



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

ICELAND AIRWAVES '10

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

IN THE ISSUE Issue 16 • 2010 • October 8 - November 4

+ COMPLETE CITY LISTINGS - INSIDE!

▶ **ANGER**

Is there a revolution brewing?

▶ **POLITICS**

The Gnarr Effect

▶ **MEDIA**

How Iceland's press totally failed

▶ **MUSIC**

The story of SH Draumur - Iceland's greatest post-punk band

▶ **DESIGN**

Turning wool into gold with Vík Prjónsdóttir

Teen Age Riot

✦ AIRWAVES × Vík Prjónsdóttir

Iceland's youngest generation of musicians is making a name for itself



'10 It's Iceland Airwaves time again! And what a time! To mark the occasion, we're making three different covers (!) for this issue, celebrating three generations of Icelandic musicians performing at the festival. This particular one is dedicated to all the up-and-coming musicians in Iceland. Pictured are members of **Pascal Pinon** and **Endless Dark**. Both bands' members are still in their teens, and both bands are already doing great things. Happy Airwaves, y'all!



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Remain in Light

AIRWAVES × *Vík Prjónsdóttir*

The Elder Statesmen of Icelandic music keep it respectable



'10 It's Iceland Airwaves time again! And what a time! To mark the occasion, we're making three different covers (!) for this issue, celebrating three generations of Icelandic musicians performing at the festival. This particular one is meant to honour the Elder Statesmen of awesome Icelandic music, who we all revere and love. They are represented by members of **HAM** and **Apparat Organ Quartet**, two of the most excellent bands Iceland has fostered. Happy Airwaves, y'all!



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Star Power

On top of their game, and they ain't going nowhere

AIRWAVES × *Vík Prjónsdóttir*



'10 It's Iceland Airwaves time again! And what a time! To mark the occasion, we're making three different covers (!) for this issue, celebrating three generations of Icelandic musicians performing at the festival. This particular one is meant to applaud the current pillars of the local music scene, who are represented by members of **Amiina**, **Seabear**, **Sin Fang**, **Hjaltalín** and **Retro Stefson**. Happy Airwaves, y'all!

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

On the covers: Members of: Pascal Pinon, Endless Dark, Hjaltalín, Amiina, Retro Stefson, Seabear, Sin Fang, HAM and Apparat Organ



Photography: Marínó Thorlacius - marinot.com
Art Direction: Hristbjörnsson - this.is/trendy
Styling: Guðfinna Mjóll Magnúsdóttir & Brynhildur Pálsdóttir. Vík Þrjónsdóttir - vikþrjonsdottir.is

The Annual Iceland Airwaves Editorial

Haukur's 32nd editorial

I will come right out and say it: I have been in love with the Iceland Airwaves festival ever since I was a teenager. There's just something about it. Something in the air. I can't really define it. I guess it's some kind of amalgam of all the excited musicians gallivanting around town, the way Reykjavík fills up with new and interesting folks, the non-stop barrage of excellent concert action. And all the drinking, too, but of course.

Thinking about it, I feel that maybe the Iceland Airwaves festival's main appeal has something to do with all the fun, love and solidarity that seems to permeate the air. It feels like everyone sporting those wristbands has some sort of special bond over the course of those five days. Thousands of total strangers take over 101 Reykjavík with the shared and mutual goal of experiencing as much excellent music as they can in the least amount of time possible. Of discovering something new, and reconnecting with something old. Of having a

good time.

Yeah, that's me. I like solidarity and bonding and shared goals, love and fun. Those are all great things.

And sadly, those are all things that have been all too absent from Iceland over the last two years. In conversation with my uncle Gummi the other day, we reached the conclusion that our once proud nation was handling this whole ECONOMIC COLLAPSE thing with as little grace as possible. There is no solidarity. There are no shared, common goals. There is no love.

There is plenty of finger-pointing in all directions. There is plenty of hate and spite. There is lust for vengeance and retribution. There is an unbridled guarding of self-interest.

Reading the local discourse one starts feeling like the nation of Iceland is comprised of several small interest groups that have absolutely nothing in common with one another, no shared memories

past, or goals, no common interest, no lineage. It's like we don't even speak the same language. It's like we are totally unwilling to hear one another.

One even wonders why us 320.000 souls choose to live together on this barren island, if we are indeed so completely alienated from one another. Should we just empty the ashtrays and leave? Pack up our shit and try our luck elsewhere?

Wow. That's grim. Sorry about that. I hope I'm just being pessimistic. I am sure the Airwaves festival and all the currency-bearing Airwaves tourists will inspire us to love one another once again, to celebrate our shared heritage and to keep on moving forward.

We really need to at this point.

PS - remember to visit our Airwaves site for your daily updates, tips, trix and reviews of every goddamn show!



Mayor's Address | Jón Gnarr

Welcome To Reykjavík

The odds of you being in Reykjavík are not great. The greatest part of mankind is elsewhere. It is scientifically proven. When I was little, I would often ask myself why I had been born in Reykjavík. Is it a coincidence where one is born? Is it subject to some universal law? Did I exist in any form before I was born? Did I have anything to do with where I was born? Why did Eva Braun and Adolf Hitler not bear any children? Did they not try to? Can it be that no child wanted them as parents? I don't know, but I do not believe in coincidence. I do not believe that God plays dice, especially not when human lives are concerned. These thoughts inevitably lead one to consider Schrödinger's cat. He is probably one of the most famous cats in the world (maybe after Ninja Cat). Still no one knows what it was called? What was Schrödinger's cat called? Abracadabra? I don't remember. Let's call it Phoenix. That is a common name for cats. Phoenix was of the nature that it both existed and not. Therefore, it always existed, and even if Schrödinger killed his cat in a rather tasteless manner, it is still alive at Schrödinger's house, while Schrödinger

himself has been dead for a long time:

$$\Delta x \Delta p \geq \frac{h}{2}$$

Does this mean that I always existed, or that I never existed and do therefore not exist now? That can't be! It would mean that all our existence was unreal and only existed in our own imagination. If I do not exist, then neither do you. I have a hard time believing that. The facts speak for themselves. If I am not real, then how could I fly to Finland, send myself a post card with a picture of Tarja Halonen, the President of Finland, fly back home and welcome the mailman that brought me the card? I don't know. I am one of many Icelanders that believe in elves and trolls. I mainly believe in Moomin elves. It is more of a certainty than a belief. I have seen them and touched them. I know they exist. I have been to Moominworld in Naantali, Finland. I have evidence; photographs, video recordings and witnesses. I had a good talk with Moomin Papa. He told me that life in Moominvalley was much better after Finland joined the EU. He encouraged us Icelanders to join the EU. He



also said that the Moomins had always existed, long before Tove Jansson "invented" them. The Moomins are eternal, at least in books.

I hope these thoughts shed some light on the history of Reykjavík and its culture. I hope you enjoy your time in Reykjavík, that you go swimming a lot and tell all your friends how fun Reykjavík is, and how everyone is always happy there and that you will never forget your hotel, Suðurlandsbraut and the eternally young cat Phoenix

Jón Gnarr, Mayor of Reykjavík

Comic | Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir



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4 Letters

MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Incorrect statements, wrong conclusions
Paul Nikolov wrote an article in the 13th issue of the Grapevine 2010 on troubles in the Evangelical Lutheran church of Iceland and the separation of church and state. I find many of his statements incorrect, conclusions wrong and the article therefore misleading, not informing.

Decidedly irreligious?
The article states in its opening paragraph that most Icelanders are "decidedly irreligious or not very religious". According to the most comprehensive study done on religiosity in Iceland this century app. 70% of those asked said that they were religious. The survey also shows that 30% pray daily or more, 55% pray once per week or more. App. 60% say the Lord's prayer once per week or more, 29% say it daily. This survey was conducted by Gallup for the ELCI and the University of Iceland in 2004, not in 2006 for the Humanist association as is stated by Nikolov who quotes from the survey about church attendance. The survey asks specifically about regular Sunday service, not about how or if people go to church for other services or activities, therefore even that quote from Nikolov is misleading.

These numbers would not by any sociologist of religion be interpreted as being a sign of "not very religious" nation.

A little background
Þjóðkirkjan, The ELCI, became established when Icelanders received home rule in 1904 (not 1874 as is stated by Nikolov). That transition was part of increasing independence of Iceland from Denmark. The church at that time had guardianship in 1907, instead paying salaries of pastors. Until then most pastors did not receive salaries but were farmers on lands belonging to their parish. This agreement is the basis for present agreement between the church and state regarding salaries of a certain number of pastors. Contrary to Nikolov's conclusion, it is not part of or dependent on the clause in the constitution about the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a National Church of Iceland and as such protected and supported by the state. A change in relations does not necessitate change in the agreement. These are two separate issues, something which sadly is often not clear to parliamentarians in Iceland.

Paul Nikolov states that the church receives 5 billion ISK in form of state revenues. A close look at this reveals that Nikolov is wrong again. The figure comes from the budget, covering government expenditures on religious issues. Of this, some 917 million goes to the cemeteries, a separate institution from the church and serving all, religious or not religious. Of the remaining 4.1 billion, some 1.8 billion is membership payments to the ELCI. The state collects membership payments for all registered religious associations in Iceland, some 240 million ISK is collected for other religious associations – the amount is higher for ELCI as it has some 80% of the population as members. Some 2 billion ISK are received as salaries according to the land agreement or payments to separate funds due to various agreements, for example the preservation of over 200 listed (protected as heritage) churches around the country.

Public records
Paul Nikolov states that in the National Registry "all Icelanders are registered

MOST AWESOME LETTER

A buncha POLAR BEER for your thoughts

We're not gonna lie to you: we really love us some beers. Some folks would call it a problem, but beer never gave us any problems. In fact, over the years, it's solved most of 'em. A frosty glass of cold, frothy, bubblicious, golden-tinted beer has consistently failed to let us down. In the immortal words of the once-reputable Homer J. Simpson: "Mmm... Beer..."

Now, since we're real pleasant and giving folks here at the Grapevine, we thought we'd share some wonderful POLAR BEER with you, our readers. Not only that, you're also getting the gift of social life with it. So here's the deal: our most awesome letter of each issue (henceforth, or until the good people of POLAR BEER decide they don't want to play along anymore), we will be providing our MOST AWESOME LETTER scribe with twelve frothy POLAR BEERS, to be imbibed at a Reykjavik bar of their choice (so long as that bar is either Bakkus or Venue). If y'all's letter is the one, drop us a line to collect. Give us your worst: letters@grapevine.is



(Light)

Dear Steinunn,

First, I want to thank you for taking the time and effort to pen such a long letter. I was at first very pleased to see an official from the National Church responding to the points brought up in my article. But then I became disappointed when it became clear that where you didn't completely misread what I'd written, you engaged in rhetorical acrobatics to avoid painful truths.

1. I was confused when you attempted to correct which poll I was referring to when I said that most Icelanders are decidedly irreligious. The fact is, you're citing a poll from 2004, and I'm citing one from 2006. I am not citing "the wrong survey" any more than you are—mine is just more recent. And speaking of recent polls, a Capacent poll just published shows 73% of Icelanders favouring separation of church and state.

2. You're absolutely right that home rule was established in 1904, and not in 1874. Fortunately, I never said any such thing. In the very first sentence of my article, I said, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland has been a part of the government since the constitution established it as such in 1874." This is in reference to the constitution drafted at that time, which specifies that the "Evangelical Lutheran Church is a national church and as such it is protected and supported by the State."

3. The National Church does indeed receive about 5 billion ISK each year from the state, and I find it very telling that you ignored one of the major points of my piece, i.e., clergy salaries, in particular, how the bishop makes about 1 million ISK per month. To say that a large portion of the money the Church gets comes from members of the congregation is a bit misleading—all Icelanders are registered with the National Church by default. But what about the change to legislation, you argue, wherein children born in Iceland are registered in the same religion as their mothers? Things brings us to:

4. The "mother clause" is reminiscent of the "grandfather clause" of the American South in the days of segregation. The grandfather clause said that anyone could vote whose grandfather could—it seems as though it's a change from outright banning African-Americans from voting, but as their grandfathers certainly couldn't vote, neither could they. By the same token, as all these mothers born a generation ago in Iceland were automatically registered in the National Church, just what religion can we expect all these children to be registered in today?

5. The events surrounding cases of sexual abuse within the Church are indeed muddled, but I think the purposeful reticence of the Church is more to blame for this than my own writing. That constant media pressure finally compelled the Church to reveal just how many cases of sexual abuse have gone on within its walls shouldn't be a source of pride but a source of shame.

Overall, I was let down by your response, and I say this as a person with nothing but respect for the Christian faith in general, and the National Church in particular. I hope someday the Church devotes less time to accusing members of the media of dishonesty and more time to fixing what needs fixing within their own institution.

Regards,

Paul F. Nikolov

with the church by default." This is simply wrong. According to present legislation children are registered in the same religious association as their mother – also if the mother is outside religious associations.

Disclosure
In a rather confusing narrative of what has happened in the handling of accusations of sexual abuse in the church Nikolov states that the ELCI Advisory Board on sexual misconduct did not disclose how many cases it had handled during more than a decade of work. The truth is that this was disclosed August 17th, well in time for the publication of the article, which included references to much later happenings. At the time, five cases had been reported to the committee.

Another misunderstanding of Nikolov's regards his comments on disclosure of police records of church staff. These have been enforced for applicants in children and youth work but according to new regulations, from the General Assembly November 2009, all staff will be screened and the proposed screening is much more thorough.

Change in relations?
The general description of events in the article is muddled. The church has said, and said repeatedly, that the handling of complaints in 1996 of sexual offence against former bishop Skulason, was regrettable. There were simply no institutions in the church where these complaints could be channeled and the church did not have the independence that it achieved with legislation from 1997. Two committees now handle complaints to the church and complaints of sexual offences are channeled to the Advisory Board where sufferers receive support and help to take action.

It would have been easy for Nikolov to find this information had he contacted the ELCI.

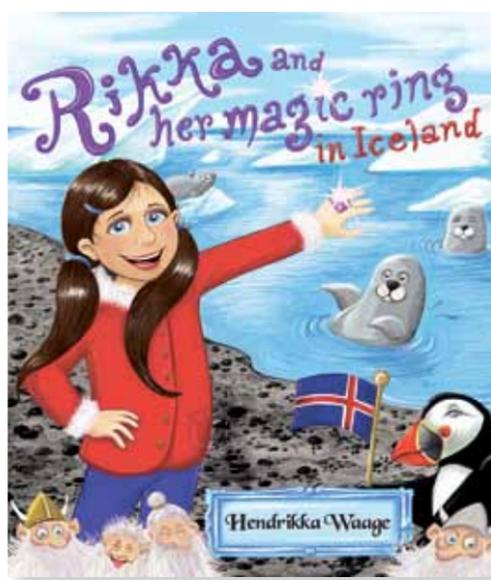
While Nikolov's article is not helpful in understanding recent events, there is no question that the past few weeks have been a difficult time for the church and also for the nation with new information about the former bishop. It remains uncertain whether this will be the deciding factor in the relationship of church and nation as Nikolov predicted. It may affect the upcoming discussion on relationship between church and state which will undoubtedly be part of the process to review the constitution. Most people, however, judge the church by the service they get in their parish and reports from parishes show that participation in congregations have not diminished, but in many cases increased this autumn.

Steinunn A. Björnsdóttir,
Pastor and Project manager in the ELCI

Dear Steinunn,

thank you for your letter. It is most informative. We also think it's cool that we've got members of the clergy reading our paper – and actually contributing to it! Kudos to you! Anyway, we thought it would be best if Paul responded to your letter. If you want to respond back to him courtesy of us, please do so! We love discourse!

PS – we're giving you our FREE BEER OF THE ISSUE. If you're not into drinking it, you can always pass it along to someone else. We still suggest you venture to Bakkus and share the beers with Paul. He could even interview you! Now, here's Paul:



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Is There a Revolution Brewing?

I spent part of the weekend with friends in a bar discussing the coming revolution, which now is again beginning to sound like a distinct possibility. At some point, this might have sounded like a boyhood dream. But like all boyhood dreams, the reality is not what one had hoped.

Last time around, January 2009, the demands were quite clear, despite the many groups and agendas involved. We wanted elections, a new government, former PM Davíð Oddsson to resign from the Central Bank and the head of the Financial Supervisory Authority to resign. This all came about, but somehow no one is quite happy with the results. Davíð Oddsson is now editor of Morgunblaðið, instead of subsiding off his considerable pension. And no one seems to like the new government very much. Where did it all go wrong?

COLD WAR POLITICS AGAIN

Part of the government's problems lie in some of its successes. The first real left wing government in Icelandic history did not go in for radical social change. Instead, they went ahead with the IMF's demands for severe welfare cuts and have been rebuilding the economy in the direction of its pre-boom/bust level. This has been painful but largely successful. The economy is starting to grow again and the depression has been far less severe than many dreaded. There is little doubt that Minister of Finance Steingrímur J. Sigfússon is very capable, which is a welcome change from the excesses of the Independence Party. All these initiatives should endear them to conservative voters, who supposedly vote with their wallets. However, to those same voters, the Left-Greens will always be a gang of communists, no matter how fiscally responsible they prove themselves to be, and the coalition Alliance Party little better.

WHY IS EVERYONE UNHAPPY?

Meanwhile, the government has managed to alienate most of the left with precisely the lack of social change that many had hoped for. Increasing GNP matters little to those on the left when there is little prospect for social justice. Many of those responsible for the collapse have had their huge debts written off, while common folks with far smaller debt face the prospect of being carried out of their houses. There has been very little restructuring of ownership of breaking up of the monopolies that led to disaster. This is probably one of the reasons why prices keep going up, even though the króna is stronger now than it has been at any time since the collapse. To make matters worse, the Social Democratic Alliance, already tarnished by its place in government along with the IP during the collapse, brazenly protected its own members from indictment by a national tribunal.

THE POINT OF THE PROTESTS

All this leads to the very Weimar-like situation of a Social-Democratic gov-



ernment under siege by both Left and Right. Small wonder, then, that the aim of the protests sometimes seems unclear. But the protesters still have a very good point. As the possibility for any kind of justice seems to be slipping away, the anger is not unfounded. It may even be healthier for society than complete apathy, which is likely the next stage if nothing is done.

Many people, understandably, are afraid of eviction. Others demand new

elections (yearly elections were another late-Weimar staple), although it is not certain this would improve matters much. But probably everyone can agree that we really need to see those responsible for this whole mess brought to account. Without, there is really is reason to fear that all hell will break loose.

✍ VALUR GUNNARSSON
✉ JOSEPH HENRY VON RITTER

Slither Slander



I was at the Grapevine offices on Friday when someone called with an urgent matter. The person asked to speak to the editor, who was not in at the time, or someone else "in authority", such as the publisher, who was also out of the office. I said I would be happy to take a message.

It turned out I was speaking to Supreme Court Attorney Dögg Pálsdóttir, whose client, she said, had complaints about a certain Grapevine writer who Dögg maintained was committing slander (or rather a writer she thought probably was going to write something slanderous).

She explained that the writer, who is Íris Erlingsdóttir by the way, had linked to her blog on Eyjan.is a DV article regarding a bank officer who had close ties to a company whose \$3.5 million loan Íslandsbanki allegedly had written off, and although the DV article had been amended, she had not made those corrections in her blog. Okay, fine. So, what does this have to do with the Grapevine?

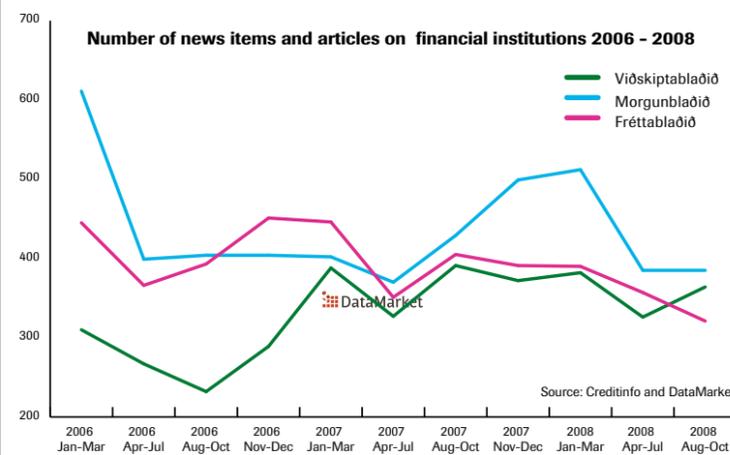
Well, she explained that Íris's sister was married to this particular client, and that client is now the live-in partner of the bank official mentioned in the DV article. Íris, she maintained, had "threatened" her client during the divorce, and she has now been asking questions of Íslandsbanki about the client's girlfriend. That's pretty vague, but I have no intention of muddling myself in that matter, of which I know nothing.

