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ISSUE 13
FRI 02SEP - THU 06OCT 2005
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Last Days of Local

SIGUR RÓS PREPARES FOR SUPERSTARDOM

Honey, I Sold Your DNA

In the land of deCODE, The Island hits close to home

Sonic Youth Refuse to Grow Up

The Murder of **Ashley Turner**

Looking for Answers at the Keflavík NATO Base

the REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE
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Send your submissions to : editor@grapevine.is

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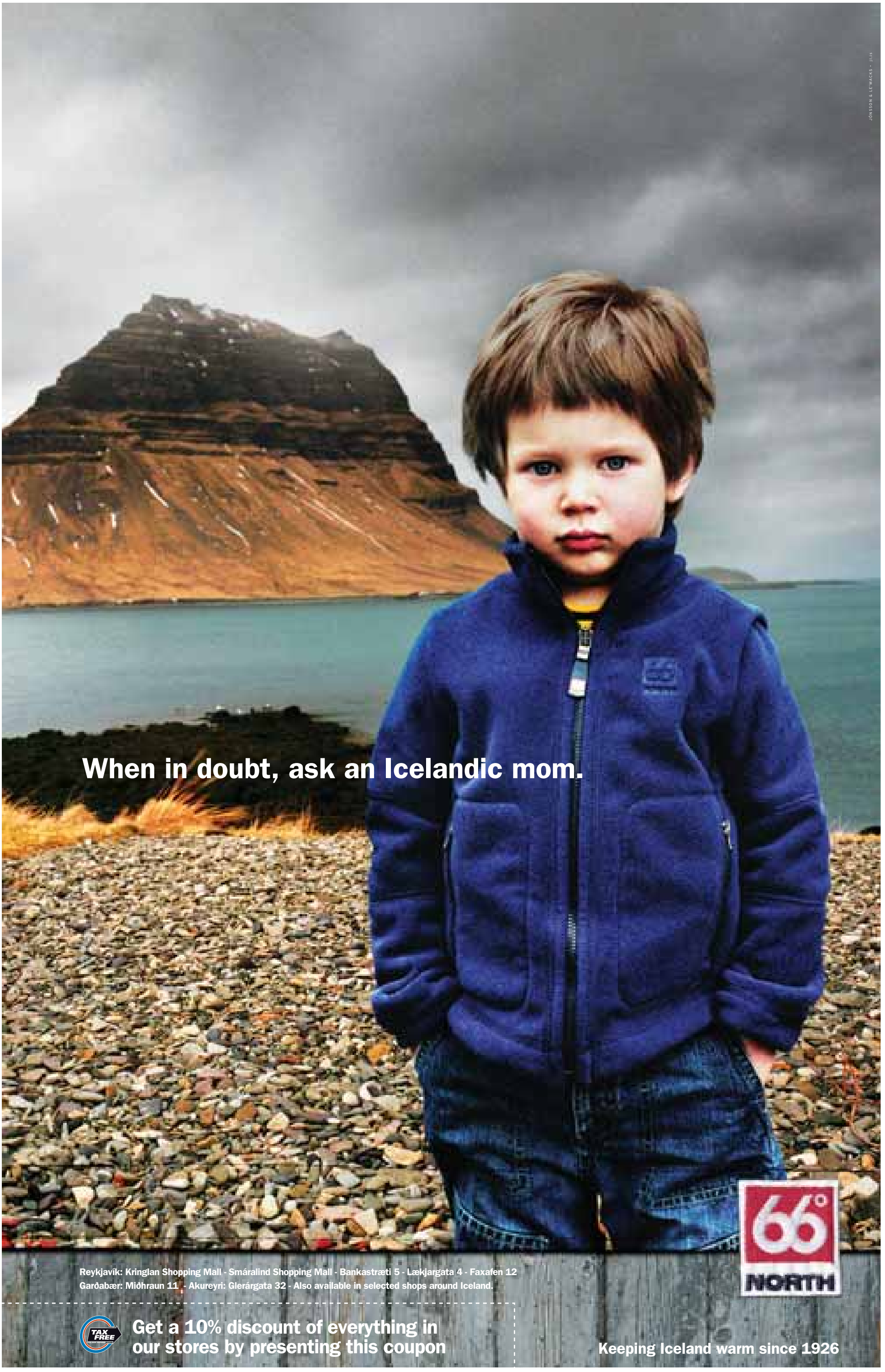
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LETTERS

Complaints, criticism, suggestions, praise, money, anything at all: Contact letters@grapevine.is or send your mail to: The Reykjavík Grapevine, Hafnarstræti 15, 101 Reykjavík.

Dear Editor

Great idea to have a memorial service for the Hiroshima anniversary. Maybe not such a great idea to use the American aluminium and oil industries to do it? Ok, paraffin wax candles in foil trays on the lake look pretty. But whilst remembering Hiroshima, let's spare a thought for our roles in other humanitarian and ecological conflicts too, Kharanjukar, Iraq or wherever. A joining of hands around the lake might do the same thing?
yours,
a visitor.

Yes, there is more to be done. But hats off to the organizers of the Hiroshima observation. It was beautiful and tactful. Speaking of tact… well, for starters, it's spelled Kárahnjúkar.

Hi
Saw in the latest issue of Grapevine that you list Icelandic courses and I thought I'd bring to your attention a free online course in Icelandic:
http://www.icelandic.hi.is/
thnx for a great mag
gunnar

Thank you.

We were on our way back to Keflavík airport on Saturday 13th August, when we found ourselves just ahead of what looked like a fairly large motorbike convoy, complete with flags. The police stopped traffic to let them all through as we were leaving Reykjavík. We've been trying to find out what was going on, but with no luck and we're REALLY curious! Do you have any information? We'd love to hear.
Jackie and Colin Rowell

Could be Alice Cooper fans. Could be hidden people. Could be a spot of underdone potato.

Hail Brother Bart and Squire Paul

The reason I am writing to you is out my untold love for the Grapevine newspaper. The witty comments and articles I read every few weeks make me fall off my seat laughing especially those replies to letters, I felt for the Italian guy at the "unnamed" bank. People surely criticise you just to release the best material you guys have in the responses to them?

I thought that surely I would never find myself trying to throw a verbal wrench into your editorial and yet I now find myself doing this very thing and akin to Homer J Simpson realising that all the "doughnuts" have run out. I was mortified…

My qualm, so to say, is through your actions rather than your words. The current Grapevine "bad taste" tour is most excellent and welcomed by myself and many others, especially the Bart Dylan recital, most recently. I personally can't help but feel this coverage and limelight could have been used in a more productive manner, not only to promote more unknown Icelandic bands but of the general multi-cultural aspects of Iceland and the ideals that Grapevine, allegedly, represents.

The other day I was walking through downtown and right outside the Grapevine offices I found myself watching a four man indigenous North-American ho-down, so to say. The guys were wearing full traditional Sioux or Apache costume and dancing, to what I believe was some sort of shamanic celebration. It was truly amazing and I would have much preferred to have seen this amazing, soulful, historically and enlightening piece, rather than the drab, grey and to quote recent Grapevine reviews, "screaming" bands, from the escalator of Icelandic indie/ metal mediocrity. Grapevine it is a crying shame that you cannot have used your media platform and this opportunity you had here to show the amazing music, talent and diversity that the different cultures present in this land and you didn't...

All I can say that you can go somewhere to repairing this drift between us through a) a witty comment in response to this, b) finding those said Sioux tribesmen and use them to replace the wailing crap which seems to be headlining this month's tour and finally C) Using the correct "International English language" for your "International English language paper", therefore not Americanised English. I am expecting no more Colors from now on but Colours and it is doughnut, a nut of dough, not a Homer J "Doh" nut and so and so forth...

Lots of love
Mervyn J. Puffin (Connoisseur of all things doughnut and not the manager of afore mentioned Sioux tribesmen)

Hello Mervyn,
We use American rules of punctuation and British spelling. Donut is actually correct in the King's English. Sioux is rarely used anymore, as most members of the Lakota tribes prefer not to use a name passed on to them to by Frenchmen. Icelandic music is the best music in the world. Our reviewer was mistaken.

But, to pick a scab, actually the GRAPEVINE BAD TASTE CONCERT SERIES had nothing to do with Bart Cameron or Paul Nikolov.

And what do you mean no diversity? The series had Nortón. Nortón! That is diverse. And they even played twice. You only get that kind of diversity when the organizer is in the actual band Nortón.

RE: I'd Like to Link to Your Cat Sitting Page

Hi there,

I'm writing because I'd really like to link to your site from mine. I have a site dedicated to locating cat sitters all over the United States. The URL is: http://www.catsitting.net/

Each page has a "Related Sites" section where related links go. Your link will go in that section.
You can add your link to all 16,000+ pages of the site by filling out the form located here: http://www.catsitting.net/index.php?addlink=true&url=www.grapevine.is&id=29449
PLEASE do not share that URL with anybody, since I am very particular
about which sites get added to my related sites section and I don't want that form to get abused by link spammers.

I appreciate the hard work you're doing on your site!
Keep it up!

Thanks,
Jon

Actually, we do offer a cat sitting service, though we've never written about it, Jon, you nasty little spammer. Can we recommend you visit Reykjanes, here in Iceland, where they will take your cat and promptly euthanize it—they seem to do a humane job. And they've got a lot of practice; as of August 30th, they'd killed hundreds of cats in a special program to fight overpopulation. Otherwise, I guess you can mail your little songbird-killing mutant feline to us and we'll gladly sit on it until it stops squeaking.

Ahem… I may need some sleep. All you cat-loving, lonely people, please email letters@grapevine.is between Sept 1 and Sept 14, when I'm on vacation. The interns or Paul will apologize for me.

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EDITORIALS

Bart Cameron, Editor

Takk

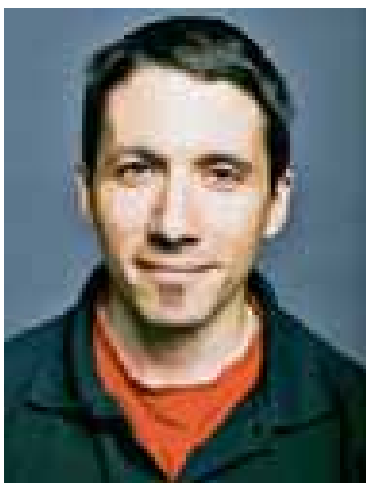
This is the final issue of the summer of 2005, the last of eight bi-weekly issues of the Grapevine, which have seen our content increase two-fold, our writing staff increase by four times, and our revenue increase close to 120%. Closing out this successful summer feels something like a graduation—in October The Grapevine moves to its larger office. A number of other large-scale changes will come through in the next few months that should come as a series of very pleasant surprises to our readers.

I would like to look back on a successful summer, but I instead have my gaze stuck on this September issue, the best publication I have ever had any involvement with. Paul Nikolov's feature on the murder of Ashley Christine Turner at the Keflavík NATO base is an exceptional piece of journalism, due largely to the cooperation and interest of the Turner family. They put a great deal of trust in us to cover their story with compassion, and I believe Paul has done this.

Beyond Paul's feature, there are five or six articles in this magazine that I would call typical feature material, among them an excellent piece by Þórdis Elva Þorvaldsdóttir Bachmann displaying the dangerously offhanded manner with which the local health authorities are treating the recent boom in eating disorders in this country of fashion models and fast food, and a compelling evaluation by Valur Antonsson of the ethics relating to the sale of the nation's health records to deCODE. (Spurred, of course, by a Scarlett Johansson sci-fi film.) I also believe that fans of contemporary music will not be disappointed with the insightful comments that the members of Sigur Rós had about their work and their career.

What is remarkable to me about this issue is the amount of help we got from the community of our readers. Sigur Rós are among our readers, as they pointed out extensively in the parts of the interview I was forced to cut when, on reading the quotes, I was unable to get my head through the doorway. But their favour in granting us such a lengthy and candid interview, and in granting us an additional photo shoot, was greatly appreciated. We got similar consideration from everyone from the mayor of Reykjavík to the Reykjavík Dance Festival, to the people of Spegillinn, who gave so much of their time to Ms. Bachmann.

The actions of these readers suggest what has allowed The Grapevine, a small tourist magazine put out by wise-cracking music fans, to succeed as an alternative voice for the entire country. The fact is that Iceland seems to care about ensuring diversity. The majority of the people I've met since I took over this magazine want to make sure those new to the country, be they tourists, immigrants or temporary workers, have access to information and take part in the community. As of now, it feels like we are providing a forum for this. And, as of this issue, it seems to me the people to thank are the Icelandic readers who have reached out to us.



Paul F Nikolov
Journalist & Online Editor

Rights, Justice and Freedom?

By the middle of September, a convicted sex offender will arrive in Iceland. In 1997, Aron Pálmi Ágústsson, who molested a young boy in Texas when he was 13 years old, was arrested, charged, convicted of sexual abuse and sentenced to ten years in prison. Since then, coverage of the case has been decidedly one-sided in Iceland. A great deal of voice was given to Ágústsson, who contended that he was "just playing doctor" with the young boy, and he's had a considerable number of supporters, including the Church of Iceland who, on their website (www.kirkjan.is), called the drive to free Ágústsson "a human rights battle." Yet the strongest group clamouring to free Ágústsson is an organization calling itself the RJF Group.

This is RJF Group's second project; their first was to free former world chess champion and raving anti-Semite Bobby Fischer from a Japanese prison and bring him to Iceland. In fact, while the group contends that "RJF" stands for "Rights, Justice and Freedom," this also happens to be the initials of Robert James Fischer, another person of questionable character that a small but loud minority was able to bring into this country, to the embarrassment of everyone else.

For the record, Ágústsson is not exactly sitting in prison at the moment; he's under house arrest.

He goes to high school, gets out to exercise regularly, spends time on the Internet, and has said himself that he's made a lot of friends in Texas. And while Texas is not exactly world famous for being a bastion of fair and balanced justice, trust me – being under house arrest for child molestation in Texas, USA is getting off pretty light. All the same, RJF Group and others have managed to convince Texas governor Rick Perry to have Ágústsson extradited to Iceland to finish his sentence here.

In all the shouting and chest beating, the voice of Ágústsson's victim has been all but absent from the discussion here. "Just playing doctor" is probably one of the more common defences that child molesters give for their acts. In addition, I wonder if the church, RJF, or any of Ágústsson's other supporters have considered the human rights of the victim in this case. Apparently not. I sincerely hope Ágústsson himself never finds himself in the position of having to listen to a group of supporters defend the "human rights" of someone convicted of molesting his own child.

I guess the rights of victims, and their families, have been on my mind a lot lately after having the unfortunate task of investigating the case of US Air Force Airman First Class Ashley Christine Turner's murder for this issue's feature. What we uncovered about the Keflavík NATO base's chain of command's handling of this case has been very disturbing. My thoughts and my prayers go out to Turner's family, who contacted The Grapevine themselves and have relied primarily on us for news of the case's progress, which is tragic – that should be the job of the Keflavík chain of command. Here's hoping that changes are made at the base that prevent such a tragedy from ever happening again.

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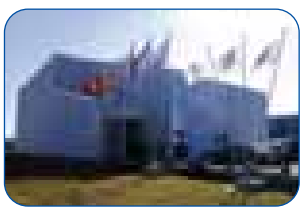

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Getting More Women in Politics

Interview with Mayor of Reykjavík, Steinunn Valdís Óskarsdóttir, and Dagbjört Hákonardóttir

The Social Democratic Party has newly formed a women's group within their own party, and have planned a meeting for 16 and 17 September that will define their objectives. Currently, the Social Democrats have the greatest percentage of women in parliament – 45% - well ahead of the parliamentary average (29.26%) and even further ahead of the ruling Independence Party (21.7%). By their own estimates, 60% of their voters are women. With an already strong base of support among women, The Grapevine wanted to know why they believe it's necessary to form an exclusive women's group within their ranks. To this end, we spoke with Mayor of Reykjavík Steinunn Valdís Óskarsdóttir as well as with columnist, writer and one of the younger members of the women's group, Dagbjört Hákonardóttir.

What led to the decision to form a women's group within the Social Democratic Party?

Óskarsdóttir: The idea is old. It runs back to when the Social Democrat alliance started. There were women in the alliance who started the discussion as to whether or not there should be a venue just for us. This discussion has been going on for years, and I think people are ready to do this.

Hákonardóttir: The original idea was to have an exclusive group just for women, and there was discussion as to whether or not to have the discussion open to men. But then it was decided that this group would certainly not be the only venue to discuss equal rights. Plus, there were older women who wanted to re-enter politics and political discussions.

Óskarsdóttir: We wanted to strengthen the dialogue as well between different groups within the party. Some of the women who had been in Alþýðaflokkurinn felt as if they were far away from the women for example in the Women's Alliance and vice versa.

Hákonardóttir: It's hard to get young people, especially young women, involved in politics, so this was a sort of motive to get young women to join in politics.

Óskarsdóttir: It's hard to say [why there were women who felt disconnected from the Women's Alliance]. It depends on who you talk to. The older women were brought up in a different culture. When I graduated from university I was in the Women's Alliance, but most of the women didn't define themselves as feminists.

It's important for our party to have this female front. Most of our voters – I'd say about 60% - are women. In parliament, nine out of our 20 MPs are women. One of the things I missed, when I joined the Social Democratic Party, was the culture of the Women's Alliance, the friendship and the sisterhood. The big meetings, the coming together, good discussions, and just enjoying being together.

Hákonardóttir: It's easy for men to bond with each other, even in the presence of women, but we need to have our own time in order to bond with each other. There are many men who certainly have an interest in gender equality issues, but we need to have our own group and as I said, this group isn't the only venue to discuss equal rights.

Óskarsdóttir: We're trying to learn from each other. There are some who have been involved in politics for many years, and they have a lot they can teach us.

What will the focus of this group be? What issues take top priority?

Hákonardóttir: There are voices outside the party that object to the formation of this group, such as many voices within the Independence Party. The Social Democratic Party is relatively young. We don't have this tradition of older women getting together and making pastries and coffee like the Independence Party does. Also, when the Progressive Party had to get rid of one minister, they chose [then Minister for the Environment] Siv Friðleifsdóttir.

She was replaced by a woman, though, Minister for the Environment Sigríður Anna Þórðardóttir.

Hákonardóttir: Yes, but from she's from the Independence Party. But I think the women in the Progressive Party really stood by Siv and supported her.

Yes, Ms. Friðleifsdóttir has been very strong on feminist issues. With women in other parties interested in the same feminist issues as you're interested in, is there a chance that this group will be seeking to form an inter-party alliance?

Hákonardóttir: I wouldn't say that, but they're certainly welcome to come and be observers.

Óskarsdóttir: The idea has been to form a base of support for women within the party, to support our chairman [Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir], our women MPs, our women in local government, to share our experiences and to learn from the older women in our group. This will be a venue to discuss equal rights and feminism.

Hákonardóttir: And with elections coming up [for City Council this spring], it's important to maintain that stability.

I've noticed myself that there are more women getting politically active in recent years. Why do you think that is?

Hákonardóttir: Primarily because of female role models, such as [Chairperson of the Social Democratic Party] Ingibjörg, Steinunn and the women in parliament. The more women who get involved, the more they encourage others to get involved as well.

Óskarsdóttir: This morning I had the pleasure of meeting Cherie Booth Blair, who was talking to cultural ministers from all over the world. I was impressed because she had such a strong vision for women. One of the many things she mentioned was that Rwanda has the highest percentage of women in parliament [48.8%] in the world. I think that Iceland is in 16th. To be at this meeting energized me, and gave me much inspiration.

Gúndi

Hákonardóttir: I'd like to add that 50 years ago, we couldn't imagine maternity leave being a possibility, and today we think of it as a given. It makes me think to myself, "What rights are we fighting for now that we'll see as a given fifty years from now?" In Iceland, it's the state of mind that needs to be addressed. I have some friends in the Independence Party who believe that it doesn't matter whether or not women get more involved in leadership positions, whether in government or in business. In the last Independence Party elections, they put younger, less experienced men in the first seats and older, more experienced women in the second seats or lower.

Óskarsdóttir: Which is maybe one reason not to vote for the Independence Party.

At this point Óskarsdóttir had to attend a meeting but the conversation with Hákonardóttir continued.

Why do you think women should get involved in this group?

