So off we go, to the only bar in Reykjavík one can enjoy conversation on a Sunday morning without getting all shouty and stuff. The super secret, super awesome MSC clubhouse – The Leather Bar. We borrow a bottle of champagne from nearby Boston and get to talking while deep house blurts in the background and the fetish cage stands vacant.

The following is a transcript of what went on that night.

Enjoy.

Leather Bar, night of the Icelandic Music Awards – 01:30 AM

Nico Muhly: So now we're here in Iceland. I'm leaving tomorrow, and I've been here trying to make sure the live show is good.
Jónsi: There's a lot of shit going on. We are only five people in the live outfit, trying hard to make the album work within our confines.

N: Why didn't you want to tour with a mini-orchestra?

J: I don't know... I kind of wanted to start small, have it all raw and dirty – a stripped down version of the album. Because the album is so flamboyant and layered – in a really nice way – I wanted the live show to be kind of different from that. Maybe later this year we can do some crazy shit.

N: When we first talked about it, I was wondering how to treat these songs, when I first got the demos they were literally one guitar and his voice, nothing else.

J: It was as stripped down as possible: one acoustic guitar, one mic and a voice, with a click track.

N: I won't do anything without a click track; working without one is a disaster. The first song I arranged was Boy Lilikoi. I listened to the demo and thought, "I want to try something so outrageous for this, and I am just going to completely skeet all over its face!"

J: And this is why I wanted Nico to work with me the first place! I had heard one album with his arrangements, Sam Amidon's album [All Is Well], and I was like,

"Whoa! This is perfect for my music!" It was like this painting, a splash of colours that goes in and out – not like a constant carpet over the music. So I was really excited about this collaboration, to get this crazy vibe, this colour and texture all over the songs.

ON GOING APESHIT ON THAT BITCH

N: I remember, I took it home and was all "I'm just gonna go apeshit on this bitch," so I got all my midi woodwinds all over it and I sent it to Jónsi. I was so nervous, I thought: "He's gonna think I'm completely crazy." Now, first of all, midi demos are always the worst, it sounds like, you know, Legend of Zelda shit. But it seemed to work.

J: I think it was really good.

N: You were so happy.

J: I really liked it

N: I remember, I woke up to your e-mail reply, and it was a very happy moment for me. "Good, this is a good start!"

J: I think it [Boy Lilikoi] is your best arrangement on the album, for some reason you were so inspired and it was the first spark, really full on and crazy.

N: It's super full on. It's also about as much shit as you can possibly get away with in pop music, ever.

J: I sent Nico the acoustic guitar demo through the internets. I got the file back and was all... "Hmmm... this is really full on. There's so much shit happening, it's cool and I really like it. It's perfect, exactly

what I wanted, really colourful and playful..."

We met two days later; he came to my home with his laptop and was sitting on the floor with a small midi controller. We did, like, five arrangements in that one night. I think that's so crazy! It's a really good example of the way Nico worked with us. I like to work kind of fast; I like to build things quickly, to see progress. It was thus exciting to get to work with Nico, because he's so spontaneous and fast.

N: I like throwing things out if they don't work. I'm all like "Whoa, doesn't work! On to the next one..."

J: Exactly. I heard about Mr. Nico, that his best quality is to throw stuff away that folks don't like, without getting all offended. His attitude is: "Whatever works, works. OK, start again from scratch, no problem..."

N: Throwing music away is so much fun, it's as much fun as wasting water. There's something delicious about it, you can turn it on and off, and you can totally admit it when it's not successful.

ON MOVING AWAY FROM SIGUR RÓS

J: Starting the album, I wanted to move away from Sigur rós, those floaty, dreamy landscapes. That made it kinda fun to work with you, because you had your midi controller and then you just played and played; "Oh, we have a flute now. What do you think about this? Eeeh, can we have a little bit more this..." [starts singing]. That's how it worked. Super fast, super organised, no bullshit and he takes it home and works on it. I didn't think this kind of music could be that spontaneous, that's one thing I don't like about classical music and arrangement: it's too thought about and too worried about.

N: This music wanted to be ecstatic; it wanted to feel like a magic thing erupting from below. So the best way to do all the arrangements was to at first shit them out and vomit them out, make it be all messy and let there be gut reactions. They're your songs, and I kept telling you "I see brass band, a Mexican funeral," I basically kept throwing these images out...

J: I think that's really good, how we would visualize things. For example on Boy Lilikoi, we were talking about Saint Francis of Assisi and how he was preaching to the birds, all these images and layers and colours. I really like that, it's a good way to describe how music should be.

N: Arranging is really about taking the other person and making them as presentable as you can. It's as if you're designing a dress; it's not about making the dress look good, but the person wearing it. It's about finding something that is fabulous, that makes you sound fabulous. It shouldn't call attention to me – as an arranger, you have to erase yourself in the process. So spontaneity is the best way to accomplish this, and images are often the best way to accomplish that. Everything has to go together. That was something I really liked about the Sigur rós arrangements, there was a formality to them. They also just serve to make your voice sound so fabulous. What I wanted to do was make it a little bit naked, to claw a little in your range.

J: Exactly. I remember the images you tried to bring to mind: gardens and birds flying around and flowers growing. I think it's really cool to describe music and arrangements like that.

N: What was fun for me, too, was recording it, because we did it all in one go, in sections, and we did this thing where I designed the sections along with this contractor violist, Nadia. We could record it quickly, but no one could believe we could do it as fast as I said.

ON SPONTANEITY

J: Yeah [laughs!] It was like, "That Nico Mueller is sooooo hyperactive. He's a workaholic. Everyone is talking about it!" It was an intense session. [All laugh].

I hadn't heard all the arrangements until we recorded them. Nico was working on them at the last minute, and we had to make all sorts of decisions right before they were recorded. He was always making these new things, right up until the deadline. It was intense, but very healthy.

N: One thing I wish, if we had more money for it, is that we could back one more time with more musicians and just do...

J: No that's bad.

N: Why?

J: It's very healthy, I think, making these fast decisions. It's healthy in music, and in life.

N: In everything.

J: Yeah.

N: Some of the best arrangements are results of stuff we said and did in the record-

ing sessions themselves. It was like a tornado at times, I brought this printer to the studio and every night it was spewing out a million pages of these new crazy things that we had worked on the night before. How many songs did we record? Fifteen? More?

J: Fifteen.

N: And how come there's only nine on the album?

J: I don't know...? I think I kinda wanted to have it kind of uplifting and spontaneous and...

N: None of the slow jams went on the album.

J: Some of them did...

N: Which slow jams?

J: Like Hengilás and... Tornado

N: Tornado's a fast jam.

J: There are some slow jams on the album.
N: It's a funny thing. While we were making it the album seemed like such an enormous, spontaneous beast. What it is now is a bullet train of an album.

J: It's funny actually, how you got into an album. I wrote the songs in my apartment on an acoustic guitar, piano, harmonium and made these really simple demos that I slipped to Nico – with a click track – we went to the studio and we saw things build up quite quickly because of the fabulous arrangements, strings, brass and wind arrangements. It was quick – Nico only had like six days to record everything – I think it worked.

N: Not to mention the piano parts, which were all hysteria. Complete hysteria. Hahaha! It was hilarious, I got myself all jeeped up on coffee and just went completely nuts with it. I'd give you seventeen tracks on top of each other and catch the next train to New York.

J: It's Nico's trademark. He does a shitload of shit and leaves you with a shitload of shit, then you have to dig through it and find the gold nuggets, you know.

N: Yes! We made lots of good stuff that way! Also, for me it's more fun. It's like if you're a houseguest at someone's house and instead of giving them one present, you give them a whole kitchen of spices to serve.

J: Yeah, and they can throw out the things they don't like.

N: Everything, if that's the case. The amount of piccolo on that album... I think we really made the album with the most piccolo in modern music. I don't think there's any more.

J: Nico is obsessed with this piccolo part. I kind of can't hear it anymore. I've gotten numb to this piccolo thing. Do you have any questions, Haukur?

-Well, I love to hear you two talking together. You are so eloquent.

J: Elephant? Elegant? I have this TV blaring in my eyes, it's a little bit distracting [points to TV set in the corner, projecting homosexual pornography with regular cumshot intervals].

ON GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

-Well. How did your relationship develop? How did you guys come to know each other? You've both been in Iceland obviously, had you been hanging out and drinking champagne a lot?

J: I didn't know Nico AT ALL. When you came to one of our shows in New York, I spanked your ass that time...

N: ...that's right. A little spanking.

J: That was our introduction.

N: We got to know each other through this shy person thing, where we both sorta sent word through other people that maybe we wanted to do this thing with this certain person.

J: Yeah.

N: It was all done through like nineteen different people. E-mail chains. It was funny and shy. Hahaha.

-This album, it was two years in the making?

N: Last January was when we first started working together. So it was a year and two months ago.

-Did you know each other's music before you worked together?

J: No. Nico knew Sigur rós, probably.

N: Yeah, I knew Sigur rós.

J: I never listen to anybody's music, I never have a clue about any music at all, so I never heard Nico until Valgeir [Sigurðsson] gave me Sam Amidon's album. I met him at some show and he gave me Sam and the other Bedroom Community albums. I've not heard all of them yet, but I heard Sam's album and was like, "Yeah, this is pop!"

"It's Nico's trademark. He does a shitload of shit and leaves you with a shitload of shit, then you have to dig through it and find the gold nuggets, you know."

N: Yeah, it was weird about Sigur rós. It was a band for starters, and totally different from anything I was listening to. It was hard to evaluate the composition of the band. What was interesting about it is that it evolved into playing more composed pieces later. Like the songs didn't start emerging until the last two albums, like actual short songs.

J: Yeah, exactly, that's kinda true.

N: A lot of stuff, these endless ten minute long compositions, not quite ambient but kind of... Anyway, I knew my Sigur rós, for sure, I did my duty as a young gay college student and went to some show at the Fillmore or whatever, like in 1999 or something. I forget. It was like, right before Takk came out in the states, I saw a show with these Icelandic people. It was chaotic.

ON LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER

-So alright, you are now acquainted. The next logical question would be "You spent time working and communicating, did you learn anything from one another?"

J: In what way? Life in general? You mean better in life, like practical stuff? Alex [Somers, American visual artist and boyfriend/collaborator to Jónsi] is always telling me: "You're so good at life," meaning practical stuff. I don't spend time doing the day-to-day stuff. He always takes a long time to shower, I shower in like five minutes, then I'm out. When responding to e-mails, I just answer yes or no. I try and be practical like that, I think Nico is a little bit similar. No bullshit.

N: Yeah. As for stuff that I learned, for me – what I always learn when working with sorta non-classical musicians – you learn to be a good advocate for your ideas because those working with you don't read music. I can't go around sending people scores and asking if they don't think it's genius. Instead I need to invent a vocabulary to present my ideas.

J: It's all about sound.

N: Yeah and to be able to envision this dumm-diddy-dumm diddy, to convey that and articulate what I'm doing. So much stuff we sent back and forth, that was the big lesson, getting into your head a little bit, how you saw music.

J: Also, what surprised me a lot about Nico Mueller...

N: Möller!

J: That's such a good last name. Nicklaus Möller. Like Helga Möller. Anyway, I think the best thing about him is that he comes from the classical world, cuz I have always been sceptical about classical people and music schools and that, all that stuff is soooooo boring. What I have really liked about Nico was the spontaneity of him. That was the most surprising for me. He came in with his laptop and midi and that was exactly how it sounded on the album. These were good times, the two of us in my apartment, doing five arrangements in one night.

N: That was so much fun!

J: I know, and that's how it sounds on the album. Fun!

N: For me as a classical composer, it was so great not to have to put in all that pre-compositional work every time. If someone commissions me to write a piece, I'll work on it for days, figuring out all the bullshit and intricacies. Here I got to flow more freely, seeing your reactions as we went along.

J: That's how it should be with all music.

N: Yes. But still, one of the things I cherish in my life as a classical composer is how you have time to think about things. Sometimes, if someone commissions me to write a piece, I'll love to have a year to think about it. It comes and goes, in the scheme of the classical person's life... like when I started working on this opera that I've been writing for two years now, and I'll be writing for another six months...

J: How does it work? I don't understand! A piece on piano or cello... you obviously play piano very well, but how do you think about the cello part – how do you arrange it? As if it's a vocal line?

Because for me, I started playing instruments really early, at age thirteen I started playing the guitar and I decided



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right away to write my own songs, because I was so bad at picking up other people's. One of the first things I did was working on playing the guitar while singing, getting those two entities to work together in harmony, playing guitar and using my voice to create melodies over them... I understand how that works; you have a bassline and a melody, I get that, but I don't understand how your mind can work itself around all those other instruments and how they all come together.

ON NEVER THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING AT ALL (AND LOVING ON EACH OTHER)

N: You are sort of a genius at writing things that fit so perfectly with your voice.

J: It comes very effortlessly and spontaneously. How do you work when you have to do whole arrangements for an orchestra? Isn't that too much? It's over the top, I think. Do you see, like, a colour palette?

N: I like to think: "What is the emotional pull of the number of minutes that I have to do this in?" Let's say I have twelve minutes for orchestra. What can happen in twelve minutes? Can we go on a trip? Can we walk? Can we tell a story?

J: This is different from me. I never think about anything at all.

-That's our headline right there. "I never think about anything at all."

J: I think you should only follow your instinct. Just write a song. Don't think about if it's sad or happy or fast or slow. Sorry. I'm just curious about coming from the school environment and the classical world. You've been in Juilliard, you've studied for ten years, all the formulas and stuff. How do you think about music? Is it in the spontaneous way?

N: It's always an ecstatic process. For me, school is just a technique to learn how to do certain things.

J: Exactly! That's exactly the right way to think about it.

N: The thing you get from school is: you don't learn how to think, you learn how to sew, how to cut the string, to do the kinda practical stuff. It's practical and mechanical. You learn and you learn. Some teachers at school will teach you how to focus your ideas, for instance. The biggest question for me has always been, always, whatever I'm doing: is this, this thing I'm working on, is it preferable to silence?

If someone tells me to write twelve minutes for orchestra, whatever I make had better be so great that it deserves to exist. If people could spend twelve minutes sitting around in their house and have a better time, then I'll cut it. You know, a lot of music is not preferable to silence.

J: I also have this debate with classical composers and people in the classical world, about their kind of music and how it seems formulaic to me. They're so learned and schooled, they kinda fall into this rut of classical composing... You, however, seem different. You are so young. And you like to work with different kinds of music. It seems so generous to me, so wide, so broad...

N: For me, music has to always be an ecstatic process. It just has to be.

J: Why do you work so well in all the genres? Most people stick to pure classical or pure avant-garde.

N: I think if your attitude is right, you can do anything. It's like travel. How can you have a life in Iceland and New York and London or wherever. If you think about genres as different countries, it gets easier to travel. Everyone still has to pee, they have foods and menus and rituals of saying hi. I always think about genres as non-existent, really. For me, the whole musical spectrum is one big Schengen area.

J: I love that. It's so fucking true.

N: Thinking about genres is like asking someone... pretend your mom is from India and your dad is from Iceland or wherever, and you move to New York and you're just a young family trying to make work and you make dinner, you have kids, and whenever people come over they talk about it being fusion-y. "Ohh... this is like India meets Iceland" and you're all like "No, it's just what we like making for the kids."

It's a natural process for me, even when I'm thinking on a piece and planning in advance, I stop short of deciding upon the actual genre of it or whatnot.

J: That's really important.

N: To be fair, there's something fun to be gained from it all. Planning some things out. One of the thrills of pop music – even though the creation is spontaneous – is that there's a lot of work that happens afterwards. Post-production, as you know. So in pop music, you guys have an army of people that think about all those things for

months after the music's recorded – and even record on top of it – whereas in classical music, you just take the notes and play them.

J: This is very true.

N: All the stuff that happened after the tracking on your new album was as important as what happened during the tracking. You changed songs around, cut them. Really, what happens in classical music is that you do all that work beforehand.

J: It's very true actually. Say a classical musician writes a piece, he doesn't even think about the recording. The recording is just documentation, you record it exactly how it appears on the sheet music, then publish it. Not like us, who recorded strings, brass and wind separately, we fucked it all up afterwards, cut it up and worked it...

ON LEAVING SPACE

N: For me, that was my biggest interest coming here and starting to work with Valgeir. He said: "Why don't you just make an album?" and I was like, "Yeah, that's a good idea."

So we made an album and it was a revolution for me. Just ingraining myself into that kind of work method, getting to think about things both before and after. Before that time, I was literally in this weird position where the only documentation of my music were live recordings of performances from 1998, just cassette tapes that people had recorded and that was it, forever. Valgeir approached me asking if we shouldn't do it in the studio, so we could do stuff to it afterwards. It was a genius, novel idea.

J: When you record your classical piece, do you write it all down and spell it out in notes, perfectly? The musicians play, Valgeir records and you change everything around afterwards?

N: Yeah, everything.

J: What do you mean everything? Do you fuck it up? Reverse it? Change the parts around?

N: Yeah, but nothing too crude. For both the albums I've made with Valgeir, I've built in a space for him to do things. I'll write a piece and leave this huge hole between voice and bass for him to pick up and fill up and have fun with. You can combine things in a way you wouldn't if you thought too hard in advance. I think this is slowly changing for composers, Daniel Bjarnason's album is a good example of something that's thought out and written out perfectly, while still adhering to the tenets of post-production in a way.

J: Indeed, the good thing about Nico's arrangements on my album is the space he left. He didn't cover the whole songs in flourish.

N: And you know, my attitude was always to turn it up, turn it down, fade in, fade out, I always try and provide ingredients rather than answers. Occasionally I would say things like, "you should do this or that or double this," but there was no ego associated with my notes. You were free to disregard them if you wanted.

J: That's probably Nico's best quality, his lack of ego. Nothing in how he works indicates a huge ego. Ha! Ego Mueller!

N: It was funny. With some of the things, I thought: "If they cut it, I will be sad." Lucky for me, none of those bits got cut!

ON STING AND YOGA AND MONEY

J: He'd be in the studio, sitting with the engineer going "oh yeah, turn up the flutes on this baby!" I was like "What the fuck? Hopefully he's not going to be around when we mix this thing..."

N: I wanted to make sure everything I gave you was perfect, so when you wanted to start fucking with it, it couldn't hurt. One of the things that freaks me out about pop music is that sometimes the quality of the recordings is not good and sometimes the playing is bad. The worst thing is the strings. Synth strings.

J: Sting uses synth strings. What the fuck is up with that?

N: Indeed. He has so much money.

J: Sting is full of money and yoga and he doesn't use real strings? It's weird.

N: It's a big issue, string samples. A lot of pop arrangements now are made for samplers rather than actual players. This makes a boring, poorly sounding recording and all the violists are unemployed. In any case, I wanted to make sure everything I gave you was in tiptop condition.

J: Actually, the demos sounded really good.

N: The recordings did too. I was aggressive about hiring expensive players for this project, hahaha!

J: I KNOW THAT! [glares at Nico]

N: As you may or may not have sensed from me, I thought it really important to



work with people that I could feel comfortable with, and that share some of my attitudes. This makes the work a much more pleasant process.

J: It was actually really cool. Nico knows a certain group of players that he really prefers to work with, folks he loves and knows can deliver the job. He ordered them in, we got some Dunkin Donuts coffee and everyone got pumped recording that stuff. He had the whip on them real tight.

N: Working with players you know and trust is important.

J: It is important if you're a conductor, conducting a group of people. Everyone likes to be controlled, people like that, and you are a controller. You manage to control them and be funny and pleasant at the same time you are being controlling and getting things done, that quality you have is really awesome.

N: It helps when you know the people. You can say something curt and really awful, just lay it on and it's OK.

J: I know. You managed to loosen up everything while being firm on the whip the whole time.

N: For me it's awful being in conduction. Being a young conductor is so awful... for your album, it wasn't so scary, but say I'm conducting a film score...

J: How is that?

N: It's fine. Girl, it's fiiiine. Everyone gives you these stern looks, as if you have to prove yourself. In England, especially, you can really struggle. 'Cause England is England.

J: They want an old geezer, a big formal guy?

N: Yeah. And if you're not some old geezer, they want for you to, like, totally dominate them with your brilliance. English people are such a bottom, it's crazy. What they want is for you to go in there with fireworks and shoot lasers from your fingers and be like "Girl, you get on the floor and you PLAY that cello!" and you just sort of... Hahaha. I sorta had to lash my tongue out at them in to get things moving. I'm looking forward to being over thirty.

ON NEGATIVE REVIEWS

-I only ever read bad reviews about you, Nico, on your own website. And often the articles will be all upset with how young you are....

N: I only ever put up my bad ones. I get in so much trouble with the classical press. We're fucked no matter what we do. But press stuff is so secondary.