The thing is, Dögg then said, given these circumstances, she believes that Íris will write something on the matter, and she said "we're sure that nothing she says will be true if she writes anything at all." (By the way, isn't it slanderous to call someone's employer informing them that nothing one of their writers writes can possibly be true?) She said it's best that we are aware of this so that we can avoid a situation necessitating legal action.

Now, I don't know what you all think about this, but I think this is disconcerting. Even if—and I have no idea if this is the case—the client and his attorney are correct, it's a scary thing when the media are silenced to avoid legal threats made by a big time attorney. Were situations like this one not problematic before Iceland's October 2008 crash? Just a thought.

Iceland | Statistics

What Happens When Journalists Take Their Summer Vacation?



The SIC Report reveals that roughly 80% of news stories covering the three largest banks in the two years leading up to the crash were neutral rather than positive or negative. The newspapers deserve some applause for that. But, it's sometimes said that even if the media doesn't tell you what to think—it still tells you what to think about. If you buy this idea that the media determines which issues are important by covering some issues prominently and others not so prominently, then what good were these unbiased reports about the banks if they were few and far between?

If you look at this data, you see how many articles Fréttablaðið, Morgunblaðið and Viðskiptablaðið printed about financial institutions between January 2006 and August 2008. There are a few interesting points to note. One point is that the number of articles about financial institutions consistently drops in March and

doesn't pick up until after the summer. So, if you were a financial institution, and you were going to pull a fast one on the country, it would be wise to do it during the summer.

Perhaps the more seasoned journalists are on vacation and people are generally thinking about the weather and other more light-hearted stuff rather than business and heavy economics. Another point is that that even in the spring and summer before the crash, coverage largely declined and remained low. Shouldn't we have seen a spike there?

Check out an interactive graph at www.datamarket.com (short link: www.url.is/440)

✍ ANNA ANDERSEN
✉ PÁLL HILMARSSON

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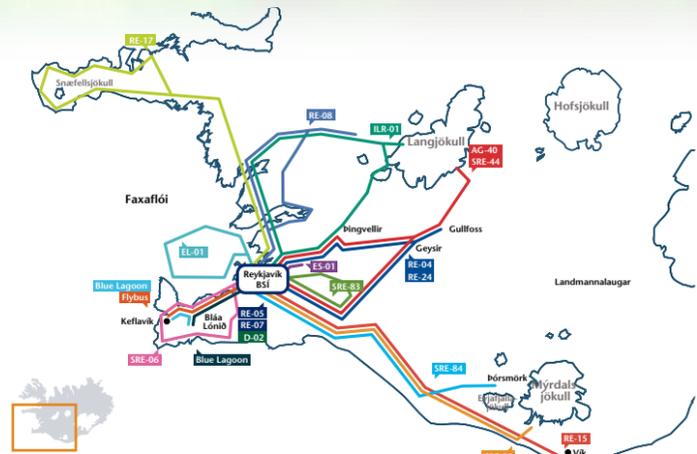
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The Gnarr Effect

Established parties, beware!



We were trolling Facebook the other day and stumbled upon the phrase “the Gnarr effect.” We were intrigued. What is this so-called ‘Gnarr effect’? WHAT DOES IT MEAN? So we tracked down Ólafur Þ. Harðarson—the political scientist responsible for coining the phrase. We sat down with Ólafur (who is incidentally also Dean of the School of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland), and got him to explain this catch phrase, the success of the Best Party and what it means for Iceland’s four established parties.

In his Facebook diary Reykjavík Mayor Jón Gnarr recently wrote that he visited the University of Iceland and learned that he had become a concept in political science—“the Gnarr effect.” Do you know what he was referring to?

Well I actually met Jón that day and we were discussing the Best Party and sort of what kind of party it was, ideology and so on and so forth, and I told him that I get a lot of foreign journalists asking me for interviews to explain the Best Party and the Gnarr phenomenon, if you like. And in discussing this with foreign journalists I think prob-

ably I have coined the phrase, “the Gnarr effect.” So it’s not really a theoretical political science term [laughs].

For a new party that is antiestablishment, satirical, made of comedians if you like, obtaining 1/3 of the vote is highly unusual. And as I have been using it, “the Gnarr effect” simply refers to the impact this extreme success of the Best Party has had on the other parties.

Why was the Best Party so unusually successful?

The basic reason for this great success was two-fold. First, there was the extremely low trust that Icelandic voters now have for the four established parties. But, secondly, the profile of the Best Party was very different from, for instance, many of the protest parties in Europe that had been getting up to 10–15% in some cases. Many of those protest parties have basically been extreme right wing, focusing on xenophobia, hatred of foreigners, things like that. There has been some electoral market for that, but they are not getting anything like a third of the vote.

The difference here is basically

that the Best Party presented themselves as a party with little emphasis on ideology. Then it seems to me that they had relatively nice, presentable candidates. So my explanation of their success is that many voters thought that they could, by voting for the Best Party, show their dislike of the established parties—at low risk.

Low risk? Jón Gnarr’s platform was about bringing a polar bear to the zoo and things like that.

Ah, yes but people didn’t take that very seriously. He was basically saying, ‘we are nice guys, we have no extreme ideology and we are fed up with politics as it has been.’ When he got detailed questions on policy, he said we have excellent public administration that will take care of the technicalities. A lot of people were prepared to take a chance on voting for such a party. They probably thought, even if they get some members elected, there would be no disaster.

Back to “the Gnarr effect,” specifically what kind of impact is it having on the established parties?

It’s basically twofold. First, the success of the Best Party is a powerful deterrent against calling for new elections, which some of the old parties would otherwise like to do in light of the present difficulties in government and disagreements in parliament.

The second impact of “the Gnarr effect,” which I don’t think has really manifested itself to a great extent, is that the established parties will do some soul searching—asking, ‘what did we do wrong? What do we have to do to gain back the trust of the people and avoid something like this from happening again?’

Was the crash itself not enough to get the parties soul searching?

To some extent. We’ve had the SIC [Special Investigative Committee] Report that is extremely critical of the political system, the political parties, the political culture, basically how Iceland has been practicing politics for the last decades. And then we have this report from the Parliamentary commission. They basically concluded that the political culture in Iceland has serious defects, and there are a lot of things, both in legislation and political practices that should be reformed.

The important thing is, firstly, a committee with representatives from all of the parties came to the same critical conclusion and secondly, all 63 members of parliament voted for this resolution. That of course means that MPs from the parties responsible for those old practices and political behaviour are at least verbally saying, ‘okay this is right, we have to do something.’

A completely different question is, ‘are they going to do something?’ So far, I have not seen many signs that they have really been taking this seriously enough. At least the unanimous passing of this parliamentary resolution is perhaps the first sign that all MPs are accepting that there is a problem.

At this point though, do you think it matters if the established parties attempt to reform, or aren’t people just too fed up with them?

That’s impossible to say. If you look at history, the most likely outcome is always that things will stay roughly the same in terms of parties and party support. It’s rare that major parties die when you have great discontentment among voters (the exception being Italy in the early ‘90s). The old parties almost always adapt when a new situation arises.

However, a refocus of political agenda is far easier than changing a heavily ingrained political culture. The worst-case scenario for the established parties is that the people get so fed up that they conclude that those rascals in conventional politics are so bad that we can’t get anything worse. So they can vote for anything. That could be the Best Party. That could be a xenophobic party. That could be a new centre party. It’s impossible to predict. So if the old parties do not adapt and refresh themselves, there is increasing probability of “the Gnarr effect.”

Do you think the Best Party has a shot in the next parliamentary elections then?

Well, my guess is that most voters would not be prepared to take the risk of voting for a party like the Best Party, with almost no ideology and little experience, because there is more at stake when governing the country than governing the city.

“That is one of the fascinating aspects of Jón Gnarr and the Best Party, the whole operation is so ambiguous—you never know exactly when he is serious, when he is not. Is he just making a parody of the political system and giving a warning to the conventional parties or is there something else to it.”

People might think it’s okay to have Jón Gnarr, a nice mayor in Reykjavík, but whether they would like him to be a Prime Minister is another question. Voters might ask questions like, is it likely that Jón Gnarr and those lovable, respectable artists would really be good at reorganising the economy and facing the difficult tasks of running a country with no experience in politics? So, when it comes to this, I think it would be more difficult for a party like the Best Party to succeed.

But were you not surprised when the Best Party did so well in the city elections?

Yes, I was surprised. As a political scientist, I am trained in observing politics as they usually are, what is common, and then you get something that is absolutely out of the ordinary, you are really not expecting it.

One of the fascinating aspects of Jón Gnarr and the Best Party is that the whole operation is so ambiguous—you never know exactly when they are serious, when they are not. Are they just making a parody of the political system and giving warning to the conventional politicians or is there something else to it.

We are in completely unknown territory so we’ll just have to see how things unfold. And I have to admit, for a political scientist, things like this, even though people don’t always admit it, it is of course scientifically very interesting, just like economists, they find economic disasters very interesting, and geologists find eruptions very interesting. ☺

ANNA ANDERSEN
HÖRÐUR SVEINSSON



A Nation Of Barebackers

Why Icelanders aren't using condoms and how to get them to wrap it up

Words

Rebecca Louder

Photography

Hörður Sveinsson

It's 4:30 in the morning at the 10-11 on Austurstræti, as a night of steady drinking, sweaty dancing and anonymous groping comes to an end. Couples slobber and dry-hump through the aisles, clutching sandwiches and Coke to power-up for a night of sloppy fucking and awkward re-introductions in the morning. At the check-out line, the display rack of condoms and lubricants is practically untouched and ignored.

For the most part, Icelandic culture is more open and accepting of casual sexual activity than most places in the world. This cultural aspect has been popularised overseas to the point that the country's leading airline managed to advertise 'Dirty Weekend' trips for years and Reykjavík is now a classic stag party destination for hooting British males. What the airline's marketing campaign did not divulge to horny tourists was that 'dirty' should be taken quite literally and they might go home with more than they bargained for. The condom is not very popular in Iceland.

THE PINK ELEPHANT ON THE ISLAND

The condom is in fact so unpopular that the country is known as "the Nordic champion of Chlamydia," according to Guðrún Sigmundsdóttir at the Icelandic Directorate of Health's statistics department. In 2008 alone, 1834 people were diagnosed with the infection—that's 0.6% of the population—and the number looks the same or worse for each year of the preceding decade. Infections of Gonorrhoea are also on the rise, with a sudden jump from single to double digits in the past five years and while HIV and AIDS are still relatively low in numbers, they are growing globally and should be taken seriously locally.

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are a steady problem that few people outside of the medical profession are willing to acknowledge. I spoke with several sexually active young Icelanders about their attitude towards using condoms and found that most didn't even consider STIs when deciding whether or not to wrap up. "Everyone is on birth control so we aren't really worried about getting pregnant," said Ragnheiður*, 20-years old, when explaining why she does not use condoms. If this seems like flawed logic, it is, since there has been an average of 4394 births per year in Iceland since 2000. Presenting her with



the question of infections, she replied that people date within their circle of friends and think they would know if anyone caught anything. "Everybody knows each other. I think it's only with foreigners that you get worried."

A more relatable explanation came from 21-year old father-to-be Míkael*. "They are just too expensive here," he said. "I was living with my girlfriend last year and of course we were having a lot of sex. We were both pretty broke, so of course you buy food and pay for rent first. After there just wasn't enough left to buy condoms. Now there's a baby on the way." A quick trip to the protection section at a pharmacy is astonishing—no less than 2500 ISK for twelve latex condoms. This of course raises the issue of much one values their sexual health and future in order to budget for it. Unplanned pregnancies and children are much more expensive in the long run, after all.

NO GLOVE, NO LOVE

None of the young people I spoke with had any reasonable explanation for why there is such a pervasive aversion to slapping on a jimmy-hat and seemed apathetic to think of one. I turned to Sigurlaug Hauksdóttir for answers. Sigurlaug is a social worker at the Icelandic Directorate of Health and holds a Masters degree in parental sexual education. Her view is that condom use in the country is, indeed, insufficient, attributing it to several factors. "One reason is people here start to have sex very early, especially girls," she told me. "European research has showed that Icelandic girls are the third youngest to start having sex, behind Greenland and Denmark. When kids start having sex very young, they are very vulnerable. It's harder to assert themselves, say no and insist on using a condom."

The problem is greatest with youth aged 15-25, although sexual education is supposed to be taught in school at the primary level. Sigurlaug does think that an investigation into how sexual education is being taught is in order, as well as continual education at the secondary school level. "Teachers think it's a difficult area to teach, but a lot of teachers and especially nurses have been doing a great job," she said. "It is important to know as much you can, so you can have a sex life that's as interesting and healthy as possible. We need to have a better discourse." She also praised the work of the sexual health clinic at the hospital in Reykjavík's Fossvogur district where people can receive anonymous care and free medications.

Other factors she addressed are an overall negative view of condoms—that they take away the pleasure or show a lack of trust in one's partner—as well as the issue of price, saying that people should use their money more wisely. "It would be nice not paying at all, but going to the movies or buying chocolate, for instance, costs more and is less important, yet we always seem to have money for that," she argues. "People should use condoms with a more positive mind. There are many types of condoms that vary in taste and colour and shape and texture. Figure out what you like best with your partner and have fun with it."

BLAME YOUR PARENTS

Her main concern in the struggle to increase condom use and sexual education in Iceland is the involvement of parents in their children's health and lifestyle as they transition from young children into adolescence. "They have a good relationship until they hit puberty and then the relationship drops," Sigurlaug told me. "We have to change our practices with our children, talking more and

"If this seems like flawed logic, it is, since there has been an average of 4394 births per year in Iceland since 2000. Presenting her with the question of infections, she replied that people date within their circle of friends and know if anyone caught anything. "Everybody knows each other. I think it's only with foreigners that you get worried.""

doing more together." She does understand that talking to one's children about sex can be incredibly awkward. "I know they can be very insecure about discussing it. They didn't grow up having these discussions in their homes," she commiserated. "Parents should be offered more education and support to make them more confident about talking to their kids about sex. I think most parents would be interested in that because they care so much about their children in every way."

ALWAYS WEAR RUBBER

In the end, it seems as though the problem needs to be attacked from every angle—from young people's attitudes and assertiveness to a more open discourse in the general media. Iceland is exceptional in its open nature towards sex, but denial of the problem of condom use and passing it off as a non-issue creates an environment of sexual irresponsibility. "I think it is good that people can go to the sex clinic and receive STI medication for free, but people could be more responsible about getting checked up," Sigurlaug contends. "There could also be more discussion about it in the mass media, to help teach our children to be more critical about pornography and the pressure to have sex. There is so much sex everywhere and it creates a lot of pressure on young people. We need to stress more that condoms are the only way to prevent diseases. We have easy access to condoms in nearly every store or by ordering online. There is no reason not to use them." 🍆

**Names have been changed to protect identities*



ICELAND :: FILM – Berlin – Copenhagen – Reykjavík
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The Silver Spoon Revolution



After the events of the past few days, it is hard not to think of Goya's painting of Saturn Devouring His Son. Iceland is still in shambles and its children are devouring the government that they voted for to clean up the mess. After watching our country suffer a meltdown induced by half-witted Gordon Gekko wannabes, I sense that a large majority of Icelanders think that the Independence Party can offer a soothing return to blissful ignorance. The robber barons and fishing industry tycoons want a return to Icelandic capitalism: crony capitalism.

And while benches were being burned, not on a bonfire of vanities, but on a bonfire of misdirected anger and ignorance, Morgunblaðið and other "respectable" media outlets claimed that this was a mass showing of ordinary citizens that were demanding a new government. However, last time there were similar protests it was because dangerous communists and extremists sought to threaten Iceland's stability and economical recovery. Bjarni Benediktsson, chairman of the Independent Party, better known as The Ken Doll, put on his Janus performance. He praised the protests since he was not in power, since Bjarni is far too busy to dare sully himself and his

silver spoon by showing up.

These benches have been the homes of Reykjavík's derelict and downtrodden, the people we walk past every day downtown. These protesters complain of a lack of income for basic needs such as food, and yet they have enough disposable income to buy egg cartons, juice bottles and other items to throw at the government that actually may not be doing the greatest job in the world yet it is still cleaning up the mess that the distinct Icelandic crony capitalism created, which enabled Jón Ásgeir and others to buy up the whole country, bleed it, torch it and then lie to the Icelandic people on television; on the same flat screen televisions the children of the boom years bought while the Progressive Party created a housing bubble with a cheerful face in ads.

The protests seemed to be comprised of a generation of "me first" Icelanders: teenagers that prefer reading text messages to books, suburbanites that lived in a bubble and believed the lies perpetuated by Morgunblaðið and the Independence Party—people that actually use words like communist with a straight face and thought that Iceland was somehow more special than every other country in the world.

However, the most pathetic part of the protests had to be the Neo-Nazis and their symbols. Instead of focusing their rage on the individuals that created an oligarchic society made up of crony capitalists, we now have people spewing their hatred on others. After suffering from a severe case of capitalistic affluenza, we now blame foreigners for our problems instead of looking within. Shortly after the crash it was Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling, then the IMF and other countries for not lending us money. Now it is "The Other".

Ironically, this makes sense in Iceland. The farcical perversity of our society is so immense that it seems like Iceland is a cosmic joke. One of the architects of the Iceland's current problems is Björgólfur Guðmundsson, who is married to the former wife of Norman Rockwell, a prominent American Nazi. Thanks to Björgólfur and the rest of the ship of fools, Iceland is now dealing with the aftermath; nonetheless people seem to have forgotten him. I guess he is too busy trying to run Iceland into the ground again for the protesters to notice while they keep on filling the pockets of the oligarchs. ☹

✉ PÁLL HILMARSSON

Jungle Drums and Tribal Justice



"...Iceland's misadventure in imitating the banking excesses of bigger countries has let it to imitate their judicial excesses." Christopher Caldwell, Financial Times

Public patience has once again reached breaking point. Although current protests may have been ignited by Alþingi's recent debacle—a surprising event which vindicated former ministers of Finance, Foreign Affairs and Business Affairs of all blame in Iceland's economic collapse, but singled-out ex-PM Geir Haarde, voting to indict him for gross negligence—the question Icelanders are asking is: Can anyone here get our house in order? Commenting on the indictment of Geir Haarde, the Financial Times noted: "In large countries a crusading judiciary is either the sign of a feeble political class or the modus operandi of a corrupt one. Maybe, where everyone knows everyone else, statesmen can be disciplined ad hominem without creating damaging constitutional precedents. Maybe the prosecution of Mr Haarde is more tribal than political."

In an interview with Bloomberg Television, Geir stated that his indictment was absurd. "The crisis," he said, "was not due to political decisions. It was partly the banks' own doing." Without pointing fingers, he admits that there were mistakes made within his own government, but for him, this indictment is a case of "political opponents settling their scores." Geir H. Haarde, the first political leader to lose power as a direct result of the economic crisis, is also the first—and potentially only one—to be indicted. He told the Financial Times that he and his colleagues "did not cause the crisis any more than George Bush in the US or Gordon Brown in the UK."

Geir may be on to something here. Hoping Geir's indictment could set precedent other former political leaders are being singled-out for the chopping block in the UK and even the US. In fact, the Daily Telegraph proposes the UK government mount a similar case against Gordon Brown: "...he failed to control the recklessness of the banks... he stripped the Bank of England of its powers...and gave them a...wholly inept regulator...he misled parliament over the state of the public finances..." The Wall Street Journal concurs wholeheartedly, but it's highly unlikely that a major political leader could be brought to court either in the UK or the US due to negligence any time soon. Set up in 1905, Iceland's Landsdómur, a special chamber to try ministers accused of crimes, appears to be a rather unique institution.

In the US, Foreign Policy Magazine

had a look at the legal framework covering a potential indictment of former President George W. Bush and former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, but found that "it's not against the law for [US] politicians to screw up." Apparently mistaken regulatory decisions and lax oversight are not grounds for criminal charges, and in fact even civil charges are highly unlikely. "Unless U.S. regulators were purposely colluding with companies to defraud investors, they can't be held responsible. Iceland's law is pretty unique, but countries under the Westminster system—those based on the British parliament—traditionally operate under a principle of 'ministerial responsibility'." The Financial Times points out that, "A simple-minded ideology, foolishly imposed is not the same as a crime. Negligence, no matter how gross, is not corruption."

To make matters worse, progress in charging former Icelandic 'oligarchs' and their 'banksters-in-crime' appears to be geriatric to say the least. The Daily Mail states: "The Financial Services authority, as Kaupþing's UK regulator, does not appear to have been in a great hurry to release regulatory material to the Serious Fraud Office." And here in Iceland, despite a year and a half of evidence-accumulation, not a single 'bankster' has been brought to justice. Meanwhile, despite all the current government's promises to the contrary, and at the behest of the IMF, homes are being repossessed, taxes are higher than ever, and social benefits are being cut left and right. One wonders who really governs the country.