Hákonardóttir: First and foremost, if you're not an extremist and you're not apathetic, then you'll certainly find a place among these broad-minded people. We're a true social democratic party following the Scandinavian model, we're positive towards contact with other European countries. We choose to work with everyone. We're a moderate party. The Social Democratic Party also has modest ways. The Independence Party has been rallying for car owners and wants to build single-family homes in the west – and they blame us for a not-so-smooth traffic! The Social Democratic Party has also been very adamant about developing the Vatnsmýri area [where the city airport is currently situated], which the Independence Party has been opposed to. I think our goals are clearer, we answer all questions easily and, instead of shifting responsibility like the Independence Party, we take responsibility. And that's what the voters want.

What does the group have planned next?

Hákonardóttir: The local elections. It's been a very exciting year, and I think it's going to be very exciting to see what happens.

All those interested in attending the meeting of women in the Social Democratic Party this 16 and 17 September can contact Árdís Sigurðardóttir at samfylking@samfylking.is or call 414-2200.

By Paul F Nikolov

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your Reflection of Iceland...

Photo Courtesy / Sirkus RVK

Guðmundur Steingrímsson Surpasses Gísli Marteinn...

as the single most annoying television personality in the world.

Icelandic talk show host Guðmundur Steingrímsson impressed all five of his viewers on Friday, August 25th, when he asked a question so asinine and tinged with bigotry that mayoral hopeful, and former asinine talk show host Gísli Marteinn, had to yield his throne as most annoying television personality in the world.

Steingrímsson's question, posed to composer and frontman for Bang Gang, Barði Jóhannsson about the soundtrack to Strákarnir Okkar, (Eleven Men Out): "The movie is about gay people and I was wondering whether a person needed to be gay to play a gay person." Jóhannsson then promptly stood up and left the set. "It was a natural follow-up to ask whether you wouldn't need to be gay to compose music for a gay movie" Guðmundur told reporters after the incident.

The profoundly offensive conduct by Steingrímsson has earned media coverage in sister company Fréttablaðið, for whom Steingrímsson also writes a mediocre weekly column.

Casual observers of local political scene have taken note: Gísli Marteinn prefaced his campaign for mayor of Reykjavík with a slew of racial stereotypes during a nationally televised broadcast of Eurovision. Steingrímsson, who is the son of former Prime Minister Steingrímur Hermannsson, and grandson of former Prime Minister Hermann Jónasson, has set himself as offensive enough to be considered for the post of prime minister when national elections are held in 2007.

By Bart Cameron

Guðmundur

Independence Party Contender for Mayor Has a Change of Heart

In Issue 11 of The Grapevine, we featured the Reykjavík city planning ideas currently being debated by the different parties who will be fighting for city council's fifteen seats this spring. Among others, we spoke to Vilhjálmur Þ. Vilhjálmsson of the Independence Party, whose ideas included developing the islands west of Reykjavík into areas for single-family homes and the creation of a freeway running through the middle of the city to connect these neighbourhoods to the mainland. One of the more contentious areas of Reykjavík, Vatnsmýri (the current site of the city airport), was left out of his platform at that time, as there have been and still are disagreements within the Independence Party as to what they would do with the area if they took city council.

But then on the television station Stöð 2's Ísland í dag last Tuesday, Vilhjálmsson, who was being interviewed with Reykjavík mayor and Social Democrat Steinunn Valdís Óskarsdóttir, announced that he had "been thinking about the matter for some time" and had come to the decision that, "If elected mayor, I would focus myself on building up the Vatnsmýri area into an apartment and employment development, and move the airport out of the area."

Óskarsdóttir was visibly surprised to hear the news and responded, "Welcome to this group who want the airport gone."

The news also came as a surprise to us, especially since one of the founding platforms of the Independence Party of city council is the further encouragement of single-family homes.

As Vilhjálmsson told The Grapevine himself in Issue 11's feature, "Most people want to live in single-family homes, and that's why there's been this flight into the suburbs. There are now people moving as far afield as Hveragerði and Selfoss. We want to keep families in Reykjavík."

Vilhjálmsson's announcement also comes in the wake of a recent Fréttablaðið poll, which showed him trailing behind former television personality Gísli Marteinn Baldursson in their party's fight for the mayoral office. Perhaps Vilhjálmsson's recent shift of focus will win him more support, as he has now decided on a city planning idea that shows more sustainability than any other Independence Party planning idea so far – even if it is an idea already being touted by the Social Democrats.

By Paul F Nikolov

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The Reykjavík City Call Centre, tel. **4 11 11 11**, will provide you with all information on municipal services and operations and connect you to required personnel.

600 Children on Waiting List for Preschool

About 600 children are on the waiting list to get into preschool due to a manpower shortage. According to Vísir, the city of Reykjavík has been advertising for more workers. Iceland is currently experiencing a labour shortage; the Directorate of Labour currently puts the national unemployment rate at 2%, a rate that has been dropping since January.

In a statement from the Leftist-Green Party, the party has called upon Reykjavík city government to solve the employee shortage at the city's preschools.

"It is an important goal to offer all children over 18 months of age a place in preschool and children 6-9 years old professional workers during free time in addition to their traditional school day," the statement read.

In related news, the city of Reykjavík's decision to raise the registration fees for preschool has been recanted. "It's just healthy that politicians change their opinions sometimes," Reykjavík mayor Steinunn Valdís Óskarsdóttir told Vísir.

Representatives from all parties welcomed the decision, with Liberal Party city council representative Ólafur F. Magnússon saying, "We were against the raising from the beginning, which is in keeping with our desire to lower or eliminate service fees on families with children."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

By Paul F Nikolov

Red Cross Poll: Mixed Results Regarding Foreigners

According to an IMG Gallup poll conducted for the Red Cross, the majority of Icelanders believe that immigrants have a positive effect on the economy, with only 16% saying otherwise. 57% said they would be positive towards their child marrying a foreigner. 5% of respondents believed that their lives have been worsened by the presence of foreigners, while 19% said their lives have been improved.

For the "neighbour question," according to Vísir, between 5.5 and 6.5% said they would not want to live next door to homosexuals, foreigners or Buddhists. While 17% said they would not want to live next door to someone with a mental illness; fully 22% said they wouldn't want to live next door to a Muslim.

Sigrún Árnadóttir, the managing director of the Red Cross, told Vísir that the results regarding Muslims came as "a great disappointment."

Police Decide Not to Investigate Themselves

Despite requests from activists protesting the Kárahnjúkar dam project that the police investigate themselves for possible mental and physical abuse of the protestors, Minister of Justice Björn Bjarnason says that no such investigation will happen. On his website, Bjarnason said that recent opinion pieces by Alliance Party MPs Össur Skarphéðinsson and Mörður Árnason as well as by journalist Egill Helgason that criticized the police's treatment of the protestors were "unwarranted attacks" against the police.

The accusations against the police include harassment, physical and mental abuse, and sexual assault. A spokesperson for the protestors declined to comment.

Czech President Wants More Business with Iceland

Václav Klaus, the president of the Czech Republic, and Prime Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson came to the agreement that trade relations between the two countries should be increased. During the course of his visit, Klaus visited Nesjavellir, Gullfoss and Geysir.

Justice Minister Will "Look Into" UN Comments on Racism in Iceland

Guðrún D. Guðmundsdóttir, managing director of the Icelandic Human Rights Office, said that she was pleased with the results of the UN's Special Committee on Racism. Among other things, the committee criticized Iceland's "age 24 law," which states that a foreigner must be over 24 years of age to marry an Icelander and get the rights conferred upon foreigners marrying Icelanders.

According to RÚV, she said that she welcomed both the committee's praise of Iceland as well as their suggestions for improvement. Minister of Justice Björn Bjarnason said that he will consider the remarks of the committee.

Convicted Sex Offender Coming to Iceland Soon

Aron Pálmi Ágústsson, who was convicted of sexually abusing a young boy in 1997 and sentenced to ten years in prison in Texas, could be coming to Iceland as early as next week.

According to Vísir, Ágústsson committed the offence when he was 14 years old and was at first sentenced to juvenile detention, but was moved to house arrest when he turned 17. Since his conviction, many in the Icelandic government - among them Prime Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson - have called for Ágústsson to be extradited to Iceland.

Among Ágústsson's other supporters are Bobby Fischer and his own supporters, who more recently revived discussion about bringing Ágústsson back to Iceland. Texas Governor Rick Perry is expected to sign a release and extradition request soon. Ágústsson himself said that while he has made many friends in Texas, he looks forward to returning to Iceland.

Independence Party Could Get Nine City Council Seats

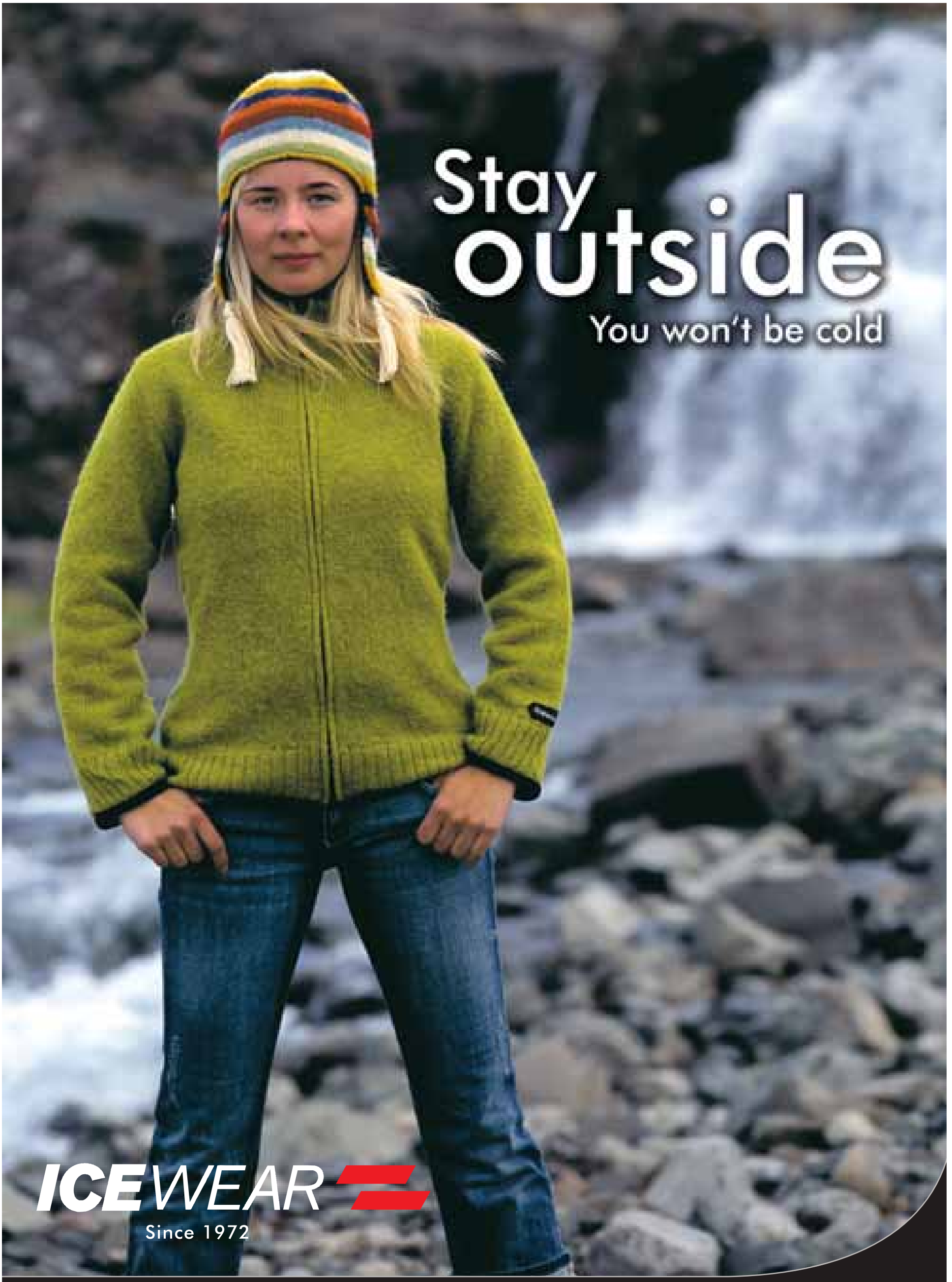
In a survey conducted by Fréttablaðið that contacted 800 people in Reykjavík with 56.8% of those surveyed responding, the Independence Party would take nine of City Council's 15 seats if elections were held today. 29.7% said they would vote for the Social Democratic Party - which equates to 5 seats - while the Leftist-Green Party, with 8.8%, would receive one seat.

Neither the Progressive Party nor the Liberal Party would win seats according to the survey, but 4.8% said they would vote for the Progressives and 2.2% said they would vote for the Liberals.

In related news, former television personality Gísli Marteinn announced last week that he will be seeking the first seat of the Independence Party. Vilhjálmur Þ. Vilhjálmsson said that he will also seek the first seat in the party.

Icelandic Car to the South Pole

A six-wheel Icelandic car is being outfitted for travel in the South Pole this winter with a British explorer and an Icelandic driver. According to RÚV, the plan is to break the land speed record to the South Pole from the Antarctic coast. The company making the car has been keeping the specs a secret, but they have built cars capable of driving over glaciers at high speeds.



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Who They Are:

The Leftist-Green Party (Vinstrihreyfingin-Grænt Framboð)

Guiding principles: Far-left, pro-environmental, anti-NATO, feminist.
Party Chairman: Steingrímur J. Sigfússon
Number of seats: 5
Registered members: about 1,400
Ministers: none
Strange but true: Has at least two people currently working in the dramatic arts: MP Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir is a theatre director and Young Leftist-Green member Ugla Egilsdóttir played the lead role in 2002's movie Mávahlátur (Seagull's Laughter).
Website: www.vg.is
E-mail: vg@vg.is
Phone: 552-8872
Address: Pósthólf 175, 121 Reykjavík

The Social Democratic Party (Samfylkingin)

Guiding principles: Left-centrist, social-democratic.
Party Chairman: Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir
Number of seats: 20
Registered members: about 20,000
Ministers: none
Strange but true: Is inviting the general public to attend a golf tournament in Hafnarfjörður. Anyone interested can contact Jón Kr. Óskarsson at 895-6158 or by e-mail at etrade@simnet.is.
E-mail: samfylking@samfylking.is
Phone: 414-2200
Address: Hallveigarstígur 1 (2nd Floor), Box 160, 101 Reykjavík

The Progressive Party (Framsóknarflokkurinn)

Guiding principles: Right-centrist; believes in fewer economic and environmental regulations while strengthening the social system.
Party Chairman: Halldór Ásgrímsson
Number of seats: 12
Registered members: about 10,000
Ministers: Prime Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson, Minister of Social Affairs Árni Magnússon, Minister of Agriculture Guðni Ágústsson, Minister of Health Jón Kristjánsson, Minister of Industry Valgerður Sverrisdóttir
Strange but true: Has recently been very active in trying to build more trade between Iceland and eastern Europe, particularly in the Czech Republic, the Ukraine, and in the Balkans.
Website: www.framsokn.is
E-mail: framsokn@framsokn.is
Phone: 540-4300
Address: Hverfisgata 33 (2nd Floor), 101 Reykjavík

The Liberal Party (Frjálslyndir)

Guiding principles: Right wing, pretty much the same as the Independence Party, with more emphasis on the rights of fishermen.
Party Chairman: Guðjón Kristjánsson
Number of seats: 3
Registered members: about 2,000
Ministers: none
Strange but true: Have proposed that children, young people, and the elderly ride the bus for free.
Website: www.frjalslyndir.is
E-mail: xf@xf.is
Phone: 552-2600
Address: Aðalstræti 9, 101 Reykjavík

The Independence Party (Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn)

Guiding principles: Right wing, believes in further privatization in all areas of society.
Party Chairman: Davíð Oddsson
Number of seats: 23
Registered members: about 34,000
Ministers: Minister of Fisheries Árni M. Mathiesen, Minister of Justice Björn Bjarnason, Minister of Foreign Affairs Davíð Oddsson, Minister of the Economy Geir H. Haarde, President of Parliament Solveig Pétursdóttir, Minister of the Environment Sigríður A. Þórðardóttir, Minister of Communications Sturla Böðvarsson, Minister of Education Þórgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir
Strange but true: The member of their party considered most likely to lead them to victory in this spring's municipal elections is former television personality Gísli Marteinn Baldursson.**Website:** www.xd.is
E-mail: xd@xd.is
Phone: 515-1700
Address: Háaleitisbraut 1, 105 Reykjavík

And Where Do They Stand On...

What is the first measure your party plans on introducing when parliament reconvenes?

Leftist-Green Party:
"In preparation for this winter, we have been putting up a list of priorities, among them being environmental issues and bills relating to a more fair distribution of the economy. The government has been emphasizing heavy industry, and we want to see a more diversified economy." MP Ögmundur Jónasson.

Social Democratic Party:
"We'll be deciding that this weekend, but for right now it's confidential." MP Guðrún Ögmundsdóttir.

Progressive Party:
"We want to stress that the welfare society is important, and that will be reflected in our budget." MP Siv Friðleifsdóttir.

Liberal Party:
"The Liberal Party has been keeping up the struggle against the unfair quota-system and the fisheries management, which is slowly killing the rural districts around the coast of Iceland. We will also emphasize the situation of the elderly, by putting forward a bill that is intended to ensure that the elderly are never given too low an insurance or security wages to support themselves. We will also put forward both older and newer bills on various matters, such as communications, the status of small businesses, and other matters. The party will introduce the new bills shortly before parliament opens in October." Margrét Sverrisdóttir, Liberal Party manager.

Independence Party:
No member of the Independence Party could be reached for comment at the time of this writing.

Ögmundur

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Talking It Out

Sigur Rós on Takk, Touring and the Casio 87

In our last issue, The Grapevine stole a copy of the new Sigur Rós album, Takk, off the Internet and published a full review. This was our second offence against the band: one year ago, I interviewed Sigur Rós at their studio, Sundlaug, and called the incident the single worst interview of my life. Therefore, when we managed to get through to the band to schedule an interview for the release of Takk, we didn't expect much. We were extremely pleasantly surprised, as the band not only gave us hours of interview time, but also granted a special photo shoot at Hornið, the Italian restaurant that served as the first live venue the band ever played in.

We met for the interview at Apótek, during a planned full-day press junket.

I didn't personally download your album. I overheard someone listening to it and confiscated it. I swear. After we heard that you weren't that upset over the fact that it was online.
Jónsi: How does it sound when you download it? I haven't downloaded it myself.

Really high quality for a pirated recording.
Jónsi: I like that better than if it were a crappy recording.

We've spent all week dealing with Sigur Rós fans, honestly. I've been surprised by the international community behind your band. At how interested they are solely in the music, not in the personality or the lifestyle of the members. The Sigur Rós website, for example, focuses only on types of keyboards.
Jónsi: That's how it should be. Though I never go to the website. I think it's quite scary, actually, how everyone wants an explanation for everything. I never go.

Is it scary even if they're only discussing music? We had someone looking at the photo we had from the studio explaining that the keyboard is a Casio 87, asking which song it might be on.
Jónsi: Well that's obviously wrong. It's just nerdy, though I think it's cute, actually, when they're asking about how we got the guitar sound, but then it gets scary beyond that. A lot of weird discussions go on.

Regarding the music versus personal, there is an aspect I liked about Sigur Rós and the coverage in Iceland. When The Grapevine went to your studio last year, even though you and I had met before, we discussed nothing personal at all—a Sigur Rós interview used to just be a reminder that you should be content with the CD. But then this week, in Iceland, I've been seeing your personal life in the media. All about who you're dating and who got married.
Jónsi: I know, I think it's fucking ridiculous. I think it's because of the website. The web designer put it up for news, but then Fréttablaðið just took it and printed it. It makes everything weird for us.

You'd rather be left alone when you're at home.
Jónsi: Yes, but we can't get frustrated about this. That's just the way journalism is. We just leave it alone.

That said, it's hard for journalists to cover Sigur Rós. I've been thinking about this: with rock or folk music, you have lyrics and patterns that interact with journalists as much as fans, as opposed to say jazz and classical music, which doesn't directly transfer into print. Plus, Sigur Rós doesn't react with journalists. There's an interesting pressure when we just have to review music like its music, not like it's somebody's article.
But you're really fucking with rock journalists when you put out an album that considers influences and styles outside of our small space of known material.
Jónsi: Especially with the brackets album. That was so hard for them. No titles, no lyrics. Nothing for them to hold on to. When they got it and they realized there were no titles and you just had to listen, it was too much for them, I think. And they talked more about that than the music. And I think when the journalists are not being fed everything then they get a little scared.

But you sympathize with that, I imagine. A lot of musicians in Iceland have written or commented on local music in addition to performing. Are you one of them?
Jónsi: No. I think it's scary to analyze music too much. There should be a certain amount of magic that shouldn't be thought about too much. It should happen naturally. I think that's always the best thing.