J: I learned very early on not to read anything about your work. Nico is probably still reading his reviews... I never read anything. I never go to my own website or anything. I have to live in the old bubble.

-What was the last review you read?

J: The last one I read was probably ten years ago. NME had been really loving on Sigur rós. And they really love to hype bands to death before turning on them and crushing them. When we first came out in the UK they really loved on us, and

then a year later I read a review there. "Oh Sigur rós, it's really boring. Like Pink Floyd on steroids. Really really boring and too long...". I went all "uhmm..." with that.

N: I learn a lot from bad reviews. Sometimes they say the very worst things you've thought about yourself.

J: It can be so unfair, though, that I kinda don't like to read them at all. I like to get reviews from friends. Like Alex, my boyfriend, he is a hardcore critic, telling me exactly what doesn't work and why. I like getting word from my friends rather than some asshole reporter who's really grumpy that day and hates everything. You know?

N: I've never really gotten terrible reviews. I get a lot of nasty reviews and internet comments, though, but it's never something I haven't thought about myself. But that's just a kind of gay self-loathing. The worst stuff that's been said has never been outside of what I've thought of myself, which I like. There's a certain consistency to it.

ON SHARING SIMILAR ATTITUDES AND REHEARSING A BAND OF FIVE PEOPLE

-Do you think you share similar attitudes to music? Do you imagine you experience and convey it in comparable ways?

J: I think definitely

N: I would say definitely, yes.

J: I was really happy when I worked with Nico for the first time, when we met in my apartment. We sat on the floors, with a pillow, and I just was enthralled by the spontaneity of it all, the no bullshit approach. I always thought classical people had to be boring. Too learned, too thought out or whatever. It was so refreshing to be exposed to Nico and how he wrote five arrangements in one night.

N: It was such a good night. A good example is the song that's now called Sinking Friendships and that whole bubbling ecstasy that's in there. How fun it was, just the two of us on the piano playing it. You taught me the chords and I immediately latched on [starts mimicking a very, very fast piano player].

J: Did you learn anything from me? Or like anything that happened?

N: Yeah, definitely. First of all the songs themselves were fabulous, but I also love your whole attitude. You have good attitude about figure things out, and which order they need to be figured out in. You know when you should work on certain things, which is a quality I love. "Let's deal with that bridge later..." You know what your strengths are, not just in general but also at the moment.

Then this last week of rehearsing the band was kinda weird, dealing with different perceptions of how things should be done.

J: That was kind of hard...

N: It was fine. I was there to be an asshole. J: I don't know if you were being an asshole. But you were a foreign element to the proceedings, and you had to keep things going and working. It was interesting be-

"I think people should be more aware of what they put in their bodies – music or food – it's your fucking fuel, it's what keeps you going."

cause Nico came over to help us with our rehearsals and help the piano player learn his parts. Usually – I'm sorry, I might be talking BS out of my ass here – but usually in the classical world everything is written down and you really just have to rehearse it again and again until it gets flowing. With a band of five people, you can't really do that. You don't know where exactly you're headed, but you know you want it to be really good. You need a space to play around in, time to noodle and tweekle and be really lazy, just doing this and that.

N: Right, which I don't really know about.

J: So that work was maybe difficult, but also cool. It's like our major difference is that Nico comes from the classical world and I... don't.

N: I believe in notation, and I believe in parts.

J: ...and I believe in everything being practical and fast!

ON BJÖRK, AND NOT BEING AN ASSHOLE

J: Playing in a band is the only thing I've done in my life, ever, and we need this time to be stupid, to play around, be silly, hang out and noodle...

N: ...and I was all like, "are we done yet?"

J: Nico on the clock: "WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?"

N: That was good for me to witness, the noodling.

J: I think it's healthy. And it's also healthy for me. I should speak up sometimes, I feel.

N: It's also interesting because a band is a diplomatic project whereas this thing is your shit – your actual name's on the project.

J: I know, and I always forget that. I don't want to be the asshole that orders people what to do. I don't want to be that asshole, so I wind up not speaking up. I'm afraid I might have to start to speak up more.

N: In a situation like this, it's where I've always felt the model for the solo artist should be that she really gets what she wants. That there should be nothing happening on that stage that she does not like. A good example of this is Björk.

J: It's amazing that through doing this project, I developed this crazy respect for Björk for the first time.

N: Going solo is hard. It's so much different from being in a band. You're not just the singer anymore, you're the artist.

J: It's so fucking hard.

N: And her ass has been at it for 35 years, getting the best ingredients from everyone

The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE iNFO



Music, Art, Films and Events Listings + Eating, Drinking and Shopping + Map

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL AND
ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND.

Issue 4 - 2010

www.grapevine.is

10
Apr.

2
May.

LIGHT BRIGHT

Hekla Dögg Jónsdóttir
Art Exhibition

Kling & Bang Gallery

Kling & Bang gallery has managed to capture some fireworks in their studio. Come see before they fade away! Past installations by multimedia artist Hekla Dögg Jónsdóttir have been visually thrilling—sculptures of multi-coloured, sound-reacting cathode rays exploding into the gallery space, with backdrop video projection. Visit the gallery to see what the bright spark of an artist does this time. **SO**



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APRIL 16th

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MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN APRIL

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How to use the listings
Venues are listed alphabetically by day.
For complete listings and detailed
information on venues visit
www.grapevine.is

9 FRI

B5
22:00 Live DJs.
Bar 11
0:00 Matti.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.
Culture House
17:00 The Chamber Choir of Southern Iceland.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Hallgrímskirkja
12:00 Chamber choir.
Hemmi & Valdi
22:00 Local DJs.
Hressó
22:00 Jogvan & Vignir, DJ Bjarni.
Jacobsen
22:00 DJ Frigore.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 DJs Nino and Dramatík.
Kaffibarinn
23:45 Alfons X.
Langholtskirkja
19:30 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Jón Nordal.
NASA
23:00 Localice Live: Sign, Cliff Calvin, For A Minor Reflection, Noise, Ten Steps Away, Nevolution.
Óliver
22:00 Ladies' Night.
Prikið
22:00 Jenni & Franz, DJ Danni Deluxe.
Salurinn
20:00 Sounds from Mexico - Guitar concert.
Sódóma
22:00 Sólstafr, Sorocide, In Memoriam, Bastard.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJs.

10 SAT

B5
22:00 Live DJs.
Bakkus
22:00 Della Rósa.
Bar 11
0:00 Biggi Maus.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Hjaltalín.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Hallgrímskirkja
17:00 A German Requiem by Johannes Brahms.
Havari
16:00 Stafrenn Hákon
Hemmi & Valdi
22:00 Local DJs.
Hressó
22:00 Napóleon, DJ Bjarni.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 DJs Nino and Dramatík.
Kaffibarinn
23:45 Terrordisco, Oddur Snær & DBF.
NASA
22:00 I ATG RVK vs. Techno.is.
Óliver
22:00 Local DJs.
Salurinn
17:00 Martial Nardeau & Désiré N'Kaoua.
Sódóma
22:00 Mínus & Guests.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJs.

11 SUN

Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Gerðuberg
14:00 Let's sing and chant...
Hallgrímskirkja

17:00 A German Requiem by Johannes Brahms.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 Movie Night.
Prikið
22:00 Hangover Cinema presents Howard the Duck.

12 MON

Bakkus
21:00 Movie Night.
Café Rósenberg
21:00 Selma Björnsdóttir & Co.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Kaffi Zimsen
21:00 Best Friends Day. 2 for 1 beer.
Prikið
21:00 Wine and Cheese Night: 2 glasses and cheese for 1,000 ISK, DJ J-Man.

13 TUE

Café Rósenberg
21:00 Live Music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Óliver
22:00 Live Karaoke with Raggi Troubadour.
Prikið
22:00 DJ Gauti.

14 WED

Bakkus
21:00 DJ Laufey.
Café Rósenberg
21:00 Live Music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Óliver
20:00 Pub Quiz.
Prikið
22:00 DJ Hot Sauce.
Sódóma
21:00 Valdimar & Guests.

15 THU

Bakkus
21:00 Two Step Horror.
B5
22:00 Live Music.
Bar 11
21:00 Kreppa Night. Beer for 450 ISK.
Café Rósenberg
21:00 Live Music.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live music.
Hressó
22:00 Troubadours Böddi and Davíð.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 Ólafsvaka night. Beer for 490

ISK.
Kaffibarinn
21:00 Alfons X.
Óliver
22:00 Live Music.
Prikið
22:00 Hip Hop night.
Salurinn
20:30 Ingó and Jóhanna Guðrún.
Sódóma
21:00 Coral, Mikado, Two Tickets to Japan.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Mojito night. Mojitos for 1000 ISK.

16 FRI

B5
22:00 Live DJs.
Bakkus
22:00 DJ Unnur Andrea.
Bar 11
0:00 Biggi Maus.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Langi Seli & Skuggarnir.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Hemmi & Valdi
22:00 Local DJs.
Hressó
22:00 Silfur, DJ Fannar.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 DJs Nino and Dramatík.
Kaffibarinn
23:45 FKNHNSM DJs.
NASA
23:30 FM Belfast & Retro Stefson.
Óliver
22:00 Ladies' Night.
Prikið
22:00 Franz & Jenny, DJ Addi Intro.
Sódóma
22:00 Móri, Messias MC & Guests.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJs.

17 SAT

B5
22:00 Live DJs.
Bakkus
21:00 DJ Árni Sveins.
Bar 11
0:00 Matti.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Langi Seli & Skuggarnir.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Háskólabíó
14:00 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Maximús trips to music school I.
17:00 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Maximús trips to music school II.

Music & Entertainment | Venue finder

Amsterdam Hafnarstræti 5 D2	Dillon Laugavegur 30 F5	NASA Porvaldsenstræti 2 E3
Apótek Austurstræti 16 E3	Dubliner Hafnarstræti 4 D3	Nýlenduvörurverzlun Hemma & Valda Laugavegur 21 E4
Austur Austurstræti 7 E3	English Pub Austurstræti 12 D2	Næsti Bar Ingólfstræti 1A E3
B5 Bankastræti 5 E3	Glaumar Tryggvagata 20 D2	Óliver Laugavegur 20A F5
Babalú Skólavörðustígur 22 G5	Grand Rokk Smiðjustígur E5	Ólstofan Vegamótastígur E4
Batteri Hafnarstræti 1-3 D2	Highlander Lækjargata 10 E3	Prikið Bankastræti E3
Bar 11 Laugavegur 11 E4	Hressó Austurstræti 20 E3	Rósenberg Klapparstígur 25 E4
Barbara Laugavegur 22 F6	Hverfisbarinn Hverfisgata 20 E4	Sódóma Reykjavík Tryggvagata 22 D3
Bjarni Fel Austurstræti 20 E3	Jacobsen Austurstræti 9 E3	Sólón Bankastræti 7A E3
Boston Laugavegur 28b F5	Kaffi Hjómáland Laugavegur 23 E4	Thorvaldsen Austurstræti 8 D2
Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18 E4	Kaffi Zimsen Hafnarstræti 18 D3	Vegamót Vegamótastígur 4 E4
Café Paris Austurstræti 14 E3	Kaffibarinn Bergstradastræti 1 E4	Venue Tryggvagata 22 D3
Balthazar Hafnarstræti 1-3 D2	Karamba Laugavegur 22 F4	
Celtic Cross Hverfisgata 26 E4	London/Reykjavík Tryggvagata 22 D2	

Havari
16:00 Sóley
Hemmi & Valdi
22:00 Local DJs.
Hressó
22:00 Dalton, DJ Fannar.
Kaffibarinn
23:45 DJ B-Ruff & Gísli Galdur.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 DJs Nino and Dramatík.
Óliver
22:00 Local DJs.
Prikið
22:00 DJ Danni Deluxxe.
Salurinn
13:00 Modern and catchy.
17:00 Ari Þór Vilhjálmsson & Sigurgeir Agnarsson.
Sódóma
22:00 Rökkurró, Nolo, Tristran.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJs.

18 SUN

Café Rósenberg
21:00 Soffia Karls.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Gerðuberg
14:00 Folk music from around the world.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 Movie Night.
Prikið
22:00 Hangover Cinema presents So I married an axe murderer.

19 MON

Bakkus
21:00 Movie Night: Rafskinna - En-nimánaskin 6.
Café Rósenberg
21:00 Hjálmar.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Kaffi Zimsen
21:00 Best Friends Day. 2 for 1 beer.
Prikið
21:00 Wine and Cheese Night: 2 glasses and cheese for 1,000 ISK, DJ Shake it.

20 TUE

Café Rósenberg
21:00 Live Music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Óliver
22:00 Live Karaoke with Raggi Troubadour.
Prikið
22:00 DJ Gauti.

21 WED

Bakkus
22:00 DJ Ugly.
Café Rósenberg
21:00 Gímaldin.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Kaffibarinn
21:00 Hunk of a Man.
NASA
23:59 Judge Jules, Frigore, Sindri BM, Ghozt, EXOS.
Óliver
20:00 Pub Quiz.
Prikið
22:00 DJ Árni Kocoon.



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22 THU

B5
22:00 Live Music.
Bar 11
21:00 Kreppa Night. Beer for 450 ISK.
Bakkus
21:00 DJ Músikölski.
Bar 11
21:00 Kreppa Night. Beer for 450 ISK.
Café Rósenberg
21:00 Go Go Jógo.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Hressó
22:00 Troubadours Jogvan & Vignir.
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Gísli Galdur.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 Ólafsvaka night. Beer for 490 ISK.
Óliver
22:00 Live Music.
Prikið
22:00 DJ Moonshine.
Salurinn
21:00 Men's Choir Fjallabræður.
Sódóma
21:00 Endless Dark & Guests.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Mojito Night. Mojitos for 1000 ISK.

23 FRI

B5
22:00 Live DJs.
Bakkus
22:00 DJ KGB.
Bar 11
0:00 Ómar X.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Varsjárbandalagið.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Havari
16:00 Haraldur Jónsson book release, live music by TSOYL.
Hemmi & Valdi
22:00 Local DJs.
Hressó
22:00 Magni, DJ Elli.
Kaffibarinn
23:45 Alfons X.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 DJs Nino and Dramatík.
Langholtskirkja
19:30 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: The Four Seasons.
Óliver
22:00 Ladies' Night.
Prikið
22:00 Franz & Jenni.
Sódóma
22:00 Bloodgroup, Ultra Mega Technobandið Stefán, Berndsen.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJs.

24 SAT

B5
22:00 Live DJs.
Bakkus
22:00 DJ Ófull.
Bar 11
0:00 Biggi Maus.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Túpíllakar.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Havari
15:00 Suska Puma Moeritze book release with live music by Quadruplos.
Hemmi & Valdi
22:00 Local DJs.
Hressó
22:00 Penta, DJ Elli.
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Kári.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 DJs Nino and Dramatík.
Langholtskirkja
19:30 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: The Four Seasons.
Óliver
22:00 Local DJs.
Prikið
22:00 DJ Benni B-Ruff.
Sódóma
22:00 Hoffman, Momentum & Guests.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJs.

25 SUN

Café Rósenberg
22:00 Dægurflugurnar.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Prikið
22:00 Hangover Cinema presents Clueless.

26 MON

Bakkus
21:00 Movie Night, Sigtryggur's Selection.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Dægurflugurnar.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Kaffi Zimsen
21:00 Best Friends Day. 2 for 1 beer.
Prikið
21:00 Wine and Cheese Night: 2 glasses and cheese for 1,000 ISK, DJ Glam.

27 TUE

Café Rósenberg
22:00 Live Music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Óliver
22:00 Live Karaoke with Raggi Troubadour.
Prikið
22:00 DJ Gauti.

28 WED

Bakkus
21:00 DJ Silla.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Villi Naglbítur.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Óliver
20:00 Pub Quiz.
Prikið
22:00 DJ Aggi.

29 THU

B5
22:00 Live Music.
Bakkus
21:00 DJ Einar Sonic.
Bar 11
21:00 Kreppa Night. Beer for 450 ISK.
Café Rósenberg
21:00 Bluesband Danni Pollock.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Háskólabíó
19:30 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Master Martin.
Hressó
22:00 Troubadours Böddi and Davíð.
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Alfons X.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 Ólafsvaka night. Beer for 490 ISK.
Óliver
22:00 Live Music.
Prikið
22:00 Diddi Fel, MC Gauti.
Sódóma
22:00 Woodpigeon, Pascal Pinon, Mukkaló.

30 FRI

B5
22:00 Live DJs.
Bakkus
22:00 DJ Kári.
Bar 11
0:00 Matti.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Live Music.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Gerðuberg Cultural Centre
12:15 Lunchtime Classics - Arias and Russian folk songs.
Hemmi & Valdi
22:00 Local DJs.
Hressó
22:00 Skósólarnir, DJ Fannar.

Den Danske Kro

* Mondays *

Shot's night - all shots ISK 400.-

* Tuesdays *

Live music and Beer Bingo night

* Wednesdays *

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* Saturdays *

Live music / Sing-along nights

* Sundays *

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THURSDAY APRIL 1st 4pm

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+ STORMY CURVES

SATURDAY APRIL 3rd 4pm

BENNI HEMM HEMM

SATURDAY APRIL 10th 4pm

STAFRÆNN HÁKON

SATURDAY APRIL 17th 4pm

SÓLEY

FRIDAY APRIL 23rd 4pm

TSOYL
HARALDUR JÓNSSON
ÚTGÁFUHÓF.

SATURDAY APRIL 24th 3pm

BÓKVERKAÚTGÁFA
SUSKA PUMA MOERITZE
OG PIET LANGEVELD.
// QUADRUPLOS

Haha
haha
vari

AUSTURSTRETI 6

Úturdúr

Sódóma

REYKJAVÍK

April 9th: Sólstafr, Sororicide, In Memoriam, Bastard / 10pm

April 10th: Mínus + guests / 10pm

April 14th: Valdimar, Of Monsters and Men / 9pm

April 15th: Coral, Mikado, Two Tickets to Japan / 9pm

April 16th: Móri, Messiah MC + guests / 10pm

April 17th: TBA

April 21st: Lights on The Highway

April 22nd: Endless Dark + Cliff Clavin + In Memoriam

April 23rd: Bloodgroup, Ultra Mega Technobandið Stefán, Bermdsen / 10pm

April 24th: Hoffman, Momentum + guests / 10pm

April 28th: Hank & Tank album release / 9 pm

April 30th: Fræbblamir + guests / 10pm

May 1st: DUPLEX #7 / 9pm

May 6th: Blúsakademían / 9pm

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Magic Thursdays

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MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN APRIL

Kaffibarinn
23:45 DJ KGB.
Kaffi Zimsen
22:00 DJs Nino and Dramatík.
Óliver
22:00 Ladies' Night.
Prikið
22:00 Jenni & Franz,
DJ Addi Intro.
Sódóma
22:00 Fræbblarnir & Guests.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJs.

1 SAT

B5
22:00 Live DJs.
Bakkus
22:00 Live DJ.
Bar 11
0:00 Biggi Maus.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Live Music.
Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.
Cultura
22:00 House DJs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Hemmi & Valdi
22:00 Local DJs.
Hressó
22:00 Sturla, DJ Fannar.
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Már & Nielsen.
Óliver
22:00 Local DJs.
Salurinn
17:00 The Ísafold Quartet.
Sódóma
21:00 Duplex #7.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJs.

2 SUN

Café Rósenberg
22:00 Uppistand.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Gerðuberg Cultural Centre
13:15 Lunchtime Classics - Arias and Russian folk songs.
Prikið
22:00 Hangover Cinema.
Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJs.

3 MON

Bakkus
21:00 Movie Night.
Café Rósenberg
22:00 Blúsfélagið.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Prikið
21:00 Wine and Cheese Night: 2 glasses and cheese for 1,000 ISK.

4 TUE

Café Rósenberg
22:00 Matti Sax Big Band.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Óliver
22:00 Live Karaoke with Raggi Troubadour.
Salurinn
20:00 Ingólfur and Lluisa Es pigolé.

5 WED

Café Rósenberg
22:00 Murra & Elín Eypórs.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Óliver
20:00 Pub Quiz.

6 THU

B5
22:00 Live Music.
Bar 11
21:00 Kreppa Night. Beer for 450 ISK.
Café Rósenberg
21:00 Gunní Þórðar.

Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music.
Dubliner
22:30 Live Music.
English Pub
22:00 Live Music.
Háskólabíó
19:30 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Schumann & Brahms II.
Hressó
22:00 Troubadours Jogvan & Vignir.
Kaffi Zimsen
21:00 Best Friends Day. 2 for 1 beer.
Óliver
22:00 Live Music.
Salurinn
21:00 The little fly.
Sódóma
21:00 Blúsakademían.

BEWARE: Icelandic Nature

Remember at all times: Iceland's nature is not to be taken lightly. Weather conditions can quickly and unexpectedly turn around, without a moment's notice.