This last month the FT noted that Ágúst Guðmundsson, founder of Bakkaþór and one of the largest shareholders in the now-defunct Kaupþing, settled a London lawsuit filed against him. He was charged with acquiring an unprecedented 10 million USD loan from his former bank in 2007 for a holiday chalet in the French Alps. In the US, Glitnir's ongoing 2 billion USD lawsuit with Jón Ásgeir Jóhannesson appears to be nowhere near reaching a close. Quoted last month in the Daily Telegraph, he says: "For Glitnir to suggest that the overseas incorporation of these [my] companies is evidence of a complex web of international interests designed to conceal my assets is clearly nonsensical."

On the surface, it seems—with the exception of Geir Haarde—that no one is guilty of a single thing. For a frustrated Icelandic nation there appears to be only one thing to do: Crack out those pots and pans and get banging again. ☹

✉ MARC VINCENZ

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14:00	MODDI (NO) Q&A	ALCOHOLIC FAITH MISSION (DK) Q&A	NIVE NILSEN (GRL) Q&A	HIGHER YOU AND ME DOCUMENTARY ON HJÁLMAR IN JAMAICA
15:00	AGENT FRESCO (IS) Q&A	MARIUS (FO) Q&A	ZACH & FOES (FO) Q&A	
16:00	MURDER (DK) Q&A	BRÓÐIR SVARTÚLFS (IS) Q&A	ÚTIDÚR (IS) Q&A	WHERE IS THE SNOW?! – DOCUMENTARY ON ICELAND AIRWAVES

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BRING IT ON



LÉTTÖL



THE FAILURE OF ICELANDIC POLITICS

or is Iceland essentially ungovernable after its economic collapse?

Words

Egill Helgason

Illustrations

Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

Here is a famous quote by Harold Wilson: "A week is a long time in politics". At the time of writing, it is totally unclear what the political situation in Iceland will be in a week's time. The day before saw the largest public demonstration in Reykjavik since the so-called 'pots and pans' revolution that toppled the government of PM Geir H. Haarde, which presided over the collapse of the Icelandic economy.

This writer must admit that he was totally wrong in his last Grapevine article. It was titled 'A Case Of Revolutionary Fatigue'. Some of the analysis was fairly accurate, for instance regarding the loss of optimism and citizen initiative, which was in evidence for some time after the crash. But when the author said that Iceland was on the verge of descending into apathy he was mistaken—at least for now.

A NIGHT OF FIERCE DEMONSTRATIONS

Monday October 4th was a day of fierce demonstrations in Austurvöllur, a leafy square dominated by the Alþingi, a rather modest cathedral and a statue of 19th century national hero Jón Sigurðsson. During summer it is a place where people hang out and drink beer, but that night the mood was very ugly. Large oil barrels were beaten, bonfires were lit, again there was a din of pots and pans—but this was pretty far from the exuberance of the rather joyful 'pots and pans' revolution.

Under the din of the protesters who filled Austurvöllur, PM Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir tried to make the annual Prime Minister's policy speech, citing what had been accomplished in the last year, and what is to be done. In this way it was a very traditional first working day of Alþingi, but in light of the angry crowd outside it all seemed unimaginative and somehow inadequate. In light of the circumstances parliamentarians might have gone out on the balcony of Alþingi and tried to talk to the crowd, in the spirit of De Gaulle's famous speech: "Je vous ai compris." I understand.

WHY ARE THEY PROTESTING?

But what were the people protesting? Well, the mood in Iceland is very sombre. There is a great deal of anger and resentment after what happened in 2008. Icelanders—who admittedly can be rather naive—suddenly realised that they had lived in a rather corrupt society. Trust in institutions like Parliament, the government, the civil service and the banks is extremely low. Many people are a lot poorer than they were—in the demonstrations I met an old woman who had been tricked by the bank Glitnir to sell her flat and invest in shares. Which she promptly lost in the collapse. This woman told me she had 3.500 ISK—the equivalent of 20 Euros—to live from every month after her debts had been paid.

Stories like these abound. Iceland is undergoing almost every sort of crisis that is known in the capitalist world: A banking crisis, a currency crisis, a debt crisis, a ruined stock market and a burst housing bubble.

THE PERIOD OF EASY CREDIT

Between 2003 and 2008, housing prices in Reykjavik and its outlying towns shot through the roof. This was mostly due to the fact that after being quite restrictive, banks started giving out mortgages as if there were no tomorrow, competing with a government run housing bank. Soon they started lending 100 percent of the price of a flat or a house—and gradually, as ISK interest rates were raised, loans were given out in foreign denominations.

Iceland was traditionally a country where few people had access to credit. You had to be in the right clique or political party. So Icelanders have had a tendency to regard loans as free money—it is a fact that interest rates have had surprisingly little effect in Iceland. Thus in a period of easy credit, people started taking out loans and mortgages as if there was no tomorrow.

A POLICY OF OWNERSHIP

Some of them were of course overspending and acting totally reckless. It is sometimes rather difficult to see who deserves to be saved after this period of excess, and who doesn't. But some had little choice. The hardest hit are people between the ages of 25–40, who were buying their first properties. There is no rental market in Iceland to speak of; it has been government policy that basically everyone should own



their own property from a young age. This is very unlike our neighbouring Scandinavian countries. These people therefore had no choice but to take on debt to be able to get a place to live, at a time when housing prices were becoming ridiculously high.

After the collapse these loans have become an impossibly heavy burden on many households. They are either indexed to foreign currencies—a practice that was in fact deemed illegal by the High Court in a recent verdict—or to the rampant Icelandic inflation. At the same time house prices have been falling steadily and they have still not found their bottom, salaries have fallen to a level of many years ago, many people have less work or are even unemployed.

RESURRECTED BANKS

The present government has been very clumsy in dealing with this problem, but this is what's really poisoning political life on the island: During the collapse all deposits in banks were guaranteed by the government and they still are, billions were put into the rescue of money market funds where more affluent people had put their money—but the perception is that very little has been done for common debtors.

It is a paradox that in the time of a nominally left wing government that the banks have been given new life. They all collapsed, but now we basically have the same banking system as before, excepting a fray of smaller financial institutions that have gone bust. Two of the banks have changed their names, with one of them, the Landsbanki of Iceland, even blatantly retaining its tarnished name.

One of the demonstrators from October 4th said to me: "This government of the left had the banks on their knees, but then it decided to resurrect them."

WHO IS PROTESTING?

There is also a question of who was protesting. Some even stated that this was a revolt by the middle classes who normally might vote for The Independence Party, the party considered most responsible for the crash. Many left wing people, supporters of the government who took an active part in

the 'pots and pans' revolution, stayed away this time. There were even claims that the demonstrators had arrived in their SUVs, filling all the parking places downtown.

In the crowd that night a Nazi flag was hoisted, along with different neo-Nazi insignia, fuelling fears that the extreme right might be on the rise in the country. There was also a flag with the image of Che Guevara to be seen, as well as the black flags of anarchists. Some of these people might have a different agenda, ranging from an aversion to the IMF or the EU to general dislike of capitalism.

THE DEFENSIVE SHIELD THAT FAILED

However, it can be claimed that the demonstrators were quite normal people, people who are fed up with the incompetence and constant bickering of politicians. It has been claimed that of 150 people—many of them politicians—interviewed by the Special Investigative Committee, not a single person felt any responsibility for the collapse. Most of these people can't seem to wait to get back to business as usual, while the general public becomes more and more frustrated by the aftershocks of the collapse.

Surely the government's task was always going to be difficult, but at the outset it announced that it would throw a defensive shield around the homes of Iceland. The term for this, "skjaldborg", has become a byword for broken promises. It was also going to be a government of Nordic welfare, after many years of relentless neo-liberalist policies. However, the government has been extremely bad at communicating with people and inspiring them. Trust in Alþingi, the Icelandic parliament, is almost non-existent. Few people lament that it was pelted with eggs and rotten vegetables on Monday the 4th of October.

AN UNGOVERNABLE COUNTRY?

This all leads to a serious political vacuum. Not many people seem to want the old government back. One prominent politician from the Independence Party got hassled during the demonstrations

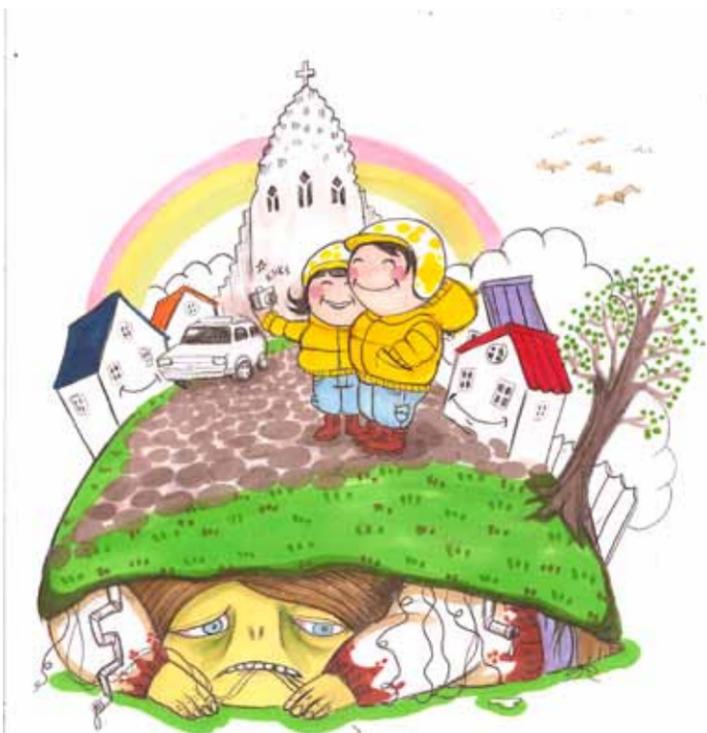
and had to be rescued by the police. In September, Parliament decided—after recommendations from the aforementioned parliamentary committee—to prosecute ex-PM Geir Haarde before a special court, never before convened. This created an outcry amongst Geir Haarde's supporters, but it was evident that no one on Austurvöllur was demonstrating on his part.

It could be surmised that Iceland is essentially ungovernable at the moment. Debate is unusually vicious and uncompromising, as can be witnessed on local blogs. Foreigners who come here see a country with nice houses, cars and shops. The crisis is not evident when you move about Reykjavik. But underneath there lies a kind of malaise that is eating up our social capital. The feeling is almost that the country is ungovernable. A recent comparative study shows that trust in Iceland is on the level of—no, not Sweden or the other neighbouring countries—but Venezuela.

BRAIN DRAIN

There are calls for a government of all parties, or a government of specialists appointed by the President. But then one wonders whether such governments would have the clout to deal with the powerful interest groups that the current government has been so afraid to take on: The banks, who seem to be back to their old secretive ways, writing off the debts of the extremely rich while persecuting the small debtors; the very powerful owners of fishing quotas; the farming lobby and the bosses of the pension funds.

We have a nation that might have thought that the economic collapse was an abstract that wouldn't affect people in any real way—but now it does. The crisis—in Icelandic "the kreppa"—will be a long-winded affair. One of the serious dangers with debt, budget cuts, unemployment and general discontent is that young people will leave the country in herds. Iceland has very many square kilometres, but the population is small—a brain drain is the last thing we need, but just next door, we have affluent Norway... 



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 Housing Financing Fund

The media is often recognised as the fourth branch of government sitting next to the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Recognising its importance in 1787, United States Founding Father Thomas Jefferson said, "were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

By Anna Anderson Photo Hörður Sveinsson

The Watchdog That Didn't Bark

How the media failed the people before the crash



If fulfilling the role of the 4th branch was the goal, then Iceland's two most widely read newspapers, Fréttablaðið and Morgunblaðið, by and large failed to fulfil their duties before the crash. On the contrary, the papers often served as a mouthpiece of the government and financial institutions, through which they spewed positive propaganda to the public.

Although, for example, Morgunblaðið's editor at the time, Styrmir Gunnarsson, claims the paper, "adequately evaluated external news and information [before the crash]," an examination of what the newspapers had in their hands in terms of external warnings and what they then passed on to the public reveals a serious lapse in journalism.

Before the crash, external agencies like Moody's, the OECD and Merrill Lynch, consistently issued reports warning about the enormity of the commercial banking sector and the absence of a lender of last resort. Each time, the newspapers remarkably minimised their reports and ignored or refuted any critical information about the banks.

April – Moody's is worried about Iceland's banks

Moody's Annual Report, April 9, 2008

"...Moody's has become increasingly concerned about the burden of potential contingent liabilities stemming from the Icelandic banks. Iceland's banking system has rapidly internationalized: the system has grown to nine times GDP...The downgrade of all three major commercial banks to C- in February 2008 means that Iceland is the only Aaa-rated country to have a banking system with an average financial strength rating below C. The risk of contagion among these three banks has raised concerns about a system-wide crisis. Moody's considers such a crisis to be a very low probability but high severity risk scenario distinguishes Iceland from other Aaa sovereigns, and accordingly has changed the outlook on the government's ratings to negative. The government's direct debt is very manageable, but the negative outlook is meant to signal the pressures emerging from banking system liabilities, and the incremental increase in the risk that some part of those could come onto the government's own balance sheet..."

On April 9, Moody's issues its annual report on Iceland, reiterating its decision to downgrade Iceland's banks to C- and lower the government's rating to negative in February and March, respectively.

MORGUNBLAÐIÐ SAYS CRISIS IS UNLIKELY

On April 9, Morgunblaðið reports, "New Moody's report says crisis unlikely." At once the headline sums up a rosy conclusion of a report from an agency that has recently downgraded Iceland's banks

to C- and lowered Iceland's outlook to negative. The article begins by stating Iceland's exceptional quality in being the only Aaa ranked country with C- ranked banks, as if this was almost a good thing. It goes on to say, "the state of the banks is said to be concerning, but it's unlikely that they will be the cause an economic crisis." Additionally, it reports, "Minister of Finance Árni M. Mathiesen says discussions during the last two to three weeks have been moving in a positive direction. Moody's is very well acquainted with the country and their positive report should push discussions in that direction."

Thus, it's generally a positive report. Morgunblaðið fails to mention that the banks are nine times Iceland's GDP, and does not include Moody's warning: "The banking sector in Iceland represents the most burdensome contingent liability. Moody's considers the three large commercial banks in Iceland as "too big to fail," a concept that is not affected by the banks having been fully privatised,

meaning that we would expect a very high degree of systemic support by the Icelandic authorities for the banks in the event of a stress situation. Given the scale of the banks' international operations, however, any systemic threat would prove extremely costly to the government if that eventuality were to materialize."

Of course if they had included all of this, the Minister of Finance would have appeared incompetent and they couldn't have written up such an overwhelmingly positive interpretation of the report.

FRÉTTABLAÐIÐ SAYS SPECULATIONS ARE RIDICULOUS

On the following day, April 10, Fréttablaðið covers Moody's report in an article called, "Ridiculous speculations." The article begins by quoting Prime Minister Geir Haarde who dismisses speculations that Iceland could run into insolvency problems and says, on the contrary, "exports are increasing, the trade deficit is decreasing and the state of the banks is strong." Yes, he said, "the state of the

banks is strong."

Then, selectively paraphrasing from Moody's report, the article says, "Moody's believes Iceland will come out better than other countries with the Aaa rating and countries with this rating can easily shake all kinds of economic difficulties."

Did Fréttablaðið not find Geir Haarde's statement, "the state of the banks is strong," preposterous after reading Moody's report, which clearly expresses concerns about the banks? Perhaps they did not read the report. At least that would explain why they fail to point out that a high severity risk scenario makes Iceland different from other Aaa countries and that Moody's is "increasingly concerned about the burden of potential contingent liabilities stemming from Icelandic banks...the system has grown to nine times GDP...the risk of contagion among these banks has raised concerns about a system-wide crisis."

The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

INFO

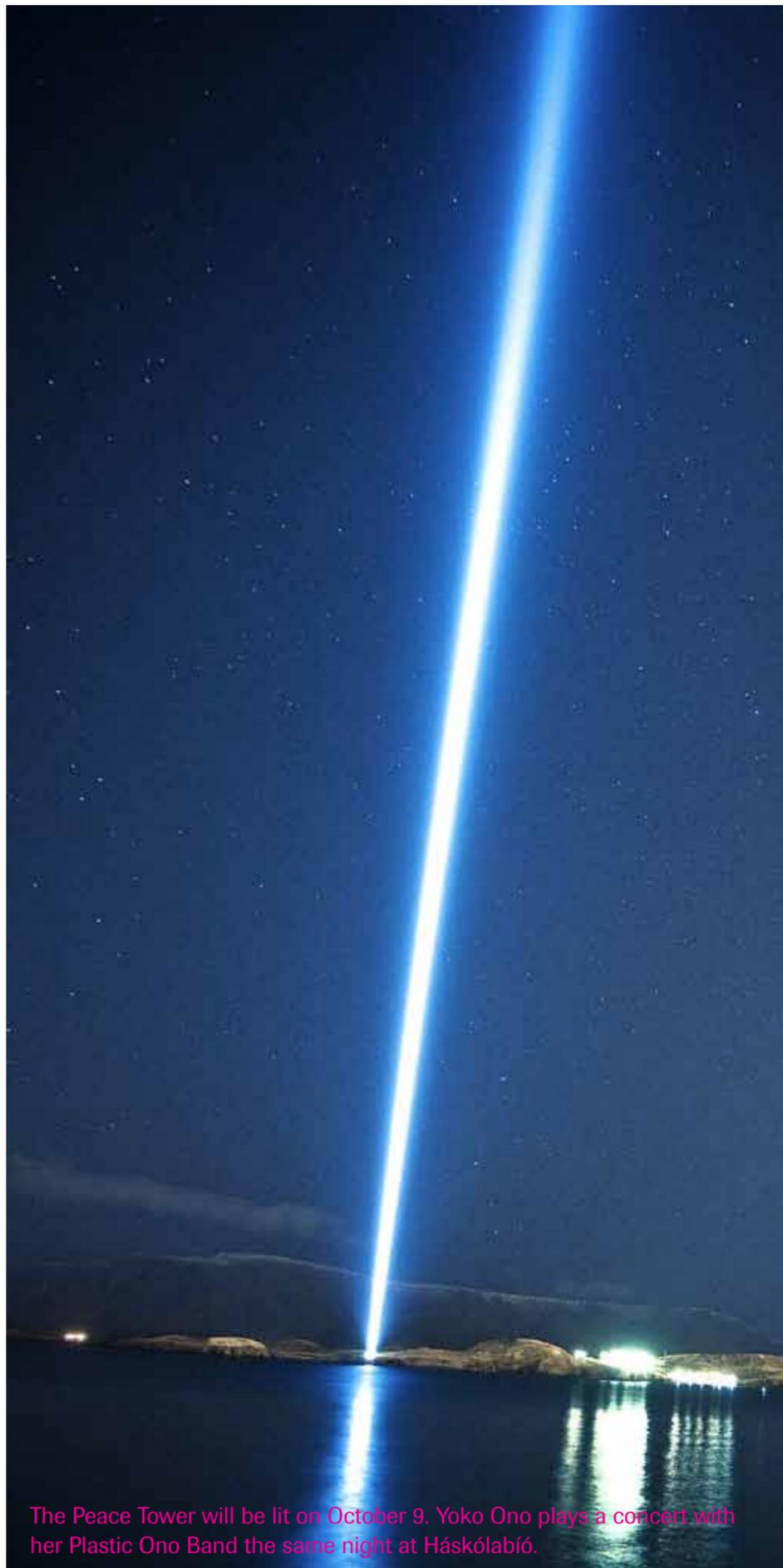


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Issue 16 - 2010

www.grapevine.is



The Peace Tower will be lit on October 9. Yoko Ono plays a concert with her Plastic Ono Band the same night at Háskólabíó.

YES!

A conversation with Yoko Ono

Text by Kristín Dagmar
Photo by Gúndi

Conceptual artist, performer, musician, experimental filmmaker, peace activist, businesswoman and philanthropist, Yoko Ono is still overshadowed by the role she is most known for: being the widow of musician John Lennon and the accompanying hard-to-shake-off clichés about 'splitting up the Beatles'.

Yoko's continuous quest for love, peace and above all HOPE is perhaps exactly what's needed in Iceland in these times of economical and political turmoil. It hasn't exactly been a time of positive thinking. Fortunately, she is back in Iceland this weekend to light up her 'Imagine Peace Tower' for the fourth time.