Talking about the album, Takk. Can we begin with the overall organization? How it works together. I noticed songs blended together, it felt like a complete symphony more than a collection of tracks.
Jónsi: It was not organized: there are many songs, which connect with each other. The order just came along that way. Of course number 11 had to be number 11. And track 3 and 4 are looped. And they're actually made from a loop from Ágætis Byrjun, a reverse loop of track 7. So it's a lot of recycling going on. I think it'd be fun to take one song and try to sample something from that, then sample something from that. And make something from that. It would be fun. Do you want to know something about the songs or something?

Anything you want to tell. The song that most fascinates me is Lest, track 5. The composition, the mixture of beats. The polka.
Jónsi: That was funny. We got a celeste, do you know the instrument?

No, I honestly hardly knew any of the instruments at your studio.
Jónsi: A celeste is like a small upright piano. There's a picture of it here (in issue 12 of The Grapevine), this is Björk's celeste. It sounds a lot like a glockenspiel. But it is played like a piano.

Ah ha. This explains a lot.
Jónsi: It's really a beautiful instrument. We got that on loan from Björk. And we got a vibraphone that we bought at a flea market in New York. When you get toys like this you start to write differently. Then we started playing different instruments. It keeps us awake and happy.

So this song was written right when we got the celeste.

The whole composition? With that many layers and change-ups. I figured it was a long project. What was Orri just going crazy with drum beats or something? There's a waltz in that one, too.
Jónsi: It kind of happens like this a lot. This is actually two songs put together. We wrote the first part then the second. We wrote it like that and then we found that it really worked together.

A lot of our music is like that. Nice accidents. Accidents that really work well. Kind of accidental art.

We changed a lot on this song. In the first part, I play piano, Orri played vibraphone and Kjartan played celeste, and, in the second part, I play the vibraphone, Orri plays the celeste and Kjartan plays the piano. But it's really fun though.

So when we hear things like the thundering basslines, we can't assume it's Georg.
Jónsi: You know it's him. He plays so massive. I really like the bass sounds—he has a signature sound.

Do you have any favourite tracks on this album?
Jónsi: Right now my favourites are tracks 3 and 4. These are studio songs, songs we found by accident and just played around with. (Reading from The Grapevine) "Also we developed a sneaking suspicion that track 4 may present a reversal from track 3," já, that's exactly what it is. It's just backwards.

One good guess. The main advantage to doing early reviews is that it will be out of print before the album comes out. Everything I got wrong I'll say "I was right, you just aren't remembering correctly."
But you prefer composing in a studio as opposed to live.
Jónsi: Já. Most was written in the studio. Gong was the only complete song before we went in. Glósóli (track 2) was the first song we wrote for the album, and then a lot of the others are just us playing.

How are you going to prepare for the reaction to this? I'm thinking it will be quite a different critical response than for the bracket album.
Jónsi: This is definitely more accessible. The bracket album was a lot heavier. When we did this album we wanted to have more fun. For the other album we'd been touring with the songs for so long before we went to record them. So it was very hard to be creative. But for this the songs were fresh.

And I think we silently agreed that we were tired of the heaviness. Because we aren't very heavy, we're just a bunch of silly guys. Definitely not serious. I think we just wanted to have fun.

(Looks closely at The Grapevine.) Heh heh heh. You wrote [regarding track 6, Sæglópir] "Opens with a reverb piano part strangely reminiscent of 90s metal ballads" that is very true I think.

So you're not pissed?
Jónsi: Does it get many beers?

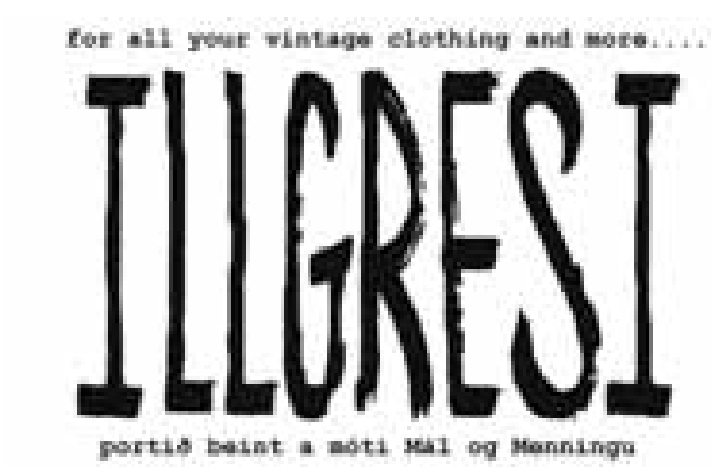
Oh shit. You read our paper. It would get six beers, I think. One thing that I find especially commendable, something that is hard to cover, is how much pressure this album had on it. You really had a lot of magazines and websites wondering, especially when movies like Life Aquatic were featuring the old material.
Jónsi: I just wasn't listening to them. Especially after the brackets album. We had so many people saying for that album can they follow Ágætis Byrjun again, and we just never listened to them.

The fans who emailed us wanted to know what track the toy piano featured in our photo of your studio is on.
Jónsi: It's on track 5, your favourite song.

Yeah, okay I'm a dork for liking polkas. But if you were going to make a sequel to The Triplets of Belleville, I really think that could be the soundtrack—it's such a blend of energy and melancholy.
Jónsi: (laughing) Yes, it would fit very well in there.

Are there extra tracks that you recorded completely that aren't on the album?
Jónsi: There's one track, Salka, that may be released later. We were going to have it on this album, but we couldn't find a place to get it in.

Can we talk about your tour schedule? You were selling out without a new album, how do you satisfy the fans now that you have new material?
Jónsi: We're going to be touring for a year. We like to tour. It's fun to travel and play and meet people. That's what's great about a tour: when we're in Iceland we never play together. We like it, we take one year



and we tour and work, then we get one year off. It's like a carrot, that year off at the end of the tour.

Is there any chance that you could play a show in Iceland before you go?
Jónsi: Yes, in the beginning of October. We're thinking about that.

I think you've answered every question we had. I know you have a long line of people outside.
Jónsi: Já. What are you listening to, are you listening to any good music? I'm so sceptical about music, I think everything sucks, big time.

Really? I have to admit I just started listening to Highway 61 again.
Jónsi: Similar to me. I've been listening to old music, too. Like Billie Holiday and old Icelandic music. It's amazing.

Jón Leifs or something Classical?
Jónsi: No, like Elsa Sigfússdóttir. The same atmosphere as Sinatra or something only it's Icelandic. Only because it makes me feel good. The atmosphere in it. There's nothing happening right now. And everybody is trying to copy everything. If one band like the Strokes comes along, then everybody tries to rip them off.

Yeah, and the consequence is that you end up hating the Strokes as well. But I enjoy some of the stuff. Fischerspooner. Polyphonic Spree.
Jónsi: I really don't like scene of retro-electronic. But I'd like to see them live in concert. I'm really picky about music. If there's one thing about music I can't stand it.

(Brief argument about Bright Eyes.)

Jónsi: There's one thing I like, Joanna Newsom. I heard one song and it really hit me.

After a year on the road, having to listen to radio crap, maybe you'll be more accepting. If you've been listening to these old classics, does that explain the lullaby riffs at the end of the album.
Jónsi: Orri was actually playing the celeste there. We all did the melodies.

And while we're discussing the lullaby tone, this seems to be true of the lyrics.
Jónsi: Yes, the lyrics are naïve and simple. Actually, it's really hard for us to do lyrics and to speak. We're all very quiet, that's why we're musicians. But this was really healthy for us. And even though it was hard, now that it's done, we're really happy that we did it.

Okay, finally, key question here: Hidden people, yes or no! (Slamming fist on table.)
Jónsi: (Laughing) Oh god. We don't get that one as much. More landscapes.

Yes! Landscapes. Beautiful landscapes. Tell me what key reflects the Icelandic landscape, go! (Slamming fist on table again.)
Jónsi: It's not as bad anymore. Now they ask about fashion.

With a restaurant full of reporters, Jónsi and I discuss life in Iceland, and life in Boston for another thirty minutes, before the Smekkleysa Record Label manager comes in and asks Jónsi to take part in other interviews.

I have been speaking with Jónsi for an hour and a half, but as I go to leave, he guides me to Kjartan's chair and tells me to speak with him. Orri and Georg get up to do a television interview, during which they will say almost nothing.

Kjartan: What's this?
An MP3 recorder. I use it to play music and do interviews.

Kjartan: Is your battery gone or is it full?
Ah, good question. It's empty. I really wasn't expecting to get an hour and a half.

I can't believe how much you guys are talking. Are you getting all the interviews out of your system or something? Is this it for the year?
Kjartan: No, when we're on tour we're all business. We do interviews for an hour a day. It's a part of the job. And it helps the artists to talk.

You're looking at talking to strangers for an hour a day about the same album for a year.
Kjartan: It's probably just for the beginning.

I doubt it. This album is going to be everywhere. I'm slightly exhausted. Look at these cameras (nodding to television camera behind my head).
Kjartan: We're getting much better with interviews. It was really hard at first, especially in English, we weren't that confident in English. But sometimes it's quite enjoyable. Because we never talk about music. Talking about music all day helps us realize what we think about what we've been doing. So that's a positive. Sometimes it really helps you to realize your vision. It's good to talk.

And are you prepared then for one more level of fame? If you have cult status now, it looks like it's going to step up.
Kjartan: I think we are. Our life has settled down. We all have our place in the band. Touring has been accepted, just as doing interviews and talking to record people has. Now we just know what we're doing rather than going out and discovering the world.

We had to get used to things. You know, starting out, we didn't know whom to trust. We were just four boys from Iceland going out to the big world. Which is strange.

■ By Bart Cameron

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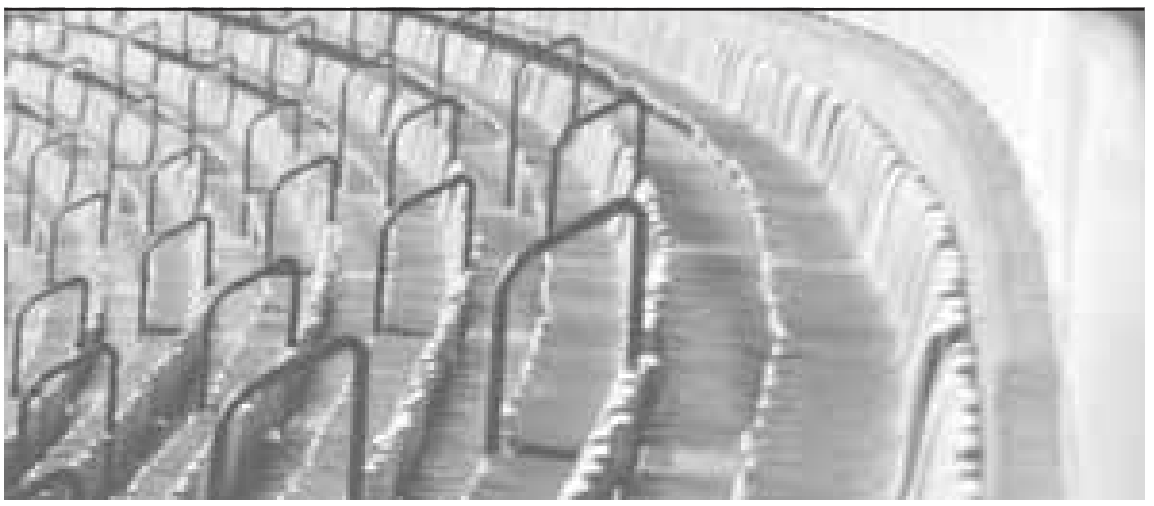

Icelandic National Team and the World Cup

Eighteen months ago, the Icelandic National Football Team found themselves in the unusual situation of competing for a place at the Euro 2004 Championship, alongside Scotland and previous World Cup finalists Germany. Having narrowly missed out on a place, Iceland were buoyed with confidence that in the upcoming World Cup qualifiers they really stand a chance of making it to their first-ever major tournament finals.

It has not been a good eighteen months. Walking out onto the pitch at the Laugardalsvöllur stadium this Saturday, the players will line up knowing that their dreams of playing at the World Cup next year lay in tatters. With only one win, one draw and five defeats Iceland are languishing second to last in their qualifying group and must get a result against their opponents Croatia.

All the Talent, None of the Wins

For a population of nearly 300,000, it is remarkable what individual Icelanders have achieved on the football scene, with players of high calibre such as Eiður Smári Gudjohnsen and Hermann Hreiðarsson playing in the Premiership, but this development has unfortunately not translated itself onto the international scene.

Confidence seems to play a big part in this. Players who are playing in intercontinental football leagues, at the highest standards every week, are losing their confidence on the international scene? Could it be the fact that only 6000 on average turn up to see and support their beloved national team every time they play, or that hardly any people ever travel to watch Iceland abroad? Perhaps it could be that the national coaches don't instill the players with the same confidence that managers and coaches at their domestic clubs do?

It is always going to be hard for a nation with such a small population to excel at team sports, but the sad fact is that the talent does lie within the national team and that it is not reaching its true potential under current coaches Ásgeir Sigurvinsson and Logi Ólafsson. If KSÍ are serious about harnessing the true potential of the players at their disposal, they must consider the option of using a foreign coach, who could offer the tactical know–how and experience to make the dream come true.

Iceland are just as good as similar smaller nations who have made it to the finals; Slovenia made it to the last World Cup, with only two million inhabitants and Northern Ireland have made it to three World Cups and a World Cup quarter-final with a population of only 1.6 million, and the pedigree of Iceland's players far outstrips those of these two countries. Iceland certainly don't have the depth in squad to upset big teams like Sweden but the players should have the confidence that they can mix it up with countries like Bulgaria and Hungary.

Europe's Brazil?

Upcoming opponents Croatia will certainly test the confidence of the Icelandic team to the extremes. Being one of the most skilled, talented and consistent national sides in Europe, Croatia currently top the World Cup qualifying group 8 with five wins, one draw and no defeats and are the favourites above Sweden to capture an automatic place in the World Cup next year and to do this, nothing less than victory will do for them on Saturday. The famous red and white check shirts of Croatia roll into Reykjavík after recently clashing with the legendary gold and green shirts of World Champions Brazil. Coming out of the game with a 1-1 draw, Carlos Alberto, the coach of Brazil believes that "they're a very good team. They play a type of football close to the so-called 'Brazilian school'; a game that prioritises technique and quality."

Croatia without doubt are one of the most entertaining football teams to play in Iceland for quite some time, the game should be outstanding. If Croatia play like they normally do and if Iceland play with the recent confidence and discipline that they have found in the last two games, there is a good possibility that this could be a classic encounter. If you want to see a great game, don't miss this. If Carlos Alberto is to be believed we might just get to see a little bit of "samba football."

Iceland v Croatia (Sat 3rd September 18:05, Laugardalsvöllur Stadium)
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DYING FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

Eating Disorders – Iceland's Unsolved Problem

In 2002, an estimated 3000 Icelanders suffered from an eating disorder. That's more than 1% of the entire nation, and the number may have risen since then. Yet Iceland offers hardly any specialized solutions for people suffering from this psychological disorder.

One Nurse and Three Beds

According to Katrín Sif Sigurgeirsdóttir, the chairperson of Spegillinn (The Mirror), an interest group for families and relatives of eating disorder (ED) patients, the current situation is simply terrible. "There are no solutions for people with eating disorders. The psychiatric ward at Landspítalinn University Hospital does not specialize in treatment for these patients. There were a couple of nurses who took it upon themselves to cater to ED patients, sometimes in their own time. There were cases when they worked during their lunchtimes to provide care for anorexics and bulimics. Still, it was nowhere near enough."

Now, even that has come to an end. On the 25th of January last year, the ED team at the psychiatric ward issued a statement saying that they would no longer accept new admissions of ED patients. The reason behind it was simply overflow of cases, combined with lack of staff and funding. New patients were referred to the outpatient clinic of Landspítalinn instead, where currently one psychiatric nurse caters to all eating disorder patients. The nurse said in an earlier interview that she received five new cases per week. That makes roughly 300 people per year who seek help, not counting the cases where patients seek private counselling. However, a vast majority of ED patients suffer in silence, whereas only one in ten people receives treatment for their illness. The Icelandic public health care system has three hospital beds specifically for adults with eating disorders, and they're constantly filled.

An Explosion of New Cases

The cessation of treatment by the eating disorder team at the psychiatric ward could not have come at a worse time. In the year 2003, 70 eating disorder patients were referred to the ward, a 37% increase from the year 2001. To put things in perspective, 110 patients were diagnosed with an ED in Iceland between the years 1983 and 2001 (The Icelandic Medical Journal), meaning that the referrals in 2003 alone were as many as in the 11 years prior to that. More disturbingly, the number of child referrals doubled between the years 2003 and 2004, going from 10-15 to 30. Two thirds of those who suffer from eating disorders in Iceland are under the age of 25. However, people do not grow out of these disorders simply because they grow up.

On the 18th of March of this year, the Minister of Health, Jón Kristjánsson, was portrayed on the front page of Fréttablaðið newspaper, saying a special clinic for eating disorders had been opened.

"Our phone was ringing off the hook for days afterwards," Sigurgeirsdóttir told us about the day. "I was extremely happy to hear that our struggle had finally led to something positive, but, at the same time, I was a bit taken aback that nobody had notified us about such radical changes. I called everywhere to get more information about this new clinic, including the Department of Health, but nobody could give me any concrete answers. Apparently, this clinic doesn't exist. It was all an illusion."

According to a staff member of Landspítalinn who wishes to remain anonymous, what happened was this: "They renovated a space at the psychiatric ward, in order to become a clinic for eating disorder patients. The space was inducted, but that was all. To this day, it's still empty and not in use. There is no way of predicting when or if it will start serving its function."

When contacted about the matter, the Department of Health could not offer any comments for the time being.

Those Who Fight for the Cause

Forma, a support group for people with eating disorders, was founded a few months ago by two women who have battled anorexia and bulimia in the past. Alma Geirdal, one of the founding members, says that the estimated 3000 Icelanders who suffer from eating disorders is an outdated statistic in her opinion.

"It's closer to 10,000; I would assume," she says. "I think the numbers have doubled between years since the last research was conducted."

Alma says that the need for an inpatient clinic is tremendous.

"When we started our work at Forma, we were going to focus on people aged 18 to 26. In light of how great the need is, we tossed our restrictions and we're currently working with people aged 13 to 50. Many of them are in need of around the clock care."

Like the staff of Spegillinn, the women behind Forma are not getting paid for their work, and neither organization charges for their assistance. Youth centre Hitt Húsið has let Forma convene in their locales, but apart from that, they're still looking for appropriate housing to tend to their ever-growing group of eating disorder sufferers.

Interest and support group Spegillinn was founded in 2002 by families and relatives of ED patients. They have been lobbying the healthcare system for three years, pressing for change.

"It's a constant struggle. For every two steps forward, we take one and a half backwards," says Sigurgeirsdóttir. "We've had a representative from Spegillinn on a committee that was put together almost three years ago by the Department of Health."

Other representatives were recruited from the Directorate of Health, the Landspítalinn University Hospital psychiatric ward, and the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The committee's aim is to find ways to develop a clinic for people with eating disorders, but to this day, nothing has come of it. "We've attended every single meeting and put forth our ideas, and in between meetings, we've called and pressed for answers regarding the process. The fact that nothing is happening is very discouraging."

Prisma, an interdisciplinary clinic for people with ED, opened in Reykjavík on the 1st of November last year. It was founded by three women, an occupational therapist, an art therapist and psychiatric nurse Margrét Gísladóttir, who is also in the administration of Spegillinn, as well as an employee of Landspítalinn. Since Prisma is not funded by the government, patients pay full value for their treatment, perhaps not an option everyone can afford. However, the price for a personal interview at Prisma is lower

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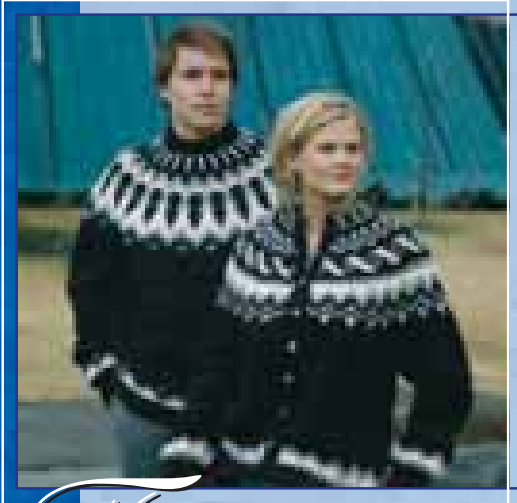

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Article Continued From Page 18

than the standard price for psychologists with private practices in Iceland, or 5000 ISK compared to 7000 ISK.