It is imperative that people take all the necessary precautions before going to check out volcanoes, for instance. We recommend organised tours, but if you must go it alone: Wear long underwear, windproof pants, a windproof jacket, a warm hat and gloves, and waterproof hiking boots. Bring more than enough food and water with you, even if you are simply driving there and back. Lastly, be sure to let someone know when you are leaving and when you plan to return. ☺



Underwear And Popcorn

FM Belfast & Retro Stefson

NASA ☺ 23:30

Stop running down the streets in your underwear 'cause nothing happens! Take it off instead and throw it to the stage! FM Belfast are coming to NASA! One of Iceland's most celebrated electro bands is ready to electrocute y'all out there once again, after a successful jaunt across Europe. They are joined by Retro Stefson, the band that claims to be "the 'pop' in your popcorn and the 'smooth' in your smoothie."

Both bands have been doing some heavy recording in the last weeks, so in case you're already bored of their last releases, you'll be sure to hear some fresh stuff. And by the way, the last time, FM Belfast and Retro Stefson performed at NASA, the concert was sold out, so make sure to get a ticket soon. Or do you want to keep on running down the streets in your underwear 'cause nothing ever happens here? We think not. **SVT / Photo by Jói Kjartans**



The Prikið Summer Jam

Prikið

In celebration of the first day of summer – kind of a big deal in Iceland – Prikið is barbecuing ribs and holding a slam-dunk contest on their outdoor patio. If shooting hoops is not your thing, there will be no shortage of entertainment, with DJ Moonshine and his friends on duty to get the crowd dancing. And by the way, Prikið is Reykjavík's oldest coffeehouse, dating back to 1951, which might explain its quaint red exterior and that rooster sitting above the door (Prikið means: "The stick" – everyone knows roosters love hanging out on sticks). **AA**

30
Apr.



Who's Got The Stamina?

Fræbbblarnir + Guests

Sódóma 🕒 22:00

The first Icelandic punk band is climbing Sódóma's stage on April 30th. What? You're thinking of some weird white-haired wannabe rockers who need an elevator to get on stage? Don't worry, just because they were the first Icelandic punk band doesn't mean they're doters. Fræbbblarnir (The Staaamens) were founded as a just-for-fun-college-band in 1978 (with their youngest member being only 14 years old – check out Dr. Gunn's rock history in our last ish for more info) and just somehow never got around to leaving stage again. So gather your stamina and prepare for a historic – and historical – rock show. **SVT**

9
Apr.



LEATHER PANTS MADNESS!

Localice Live

NASA 🕒 20:00

Tonight is a night for whisky and leather pants (unless you read this after our date of publication, which means you steamed your leather pants for nothing). Production company Localice is throwing a party at NASA, inviting some of Iceland's sweatiest rock outfits to play: Sign (who haven't been on an Icelandic stage for a whole year – and they have been missed!), cheerful raw-rockers Cliff Clavin, twenty-year-old post-rockers For A Minor Reflection, grunge throwbacks Noise, the ever-unattainable Ten Steps Away, and Akureyri metal heroes Nevolution. Doors open at eight, and if you want to enjoy some cheap(ish) drinks, be sure to show up early. **SVT**

9 - 11
Apr. - Apr.



From Darkness To Light!

Festival of the Sacred Arts

Hallgrímskirkja Church 🕒 23:30

Saturday and Sunday, 4.900 ISK

Hallgrímskirkja's biannual Festival of the Sacred Arts is coming to a close, but there's still time to catch the tail end of it – that is if you are reading this on April 9, 10, or 11. And in that case, you can stop by the church at noon on Friday the 9th to catch Schola Cantorum music and meditation and you can purchase a ticket at midi. is for the finale Saturday and Sunday concerts with Johannes Brahms' "A German Requiem" performed by the Hallgrímskirkja Motet Choir along with soloists Birgitte Christensen and Andreas Schmid. Don't they usually save the best for last anyways?

If you missed the festival by the time you opened this paper, still go see Hallgrímskirkja if only to climb to the top for a nice panoramic view of the city. **AA / Photos by Jói Kjartans**



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MAP

Places We Like

1 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Weekends are somewhat overrated at Kaffibarinn if you ask me. Don't get me wrong, they can be brilliant if you're completely pissed, the DJ is fresh and the crowd is full-blooded, still the weekdays are better. It doesn't matter when you pop in, you're always treated like a pal rather than a customer, and you should always expect get caught in some shenanigan, whether it's a crazy Monday bender or a wacko Tuesday... well... bender. SKK

2 Boston

Laugavegi 28b

Like an older sibling to the fabled (now deceased) Sirkús, Boston is a warm and mellow second-floor bar on Laugavegur that plays host to the arty party crowd. The baroque wall dressings and deep, rich coloured décor make this bar feel pretty swank, but the mood of the place can go from great to legendary within a heartbeat. CF

3 Havarí

Austurstræti 6

Even before it opened, Havarí was everybody's favourite new music and design store. Headed by Svavar Pétur and Berglind of Skakkamanage, the shop shills the musical goods of Kimi Records, Borgin Hljómplötur, gogoyoko and Skakkapopp as well as posters, art, design products and clothing. CF

4 Hemmi og Valdi

Laugavegi 21

The "colonial store" Hemmi and Valdi is a cosy hangout that has advanced from being a toasty retreat, where one can score cheap beer and have a quiet chat, into being a chock-full concert venue and an all-night party place. And believe us, the atmosphere is brilliant. SKK

5 Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27

If you're sick of all the arty cafés, filled with Sigur Rós wannabes browsing Facebook on their Macs – go to Tíu Dropar. It's a back-to-basics Icelandic café that hasn't changed its interior since the sixties. Really proves the old adage "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." Plus, the coffee's great and so are the pancakes. SKK

6 Sódóma Reykjavík

Tryggvagata 22

Newly opened Sódóma on Tryggvagötu is already a hit with party crowds and gig-goers alike. An extensive venue, filled with reasonably priced beverages and reasonably good looking people. Some of Iceland's finest musical ventures have played in recent months, and their schedule looks promising too. Also, make sure to visit their men's room for a glance at the "Pissoir of Absolution". JB



7 Babalú

Skólavörðstíg 22

Located on the second-floor of a quirky little building on Skólavörðustígur, Babalú is an inviting, quaint and cosy café serving up a selection of tea, coffee and hot chocolate along with delicious baked goods and light meals. Food and drink aside, Babalú boasts colourfully decorated and super-comfortable surroundings and a genuinely friendly and likeable staff. CF

8 OSUSHI

Lækjargata 2a

Great place to satisfy your craving for raw fish and vinegar rice. The selection on 'the train' is wide and varied and the atmosphere is relaxed. Also, the colour-coded plates make it easy to keep tabs on your budget while scarfing down your maki and nigiri. CF

9 Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a

Super relaxed and cozy diner/café below street level. This place makes the best hangover breakfast ever (the truck!) and any-other-day breakfast as well. It's a nice and relaxing place to eat and increase your caffeine intake and chill with friends or with some reading material. CF

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Lækjargata 6 b

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10 Nonnabiti

Hafnarstræti 9

Delicious and relatively cheap considering how massive and filling their sandwiches are. The Luxury Sub, with salty pork, veggies, sauce and pineapple is a brilliant combination of flavours for late-night munchies. It's just as satisfying and filling during more civilized hours as well. And the service is fast if you're in a rush. CF

11 Bakkus

Tryggvagata 22 - Naustarmegin

A new and welcome addition to Reykjavik's bar scene. Bakkus serves up reasonably priced beer, a really impressive selection of international vodkas and an atmosphere unlike any other in town. An eclectic mix of patrons, regular live music and movie nights keep this place interesting and always inviting. Expect dancing on tables and to-the-death foosball battles. CF

12 Sægreifinn

Verbúð 8, Geirsgata

Down by the Reykjavik harbour, Sægreifinn fish shop and restaurant is truly a unique establishment. The menu features various fish dishes (including most of the "crazy Icelandic food" you'll want to tell your friends you had) and a rich portion of the best lobster soup we've ever tasted. Good food and welcoming service make this place a must-try.

13 Deli

Bankastræti 14

Getting a good slice of pizza on the go can be an utter ordeal. If you're not careful, you'll frequently wind up paying good money for a cardboard wafer that has been sitting in a heater box for a week. Not at Deli, however. Their slices are consistently awesome and fresh, the topping selection is intriguing and tasteful and, best of all, they're really cheap.

14 Café d'Haiti

Tryggvagata 12

The first time I entered this exotic little joint, meaning to buy myself a take-away espresso, I ended up with two kilos of fresh and roasted coffee beans due to some language complications and way too much politeness. Since then I have enjoyed probably way-too-many wonderful cups of Haitian coffee, but they're always as nice, so the two kilos were definitely worth it. SKK

15 Hressó

Austurstræti 20

You know, Hressó is basically the only place I go for coffee. Why? Their coffee is decent to excellent, but their forte is surely their wonderful patio, where you can enjoy the spring breeze in the sun, wrap yourself in a blanket beneath an electric heater in January and at all times: smoke. They boast of quite the prolific menu, but I'd reconsider the playlists to tell you the truth, too much of Nickelback really hurts. SKK

16 Á Næstu Grösum

Laugavegi 20b

Á Næstu Grösum is an all vegetarian restaurant right in the city centre that features a friendly atmosphere and fair prices. There is always at least one vegan soup on offer and the daily special portions are big and always satisfying. There is even some organic wine on offer.

17 Austur

Austurstræti 7

Sleek and shiny, this new restaurant and bar is a straight-up boutique hot spot for stylish kids and trendy professionals alike. Appropriate for formal business meetings but casual enough for the roll-out-bed-at-5pm crowd, they serve up ample, satisfying, modern dishes at reasonable prices. This is also one of the rare places to get a full breakfast all day long! It's really fucking good too. RL

18 Jacobsen

Laugavegur 22

Jacobsen is owned by some nouveau riche Swedes, and has been providing a non-stop party over the last few months. Besides its importing foreign big-shot DJs and other niceties, it is probably most appreciated for its loooong hours; it doesn't matter if you stop partying at 2AM or way-too-much AM, Jacobsen is always forking out shots and cocktails. SKK

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ART

GALLERIES & MUSEUMS

COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

How to use the listings: Venues are listed alphabetically by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit www.grapevine.is

OPENING

APRIL

10

ASÍ Art Museum
Ólafur Gíslason—Identity Check
Ólafur Gíslason, a professor at the Icelandic Academy of Art, exhibits his work on the self-image of Icelandic youth. Ongoing until May 2.

10

Kling & Bang
Hekla Dögg Jónsdóttir
Engaging mixed media sculpture, often including cathode lights. Ongoing until May 2nd.

10

Living Art Museum / Nýló
Hrókering / Castling
Seven young artists exhibit their work.

29

Reykjavík Art Museum
Hafnarhús
Iceland Academy of Art's Graduation Exhibition
Ongoing until May 9.

MAY

6

Gerðuberg
Everyone Has Talent
Art group exhibits their winter's work in collaboration with Art Without Boundaries. Ongoing until June 30.

ONGOING

Arbæjarsafn / Reykjavík City Museum

Winter Program
This open-air historical museum offers guided tours Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 13:00.

Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum

Rhyme - Works by Ásmundur Sveinsson and contemporary artists
This exhibition showcases contemporary artists that tackle similar issues as Ásmundur did in his time, but in a context of a new age.

The Culture House

Medieval Manuscripts Icelanders
Exhibit featuring a selection of photographs from the book "Icelanders" by Unnur Jökulsdóttir and Sigurgeir Sigurjónsson.
ICELAND :: FILM
Traces the evolution of Icelandic filmmaking, exploring myths versus modernity.

The Nation and Nature
Thirty-minute film about the relationship between humans and nature. Film plays continuously during open hours.

The Library Room

National Archives of Iceland - 90 years in the museum building.
Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Culture House.

The Dwarf Gallery

The Einar Jónsson Museum
Permanent exhibition:
The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.

Galleri Fold

Sound fragments
Works by Shannon Novak.

Gljúfrasteinn Laxness Museum
Gljúfrasteinn was the home and workplace of Halldór Laxness (winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955).

Hafnarborg

Children's Sizes
Design for kids.

i8 Gallery

31 March - 8 May
New works by Lawrence Weiner.

Living Art Museum / Nýló

11 March - 2 May
Intercourse With The Collection

The National Gallery of Iceland

11 March - 2 May
Wistful Memory

Four artists' take on the power of memory.

11 March - 2 May

Workplaces of Real Men

Photographs by Ívar Brynjólfsson.

The National Museum

Permanent exhibition:
The Making of a Nation
Heritage and History in Iceland is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

Embroidery of Life

Embroidery by Guðrún Guðmundsdóttir, inspired by old Icelandic manuscripts.
28 November 2009 - ongoing

Ása Wright - From Iceland to Trinidad
Collection of objects that belonged to the adventuress Ása Guðmundsdóttir.

The Nordic House

10 April - 30 September
Land Of Experiments
Interactive exhibit based on scientific contraptions from Tom Tits Experimentarium in Sweden. Play!

Ráðhús Reykjavíkur

Dulín Himintungl
Kim Linnet exhibits her 360° panorama photos of Iceland.

Reykjavík 871 +/- 2

Permanent exhibition:
The Settlement Exhibition

Reykjavík Art Museum

Ásmundarsafn
2 May 2009 - April 30
Rhyme - Works by Ásmundur Sveinsson and Contemporary Artists

Reykjavík Art Museum

Hafnarhús
28 May 2009 - August 29
Erró - Portraits
18 March - 23 May

Erró - Portraits - Women from North Africa

January 15 - April 11

Coloursynthesis

February 25 - April 11

D-16 - Katrín Elvardsdóttir

Reykjavík Art Museum

Kjarvalsstaðir
January 30 - April 25

Kjarval - Insights: Warrior Maidens and Ships of Fancy

February 13 - April 25

Watery Hues: A Survey of Icelandic Watercolours

February 13 - April 25

Water and Colour

Educational family-oriented workshop in conjunction with the exhibition Watery Hues.

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Permanent exhibition:
Boats, fishing, and coastal culture.
Special exhibition hall hosts short-term exhibitions.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

23 January - 9 May
Jóna Þorvaldsdóttir - SENSES
Mysterious, often sensual photos made using antiquated techniques.

23 January - 9 May

Jakob Jakobsson - AT WORK

Artist draws on 50 years as a civil engineer. Black and white industrial landscapes and portraits.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

February 12 - ongoing

Who is who?

February 15 - ongoing

A Moment with Sigurjón Ólafsson



Icelandic Filmmaking Retrospective

ICELAND :: FILM

10 March - September

The Culture House

Ever seen an Icelandic film? This exhibit has everything you'll ever need to know, for film neophytes and experts alike. Discover Iceland's cinematic voice, contrasting past with present, myths with reality. The exhibit chronicles over 100 years of Icelandic filmmaking in four stations: feature films, short films, literature adaptations, and documentaries. Visitors can watch over 100 films in full length, so go prepared to invest some time. **SO**

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29 - **6**
Apr. May.



Art School Grad Show Awesomeness

Iceland Academy of the Arts Grad Show

Opens April 29

Reykjavik Art Museum—Hafnarhús

After three years of study, IAA grads are breaking loose. Fine Arts, Design, and Architecture grads will be exhibiting the crowning achievements of their academic careers in the form of paintings, sculptures, multimedia installations, performances—you name it. The exhibition promises to be diverse, and, as a bonus on the already free admission, visitors will be able to witness nine people from the art department collaborating on “a Land,” incorporating various events throughout the exhibition. We don’t know what this means, but it sounds like there’s a high likelihood of stumbling into something fun. **SO**

13
Mar.



Reykjavik City Theatre Recites THE BLACK REPORT

Reykjavik Theatre Reads the Black Report

April 12 (assuming the Commission stops teasing us)

Reykjavik City Theatre (Borgarleikhúsið) - FREE

The Reykjavik City Theatre group plans to read out loud the much-anticipated 2,000-page Black Report detailing the investigation into Iceland’s banking crash. The report was commissioned by Iceland’s parliament more than two years ago, and was originally scheduled for release this past February. The commission in charge has since then postponed their deadline a few times (for some reason, us normal folks aren’t allowed to do that) and Icelanders are rightfully getting impatient.

If they actually stick to their new April 12 deadline, 45 actors from the Reykjavik City Theatre plan on reading the report out loud, all day and all night, until they get through the thing – an estimated three-to-five days later.

Free admission for everyone. And for those who would prefer to listen from home, the reading will also be streamed over the Reykjavik City Theatre website: www.borgarleikhus.is.

Note: The report will be read in Icelandic, but because this is such an epic moment for Icelanders, it is well worth checking out. **AA**

Art | Venue finder

101 Gallery
Hverfisgata 18A | **E3**
Thu–Sat 14–17 and by appointment
www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/

Artótek
Tryggvagata 15 | **D2**
Mon 10–21, Tue–Thu 10–19, Fri 11–19, Sat and Sun 13–17
www.sim.is/Index/Islenka/Artotek

ASÍ Art Museum
Freygata 41 | **G4**
Tue–Sun 13–17

Árbæjarsafn
Kistuhylur 4

The Culture House
Hverfisgata 15 | **E4**
Open daily 11–17
www.thjodmenning.is

Dwarf Gallery
Grundarstigur 21 | **H6**
Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18–20
www.this.is/birta

The Einar Jónsson Museum
Eiriksgata | **G4**
Tue–Sun 14–17
www.skulptur.is

Fótógrafi
Skólavörðustigur 4a | **F4**
www.fotografi.is

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Bæjarháls 1
www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/
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Gallery Auga fyrir Auga
Hverfisgata 35 | **E4**

Gallery StartArt
Laugavegur 12B | **E4**
Tue–Sat 1–17
www.startart.is

Gallery Ágúst
Baldursgata 12 | **F4**
Wed–Sat 12–17
www.galleriagust.is

Gallery Fold
Rauðarástigur 14–16 | **G7**
Mon–Fri 10–18 / Sat 11–16 / Sun 14–16
www.myndlist.is

Gallery Kling & Bang
Hverfisgata 42 | **E5**
Thurs–Sun from 14–18
this.is/klingogbang/

Gallery Turpentine
Ingólfstræti 5 | **E3**
Tue–Fri 12–18 / Sat 11–16
www.turpentine.is

Gerðuberg Cultural Centre
Gerðuberg 3–5
Mon–Thu 11–17 / Wed 11–21 / Thu–Fri 11–17 / Sat–Sun 13–16
www.gerduberg.is

Havari
Austurstræti 6 | **E3**

Hitt Húsið – Gallery Tukt
Pósthússtræti 3–5 | **E3**
www.hitthusid.is

i8 Gallery
Tryggvagata 16 | **D2**
Tue–Fri 11–17 / Sat 13–17 and by appointment. www.i8.is

Living Art Museum
Skúlagata 28 | **F6**
Wed, Fri–Sun 13–17 / Thu 13–22. www.nylo.is

Lost Horse Gallery
Vitastigur 9a | **E3**
Weekends from 13–19 and by appointment on weekdays.

Hafnarborg
Strandgötu 34, Hafnarfjörður

The National Gallery of Iceland
Fríkirkjuvegur 7 | **F3**
Tue–Sun 11–17
www.listasafn.is

The National Museum
Suðurgata 41 | **G1**
Open daily 10–17
natmus.is

The Nordic House
Sturlugata 5 | **H1**
Tue–Sun 12–17
www.nordice.is/

The Numismatic Museum
Einholt 4 | **G7**
Open Mon–Fri 13:30–15:30.

Reykjavík 871+/-2
Aðalstræti 17 | **D2**
Open daily 10–17

Reykjavík Art Gallery
Skúlagata 28 | **F6**
Tuesday through Sunday 14–18

Reykjavík Art Museum
Open daily 10–16
www.listasafnreykjavikur.is
Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum Sigtún Hafnarhús
Tryggvagata 17 | **D2**
Kjarvalsstaðir Flókagata | **I7**

Reykjavík City Theatre Listabraut 3

Reykjavík Maritime Museum Grandagarður 8 | **C3**

Reykjavík Museum of Photography Tryggvagata 16 | **D2**
Weekdays 12–19 / Sat–Sun 13–17 - www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum Laugamestangi 70



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REVIEWS

Food For All Budgets

The (fiscal) highs and lows of Reykjavík dining

I love a good option. Actually, I love plentiful options. I particularly enjoy said bounty of options when deciding on where to grab a bite to eat. Luckily for me and my option-adoring cohorts, Reykjavík is not lacking in restaurants of all price-points. Regardless of how close or far one is from payday this city has got you and your grumbling, option-loving stomach covered.

Perched atop the Hotel Saga in Hagatorg, Grillið has been serving up fine-dining and hard-to-top panoramic views of the city, suburbs and Esja for over forty years. Grillið is quite possibly the highest of the high-end. It's no wonder this classy joint has enjoyed its longevity, with impeccable service from the moment guests step through its door.