Made in memory of Lennon, the work tower has been lit upon his birth date, October 9, since it was unveiled in 2007. This year Lennon would have turned 70 years old, which means a big celebration with events such as the long sold-out live performance by The Plastic Ono Band on Saturday night. We are glad to have her, so we called her up.

Instructions

"LET EVERYBODY IN THE CITY THINK OF THE WORD "YES" AT THE SAME TIME FOR 30 SECONDS. DO IT OFTEN."

--YOKO ONO--

Yoko Ono's instructional pieces, published in a book titled 'Grapefruit' in 1964, are simple and often Zen-like 'event scores' that replace the physical work of art. Yoko started to make a name for herself in the early 1960s avant-garde art scene in New York, performing and exhibiting with artists of the Fluxus group. She explains: "We were all there before" [prior to George Maciunas' Fluxus manifesto in 1963], and some of their early events were held at Yoko's loft. Fluxus was an international network of artists who celebrated experimentation, anti-art sensibility and explored media ranging from performance art, poetry, experimental music and film. True to the Fluxus spirit Ono's final instruction for 'Grapefruit' was: "Burn this book after you've read it"

It could be argued that Yoko Ono has only in recent years gained true recognition for her work, with a retrospective spanning her 40-year career exhibited in 2000, being awarded with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Japan Society of New York and the Golden Leon award at the Venice Biennale in 2009. Her early works include 'A Painting (Work) To Be Stepped On' (1961), literally leaving a piece of canvas on the floor to be stepped on, and the controversial 'Cut Piece', which was first performed in Japan in 1964. The artist sat kneeling on a stage, with a pair of scissors in front of her. One at a time, the audience cut off a bit of her clothes for them to keep, leaving the artist naked by the end of the performance. But Ono shares her art and perhaps herself in this way.

Audience participation is important

Audience participation has been an ongoing element in her work, as she explains when asked: "It is very important to me, because it makes people closer to my work. And I don't want to be put up on a pedestal." In her notorious 'Ceiling Painting' the viewers had to climb up a white ladder in the centre of the room, from where a magnifying glass

hanging from the ceiling revealed the word "YES" written in tiny letters. The work was exhibited at London's Indica Gallery in 1966, which John Lennon supposedly crashed prior the opening and took a big bite of an apple placed on a pedestal the middle of the gallery (stood in this case as a work of art, titled 'Apple').

The importance of being geothermal

The participatory element is particularly evident in more recent projects such as the 'Wish Tree'. First set up in Japan in 1996 and continued in cities around the globe, it collects people's wishes and refers to her Japanese background and traditions. The work has a special connection to the 'Imagine Peace Tower' as Yoko collected a number of those wishes and buried them in capsules around the tower.

Iceland was chosen as a location for the Imagine Peace Tower particularly because of its ability to geothermally generate the electricity needed. Yoko notes that Icelanders should be very careful in the future when we touch on the subject of geothermal and hydroelectric energy, a current and highly debated issue in Iceland. "Iceland is such a beautiful country", she continues.

Not necessarily having any other connection to neither her nor John Lennon, its particular placement is not the issue. It could have been placed anywhere in the world. Yoko grew up moving between Japan and New York in her younger years. This, she explains, shaped her when growing up and therefore the aim to bring people of the world together and blurring geographical boundaries has meant something very special to her. Having travelled around the globe she celebrates increasing globalization: "It's like a melting pot today," she says in an excited voice.

Things are always changing

When asked about the changes that have occurred in Iceland since the Peace Tower's unveiling in 2007, a year that represents the end of an era of wealth and perhaps innocence, and if it has affected the way people view the work, she agrees. She says that "of course it shapes the way we look at things," but then calmly, in an almost spiritual manner, she goes on: "Things are always changing". Her words are inspiring and full of hope.

It is by looking back at her career you really start to appreciate her work. The Peace Tower has taken some time to grow on me, personally. The work was originally a conceptual text piece called 'Light House' (1965), noting " - a house constructed of light from prisms, which exists in accordance with the changes of the day." It was Lennon's idea to make it a reality. One beautiful wish has come true.

We do not need to look at the work as reminder of the silly things we got up to in 2007, but rather the symbol of hope it is meant to be. It might just feed off something positive. Perhaps it seems like a wishful thinking, but that is how the best of things often start to take shape.

Yoko Ono ends our conversation in quite Japanese fashion with the words: "Iceland, I love you, and see you soon!"

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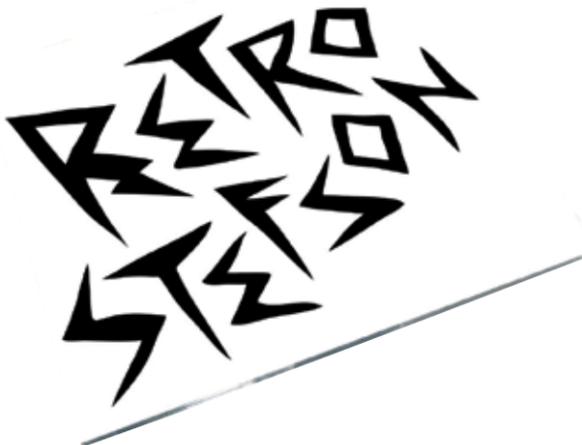
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How to use the listings
Venues are listed alphabetically by day.
For complete listings and detailed information
on venues visit www.grapevine.is

8 FRI

- Apótek**
22:00 Live DJ.
- Austur**
22:00 DJ Símon.
- Austurbær**
20:00 Buddy Holly Musical. 4300 ISK.
- B5**
22:00 DJ Leifur.
- Bakkus**
22:00 DJ Benson is FANTASTIC!
- Boston**
22:00 DJ Unnur Andrea.
- Café Oliver**
22:00 Girls Night. DJ Maggi & Brynar Már.
- Café Rosenberg**
22:00 KK-Band.
- Celtic Cross**
22:00 Live music.
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music. Sing-along night.
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music.
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music.
- Faktorý**
23:00 Ten Steps Away and guests. DJ Atli Kanil. 500 ISK.
- Hressó**
22:00 Penta band and DJ Fannar.
- Hverfisbarinn**
Funky Friday - old school funk and hip hop.
- Kaffibarinn**
22:00 Már & Nielsen.
- NASA**
Pendulum DJ Set (Australia).
- P**
22:00 Daddi Disco and Hlynur.
- Prikió**
22:00 Frískó (Franz & Kristó). Afterwards DJ Danni Deluxe.
- Risió**
22:00 The Houseband. Live funk.
- Sódóma**
20:30 Funding concert with Noise, Coral, Æla, Vicky, Hellvar, Kallakór Kaffibarsins, Bróðir Svar-túlfis and more. 1000 ISK.
- Thorvaldsen**
22:00 Live DJ.
- Vegamót**
22:00 DJ Jónas.
- Venue**
23:00 Evil Night: Logn, Lazyblood, Manslaughter, Reykjavík!, Bárujárn. Free.

9 SAT

- Apótek**
22:00 Live DJ.
- Austur**
22:00 Live DJ.
- Austurbær**
20:00 Buddy Holly Musical. 4300 ISK.
- B5**
22:00 DJ Jónas.

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- Bakkus**
22:00 DJ Unnur Andrea.
- Boston**
22:00 DJ Maggi Lego.
- Café Oliver**
22:00 Girls Night. DJ Maggi & Brynar Már.
- Café Rosenberg**
22:00 KK-Band.
- Celtic Cross**
22:00 Live music.
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music. Sing-along night.
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music.
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music.
- Faktorý**
23:00 Bob album release, Sudden Weather Change, Miri. Retro Stefson DJ set. 1000 ISK.
- Háskólabíó**
21:30 Yoko Ono Plastic Ono Band. 2000 ISK.
- Havari**
16:00 Airwaves warm-up concert. Pétur Eyvindsson and Graupan & The Crying Cowboy.
- Hressó**
Silfur band and DJ Fannar.
- Hverfisbarinn**
DJs playing hip hop, R&B, house and funk until the morning.
- Kaffibarinn**
22:00 Alfons X.
- P**
22:00 Daddi Disco and Hlynur.
- Players, Kópavogur**
Karma. Live music.
- Prikió**
22:00 Big J release party. With Alla Abstract, MC Erp, Didda Fel, Intro, Helga Val and others. DJ Moonshine.
- Risió**
24:00 Plugged and Played. DJ and drums.
- The Icelandic Opera**
20:00 Rigoletto premiere. 6000 - 10000 ISK.
- Thorvaldsen**
22:00 Live DJ.
- Vegamót**
22:00 DJ Danni Deleuxe.
- Venue**
Ég og Múgsefjun. Live music.

10 SUN

- Austurbær**
20:00 Buddy Holly Musical. 4300 ISK.
- Café Oliver**
Live music.
- Café Rosenberg**
21:00 Tóta Jazz.
- Celtic Cross**
22:00 Live music.
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music.
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music.
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music.
- Prikió**
22:00 Hangover Movie Night. Film: Starship Troopers. Free popcorn and coke offer.
- Risió**
Jenson, Ásmundsson and Hemstock.

11 MON

- Balthazar**
20:00 Tango practica.

- Bakkus**
21:00 Movie Night: Sigryggur Berg Sigmarrson presents The Witch Who Came from the Sea. Free.
- Café Oliver**
Margarita Monday. 2 for 1 margaritas. Live music by Raggi Troubadour.
- Café Rosenberg**
21:00 Gísli Helgasson. Live Jazz.
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music.
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music.
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music.
- Kaffi Zimsen**
Best friends day. Beer offer.
- Prikió**
21:00 DJ Ffej. Red Wine & Cheese for 2. 1000 ISK.

12 TUE

- Café Oliver**
Live karaoke night.
- Café Rosenberg**
21:00 Live music.
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music & beer bingo.
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music.
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music.
- Faktorý**
21:30 Live electronica. Stilluppsteypa, Selvhentur(DK) and more. 1500 ISK.
- Prikió**
21:00 DJ Kalli (Breakbeat.is).
- Risió**
Sigurður Flosason Quartet. Live jazz.

13 WED

ICELAND AIRWAVES 2010
For daily schedule check out www.icelandairwaves.is.

- Austur**
Live jazz groove.
- Bakkus**
Dj Flugvél and Geimskip - Bárujárn.
- Café Oliver**
Live music.
- Café Rosenberg**
21:00 Myst. Live music.
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live music & pop-quiz.
- Dubliner**
22:00 Live music.
- English Pub**
22:00 Live music.
- Faktorý**
21:30 Live electronica. Arnljótur, Stereo Hypnosis and more. 1500 ISK.
- Hverfisbarinn**
Live music. Special offers.
- Kaffitár café**
20:00 Tango Milonga.
- Kaffi Zimsen**
Playday. Offers at the bar when the bells rings.
- Risió**
22:00 Plugged and Played. DJ and drums.
- Salurinn, Kópavogur**
20:30 Memory concert for Hauk Morthens. 3500 ISK.

14 THU

ICELAND AIRWAVES 2010
For daily schedule check out www.icelandairwaves.is.

Music & Entertainment | Venue finder

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

B5
Troubadours **Sjonni Brink** and **Gignir**.

Bakkus
22:00 DJ **Einar Sonic**.

Boston
DJ **Unnur Andrea**.

Café Oliver
Ingó Weathergod.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 **Ómar Diðriks** album release.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.

Dillon Rock Bar
Live music.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Kaffi Zimsen
Ólafsvaka. Beer offer.

Kofi Tómasar Frænda
22:00 Troubadour.

The Icelandic Opera
20:00 **Rigoletto**. 6000 - 10000 ISK.

Thorvaldson
20:30 Salsa dancing night.

Vegamót
22:00 DJ **Jónas**.

15 FRI
ICELAND AIRWAVES 2010
For daily schedule check out www.icelandairwaves.is.

Austur
22:00 DJ **Jónas**.

Austurbær
20:00 **Buddy Holly Musical**. 4300 ISK.

B5
22:00 DJ **Jóhann Valur**.

Bakkus
Spaceships are Cool - Retrön.

Boston
DJ **Baldur**.

Café Oliver
22:00 Girls Night. DJ **Maggi & Brynar Már**.

Café Rosenberg
22:00 Band on Stage.

Celtic Cross
22:00 Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & sing-along night.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Hverfisbarinn
Funky Friday - old school funk and hip hop.

P
22:00 **Daddi Disco and Hlynur**.

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 **Jonas Ingimundarson** honors composer **Arni Thorsteinsson**. 3500 ISK.

Thorvaldson
22:00 Live DJ.

Vegamót
22:00 DJ **Danni Deluxe**.

16 SAT
ICELAND AIRWAVES 2010
For daily schedule check out www.icelandairwaves.is.

Austur
22:00 DJ **Bogi**.

Austurbær
20:00 **Buddy Holly Musical**. 4300 ISK.

B5
22:00 DJ **Jónas**.

Bakkus
Sakaris - Bloodgroup.

Boston
Kasper.

Café Oliver
22:00 Girls Night. DJ **Maggi & Brynar Már**.

Café Rosenberg
22:00 **Trupilakar** band.

Celtic Cross
22:00 Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & sing-along night.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Hverfisbarinn
DJs playing hip hop, R&B, house and funk until the morning.

P
22:00 **Daddi Disco and Hlynur**.

Prikió
24:00 **DJ Danni Deluxe & Rottweiler**.
The Shitsez Norsk (electro punk pop).

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 **Páll Rósinkrans**.
Concert. 3500 ISK.

Thorvaldson
22:00 Live DJ.

Vegamót
22:00 DJs **Anna Rakel** and **Yr**.

17 SUN
ICELAND AIRWAVES 2010
For daily schedule check out www.icelandairwaves.is.

Bakkus
B-Waves Bakkus off-venue concerts.

Café Oliver
22:00 Live music.

Celtic Cross
22:00 Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Prikió
22:00 Hangover Movie Night. Film: **Wild Side**. Free popcorn and coke offer. Afterwards **DJ Kococon**.

Risió
Jenson, Ásmundsson and Hemstock.
Live jazz/funk.

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 **Omar Ragnarsson**.
Concert. 4400 ISK.

18 MON

Balthazar
20:00 Tango practica.

Bakkus
21:00 Movie night: **The Valley of Dawn** (Adrienne Grierson, 2010) Director present. Iceland premier. Free.

Café Oliver
Margarita Monday. 2 for 1 margaritas. Live music by **Raggi** Troubadour.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 **Bob Ackerman** band.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Kaffi Zimsen
Best friends day. Beer offer.

Prikió
21:00 DJ **Óli**. Red Wine & Cheese for 2, 1000 ISK.

Sólon
20:00 Salsa Night.

19 TUE

Borgarleikhúsió
19:30 **Jesus Christ Superstar**.
3500 ISK.

Café Oliver
Live karaoke night.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 **Skúli Mennski and Grjót**.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & beer bingo.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Prikió
22:00 DJ **Anna Brá**.

Risió
21:30 **Skuggamyndir frá Býsans**.
Bulgarian/Makedinian folk-jazz.

20 WED

Austur
Live jazz groove.

Bakkus
22:00 Djöfullinn er danskur.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 **Magnus Torfi** and band. Live jazz.

Faktorý
22:00 **RIVR (USA)**, **Deathmetal Supersquad** and **Reykjavík!**

Hverfisbarinn
Live music. Special offers.

Kaffitár café
20:00 Tango Milonga.

Kaffibarinn
22:00 **Hilmar & Hellert** - Reggae Dub Session.

Kaffi Zimsen
Playday. Offers at the bar when the bells rings.

Prikió
22:00 DJ **Moonshine**.

Risió
21:30 **Andrés Þor Quartet**. Live jazz.

21 THU

B5
Troubadours **Sjonni Brink & Hreimur**.

Bakkus
22:00 DJ **Óli Dóri**.

Boston
Frosti Gringó.

Café Oliver
Ingo Weathergod.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 **Reykjavík Rockabilly** band.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.

Dillon Rock Bar
22:00 Live music.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Faktorý
19:30 Classic Pub Quiz
22:00 **Ég**. Live music.

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* Tuesdays *

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* Wednesdays *

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* Thursdays *

Live Music / Scandinavian nights

* Fridays *

Live music / Sing-along nights

* Saturdays *

Live music / Sing-along nights

* Sundays *

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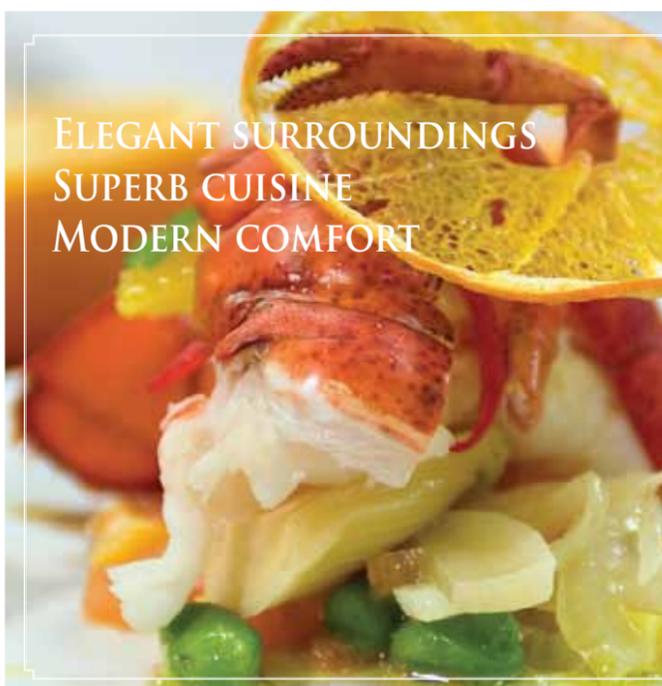
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Sódóma

REYKJAVÍK

- Oct 8** Jan Mayen
Æla
Noise
Coral
Bróðir Svartúlfs
Kallakór Kaffibarsins
Valdimar
Vicky
Hellvar
- Oct 9** Private function
- Oct 13 - 17** Iceland Airwaves
Music Festival
- Oct 22** Moses Hightower
Jónas Sig
- Oct 23** Nomad (PL/ISL)
Save Public
- Oct 29** Ten Steps Away

Sódóma Reykjavík Tryggvagata 22, 101 RVK
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18 September 2010 – 9 January 2011

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MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN OCTOBER & NOVEMBER

Hitt Húsið
20:00 Sgt. Millers Misbehaviour
Daughter & guests. Free.

Hressó
Troubadours Böddi and Davíð.

Kaffibarinn
22:00 Alfons X.

Kaffi Zimsen
Ólafsvaka. Beer offer.

Kofi Tómasar Frænda
22:00 Troubadour.

Prikið
22:00 DJ Benni B Ruff.

Risið
22:00 Oktoberfest. Beer-fest band.
Beer offers.

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 Tófrakvöld HÍT 2010.
Magic show. 2900 ISK.

22 FRI

Apótek
22:00 Live DJ.

Austur
22:00 DJ Jónas.

Austurbær
20:00 Buddy Holly Musical. 4300 ISK.

B5
22:00 DJ Jóhann Valur.

Bakkus
22:00 Della Rósa. Live DJ.

Boston
22:00 DJ Biggi Maus.

Café Oliver
22:00 Girls Night. DJ Maggi & Brynar Már.

Café Rosenberg
22:00 Jón Rafns. Live music.

Celtic Cross
22:00 Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music. Sing-along night.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Faktorj
23:00 XIII, In Memoriam, Momentum
and more. DJ Playmobil.

Hressó
Dalton band and DJ.

Hverfisbarinn
Funky Friday - old school funk and hip hop.

Kaffibarinn
22:00 Maggi Legó/ Hunk of a Man.

P
22:00 Daddi Disco and Hlynur.

Prikið
22:00 Frískó (Franz & Kristó).
Afterwards DJ Danni Deluxe.

Risið
21:00 Bob Ackerman. Live jazz.
23:00 Los Perros. Live funk.

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 Páll Rósinkrans.
Concert. 3500 ISK.

Sódóma
Moses Hihgtower, Jónas Sig.

Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJ.

Vegamót
22:00 DJ Símon.

Venue
Nýhill poetry festival.

23 SAT

Apótek
22:00 Live DJ.

Austur
22:00 DJ Símon.

Austurbær
20:00 Buddy Holly Musical. 4300 ISK.

B5
22:00 DJ Leifur.

Bakkus
22:00 DJ Öfull.

Boston
22:00 DJ Kári.

Café Oliver
22:00 Girls Night. DJ Maggi & Brynar Már.

Café Rosenberg
22:00 Jón Rafns. Live music.

Celtic Cross
22:00 Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music. Sing-along night.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Faktorj
23:00 Black Earth and guests.
DJ Benson is Fantastic!

Hressó
Offside band and DJ.

Hverfisbarinn
DJs playing hip hop, R&B, house and funk until the morning.