Public assistance, though, is limited. According to Alma Geirdal of Forma, "The head of the psychiatric ward at Landspítalinn doesn't think eating disorders are a problem in Iceland."

To this day, healthcare authorities claim nobody has died from an eating disorder in Iceland. However, Sigurgeirsdóttir lost her sister-in-law to anorexia, as she'd been battling the disease for years and eventually committed suicide.

"Deaths from eating disorders are always labelled as suicide, heart attack or asphyxiation due to a foreign object being stuck in a person's throat," says Alma Geirdal. Bulimia patients, for example, are vulnerable to heart attacks because they exhaust their body's supply of calcium. They are also at risk of choking on pieces of food while forcing themselves to throw up.

In order to be admitted to one of the three hospital beds the Icelandic healthcare system has to offer eating disorder patients, the person has to have reached a certain minimum BMI (body mass index) based on their weight.

"It is utterly strange," says Geirdal, who knows the process from personal experience. "First of all, a person's weight does not indicate how sick they are. Second, imagine what it does to a person who's striving to be thin, to be told that they're not thin enough to deserve help. It fuels the disease."

At the Spegillinn website, parents and relatives of eating disorder patients share their frustrations. One woman brought her acutely ill and delusional daughter to the ward, but was sent home because her daughter still had weight to lose before she'd even be considered for admission.

"Do parents need to sit by and watch their children die because the healthcare system doesn't offer any resources for eating disorders?" a worried relative asks.

It's a question worth posing, since the current framework basically requires ED patients to be on their deathbeds in order to be admitted. In some cases, it's too late, since physical complications such as osteoporosis and fertility problems are often irreversible.

How are other countries reacting to the sudden surge in eating disorders?

According to the National Eating Disorder Association of America, the United States has 102 inpatient clinics, or one clinic per 2.8 million people. An estimated 7 million American females and 1 million males suffer from eating disorders. Treatment for anorexia or bulimia costs anywhere from $500 to $2000 per day. Patients with severe anorexia require at least three to six months of inpatient care, so the bill for recovery could possibly run up to $360,000. Most American health insurance companies refuse to cover the cost of treatment for eating disorders. According to a survey by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Britain has 39 National Health Service units and 18 private clinics for eating disorder treatment. The survey described Northern Ireland as "woefully inadequate," since it has no specialist services for children and adolescents.

The Complexity of the Disorder

In addition to being among the deadliest of psychological disorders, eating disorders are also extremely difficult to cure. According to Geirdal, it is incredibly hard to be a recovering ED patient in today's society.

"It is almost easier to be a recovering alcoholic, since it's illegal to advertise alcohol in Iceland. Our addiction is in our face all the time. We're constantly bombarded by dieting tips and distorted body images in the media."

To complicate matters even further, a person with an eating disorder often suffers from one or more personality disorders aside from the ED, which may have been present in the patient beforehand, but may also be a product of it. A research conducted in an inpatient clinic in Norway proved that 75% of the patients had one or more personality disorders, including avoidant personality disorder (51%) and borderline personality disorder (21%). This makes it even more apparent that ED patients need tailored treatment and special care.

No Funding

Eating disorders receive absolutely no government funding aimed at finding specific solutions and treatment. A group of students graduating from Reykjavík University created a model for a hypothetical Icelandic eating disorder clinic, complete with an exact budget of how much building and operating it would cost in real terms.

The students who created the model developed it fully so it could be put to use in reality. Now that the groundwork has been laid and the numbers have been calculated, all that's left is a government initiative.

Hjördís Hjartardóttir, one of the students who created the model, attended a meeting with the Minister of Health. "He was less than enthusiastic about our ideas," Hjördís says. "We got the impression that there was a decided lack of interest from the head of state."

A Plan Worth Tying Hopes To?

On the 25th of October last year, the Health and Insurance Committee of the Icelandic parliament proposed a plan to improve public health by encouraging healthier diets and more exercise. The plan included putting together a professional team to analyze problems related to unhealthy diets, obesity, lack of exercise and eating disorders.

After diagnosing the causes and consequences, the team is to propose a united operation and plan of implementation to the government in April 2006. However, Sigurgeirsdóttir doesn't tie her hopes to the work of the team.

"Nobody from this team has been in any contact with us at Spegillinn. Since we have members working in the psychiatric ward too, we would know if anybody in there was contacted in relation to this plan. So far, there has been no communication with us. Why should we raise our hopes if this committee doesn't even talk to the people who know what's going on in these matters?"

When asked what they'd do if they had ultimate power, both Geirdal and Sigurgeirsdóttir responded in the same way: "I'd open a clinic for people with eating disorders," they say.

"We're working with so many ill people, helping them to hang in there, but that's about all we are in the position to do," says Sigurgeirsdóttir. "We at Forma are preparing a symposium about eating disorders on September 17th," she adds. "It's a huge project, and it'll be held in Loftkastalinn theater. We're hoping that by doing this, we'll raise the authorities' attention to the problem at hand. We encourage everybody to attend, not just people within the healthcare system."

Forma is still looking for sponsors for the symposium. Although the government seems to lack interest and initiative to act on the problem, there's still hope for people with eating disorders in Iceland. By refusing to give up, the hard-working individuals at Forma, Spegillinn and Prisma make sure the fight goes on.

For more information in Icelandic, visit www.spegillinn.is.

■ By Þórdís Elva Þorvaldsdóttir Bachmann

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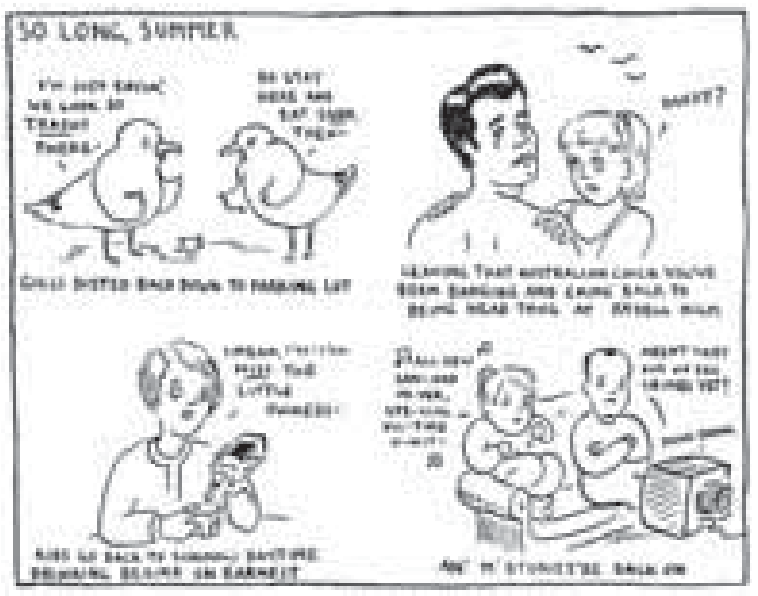

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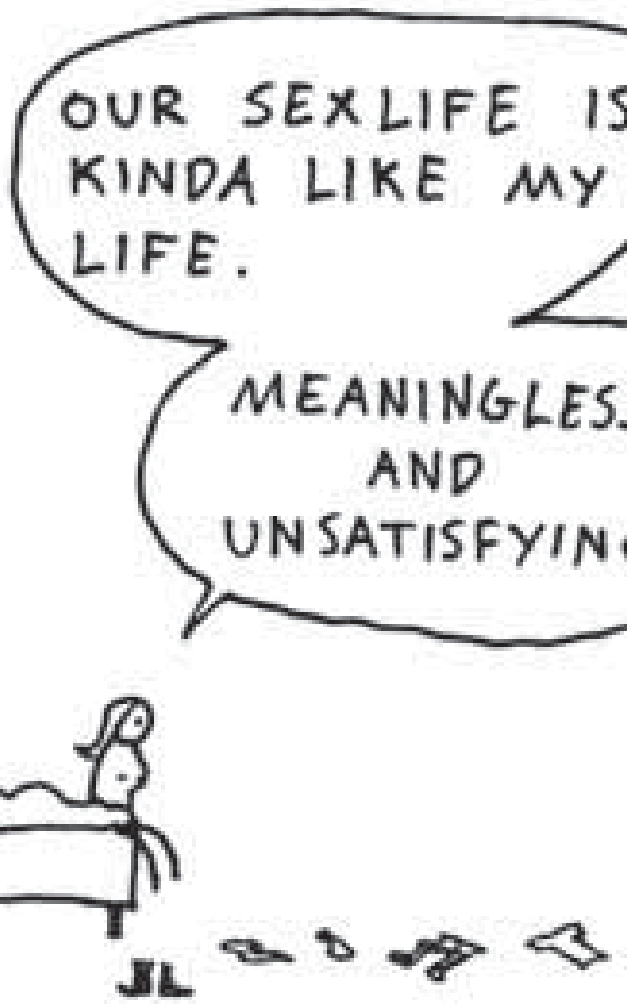

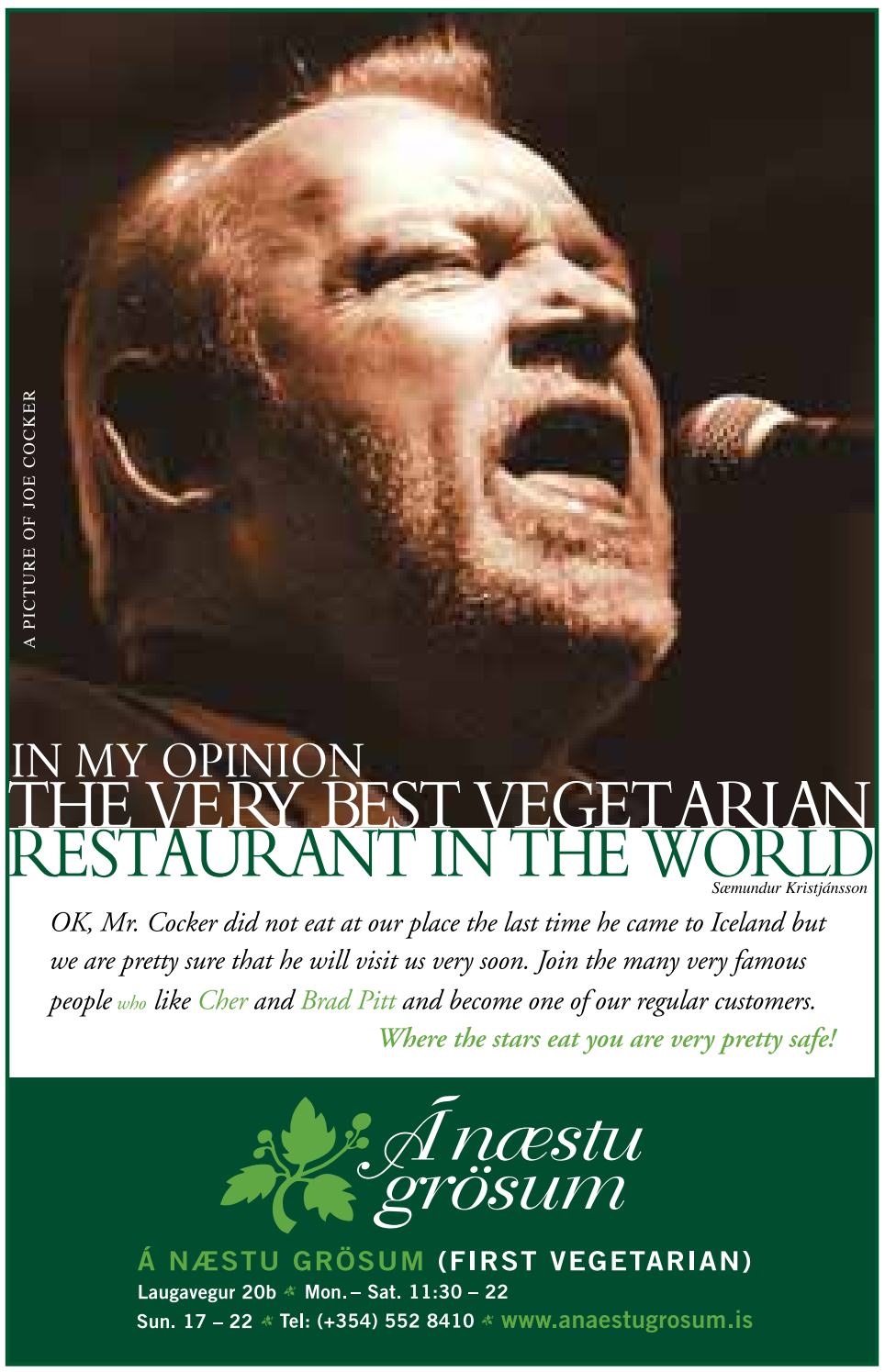

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Trabant
Emotional

Trabant have captured the energy of their live shows, but, much better, they've reinvented the groove that early recordings and shows only hinted at. While vocalist Ragnar is pumped up and charming as ever, the rhythm section shines on this record—coming off like the perfect marriage of the Roots and P-Funk.

Worth six beers and a shot of Brennivín.
Costs four beers.

RASS
Andstaða

When punk goes right, explaining it is a hell of a thing. Rass (ass) made up of a group of thirty-something local rockers, have produced the best punk album I've heard since… well, since you were allowed to call things punk. (Bad Brains come to mind.) The thing about extremely repetitive, shouted rock songs is that the lyrics have to be accurate, truthful and entertaining—in all of the 12 extremely short tracks on this album, with lyrics in English and Icelandic, the lyrics are that good, shouted in a soulful, menacing and at the same time playful manner—punk in 2005 is of course no longer threatening to familial codes and social conduct. No, in 2005, punk is a playful way to scream about political differences. We leave you with kind words from an English-language track: "One day when Uncle Ben went to work, he was looking like a big fat stork. One day when Uncle Sven went to Mary, he was looking like a big fat Gary." God bless Rass, in their album notes, they even include the chords to their songs.

Worth five beers.
Costs three.

Flís
Vottur

The new jazz album, Vottur (witness), by Flís, is so strong and immensely likeable, that it should creep into the local culture soon. A respectable three-piece including Davíð Þór Jónsson on piano, Valdimar Kolbeinn Sigurjónsson on bass, and Helgi Svarar Helgason on drums, the group here reinvents the Icelandic standards originally performed in the fifties by Haukur Morthens. The blend of moody ballad with classical touches and lyric jazz takes on the endearing gothic tone that Tim Burton might ask for were he to direct a movie of A Charlie Brown Christmas.
The discovery here, which may have more magnitude than Mugison, is that music existed in Iceland before rock, and it may have been very very good. Kudos must go out to the recording engineers, and Mr. Sigurjónsson on bass. The tone of the lows throughout this album are extraordinary.

Worth Six Beers.

Sigur Rós
Takk

Reviewed obsessively in the last issue, Takk sees Sigur Rós pushing the boundaries of their blend of naïve orchestration and rock. From the second track, Glósóli, a slightly more up-tempo take on the style of their previous albums, to the smorgasbord that is Lest, to the local folk music-influenced lullaby tracks that close the album, Takk is a complete artistic statement. The new uses of the tools Sigur Rós has always employed well—sweeping, echoed melodies and driving rhythm—reinvigorates the sound completely.

London's Calling:

Trabant Raid the Young Impressionable

Gúndi

In case you got a bit lost here are some essential London music links (glossary if you will) that you should check out before attempting a trip or even your first tour!

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By London Correspondent Deborah Coughlin

We know you can't open an Icelandic music mag without seeing an article on the half-naked kings of kitsch, but Trabant have just left London a little, well, scared and are responsible for literally 100s of young London bands scuppering 'round lingerie, firework and braces departments. They clearly upped-the-ante on the costume stakes, impressing the impressionable in a London scene where a band rarely wears anything more dandy than a pair of Levi's and a jumper. The oldies still dragging their late-thirties carcasses through the scene were less willing to jump on the bandwagon, whispering how they had seen it all before, a hyped, one-album, gimmick-laden act, there's nothing new under the sun, etc. They said it about the Scissor Sisters, they said it about The Hives, but one thing is for sure it's the kids dancing in clubs that decide, and already Nasty Boy has been popping up on dance floors across the capital.

So where did they play? Firstly at Camdens Monarch (or now commercially known as The Barfly) at the infamous Queens of Noize night, a female DJ/Promoter duo who were once described as "the most righteous bitches in Camden" by one Miss Courtney Love. Since the highs of 2003, and now classic performances from The Libertines, the Queens night had gone a little passé, while they enjoyed a newfound fame of NME articles, tours and a stint on MTV UK. But Trabant, with support from Manchester act Stazi, made the place sparkle again.

Stazi sound like Scott Walker over Joy Division, have a gimp, and an ex-Happy Monday called Rowetta who, after a revival on Pop Idol, is quite the crowd puller, and were the only band around who could complement the champagne soaked y-fronts. Originally they were meant to be headlining, but mysteriously Trabant were promoted to the top spot just before the lights went up. Post gig dancing and over enthusiasm from the Trabant crew ensured that many a North London indie kid not only woke up with a hangover but with a pillow full of glitter as well.

After picnics with Suicide Girls and golf in the East End, next they played Notting Hill Arts Clubs glamorous Weds night, hosted by Oasis mogul Alan McGee. First act on, Trabant made an entrance, blew the electrics (crack, bang, PA blown) and blew the crowd away with a blinding rendition of Maria (people were singing along and even attempting the whole lighter in the air thing). The other bands were quite honestly terrible and resorted to slagging off the audience and general microphone moaning, leaving Trabant to get an awful lot of attention from the gig goers, a huge percentage of which were bonafide Icelanders. And off they flew, back to you, but not before signing a contract and arranging to come back for a major tour later in the winter.

One Icelander in the audience was ex-Maus frontman Biggi who is releasing a solo album late 2005, produced by the likes of Tim Simenon from Fanclub Productions. Biggi is in good hands. Tim has produced for Björk, Depeche Mode and Sinéad O'Connor. After spending the past year writing the new material, Biggi played his first gig Sat 13th August at The Spitz in London's ubercool East End with his new band Bigital, supporting new London Artrocker-scene act 586, and their comrades Remodel. This one-off performance gave Londonders the chance to see the act in its embryonic stage with only three members of the band playing, while Biggi holds the rest back until it feels right. Go to www.myspace.com/bigital to hear some of his new music, more mature than the popular Maus, there are touches of Elliott Smith, Portishead and the melancholy of Bonnie Prince Billy.

Speaking of which if you are on your way to London for a little late summer jaunt the Bonnie Prince is just one of the acts you can catch. Over the next month if one London club is producing the best live shows it's got to be Camdens Koko (formerly The Camden Palace), in the coming weeks you will be able to see the BPB, post-grunge master Dinosaur Jr., all-girler, Sub Pop-signed Sleater-Kinney and Warps Autechre. Looking further ahead, Iceland's very own MUM will be performing a mammoth back catalogue gig at London City Barbican supporting Cat Power, so if you are going to be in town book it now so as not to be disappointed!

LIVE MUSIC REVIEWS

WHO

> ALICE COOPER

WHERE

Kaplakriki Sports Hall

WHEN

13 August

The Whip Girl Reviews Alice Cooper

By Þórdís Elva Þorvaldsdóttir Bachmann

Funny as it may seem, the self-crowned Prince of Darkness is a huge West Side Story fan. Alice Cooper, (real name Vincent Damon Furnier), claims to have been absolutely blown away by seeing the musical performed on Broadway, and it inspired him to try to bring rock and theatre closer together. This explains his three-decade career using electric chairs, fake blood, actors dressed as scarecrows and severed corpses amongst other things. Alice Cooper's recent concert in Kaplakriki was no exception. Accompanying Cooper on his 2005 Dirty Diamonds tour was his daughter, Calico Cooper, who first appeared on the stage as a vampire, before changing into an insane asylum nurse, a henchman and eventually - Paris Hilton. Calico started the show by intimidating Cooper with her impressive set of vampire fangs, before trying to kill him with a dagger, after which she was beaten and dragged by the hair by her father. A one-up on Ozzy Osbourne.

The August 13th concert was a mix of old hits, which pleased the crowd immensely, and new stuff fewer people had heard, but which was well received. I was by no means disappointed with the level of theatricality on stage. Alice Cooper first appeared in an all-black outfit, topped off with skin tight leather pants, before changing into a red satin, and finally into a white tux. Each song had tailored props. For example, in "Dirty Diamonds," Cooper threw silvery bead necklaces to the eager crowd. In "Billon Dollar Babies," fake money was distributed, and in "Lost in America," Cooper put on a leather jacket with the American flag on the back. In "Feed My Frankenstein," Cooper had fake, severed body parts, which he assembled to form a body in a freestanding coffin on the stage.