Having spent the ride over to the hotel gushing about the pristine skies and anticipating heart-stopping views of Esja, my heart sunk when the host guided my date and I to our table along the wall with closed wooden blinds. Seriously? We're grown adults and all, but we pouted just a little as we gazed across the restaurant, envious of the patrons seated along the length of the windowed wall sans blinds. We tucked our bottom lips back in though once our blinds were raised, unveiling a stunning orange sunset over Vesturbær.

As magnificent as the service and views are, Grillið's food is what we were there for and we were eager to discover what the collective of chefs had up their sleeves. So, we both ordered the Discovery menu (8.900 ISK), offering four courses of the chefs choosing.

Before we even discovered our first course, out came light-as-air crisp wafers of rye and lamb and smoked salmon, paired with a fresh, whipped horseradish spread. A trio of fresh breads and accompanying spreads – Icelandic butter with red salt, olive and rapeseed – came next. This was followed by yet another pre-order amuse bouche of marinated cucumber with dill granita and parsnip purée – a refreshing palate cleanser with a pleasing crunch.

The first course of our ordered menu turned out to be a salmon dish; a duo comprised of pan-fried and butter smoked miniature fillet with horseradish and celery root. While the pan-fried portion was slightly flaky for my taste, the butter smoked morsel melted in the mouth, as "butter smoked" suggests it would, and let the taste of the high-quality salmon speak for itself.

Secondly we were presented with a portion of halibut alongside a long rectangle of carrot flan painted on the plate, topped with lobster lava rocks and drizzled with beurre blanche infused with orange. My eyes nearly popped out of my head when this dish was placed in front of me, the bright orange, green, white and black combination on the plate was spectacular; the complimentary flavours even more so. The halibut was delectably tender, reminiscent of the butter smoked salmon that preceded it but still new and different; the carrot flan was sweet and savoury all at once; the

Start Of The Month Treats



beurre blanche was a surprising medley, combining the richness of butter with the fresh zing of citrus. The most awesome component of the plate, however, were the lobster lava rocks – seemingly charred to a crisp, portions of lobster identical in appearance to lava rock that somehow managed to not taste at all burnt and were more akin to the Thai shrimp chips. But lobster.

Confession: I was tempted when ordering the discovery menu to request that my main course not be beef. Beef just isn't my thing. Never has been. But I kept my mouth shut and decided to take whatever Grillið's masterminds threw at me. This may possibly be the smartest decision I've ever made because beef tenderloin on oxtail is without a doubt the most heavenly succulent red meat combo I've ever experienced. Just reflecting on it now inspires me to use such youthful acronyms as OMG and the like.

This meat was incredible. The tenderloin was browned on the outside but soft and dark pink inside and the oxtail disintegrated in my mouth, it was so tender. The plate was shared with a potato cake topped with mushrooms, a cone of artichoke purée and a smear of thick date sauce.

I could have done without the artichoke cone. The bottom portion of it tasted too raw, and the gelatinous consistency of the thing rubbed me the wrong way.

Yet another welcome add-on to our four-course menu was the pre-dessert that came next, presented personally by a charming, soft-spoken dessert chef. This was a lovely touch. The little treat was equally lovely. Beetroot and white chocolate sorbet with pistachio and chocolate crumble. My date and I so

Grillið

Hótel Saga

What we think: Creative, masterfully prepared cuisine

Flavour: Rich and complex

Ambiance: Upscale with great views.

Service: Professional and knowledgeable.



enjoyed the play between flavours and textures that we both not-so-secretly hoped that our fourth and final course would be more of the same.

Finally, the real dessert. Chocolate, chocolate and more chocolate. Chocolate soup beside chocolate foam atop a white chocolate square, beside a milk chocolate brownie, beside rice and pistachio ice cream on a white chocolate parfait. Chocolate overload! The pistachio ice cream, parfait and foam were sinfully rich, the brownie was sticky and moist and gooey. The chocolate soup, my date and I agreed, was on the bitter side. I left most of mine on the plate; my date ate hers but commented that it was her least favourite item in that course.

After four courses and just as many extra little surprises, my date and I sat and watched the few lights of the city's west side glow in the now dark night. More than three hours had passed since we were first seated but we would have never guessed. Each plate presented to us had grabbed our attention and sparked conversation when the table was empty. This meal was truly a pleasure.

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3 Frakkar
Baldursgata 14 | **G4**
Aktu Taktu
Skúlagata 15 | **E6**
Alibaba
Veltusund 3b | **D2**
American Style
Tryggvagata 26 | **D2**
Argentina Steakhouse
Barónstígur | **F6**
Austurlanda-hraðlestin
Hverfisgata 64A | **F5**
Á Næstu Grósum
Laugavegur 20B | **E4**
B5
Bankastræti 5 | **E3**
Bakkus
Tryggvagata 22 | **D2**
Ban Thai
Laugavegur 130 | **G7**
Basil & Lime
Klapparstíg 38 | **E4**
Babalú
Skólavörðustígur 22A | **G5**

Balthazar
Hafnarstræti 1-3 | **D2**
Bejarins Beztu
Tryggvagata | **D3**
Brons
Pósthússtræti 9 | **E3**
Café Cultura
Hverfisgata 18 | **E4**
Café d'Haiti
Tryggvagata 12 | **D2**
Café Loki
Lokastígur 28 | **G4**
Café Paris
Austurstræti 14 | **E3**
Café Roma
Rauðarárstígur 8 | **G7**
Deli
Bankastræti 14 | **E5**
Domo
Þinghóltsstræti 5 | **E3**
Einar Ben
Veltusundi | **E2**
Eldsmiðjan
Bragagata 38A | **G4**
Fiskmarkaðurinn
Aðalstræti 12 | **D2**

Geysir Bar/Bistro
Aðalstræti 2 | **D2**
Garðurinn
Klappastígur 37 | **F4**
Glaetan book café
Laugavegur 19 | **F5**
Grái Kötturinn
Hverfisgata 16A | **E4**
Grillhúsið
Tryggvagata 20 | **D2**
Habibi
Hafnarstræti 20 | **E3**
Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar ("Bullán")
Geirsgata 1 | **B2**
Hilolla Bátar
Ingólfstorg | **D2**
Hornið
Hafnarstræti 15 | **D3**
Hótel Holt
Bergstaðarstræti 37 | **G3**
Humarhúsið
Amtmanstígur 1 | **E3**
Hressó
Austurstræti 20 | **E4**

Icelandic Fish & Chips
Tryggvagata 8 | **B2**
Indian Mango
Frakkastígur 12 | **F5**
Jómfrúin
Lækjargata 4 | **E3**
Kaffi Hjálmalind
Laugavegur 21 | **E4**
Kaffifélagið
Skólavörðustígur 10 | **F5**
Kaffitár
Bankastræti 8 | **E4**
Kaffivagninn
Grandagarður 10 | **A1**
Kofi Tómasar Frænda
Laugavegur 2 | **E4**
Kornið
Lækjargata 4 | **E3**
Krua Thai
Tryggvagata 14 | **D2**
La Primavera
Austurstræti 9 | **D2**
Lystin
Laugavegur 73 | **F6**

Mokka
Skólavörðustígur 3A | **E4**
Nonnabiti
Hafnarstræti 9 | **D3**
O Sushi
Lækjargata 2A | **E3**
Pisa
Lækjargötu 6b | **E3**
Pizza King
Hafnarstræti 18 | **D3**
Pizza Pronto
Vallarstræti 4 | **E2**
Pizzaverksmiðjan
Lækjargötu 8 | **E3**
Prikið
Bankastræti 12 | **E3**
Ráðhúskaffi | **E2**
Tjarnargata 11
Santa Maria
Laugavegur 22A | **F5**
Serrano
Hringbraut 12 | **H3**
Shalimar
Austurstræti 4 | **D2**
Sifur
Pósthússtræti 11 | **E3**

Sjávarkjallarinn
Aðalstræti 2 | **D2**
Sólón
Bankastræti 7a | **E3**
Sushibarinn
Laugavegur 2 | **E4**
Sushismiðjan
Geirsgötu 3 | **B2**
Svarta Kaffi
Laugavegur 54 | **F5**
Sægreifinn
Verbúð 8, Geirsgata | **B2**
Tapas
Vesturgata 3B | **D2**
Thorvaldsen
Austurstræti 8 | **D2**
Tíu Dropar
Laugavegur 27 | **E5**
Tívoli
Laugavegur 3 | **E4**
Vegamót
Vegamótastígur 4 | **E4**
Víð Tjómína
Templarásund 3 | **E2**
Vítabar
Bergþórugata 21 | **G5**



End Of The Month Cheaps

It doesn't get much more affordable than Bæjarins Beztu Pylsur. Hot dogs for just 280 ISK, and soda for 170. You'd be hard pressed to find cheaper eats in Reykjavík, or anywhere else for that matter.

Bæjarins Beztu Pylsur has been serving up hot dogs with all the toppings to the hungry masses and well-informed tourists (including the likes of Metallica's James Hetfield and phallus aficionado/former P.U.S.A. Bill Clinton) for 73 years. Four generations, in the same location on Tryggvagata almost the whole time. Some of today's staff have worked there for over thirty years. The place is a legend.

When I idled up to BBP on this particular day, it was admittedly not my first time in that line-up. I had a love affair with "eina með öllu" (that's a hot dog topped with ketchup, mustard, fried onion, fresh onion and remoulade – one with everything) early last summer; one so intense that it ended up spontaneously combusting, resulting in a lengthy separation. But here I was, waiting to experience that familiar flavour combination that Icelanders so love once again.



Bæjarins Beztu Pylsur

Tryggvagata

What we think: Best pylsa in town.

Flavour: Better than all the other hotdogs.

Ambiance: Street eats.

Service: Fast and friendly.



The pylsa is just how I remembered. Run of the mill bun, ample toppings, steaming hot sausage. The casing of the sausage pops in my mouth as I bite into it and the combination of crunchy and fresh onions and the darker hot dog mustard add some gentle bite and complexity to the texture. It's a decent snack or meal.

The one lesson I never seem to learn is that I just don't like remoulade. It's too mayonnaise-y, too thick, too something I can never seem to put my finger on until I've downed my pylsa and think to myself "damn, I wish I hadn't asked for remoulade." But at the same time I know that I would be unsatisfied without the added condiment. It's a bit of a double-edged sword, I suppose. I hope to find a solution some day.

Bæjarins Beztu Pylsur are, without a doubt the best pylsur I've tasted in Iceland. They are fresh and tasty where others are lacking. There's a good reason why this tiny little stand is never without a long queue. And it's cheap. **CATHARINE FULTON**

EAT AND DRINK:

3 X HOME DELIVERY

1 ÁVAXTABÍLLINN

It's the fruit-mobile! Let's be honest, sometimes (all the time) the fruit selection at Bónus leaves much to be desired, and hauling your cookies out of 101 is way too much work. Luckily Ávaxtabíllinn brings the healthy produce to you. Thanks, Ávaxtabíllinn! www.avaxtabillinn.is.

2 SHALIMAR

Ever have a hankering for Indian and Pakistani cuisine but just can't bring yourself to put on shoes. We've all been there. For 1000 ISK, you can have said eastern cuisine brought to your doorstep. The food is delicious, no matter where you eat it. www.shalimar.is.

3 DOMINO'S PIZZA

Hot pizza with toppings of your choice delivered from the oven to your door is a good thing. Therefore, Domino's is a good thing. It's simple math. www.dominos.is or 581-2345.

3 X BAKERY

1 SANDHOLT

This classy little bakery on Laugavegur is a feast for the senses. The glass case stocked with snúður, danishes, pain au raisin, chocolate lava cakes, etc. are very hard to resist. The sandwiches are pretty wonderful too. **Laugavegur 36**

2 MOSFELLSBAKARÍ

While not conveniently located in the 101 area, this well-known bakery is well worth the drive to Mosfellsbær (or their other shop in 108 RVK). Their baked goods are always flaky and moist and gooey and sweet and delicious. Also, they deliver. Háholt 13-15, Mosfellsbær or Háaleitisbraut 58-60, Reykjavík

3 KVOSIN

Nestled down on Aðalstræti next door to a small grocery shop of the same name, this is the latest addition to Reykjavík's baking scene. The big perk about this place is that they've got ample seating at which to enjoy the spoils of the confectioner's ovens. **Aðalstræti 6-8**

3 X UNHEALTHY

1 RIKKI CHAN

You can practically taste the MSG, and feel the pounds securely fastening themselves to your midsection when scarfing down the generous portions doled out at the Chinese food component of the Kringlan food court. But it's a lot of food for relatively little money, and it tastes pretty decent. **Kringlan 4-12**

2 AMERICAN STYLE

Burgers topped with bacon and cheese and other burgers and sided with fries and cocktail sauce, etc. A trip to American Style is a practice in gluttonous overindulgence. **Tryggvagata 26**

3 EIN MEÐ ÖLLU

Newsflash: hotdogs aren't health food. Far from it. **Throughout the city**



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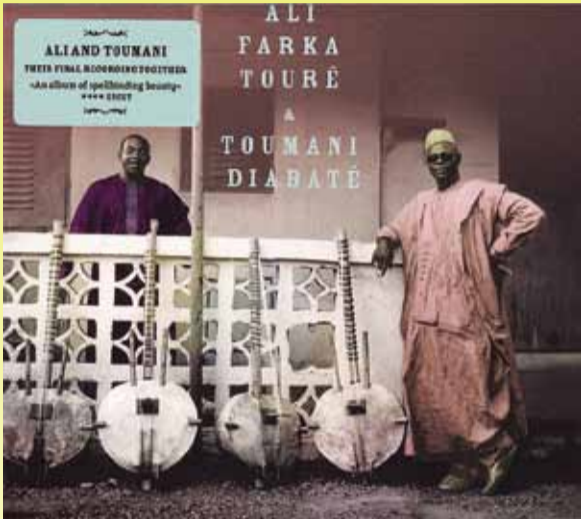
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Seabear • We built a fire



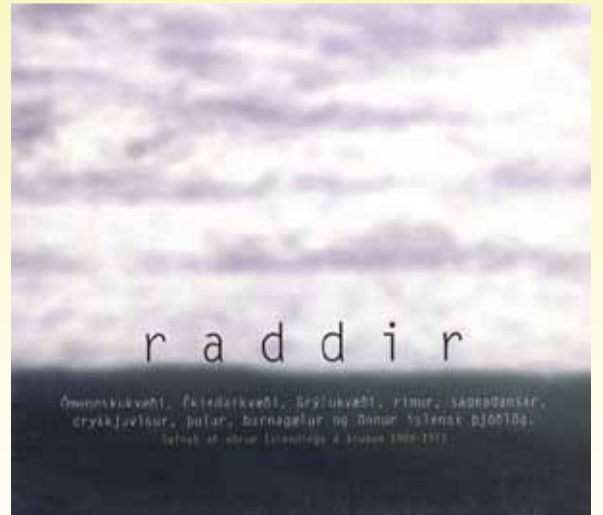
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in the world and putting them together. Really well, I might add.

J: It's so funny, I've been in a band with four other people for sixteen years. It's so diplomatic and democratic – we make every decision together. And if you get tired of some aspect or element, one of the other guys will take it over and you'll not have to think about it. This is so different, having to be focused the whole time, making decisions, pretending you know what's best for the project. It's difficult, and as I said, it made me really respect Björk and what she's been doing. This is what she has to deal with every day.

N: Since she was like seventeen, that bitch has been working it.

J: I have really big respect for Björk. Whoah.

N: As do I. Remember when we e-mailed her in the middle of the night. That was fun.

I always think about her process as being this thing that involves knowing. She'll send people to all the corners of the Earth searching for ingredients, then she kicks everyone out and cooks for herself. She has this amazing ability and talent to make things awesome with the available resources. The best resources, really.

It's all about the right ingredients. And you can always get better at that process. My mother goes to the store not knowing what to cook, she'll just buy the stuff that looks good and mixes it all together into something amazing. And that's kind of how you have to be, a mix of instinct and insight. We might be eating this cauliflower anchovy thing; even if it sounds fucked up you know it'll be genius by accident.

ON BEING SANE

-Do you believe music has a purpose; does it have one for you?

J: I can see Nico twittering there, he really wants to talk. But I'll answer first. I think music is all about keeping you sane. Writing music, writing songs and stuff, that's also about keeping you sane, about keeping you fulfilled and happy and it can reinforce the belief that life has some meaning. It's really simple.

N: Yeah, quite so. I was basically going to say the same thing, but forty times longer. For me, the purpose was established the first time I ever got full body Goosebumps. I was eleven and singing in a choir, a piece by William Bird.

J: I have to go to the toilet.

-Nico, could you describe our surroundings while Jónsi finds his release?

N: We're at the Leather Bar in Reykjavík, sitting at the entrance to the fisting room, which is currently not being used. Go poke your head in there and make sure. Over there's a gas mask and a bear pride flag, and a Scandinavian Leather Man Week ad. To the right is the cage. And there's a pretty good movie running on the TV in the corner. Jónsi's been watching it the whole time.

J: [back from the men's room] I was actually very obviously trying not to watch it.

N: Yeah yeah, lemme go [walks off to the bathroom].

[Jónsi flips through a porno mag, looking for the cover model, which looked enticing. We find him, and he is pleasing to the eye. Nico returns.]

ON BEING A GAY NERD

J: I really want to ask Nico one question.

N: What's the question, then?

J: So, being gay, how has that affected your music making and your being a composer or whatever?

N: I mean, the short answer is not at all...

J: Really?

N: ... and also all of the time. It's kind of a combination. I love to think it has nothing to do with anything, but the reasons I make music all stem to thinking about myself as an eleven year old singing in a choir, thinking about my very lonely pre-teen gay boy self, singing in a choir.

J: Did you get any priest action?

N: No, there was no priest action. But I remember how excited I was to know music at that time. And I address my music to that kid, always. Maybe slightly smarter kid, and slightly more ecstatic. Still that same one. I want my music always to be that rapturous, how I felt it then.

J: Were you a nerd when you were young?

N: I was such a nerd.

J: Really? In what way? Did you just stay at home and write songs all day?

N: No, I got into music kind of late. But I had oddball parents, and I read a lot. I much preferred reading to talking to people. I think, for me at least, being gay imposes a guilty sort of loneliness on your

social life.

J: Exactly, exactly. This same thing happened to me actually. I grew up in a small town outside Reykjavík, Mosfellsbær, and I didn't know any gays or lesbians until I was something like 21 years old. That's kinda when I came out of the closet. Until you come out, you have this urge to be happy and fulfilled, but the only way to do that is to create something. You have to make things for yourself, to draw, play music, paint or whatever. You have this urge to meet another boy or kiss somebody or hug them, but you can't, because you don't know anybody. You're stuck in a small town.

N: And even if you did know someone, it felt weird.

J: Yes. I kept making this big mistake of falling in love with my friends. A classic gay thing.

N: You mustn't fall in love with your friends. There is a built in loneliness to the gay experience, a very intense one. Just by nature of the number of things, it's so lonely.

J: In any case, I think being gay has affected me a lot as a musician. It is focal in a lot of my music making and... [trails off, eyes glued to the TV screen in the corner].

-Now, THAT was a cumshot.

ON RETHINKING IT ALL

N: We were all talking about the gay experience and the straight person mentions the cumshot! Ha! Alright. I've always felt like gay musicians have this obligation to make something that's sooooo good. For me, that served as quality control, a little. I felt that as a gay man, I had an obligation to make good music. It's served me well.

J: Yeah, that's definitely good in the long run. But kind of hard to have on your shoulders nonetheless.

N: I've always felt like everything I did has to be just perfect. It's also something. All my parent's friends were gay; everyone was gay around me, growing up.

J: It's so funny, you grew up in a totally different landscape. You were just gay all the way, you didn't grow up being the weird guy in the family. I was exactly the opposite, growing up in the countryside, really straight parents, really straight family, straight friends...

N: But the good news for you is that even if you're growing up in a place where everyone is gay, it's still fucking lonely and weird. Which I think is good. The best, in fact. I don't know, but it was just as weird to have a million gay people to be with, I didn't want to be just like them. There were also generational differences...

J: It worked out for me in the end. I knew I was gay, and had like this special thing for boys, and I fell in love with all my friends. I knew there was a definite difference between greater society and myself. This made it necessary for me to rethink everything, the whole of society, the whole world. The straight movies I'd been seeing my whole life, the rules I'd been taught and my whole life. Everything. I had to rethink it all. I think this is a very healthy practice for us.

N: It is. You get to re-evaluate all the children's' stories, all the moral codes... Actually, I'm still unravelling, all the stuff you've been taught by straight people, can't be trusted. Most people's parents – at least in our generation – will be straight. Can you listen to their stories, honestly?