Kaffibarinn
22:00 Pabbahelgi #6 - Gísli Galdur & Benni B Ruff.

P
22:00 Daddi Disco and Hlynur.

Prikið
24:00 DJ Gísli Galdur magic show.

Risið
23:30 Plugged and Played.
DJ and drums.

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 Páll Rósinkrans.
Concert. 3500 ISK.

Sódóma
Nomad (PL/ISL), Save Public.

Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJ.

Vegamót
22:00 DJ Jónas.

Venue
Nýhill poetry festival.

24 SUN

Café Oliver
Live music.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Brother Grass.
Live bluegrass music.

Celtic Cross
22:00 Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Hafnarborg
Trío Reykjavík with special guest
Ástríður Alda Sigurðardóttir (piano).
2400 ISK.

Prikið
22:00 Hangover Movie Night. Film: Moral
Kombat. Free popcorn and coke offer.

Risið
Jenson, Ásmundsson and Hemstock.
Live jazz.

25 MON

Balthazar
20:00 Tango practica.

Bakkus
21:00 Movie Night: Hlynur Helgason
presents Ghost Dance (Ken McMullen,
1983).

Café Oliver
Margarita Monday. 2 for 1 margaritas.
Live music by Raggi Troubadour.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Brother Grass.
Live bluegrass music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Kaffi Zimsen
Best friends day. Beer offer.

Prikið
21:00 DJ Jeff. Red Wine & Cheese for 2,
1000 ISK.

Sólón
20:00 Salsa Night.

26 TUE

Café Oliver
Live karaoke night.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Fluglabúrið.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & beer bingo.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Prikið
Partynight with DJ Danni Deleuxe.
Drink offer.

Risið
21:30 Jazz jam session! Bring your horn!

27 WED

Austur
Live jazz groove.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Þór Breiðfjörð. Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & pop-quiz.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Hverfisbarinn
Live music. Special offers.

Kaffibarinn
22:00 Extreme Chill - Beatmakin'
Troopa, Tonik DJ andre & Earmax.

Kaffitar café
20:00 Tango Milonga.

Kaffi Zimsen
Playday. Offers at the bar when the bells
rings.

Prikið
22:00 DJ Alli.

Risið
21:30 Andrés Þór Quintet. Live jazz.

28 THU

B5
Troubadours Sjonni Brink and Vignir.

Bakkus
22:00 DJ Einar Sonic.

Boston
22:00 DJ Andrea.

Café Oliver
Ingó Weathergod.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Kristín Bergs. Album release.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.

Dillon Rock Bar
Live music.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Faktorj
22:00 Nammidagar and guests.

Hressó
Troubadours Jogvan and Vignir.

Kaffibarinn
22:00 Sexy Lazer.

Kaffi Zimsen
Ólafsvaka. Beer offer.

Kofi Tómasar Frænda
22:00 Troubadour.

Prikið
22:00 Surprise Party.

Risið
Joel Pálsson Hammond Trio. Live jazz.

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 Ríó Trío. Concert. 3300 ISK.

Thorvaldsen
20:30 Salsa dancing night.

Vegamót
22:00 DJ Danni Delux.

29 FRI

Apótek
22:00 Live DJ.

Austur
22:00 DJ Danni Delux.

Austurbær
20:00 Buddy Holly Musical. 4300 ISK.

B5
22:00 DJ Jónas.

Bakkus
22:00 DJ KGB.

Boston
22:00 DJ De La Rosa.

Café Oliver
22:00 Girls Night. DJ Maggi & Brynar Már.

Café Rosenberg
22:00 Hárbandið.

Celtic Cross
22:00 Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & sing-along night.

Dubliner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Faktorj
23:00 Nordisk Familjebok and guests.

Hressó
Men of the Year band and DJ.

Hverfisbarinn
Funky Friday - old school funk and hip hop.

Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Kári.

P
22:00 Daddi Disco and Hlynur.

Cinema No2
Icelandic volcano and nature films in the loft at
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distance from the Reykjavík Museum of Art!

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Whale Watching Departures
Cinema No2
Reykjavík Museum of Art
Less than 5 minutes walk

Prikið
22:00 DJ Árni Kocoon.

Risið
23:00 The Houseband. Live funk.

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 Ríó Trío. Concert. 3300 ISK.

Sódóma
Ten Steps Away.

The Icelandic Opera
20:00 Rigoletto. 6000 - 10000 ISK.

Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJ.

Vegamót
22:00 DJ Hannes.

30 SAT

Apótek
22:00 Live DJ.

Austur
22:00 DJ Simon.

Austurbær
20:00 Buddy Holly Musical. 4300 ISK.

B5
22:00 DJ Jónas Valur.

Bakkus
22:00 Hunk of a Man. Live DJ.

Boston
22:00 DJ Unnur Andrea.

Café Oliver
22:00 Girls Night. DJ Maggi & Brynar Már.

Café Rosenberg
22:00 Theatre performance.

Celtic Cross
22:00 Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & sing-along night.

Dublíner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Faktorý
DJ KGB.

Hressó
22:00 Juan Cuba and band. Live DJ.

Hverfisbarinn
DJs playing hip hop, R&B, house and funk until the morning.

Kaffibarinn
22:00 Alfons X.

P
22:00 Daddi Disco and Hlynur.

Prikið
24:00 DJ Benni B Ruff.

Risið
23:30 Plugged and Played.
DJ and drums.

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 Ríó Trío. Concert. 3300 ISK.

Thorvaldsen
22:00 Live DJ.

Vegamót
22:00 DJ Jónas.

31 SUN

Café Oliver
22:00 Live music.

Celtic Cross
22:00 Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.

Dublíner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Gerðuberg, Kópavogur
13:15 Classical music for lunch.

Prikið
Hangover Movie Night. Film: Superman 1. Free popcorn and coke offer.

Risið
21:00 Hilmar Jenson's Groove.
Live jazz/funk.

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 Ríó Trío. Concert. 3300 ISK.

The Icelandic Opera
20:00 Rigoletto. 6000 - 10000 ISK.

1 MON

Balthazar
20:00 Tango practica.

Bakkus
21:00 Movie night: Jón Pálma Sigurdsson presents What Is It? (Crispin Glover, 2005). Free.

Café Oliver
Margarita Monday. 2 for 1 margaritas. Live music by Raggi Troubadour.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Blúsfélagið.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.

Dublíner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Kaffi Zimsen
Best friends day. Beer offer.

Prikið
21:00 Live DJ. Red Wine & Cheese for 2, 1000 ISK.

Sólon
20:00 Salsa Night.

2 TUE

Bakkus
21:00 Foosball Championships!

Café Oliver
Live karaoke night.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music & beer bingo.

Dublíner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Prikið
22:00 Live DJ.

3 WED

Austur
Live jazz groove.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Skúli Þórðar. Live music.

Faktorý
22:00 Kleinstadtheiden (DE), California Stories Uncovered (PL), Geriko (FR), Hunting the Robot (NL), World Service (NO).

Hverfisbarinn
Live music. Special offers.

Kaffitár café
20:00 Tango Milonga.

Kaffi Zimsen
Playday. Offers at the bar when the bells ring.

Prikið
22:00 Live DJ.

Risið
21:30 Live jazz.

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:00 Sólrún, August and Gerrit. Concert with songs by Henri Duparc. 3500 ISK.

4 THU

Bakkus
22:00 Bakkus DJ.

Café Oliver
Ingo Weathergod.

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Orri Harðar. Live music.

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live music.

Dillon Rock Bar
22:00 Live music.

Dublíner
22:00 Live music.

English Pub
22:00 Live music.

Faktorý
22:00 Sing For Me Sandra release concert.

Hafnarborg
12:00 Lunch time concert with Icelandic opera singer Maríus Sverrisson. Free.

Kaffibarinn
22:00 Live DJ.

Kaffi Zimsen
Ólafsvaka. Beer offer.

Kofi Tómasar Frænda
22:00 Troubadour.

Prikið
22:00 Live DJ.

Salurinn, Kópavogur
20:30 John King and guests. Concert. 2900 ISK.

ONGOING

Classical Concert Company
Concerts with classical Icelandic music every night at 20:30
Grandagarður 11 Admission: ISK 2900

Kaffi Reykjavík
Comedy show everyday at 18:00
Vesturgata 2 Admission: ISK 2200.



10-10-10 Reykjavik: Keep the Ice in Iceland
Hlemmur plays centre stage in the campaign to reduce climate change
Hlemmur Bus Station 14:00 - 19:00
Free

As one of hundreds of 10-10-10 events to be held around the world in support of the global carbon 350 campaign, Hlemmur bus station will buzz with the dinging of bicycle bells, fresh food stalls and music this Sunday. Events kick off with a critical mass bike ride from Austurvöllur to Hlemmur (to draw greater awareness to the use of public transport), where you can see free concerts from Bróðir Svartúlfs and Árstíðir, slow food stalls, and a swap market. The pièce de résistance will be a parade through downtown, with the organisers' wanting as many people as possible to march in their underwear down Laugavegur, accompanied, naturally, by FM Belfast's signature track. EF

This Is Wild! Go See The Valley of Dawn!
Bakkus
October 18 at 21:00 - Free

Although this sounds absolutely and completely unreal, it is in fact, absolutely and completely real. Documentarian Adrienne Grierson discovers a small Brazilian community of twenty thousand people who believe they are descendants of an alien race from the planet Capela. They say it all started 32,000 years ago, when a spacecraft from this planet Capela landed in South America and selected Brazilian truck driver Tia Nieva to build an empire and religion in what is called, 'The Valley of Dawn'.
Adrienne journeys to Brazil to explore this fascinating people and religion. "They dress like a cross between characters in Star Trek and the Egyptians of 2,000 years ago," she says. "The fabulous and outrageous clothes they wear connect them to their interplanetary spirit guides." This is all documented in her film, "The Valley of Dawn," which is now making its rounds in the festival circuit and will be screened in Iceland on October 18 at Bakkus. AA

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HOT Pecan pie with ice cream

HOT Waffle with ice cream

HOW TO DRIVE SAFELY IN ICELAND

Conditions in Iceland are in many ways unusual and often quite unlike what foreign drivers are accustomed to. It is therefore very important to find out how to drive in this country. In order to reach your destination safely, you must keep your full attention on driving.

LIVESTOCK ON THE ROAD & SINGLE-LANE BRIDGE

In Iceland, you can expect livestock to be on or alongside the road. This is common all over the country, and can be very dangerous. Sometimes a sheep is on one side of the road and her lambs on the other side. Under these conditions, which are common, slow down and expect the lambs or the sheep to run over the road to the other side.

There are many single-lane bridges on the Ring Road. The actual rule is that the car closer to the bridge has the right-of-way. This sign indicates that a single-lane bridge is ahead.

See further instruction on www.drive.is

ROAD TRAFFIC DIRECTORATE

Café Loki

in front of Hallgrímskirkja



Enjoy some solid homemade Icelandic food

MAP

Places We Like

1 C is for Cookie

Týsgata 8

This cosy new café owned by Polish couple Agnieszka and Stanislaw is the latest addition to the Reykjavik café scene and already looks set to become a favourite with the locals. Ideal for an early lunch or spending a lazy afternoon deciding which of Agnieszka's delicious home baked cakes you want to try next. I'd go with the cheesecake, it's pretty fabulous. EF

2 Havarí

Austurstræti 8

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

3 Barbara

Laugavegur 22

At Laugavegur 22, above Karamba, Barbara serves up a lively atmosphere for Reykjavik's gay community and anybody else who just wants to dance and have a good time. The first level is made for dancing and is often packed with sweaty bodies, while the second level of the bar offers a place to sit, drink and chat and another in which to smoke. CF

4 Hemmi og Valdi

Laugavegi 21

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

5 Svarta Kaffi

Laugavegur 54

If you're looking for a hearty, warming lunch at good value then head down to this cosy café for a bowl of their yummy soup. Doing away with dishes and bowls, the soup comes served in a hollowed out loaf of wholewheat bread, and the best bit is that it's refillable if you're still hungry. Sweet! And, when you're done you can enjoy some people watching on Laugavegur below. EF

6 Habibi

Hafnarstræti 18

This small restaurant offers up a concise menu of delicious Arabic cuisine, from shawarma to kebabs and falafels. The staff is really friendly and accommodating of requests to kick up the spiciness or tone it down if the customer so desires. Habibi seriously hits the spot after hours of partying (or any other time of day) so it's convenient that the place is allegedly open until 6 a.m. Friday and Saturday (although their advertised opening hours are sometimes not adhered to). CF



7 Te og Kaffi

Austurstræti 18,
Skólavörðustígur 11,
Laugavegur 27

Founded in 1984, Te og kaffi was the first company in Iceland to specialise in the production and sale of gourmet coffee and fresh tea in bulk. They have always chosen the finest quality products to import and produce and make a damn good cup of Joe, if we may say so ourselves. EF

8 Boston

Laugavegur 28

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

9 Kisan

Laugavegur 7

This store is incredibly cool. It's stocked with really unique and quirky clothes, outerwear, accessories and handbags, plus they have an adorable section of kids clothes, kitschy vintage toys and books and even interior design items. Wicked place; definitely worth a visit. CF

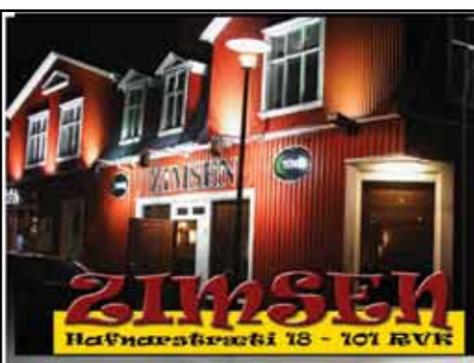
Restaurante Sankta Maria
Laugavegur 22
Tel : 552-7775
Brunch 11:00 to 15:00
Brunch 9 Euro = 1190 kr
over 30 dishes + soup and hot new bread

750 kr = 4 EURO =

Open from 11:00 to 22:00

PISA RISTORANTE

BOOKING 578 724
www.pisa.is
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Mondays
Best Friends Day
Large Draft 3 €

Wednesday
Playday
Offers @ the bar when the bell rings

Thursday
Ólafsvaka
Large Draft 3 €

One day closer to being the oldest bar in ICELAND



For a map of outside downtown Reykjavik visit www.grapevine.is or the Icelandic phonebook website www.ja.is

If you have an iPhone, check out the cool **Locatify** app in the AppStore. It's got a **FREE** guided audio tour of the downtown area, courtesy of your pals at Grapevine.

10 Sódóma Reykjavík

Tryggvagötu 22

Sódóma on Tryggvagötu quickly became a hit with party crowds and gig-goers alike. An extensive venue, filled with reasonably priced beverages and reasonably good looking people. Some of Iceland's finest musical ventures regularly perform there, and their schedule looks promising too. Also, make sure to visit their men's room for a glance at the "Pissoir of Absolution". JB

11 Bakkus

Tryggvagata 22 - Naustarmegin

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

12 Tapas

Vesturgata 3b

For those with a bit of time on their hands, the evening is well spent at Tapas, where you can enjoy your evening feasting on course after delicious course of miniature dishes served in true Spanish style. If you don't feel like getting up right away afterwards, there's also a lounge.

13 Kaffismiðja Íslands

Kárástíg 1

Old fashioned charm is the style of Kaddismiðja, in everything from the decor to the coffee grinders. Off the beaten track, this popular coffee shop is a great spot to sit and read or have a chat with friends. The owners Ingbjörg and Sonja take great pride in the beans they use and the coffee is top notch. You can buy fresh grounds too, in case you just cant get enough. EF

14 Kolaportið

Tryggvagata 19

Reykjavik's massive indoor flea market is a wonderful place to get lost for a few hours, rummaging through stall upon stall of potential treasures. There are heaps of used clothing, knitwear and other yard-sale type goods from decades of yore, and a large food section with fish, meats and baked goods. Check out the vintage post cards and prints at the table near the army surplus. CF

15 Sushibarinn

Laugavegur 2

Sushibarinn is reputedly the best bet for sushi in town since it opened in 2007. This little shop is the most authentic option for sushi in town, with the widest selection around. The price per piece ranges from around 140ISK to 600 ISK, and they also have good choice of trays and set menus options. If you can't get a set, you can also order from Kofi Tómasar next door and grab a seat there. EF

16 Grænn Kostur

Skólavörðustíg 8b

Serving healthy organic vegan and vegetarian food for well over a decade, Grænn Kostur is the perfect downtown choice for enjoying light, wholesome and inexpensive meals. Try any of their courses of the day, or go for the ever-pleasing spinach lasagne.

17 Kraum

Aðalstræti 10

The Kraum Iceland Design store features the best from the latest trends in Icelandic design. Kraum sells unique, Icelandic takes on everyday items like stationary, wooden children's toys, plastic zip-lockable handbags and raincoats, and woollen and other clothing and jewellery.

18 Borgarhjól / City Bicycle

Hverfisgata 59

For those that want to soak up the city sights and surrounding countryside at a more leisurely pace, then you should really check this place out. It's a really old school bike shop that mends as well as rents out bikes, and at really reasonable rate too. They also sell helmets, safety gear and accessories if you really want to go all out. EF

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ART

GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN OCTOBER & NOVEMBER

COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

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

OPENINGS

Artótek

Stella Sigurgeirsdóttir
Opening October 8, 16:00

ASÍ Art Museum

Erla Þórarinsdóttir
October 30 - November 21

Gallery Fold

Art auction
October 4, 18:00

Gallery Tukt

Opening October 9, 16:00
Runs until October 23
High school exhibition.

Gerðarsafn, Art Museum Kópavogur

Ragnar Axelsson
October 16 - December
Photographs.

Gerðuberg

Hávamál
October 31 - January 16, 2011
Exhibition of illustrations Kristin Ragna Gunnarsdóttir.

Hafnarborg

Egbert Pétursson
October 30 - January 2, 2011
Paintings of Icelandic flora.

Tígt

October 30 - January 2, 2011
Exhibition by The Icelandic Love Corporation.

Iðnó

Cellophane
Sundays and Thursdays, 20:00
Comedy show.

Island Viðey

Imagine Peace Tower
Opening October 9, 20:00
With Yoko Ono
Runs until December 8
In remembrance of John Lennon.

Kedja Reykjavik 2010

October 8 - October 11
Dance Festival. For full schedule and
venues visit www.kedja.net.

Lost Horse Gallery, Hverfisgata 71

Skulls & Halos
Opening October 16, 19:00
Exhibition by Ziska about mysticism and
magic.

Restaurant Reykjavik

Let's talk Iceland
Daily 20:00
Comedy show. 2200 ISK.

Reykjavik Art Museum

Hafnarhús
Moving Images Festival
October 21 - 23 October
Avantgarde film screenings with kino
klúbður.

D18

November 4 - January 9, 2011
Exhibits by Bjarni Massi.

Power has a Fragrance

October 21 - January 9, 2011
Exhibits by Gardar Eide Einarsson.

Reykjavik City Theatre

Transaquania - Into Thin Air
Oct 7, 8, 17, 24, 31, Nov 7, 14, 21 at 20:00
Dance show.

SÍM

Anna María Lind Geirsdóttir
October 1 - October 26
Installations.

The Living Art Museum

Bjarni H. Þórarinnsson
Opening October 23, 20:00
Runs until November 21
Solo exhibition.

The Icelandic Printmakers

Association
Remix Moment
October 9 - October 24
Exhibits by Erna Sigurðardóttir.

ONGOING

ART67

Tíma mot
Ongoing
Exhibits by Stefán Hermannsson.

ASÍ Art Museum

Art Nurses
Runs until October 24
Exhibitions by Anna Hallin and Óskvil-
hjálmisdóttir.

Árbæjarsafn / Reykjavik City Museum

Guided Tours
Runs until May 31, 2011

Guided tours Mondays, Wednesdays
and Fridays at 1 pm.
Exhibitions running year round on the
history of Reykjavik and Iceland life.

The Culture House

Medieval Manuscripts
Runs until January 2011

Icelanders

Ongoing exhibition
Exhibit featuring a selection of photo-
graphs from the book
"Icelanders" by Unnur Jökulsdóttir and
Sigurgeir Sigurjónsson.

Iceland::Film

Ongoing exhibition
Traces the evolution of Icelandic film-
making, exploring myths
versus modernity.

Cinema Nr. 2

The Eruption!
Monday - Friday 16:00 & 16:30

Ongoing all winter
Þorsmörk - The Hidden Valley of Þór
Monday - Friday 17:00
Ongoing all winter
Icelandic nature films.

The Dwarf Gallery

Ongoing Exhibition
An independent art gallery with ongo-
ing exhibitions. It's located in an old
basement. Do you really need to know
anymore than that?

The Einar Jónsson Museum

The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.

Gallery Ágúst

Runs until October 10
Exhibit by Marta M. Jónsdóttir.