The show reached its peak in the "Ballad of Dwight Fry," when henchmen appeared to put Cooper in a straight jacket before escorting him to a guillotine where he was beheaded. Afterwards, Calico, then in her nurse outfit, triumphantly dangled an imitation of Cooper's head. The performance was very kitsch, with over-the-top acting and fake blood that was more pink than red. However, it was very entertaining to watch, and a certain degree of self-deprecating humour seemed to be involved.

I have been asked to write this partially because of my own involvement in the show. In the middle of the concert, Eric Singer, formerly of Kiss, presented a substantial drum solo. The crowd's attention slowly waned, since not much was taking place on the stage. I was sure something interesting was coming up, and to get a better view, I climbed up on my boyfriend's shoulders. Alice Cooper then returned after a costume change, wearing a top hat and carrying a little whip. Since I was located directly in front of the stage and only three metres away, sitting on someone's shoulders, I was at level with Cooper, who looked me straight in the eye while singing. I felt a bit self-conscious, arguably because I was wearing only a sports bra as a top due to the heat, but I used my position to take a picture for a woman who eagerly handed me her camera and gestured for me to use it.

Overlooking the crowd made me notice that nobody else was shoulder-riding like me. After singing a few lines to me, probably because I stuck out of the crowd like a sore thumb, Cooper threw his whip my way. Amazingly enough, I actually caught it--with hundreds of envious eyes upon me and feeling more self-conscious than ever, I quickly climbed down with my newfound treasure.

After the concert, I was known as the "whip girl" and received congrats and pats on the back from other Cooper fans. As I ducked into the bathroom at Kaplakriki, my boyfriend held on to the famous whip. He was approached by a gang of boys who offered him two plectrums, a water bottle the band members had drunk from, a broken piece of bead string and half a bra in exchange for the whip. The offer was kindly turned down.

Since tons of bodily fluids were lost at the concert, I went to Bar 11 to rehydrate myself. The first person I noticed when walking into the bar was Alice Cooper's guitarist, Ryan Roxie. I took my chances and approached the guy, apologizing for bothering him, but telling him the show rocked, deciding I would immediately disappear to make sure I wouldn't come off like a star-struck groupie. The first thing he said was: "Oh, you're the whip girl! I didn't recognize you with your shirt on!"

Surprisingly enough, he was very talkative and told me to bother him by all means, after which he thanked me for coming to the show in the first place. A guy whose track record includes playing with Slash and the Scorpions has every reason to be a diva, but Roxie was not. He told me about his wife and two kids, whose pictures he proudly presented me with. He also told me that Madonna isn't really that pretty in person, and that after living in Hollywood for 14 years, he was glad to move to Stockholm where he currently resides.

I felt cool as all hell when I got to introduce the guy to my friends, who quickly made room for him at our table and got him drinks. Finally, Roxie encouraged us to visit his website, whose address he wrote down in my notebook. He even posed for a picture with me and a friend. Meeting a rock star who is a down to earth gentleman made a rockin' night unforgettable. If I'm ever in the neighbourhood again where Alice Cooper is playing, I'll be the first in line for tickets. That's for sure.

(Alice Cooper has sold 50 million albums. His recent concert was not sold out.

Ryan Roxie's website is www.roxie77.com. It includes a link to Ground: Zorro, the only official Ryan Roxie fan club endorsed by Ryan Roxie himself.)

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Mix GORDON'S with Pleasure

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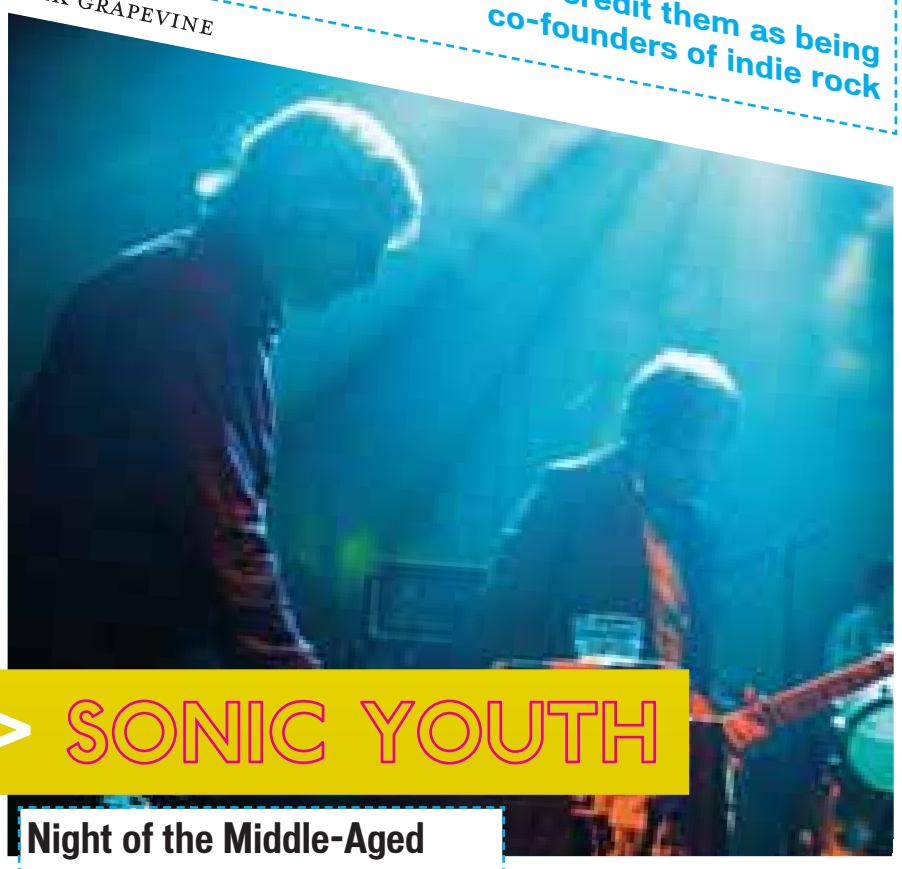
LIVE MUSIC REVIEWS

> SONIC YOUTH

Night of the Middle-Aged Skate Rats

By Paul F Nikolov | Photos by Gúndi

Many in fact credit them as being co-founders of indie rock



WHO
Curver
Ghostigital
Sonic Youth

WHERE
NASA

WHEN
19 August

THE SONIC YOUTH SET LIST

(As taped to the stage, complete with exactly what would be played for encore. All played exactly according to the list.)

Golden Blues
Stones
Pattern
Unmade Bed
Skip Tracer
Tom
Catholic Block
Shadows
Mote
New Hampshire
Rain on Tin
Kool Thing

ENCORE:
White Rooms
Brother James
Teenage

The show was scheduled to begin at 20:00, and with pre-show lines at NASA notoriously long, I practically ran to the venue at 19:45, certain that even with a ticket I'd still end up waiting a while before I could even get in. Not so - at 19:50 the place was empty, the chairs were still up and the staff was seated at one table, smoking. In fact, people wouldn't start coming in until 20:20. Apparently, there isn't that much demand to see the band that everyone who's anyone pretends to like, Sonic Youth.

In their heyday, Sonic Youth were famous in indie circles for creating a sound involving bare-bones rock hooks carried across within a deluge of feedback and noise. Many in fact credit them as being co-founders of indie rock and the Youth have been cited by numerous grunge and post-grunge outfits as an inspiration.

Their sound, however, has changed very little in the past 10 to 15 years, which should mean if you liked them then you'll like them now. That might be the case, but their live show had mixed results.

Curver opened up, playing two songs that were just voice and guitar but still sounded complete, however uninspired. This was followed by his other project, Ghostigital.

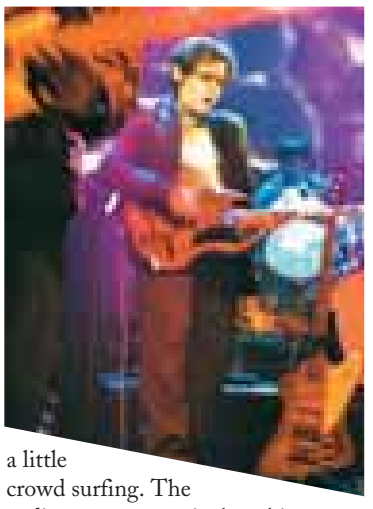
Ghostigital features former Sugarcubes frontman Einar Örn on vocals, two guitarists, a DJ, Curver working a laptop, an old loop tape machine and a few other unidentifiable gadgets, two guitarists, and Einar Örn's son - who didn't look older than 10 or 11 - on trumpet, a kid who showed more professionalism than some musicians three times his age.

Einar Örn has lost none of his hyperactivity, twitching and bounding through all of their songs. Ghostigital's music has heavy industrial overtones, sounding at times like a giant angry robot crushing buildings as it stomps its way over the city, and every musician on stage delivered this assault with passion. For as short as their set was, it was one of the best performances I've seen in Iceland so far, and they left the crowd screaming for more.

The equipment set-up for Sonic Youth was pretty involved. I counted ten beat-up Fender guitars lined up on a rack (with only one bass), and three banks of pedals taped down to the stage. Most of the pedals (including a Mooger Fooger and a 25K OHM) were covered in masking tape, marked with numbers and arrows, but they all looked about as old as the guitars. There were more than a few people photographing these pedals with their mobiles. After much tuning/noodling from the roadies, one of them left a Gibson on a guitar stand, squelching forth a piercing wall of feedback. The crowd roared - the noise was obviously the cue that Sonic Youth were about to mount the stage.

The Youths aren't so young anymore, and the Daisy Duke shorts and glittery top worn by vocalist and bassist Kim Gordon made her look more like a Miami Beach retiree than an indie queen. The others in the group - with the exception of lead guitarist and vocalist Thurston Moore - looked comfortable in their own skin, but 47-year-old Moore was still sporting the skate-rat look: a great bowl of hair over most of his face, oversized t-shirt and baggy jeans.

The band started with a relatively subdued "Golden Blues," while footage from a waterslide at a theme park was projected on the wall behind them. Throughout the show, most of the footage projected behind them would have a watery theme. The song ended with a great deal of noise, and then Moore decided to make his way into the crowd, sliding his guitar over NASA's mirrored pillars, banging it against the PA speaker about three metres over the heads of the audience, followed by



a little crowd surfing. The audience was ecstatic, but this would prove to be one of two high points in the entire show.

Having sufficiently blown their load so early in the set, even classics like "Skip Tracer" and "Shadows" sounded flat and uninspired, which made the change of guitars after every song seem like it was done more for effect than out of necessity. A few of Reykjavík's hipper set stayed close to the front of the stage, feigning being rocked. One man in the crowd felt compelled to shout his love for Gordon after every song, though she was decidedly unmoved by the declarations.

On the positive side, there was very little between-song chatter. On only two occasions did Moore talk to the crowd - both times turning brief technical adjustments - speaking in a parlance to match his attire:

"So what books are you all reading these days? Harry Potter? Is that the shit now? How about movies? Did ya'll see The Island with fuckin Scarlett Johansson? Have you seen that fuckin shit? She seems a little young to be making all that headway and shit. Nah, I'm just playin. She's cool."

Again, this man is 47 years old.

The audience, with the exception of the previously-mentioned indies, remained only mildly impressed by their set. That is, until the Youth began to play the last song in their set before the encore, "Kool Thing." At that point, people shrieked and howled, and I watched a mullet-sporting boy with a "fuzz-stache" push a younger girl out of his way so he could get to the front of the crowd. The previously-subdued Gordon suddenly began dancing like an early-60s go-go dancer. She sang with authority for the first time, even daring to step into a crowd that seemed determined to rip her to pieces if she got any closer.

This impressive performance ended with another ear-bleeding wall of noise, and the band walked off stage, leaving the crowd with the musical equivalent of blue balls. They stomped and chanted for an encore, and just when it seemed they were about to give up on the idea, the band returned, only to deliver lacklustre, tediously noisy versions of "White Rooms," "Brother James" and "Teenage."

On my way out, I ran into a friend of mine who told he'd me waited all his life to see Sonic Youth live. When I asked what he thought, he replied hesitantly, "I don't know. I guess I was expecting something more."

Maybe we all were. For myself, I wasn't expecting so much a flawless recreation of my past, as maybe some signs of development into new territory, which didn't happen. It would appear as though Sonic Youth – the band that once defined innovation in underground music for many – have worked themselves into a comfortable, Rolling Stones-style rut.

MUSIC AND NIGHTLIFE LISTINGS

Music and nightlife events usually start around 21:00, unless otherwise stated. Pubs close at 01.00 on weekdays and much, much later on weekends. For those just wanting to party, the pubs and clubs don´t get crowded until after midnight on weekends, although Thursday is a semi-official night out.

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 2

DJ Daddi Disco. *Thorvaldsen*
DJ Gísli Galdur. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Gulli. *Café 22*
DJ J.B.K. *Oliver*
DJ Jón Gestur. *Café Victor*
DJ KGB (indie/dance). *Sirkus*
DJ Night: KING UNIQUE feat. Toybox at 23:00. Pre-orders are 1000 ISK and available in Þruman record store. 1500 ISK by door. *Nasa*
DJ Óli Dóri. *Bar 11*
DJ Steinunn and Silja. *Dillon*
DJ Þröstur 3000 (pop/dance). *Sólon*
DJs Áki Pain and Atli skemmtanalögga. (Pop/Dance) *Pravda Club*
Franz and Kristó entertain before DJ Teddy (USA) takes over. *Prikið*
GHL Django jazz. *Café Rósenberg*
Grapevine Bad Taste: Days of Our Lives. *Smekkleysa plötubúð*
RÆTUR, the reggae side-project of reggae band Hjálmar at midnight. Admission 500 ISK. *Gaukur á Stöng*
Rock: Brain Police, Potentian, Sólstafir. 23:00. *Grand Rokk*
Troubadors Böddi and Danni. DJ Jhonny. *Hressó*

Tjarnarbíó, September 2nd

BENNI HEMM HEMM & STÓRSVEIT NIX NOLTES

There are 13 musicians in Benni Hemm Hemm – not too many, not too few. In fact, 13 has been widely regarded as an ideal number for groups ranging from Jesus and the apostles to witch covens all across Europe. So they've got that going for them. Playing with them are Stórsveit Nix Noltes, a band that does Balkan music (Bulgarian music in particular) exceptionally well, possibly better than anyone else playing Balkan music in Iceland today.

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 3

Concert: Pan, We Made God, Telepathetics. 20:00. 500 ISK. *TPM Tónlistarþróunarmiðstöð*
Concert: Robert Athill (Mikael Svensson, Petter Winnberg, Nils Törnquist, Kias Ericson) at midnight. Admission 500 ISK. *Gaukur á Stöng*
Cover-group Fönn. DJ Jhonny. *Hressó*
DJ Andrea Jóns (Rock). *Dillon*
DJ B-Ruff. *Prikið*
DJ Daddi Disco. *Thorvaldsen*
DJ Jón Atli. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Jón Gestur, *Café Victor*
DJ Maggi Lego (dance). *Sirkus*
DJ Matti. *Café 22*
DJ Þröstur 3000 (pop/dance). *Sólon*
DJs Suzy and Elvis. *Oliver*
GHL Django jazz. *Café Rósenberg*
Pop: Legendary pop-group Todmobile. Admission 1500 ISK. *Nasa*
Power-pop: Dýrðin and Hanoin Jane. DJ Gulli. *Bar 11*
Pravda celebrate their 2nd anniversary by having Djs Atli skemmtanalögga and Áki pain DJ from midnight and onwards. (Pop/Dance) *Pravda Club*
Rock: Singapore Sling and Kimono at midnight. Admission 1000 ISK. *Grand Rokk*
The Reykjavík Gospel-choir. Tickets are 2200 to 2900 ISK depending on seats. *Laugardalsíshöll*

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 4

Bridge-tournament at 14:00. Sign up at Grand Rokk or by e-mail: grandrokk@grandrokk.is. *Grand Rokk*
DJ Arna. *Kaffibarinn*

MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 5

"Downtown sucks!": Opening Party. *Stúdentakjallarinn*

TUESDAY

SEPTEMBER 6

Concert: Patti Smith. *Nasa*

WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 7

DJ Check. *Sirkus*
DJ Gay Thug. *Prikið*
Quiz night at 20:00. Jói troubador follows. *Stúdentakjallarinn*

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 8

DJ Kári. *Prikið*
DJ Kobbi Mastermix Junior. Mojito-night. *Thorvaldsen*
DJ Margeir. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Pods. *Café Victor*
DJ President Bongo (dance). *Sirkus*
Frisco (Kristó from Lights on the Highway and Franz from Ensími/Dr. Spock). *Dillon*
Grapevine Bad Taste: Tommygun and Telepathetics. *Bar 11*
Magni from pop-group Á móti sól featuring guests. Easy house music on the lower floor. *Sólon*
Rock-concert: Búdrýgindi, Innvortis, Retron and Morðingjarnir. 19:30. 500 ISK. No age limit. Special guests: Skítur. *TPM Tónlistarþróunarmiðstöð*
Troubador Hermann. *Hressó*

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 9

Concert: Megas, Súkkat & Big Band. *Grand Rokk*
DJ Andrea Jóns (Rock). *Dillon*
DJ Árni Sveins (alternative/dance). *Sirkus*
DJ Gulli. *Café 22*
DJ Gunni. *Café Victor*
DJ Hlynur. *Thorvaldsen*
DJ Kári. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Krummi from Mínus. *Bar 11*
DJ Þröstur 3000 (pop/dance). *Sólon*
DJs Atli skemmtanalögga and Áki Pain. (Pop/Dance) *Pravda Club*
Franz and Kristó entertain before DJs Blue Lagoon and Sahara take over. *Prikið*
Grapevine Bad Taste: Siggi Ármann at 17:00. *Smekkleysa plötubúð*
International party. *Stúdentakjallarinn*
Mood - blues band. *Café Rósenberg*
Orðið Tónlist: Rass, Dr. Spock, Mammút, Jeff Who?, Hair Doctor. *Iðnó – Theatre*
Rock-concert: Búdrýgindi, Innvortis, Retron and Morðingjarnir. 21:30. No cover charge. Special guests Múgsefjun. *Classic rock.*

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 10

Ball: Donald Trump steps on stage with 'The Lizard'. *Gaukur á Stöng*
Concert: Hölt hóra, Hekken, Bulldozer. *Grand Rokk*
Cover-group GHL Trio from 23:00 - 00:30. Atli skemmtanalögga and Áki Pain DJ from 00:30 (Pop/Dance). *Pravda Club*
Cover-group: Mát. DJ Heiðar Austmann. *Hressó*
DJ Andrea Jóns (Rock). *Dillon*
DJ Gulli. *Bar 11*
DJ Gunni. *Café Victor*
DJ Hlynur. *Thorvaldsen*
DJ KGB. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Magic. *Prikið*
DJ Margeir: Special dance party. *Sirkus*
DJ Palli. *Café 22*
DJ Þröstur 3000 (pop/dance). *Sólon*
Grapevine Bad Taste: Cotton + 1 at 15:00. *Smekkleysa plötubúð*
Mood - blues band. *Café Rósenberg*
Orðið Tónlist: Dalek, Ghostigital, Kimono, Skakkamanage. *Iðnó – Theatre*
Pop: Nýdönsk; giant ball. Doors open at 23:00. *Nasa*

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 11

DJ Arna. *Kaffibarinn*

WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 14

DJ Gay Thug. *Prikið*
DJ Jón Atli. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Pan (beats). *Sirkus*
Live Music. *Dillon*
Poetry night hosted by Mike Pollock. *Café Rósenberg*

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 15

Blúsbrjótarnir (blues). *Café Rósenberg*
DJ Árni E (dance). *Sirkus*
DJ Margeir. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Pods. *Café Victor*
DJ Teddy (USA). *Prikið*
DJs Anna Rakel & Sara. Mojito-night. *Thorvaldsen*
Magni from pop-group Á móti sól featuring guests. Easy house music on the lower floor. *Sólon*
Troubadors Böddi and Danni. *Hressó*