“Did you get any priest action?”

ON EVERYTHING GETTING DARKER

J: I feel like being gay and being a musician helped me a lot actually. I think I wouldn't have made as much music as I did if I weren't gay; it really created an urge to create to be fulfilled, to be happy.

And I remember the time until I turned sixteen. It was such an innocent and carefree time, I didn't know anything. I had friends, for sure, but I only had shallow conversations until I met the first boy in my life, my best friend who I fell in love with. He introduced me to the feeling of speaking heart to heart with someone, to being really close and say exactly how you're feeling. Before I had that, the conversations weren't deep.

N: You had to keep it one level removed, so no one will find out.

J: Of course, that changed my whole life perspective, everything got darker from that point, and more serious. More real. More you had to think of. Before that, I was so carefree. I will always remember

those first sixteen years of my life. Care-free and fun. Total freedom.

ON DELICIOUS MOMENTS, ALWAYS

N: Do you feel like you're sometimes trying to recreate that period, the carefreeness.

J: Probably in some way. It's such a beautiful moment. Such an ecstatic, carefree moment. No bullshit – no worries.

N: No sixteen layers of not speaking your mind. That's often what I'm trying to accomplish. Getting back to that first moment, right before that first moment, and write a score for that. That's the parts of my music people like, and dislike. It's an uncomfortable thing to exist in that landscape, before. Just delicious moments, always.

J: It is so strong in everybody, everybody loves their instinct and follows it, but they get caught up in society, slowly you get caught up in this stampede of information and bullshit. You get caught up and your true self gets lost.

N: Thinking about this, what's funny is that I feel like now you're living a life that's as out and about as one could hope for, but it's also quite a composed life. It's good. You have this insane dietary thing... [Jónsi adheres to a strict raw food diet].

J: I know. The thing is that it's just really healthy and fun. With everything you do, if you live for it, if you don't listen to anything...

N: I listen to everything, you don't listen to anything.

J: But you only like what you like. This is true for me as well. I think people should be more aware of what they put in their bodies – music or food – it's your fucking fuel, it's what keeps you going.

N: I only buy expensive food. If you're paying an exorbitant amount of money for something, chances are it's good.

ON BUYING EXPENSIVE CLOTHES

J: I have to make everything from scratch, like Nico's mother. Everything I eat. I can't go to a store and buy ketchup; I have to make it from scratch. Not mustard; I have to make it from ground mustard seeds, I've done that, I make burgers and stuff like that. A lot of your energy goes into making food when you're a raw-foodist, but it's worth it and I think everyone should be doing it.

N: Part of the reasons why I dress like I do is if you buy really expensive clothes, chances are it's not slave labour. It's not made by eighteen children in a Thai basement but some designer in Japan somewhere.

J: Nico only dresses in black. I never wear anything black. It's a conscious choice. Black is no colour at all, an absence of colour. I try and stay away from it.

N: I used to wear orange a lot. I had this whole orange phase. I'm branching out from black right now actually. I'm working with a really good blue, and if someone were to make me a really good dark red I would like that. But no one will make it.

It's a tough process – the whole thing is a disaster. An expensive disaster.

J: Have you talked to Bárá from Aftur? She could make it. She's making all our costumes for the tour and it's been great working with her. I don't like buying clothes and I don't like spending money on them. I'm Icelandic in that way, I don't waste money on clothes. It's funny for me, when Bárá is sewing my stage outfits, I try to make her do clothes that I can wear in daily life. To save money [laughs].

ON WHY GAY PEOPLE MAKE BETTER MUSIC

-Returning to an earlier topic: do you guys think gay people make different music from straight folks?

N: Much, much better music. Because why? Because it's informed. The gay person does not have an entitlement to life, rather a need to make the world into her image.

J: The gayness forces you to make stuff. I think it's so fucked... If you're going to feel good in this society we live in, you have to make something good. So you can feel good.

N: In my experience, straight composers get away with not thinking too hard about things. “It is or it is not, yada yada...” just... blah. Whereas – and there are of course many exceptions – I hold true that gay people have to make their own garden, kind of, their own vocabulary, rocks and trees and plants.

-Is modern composition a big gay scene?

N: No, and I think all of my favourite composers are actually straight. Philip Glass, Steve Reich and John Adams are not the gay composers. Benjamin Britten is the high watermark of how music can make me feel. He made music... he was a homosexual and he made the most exclusive music that resonates so specifically with me. I don't know. It's a weird thing. All I know is that I am becoming more severe recently about the importance of being gay. In America at least, it's crazy. You can't be in the army if you're a homo; if you're gay you're not good enough to die for your country.

J: Actually, my big gripe with being gay in Iceland is that I can't donate blood. It's so fucking stupid.

N: It's the same shit in America. I tried donating after 9/11 and they were asking “Have you had anal sex with a man in the last twelve months?” My jaw dropped. I was all like “FUCK YOU! You had sex with your dumb husband in the last twelve months, I presume.

J: This rule is a fucking joke. They only ask gay guys if they had anal sex. They don't care if you're a straight person and you've fucked every woman you know in the ass. That's fine.

N: If you one time put it in some guys pooper, you can't save someone else's life.

ON BEING FIRED BY COURTNEY LOVE. AND ICESAVE.

-For the common reader, could you explain the difference between songwriting and arranging. Can, for instance, a Nico Muhly fan buy Jónsi's album for the arrangements?

J: It was definitely fun for me to write the songs and then get Nico to bring it to another level, for me it was amazing to experience.

N: I'll say that someone might recognize my footprints on the album, but it's definitely not my album. As I said before, my job as an arranger is to make Jónsi look fabulous. It's to make the singer

[a grinning Jónsi snaps on a latex glove from a box of complimentary that rests on our counter]

look great and sound great. Some arrangers try and take credit for writing, which I would never do. All I am trying to do is make you look good. It's not my shit, it's your shit. I've just put this costume on it.

“This rule is a fucking joke. They only ask gay guys if they had anal sex. They don't care if you're a straight person and you've fucked every woman you know in the ass. That's fine.”

-I got told to ask you this, Nico. What's your relationship with Courtney Love?

N: I think she fired me. I did a bunch of arrangements for her and it was a big fiasco. I'm pretty sure she's fired me. Through Twitter? No, she hired me through Twitter, but hasn't called back after we recorded.

-What do you guys think about Icesave?

J: I have no clue what's happening in Icesave. N: I do! I listen to BBC World Service every day and e-mail people about it. No, I have no idea. I think people shouldn't have invested in another country's shady shit. It was like giving Nigerian internet people your money, really. Did you see the return rate? It was made up! It was a pool party – everybody was cheering all this easy, easy money. It seemed too good to be true, which it of course was.

The night slowly descends into even more chaos. Folks hug. We go fetch another bottle of champagne. The fisting room gets occupied all of the sudden. Members of Jónsi's band join us. At the very end of the night's dictaphone recording, I later discover an eerie call to arms, Blair Witch-style. It sounds like it was shouted by the pair in unison, although there is no way of telling: “GLOVES ARE OFF, BITCHES!”





MONDAY, APRIL 19TH

Curiosity is Yellow, Red, Green and Blue – Opening Parade

The festival opens with a big parade in the city centre, where fourth grade students are invited to partake. Each school gets allocated a colour theme, expressed in various ways, including costumes, interesting headgear and much more. The parade starts at the footbridge over Hringbraut and leads through Hljómskálagarður park to the Hallargarður park by Fríkirkjuvegur.

When: 10:00 – 11:30.

Where: Hljómskálagarður Park.

That's Me There!

A large portrait collage that kids in Vogaskóli have been working on since autumn.

When: 12:00 – 16:00.

Where: Vogaskóli.

Stomp-Play

Ingunnarskóli runs a stomp-play between the huge water tanks in Grafarvogur. Everyone is welcome.

When: 09:00 – 11:00.

Where: The tanks in Grafarvogur.

MONDAY, APRIL 19TH TO SUNDAY, APRIL 25TH

Experiment Land – Science comes Alive in Vatnsmýri

All are equal in Experiment Land; it is unnecessary to “know” anything specific, but it is important to be thirsty for knowledge and to bring some courage and imagination. Guests should preferably book an appointment in Experiment Land, so we can assure that the tools can be used and that the instructors can tend to guests. Please call the Nordic House (551-7030) for bookings.

When: 09:00 – 17:00.

Where: Nordic House, Sturlugata 5.

The Adventure Hall

A children's culture house entitled The Adventure Hall is open to everyone, emphasis placed on creating a good atmosphere with art exhibitions, workshops, concerts, dances and theatre pieces.

When: 10:00 – 18:00.

Where: Fríkirkjuvegur 11.



Curiosity – Adventure Stories written by Primary School Students and Senior Citizens

Older citizens and primary school students have been collaborating on writing an original illustrated book of adventure stories to be published this fall. Guests can observe the kids and older citizens working together, and marvel at the sight.

When: 10:00 – 16:00.

Where: Adventure Hall, Fríkirkjuvegur 11.

Curiosity – Who am I?

A collaboration between The Reykjavík Art Museum and eight primary schools. The students make silhouettes in the spirit of master artist Erró, based on the theme “Curiosity – who am I?” The works will be combined into one big mural, which will be on display in front of the F-hall in Hafnarhús.

When: 10:00 – 17:00,

Thursday from 10:00 – 22:00.

Where: The Reykjavík Art Museum – Hafnarhús, Tryggvagata 17.



Interesting Perspective of all Exhibitions in the Culture House

Exhibitions of children's films in the film exhibition ICELAND :: FILM in collaboration with the Icelandic Film Centre.

When: 11:00 – 17:00.

Where: Þjóðmenningarhúsið, Hverfisgata 15.

Entrance Fee: Adults – 400 ISK.

Children's Sizes – Design for kids

An exhibition of selected design by Icelandic and international designers who have influenced design for children as well as influenced the children's world or environment. The emphasis is on three dimensional design, toys and furniture, particularly objects that are user friendly for children and designed with their special needs and ideas in mind. A large part of the exhibition will be a designated workshop where children and other guests create their own designs on the walls of the museum as well as an interactive room with toys such as wooden speedster or racer cars.

When: 12:00 – 17:00 (Closed on Tuesdays).

Where: Hafnarborg, Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður.

Curious Tiles

Everyone is welcome to contribute to a tile relief in the Breiðholt swimming-pool. Write interesting questions on tiles, which later will turn in to an art wall in the pool.

When: During opening-hours.

Where: Breiðholt swimming-pool.

Diving for Art

Kindergarten Vesturborg reveals an exhibition on the bottom of the Vesturbær swimming-pool!

When: During opening-hours.

Where: Vesturbær swimming-pool, Hofsvallagata.

The Chess Academy

The Chess Academy and Kindergartens reveal an exhibition related to chess.

When: During opening-hours.

Where: Reykjavík town-hall.

Take a Look at Primary Schools In Grafarvogur! – Art on the Bus

Students from the primary schools in Grafarvogur exhibit their works on the buses. A variety of pictures serve to make your bus ride a lot more interesting.

When: All day.

Where: On bus lines 6, 24, 31 and 32.

Take a Look at Kindergartens in Grafarvogur! – Art on Shopping Carts

Children from the kindergartens in Grafarvogur exhibit their works in shopping carts in the supermarkets Hagkaup, Bónus and Nettó in Grafarvogur.

When: During opening-hours.

Where: Hagkaup, Bónus and Nettó in Grafarvogur.

Fun with Teddies

Students of the Grafarvogur School of Visual Arts exhibit entertaining teddy pictures in the Spöng ice cream parlour. The school organises a teddy drawing competition in collaboration with the ice cream parlour. One lucky participant wins an ice cream party for the entire family.

When: During opening-hours

Where: Ísbúðin okkar, Spöng 25.

Under the Surface

Exhibition by Húsaskóli and Engjaskóli at the Grafarvogur pool.

When: During opening-hours.

Where: The Grafarvogur pool.

TUESDAY, APRIL 20TH TO SUNDAY, APRIL 25TH

Dyndilyndi – The Price of Gifts and Counterflow

The contribution of the Reykjavík School of Visual Art is a multi-layered arts event where children, designers, artists, architects, dancers, actors, authors and musicians contribute threads from tails created by the children. Children inspire adults, artists inspire children and so on. The exhibition is ongoing until May 2.

When: 11:00 – 17:00.

Where: National Gallery of Iceland, Fríkirkjuvegur 7.

Ship Ahoy – Events at the Maritime Museum The Kids' Lair

Watch entertaining and educational films, draw and paint pictures and play with toys connected to the ocean and fishing.

Ocean Gear

Try dressing in ocean gear that the fishermen of yore used to wear. For children between the ages of 7-12.

Old Fishermen Games

Learn games played by Icelandic fishermen centuries past, including Fisherman, Icelandic wrestling and balancing arts.

Boat building workshop

Children participate in a boat building workshop under the guidance of the museum's carpenter Agnar Jónsson.

Traditional Dishes at the Museum Coffee Shop

Curious and traditional dishes served in the museum coffee shop.

When: 13:00 – 17:00.

Where: Víkin – Maritime Museum, Grandagarður 8.

Entrance fee: Adults 700 ISK. Free for children under the age of 16.

Orienteering Race and Guided Tour for Children

The National Museum of Iceland organises an orienteering race and a special guided tour for kids. Both events in English and Icelandic.

When: 11:00 – 17:00.

Where: The National Museum of Iceland, Suðurgata 41.

Happy Days at Laugarnesskóli

Six song and dance shows at Laugarnesskóli “The Phantom of the Opera” is the first in the row. Light snacks included.

When: April 19. and 20. at 18:00 and April 21. and 23. at 16:30 and 18:30.

Where: Laugarnesskóli, Kirkjuteigur 24.

The Young and the Elderly in Grafarvogur

Exhibition of photographs at the entrance of the nursing home Eir presenting a collaboration of the kids of the kindergarten Brekkuborg and elderly citizens.

When: All day.

Where: Eir nursing home, Hlíðarhúsum 7

MONDAY APRIL 19TH, TUE APRIL 20TH AND WED APRIL 21ST

The Way of Curiosity

A collaboration between the Iceland Academy of the Arts and schools, day nurseries and kindergartens in the Seljahverfi neighbourhood. These associations become art galleries.

Where: Seljahverfi, Breiðholt.

Light and Shade

Various light and shade workshops at the kindergarten Sæborg offer unlimited possibilities. Different materials are used to create an entertaining atmosphere where the child's curiosity flourishes.

When: 10:00 – 11:30 and 13:00 – 14:30.

Where: Sæborg kindergarten, Starhagi 11.

TUESDAY, APRIL 20TH

The Birds in the Ugly Puddle

The children at Geislabaugur open the show The birds in the ugly puddle. There is a big open area right behind the kindergarten that needs improvement. The children revive this area and activate guests' curiosity.

When: 10:30.

Where: Geislabaugur kindergarten, Kristnibraut 26.



Exhibition

An exhibition of paintings by the children of Stjórnuland on the occasion of the 20th birthday of the Convention on the Rights of the Child last November officially to be opened in Guðríðarkirkja.

When: 16:00.

Where: Guðríðarkirkja.

Concert at Langholtskirkja

The school orchestra of Austurbær, the choir of Vogaskóli, the Choir School of Langholtskirkja and Graduale Futuri perform a concert at Langholtskirkja. The group, consisting of about 130 children, performs Eurovision songs and various well-known pop standards.

When: 18:00.

Where: Langholtskirkja, Sólheimum 13.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21ST

Young Háteigsskóli Opera Students Perform Our Earth

Our Earth places the spotlight on environmental concerns, such as increased pollution and the resulting change in weather patterns. The students perform their own songs, then the University of Reykjavík Gospel Group joins them in singing Michael Jackson's Earth Song.

When: 11:00 & 13:00.

Where: Hallgrímskirkja Church.

Carnival at Björnslundur

The inhabitants of Norðlingaholt neighbourhood welcome everyone to join in on the fun stretching from Norðlingaskóli to Björnslundur. Lots of fun activities, including wood whittling, boat carpentry, horseback riding, and painting.

Where: Norðlingaskóli and Björnslundur in Norðlingaholt.

When: 9:30.

Babbidibú – A Magician Flies

The young national choir of pre-school kids perform classic kids' songs by Olga Guðrún Arnadóttir at Háskólabíó theatre. The children sing stories about a sick monster, and the sun and the moon, which take turns watching over us. And much more.

When: 14:30.

Where: Háskólabíó, Hagatorg.

A Scarf-clad Troll

Students from Laugarnes School drape Ásmundur Sveinsson's “Tröllkona” sculpture in scarves.

Where: The Ásmundur Museum Garden, Sigtún.

Divine Curious Birds

Kids from Stjórnuland open a show called Divine Curious Birds at Guðríðarkirkja Church. After the opening an open house and the kids offer treats.

When: 16:00 –18:00.

Where: Guðríðarkirkja, Kirkjustétt 8.

Time Flies, Trust Me!

A Musical by the Reykjavík female choir and Kram house dance school.

When: 18:00 & 20:00.

Where: Icelandic Opera House, Ingólfsstræti 2.

Entrance Fee: 1500 ISK.

Please notice this is not the complete programme. Further information at the Tourist Information Centre, Aðalstræti 2.

19th–25th of April Reykjavík Children's Culture Festival

The 2010 Experimental Dance Finals

School children compete in a dance competition with no predefined genre boundaries. The teenagers themselves create their dance and they are judged on originality and execution.

When: 19:30 – 22:00.

Where: Loftkastalinn, Seljavegi 2.

Entrance Fee: 500 ISK.

Kites and Birdhouses

Students from the Ingunnarskóli school in Leirdalur show off their kites and birdhouses.

When: 10:30 – 13:00.

Where: Leirdalur, Grafarholt.

Music Programme in Guðríðarkirkju Church

10:30 Geislabaugur kindergarten kids sing during Parents' Morning

12:10 Children from various elementary schools sing farewell to the winter by singing bird song for concert guests.

When: 10:30 & 12:10.

Where: Guðríðarkirkja, Kirkjustétt 8.

THE FIRST DAY OF SUMMER APRIL 22ND

Neighbourhood Festivities

A varied program for the whole family in neighbourhoods around the city, including a parade, music and games such as fireball, soccer, cat and mouse.

When: All day.

Where: Reykjavík neighbourhoods.

Summer Celebration

In celebration of the first day of summer, kids are invited to participate in a varied programme at the National Museum

13:00 – 15:00 Art studio for kids of all ages

13:00 – 16:00 Games from past ages

15:00 Möguleikhúsið theater performs "Landið vífra" for kids.

When: 13:00 – 16:00.

Where: National Museum, Suðurgata 41.

Ship Ahoy at the Maritime Museum

Old fishermen games, Children's play corner, boat building workshop and sea clothing where kids aged 7-12 experience wearing the gear seamen used to don in times of yore.

Children Invited Aboard Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn

Children play orienteering games to get familiar with coast guard vessel Óðinn

When: April 22, 13:00 – 16:00

Where: Aboard Óðinn, Maritime Museum, Grandagarður 8.

Entrance Fee: 700 ISK for adults, free for children under the age of 16.

Come and Play Old Games

Reykjavík museum invites kids and adults to participate in exciting games played in Reykjavík in bygone times

When: 13:00 – 17:00.

Where: Hallargarður garden, Fríkirkjuvegur 11.

Come and Play

Exhibition on children's toys.

When: 13:00 – 17:00.

Where: Reykjavík City Museum, Kistuhyl 4.

First day of Summer at the City Library

Wolf Erlbruch Exhibit Opening. The show, put on with the Goethe association, features drawings by Wolf Erlbruch.

Children's Book Award

The best original children's book will be awarded, as well as the best Icelandic translation of a children's book. The winning books are chosen by kids aged 6-12.

Skrípó 2010

The Reykjavík City Library and the Reykjavík Art School threw a comic strip contest this spring. The entries on exhibit at Reykjavík Square, awards to the best one.

Writing and Art Workshop for Children and Adults

When: 14:00 – 17:00.

Where: Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagötu 15.



Hansel and Gretel

Hólmfríður Jóhannesdóttir and Kristín R. Sigurðardóttir perform children's opera Hansel and Gretel opera with Julian M. Hewlett on piano. By Engelbert Humperdinck.

When: 14:00.

Where: Neskirkja Church, Hagatorg.

Exhibit Children's Books Art

Work by 20 students from Danish art school Ole Wich. Open until the 29th of April.

When: 12:00 – 17:00.

Where: The Nordic House, Sturlugötu 5.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum on First Day of Summer

A fun questionnaire and an orienteering race for the whole family.

Where: Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum,

Laugarnestangi 70.

When: 14:00 – 17:00

FRIDAY APRIL 23RD

The 5th International Children's Books Festival

This year's theme is children's book art. Local and foreign authors explain their work and there will also be a special programme for children.

When: 13:00 – 15:30.

Where: The Nordic House.