Gallery Kling & Bang

Luminous
Runs until October 24
Exhibits by Ragnar Jónasson & Tómas
Lemarquis.

Gljúfrasteinn Laxness Museum

Gljúfrasteinn was the home and work-
place of Halldór Laxness (winner of the
Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955).

Gerðarsafn, Art Museum Kópavogur

9
Runs until October 10
Group exhibition of nine young visual
artists at gerðarsafn Art Museum

Gerðuberg

Flights of Fancy
Runs until October 17
Paintings by Aðalbjörg Þórðardóttir of
swans as folktale motifs, part of the
natural environment and symbols of the
soul.

Responses

Runs until October 10
Artworks made of old paper by Jón
Laxdal Halldórsson.

In Four Corners

Runs until October 31

i8

Þór Vigfússon

Runs until October 16
A series of wall works made with painted
glass.

The Library Room

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

The Living Art Museum

Lobbyists
Runs until October 9
Exhibits by Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólaf-
son.

Mokka Kaffi

Hirt
Runs until October 21
Exhibits by Sigurdis Harpa.

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ART

GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN OCTOBER & NOVEMBER

Museum of Design and Applied Art

Sigríðar Heimisdóttir

Runs until January 30, 2011

The National Gallery of Iceland

Imported Landscapes

Runs until November 7

Photos by Pétur Thomsen tracing changes in the natural landscape at Hafrahvammagljúfur.

Cars in Rivers

Runs until November 7

Photos by Ólafur Eliasson - series evoking the artist's connection with the Icelandic wilderness.

Strides

Runs until December 31, 2012

A selection of the Gallery's collection from the 20th and 21st century.

The National Museum

The Making of a Nation

Heritage and History in Iceland is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

Ása Wright - From Iceland to Trinidad

Collection of objects that belonged to the adventuress Ása Guðmundsdóttir.

Embroidery of Life

Embroidery by Guðrún Guðmundsdóttir, inspired by old manuscripts.

Ráðhús Reykjavíkur

Dulín Himintungl

Kim Linnet exhibits her 360° panorama photos of Iceland.

The Settlement Exhibition

Permanent exhibition.

Reykjavík Art Museum

Ásmundarsafn

Sleep Light

Runs until April 17, 2011

Multimedia installation by Ráðhildur Ingadóttir.

Thoughts In Forms

Runs until April 17, 2011.

The workshop of sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, recreated.

"I choose blossoming women ..."

Runs until April 17, 2011

Woman as Symbol in the Art of Ásmundur Sveinsson.

Hafnarhús

Mel Ramos

Runs until November 7

Lithographs and silkscreens, created by the American artist between 1996 and 2009.

Erró - Collage

Runs until August 28, 2011

A holistic selection of Erró's collages from Reykjavík Art Museum's Erró collection.

Indian Highway

Runs until October 10

Contemporary Indian Art Video.

D17 Magnús Helgason - Im not a Compost, I'm an Earthworm

Runs until October 24

Gardening with Paint.

Kjarvalsstaðir

The Will as a Weapon

Runs until October 24

(Fe)male workshop

Runs until November 7

Family workshop in connection with the exhibition The Will as a Weapon.

Kjarval - Key works

Runs until January 16, 2011

Extensive collection of works by Jóhannes S. Kjarval.

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

The Coast Guard vessel Óðinn

Permanent exhibition

The Óðinn took part in all three Cod Wars and is open for exhibition.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

A Considerd View

Runs until January 9, 2011

Photographs of Wayne Guðmundson.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

"What are you up to now, my dear Erlingur"

Runs until November 28

Sculptures by Erlingur Jónsson and Sigurjón Ólafsson.

Spark, Design Space

Vík Þrjónsdóttir

Runs until October 30

Design and fashion.

Telecommunications Museum,

Suðurgata

Runs until November 14

Exhibition on telecommunication.

Open on sundays 11:00 - 17:00.



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Art | Venue finder

ART67

Laugavegur 67 | **F6**
Mon - Fri 12 - 18 / Sat
12 - 16

Artótek

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

ASÍ Art Museum

Freygata 41 | **G4**
Tue-Sun 13-17

Árbæjarsafn

Kistuhylur 4

The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15 | **E4**
Open daily 11-17
www.thjodmenning.is

Dwarf Gallery

Grundarstígur 21 | **H6**
Opening Hours: Fri and Sat
18-20
www.this.is/birta/dwarfgallery/
dwarfgallery1.html

The Einar Jónsson

Eiríksgrata | **G4**
Tue-Sun 14-17
www.skulptur.is

Gallery Ágúst

Baldursgrata 12 | **F4**
Wed-Sat 12-17
www.galleriagust.is

Gallery Fold

Rauðarárstígur 14-16 | **G7**
Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat 11-16 /
Sun 14-16
www.myndlist.is

Gallery Kling & Bang

Hverfisgata 42 | **E5**
Thurs-Sun from 14-18
this.is/klingogbang/

Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

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

Hitt Húsið

- Gallery Tukt
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | **E3**
www.hitthusid.is

i8 Gallery

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

Living Art Museum

Skúlagata 28 | **F6**
Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17 / Thu
13-22. www.nylo.is

Hafnarborg

Strandgötu 34,
Hafnarfjörður

Mokka Kaffi

Skólavörðustíg 3A | **F4**

The National Gallery of Iceland

Frikkirkjuvegur 7 | **F3**
Tue-Sun 11-17
www listasafn.is

The National Museum

Suðurgata 41 | **G1**
Open daily 10-17
natmus.is

The Nordic House

Sturlugata 5 | **H1**
Tue-Sun 12-17
www.nordice.is/

Restaurant Reykjavík

Vesturgata 2 | **D2**

Reykjavík 871+/-2

Aðalstræti 17 | **D2**

Open daily 10-17

Reykjavík Art Gallery

Skúlagata 28 | **F6**
Tuesday through Sunday 14-18

Reykjavík Art Museum

Open daily 10-16
www listasafnreykjavikur.is
Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum Sigtún
Hafnarhús
Tryggvagata 17 | **D2**
Kjarvalsstaðir
Flókgata | **I7**

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Grandagarður 8 | **C3**

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Tryggvagata 16 | **D2**
Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun
13-17 - www.ljosmyndasafn-
reykjavikur.is

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Laugarnestangi 70

Spark, Design Space

Klapparstíg 33 | **E4**
www.sparkdesignspace.com

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Jamie Oliver's Diary

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It's Airwaves, people! Sleep 'til noon, drink all day, rock out all night, repeat. It's a great time of year! So great that every sentence in this article should be ended with an exclamation point—it's just! That! Great! But you've got to keep your body fed to avoid an otherwise certain crashing. You don't want to skip a meal and then find yourself with an empty stomach and a spinning head at that Italian electro/Czech lo-fi/Robyn gig you've been dying to see. As always your dear friends here at the Grapevine have got you covered, whether you're looking for a five-course affair, a casual pre-concert meal or a late-night bite. Read on, dear Airwaves, and satisfy the hunger within.

Breakfast!



Grái Kötturinn is a wonderful place. Nestled somewhat underground at Hverfisgata 16a, this cosy little breakfast nook will feed your hangover away—with more food and caffeinated beverages than you can shake a stick at. There's a fairly ample menu, but if you've just woken up hungry after a long night of Icelandic hardcore/French accordion jams/Robyn then the Truck is for you. It is the very embodiment of the all-American, indulgent, guilt-inducing breakfast—larger than life and gluttonous to the extreme. Grái Kötturinn does the dish right, with fluffy pancakes, eggs done the way you like 'em, bacon, toast and home fries stacked high, and served with complimentary coffee. With some OJ to wash it all down, you'll be ready to see some cultural sites, take in some museums and then proceed to drink your face off for the 2nd/3rd/5th night running.

Lunch!



Who doesn't appreciate a good

sandwich? Bread is a classic, hearty filler and with plentiful toppings, a good 'ole sammy is pretty much the best lunch any kid could ask for. You know who does good sandwiches? Sandholt (Laugavegur 36). Laying eyes upon the fresh baguette sandwiches and selection of wraps—the salmon, with a kick of dill and creamy dressing, is superb—in the glass display is like taking in the offerings of a quaint Parisian patisserie. Since this publication is in no way affiliated with the sandwich artisans over at Sandholt we can't really promise what toppings you will be in store for, but we can fairly confidently promise you that they will be a flavour sensation the likes of which your previously deprived taste-buds have never known.

In addition to the fine casual fare, Sandholt also offers up a nice quite locale in which to lay low after a night of German indie disco/Spanish post-punk/Robyn, before heading out for more AMFJ/Mexican new-wave/Robyn.

Dinner!



You're here for a festival! Eat a burger! How about some fries? Beer? You're set! Slightly off the beaten path at the corner of Vitastígur and Bergþórugata is local burger joint/watering hole Vitabar, a greasy-spoon that is out of the way enough to go for a possibly frowned-upon midday drink but not so far that you wouldn't haul your cookies there for one of their infamous forget-me-not burgers (800 ISK).

As one would expect from the Grapevine-declared best blue cheese burger in Reykjavík, the forget-me-not burger is sweaty and sloppy and

covered in enough blue cheese and garlic to taint your breath for a week. Not recommended if you're looking to get lucky at that Irish house/Lithuanian big band/Robyn set you're heading to later. If this is your late-night intention then maybe go for another menu item—they've got a great steak and beer combo and a bunch of other burgers that are sure to whet your pallet.

Fancy Dinner!

The Fish Company. Go there. Seriously, I wish I could just end right there and bank on you all just taking my word for it and shelling out a couple hundred more krónur for a totally worth-it dining experience that will exceed your every expectation but I'll go on.

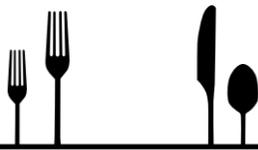
Let's set the scene: you're in town for a showcase festival, dying to catch the hottest Greenlandic emo/Norwegian death something'er other/Robyn and you feel like treating yourself to something special, something other than hotdogs and beer. You know, something classy. Go to The Fish Company (Vesturgata 2a), order pretty much anything on the menu and then write a long and gushing letter of appreciation to the Grapevine for recommending the experience. The various 'Tour' menus on offer are by far the best choice and value—you'll get a multi-course meal prepared with fresh and sumptuous Icelandic ingredients that will knock your socks off. If you're keen on combining courses of your own choosing then just be sure not to miss out on the fish soup, combining coconut milk and South East Asian spices with the typical staples of an Icelandic seafood soup to damn near perfection.

Pizza!

Gamla Smiðjan has grown out of the old Pizzuverksmiðjan on Lækjargata. It's delicious. And open late. And delicious. I don't know how Gamla Smiðjan managed it, but I think I can

Food & Drink | Venue finder

3 Frakkar Baldursgata 14 G4	Balthazar Hafnarstræti 1-3 D2	Geysir Bar/Bistro Aðalstræti 2 D2	Icelandic Fish & Chips Tryggvagata 8 B2	E4	Sjárvakjallarrinn Aðalstræti 2 D2
Aktu Taktu Skúlugata 15 E6	Bæjarins Beztu Tryggvagata D3	Garðurinn Klappastígur 37 F4	Indian Mango Frakkastígur 12 F5	Nonnabiti Hafnarstræti 9 D3	Sólón Bankastræti 7a E3
Alibaba Veltusund 3b D2	Brons Pósthússtræti 9 E3	Gletan book café Laugavegur 19 F5	Jómfrúin Lækjargata 4 E3	O Sushi Lækjargata 2A E3	Sushibarinn Laugavegur 2 E4
American Style Tryggvagata 26 D2	Café Cultura Hverfisgata 18 E4	Grái Kötturinn Hverfisgata 16A E4	Kaffi Hjómáland Laugavegur 21 E4	Pisa Lækjargötu 6b E3	Sushismiðjan Geirsgötu 3 B2
Argentina Steakhouse Barónstígur F6	Café d'Haiti Tryggvagata 12 D2	Grillhúsið Tryggvagata 20 D2	Kaffifélagið Skólavörðustígur 10 F5	Pizza King Hafnarstræti 18 D3	Svarta Kaffi Laugavegur 54 F5
Austurlanda-hraðlestin Hverfisgata 64A F5	Café Loki Lokastígur 28 G4	Habibi Hafnarstræti 20 E3	Kaffitár Bankastræti 8 E4	Pizza Pronto Vallarstræti 4 E2	Sægreifinn Verbúð 8, Geirsgata B2
Á Næstu Grösom Laugavegur 20B E4	Café Paris Austurstræti 14 E3	Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar ("Bullán") Geirsgata 1 B2	Kaffivagninn Grandagarður 10 A1	Pizzaverksmiðjan Lækjargötu 8 E3	Tapas Bankastræti 3B D2
B5 Bankastræti 5 E3	Café Roma Rauðarárstígur 8 G7	Híolla Bátar Ingólfstorg D2	Kofi Tómasar Frænda Laugavegur 2 E4	Prikið Bankastræti 12 E3	Thorvaldsen Austurstræti 8 D2
Bakkus Tryggvagata 22 D2	Deli Bankastræti 14 E5	Hótel Holt Bergstaðarstræti 37 G3	Korníð Lækjargata 4 E3	Ráðhúskaffi E2 Tjarnargata 11	Tíu Dropar Laugavegur 27 E5
Ban Thai Laugavegur 130 G7	Domo Pínghóltsstræti 5 E3	Humarhúsið Amtmanstígur 1 E3	Krua Thai Tryggvagata 14 D2	Santa María Laugavegur 22A F5	Tivolí Laugavegur 3 E4
Basil & Lime Klappastíg 38 E4	Einar Ben Veltusundi E2	Hressó Austurstræti 20 E4	La Primavera Austurstræti 9 D2	Shalimar Austurstræti 4 D2	Vegamót Vegamótastígur 4 E4
Bababú Skólavörðustígur 22A G5	Eldsmiðjan Bragagata 38A G4		Lystin Laugavegur 73 F6	Silfur Pósthússtræti 11 E3	Við Tjörnina Templararund 3 E2
	Fiskmarkaðurinn Aðalstræti 12 D2		Mokka Skólavörðustígur 3A		Vitabar Bergþórugata 21 G5



honestly proclaim that theirs is the best pizza I've ever tasted. Actually, this fine publication voted it the best pizza in Reykjavik not so long ago. The crust is thin and crisp, but not dry; the sauce is subtle yet flavourful; the toppings taste high quality and there's just the right amount of them. Delightful!

Adding to the splendour that is Gamla Smiðjan, they happen to be just across the street from a taxi stand. So when you've had your fill of British folktronica/Danish popstastica/Robyn you can chow down and quickly head home or to the after party. I recommend the pie with chicken, jalapeño's and salted peanuts, if that's your kinda thing. Pepperoni and cheese will work, too.

Hotdogs!



Bæjarins Beztu Pylsur has been serving up hot dogs with all the toppings to the hungry masses and well-informed tourists (including the likes of Metallica's James Hetfield and phallus aficionado and former P.U.S.A. Bill Clinton—who doesn't want to eat like those guys?) for 73 years. Four generations, in the same location on Tryggvagata almost the whole time and some of the staff have worked there for over thirty years. And it's cheap and open for your convenience as you stumble out of that awesome/lack-lustre/so-so showcase of that British post-rock/Canadian new weird

America/Robyn you've been dying to see. Just 280 ISK!

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

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

Did I mention it's cheap?



Noodles!

The Noodle Station (Skólavörðustígur 21A) is in a league of its own. Aesthetically sparse, but the noodles boast a punch of simple and complementary flavours that overwhelm the senses. It really is simple, with only two options on the menu: chicken or beef. I always go for chicken and have never been disappointed, but I hear the beef is great, too. The meat is seasoned independently of the soup, but does not compete with the broth or accoutrements therein; it is tender and moist to the point of breaking apart easily and delicately. The soup base is an authentically spiced broth, with bean sprouts and noodles intertwined within it and topped with accents of chilli and peanuts. And it is served in a deep noodle bowl, with a metal spoon and a good pair of sturdy chopsticks. Bonus points for real flatware and utensils.

The Noodle Station serves noodles the way noodles should be: flavourful, comforting and enjoyable to slurp and savour. Another sensational bite to get you through another mayhemic night of Finnish shoe-gaze/Armenian string quartets/Robyn. ♡

Catharine Fulton

EAT AND DRINK

Eat Fresh No More

A farewell to Subway

It is a glamorous life, that of a food reviewer. Sampling some of the greatest fare this fair city has to offer, dining on offerings that I might otherwise overlook, discovering new favourites and new least-favourites. But sometimes, between luxurious brunches and exotic curries, comes the call for something different. The call to 'eat fresh,' if you will.

That call came this past Saturday. Having just returned from abroad and faced with bare cupboards and a cavernous refrigerator, a light bulb materialized above my head. With a rumble in my stomach I ventured forth toward Austurstræti. To Subway.

Alas, much to my great shock and dismay, the door was bolted shut, the windows covered over with a brown packing paper, and where the iconic yellow and green signage once affixed itself to the building's façade there was only a patch of teal paint alluding to the poor exterior design choices of landlords gone by.

The sign on the door spelled out empty promises of the international sub shop reopening elsewhere downtown in the future, but no dates were given, no locations named. I fear the sign was lying to me.

The franchise that enjoyed record-breaking sales figures, according to the framed certificates of accomplishment that had so proudly adorned their walls, is no more. Sure there are a couple of other franchises in the suburbs, but, to me, they may as well be in Siberia. It's the end of an era.

Other Places to Get a Sandwich:

Te og Kaffi: This chain boasts a selection of focacce that are tasty on their own but get amped up a notch after spending a couple of minutes in the sandwich press. The star of the show is the grilled chicken, sun-dried tomato and mozzarella variety, with bonus sun-dried tomatoes baked into the bread. **Austurstræti 18 (in Eymundsson)**

Kornið: So Kornið has got these sandwiches in halved focaccia bread that might just be the best thing ever. Even if they weren't stuffed with chicken, bacon, veggies, cheese, egg, and what-have-you, they would still be superb simply on account of this incredibly delicious bread. It is herbed and slightly oily, but somehow not too dense for sandwich making (a very delicate art). So good! **Lækjargata 4**

Nonnabiti: When a massive serving of meat, vegetables and sauces in a fluffy loaf of bread is what you crave then Nonnabiti has got you covered. The trick is grilling all the toppings before shoving them into the roll and dousing it all with sauce – sauce that will unavoidably settle to the ass-end of the sandwich as you eat your way in that direction, making it seem as though your once solid meal has morphed into a beverage. The salty pork in the luxury sandwich is divine at 5am.