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 16

Acoustic: Helgi Valur. DJ Jhonny. *Hressó*
Ball: Cover-group Oxford. *Gaukur á Stöng*
DJ Andrea Jóns (Rock). *Dillon*
DJ B-Ruff. *Prikið*
DJ Daddi Disco. *Thorvaldsen*
DJ Gunni. *Café Victor*
DJ Matti. *Café 22*
DJ Óli Dóri. *Bar 11*
DJ Þröstur 3000 (pop/dance). *Sólon*
DJs Atli skemmtanalögga and Áki Pain. (Pop/Dance) *Pravda Club*
Live music. *Café Rósenberg*

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 17

Concert: Days of Our Lives and Dikta. 22:00. *Stúdentakjallarinn*
Concert: Denver, Potentian. *Grand Rokk*
DJ Andrea Jóns (Rock). *Dillon*
DJ Árni Sveins. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Daddi Disco. *Thorvaldsen*
DJ Gunni. *Café Victor*
DJ Jón Atli (dance/indie/hip-hop) *Sirkus*
DJ Þröstur 3000 (pop/dance). *Sólon*
DJs Gullfoss and Geysir. *Prikið*
GHL Trio from 23:00 to 00:30. DJs Atli skemmtanalögga and Áki Pain. (Pop/Dance) *Pravda Club*
Live music. *Café Rósenberg*
Pop-duo Sviðasultan. DJ Jhonny. *Hressó*

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 18

Petter & co from Hjálmar. *Kaffibarinn*

WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 21

DJ Gay Thug. *Prikið*
DJ Ingvar Geirs. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Vala. *Sirkus*
Quiz-night. 20:00. *Stúdentakjallarinn*

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 22

Andrea Gylfadóttir, Eddi Lár and Gummi P. *Café Rósenberg*
DJ Kári. *Prikið*
DJ Pods. *Café Victor*
DJ President Bongo (dance). *Sirkus*
DJs Adda & Edda. *Kaffibarinn*
Djs Ellen & Erna. Mojito-night. *Thorvaldsen*
Magni from pop-group Á móti sól featuring guests. Easy house music on the lower floor. *Sólon*
Troubador Hermann. *Hressó*

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 23

Acoustic: Helgi Valur. DJ Heiðar Austmann. *Hressó*
Ball: Cover-group Fönn. *Gaukur á Stöng*
DJ Árni E. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Brynjar Már. *Sólon*
DJ Hlynur. *Thorvaldsen*
DJ Maggi Legó (dance). *Sirkus*
DJ Metro *Café Victor*
DJs Atli skemmtanalögga and Áki Pain. (Pop/Dance) *Pravda Club*
Franz and Kristó entertain until DJ Jói takes over. *Prikið*
Lights on the Highway. *Dillon*

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 24

Concert: Touch. 22:00. *Stúdentakjallarinn*
DJ Andrea Jóns (Rock). *Dillon*
DJ Brynjar Már. *Sólon*
DJ Hlynur. *Thorvaldsen*
DJ KGB (indie/dance). *Sirkus*
DJ Metro. *Café Victor*
DJ Teddy (USA). *Prikið*
DJs Adda & Edda. *Kaffibarinn*
GHL Trio from 23:00 to 00:30. DJs Atli skemmtanalögga and Áki Pain. (Pop/Dance) *Pravda Club*
Gotti. DJ Heiðar Austmann. *Hressó*
Live music. *Café Rósenberg*

WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 28

DJ Benni. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Gay Thug. *Prikið*
Jazz festival: Hot'n'Spicy Trio at 20:30. Admission is 1800 ISK. *Kaffi Reykjavík*
Opening of the Reykjavík Jazz Festival at 17:00. *City Hall Cafeteria and Exhibition*
Poetry night hosted by Mike Pollock. *Café Rósenberg*
Pop-duo: Sviðasultan. *Hressó*
Quiz-night. 20:00. *Stúdentakjallarinn*

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 29

Concert: Bensín (Gasoline). *Gaukur á Stöng*
DJ Benni. *Prikið*
DJ Jón Atli. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Pods. *Café Victor*
DJ Sóley. Mojito-night. *Thorvaldsen*
Frisco (Kristó from Lights on the Highway and Franz from Ensími/Dr. Spock). *Dillon*
Hilmar Garðarson. *Café Rósenberg*
Jazz festival: 00:00: Koko. 1000 ISK. *Pravda Club*
Jazz festival: 20:30: Óskar Guðjónsson's be-bop sextet. 1800 ISK. *Kaffi Reykjavík*
Jazz festival: 22:30: Karmelgebach. 1500 ISK. *Pravda Club*
Jazz festival: Midnight: Jazz club. 1000 ISK. *Póstbarinn*
Magni from pop-group Á móti sól featuring guests. Easy house music on the lower floor. *Sólon*

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 30

Cover-group Fönn. DJ Jhonny. *Hressó*
DJ Árni Sveins. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Brynjar Már. *Sólon*
DJ Daddi Disco. *Thorvaldsen*
DJ Jón Atli (indie/dance/hip-hop) *Sirkus*
DJ Jón Gestur, *Café Victor*
DJ KGB. *Prikið*
DJs Atli skemmtanalögga and Áki Pain. (Pop/Dance) *Pravda Club*
Jazz festival: 20:30: "Guðmundarvaka". 3000 ISK. *Hótel Saga*
Jazz festival: 22:30: M&M Quartet + guests. 1800 ISK. *Kaffi Reykjavík*
Jazz festival: Midnight: Jazz club. 1000 ISK. *Pravda Club*
Jazz festival: Midnight: Jazz club. 1000 ISK. *Póstbarinn*
Jazz festival: Midnight: Rodent. 1500 ISK. *Kaffi Reykjavík*

SATURDAY

OCTOBER 1

DJ Árni E. *Kaffibarinn*
DJ Árni Sveins (beats/dance). *Sirkus*
DJ Brynjar Már. *Sólon*
DJ Daddi Disco. *Thorvaldsen*
DJ Jón Gestur. *Café Victor*
GHL Trio from 23:00 to 00:30. DJs Atli skemmtanalögga and Áki Pain. (Pop/Dance) *Pravda Club*
Jazz festival: 12:00: Jazz-brunch - Ingi Eydal. 2500 ISK (buffet included). *Hótel Borg*
Jazz festival: 16:00: Reykjavík Big Band perform Duke Ellington. 1500 ISK. *Nasa*
Jazz festival: 20:30: Phil Woods / Björn Thoroddsen Quartet. 3500 ISK. *Nasa*
Jazz festival: 22:30: MEGAS - the jazzed version. 1800 ISK. *Kaffi Reykjavík*
Jazz festival: Jazz Club at midnight. 1000 ISK. *Kaffi Reykjavík*
Jazz festival: Jazz club at midnight. 1000 ISK. *Póstbarinn*
Jazz festival: Jazz club at midnight. 1000 ISK. *Pravda Club*

SUNDAY

OCTOBER 2

Jazz festival: 16:00: Ellington's hymns. 2500 ISK. *Langholtskirkja*
Jazz festival: 20:30: Final concert - Ragnheiður Gröndal Octet. 1500 ISK. *Broadway Entertainment Hall*

THURSDAY

OCTOBER 6

Magni from pop-group Á móti sól featuring guests. Easy house music on the lower floor. *Sólon*

MOVIES AND THEATRE

The Island Movie Review

Here is a movie about a greedy biotechnical corporation involved in the shady business of eugenics, infringing on civil rights and moral law, and advertising its products with deceit. A movie that indirectly connects Puma, MSN, Xbox, Calvin Klein, and other multinational brands with a system that facilitates the means for violating the human body. A movie that evokes pictures reminiscent of Dr. Mengels of Nazi-Germany. Is this the steaming concoction of conspiracy theorists? Not at all: this is The Island starring Ewan McGregor and Scarlett Johansson, a film by Hollywood's very own Michael Bay who directed such blockbusters as Armageddon and the Rock-- ironically, sponsored by Puma, Microsoft, and Xbox.

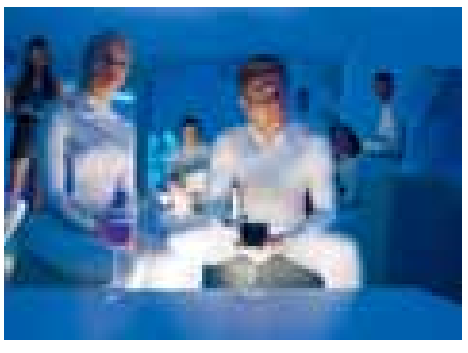
Viewing the Island of Clones from an Island of Sold DNA

The storyline takes place 17 years from now and the particulars of how the company practices the science of cloning are so far removed from anything that will be possible that no sane person could take it as a serious threat. However, in this movie there are some alarming hints, signs and allusions, not even skin-deep, and it doesn't take a pedantic film critic to notice them.

These hints point to a disturbing reality that makes one wonder whether this is not just another Hollywood movie washed ashore on our Atlantic island but a movie that deals with issues very close to the Icelandic population; closer than skin-deep, as close as DNA.

Selling the Human Body

At the turn of the millennium, deCODE, *Íslensk erfðagreining,* which is run by the charismatic Kári Stefánsson, offered to take advantage of the unique possibilities for genetic research in Iceland: 1) a relatively homogenous population and 2) a complete and extensive genealogy of Icelandic ancestry. (Every "pure-blooded" Icelander can track his or her origins back to the first settlers of Island 900 AD.) This enables the researchers to track down hereditary genes, potentially alleviating the symptoms of diseases before they can be screened by regular means. Already, deCODE genetics have pushed the limits of what was thought possible in genetic medicine, with groundbreaking work in isolating the genes that could trigger schizophrenia and Alzheimer's.



This sounds great but what about the controversy? In order to take full advantage of mapping the population, the company was given access to complete public health records. As in other European countries such records are subject to government ownership to allow the public sector to provide near full coverage for the people's medical needs. deCODE was then able to create a national database with information on our family relations, diseases-- lifestyle related or otherwise, regardless of doctor-patient privacy; this information was provided directly from the state and deCODE given an exclusive license. Many questions arose: The data are encrypted and de-personalized, but how safe is the system? People were given the chance to fill out a petition to be excluded from the database, hence securing the constitutional rights of individual privacy, but should it not have been the other way around? Those volunteering for participation could sign up – and the rest of us would have the benefit of the doubt.

These concerns were swept away by government and company, allowing deCODE to benefit from the fact that only a small percentage of the population signed off: typically, well-educated people with access to foreign language media. (A small cultural note: many Icelanders stick to the belief that we live in a classless society.) Those Icelanders without access to foreign language media would have had to access the information themselves, find the initiative, ponder ethical questions, and filter through a lot of legal and technical jargon in order to build up the courage to face the obvious: A private company is making money with information about *my* health, *my* genes, and *my* body.

Did the press react? It certainly did internationally with headlines in the New York Times like Iceland, the Nation of Clones (1999) and People Are Not Commodities (1999). Special seminars in biology and bioethics were dedicated to Iceland in universities like Princeton and Berkeley in the U.S.

There was some protest in Iceland but it was deemed untimely when the matter was under consideration in the parliament – the government, headed by Prime Minister (now Foreign Minister) Davíð Oddsson, retorted that the decision should have its due course through proper channels. In Iceland, where the distinction between the legislative and executive powers has been continuously blurred, many had their proper worries. On

December 17, 1999, the 123rd session of Alþingi, Iceland's parliament, passed the Act on Health Sector Database. After the decision was made, which favoured deCODE genetics, protesters were advised to pack their bags, the cause was lost; people should move on. After all, the stakes are high in the health business, and who doesn't want to help the sick? You were either for the database or against science, medicine, and high-tech jobs for Icelanders.

Case closed. Over. Even before it begins. The narrative of protest in Iceland doesn't seem to be able to include the present tense – it deals with past tense and lost causes, and a future that looks so remote to most Icelanders that big issues like DNA-ethics, eugenics, informed consent, intellectual property, unfair appropriation of personal information—well, all this sounds like strange science fiction.

At Least Give the Natives Glass Beads

The same narrative repeated itself when foreign protestors hiked up to the highland, this summer, and disturbed work at the construction site for the Kárahnjúkar dam. The Icelandic media were flustered. Why protest *after* the work has begun? The Right reacted with affected remorse that now was the time when "professional protestors" challenge the authority of democratically chosen governments. The main concern of Left and Centre-Leftist columnists, such as the writers Guðmundur A. Thorsson, Egill Helgason and Mörður Árnason, was that the protest was untimely, and while they ridiculed the harsh and unusual reaction of the police, under the direction of Independence Party Minister of Justice Björn Bjarnason, they disssociated themselves from the protestors.

This comes at a time when the 21st century will pose three major challenges to human dignity:

1) The *human body* – Who owns it? What's it worth? What can we do with it?

2) *Open space* – what should inhabit it? Mother Nature, the public or the excavating machines of corporate shareholders?

3) *Information* – Who should control it? When does it become private property and what's in it for me?

The controversy around deCODE genetics and the Kárahnjúkar dam has put Iceland in the hot spot regarding these issues. But there is nothing hot when it comes to Icelandic vigilance. With the decision of 1999 to allow the deCODE database, the case of bioethics

cannot be closed. Icelandic columnists and intellectuals cannot simply shrug off these matters in past tense remorse.

We have always preferred to sit the storm out, rather than ride it, or god forbid, counter it. A local expression goes "Talking doesn't change the weather or the kings of Denmark" – so we should embrace our fate. But when it comes to DNA and Open Space, others will be there ahead of us if we do nothing. And we should be embarrassed when Harvard lawyer and researcher Jamaica Potts writes a report on deCODE genetics, titled: At Least Give the Natives Glass Beads: An Examination of the Bargain Made between Iceland and deCODE Genetics (2002).

So why should we discuss deCODE genetics six years later? Especially, when many concerns around the database have been proven unwarranted, and deCODE has up to now been unable to capitalize the information as first intended due to technical issues? Well, here is something, for starters: The information of my ancestry and health record is still an asset licensed to a private company. But what kind of a property is such information?

The very state of such property hasn't been fully resolved conclusively anywhere in world. To keep up open discussions on such matters in the media demands vigilance and constant reminders – protesting could be one way – but strangely enough, I think a scriptwriter in Hollywood may have beat us to it.

To Save Us: Subversive Product Placement

And now, for the hints in the movie The Island – But plot addicts beware, there are spoilers ahead! Ewan McGregor plays the character Lincoln Six Echo who finds himself in a super-posh high-tech construct. He thinks he was brought there because all life has vanished on earth due to deadly contamination. He doesn't remember anything of his former life outside. He very much likes super-hot Jordan Two Delta (Scarlett Johansson). He belongs to a white-clad work force that leads perfectly healthy lives, shepherded by a black-clad police force – which definitely has

a hidden agenda. Everybody is content, but Lincoln Six Echo is different – he is curious about the outside.

In fact, after some struggle he finds out that he is in fact a clone. He is a full-scale copy of a person living in the outside world, actually in L.A. year 2019. Everything was a lie, and his only purpose is to be a spare replacement container. And when the time comes, when the real person wants a new kidney, he will be killed and harvested for living tissues. People paid a lot of money for this perfect health insurance. But they are unaware that the clones are actual human beings. They are led to believe that the organs are produced by vegetative machines. An evil scientist leads the company that is responsible.

Lincoln and Jordan escape, meet some real people, have sex for the first time, and realize the people are not good, but "will do anything to survive." So when they meet their real counterparts, who are called the sponsors (hint!), they realize that "people want to eat hamburgers, without seeing the cows." And that's the reason why there always will be people with enough money to buy outrageous commodities, even if the cost includes violating bodies. After all, we can always kid ourselves.

This movie raises moral issues but solves them as any science fiction movie does. Usually there is a grim future but this is always the result of human nature. Man is so evil that things must go wrong. But then there is a good guy, and, by evoking the most traditional values, he wins the girl in the end. So why is The Island different? The overall plot is in line with the abovementioned formula. But then there is this: the black-clad watchmen and doctors call the clones the *products*. They do this to strip them of all human value. They are taught that they have a special purpose. They are meant to be replacements.

This leads us to another common feature of the Hollywood film – the *product placement*. Whenever you see a brand in a movie – Honda, Pepsi, Seiko, etc. – someone has paid a lot of money to replace a generic prop with a significant, branded one. A car will not just be car in the movie, but a car that carries the message that this car is a Honda. Information is made valuable, and you the receiver, make it so – without getting paid, need I say. You must not be aware of this, so advertisement psychologists measure the threshold of your

consciousness, and the brand is only shown for a short period of time, for you not to register it. In The Island, this threshold is blatantly crossed, which means that someone in the editing room conspired with the scriptwriter to make fools of the advertisers. This is done in a movie that plays with the idea that corporate science is replacing the natural with the artificial. A clone can replace a human being – and a human body is replaced by something that can be turned into a commodity. Genes are made to be a production replacement: A single piece of information that suddenly gets a value and is claimed for ownership.

Does this sound familiar? Surely, the companies that paid a lot to get their brand shown in the movie wouldn't want to be connected with the evil done in the movie. But by this little allusion, and many more, the damage is done. The scriptwriter may very well have succeeded with a small subterfuge to protest against a genre that is conservative

and business that is heavily dependent on advertisement.

And here is a long shot. Maybe the scriptwriter had Iceland in mind when he wrote the script for The Island. A remote island, the healthy blue eyes, the nationwide capitalization of hereditary information. If so he would surely have been inspired after listening to the ABC reporting where, for a broad U.S. audience, Richard Gizbert said: "In effect, Iceland is treating its unique genetic heritage as a natural resource." And here are the morals: Even in a narrative genre like science fiction, where the good are good and the bad are bad, there is always room for some subversive pranks. And even in a country where people are brought up with the narrative *that resistance is futile*, there is room, right now, for reminders that make us uneasy about past choices – be it science or fiction.

■ By Valur Antonsson

The Art of meeting People in Reykjavík

What is *the difference between Reykjavík and cities such as Edinburgh, Oslo or Hamburg? The main difference between Reykjavík and other European cities is geothermal water. Reykjavík is heated with thermal water, a natural resource that causes virtually no pollution.*

One of *the many uses of geothermal water is bathing. Nowhere else in the world are there as many pools and baths per capita as in Reykjavík, and no other nation frequents swimming pools as often as the Icelanders.*

Reykjavík's Thermal Pools and Baths *have an extremely positive affect on overall wellness, the main reason why so many residents visit them regularly. Reykjavíkers also enjoy going to the thermal pools to meet people and discuss matters of the day, a custom they have in common with the ancient Romans. This social activity mostly takes place in the hotpots: small circular pools of thermal water kept at temperatures ranging from 37°C - 42°C (98°F - 111°F).*

Reykjavík's thermal swimming pools and baths – Source of health, fitness and well-being.

www.design.is @ 2005

Water in the hotpots *has a unique natural ability to transform all who sit in it into philosophers -- which is why visiting hotpots at the Thermal Pools is a great way to meet Reykjavíkers. Not long after you sit in one of these hotpots, someone will address you in Icelandic. When you explain that you are here on a visit, an interesting conversation may well begin about anything between heaven and earth. And if you need reliable information about something in the city, for example advice about a good eatery or what's "hot" at the moment, a hotpot chat is probably the best and most dependable source of information.*

You haven't really been to Reykjavík until you have visited a Thermal Pool and Bath, and sat back in a hotpot filled with wellness water and interesting people.

Reykjavík Spa City
ESPA European Spas Association

w w w . s p a c i t y . i s

MOVIES AND THEATRE

Velcrow Ripper

10 Reasons to Go to the Reykjavík International Film Festival

1. This is a once a year chance to see the best independent films from all over the world. The focus will be on new talented directors, Iranian cinematography and human rights. And, of course, there's a special selection for kids. Politically-aware children… we can dream.

2. You want to hear a guy talk about getting arrested in a public toilet with his pants down. George Michael's documentary A Different Story will be shown at the festival.

3. Everyone else in Europe has already seen it: Gegen die Wand. It won a Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival for a reason. No fairytale but real life.

4. You want to get 2.5 credits on your literature or film BA studies at the University of Iceland. If you'll work as an intern at the festival, attend seminars and turn in a good paper, the credits are yours.

5. Alejandro Jodorowsky. Will the cult classic El Topo be shown? And will the legend himself be there? There's only one way to find out.

6. You're considering moving to Royston Vasey and want to make up your mind. The festival will premiere the League of Gentlemen's film Apocalypse.

7. You're a cult classic junkie. Admit it. Go to the movie marathon that includes a midnight snack, living dead, chainsaws and a healthy breakfast.

8. You want to become a filmmaker. Here's your chance to mingle and meet the celebs. Abbas Kiarostami, Elle Flanders, Oliver Stoltz and Stuart Samuels are among the guests.