Curious Birds

Students from Sæmundarskóli school exhibit their work at Sæmundarsel near Reynisvatn, including performing songs from Dimmalimm, showing their curious bird art and reciting poetry about birds.

When: 12:30 – 14:00.

Where: Sæmundarsel by Reynisvatn.

Outdoor Art

Outdoor art work revealed in Gufunesbær town.

When: 15:30 – 16:30

Where: Gufunesbær, Gufunesvegi

Groups of Five Fingers

Piano students of Allegro Suzuki Music School perform on five grand pianos and five pianos.

When: 17:00.

Where: Tónastöðin, Skipholti50 d.

SATURDAY APRIL 24TH

Open House at Iceland's Dance School - Lí

Everyone is welcome to watch dance classes and students from the ages of 9 – 16 can participate in dance workshops. Students study everything from classical dance and ballet to modern dance.

Where: Listdansskóli Íslands, Engjateigi 1.

When: 10:00 – 13:30 & 14:00 – 15:15.



Kids Music, BARA PLATA

Ísgerður Elfa performs a record release show for her brand new children's record, BARA PLATA.

When: 14:00.

Where: Fríkirkjan Church, Fríkirkjuvegi.

International Children's Day

The International Children's Day features extensive workshop programmes for children and teenagers to introduce to them the diverse cultures of the world. A day filled with fun for everyone. Learn the Japanese art of Origami, make native American Geronimo or learn how to dance break and hip hop.

When: 13:00 – 17:00.

Where: Gerðuberg, Gerðubergi 3-5.

Original and Intriguing

Concert performed by students from the Allegro Suzuki Music School.

When: 13:30.

Where: Tranavogur 5, second floor.

Children's Fun at Mt. Esja

The Icelandic Travel Association invites kids and their families on a hike in mountain Esja. Orienteering, outdoor theatre and hot chocolate. Bus transportation will be provided.

Where: Bus departs from the Icelandic Travel Association, Mörkinni 6 at 13:15.

When: 13:15 – 16:00.

Brass band Concert for Kids

The Workers' Brass Ensemble's annual concert for kids. Presented by actor Felix Bergsson.

When: 14:00.

Where: Icelandic Opera House, Ingólfsstræti 2a.

The North Pole - Cultural and Arts Centre



The inventor

A dance performance for the whole family at The North Pole – Cultural and Arts Centre.

When: 15:00 & 16:30

Fun at the Labyrinth House

The Labyrinth House presents a programme of theatre, concerts, art exhibits, games and more. Kids find their way through the labyrinth and participate in the various activities along the way.

When: 14:00 & 17:15.

Where: The North Pole – Cultural and Arts Centre, Bygggarðar 5, Seltjarnarnes.

SUNDAY APRIL 25TH

Concert from the Book of Ballads

The Children's Festival throws a closing concert for the entire family with songs from the Book of Ballads.

When: 14:00.

Where: Reykjavík Zoo and Family Park.

Fun at the Labyrinth House

The Labyrinth House presents a programme of theatre, concerts, art exhibits, games and more. Kids find their way through the labyrinth and participate in the various activities along the way.

When: 13:00 & 15:00.

Where: The North Pole – Cultural and Arts Centre, Bygggarðar 5, Seltjarnarnes.

Guided Children's Tour of the National Museum – IN ENGLISH

Art from the Reykjavík Art School on display in the square.

When: 14:00 – 16:00.

Where: National Museum, Suðurgata 41.

Watercolour and Postcard Workshop

Kids aged 7 – 12 paint their own postcards and send them to children in the Faroe Islands. The workshop is part of a Faroe Islands culture programme at Kjarvalsstaðir

When: 14:00 – 17:00.

Where: Reykjavík Art Museum, Kjarvalsstaðir, Flókagata 5.



Faroe Culture Festival

Faroe artists, Faroe food and Faroe folk dance.

When: 14:00 – 18:00.

Where: Reykjavík Art Museum, Kjarvalsstaðir, Flókagata 5.

Reykjavík big band Marathon

Where: Reykjavík City Hall.

When: 13:00 – 18:00.



Music | Live Review



Fashion, Eruption, Aggression, And A Whole Lotta Fuzz

Peaches storms NASA at the RFF

Hours after a volcanic fissure ruptured in Fimmvörðuháls on the vernal equinox, Canadian electro-glam star Peaches erupted onto NASA's stage in a fury of beats, costumes, hair, and attitude—a suitable finale for the inaugural Reykjavik Fashion Festival.

Peaches' musical persona is obsessed with hair and costume; she has worn beards for media appearances, displayed her own private curly fringe for CD covers and online interviews, and—well—her fourth album title speaks for itself: *Impeach My Bush*. In videos such as *Serpentine* and *Talk to Me*, hair adorns costumes as fringe, while in *Tombstone Baby* two women toy with sexual flirtation and frustration through acts of hair stroking and pulling.

With Peaches' attempts to untangle conventional attitudes to hair, it was appropriate that she took the NASA stage dressed in boxing shoes and a black-hair body suit with towering head dress. Her second song, the aforementioned *Talk to Me*, demanded responses from two blonde go-go dancers who joined Peaches onstage, both silent dancers in black under-

wear and oversized matted wigs that obscured their faces.

Peaches oscillated between excitement and violence as she interacted with the audience. With swift kicks, she swiped empty bottles off the stage in a spray of broken glass. Her performance pushed through choreography and costume changes (from towels to pussy lights, glam-rock necklaces to prosthetic breasts), props and prat falls—dangerous enough with a drunken, infatuated mass surging towards the stage, eager to paw Peaches.

Playing into this visceral audience desire and her own ideology, Peaches delivered a series of interactive antics (spray-spitting fake blood, pulling pretty girls onstage to dance, allowing hungry hands to molest her guitar) that amped up the crowd's party drive.

Peaches even crowd-surfed and walked all over the audience. To prep the howling mass for this latter stunt, she shouted, "Are you ready for something special, Reykjavík? ... Jesus walked on water; Peaches walks on you." She chased this with stripped-down beats and laissez-faire



Peaches

Ladytron DJ's

Bloodgroup

Sykur

NASA, March 20th 2010

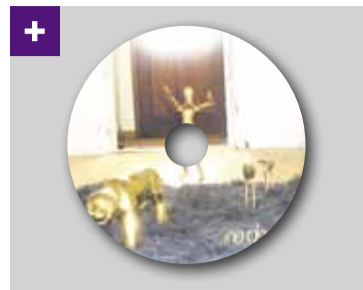
lyrics in *Serpentine*, a song from her newest album *I Feel Cream*, with a chorus that proved the motto of the night: "I don't give a fuck if you maul me."

I stood and watched the grotesquery of the evening. A hard-working (and arguably exhausted) performer executed choreographed moments and pushed or kicked any object or person out of her way while booze-soaked beauties, bedecked in fine suits and frocks, pulsed their young bodies and yelled infatuation unintelligently. My mind wandered to a YouTube fan video for Peaches' anthem *Fuck the Pain Away* paired with *Miss Piggy* clips. Excess. Desperation. Greed. Shock art of swine in pearls. Puppet perversion, jerks and gyrations, mouth full of sexually explicit expletives.

Whether drunk, bitter, sleepy, euphoric, or volcanic, by the end of Peaches' performance, we all found our release. ♪

A. RAWLINGS
JÓI KJARTANS

Music | CD Reviews



Úlpa

Jahliya (2009)

ulpa

Self-indulgent and clichéd, but in a good, wholesome way.

Úlpa have been lingering at the periphery of the Icelandic music scene for long enough to make something of a name for themselves, but I can't remember ever meeting anyone who really likes them or has even listened to them, except for this one guy... although I am a bit of a shut-in.

All that said, Úlpa's latest effort is as darkly satisfying as all their work, with a heavy Arabic twist to their guitar work and songwriting. This does unfortunately make them sound a bit too proggy for my taste, but Úlpa's laid-back professionalism and their richly textured soundscape, one glimpsed through a hazy murk of flange, delay, reverb and overdubs, always make for an intriguing listen.

♫ - SINDRI ELDON



Ólafur Arnalds

Found Songs (2009)

olafurarnalds

Sad sounds and melancholy to soothe the savage beast.

Found Songs is a project Ólafur Arnalds undertook last year. It involved writing, recording and mixing a track every day for a week, then giving them away for free via his Twitter account. The result is a twenty minute mini album containing tracks that are sparse and minimal, switching away from electronic percussion and with the piano and violin forming the central soundscape.

And such are the feelings of loss, pain and melancholy that pervade through the album's minor keys, what Arnalds seems to have done is make a soundtrack for possibly the world's saddest film, if that existed—a film that would probably contain death, cancer, incest, addiction and a bag of kittens being tossed into a river in the first ten minutes. Admittedly, some people may find the album a little cold and lacking in depth due to the shortness of the tracks. But given some time and the right setting, its soft tones have a notable calming effect.

♫ - BOB CLUNESS



Hudson Wayne

How Quick Is Your Fish?

sykurtheband

Music to come home drunk to

Seven tracks of laconic resignation form Hudson Wayne's third "full-length" and it stands firmly as the band's most relaxed and confident offering yet, which is not to say it goes anywhere special or interesting. It relies more on its mood and energy to create atmosphere than any kind of effect or production gimmicks, meaning that, for better or for worse, it's true nature is obvious: a simple little bit of morose guitar drudgery, not blessed with any highs or lows, just cruising through foggy skies with no particular destination in mind.

♫ - SINDRI ELDON

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in town

Fancy learning more about the Icelandic punk revolution? Seek out Friðrik's Þór feature length documentary on the subject, Rokk í Reykjavík.

Dr. Gunni's History Of Icelandic Rock | Part 17

Utangarðsmenn Dominate Iceland



The rhythm section of Utangarðsmenn – Magnús and Rúnar – came from the tiny village of Raufarhöfn. Brothers

Mike and Danny Pollock were the guitar players, two dudes with an Icelandic mother and an American father. They and Bubbi had met at the box factory Kasasagerðin, where they all worked, and an electric friendship had developed.

Bubbi Morthens had been writing music since 1974, when he was 17 years old. He was a migrant worker, going from village to village, working in fish factories, getting drunk and banging out original radical folk songs under the influence of Bob Dylan and Woody Guthrie. He played his stuff for co-workers on his acoustic guitar, and had sometimes played gigs, including ones for the Icelandic Folk Music Society. When Bubbi started working on his debut solo album in a small 8-track studio, the original idea was to make an acoustic Dylan-inspired album. He paid for the studio out of his own pocket, so the album processed slowly. After meeting the Pollocks, Bubbi traded out Dylan for punk rock, or as he called it, "guano rock".

Bubbi's debut album, Ísbjarnarblús ("Polar bear blues," named after a notorious Reykjavík fish factory, Ísbjörninn) was released on June 17, 1980. By that time, Utangarðsmenn had played a lot all over Iceland and more and more people had started taking notice. In June, Utangarðsmenn supported none other than The Clash in Reykjavík. Of course, this was an awesome show and there was definitely something in the air, some wave of freshness hitting the Icelandic music scene.

Up to that time, all the main players

1. Bubbi & Utangarðsmenn doing their guano rock thing in 1980
2. Geislavirkir LP

on the Icelandic pop scene had roots in the sixties, like Björgvin Halldórsson, who had been the main pop star in Iceland for most of the seventies, both with his solo albums, his Eagles-inspired band Brimkló and his 50s rock (a la Grease, American Graffiti, et al) inspired trio HLH-flokkurinn. There was stagnation and an urgent need for a younger generation to make a difference. Bubbi went straight for the jugular on Utangarðsmenn's first four track EP, released Oct 1st, 1980: "I'm a certified invalid / I listen to HLH and Brimkló / I'm a certified idiot / allow myself to be ridiculed / support the market" he sung on "Ha Ha Ha," a reggae track, subtitled "Shrimp-reggae." The old guard tried to be cool about the insult, but of course many were deeply offended.

Utangarðsmenn were in a hurry. The band's only studio LP, Geislavirkir (Radio-active), was released that November, and has since become a classic. On it the band runs through guano rock ditties such as "Hiroshima", with its catchy chorus: "You will all... You will all... You will all... DIE!!!" (This was during the heights of cold war, you see), but occasionally slows down to chillier reggae tunes. Bubbi was all over the media, commenting on various issues and ridiculing the old stiff. In 1980 he became the biggest rock star Iceland had seen since, well, since Björgvin Halldórsson eleven years earlier. All the attention he got, his fierceness and coolness, it was impossible not to be fascinated. He was the horse that hauled the rock wagon. All over the place, new bands were being formed and would come out of the woodworks in the following months. The year 1981 was to become the freshest in Icelandic rock history. More of that next time.

✂ - DR. GUNNI

By Dr. Gunni, based on his 2000 book Eru ekki allir í stuði? (Rock in Iceland). A revised update of the book is forthcoming in 2010.

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Excellent Music For Clearly Enthralled People

Dear Kimono,

I've been pondering our relationship, as it seems to have taken a childish turn recently. Names have been called. Threats were possibly made. But perhaps we were both rash in our comments, such is the passion we share.

I hoped to clear the air by attending your album release concert. Things have been going well for you over the last few months haven't they? Your album "Easy music for difficult people" (must not laugh. Nmmmpfn) was voted one the best albums of 2009 by a lot of people. Worthy praise indeed!

Firstly, I commend you for your choice of venue. The Icelandic Opera House, with its faded grandeur, old wooden seats and warm acoustics, seemed suited to your brooding presence. And the fact they had a bell to announce the start of the concert, forcing the stragglers to stop gabbing in the foyer, was a nice touch.

You started the gig differently from the usual rock histrionics with a string quartet playing a sombre piece before your own Alex and Bloodgroup's Hallur twisted their sound into something that sounded like bloodthirsty aliens scuttling in a blackened forest. This sci-fi noise was complimented with four menacing bars of red lights that surrounded you on stage, like a barrier that would blow your head off if you tried to walk past it.

But we were there to see you rock, Kimono, and you complied by shuffling on stage and launching into Standing Wave, a slow death march on drums with mournful vocals from Alex. It all sounded clear and sharp, but I felt you were hiding something back from us. And of course you were, weren't you? You little tease.

You gave us a minute's baited silence while you adjusted strings and knobs. And then you threw yourselves into Animal from the current album, and the effect was, to put it mildly, unnerving. Listening to the differences between the old and new tracks was akin to trying neat vodka

Kimono
Icelandic Opera house
March 11th 2010

for the first time after a lifetime on diet coke. The sound of you working as a three-piece was pretty much flawless, and before our brains could process this shift, you moved straight into Karen and Kente, which ended sounding like a herd of rampant Mongol warriors. Mind you I did have to have my eyes closed at this moment as you did try your best to induce epilepsy by beaming parts of your light show directly into my eyes. But this was a small irritation as you stormed through the rest of the album.

And while all this was happening you looked relaxed, almost playful. Even Gylfi was regaling us with useless trivia, such as the first film ever played at the venue was "Ben Hur", which I know will come in handy at Pub quiz night at Grand Rokk. You even invited your little friend Kari to come on and play bass with you at the end. Bless.

You ended the night with an encore including old favourites such as Japanese Policeman, and a standing ovation. So Kimono, the night belonged to you as heroes, but what about us and the future? Oh, I know it'll probably never be the same as it used to be, too much water under the bridge and all that. But at least we'll have this night to think about while we get on with the rest of our lives. ♪

Yours faithfully,
Bobby

✍ BOB CLUNESS
📷 ÆGIR BIRGISSON

You might not have heard, but the awesome Batterí venue (which is commended in at least one of the below reviews) burned to the ground earlier this month. Mínus even lost a lot of their gear in the fire, which sucks HARD! On behalf of Reykjavík's community of music-lovers, Grapevine would like to say: Miss U, Batterí. We're sad to see you go.



Mínus Return. Again.

Mínus
Biogen
DLX/ATX
Batterið
March 19th 2010

The bill tonight is an odd one. Mínus have enlisted not a single metal or hardcore act to support them, hoping rather to draw a diverse crowd with the aid of rock duet DLX/ATX and electro champion Biogen.

As I walk in the door, the soundtrack is that of three AM at a Nasa filled with sweaty, neon, glowstick-touting revelers, all hopped up on goofballs. I assume that the sounds are coming from a playlist between bands setting up, but people are watching the stage intently. Turns out Biogen's set is in full effect, and it is him jumping around on stage that the audience is focused on.

His music is downright insane. Powerful and progressive stuff yes, but at a far too early an hour. Better had he come on after Mínus to lead the crowd dancing deep into the drunken maw of the late night.

King narcissist vs. the hardcore hopefuls

Although Mínus should long since ago have lost their status as kings of the local metal and hardcore scene (via their lack of quality output in recent years), it is via the shortage of worthy successors that the band somewhat triumphantly takes the stage tonight in front of a crowd.

Mínus is a band in constant development—or progression, as the members would have it. What once was a part of the birth of the metalcore genre fast evolved into a groundbreaking noisecore unit of untold progressive measure, only to be replaced, first with a criminally catchy rock incarnation, and ultimately with a mere shadow of its former glory through a record that aspired only to mediocrity.

With a fairly newfangled line-up, one yet to prove itself on record, Mínus still retain the extremely talented backbone of string bender Bjarni and drum pounding virtuoso Bjössi. After a long absence from the stage, the band is debuting brand new songwriting efforts tonight, probably aiming to regain the critical acclaim they had until the creative flop of their latest album, The Great Northern Whale Kill.

King narcissist and raging front man Krummi enters the stage with promises of a career spanning set, and among the hardcore hopefuls a spark of anticipation ignites. Although not claiming encyclopaedic knowledge of Mínus song titles, I find the track mix quite potent, yet, as customary, a bit light on Jesus Christ Bobby era material in favour of popular classics off of the seminal Halldór Laxness album, which garnered heavy airplay in its heyday.

Stand and deliver

On stage, Mínus never fail to deliver. As the first measures of musical mayhem

burst out of their Marshall stacks, the crowd immediately erupts into an unhinged melee of a pit. As bodies pinball off of each other and onto the stage, Krummi goes through something of a personal catharsis, where tortured wails give way to clean singing and even a few growls.

But, as the fresh songs are introduced into set, the chaos subsides, perhaps due to physical burn out, or because most of the new material is somewhat ill suited for spazzing the fuck out.

No chugga-chugga

The band's promises of not including a single chugga-chugga riff on their upcoming album seem have been a songwriting mantra. Some of the new reeks of obnoxious pretence to the tune of a miniature synthesizer, other tracks strike dark ominous chords that grab desperate hold of the listener, as yet others dwell on tedious tribal drum patterns far too long.

Still, grating aural faux pas notwithstanding, Mínus fucking explode. Bjössi mounts his drum stool between songs, egging the audience on with his head in the rafters while Bjarni swings his axe and Krummi goes all apoplectic with their lanky young bass player getting his rocks off to the tune of the very same musical masterpieces that echoed off of the walls of his teenage bedroom.

As the hour long plus set draws to a dreaded close, the audience joins in chorus of demand for more, and true to form, Mínus oblige. First with their biggest hit to date, The Long Face, and then showstopper Kolkrabbinn. That done, hardcore kids and curious hipsters alike walked away all sweaty and content. ♪

Missed that awesome Mínus show at Batteríð? Not to worry - they're throwing another bash at Sódóma on Saturday April 10th, backed by the legendary Godkrist. It's a must-see!

✍ BOGI BJARNASON
📷 BRYNJAR SNÆR



Music to Watch Girls By

Duplex #5
March 6th 2010
Batterið

A vague, wisplike smattering of people were lounging around Batteríð when I walked in, having drunkenly decided that Sódóma's opening act for the night, Darke & Taylor, were a waste of my time. With the first Batteríð band yet to start, I had briefly entertained the notion of waiting at Bakkus, but the awful racket of whatever crap they had booked for the evening drove me off.

I have to say I rather like Batteríð; there's something very pleasant about how low the stage is, barely a foot higher than the dance floor, forcing you to get close to the stage if you wanted to see an act on a busy night. Not a lot of bands in Iceland can fill a venue, and anything to con the crowd into coming closer to the stage seems like a good thing to me.

Not that this was at all likely to happen during Tamarin/(Gunslinger)'s set (Incidentally, what's with that fucking name? Just when I thought stupid punctuation bullshit in band names couldn't piss me off more, some wise-ass thinks of shoving parentheses and a slash in for no apparent reason? What the fuck?). The room remained only tentatively occupied; in fact, some girls actually left.

The music was pretty good. They opened with a fairly basic version of the theme song from Escape From New York, and the original stuff was nice, too. Playing beat-shifting bully rock that keeps things simple musically but playful rhythmically, they have a remarkably dense and whole sound for a trio, although like pretty much every band in Reykjavík, they could stand to take a few singing lessons, or just get a singer.