Hafnarstræti 9 ♡
Catharine Fulton

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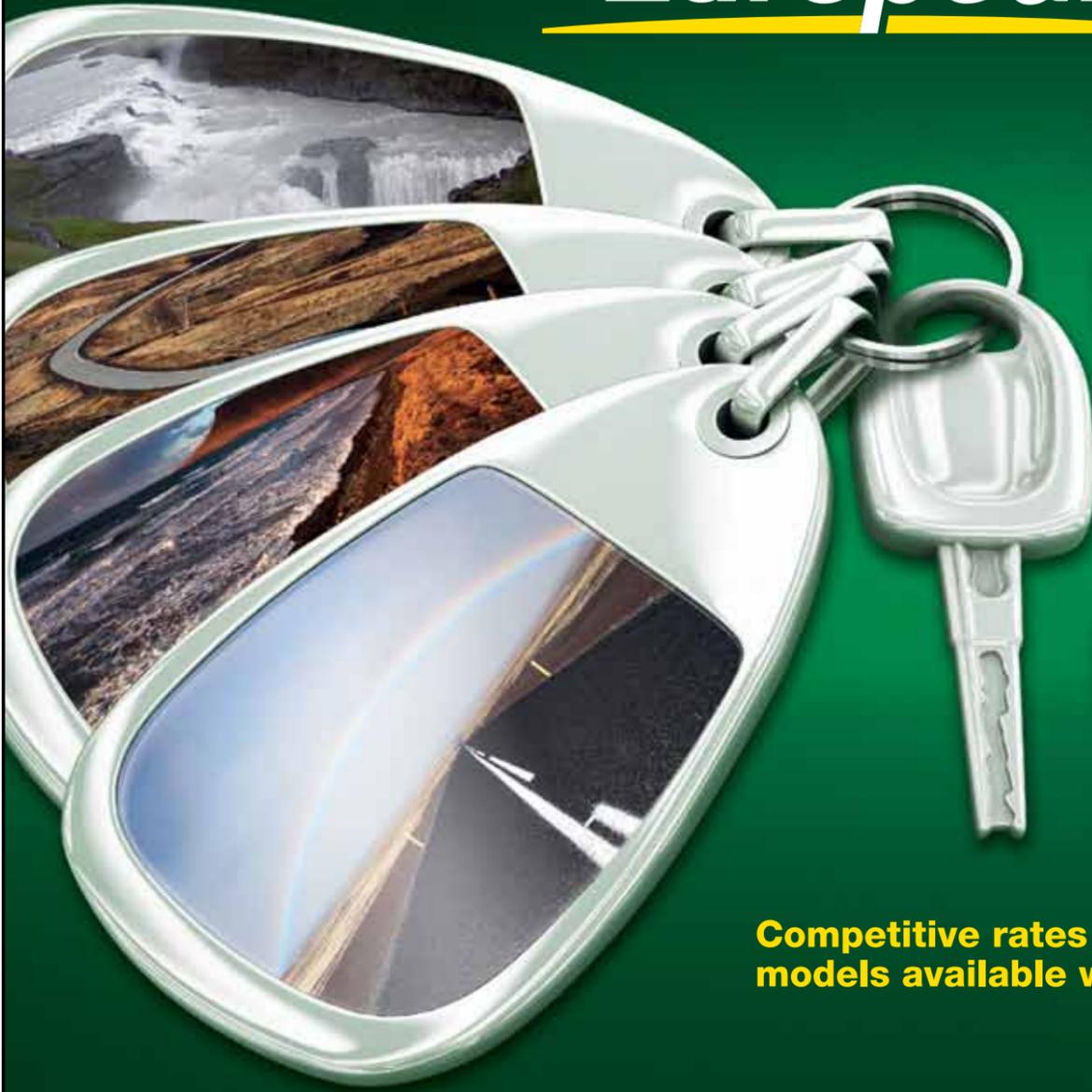
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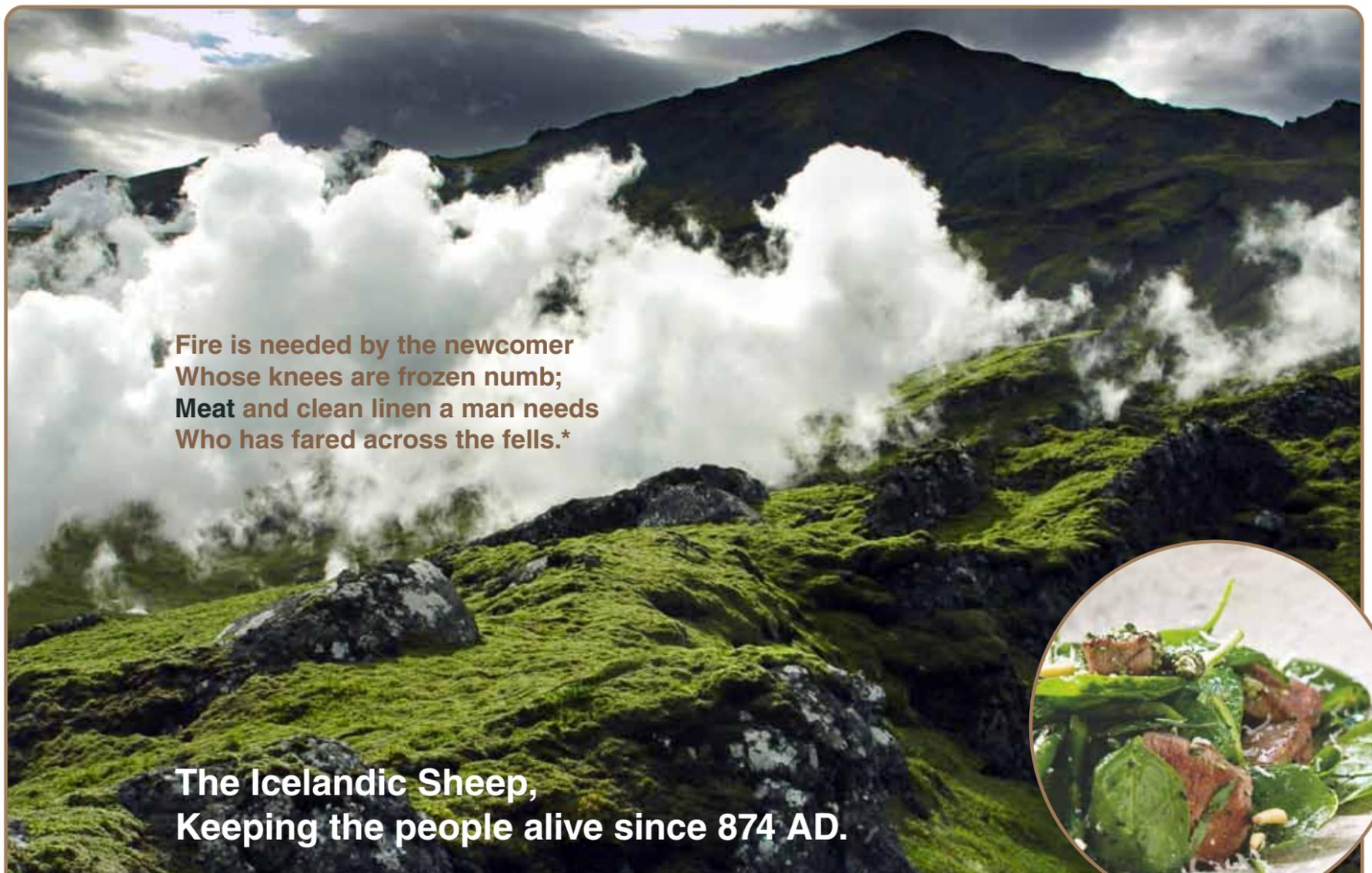


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June – The OECD says banks may be too large to be bailed out

OECD Report, June 1, 2008

“The country’s three largest banks have expanded aggressively offshore in recent years, increasing their total assets from less than 100% of GDP in 2000 to nine times that in 2007. Although these banks have little direct exposure to subprime loans in the United States and have relatively high capital and liquidity ratios, concerns have grown about their lack of access to a credible lender of last resort facility...”

On June 6, The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) publishes its Economic Outlook report for all 30 member countries, specifically pointing out that Iceland’s banks may have grown too large to be bailed out if that becomes necessary.

FRÉTTABLAÐIÐ FORGETS TO MENTION THE OECD’S FORECAST

Fréttablaðið prints two articles on the OECD report, but fails to communicate any warnings about the banks. In fact, in the first one, “Dark forecast surprises Minister,” Fréttablaðið simply reports what certain people think about the forecast rather than any information contained in the actual forecast.

The article begins by quoting Minister of Business Affairs Björgvin G. Sigurðsson, who says: “The negative forecast is unexpected. It’s possible to make various assumptions, but the current situation does not warrant such a serious forecast...”

The fact is people often scan headlines and read the beginning of articles, which is why the most important information should appear upfront. In this case, the headline and introduction are actually slightly misleading because the article goes on to quote an economist from ASÍ and the director of SA-Confederation of Employers, who are NOT surprised by the forecast. Furthermore, the article

concludes with a quote from Director of Samtök Atvinnulífsins (“The Confederation of Employers”) Vilhjálmur Egilsson who says, “there is a lot of uncertainty in all of these forecasts.” In other words, the message is that one shouldn’t put too much weight on the report because forecasts aren’t reliable.

Although these words all came from various experts, the story is constructed in a way that invalidates the forecast. Most importantly, however, the reader has no idea what these men are reacting to, unless they subscribe to OECD reports (unlikely). There is no mention of the OECD’s concerns about the enormity of the banks, the absence of a lender of last resort and its recommendation to increase supervision.

Oops.

FRÉTTABLAÐIÐ SAYS BAD NEWS DOESN’T APPLY TO ICELAND

The second article Fréttablaðið prints about the OECD forecast is: “Forecasts worse than last year,” which focuses on the general outlook for OECD countries. In summing up the report, the article states, “Those countries with highly leveraged financial companies will be worse off, Britain is specifically mentioned, but the report states that Iceland should be stable. The United States is also mentioned as the report states, for lowering the average OECD economic growth fig-

ures.” Talk about selective reporting.

Fréttablaðið makes absolutely no mention of Iceland’s banks. Instead, the article gives the reader the impression that Iceland is better off than Britain and the United States, despite the fact that Iceland had its own highly leveraged financial companies to be worried about, which the OECD specifically pointed out in their report.

Thus, these two Fréttablaðið articles fail to convey the OECD’s warning of the impending events that took place four months later. Of course the OECD did not predict the crash itself in the report, but the concerning recipe of enormous banks with no possible lender of last resort should have at least been reported.

MORGUNBLAÐIÐ BURIES THE NEGATIVE FORECAST

On June 5, Morgunblaðið covers the OECD forecast in “Negative OECD Economic Forecast.” The article appears in the corner of the business page, occupying a space smaller than a deck of cards. It relays the OECD’s recommendation: “In light of uncertainty in the world economy, it would be a good idea to increase reserves of foreign currency and bank auditing.” It also mentions Iceland’s sharp decline in economic growth, a decline in private consumption and an increase in unemployment.

However, it does not elaborate on the OECD’s specific concern about Iceland’s banks, namely their gargantuan size that precludes sufficient help from Iceland’s reserves in the case of a crisis. Furthermore, when examined in the context of the entire newspaper that day, the negative news is dwarfed by two full-page articles carrying contradictory messages: “No crisis in auditing” and “Have faith in the Icelandic market.”

NO CRISIS IN AUDITING?

In the first article, “No crisis in auditing,” President of Deloitte Ralph Adams, who “has closely followed Icelandic business,” defends the Icelandic economy and the banks. After having recently opened a Deloitte branch in Iceland, Adams states, “...it is important to note that there is neither a financial crisis nor a crisis in auditing” and goes on to explain the current situation in terms of a psychological fear and a crisis in trust whose origins we will wonder about in a few years to come.

In regards to the banks Ralph states: “The British media have been critical of the Icelandic economy lately. Icelanders have called the criticism unfair and sometimes unfounded.” In the banks’ defence, he says, “They are fishing in the same waters. When a small player does well and grows faster than a big player, the media will naturally talk about it...”

In other words, he discounts the criticism. It’s envy.

Lastly, on financial auditing, which should seemingly be the most remarkable part of the article given the headline, “No crisis in auditing,” Adams expresses the importance of transparency. But, it’s not why you’d think. He says it is a good remedy to the negative reports in the foreign media.

So, in this article, an authority figure who “has closely followed Icelandic business,” addresses and explains away all of the OECD’s concerns. First, he addresses the economic downswing—not a real financial crisis. Then, he addresses the concerns over the size of the banks—envy of success, and finally, he addresses the need for greater oversight—greater transparency needed to appease the foreign media.

IMPORTANT LOOKING MEN BELIEVE IN THE ICELANDIC MARKET!

The second article, “Have faith in the Ice-

landic market,” further makes little of the OECD warning which, remember, occupies a space smaller than a deck of cards some pages back. Accompanying the article is a large attention-grabbing photo of three important professional looking men. The caption reads, “Iceland’s friends: Venky Vishwanathan, Jan Olsson, and Hakan Wohlin from Deutsche Bank say Icelandic companies will come out strong from the downswing.”

Without going further into the content, Morgunblaðið’s decision to give this article a full page with a big attention-drawing photo is in itself a form of editorialising—it shouts: these are important people with important opinions and they believe in the Icelandic economy.

The article begins with these “high-level” bankers discounting the opinions of people who have been negatively discussing the Icelandic economy and financial ventures because they “don’t understand the situation in Iceland.” The fact that critics don’t understand the Icelandic economy is also restated in the article three times—perhaps for emphasis. Jan Olsson is quoted saying, “Deutsche Bank has great trust in the Icelandic economy and government...The Icelandic banking system has expanded rapidly in the last years but the Icelandic economy is well run.” Jan also explains away the criticism Iceland had been facing, saying, in times of difficulty it’s not surprising that people point fingers, and it’s not surprising that people have been talking about the banks, even if what they say is untrue.

So, after reading Morgunblaðið on June 5, 2008, one is left with the impression that Iceland’s economy and banks are fine, despite the small blurb about the OECD’s forecast. That’s either some seriously good PR from the banks or an especially convenient coincidence.

July – Richard Thomas of Merrill Lynch worries about banking defaults

Merrill Lynch, Icelandic Banks - Distress and Default

“On the micro level, we know that the banks would all be horrified at the suggestions: they would point to their high levels of liquidity; the fact that they have generally planned to pay all obligations a year out; and that they have other sources for funding in addition to the Euromarkets. They have a good job to date.... However, at a macro level the extraordinary high level of indebtedness remains a policy problem for the Icelandic authorities that is impossible to (continue to) ignore...”

During the majority of June and July, Morgunblaðið and Fréttablaðið ran stories about the króna reaching an all time low as well as the rising inflation figures and predictions from the Central Bank that their target inflation rate would be

reached. Yet, there was little discussion in either paper regarding the status of the banks and the absence of a lender of last resort if the banks were to default, until Merrill Lynch published a report on July 24.

FRÉTTABLAÐIÐ SAYS THE GOVERNMENT IS ‘SURPRISED’

Covering the report, Fréttablaðið prints a front-page article on July 26, “Intervention necessary,” which continues on page 12, “Wishful thinking and pious words aren’t enough.” The article begins by reporting that Richard Thomas from Merrill Lynch believes government intervention is necessary in today’s economic situation and questions whether Iceland is not in a similar situation to the US and Britain.

This is of course followed by a quote from Minister of Education Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir who says, “Such a comment speaks for itself,” and ques-

tions Richard Thomas’ motives.

Furthermore, Fréttablaðið reports that Minister of Business Affairs Björgvin G. Sigurðsson is astonished at Richard Thomas’ criticism, and claims the government and financial sectors work well together (note the irony here! In the Special Investigative Committee’s investigation into Minister negligence, it turns out Björgvin was actually never invited to any financial meetings before the crash. Yet, here he claims the government and financial sectors work well together).

The article continues on page 12, mentioning Richard Thomas’ rule of thumb: “As the CDS of a company trades

north of +1,000bps, the market is stating that it expects a default. Both Kaupthing and Glitnir are currently trading in that area.”

This is good and well, except Fréttablaðið then adds, “Thomas says the actual state of the banks are fine,” rather than “It is time to consider whether or not we will see a default from these banks,” which is what actually came next in Richard Thomas’ report.

MORGUNBLAÐIÐ HAS NO COMMENT

Morgunblaðið did not have much to say about this one.

August – Icelandic Banks Pass FME Stress Tests

FME Stress Tests, 2008

“The four largest commercial banks all pass the regular stress test of the Icelandic Financial Supervisory Authority (FME)...The Director General of the FME, Mr. Jónas Fr. Jónsson: “The results from the stress-test indicates that the capital ratios of the banks are solid and can withstand considerable financial shocks. Shareholders and management of the banks need to focus on maintaining strong capital and even increase it, as capital levels need constantly to be reviewed in light of different risk factors in the operations of each company.”

Despite countless warnings about the bank’s size, the Financial Supervisory Authority (FME) conducted a Stress Test on August 14 to see whether the banks were in a position to take on considerable financial shocks and the banks pass with flying colours.

MORGUNBLAÐIÐ TAKES THEIR WORD FOR IT

On August 15, Morgunblaðið reports, “State of the banks is strong and they can

withstand significant shock.” The coverage is quite basic and matches the FME’s press release very closely. In fact, the article includes a quote from Icelandic FME director-general, Jónas Jónsson, which was simply lifted from the press release, although not sourced that way: “The results from the stress tests indicate that the capital ratios of the banks are solid and can withstand considerable financial shocks.”

Morgunblaðið does not delve deeper

into the issue and fails to ask questions of the FME, such as how the C- ranked banks passed their stress tests despite receiving negative rating after negative rating from external rating agencies. They simply take their word for it.

FRÉTTABLAÐIÐ ALSO TAKES THEIR WORD FOR IT

Fréttablaðið reports, “Withstand FME Test.” Although Fréttablaðið provides coverage beyond the press release and points out that the tests don’t apply to the smaller banks, it does not question the conclusions of the test. The FME, despite being charged with the supervision of the banks, may have decided that it was to the benefit of the banks to boost trust and it is not difficult to imagine their motivation for positive PR at the time. However, a good watchdog tracing the scent from one negative rating to another would definitely have done some barking here. But, no questions were asked.

WHY DIDN’T THE WATCHDOG BARK?

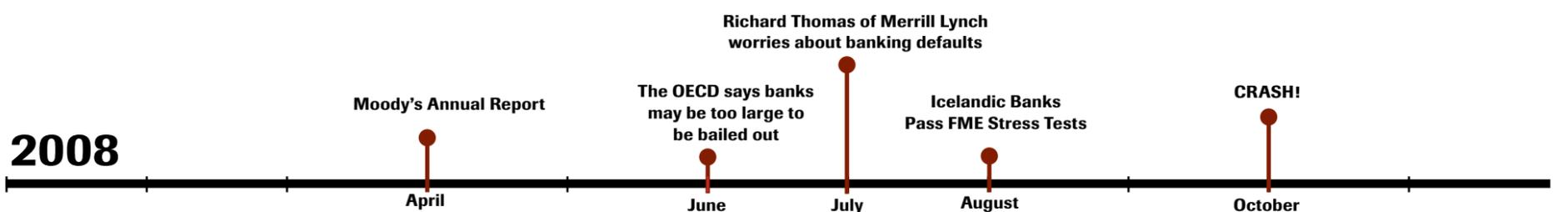
Less than two months after Iceland’s three largest banks pass the FME stress tests, in October 2008, the banks defaulted, the stock market crashed and people lost a lot of money (and eventually cars and houses). After looking at the evidence, there’s no question that Morgunblaðið and Fréttablaðið missed some blatant warnings about the banks, their enormous size and the absence of a lender of last resort. But, why?

Morgunblaðið journalist Bjarni Ólafsson, who wrote the June 5 article, “No crisis in auditing,” says he can’t remember how he came to write the story, but says someone from one of Iceland’s banks likely contacted the paper to suggest it. In the SIC Report, Morgunblaðið editor Styrmir Gunnarsson says Director of Íslandsbanki bank, Birna Einarsdóttir, called Morgunblaðið up and said, “You are supposed to stand with us. You are

not supposed to criticise and comment on the banks, you are supposed to stand with us.”

Friðrik Þór Guðmundsson, who is among the authors of the SIC Report’s chapter on the media, says there are probably multiple reasons the media didn’t report the warnings from external agencies like the OECD. For one, he points out that many journalists go on vacation over the summer and thus issues related to the banks and the economy are put on the backburner. However, he thinks perhaps the main reason is that people wanted to believe everything was okay.

That’s no excuse. To borrow words from Davíð Oddsson, of all people, “It’s extremely important that the media fulfils its supervisory role, both attentively and responsibly.” Woof! 🐕



S. H. Draumur (1982 – 1988): Kicking Against The Pricks

In 1982 I had been in bands for three years with basically the same guys in Kópavogur. Myself on bass (and sometimes guitar), Steini on guitar and Haukur on drums. The first band was an unfocused early teen band called Dordinglar ("The Spiders"). Then came F/8, which was influenced by The Ramones and the local version of The Ramones, Fræbbblarnir. This sharp and simple music gave way for "deeper" and more "difficult" stuff in 1981. We formed Geðfró ("Mind-relief", later called "Beri-Beri") with female singer Sigga Beinteins. Sigga and I weren't on the same wavelength though—and it bothered me how much time she spent on doing her make up before gigs (!)—so I eventually fired her. Sigga would later become a pop star in Iceland. Haukur threatened to quit when I suggested that I should just sing, but maybe because "bad" singers like Mark E Smith and Einar Örn (of Purrkur Pillnikk) were around, he didn't.

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

Our first gig as S. H. Draumur was at the very first night of the battle of the bands-type thing Músiktilraunir, which has continued annually since 1982. We came in third out of four bands, but that did not damage our passionate love for music. Everything centred upon music in those days (as it kind of does, still). Records were expensive, so me and my friends used to lend each other stuff. Records by The Fall, Joy Division, XTC, The Cure, Pere Ubu, The Slits, Suicide, Swell Maps, and Icelandic bands like Purrkur Pillnikk and Þeyr changed hands.

One day in early 1983 I bought The Birthday Party's 'Prayer on Fire' album in a second hand shop. To put it mildly the record blew my mind. S. H. Draumur had mainly been influenced by The Cure and Joy Division up until then, but now The Birthday Party became our main influence and new songs (in Icelandic, always) with titles like "Come To The Woods!" and "She's A Suicide" started to pop up.

SPARSE CROWDS, STILL LOUD

We demoed songs on a lousy cassette recorder and put out a cassette album in 1983 called 'Arts With Worms' (in Icelandic: 'Listir með orma'). Gramm records made thirteen copies, and never more! We did not have any fans for the first three years or so. For a while in 1983–1984 Haukur quit and was replaced by a guy called Ágúst, who would later become a film director ('Popp í Reykjavík', 1998) and a camera man for Nirvana and Guns 'n' Roses.