9. You've always wanted to see a forbidden film. Metal detectors and security guards will be present as the Canadian film What Remains of Us is shown. Why? Because it's a documentary about a young Tibetan refugee who returns to her homeland with a video message of the Dalai Lama. There are only three copies of this film in the world and the Chinese authorities are not amused. In order to protect the people who appear in the film, everyone will be screened before entering.

10. A master class by filmmaker Velcrow Ripper. He went to the ground zeros of this world to interview people who experienced catastrophes. Ripper has filmed in countries like Cambodia, Afghanistan and Bosnia.

The Reykjavík International Film Festival will run from the 28th of September until the 9th of October. For detailed information, check out www.filmfest.is

■ By Ellen de Jong

Movie Listings

Premieres:
2.9. The Land of the Death
9.9. Deuce Bigalow 2 – European Gigolo
9.9. Cinderella Man
9.9. Strákarnir Okkar
9.9. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
16.9. Night Watch
16.9. The Cave
16.9. Sky High
16.9. Brothers Grimm
30.9. Lords of Dogtown

Smárabíó
Smáralind
201 Kópavogur
Phone: 564-0000
www.smarabio.is

Broken Flowers
The Longest Yard
Fantastic Four
Sin City
Wedding Crashers
Ævintyraferðin
The Adventures of Sharboy and Lavagirl in 3D

Laugarásbíó
Laugarás
104 Reykjavík
Phone: 553-2075
www.laugarasbio.is

The Skeleton Key
Fantastic Four
Ævintyraferðin
War of the Worlds
Wedding Crashers

Regnboginn
Hverfisgata 54
101 Reykjavík
Phone: 551-9000
www.regnboginn.is

Broken Flowers
Fantastic Four
Wedding Crashers
The Longest Yard
Ævintyraferðin
Hostage

Háskólabíó
Hagatorg
107 Reykjavík
Phone: 551-9000
www.haskolabio.is

Head in the Clouds
The Island
Racing Stripes
Madagascar
The Skeleton Key
Batman Begins
Herbie: Fully Loaded

Sam Bíóin
Álfabakki 8
109 Reykjavík
Phone: 587-8900
www.sambio.is

The Dukes of Hazzard
Deck Dogz
Kicking & Screaming
Racing Stripes
Herbie: Fully Loaded
Madagascar
The Skeleton Key
The Island

Sam Bíóin
Kringlan 4-6
103 Reykjavík
Phone: 588-0800
www.sambio.is

The Dukes of Hazzard
The Perfect Man
Racing Stripes
Madagascar
Herbie: Fully Loaded
Batman Begins
Deck Dogz

The Reykjavík Dance Festival: Overcoming Isolation

Johann Freyr Björgvinsson is one of the founding choreographers of the Reykjavík Dance Festival. Started four years ago, the festival of modern dance now draws a large, diverse international group, and a larger and larger audience, with 900 people attending in 2004. This year, Björgvinsson's work, Confessions of an Amnesiac, will be performed on Thursday, September 1st at Borgarleikhusid, the city theatre.

Grapevine popped in the theatre to watch the rehearsal and to talk to Johann. There are four dancers on stage, no music. One man, three women. Johann claps his hands to give a beat, the dancers move while clutched to the walls. Each person in his or her own world. Powerful movements. Afterwards, Björgvinsson fills me in: "The 30-minute piece came together last winter. It was first performed in the basement of Klink og Bank, a huge place. Music was made especially from those surroundings, with nails, sand and things like that. The performance at the festival will be an experiment because of the smaller space. We'll put a big canvas up on the walls with bags of paint, and when the dancers touch them the bags explode. We did the same with smaller pieces of canvas at Klink og Bank. Also, we'll be using the music that was made then."

At rehearsal, the work seems very unusual, even though there are no bags of paint present. So how would Björgvinsson describe his work? "I try to fight the natural, go for the uncomfortable movements. Go against the stream, but make it flow nevertheless. Concept wise I like heavy, dramatic work, there is beauty in drama. I want to touch people's souls, want them to experience something different. New, strange, but unexpectable. The biggest influence on my work comes from Jiri Kylian. When I saw his work for the first time, I thought: this is it! He rocked my world, it made so much sense. Better than anything."

For those of you who haven't heard of Kylian, his works caused a revolution in the dance scene and have inspired many. But how can an Icelandic choreographer get that inspiration while living on this island?
"It's hard, because there is basically nothing outside the Icelandic Dance Company. I've done five projects so far this year, which has been amazing and hectic, but I feel so empty now. I try to go abroad as much as possible, I need new influences. Maybe I'll move to London for a year, there is so much happening there. Also, if you want to be a full time choreographer like I am, then you need to go to other countries. I started my own production company and I just finished working in New York. But I cannot deny the fact that I'm Icelandic, I cannot forget my heritage. I think that's what makes me different."

Safe

Olöf Ingolfsdottir agrees with Johann about the difficulty to stay inspired in Iceland. She is one of the other founding choreographers and has worked abroad a great deal in the past.

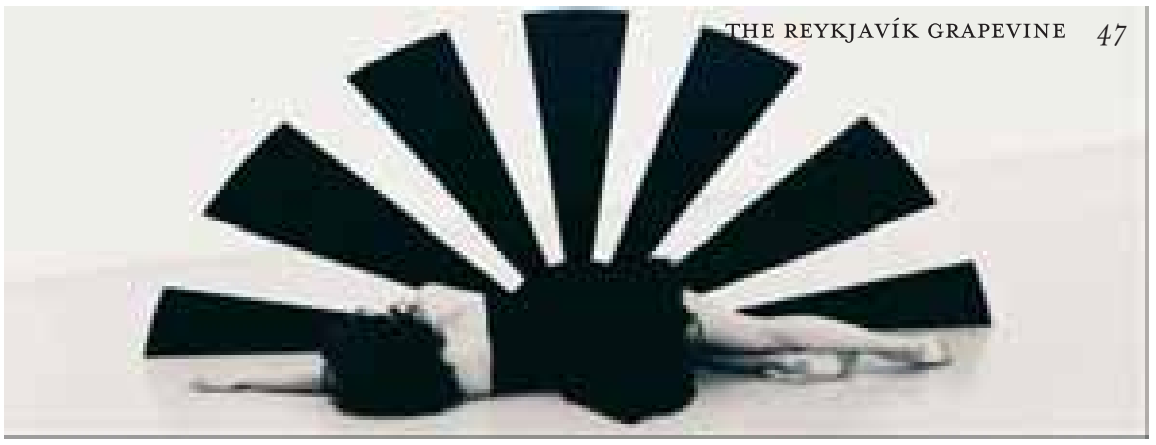
"It is not healthy to stay in Iceland forever," she tells me. "In fact, it is necessary for every Icelander to go away sometimes. I have been abroad regularly, not only to see dance, but to be in another environment. For a choreographer it is safe to stay in Iceland, but you can't compare yourself to others."

Oddly enough, her piece for the festival is called heima er best, (home is best—also translated as "home sweet home"). Her work will be performed by herself and two other female dancers on Sunday afternoon, September 4th. It seems a bit strange not to perform in the evening, but there's a reason for that. Ingolfsdóttir's piece is especially for kids. She describes the style as dancetheatre. "This work was made especially for the festival. There are not many pieces for children. I wanted to see if it was very different to make something for children, a totally different audience, but I found out it wasn't. It is fun, a light-hearted work, meant to make you feel good. It shows that grown ups can play too."

By Ellen de Jong

The Reykjavik Dance Festival will be held at the city theatre, Borgarleikhusid, from Thursday September 1st til Sunday 4th. Check out the complete program at www.dancefestival.is
Ticket sales from Borgarleikhusid, Listabraut 3 (next to Kringlan), call 5688000.

You can buy a ticket for each performance for 2000 kronur or get a four-day pass for only 4000 kronur. Heima er best will cost 800 kronur a ticket.



Heima er best

Crystall

BOOK REVIEW

There's Nothing Wrong with a Cow on a Swing

Mamma Mö Rólar (Mama Moo Swings)

The plot of this story, with a vocabulary aimed at children entering grade school, is simple enough: one fine summer's day, an ordinary cow (Mamma Mö) gets the urge to learn how to ride a swing, so she sneaks away from the pasture and into the woods to do just that. Her reasons for wanting to do so take up a large part of the beginning of the narrative, with a crow, Krákur, following her all the while, acting like a belligerent Jiminy Cricket, repeatedly pointing out the absurdity of a cow on a swing. But Mamma Mö is unswayed and counters Krákur's argument of "there's no good reason for a cow to swing" by pointing out that there's no reason why she shouldn't, either.

Krákur, after watching Mamma Mö's futile attempt to string up a simple plank-and-two-ropes swing from the branch of a pine tree, relents at last and gets the swing tied in place. With understandable trepidation, Mamma Mö settles down on the swing and waits for something to happen. It's at this point of the story that the already entertaining illustrations take a more active role in the narrative, depicting in a way that words can't Mamma Mö's struggle to get the swing to move with her legs and tail. After several attempts, Mamma Mö gets the thing in motion at last, and is soon cheering as she swings high up in both directions, with Krákur delighted for her.

The crow is, in folklore, often a bad omen, and the case is no different in this story, as Krákur's initial refusal to believe that a cow can swing is made manifest in the form of an approaching farmer on his tractor. Mamma Mö and Krákur both realize they'd probably send the poor farmer into therapy if he saw her on the swing and they quickly hide. The farmer notices the commotion and takes a closer look but, not able to see a cow cleverly hiding in some underbrush, gets on his tractor and heads back to the farm. Having tricked the world's stupidest dairy farmer, Mamma Mö sneaks back into the barn where he's milking the other cows and is oblivious to the fact that Mamma Mö is wearing his John Deere cap.

The illustrations are what really bring this story to life, and even brought a chuckle to some otherwise serious grown-ups we know. It's a simple, charming, well-paced story, too, with the added bonus of trying to convey one of the better lessons you can teach a child: just because some harmless and enjoyable activity isn't something you'd normally do is no reason why you shouldn't do it.

By Paul F Nikolov

Fearless and Original

The Dan Kai Teatro Theatre Group

Going to see theatre in Iceland has not been an option for non-Icelandic speakers, since there have been relatively few performances in other languages. Therefore, Dan Kai Teatro's plays in Tjarnarbíó this Menningarnótt were noteworthy due to the fact that they were performed almost entirely in English.

Aside from that, the group is an interesting phenomenon for different reasons. "We're an independent theatre group with members currently located in four different countries," says Eyrún Ósk Jónsdóttir, one of the founding members. "We met at Rosebruford College in London, where we were taught the methods of devised theatre, which is based largely on improvisation. The school teaches us to think beyond being simply actors, writers or directors, but as an ensemble where everyone can influence and affect the different aspects of theatre."

"People who study theatre are brainwashed to believe that it's such a hard business with such slim odds of success," says Jónsdóttir. "Rosebruford College taught us that everything is possible, and that if there's a will, there's a way. Even in theatre."

Another founding member, Kristján Hans Óskarsson, says that it's all a matter of creating your own opportunities. "We've been producing original works about issues we're interested in," he says. "None of us are really turned on by the classics."

Jónsdóttir has written two original pieces that the theatre group has performed, called Beauty, and another called Fear. Both of the works are very physical and surreal. Including Iceland, Dan Kai Teatro has performed in Spain and Britain. In Madrid, the group performed in Spanish.

"I had to learn the language in three months," Jónsdóttir told us, giggling. Their performance in Madrid was based on the play El Publico by Federico Garcia Lorca. Jónsdóttir described the choices behind the piece:

> *"We developed our adaptation of the play as a group, and called it Nudos. When we translated it from Spanish to English, the play changed so drastically that we had to give it a new name, Nana Del Caballo, which we performed in Reykjavík. We like toying around with languages, so we inserted Spanish chapters into the plays Beauty and Fear, which were otherwise performed in English."*

When asked about the problems of being such a scattered group with members in four different countries, Óskarsson and Jónsdóttir see it as an advantage rather than a disadvantage. "It increases our chance of funding, as we can all apply to different funds in our respective countries. It also makes international touring easier, with people who know their way around. In the future, however, we'd like to establish a form of headquarters here in Iceland," says Óskarsson.

Without a home base, funding becomes difficult. But recently, the township of Hafnarfjörður granted Jónsdóttir 100,000 ISK out of their cultural fund. Still, being based in Iceland has its consequences. For example, Jónsdóttir told The Grapevine that she invested heavily in the production. "I paid for the flights for the other members out of my own pocket, before I knew I'd gotten the grant. I found out the following day, and was thrilled to have an extra 5000 ISK left over. It's a matter of keeping the faith."

Jónsdóttir and Óskarsson say that the audience response in Iceland has been quite fantastic. "The theater scene in Iceland is a bit limited," says Óskarsson. "Therefore, we didn't know what to expect, since our style is very expressive and surreal and perhaps hard for theater-goers here to comprehend. But we've gotten great responses from 7 year olds and up to 90 year olds. One little girl approached us after a show and told us that out of our two plays, she liked the more surreal play better because she understood it better."

"She understood the feeling we were trying to convey," says Jónsdóttir. "It was great."

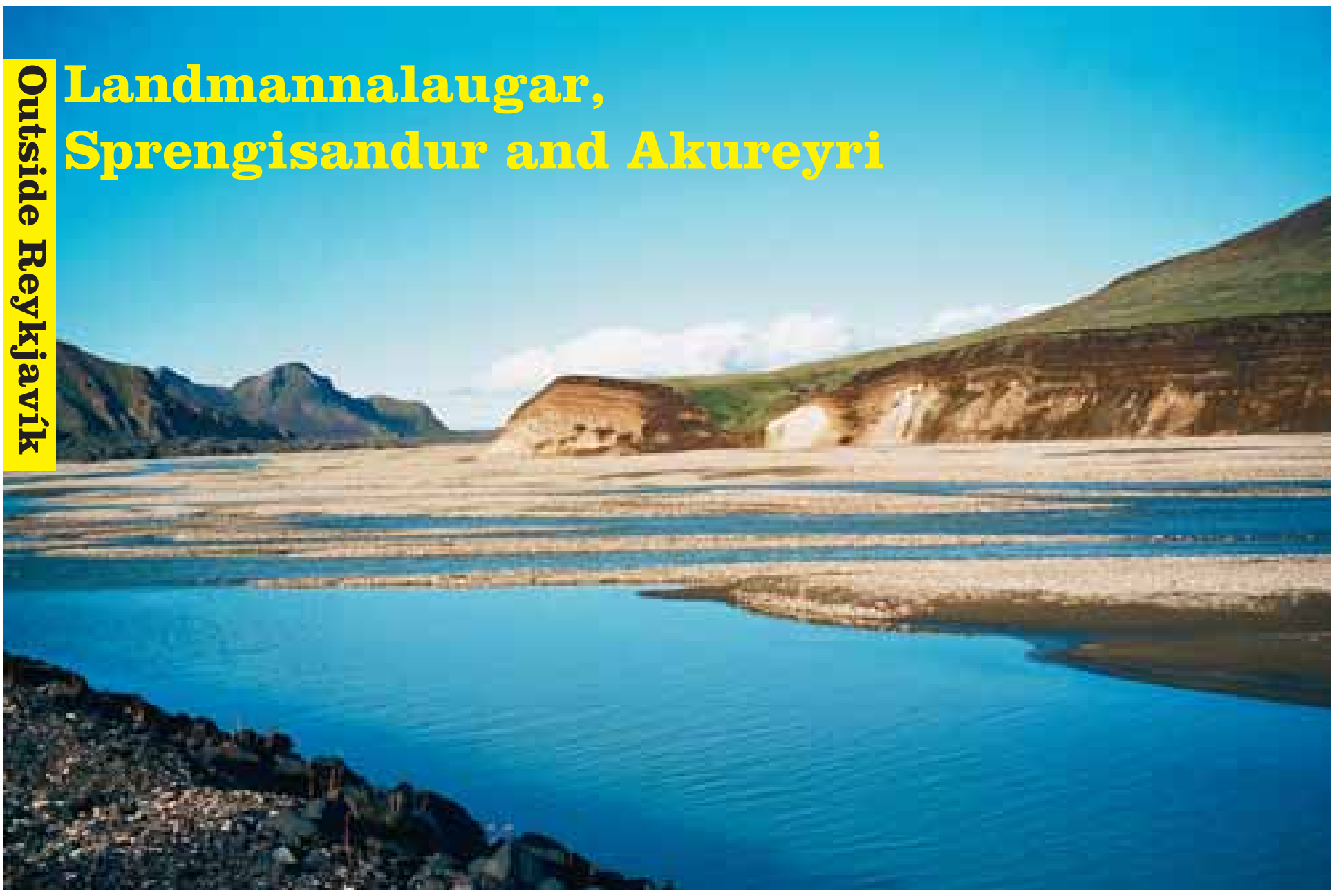
The other members of Dan Kai Teatro who are not from Iceland got a bit of a culture shock when they first came here. They were accommodated in Jónsdóttir's family's house, where her father cooked for them and scheduled activities for them.

"My father picked up the phone and made a couple of calls and got us amazing things. We went to the Blue Lagoon, we were taken out to dine in two different restaurants, we got to do the Golden Circle on a bus and didn't have to pay a thing for any of it. Because Iceland is such a small community, it's easy to make deals and get sponsors for things like this. The other members of the group, who are not familiar with this sort of environment, were completely astonished. They started calling my dad "the king of Iceland" says Jónsdóttir, and she and Óskarsson both laugh at the memory of it.

As we part, they ask to remind people of this: "If you keep the faith, nothing is impossible." Looking at what this group has accomplished, given the strong reviews that their show has received in Iceland, this seems to be true.

By Þórdís Elva Þorvaldsdóttir Bachmann

Landmannalaugar, Sprengisandur and Akureyri



This is the tale of three happy people who set out on a trip to Landmannalaugar... and ended up in a desert on the Sprengisandur route that crosses the island from south to north and leads you in between glaciers to the most beautiful part of Iceland. The problem: In former times, when people used to ride through this barren landscape as fast as possible in fear of ghosts and outlaws, they often exhausted their horses (hence "sprengi"). Today, the horse is substituted with a car, and its battery is dying of exhaustion, almost as in the olden days. The next hut is 20 kilometres and a few river-crossings north. Will our three anti-heroes die in the wilderness?

Exhausting the Horse

Black Sheep Down

Let's start from the beginning: On a sunny Saturday morning at the end of August, a psychic Finn, an Austrian with a knack for magic mushrooms and one of those Germans who seem to populate Iceland these days leave Route 1 at Hella to turn north towards Hekla. The volcano lures with its nearly perfect peak, covered in snow, looking as if dipped into a bowl of cream. Six hundred years after the brush off "Go to Hekla" was coined, the area seems the perfect place to build your summer cottage: meadows, little streams, the view of the mountains and even a little (in terms of low) forest – everything you could ask for.

On the road to Landmannalaugar, the adventurous three decide to take a look at Landmannahellir, a cave that is only accessible with a four-wheel-drive vehicle. Though the guide book says it used to be a traveller's shelter, traces of toilet paper suggest modern travellers have lost respect for the cave's life-saving quality of the past. Outside the cave, with a sunbathing Austrian in front and Hekla in the background, you get the strange feeling you are on a mountain pasture in the Alps – but instead of cows, you hear sheep bleating in the distance. Oddly enough, every flock in this area has exactly one black sheep, no more no less.

The journey proceeds towards Landmannalaugar, a valley separated from the outside world by mountains on three sides and a brook on the fourth. All normal (waterproof) cars can pass it during summertime. And so does the Suzuki Grand Vitara the three adventurers are driving. To their disappointment, the parking lot is very busy, and both tourists and Icelanders are making the place as lively as a beehive. The three decide to have lunch in the kitchen at the Landmannalaugar hut, which charges 200 ISK per person – a fair price for a filled belly. Afterwards, the three explore the valley, have a look at half-naked people sitting in the hot pool (despite warnings of parasites biting most actively during August and September) and climb up a hill for an even better view of the rhyolite mountains, which shine in various colours in the sunlight. This is where the Finn utters her first premonition of catastrophes to come: "When I went on a hike from Þórsmörk to Skógar last autumn, we had a few experienced hikers with us "but in the Icelandic wilderness, it only takes so little for things to go wrong."

In fact, the hiking trek from Landmannalaugar to Þórsmörk and Skógar is, according to the guidebook, the premier hiking trek in Iceland. Apart from that, you can take several smaller hiking trips around Landmannalaugar, most of which pass some major attraction of the largest geothermal field outside Grímsvötn caldera in Vatnajökull. Though sorry not to get the opportunity to visit the star among stars, the "ugly pond" Ljótipollur, our three adventurers decide to expand their trip "a little" and take the historic Sprengisandur route up north. Various trips through the loneliness of Iceland's nature have made them allergic to the touristy centres in the south. Quiet is what they are looking for.