The emptying room made the music all the more earnest and atmospheric, with expensive lights tossing wild shadows across the floor as a single raven-haired girl, probably a performer's girlfriend (usually the drummer's, in my experience), stood alone in front of the stage taking pictures with her cellphone, beautifully decorated by the pulsating, spiralling lights. "The epitome of why guys join bands," I scribbled nonsensically in my notebook and wished I had money for another drink.

The rest of the night was interesting, I guess: Ólöf Arnalds was one of the more awkward things I've ever seen (one of her songs was from a Diet Coke ad), but she carried it well, and Weapons have branched into folk territory with their new stuff, with glorious results.

But I could not concentrate. The image of that solitary girl watching Tamarin/(Gunslinger) stayed with me, and after Weapons' set, I stumbled out into the night looking for romance, blowing the last of my spending money on a bag of dried fish in a supermarket and eventually falling asleep in a chair at Næsti Bar. ♪

✍ SINDRI ELDON
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Cheerful, Drunken Voices In Song And Celebration

Inexplicably, at midnight, the bar gets crowded.

There's no clear reason why. The house lights have come on and Reykjavík! have stopped playing. By all traditional indications, this should be the end of the night. But the stairs leading down into Krúsin are packed and the lobby area that doubles as the club's bar is straining to contain the sudden onrush of tall, giddy, grinning blondes.

As it turns out, this encounter is the ideal preamble to this year's Aldrei fór ég suður ("I Never Went South") festival, a two-day music event that takes place in the small Icelandic village of Ísafjörður, located in Iceland's northernmost fjords. The following 48 hours would be full of loud drunks happily trying to cram themselves inside buildings too small to hold them, all in an effort to get an earful of a few minutes of music.

AN ART PROJECT OF A TOWN

The town of Ísafjörður is a visual miracle. Surrounded on all sides by massive, awe-inspiring cliffs, the village feels like an art project: a brightly-coloured, economically-designed township nestled dead in the centre of gargantuan natural marvels. It's as if someone had dropped it in using a crane.

Unlike Iceland Airwaves, Aldrei fór ég suður focuses mainly on local and unknown bands. Indeed, the biggest international "name" on the bill is Ólöf Arnalds, and the next biggest is the

festival's organiser, rock experimentalist Mugison. Where Airwaves usually books a handful of international bands, Ísafjörður's festival is proudly, stubbornly local. It's also charmingly and deliberately amateurish. As Mugison said over a lunch of fish stew before the festival opened, "No one gets a sound check, everyone uses the same equipment, and there's no hierarchy in selecting the set times" (perhaps as if to prove his own point, he scheduled himself to play early on the first night).

The festival's relentless egalitarianism means that the musical choices can often be baffling. On Saturday night, a group called Yxna, comprised mostly of men in their sixties sporting leather jackets and sunglasses, bashed out bar blues to a mostly appreciative audience. Their set concluded with a cover of I Can't Help Falling in Love With You, sung by Oscar nominated Icelandic film director Friðrik Þór in a craggy voice that would make Tom Waits sound like Celine Dion.

ICELANDERS LOVE TO PUSH AND SHOVE

The festival boasted just as much bad music as good, but that's somewhat beside the point: the event's the thing. Parents wheel out well-bundled infants in strollers, dads hoist excitable four year-olds up on their shoulders, grandparents mill around by the hot dog stand. Though the festival is held in an unheated cement warehouse,

the sheer number of bodies crammed into that small space provides ample heat. Indeed, the festival's biggest drawback is the enthusiasm of its audience: much like that first night at Krúsin, audience members are more than willing to consistently push, shove and bully their way into the building.

But there's no good reason to linger on the downside. More than anything, the festival speaks to a passionate and generation-defying love for and appreciation of Icelandic music. Where many other festivals come off as a celebration of song (still others, a celebration of commerce), the festival in Ísafjörður feels like a celebration of Iceland. Few of the bands have much ambition to be successful anywhere other than their homeland, so it seems petty to call out the less-than-spectacular.

Especially when the festival offered more than its share of gems: Ólöf Arnalds, always a treasure live, deigned to break out the sublime lullaby Við og Við, a song she has yet to perform any time I've seen her play in the U.S. Reykjavík!, who are easily as thrilling as any post-punk band the States has lately produced, hurtled through their set, a bracing shot of spastic noise.

QUIET CAN BE JUST AS GOOD

The quieter acts were often just as good: Lára Rúnars offered the kind of cheery, chirpy indie pop that would make fans of Lykke Li swoon.

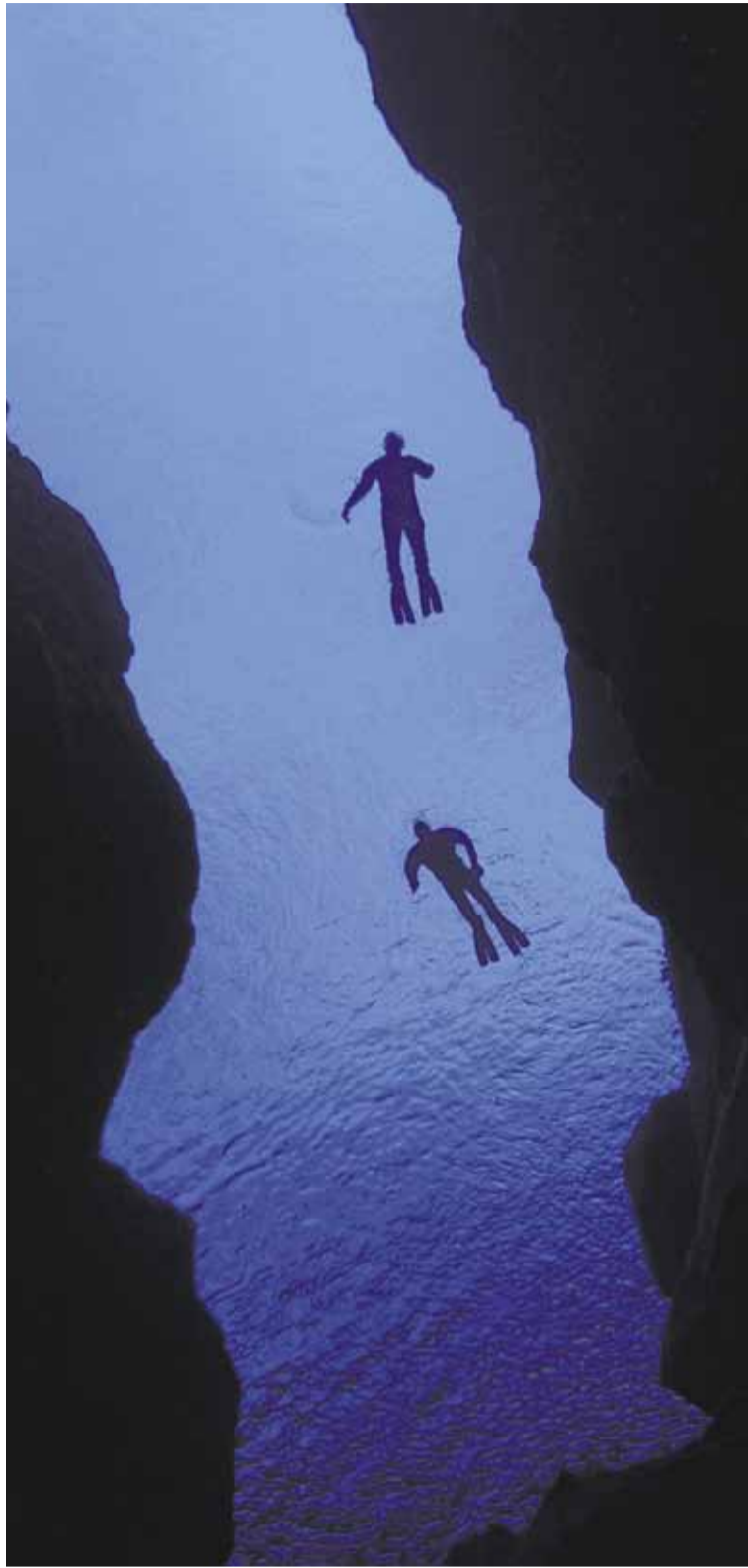
The orchestral pop act Hjaltalín was angelic, lacking simple pop melodies with strings and brass and even an oboe, proving it's possible to add a string section to your band and not sound like a mimeograph of Arcade Fire. That their set ended with a rapturous cover of Don't Stop 'til You Get Enough was merely a bonus.

Often, the bands were harder to pin down: Biggibix went from approximating the '80s nostalgia of the Killers to the '80s nostalgia of Daughtry. Still, it was harder to resist his last number, the broad and soaring Situation (the recorded version of which sells it short by a great deal). A small army of fellow friends and musicians crowded on to the stage—somewhere between 15 and 20 in all—locked arms and belted out the song's giddy, shout-along chorus and, one by one, the audience caught on and joined in. In the end, that's what Aldrei fór ég suður is about: a community raising cheerful, drunken voices in song and in celebration. 🍷

J. Edward Keyes is Editor-in-Chief for the awesome eMusic site. He has been writing about music since 1997 for publications including RollingStone.com, Newsday, the Village Voice and Entertainment Weekly. And the Grapevine!

J. EDWARD KEYES
JULIA STAPLES





Snorkelling In Long Underwear And Thick Socks

Grapevine goes under

School's out, work's off and Spring Break has finally arrived. Like countless others with the same ideas of escape, I fled the city for a nice snorkelling destination. Only this was going to be nothing like that infamous image of Spring Break that perhaps comes to mind...

For starters, swap out the overcrowded and inebriated beach scene and insert a remote and pristine lava field, then substitute the warm tropical ocean with frigid 4C glacial water, and while you're at it, forget about the bikini and think: long woollen underwear, thick socks and a dry suit. Now you're ready for snorkelling in Iceland.

ÚFFF!

The adventure began bright and early from Reykjavík's central bus station, where our friendly guide from Dive.is, Quentin, picked us up and proceeded to take us to our destination: Þingvellir National Park. Þingvellir is a popular destination and a must-see for many reasons. It's the meeting site of Europe's oldest parliament established in 930AD. It's home to Iceland's largest natural lake. And, it's one of only two places on Earth where the effects of the continental drift can be observed.

As we drove out of the city, we passed a billboard reading 3C. Úfff! It was going to be undeniably cold out there. This was confirmed a short while later, as the van climbed over a small hill and a gorgeous view of a frozen Lake Þingvellir opened up before us. Yes, frozen!

Quentin quickly reassured us that Silfra, where we were going snorkel-

ling, would not be frozen. Although that didn't mean the water would be warm—it just meant the water didn't remain still enough to freeze. In fact, we were going snorkelling in glacial runoff from Langjökull glacier, which bubbles and tumbles its way underground for 50 km before filling into the Silfra crevice and emptying into Lake Þingvellir. Talk about purified water.

The water temperature hovers around 2 to 4C year round, which makes it a great diving and snorkelling destination, Quentin told us. How does this make it a great snorkelling destination? Well, the cold temperature makes for extremely clear water, which provides high visibility for divers and snorkelers. It also should be noted that at Silfra, you're swimming over the Mid-Atlantic Ridge between the North American and Eurasian continental plates.

LIKE WATCHING A RHINO GIVE BIRTH TO ACE VENTURA

On to the most strenuous part of the trip: gearing up. Putting on our long underwear, thick socks, and the warm jumpsuit provided by Dive.is proved no problem. But, then came the dry suit, the hood, and the mittens. I'll just say that watching the others squeeze their heads and hands through the tight holes of the dry suit was like watching a rhino give birth to Ace Ventura, Pet Detective.

After yanking the hood over our heads and helping each other put on our mitts, we grabbed our goggles and fins and headed to the water. Fearing the suit would somehow fail to keep me dry, I cautiously lowered myself in as the water pushed against my suited self. The suit did its job. Lo and behold: before me appeared a dreamy blue waterscape enclosed by jagged walls of crumbling rocks.

I said the hard work was over before we got into the water. And it was. The glacial current simply carries you along, leaving you only to stare in awe at the deep majestic blue water encased

by North America on your right and Europe on your left. And when I spotted a narrow spot between the rocky steeps, I stretched my fingers to Eurasia and my fins to North America, barely reaching. It's a good thing I didn't wait another year or two before deciding that I wanted to simultaneously be on two continents, because the plates drift apart 1-2 cm every year.

FROZEN SUITS

At some point along the way I started wondering how long we were going to be in the water. It's not that it wasn't incredible, breathtaking, and awesome. It's just that it started to get pretty cold while floating motionlessly on the surface. Luckily, just as my thoughts were being overtaken by the cold, Quentin popped up out of the now choppy water and said this was the last stretch before a warm cup of coffee.

We climbed up on to the icy moss covered lava rocks and took our fins off. On the short walk back to the van, the water on our suits and mitts froze. Yes, it was cold. But, when we got back into the car, my brain started working again. I thought about what we had just done. We had snorkelled in Iceland on a frosty April morning. We had snorkelled in long underwear and thick socks and, most remarkable of all, we had snorkelled between two continents above some of the youngest rocks on Earth.

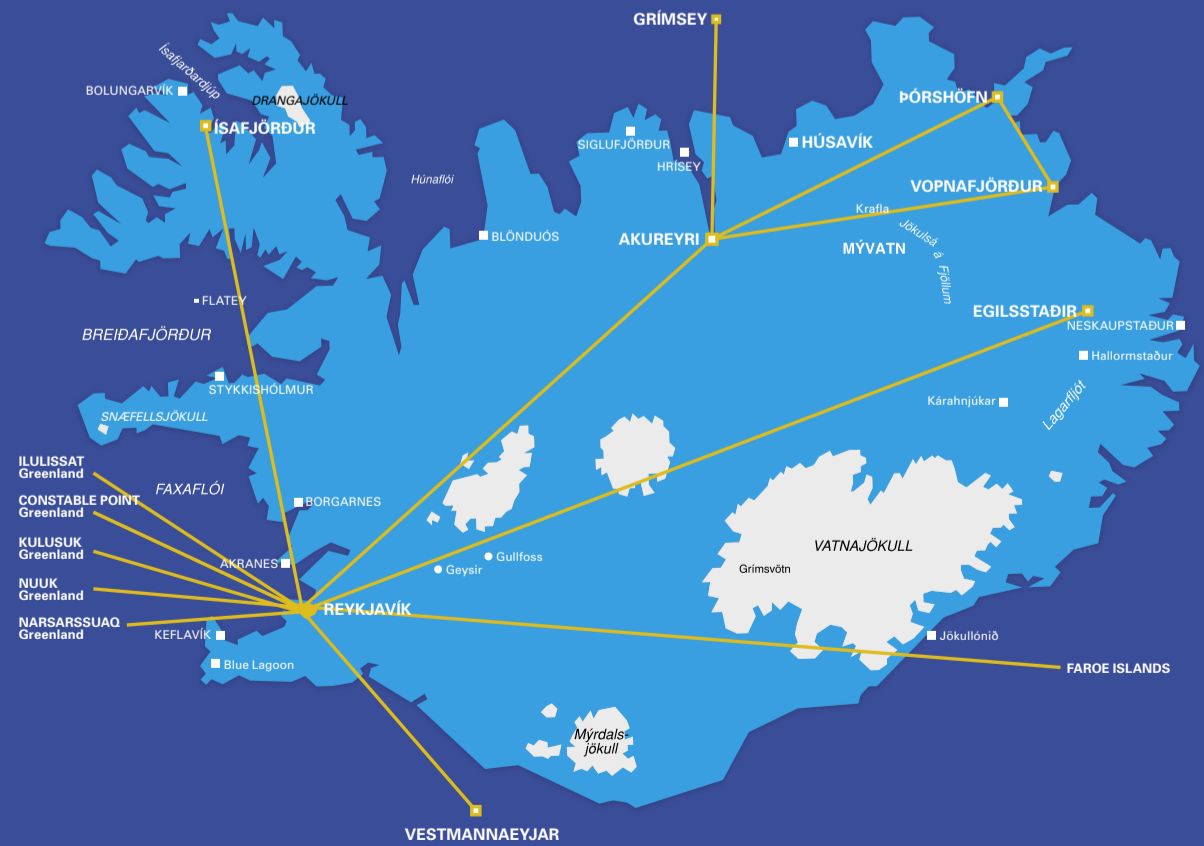
This was one Spring Break snorkelling trip to remember. And I am willing to wager that a number of Spring Breakers who went to Cabo or Cancun don't have any memories of theirs! ☺

✍ ANNA ANDERSEN
📷 TOBIAS KLOSE – DIVE.IS



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The Iceland Of My Heart

Country as metaphor

Lately, we hear a lot about Dubai being the Iceland of the desert or Greece being this year's Iceland. Iceland, however, is more than just a metaphor for economic stupidity. Songwriters have long used Iceland to illustrate a variety of emotions and events. None of them good.



THE SINKING OF THE REUBEN JAMES

Performer: Woody Guthrie
Year: 1942

Iceland reference:

"One hundred men went down to their dark and watery graves,
When that good ship went down only forty-four were saved.
T'was the last of October, they save the forty-four,
From the dark, icy waters of that cold Iceland shore."

Metaphor: While both geographically and historically accurate in the case of the first US ship lost during WWII, there's something particularly tragic about being drowned off the coast of Iceland. Some versions say "cold, icy shore," but Iceland sounds more to the point. The shores are as cold as the sea. And so, no doubt, are the people.



MY HEART STOOD STILL

Performer: Frank Sinatra
Year: 1963

Iceland reference:

"I laughed at sweethearts I met at schools
All indiscreet hearts seemed romantic fools
A house in Iceland was my domain
I saw your eyes, now castles rise in Spain"

Metaphor: Pretty obvious here. Iceland is cynicism and loneliness, but thankfully it is just a state of mind. It only takes love to remove you to Spain where all is bliss. All you have to do is believe, and there will be no more Reykjavik. Originally composed for the 1927 musical "A Connecticut Yankee," where the hero dreams himself to King Arthur's Court. Yes, everything is possible.



WAR NURSE

Performer: Bruce Springsteen
Year: 1972

Iceland reference:

"She was the reincarnation of the virgin Mary

She was the hooker down in San Antonio
And although her heart was somewhere in Iceland
Commanding the dawn patrol
Blessed in this blood and stitched in these bones
The war nurse left us all"

Metaphor: A song from a bootleg of unreleased material, which includes lines that will later appear on his debut. Bruce here mixes the two "Iceland metaphors," the cruelty of war and the lack of love. It is, however, unclear whether the titular character's Icelandic heart is better represented by the Virgin Mary or the San Antonio hooker. The dawn patrol is still active in Iceland and can be seen late on Saturday evenings/early Sunday mornings throughout the country.



MARELD

Performer: Lars Winnerbäck
Year: 2004

Iceland reference:

"Ner faller löven
och bladen blir mull
Jag kanske åker till Island
Jag kanske super mig full
Jag är för fattig för London
Jag är för tyst för LA
Det finns en anda i Dublin
men den är skadlig för mig"

Metaphor: The singer proclaims his intention to leave his native Sweden before the end of summer. He is too broke for London, too silent for LA. There is spirit in Dublin, but one not very good for you. He might go to Iceland to get drunk. Well, at least it's good for something. Skál.



YELLOW SUBMARINE

Performer: The Beatles
Year: 1966

Iceland reference:

"Hljómsveitin er íslensk"
Metaphor: It is a little known fact that parts of the Magical Mystery Tour movie were shot in Iceland. It is even less noticed that somewhere around 1.45 of Yellow Submarine, you can quite distinctly hear someone say: "The band is Icelandic." And in Icelandic at that. Could it be that the Beatles, like James Bond, are actually Icelandic? Or did they merely reuse old "Thor's Hammer" tapes and forget to delete them first. What can it all mean? Iceland on the brain, or something that got in there?



I'M ON AN ISLAND

Performer: The Kinks
Year: 1965

Iceland reference:

"I'm on an island and I've got nowhere to swim
Oh what a mood I am in
I'm on an island
I'm on an island since my girl left me behind
She said that I'm not her kind
I'm on an island"

Metaphor: The Kinks played eight successive concerts in Austurbæjarbíó in September 1965. A couple of months later, Kinks Kontroversy came out, featuring this song supposedly written in Reykjavik. The metaphor here is similar to the one employed by Frank Sinatra, "The Island" (Iceland) as loneliness. In the next verse, the island becomes tolerable, if only the girl were there with him: "But there is nowhere else on Earth I'd rather be if my long lost little girl was here with me."



IMMIGRANT SONG

Performer: Led Zeppelin
Year: 1970

Iceland reference:

"A-ah-ahh-ah, ah-ah-ahh-ah,
We come from the land of the ice and snow
from the midnight sun where the hot springs blow.
The hammer of the gods will drive our ships to new lands
To fight the horde and sing and cry, Valhalla, I am coming"

Metaphor: The usual. Iceland as exotic paradise much beloved of shouting longhaired men with bare chests. The first two lines sound as if lifted from a tourist brochure, until Viking imagery takes over. The last two lines are quite apt today: "So now you better stop and rebuild all your ruins / For peace and trust can win the day despite of all you're losing." ☘

✉ VALUR GUNNARSSON

Opinion | Graffiti



High and Low

If the purpose of art is to inspire, where is all that inspiration to be found in Reykjavik? Certainly not in its art galleries. Wandering around the streets of the city, it struck me that the best works of art in the city live on its streets.

Reykjavik is a city that keeps its secrets. All the best things about it are hidden away off the beaten path. The best food here is not in the fine restaurants, it is in the carts and little shacks. The best book deals are in the flea market and small bookstores, not in the obvious bookshops. And so it is with all the best pieces of art in Reykjavik too. You have to pry those secrets out or blunder into them blindly. The way I found myself suddenly staring at Einar Jónsson's mind-altering sculpture "Outlaws", in a forgotten corner off a busy highway with not a sign to mark it as one of this island's greatest works of art. I guess that's Reykjavik for you. First exhibited in 1901, "Outlaws" marked Einar's radical departure from notions of sculpture at the time, to blaze his own independent path. Today though, modern art in Reykjavik seems not to be blazing very much at all.

One might imagine that a land this grand would inspire equally grand works of art. Instead, grey soulless concrete monstrosities erupt out of the ground and tepid paintings line the walls of the galleries. Intellectually profound they may be, high culture even, but they are no fun at all. Indeed, the most enjoyable paintings in the National Gallery are the ones in the kids' workshop in the basement. In this land of weird midnight colours and vibrant volcanic hues, are dozens of canvases covered with inane lettered scrawls really the best you can do? Really, Reykjavik? Where is all that colour, where is all that life?

Remember, I said this city has secrets. Well, if you keep an open mind and follow your feet, it turns out you blunder right into it. Again and again. Everywhere. It is all over that abandoned plot off Skólavörðustígur, it is half a street away as you stroll down Laugavegur, it's splattered on forgotten walls by the seafront, it is on the walls of official buildings by

Laufásvegur. Like strange wild flowers, it sprouts where you least expect it and it can just as tenaciously return if you scrape it off. Evil clowns in pink and green, silly grey cats with attitudes, sprinting skeletons, deviant fish, they are all out there and more. All you have to do is stop and look. A menagerie exploding in Technicolor somewhere near you.

Wait a second, you might say, this is just graffiti isn't it? The work of nameless vandals who deface buildings with their meaningless caricatures. How can something like this be profound, or even in any way interesting? Well, think about that question when you stumble across the thought-provoking phrase "If..." painted on a humble hydrant. Or when you see Jacques Cousteau in a diving helmet waving a flag under water on the side of the French embassy. The most enjoyable, hilarious and intelligent paintings in Reykjavik I've seen have been on the walls of buildings.

Maybe all of this just says something about my mental (im)maturity. Or maybe I just have a soft corner for people who are unseen, unheard, yet manage to brighten up drab corners of the world without expecting recognition and cocktail receptions for their art. Whatever it is, I'll take that witty cartoon instead of a pretentious painting any day. Freedom, after all, is the ability to say "to hell with that". And nothing quite says "to hell with the high brow" better than a simple scrawl on an abandoned wall. ☘

Arnar Vuða is not an art critic. He wouldn't know a masterpiece if it walked up to him and hit him on the head, shouting, "I'm a masterpiece". Any artists who feel their work has been slighted should know that he intends to leave the country as soon as he finishes that hotdog.

✉ ARNAR VUÐA
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Wanna get hurt?

Find these guys on Facebook under "Rugby félag Íslands (Icelandic Rugby Team)" or email James at icelandrugby@gmail.com. Training takes place at Sporthúsið, which is located at Dalsmári 9-11, in Kópavogur, every Wednesday at 19:45.



Raiders With Oval Balls!

Rugby arrives in Iceland with a thud

"Keep moving! Use the ball with both hands. Don't throw it away like that. NEXT GROUP UP NOW!!"

A large man with an impressive beard is giving out instructions, but I'm not hearing very well. Perhaps it's due to the fact that my lungs are on fire and parts of my body that even my mother didn't know existed are being strained and exercised to their limits.

The venue is the Sporthúsið complex in Kópavogur and the occasion is a training session with the newly formed Reykjavík Raiders Rugby Football Club. Myself and 25 other players are being put through our paces with a succession of drills and games. There are also several Icelanders attending their first ever session, this being the first time they've ever touched an oval ball. And they seem to be really enjoying it as well.

Despite being played in 115 countries over the world, rugby seems to have hit a blind spot in Iceland, the preferred team sports being handball and football. But this is a situation the Reykjavík Raiders are hoping to change.

When I eventually recovered my breath, I managed to pose a couple of



questions to one of the club's founders, James Broad.

Tell us about the origins of the Reykjavík Raiders. How did it all begin?

I moved to Reykjavík in 2009 and as I have been addicted to rugby since I was nine years old, I was determined to carry on playing here. I found a Facebook group called Rugbyfélag Íslands, started by Stefán Smári Kristinnsson, an Icelander who had come to love the game after time he had spent in Italy and Scotland. He called a meeting with a few others who felt the same way as us, we had a few beers, swapped life stories and the first training session was arranged...

What is your current setup? What are you offering people who turn up to train?

We play every Wednesday evening at Sporthúsið, who have been very enthusiastic supporters of our mission. The training group has gone from a team of nine at our first meeting, to between 20 and 30 guys each week.

We offer anybody keen to try the sport the opportunity to join us and get involved in setting up something that has never happened in Iceland before. You will get coaching, advice and extremely friendly and enthusiastic support from a group of guys amongst who are rugby players who have many years of experience playing professionally and semi-professionally abroad, in international leagues and tournaments.

What do you envision the future holds for RR RFC? Could an Icelandic national team be far off, even?

Each week, more people are finding

out about us, more are coming along to play and more word is spreading, both locally and internationally that rugby is being played in Iceland. RR RFC is just the start. We envision that we would be one part of a Reykjavík Rugby league in the future, which could eventually become a nationwide Icelandic League.

I would love to see a National Team in the not too distant future. It is disappointing to tell you that Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark all play, and play each other regularly as part of a Nordic Cup. But what better motivation for us? I have every reason to believe that Iceland could be a very strong rugby-playing nation. The potential shown by the Icelanders at our sessions has been extremely encouraging.

OK, I'm an Icelander who has never heard of this sport of Rugby. Sell it to me, why I would be interested in playing this sport? Or my kids playing it, for that matter?

I think the game of rugby matches the Viking spirit perfectly. It's a very physical contact sport played on the grass for a thoroughly exhausting and incredibly rewarding 80 minutes. It has the hand skills and physicality of handball, only times ten! If you play handball, if you like the physical nature of that game, the hand-skills and the speed, then you will love rugby.

And we play rugby to the safest levels possible. Kids are not thrown into full physical contact until they are developed enough to use it or take it. There is also a non-contact version that we play called touch rugby, which is played from a young age and utilises all the skills, fitness and tactics of rugby, without the hard tackling. 🇮🇸

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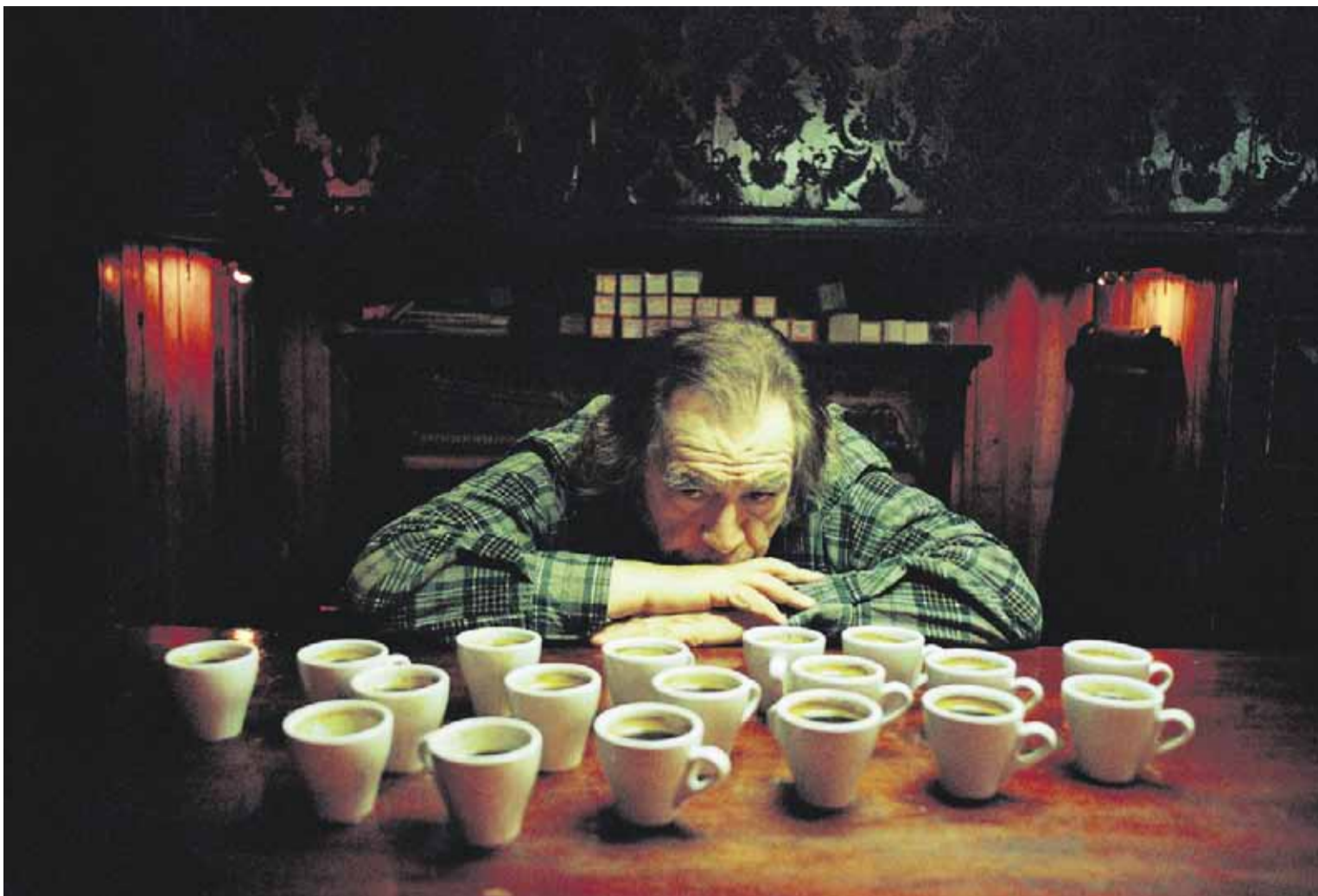
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Different Hearts

Dagur Kári's *The Good Heart* examined



The Good Heart is Dagur Kári's third feature film after *Dark Horse* (Voksne Mennesker, 2005) and *Noi The Albino* (Nói Albínói, 2003). In his films, the story usually revolves around a few main characters, their way of connecting to other people and finding people who understand them. A good example is *Noi*, where a very particular boy in a small fishing village creates a world of his own as a reaction to how a few people understand him or give him a chance to be himself.

Dagur Kári developed this theme further in *Dark Horse*, which was made with Danish actors and shot in Danish. Now with his new film, an English-language one featuring actors who have made a career in the US, he takes a new approach to this theme.

The two main characters are men who each in their own way have come to an existential end station. They are

as different as could be: Lucas, the young homeless boy, and Jacques, the old bad tempered bar owner. They meet at the hospital after Lucas tries to commit suicide and Jacques is recovering from his fifth heart attack. After Lucas leaves the hospital, Jacques seeks him out and takes him under his wing. He then starts to teach him how to run his bar with his philosophy of life.

One might say that the bar becomes the two main characters' entire existence, and those that enter the bar are the few people who enter their lives. Jacques only allows customers he knows and trusts into the bar. His heart has been hurt and the bar is a place where he can take total control of his environment and where he feels safe. The biggest threat to him is when the girl April enters the bar. Lucas, being kind and good hearted, can't deny her when she asks for help and has no other

place to go.

That is a good example of the main characters' huge contrast. Lucas is young and early on his path in life and wants to help others. Jacques is old and close to the end of his path and avoids helping others and trusts no one. This is underlined when Jacques says to Lucas that he is not here to save people, but to destroy them. One could also say that, in a way, that is how the world works.

In *The Good Heart*, the characters' world takes place in small spaces, a confined universe. This gives them a feeling of comfort and security, like with *Nói* in his cellar, which also keeps him safe in the tragic events at the end of the film. Although Dagur Kári's three films have similarities they are quite different from each other and therefore cannot be considered as a trilogy but more of a process and development of a young and interesting film di-

rector. *The Good Heart* is definitely recommended for those who want to experience the fruits of the constantly growing Icelandic film scene. 🍷

EYJÓLFUR EYVINDARSON

Poetry | Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl

Canon Fodder

I regularly read poetry to Aram, my infant son. He doesn't "get it," of course—no matter how I try to explain that he's really not supposed to understand it but rather "sense it." But he seems to like the rhythms of it anyways (and/or his father's theatrical performance), so I keep at it. I mostly read from this famous little blue book called *Skólaljóð* (School Poetry), which contains all the national classics from Hallgrímur Pétursson to Steinn Steinarr—the Icelandic poetry canon as it was compiled in the middle of the last century. And as I find myself skipping more or less every poem that deals with God, Christ or Country (about two thirds of the book), in an attempt not to inadvertently indoctrinate my boy as a Christian nationalist, I become strangely aware of how Icelanders have really never taken the trouble to properly reevaluate their canon. There are a couple of newer books, where some oldies have been skipped, and a few newbies have been granted access—but mostly it's the same ol' same ol'. The same sombre tones, the same sombre attitudes (and when I say newbies, I mean mostly very old newbies, most of whom are dead already).

Some things are probably too sacrosanct. It'd be hard, for instance, to rouse support for changing the national anthem to something more up-to-date (I'd vote for Haukur Már Helgason's *Matarsíðir Sýslumannsins í Kópavogi* (The Dining Habits of the

District Magistrate in Kópavogur) or Kristín Svava Tómasdóttir's *Klof vega menn* (Crotches Kill Men)). So we might have to keep Matthías Jochumsson's Song of Praise—"Oh, God of our Country, Country of our God"—despite the fact that I wouldn't read the horrendous thing to my son if it'd spawn peace on earth (well, okay, maybe then, but I want it in writing!).

But how about Bjarni Thorarensen? Hannes Hafstein? Do we really need this? How about just cutting the nationalism and the godliness in its entirety? I, for one, believe in the power of poetry, the power of words, of language—and I don't think this drivell is doing us any good, nor has it ever. It rots your mind.

If one were to actually reduce *Skólaljóð* in this manner, what you'd be left with is nature and a few verses of Steinarr's "The Time and the Water". Now, nature is fine and all (and knocking Steinarr is a veritable crime), but nature and more nature might eventually get a little monotonous, believe it or not. So how about instead of us just picking out what isn't popular anymore and inserting a few innocent examples from newer poets (which seems to have been the method of composition for anthologies thus far), we enter the archives and start picking out new interesting examples from the history of Icelandic poetry? Why, for instance, is there so little of Æri-Tobbi to be found? He's hardly even mentioned in the five volume *Bókmenntasaga Íslands* (Iceland's Literary History). This is a

serious canonical mistake—"agara gagara" etcetera!

In this process we might also see about finding some more female poets. Reading anthologies one might think that women hardly ever wrote poetry back in the days—but to the contrary, poetry was very much a feminine sport and indeed most poets were women. Granted, not all of it got written down, and collecting the poetry of Icelandic women throughout the centuries is hardly unproblematic. But it is, truly and utterly, a cultural heritage (mostly) ignored (while we spend years debating whether or not sacrosanct male poet Jónas Hallgrímsson had syphilis, and whether saying so aloud is decent or not). And if there's anything that gives Icelandic authorities a hardon, it's the words "cultural heritage" (attention, scholars: free grant money!)

A cultural heritage is not an impermeable fact and it has never been. What we consider important to our "national image" (a dubious and difficult concept in and of itself), or to ourselves privately—what we make available so that I can read it to Aram—isn't etched in stone. It's written on paper and it can and should be reevaluated every other year or so. A cultural heritage is a construction like any other, we define it—it is not an otherworldly, uncontrollable entity which controls us—we control it. And so we should if, at all, we give a damn. 🍷

News | Marc Vincenz

Kreppa in the International Eye: March

Strip clubs, spies, crazy money, and other eruptions

Last month the London Times contemplated volcanic fallout in 2010 due to the inevitable eruption of Katla; Alþingi agreed to rent out Keflavík's former NATO base to a privately-owned military company (strangely, this news received little attention in the international media); and President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson suggested flogging Iceland's NATO marine facilities as a way station (for when the polar ice cap has melted through). Newsweek recently confirmed China's interest in taking over the abandoned NATO naval base (which perhaps explains why Iceland was not invited to the recent Arctic countries meeting in Canada?).

What else is up for grabs? Well, certainly no strip clubs—that business model is now firmly a thing of the past.

On March 25, the Guardian hailed Iceland as the world's most feminist country. As of July 1, it is illegal for any business to profit from the nudity of employees. This makes Iceland the first country in the world to ban stripping for "feminist reasons". Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir, former Minister for the Environment, was quoted as saying: "I guess the men of Iceland will just have to get used to the idea that women are not for sale."

On March 31, following the lead of Fitch Ratings, Standard & Poor's (S&P) lowered Iceland's credit rating to BBB-/A-3, which for all intents and purposes is pretty much a junk rating. S&P stated to Businessweek that "potentially prolonged application of foreign exchange controls will restrict Iceland's monetary and fiscal flexibility and investment prospects." Meaning that Iceland will have to do some serious mind-bending in order to generate any possible foreign currency earnings.

Nothing new on that front, but let's have another look at the numbers as laid out by Bloomsberg:

Iceland has to finance a 230 billion ISK deficit in 2010. It is expected that 190 billion will be generated domestically by selling government debt. Another 40 billion will be come out of the central bank's deposits. A 1 billion-euro (\$1.3 billion) bond matures, and should be paid up by December 2011.

So, have the powers that be tightened their belts and donned their thinking caps? Well, you be the judge.

Even if stripping is now illegal, it appears Alþingi seems to think it is above the law as far as the sale of whale meat is concerned. On March 18, The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) stated that Iceland is illegally selling whale meat to EU countries, including Denmark and Latvia. Talking about spurious activities, the Guardian, the Washington Times and Salon Magazine all commented on Wikileaks' newest: namely the leak of US diplomatic documents including the profiles of Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir and Össur Skarphéðinsson. Jóhanna immediately called for a visit from Sam Watson, US charge d'affaires, presumably to give him a right old spanking.

Wikileaks also claim they have been the victim of harassment by the Pentagon and their friends in Iceland. Wikileaks' editor Julian Assange suggested that he was being followed by the CIA from Iceland to a recent conference in Sweden. At the same time he pointed out that the local police was holding one of his Icelandic volunteers in custody. Surely he's not intimating that the Icelandic police are colluding with the CIA? "We have discovered half a dozen attempts at covert surveillance in Reykjavik both by native English speakers and Icelanders. On the occasions where these individuals were approached, they ran away," noted Assange.

Oh, what a tangled web we weave. Bet you can't wait for the next round of Icesave negotiations. 🍷

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PAGE 12:

But the good news for you is that even if you're growing up in a place where everyone is gay, it's still fucking lonely and weird. Which I think is good.

Nico Muhly bares all at The Leather Bar...

PAGE 12:

It is so strong in everybody, everybody loves their instinct and follows it, but they get caught up in society, slowly you get caught up in this stampede of information and bullshit. You get caught up and your true self gets lost.

...as does Jónsi.

PAGE 22:

The festival boasted just as much bad music as good, but that's somewhat beside the point: the event's the thing. Parents wheel out well-bundled infants in strollers, dads hoist excitable four year-olds up on their shoulders, grandparents mill around by the hot dog stand.

Ildrei fór ég suður continues to dazzle

PAGE 6:

Being taken seriously as a stripper is an uphill battle all over the world, and certainly in some cultures more than in others. It is perhaps not surprising that Iceland's strippers don't have a formal union or spokesperson, considering the increased stigma and risks that sex workers, who are also undocumented immigrants, face in coming out and publicly standing up for their rights.

Is the case of feminism, gender politics, pornography and human trafficking perhaps more complicated than some people like to think?

PAGE 8:

In the weeks after the first fissure ripping open, the eruption has remained pretty small, but extremely exciting.

Grapevine's volcanologist student friend James Ashworth gets excited. Like the rest of us.



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