Good Night, Pig

And what they find. Driving through the desert for hours, the sun begins to set in the distance above Hofsjökull. If you thought the Westfjörds were the most desolate, quiet place in Iceland, you have not been to the centre of the island. Every now and then, a lonely bird keeps the car company along its way north. It remains a mystery how birds manage to survive in this part of the country, with no vegetation as far as the eye can see. To travel along the Sprengisandur route, you not only have to have a four-wheel-drive to pass the little streams that cross it now and then, you also have to go during summertime. It is mid-August, and a few days earlier, this road was closed due to snow, and it will soon be closed again for the winter.

It is getting dark and the adventurous three are tired. They stop the car on a bank flanked by three glaciers: Vatnajökull, Tungnafelljökull and Hofsjökull. A beautiful view to wake up to in the morning. With an outside temperature of minus three degrees, they decide against putting up the tent and turn the car into a low-quality sleeping bag accommodation. After shifting places and positions a few times, the Austrian sings a few lullabies (both Austrian and Icelandic, the latter one involving a line that claims somebody is a pig).

Do Not Do This

The next morning, after the Finn and the Austrian have told their dreams – both mysteriously involving the German moving to France – they discover that the battery of the car is so low they cannot get it started. They try pushing it down the bank and jumpstart without success. A look on the map tells them the next hut is at least 20 kilometres and a few river-crossings north of them. The next hut south seems even further away. A discussion ensues about whether to wait for a car to pass or to hike to the next hut, or split up and do both.

The psychic Finn's second premonition, "I don't think we

will have to walk far until somebody picks us up," comes true when a car passes the moment they are about to leave. The two tourists in the car take the Austrian to Nýidalur, the next hut up north, to get a starter cable and a car to help. About an hour later, a bus full of German tourists picks up the Finn and the German, telling them that there is indeed a warden and a cook at Nýidalur, but no car. The bus proceeds south with a speed of about 10 kilometres per hour.

Meanwhile, the Austrian has reached said place and realizes there is neither a starter cable nor a car. However, tourists tell him about several alternative possibilities to restart the car, including one that had proven helpful in Namibia. The Austrian is given a lift back by an Englishman in a Swiss Pinzgauer-van – whatever that says about globalization – and they try again to start the car, but fail.

At Versalir, the hut south of the tragic happenings, the staff have phoned Nýidalur, who said the Austrian had gone off with somebody and a starter cable and would drive the car back south to get the other two adventurers. Waiting for the Austrian and the car, the Finn uses the opportunity to tell the German about what appears to be something in between the first and the second foreboding: that she had thought about what would happen if the battery would go off before she fell asleep last night. Finally, the Austrian appears – with the Englishman and the Pinzgauer, but without the Suzuki.

It is 2:30 on Sunday when the car is finally restarted by Siggi and Kia from Versalir, and the adventurous three decide against the Finnish saying "Siberia teaches you" in favour of "it can't get any worse" and "now that we've come this far," and continue their journey north. The best of the following events includes a Western movie-style river-crossing duel, which the Suzuki wins against a car that is far bigger but does not dare to be the first to cross.

At the junction at Laugarfell in the northeast of Hofsjökull, the adventurous three follow the advice of the Englishman and dive into a hotpot overlooking a skyline of mountains. After the coldness of the night and the exhaustion of the day, lying in a big bathtub at 39 degrees is something absolutely worth the 200 ISK they pay. It is also worth watching the elegant moves of an Austrian who claims to have been the school champion in synchronized swimming – one-man synchronized swimming.

Eyjafjörður to Akureyri

From the junction, the three take the Eyjafjörður approach that leads up to Akureyri. While the southern part of the Sprengisandur road was characterized by black mountains, an endless prairie and the white glow of the glaciers, the scenery changes frequently in the northern half of the route. Black turns into brown, sand turns into stone, until you finally reach the eeriest part in all of Iceland near the source of the river Eyjafjarðará.

From here, the road descends in steep, serpentine turns with thick fog obstructing the view down the side of the road – saving the lives of the faint of heart.

Even the fearless three get the creeps. The atmosphere of this place, which consists of grey stones and fog, is reminiscent of hell, except for the freezing cold. The barrenness and lack of vegetation gives the impression of a bombed city, a doomed place abandoned by every living soul that once inhabited it.

While the three pass this scene of hell with bated breath, they are being rewarded by sparse vegetation in the riverbed below. The moss turns into grassy slopes divided by little streams. This is the spring that pursues winter, the oasis that follows the desert. The first sheep are spotted by the adventurous three. Good to know there is life on earth. The Austrian concludes that where rich vegetation is, there must be magic mushrooms, and hops out of the car every few hundred metres to search the meadows for the precious mushrooms. Wrapped in a blue blanket, he looks like a druid in Avalon.

Soon after the sheep, the first signs of civilization return to the scene. And the first traces of culture. Worth a visit are the little church at Grund, which looks as if it has been imported directly from Moscow, and a Christmas hut further up the road. This might be a culture shock at first, but for our three adventurers it is a good way to get re-acclimated as the day draws in and the city of Akureyri comes nearer. Soon, they will be headed for the big city in the south, the adventure will have ended, but their memories of this trip will be with them for a long time.

By Julika Heuther

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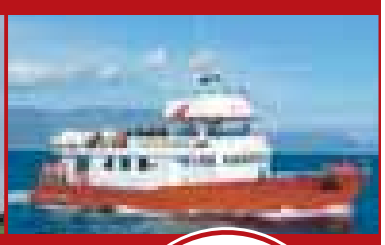

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Sonic Youth

The Last Place in the World You Can Expect to Rock:

The 2005 Oya Festival in Oslo

Walking in the relaxed park and café Sofienberg district on a Sunday after the Oya festival, I saw Oslo at its best. On a moderately sunny day, groups of four and five young exceptionally fit professionals sat outside bars sipping beers and being polite.

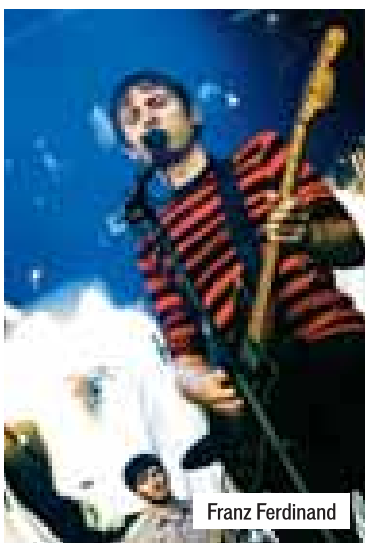
In the background, you could hear Muddy Waters and Miles Davis—quality foreign music that the people of Oslo have championed for years. There I came to understand the words of one of the Oya Festival's attendants: "Oslo is not a city you visit. It's a city you live in."

It was the obnoxious drummer/frontman of music media darlings Death From Above, 1979 who showed what Oslo was not good at. When he discovered that the Oya festival could be pronounced "Oh yeah!" at exactly 6:30 pm on day two of the three day festival, all of Oslo realized how incredibly unfit it was to host a rock and roll festival.

Not that anybody in Oslo should have been upset that it wasn't a good home for a rock festival—this merely meant they weren't dumb or drunk enough to enjoy uninspired relationship pop songs by Canadians in small, regional t-shirts, and they weren't ugly enough to allow the other vamping stars of the festival crowd to work their magic. Had it not been for a surprise performance by Pete Doherty of Babyshambles, nobody in Oslo would feel they were missing anything by being so decidedly unrock.

Annie

In three days, 10,000 music fans, 1000 volunteers, and 100 foreign journalists watched 158 up-and-coming bands perform. Unlike perhaps any other music festival in the world, in the course of the Oya festival not only was no damage done to the environment, nobody was cut in line, nobody had to go without washing their hands after using the ample restroom facilities, and nobody had their feelings hurt. Purely on the grounds of pleasant atmosphere, good sound mixing, and polite people, there has never been a better music festival than the Oya of 2005. Having attended the festival just to see if the brochures about professionalism and volunteer spirit could have possibly been right, I have to say they were.



Franz Ferdinand

The only difficulty was the music and the notion of a rock festival itself. As a member of one of the few acts to pull off an energetic set at the festival told me, "These festivals in Europe are just about getting local talent near successful bands. The locals come on and get through their numbers, then an American band gets up and gives the crowd their money's worth."

Indeed, the idea that people living in a successful European city have to import their passion became crystal clear on the final night of the Oya, when Chinese punk rock band The Subs got up and gave the guttiest performance of the festival, causing some unease as more than one member of the crowd pointed out "Imagine what it's like being a punk musician in China."

Polyphonic Spree

I Don't Like Their Music, But They Know How to Market

My hope in going to Oslo was to see local bands Kings of Convenience, Annie and Robert Post, and to get a feel for the music scene in this seldom-reported town.

Kings of Convenience could have been confused for Simon and Garfunkel without all the pesky soul. Robert Post, a young singer/songwriter with Hollywood looks and a Broadway voice, impressed and amused a far too small audience on a side stage. Annie, Norway's club music diva, had an extremely off afternoon performance—so off that organizers told a group of reporters that there was no doubt that she "had the flu but had performed anyway."

The crowd didn't care for any of these bands: most festival-goers were at the Oya to see Oslo sensation Turbonegro. What is Turbonegro? According to many fans, Turbonegro is "big in the States", they "know that music is just about having fun" and they "really know how to market."

Turns out Turbonegro are fat boring mediocre musicians in costumes and makeup that crosses Twisted Sister with the Village People who bring dwarves on stage and sing "We're wasted!" over and over. To enjoy Turbonegro, you "can't listen to the music" as three fans told me, but you just have to "enjoy the concept."

Of the dozen Norwegian music fans I queried at the Oya Festival, every one rated Turbonegro as the

best concert of the festival, and as the best band from Oslo—not one fan believed Turbonegro performed good music.

Imported Talent, Imported Journalists

So who do you import to satisfy fans and journalists who want to actually hear music at a music festival? Saul Williams, Fischerspooner, The Polyphonic Spree, Babyshambles, The Subs, Roots Manuva, Wolf Parade and Jon Spencer's new band Heavy Trash provided the best moments of the festival, in that order. Pete Doherty and Babyshambles stole the show—not only does Doherty have charisma and a strong voice, two things not often seen in the contemporary rock scene—but Babyshambles have compelling music, blending the Smiths and Happy Mondays with lyrics that are self-absorbed and romantic but, mercifully, full of just enough self-loathing to put rock into its proper element.

Expected to save the show, but failing, were Franz Ferdinand, who wowed the audience with their teeth, physique and manners, but were unable to hit most of the notes from their debut album. Other bands that seemed polite but unconvincing were Sonic Youth, Dinosaur Jr., the Hot Snakes and Hot Hot Heat.

Sitting among music journalists from major publications of the US and the UK, I had my gut reactions corrected.

"Fischerspooner were just rude right from the beginning," an American told me. "They were so disrespectful to Norwegians," she said, referring to Casey Spooner's inspired between-number comment 'Oh come on, don't be so fucking Norwegian. This is a fucking concert.'

Dinosaur Jr. were also great, a dorky male writer from a prestigious American music magazine told me. Why? "This is the same line-up that they had when I saw them play in

Seattle before Lou Barlow formed Folk Implosion."

I saw no point in asking why the reporter was more important than the quality of the performance.

I got a quick lecture from the most concerned of the press corps.

"What you have to realize is that it's easy to trash a band. What is really difficult is to write a so-so review, one that's readable."

I was about to ask "Why would you write a so-so review for a shit album?" but then I reflected on the fact that most mediocre bands I saw at the festival received three-star reviews when I looked them up before coming. In fact, damned near all of them did.

I was close to starting a fight with the journalists at my table, most of whom admitted that they were more into jazz or music from 1992 than anything recorded recently, when somebody broke out a Turbonegro souvenir. It was a fake American dollar with "In Deathpunk We Trust" printed on it.

"But that band was fucking horrible. How can anybody remotely interested in music stand to touch that thing?" I asked. The journalist next to me, holding the fake dollar, said: "It's just about having fun."

■ By Bart Cameron

Fischerspooner

Turbonegro

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It's in the Air:
The Sweet Smell of Reykjavík's Asian Foodshops

Coconut milk light, octopi, pickled eggplant, instants for tofu pudding and "frozen snowballs" – Asian foodshops do resemble a museum of sorts. But the two shops in the Reykjavík city area, Filippseyjar and Sælkerabúðin, offer much more than just peculiar Asian specialities.

Gúndi

Filippseyjar
(Philippine Islands)
At the corner of Hverfisgata/ Barónsstígur

Before she opened the shop in 1996, Maria Priscilla Vanoria used her trips to Denmark and other European countries to buy Asian food, which was, back then, unavailable in Iceland.

"When more and more of my Asian friends asked me to bring something, I began to order whole boxes of food from Denmark," Maria says.

Starting a business was eventually the only way of meeting the great demand for Asian products. Today, most supplies come directly from the Philippines, Maria's country of birth, and Thailand. However, some products, especially Chinese and Korean items, are being imported from Holland – and we are not talking cheese.

Apart from selling food and souvenirs, Filippseyjar is most definitely the only place in town where you can rent Thai and Filipino videos.

Although "business is constantly going up and down," as Maria says, Filippseyjar will celebrate its 10th anniversary next year. A great achievement for a small shop. So what is the secret behind the success? Maybe it is the outstanding service the shop provides the Asian community with: customers can get free counselling and help with Icelandic bureaucracy – filling out applications for work permits and the renewal of passports, for example.

Sælkerabúðin
(The Gourmet Shop)
Suðurlandsbraut 6

A dim light reflects on the waxed checkered floor as a radio plays mainstream rock in the background. Enter Ning de Jesus. Ning is *not* the main character of the next Al Pacino movie, and this scene does *not* take place in a spooky American restaurant, but in Sælkerabúðin in Reykjavík.

Ning opened the shop in 2000, after he had established other all-Asian businesses, including the Chinese restaurant next door. For Ning, who also comes from the Philippines, The Gourmet Shop is not only a name but an agenda.

"I only choose the best there is on offer," he says, meaning high-standard products demanded by the Asian community in Iceland. The selection of products is truly exquisite: dried coconut strips with honey and sesame seeds, guava and tamarindo juice as well as all kinds of sushi ingredients, to name just a few. All sorts of different seafood items and fresh vegetables are flown in from Bangkok every week.

On a recent visit, two members of staff stack up products, another one is standing behind the counter – business seems to go well at Sælkerabúðin. Are there plans to expand sometime soon?

"It's in the air," Ning says, smiling, and the air fills with the sweet smell of Chinese food.

By Julika Heuther

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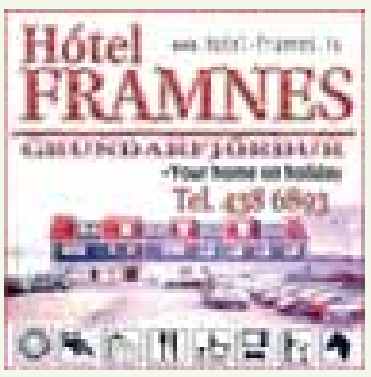

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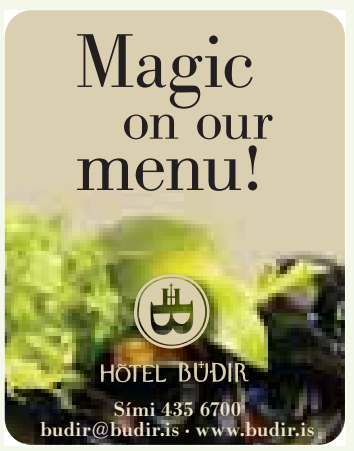

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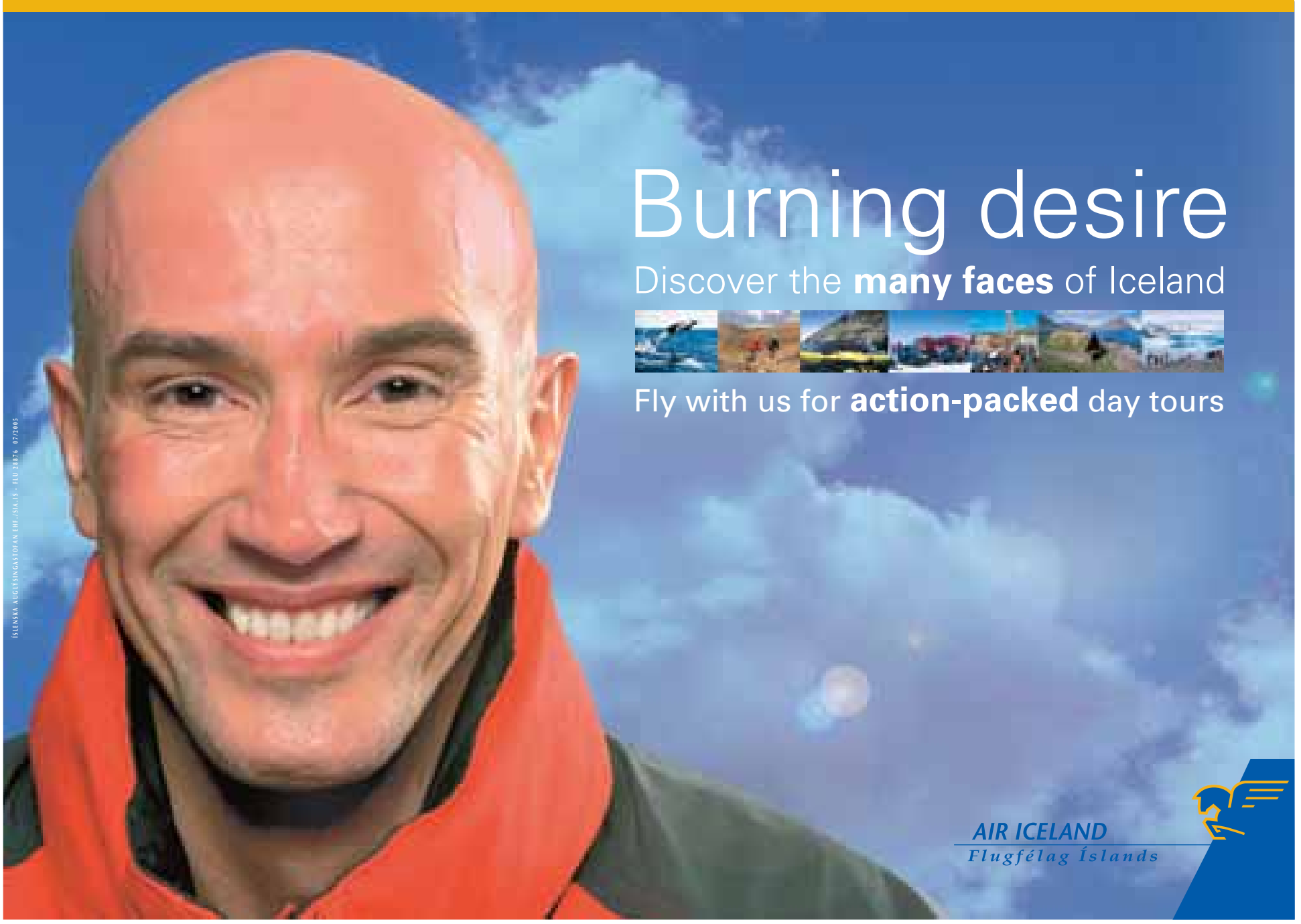

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Stuffed with stuff

"What rights are we fighting for now that we'll see as a given fifty years from now?"
Social Democrat Dagbjört Hákonardóttir, on her party's newly formed women's group PAGE 6

"I called everywhere to get information about this new clinic, including the Department of Health, but nobody could give me any answers."
Katrin Síf Sigurgeirsdóttir, chairperson of Spegillinn interest group for families and relatives of Eating Disorder patients on the non-existent ED treatment announced by the Minister of Health PAGE 14

"The movie is about gay people and I was wondering whether a person needed to be gay to play a gay person."
Television talk show host Guðmundur Steingrímsson presenting the viewpoint of Cro-Magnon man on new movie Eleven Men Out, and setting himself up as the next Prime Minister of Iceland PAGE 21

"We wanna know what's going on but they won't say. It could be any one of us it happens to next."
Anonymous US serviceman, on the murder of Ashley Turner PAGE 22

"The information of my ancestry and health record is still an asset licensed to a private company."
Valur Antonsson, referring to genetic research company DeCODE PAGE 44