Underground rock was in a slump in Iceland. We played pretty regularly but the crowd rarely consisted of more than fifty people. I started to correspond with foreign fanzines and people abroad just to find some action. The band went on an Interrail trip in the summer of 1985 and met up with one of my penpals, John Robb of The Membranes, in Manchester. He got us a gig in Preston and we were very grateful to play for some people we'd never seen before in our lives. And they even liked what we were doing!

We decided to make a real record when we came home. We only had money for twenty hours in the studio, so we made a four song 10" EP. It came out early in 1986 and shortly afterwards Haukur quit for good. Instead we got Birgir Baldursson, a friend from Kópavogur who had helped us demo stuff before and was (and is) a fantastic drummer. We supported Einsturzende Neubauten and Crime and the City Solution in Reykjavík in the summer of 1986. All of a sudden we were playing for larger crowds, and they were pogoing and stuff! I had graduated from college in 1985 and in the fall of 1986 I went to Lyon, France. My idea was to become a writer and I did not even bring an instrument along. Within a week I had bought a guitar.

THE UNDERGROUND AWAKENS!

I returned in early 1987 and S. H. Draumur started to rehearse again. I had written plenty of new songs in Lyon and Steini, Biggi and I arranged them in the garage and rehearsed them to perfection. We were dead set on making an album. There was much more happening in the Icelandic underground by then, largely thanks to the fact that The Sugarcubes were getting big in England. We gigged with bands like Daisy Hill Puppy Farm (a Jesus and Mary Chain influenced band lead by Jóhann Jóhannsson), Sogblettir (rude teen punks), E-X (an R.E.M.-ish rock band), Mússólíní (a kind of C86-ish teen band), Ri-sæðlan (Reptile) and Ham.



"Underground rock was in a slump in Iceland. We played pretty regularly but the crowd rarely consisted of more than fifty people."

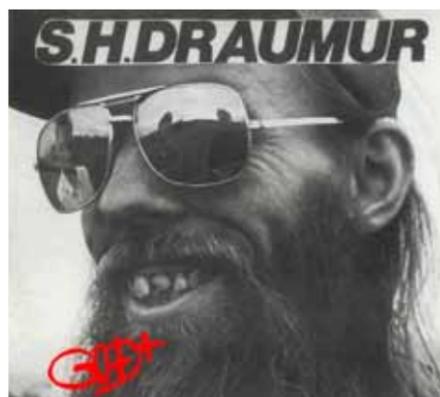
We recorded the Goð LP in about 50 hours in a new studio located in a YMCA community centre. The album was ready in September of 1987, and was released in January of 1988, by my own label, Erðanúmúsik, in association with a small English label called Lakeland Records. I guess everything we had done so far got focused and poured into this thing, Goð. Yes, I think it's good. It might even be my very best record.

IT ENDS, IT ENDS

Being in a band as a hobby, not a steady job, takes up most of your energy. Steini had a wife and a son in 1987. He wasn't all that interested in "rock" music anymore and leaned towards classical guitar music. He wanted to quit, but before he did we convinced him of doing two things: making another record and playing with The Sugarcubes on their first major UK tour.

We played only three gigs on the Sugarcubes tour, the biggest one being at the London Astoria for about 2,000 people, which was of course the largest crowd we'd ever played to. This was a nice time for us; we got to eat exotic food, get very drunk and get close to famous people backstage.

The record was fittingly called Bless and had four songs. Sigurjón Kjartansson from Ham produced this 12" EP. I rehearsed with Ham for a while in the summer of 1988, but played only one gig with them though. With Steini out of the picture, Biggi and I formed a new band (fittingly called Bless, to promote the recently released EP, 'S. H. Draumur') with Ari Eldon of Sogblettir.



IT'S BACK, IT'S BACK

In 1993 a CD with all the S. H. Draumur stuff came out. In hindsight it was a failed release. The band came back for one concert. We drew 500 people, which was quite victorious for us, as we were used to a lot less during our real life span. Now in 2010, 23 years after Goð was recorded, we come together once more to promote our 'Goð+'—a two CD package, just out on Kimi Records. It has the Goð LP in super sound quality, all the other records and a whole lot of demos and live recordings. We're playing at Airwaves and later on we plan to do two gigs (in Reykjavík and Akureyri) where we perform 'Goð' in its entirety.

We've already rehearsed in Egilsstaðir, where Steini is the headmaster of the local music school, so I know we can still pull it off. I might even go as far as promise it will be our best gigs ever! 🍀

By Dr. Gunni

(bassplayer and singer of S. H. Draumur)

- 1 Playing in MH college in Feb. 1988
- 2 S. H. Draumur rehearsing in 2010: Never better!
- 3 The Goð LP sported Mr. Stefán Grímsson, who was and is S. H. Draumur's main religious symbol.

Protecting Free Speech in Iceland



Earlier this year, Iceland made headlines around the world by vowing to enact the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative (IMMI), in effect agreeing to become the world's free speech haven. This important proposal has extensive protections for journalists, including protection from libel tourism, and limitations on prior restraint.

Whether members of the Icelandic Parliament passed the resolution in the spirit of George Washington's words that "[i]f the freedom of speech is taken away then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter" or they saw in its passage an opportunity for positive PR—sorely needed since our harebrained bankers led the country off a cliff—is not clear, since Iceland has hardly been a model of a society that values free speech. Iceland still retains on its books extremely restrictive libel laws, adopted from our Danish overlords in 1940, that criminalise truthful statements offending the subject of the communications. The laws permit imprisonment for up to two years for presenting a "defamatory insinuation," and for up to one year for "injuring the personal honour of another" or for insinuating "something which would be to the detriment of his/her respect."

Iceland's constitution guarantees the right to free expression, and these archaic laws are rarely enforced by the prosecutors, but the rich and powerful continue to use these relics to intimidate those who dare impinge their "honour." My public criticism, of the current administration's hiring of former high level bank officials, was answered with a swift demand for an apology and an indirect referral to defamation laws.

On top of this, nearly all the major media are owned and operated by the oligarchs and politicians who led us to the point of perdition. Iceland's bank secrecy laws prohibit everyone—even legislators attempting to investigate the misdeeds of the 2000s—from viewing records. Iceland has no open meeting laws, no ACLU to take up the gauntlet in free speech cases, no anti-SLAPP legislation to penalize those who bring baseless suits to intimidate and silence critics by burdening them with legal costs.

As has been reported elsewhere, I was recently the target of intimidation by a bank official. The newspaper DV had reported that Íslandsbanki had written off a \$3.5 million loan made to a company with close ties to one of its bank officials. I cross-referenced the DV story on my blog on Eyjan.is—an Icelandic-language website—along with a comment about another "disgusting" instance of unethical favouritism by the taxpayer-bailed-out banks.

Since DV's news story was related to another story I was working on, I directed follow-up questions to the bank regarding its official policies towards insider loans and what the criteria were for loan write-offs. This last question is of particular interest to the Icelandic public, as the banks are adamant in their refusal to write-off residential and personal loans for the unwashed masses.

The bank, unsurprisingly, evoked bank secrecy laws regarding the specific case, but referred to the bank's "General Rules" which answered none of my questions.

What did surprise me, though, was a vehement attack against me by the officer's attorney, Dögg Pálsdóttir. As reported in DV, Ms. Pálsdóttir called the Reykjavík Grapevine to warn its editor that I was going to provide him with a libellous story about her client, saying she was "sure that nothing she [Íris] says will be true if she writes anything at all." [Refer to page 6 for a write up of the incident]. She added it would be best the paper was aware of this, to avoid a situation necessitating legal action.

Fortunately, both DV and the Grapevine are independently owned and have not succumbed to the intimidation. But it makes me wonder how many questionable deals were never investigated, how many stories have never seen the light of day, and how many follow-ups have been deep-sixed because of these bullying techniques.

The IMMI is a promising start, but more must be done. The intimidation does not come just from the overt threats, but from the general societal attitude. We are told not to rock the boat, to keep our disagreements among ourselves, and to think about the effects of speaking out on our families and our careers.

As a new Constitutional Convention approaches, we must reaffirm our absolute commitment to free expression. We must continue to push for quick passage of the IMMI, as well as for the repeal of obsolete laws. We must create anti-SLAPP measures to fight back against the intimidators. And we must support without hesitation those who dare to speak out, even if we don't always agree what they're saying. As Voltaire said, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." 🍀



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Iceland Airwaves Off-venue Program

TUESDAY 12th October

22:00 Útidúr
23:00 Sakaris (FO)

WEDNESDAY 13th October

21:00 Yunoshi (UK)
22:00 Orphic Oxta
23:00 Alfons X

THURSDAY 14th October

16:30 Yoda Remote
17:15 Jungle Fiction
18:00 Rabbi Bananas
19:00 Captain Fufanu
21:00 - 01:00 X-97.7 / Funkþátturinn present
DBF & Terrordisco - Live on X-97.7

FRIDAY 15th October

16.00 - 19.00 Bedroom Community & Friends
21:00 The Bartones: The Kaffibarinn Male Choir
21:30 DJ Kári
00:00 Sykur
01:00 Alfons X

Saturday 16th October

16.00 - 19.00 Bedroom Community & Friends
19.30 Hjaltalín
21:00 DJ HalliValli
01:00 DJ Casanova

SUNDAY 17th October

21.00 - 01.00 Human Woman (DJ Mic Set),
Shumi (Kompakt, DE),
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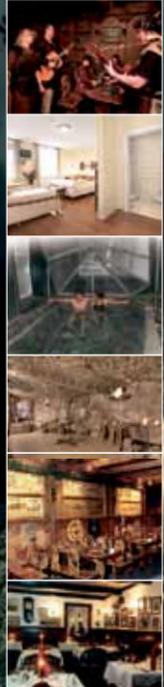


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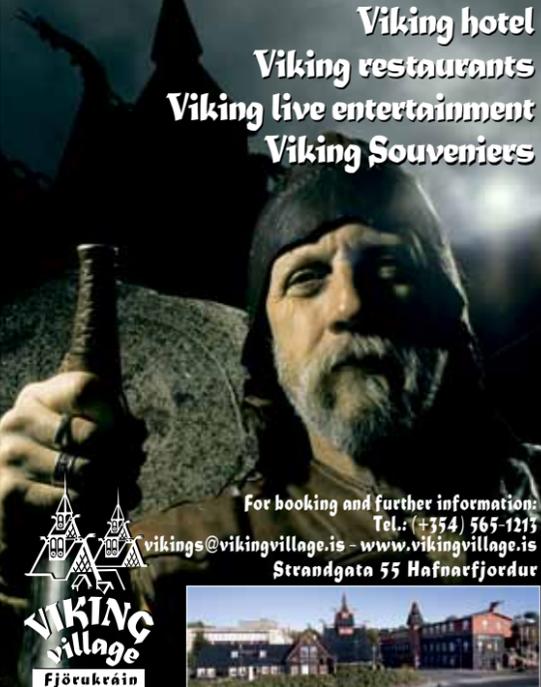
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Second Coming

Amiina wow the crowd with a thumbs up Icelandic debut of 'puzzle'



I didn't expect to see fourteen musicians on stage, a mind-boggling array of instruments and an audience ranging from rock royalty to little old ladies, but that's what I got at Amiina's album release concert at NASA earlier this month. Debuting songs from their second album 'puzzle' on home soil, the band played to an almost full house, sprinkled with more gods and goddess of the Icelandic music scene than sugar on a doughnut.

It was up to Sin Fang's (they've dropped the Bous) eclectic musical stylings to warm up the gathering crowd. While frontman Sindri Már Sigfússon kept his presence low-key, his thoughtful lyrics and charmingly ramshackle electro-acoustic compositions seemed to rouse the audience. Signing off with the upbeat 'Clangour And Flutes,' it was time for Amiina to rock up and do their thing.

Almost instantaneously, the eerie electronic hum of the albums opening track 'ásinn' silenced the bustle, and within minutes the hypnotic beat and spine-tingling strains of the accordion seemed to grip the room. Aside from, funny enough, fudging the timing on

the intro to 'what are we waiting for?', the six-piece settled into their rhythm, absorbing themselves among the collision of drums, keyboards, violins, xylophones and saws. For the first twenty minutes, you could have heard a pin drop in each momentary pause before the audience broke into whoops and whistles.

Midway through the vibe changed, the audience came back to earth, shuffling about and breaking for a cigarette. The band took the opportunity and gathered themselves, Sin Fang and guests on stage and treated us to a beautiful performance of 'in the sun'. It was a really special moment, and everyone seemed to love it. Between the lovey dovey couples swaying to the gentle violins on 'thoka', and the groups of friends giggling through the uplifting rhythms of 'púsl' it felt more like being in a cosy living room than a big club.

What's so interesting about Amiina's live performances is the sheer amount of instrumentation these ladies and gents manage to pack in on stage. They rotate seamlessly between roles; the keyboard player becomes the xylophonist, the violinist becomes the zither player and so

on. The only one who had to keep his seat all night was the drummer, Magnús. When you see a live band create such a multitude of sounds across such a broad (and kinda bizarre) spectrum of instruments, it's hard not to respect them for it, regardless of whether or not their music is your bag.

As they pulled people back into the ether with the much darker, more dramatic sound on 'sicsak', the progression Amiina have made between their two records seemed strikingly clear. Sure, the violin twiddles and melodic waves on Kurr were gorgeous, but they're not half as affecting as their more recent efforts.

So justly confident are the band in their newer material that, for the encore, they rounded off proceedings with another rendition of 'in the sun', albeit on a smaller scale. They seemed really pleased with the overwhelming positive reaction from the crowd, and skipped off stage happy as pigs in the proverbial.

EIMEAR FITZGERALD
HVALREKI



TRACK CD OF THE ISSUE

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Boy. Goddamn Airwaves. Got us so excited that we couldn't stick to just having a track of the issue. Nope. We had to go all in and make a super special AIRWAVES COMPILATION for y'all. It's a monster, too. It has over thirty tracks of fresh and excellent Icelandic music from some of our favourite Airwaves acts of 2010 (not all of them, but a lot of them).

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- 3) There's even a cool cover included, designed by our very own Páll Hilmarrson. You can print that out, if you want to get crafty.
- 4) ????
- 5) PROFIT!

Here's what's on the comp:

Æla - Hent'essu í mig // Klink - Death By Auto // Hjaltalin - Suitcase Man (Gísli Galdur Remix) // Stafrænn Hákon - Val Kilmer // Endless Dark - Cold Hard December (radio version) // For a Minor Reflection - Flóð // Saytan - Cub // Momentum - As The Skies Break // Zach and Foes - Back to Egypt // Markús & The Diversion Sessions - Stay // kimono - Kente // Biggibix - Run Away // Ólafur Arnalds - Hægt kemur ljósið // Nóra - Skóflaðu mér // Moses Hightower - Vandratað // My Summer As A Salvation Soldier - How Are You? // Miri - Ég á heima á Íslandi // Útidúr - Killer On The Run // Fist Fokkers - Hysteria (ruff-mix) // Swords of Chaos - Ill-gotten Gains // Mordingjarnir - Flóttinn mikli // LAZYBLOOD - Once Upon A Time (demo) // Sudden Weather Change - The Whaler // Dikta - Goodbye // Sindri Eldon - 30 Seconds // S.H. Draumur - Glæpur gegn ríkinu // Feldberg - In Your Arms // Reykjavík! - Cats // FM Belfast - President // Benni Hemm Hemm - FF ekki CC // Retro Stefson - Kimba // Quadroplos - Mandaranda // Prinspóló - Niðrá strönd // There are a few more, too!

Music | CD Reviews



Mount Kimbie
Crooks & Lovers

mountkimbie

If you like electronic music and don't buy this, then you are an idiot

Dubstep has grown from a small London niche to the predominant genre in electronic music. Alas this has meant that most stuff you'll hear is often sub-standard techno DJs whacking an elephant anus-prolapse bass synth over tinny beats.

Thank goodness that the guys of Mount Kimbie have come along to give us a different take on those syncopated beats. What 'Crooks and Lovers' does is replace the sweaty claustrophobia of most dubstep and cool it down an array of influences and sounds. You have the glacial R&B of 'Would Know', the post-rock guitars and machine pulse synths of 'Field', while 'Before I Move Off' sounds like Norwegian freak folk produced by Four Tet. For those requiring a classic dubstep fix, there is the tight, skittering percussion with wobbling bass on 'Blind Night Errand'.

Crooks and lovers defies clear definition. Is it Post dubstep? Hyper wonky? Twoblokesfanningaround? Whatever you call it, it's the sound of a genre being torn apart and put back together with the end result sounding better than most current dubstep music out there.

✂ - BOB CLUNESS



Miri
Okkar

amiina

A special record

This is magnificent. It really is. Miri, the band who made the album in question, are almost purely an instrumental band, and when they use vocals they are used rather as instruments rather than to convey a meaning. The only song that contains vocals on this particular album is 'Draugar'. The lyrics are probably nonsense words.

Most of their songs are pretty experimental yet accessible at the same time. How they achieve this is anyone's guess. It warrants a mention that this is not dada-esque in its experiments, but compared to "regular music" it's still different. Songs reach the seven-minute mark and you don't notice, which is something that rarely happens to me.

Miri's Okkar is a special record as it achieves incredible success as a creative venture while also remaining—to put it simply—fun to listen to.

✂ - MAGNÚS B. GUÐMUNDSSON



Swords of Chaos
The End Is As Near As Your Teeth

swordsofchaos

A fun ride that's a tad short on longevity

Here we have a group of young dudes that are good friends. They're horny, amped and there are no brakes. That's how you should sound early in your career. Especially if you love spastic punk, noisy hardcore and metal. The result is like being stuck in a wind tunnel. When sitting through the whole thing, you'd be forgiving for breaking sweat. So, right there, you're in for a ride. This band is talented and fun to behold. Check. It's very possible that Swords are taking cues from some of the old GSL, Three One G bands and early Blood Brothers.

Internationally, the envelope is hardly being pushed but in an Icelandic context, they've carved their own niche. Swords Of Chaos trump most of these bands in the bass-playing department. The guitar and drum work is a little bit samey throughout. Consequently the record needs more variation. When slightly spiced up ('Mandibular Wolf Tooth in Horse', 'Nashkel Mines' and 'Chip-On Disguise Chops') it clearly demonstrates how it wouldn't have taken much seasoning to make 'The End Is As Near As Your Teeth' an irresistible delicatessen.

✂ - BIRKIR FJALAR VIÐARSSON



Sketches for Albinos
Days Of Being Wild And Kind

sketchesforallbinos

Not that wild but, rather kind

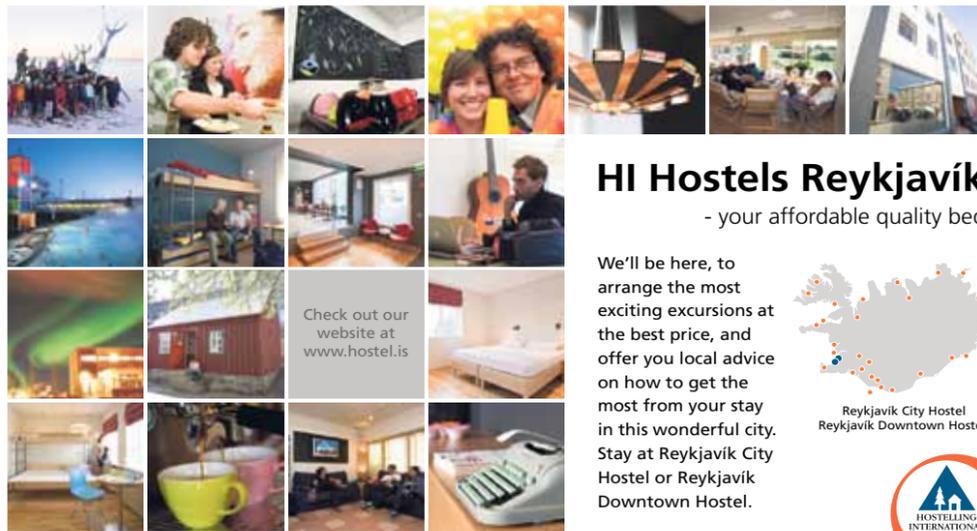
Sketches for Albinos is the solo project of Iceland based musician-slash Bedroom Community affiliate Matthew Collings. Now he's striking out on his own with this debut effort containing sixteen tracks of soft, numbing, shoe-gaze-y ambient noodlings.

Listening to the opening track, 'Sorbonne Midnight', with its muted underwater piano did make me go 'God no! It's Riceboy Sleeps again!' But after that, there was a lot more going on than the usual ethereal puffwheat that passes for ambient music.

Thanks to his guitar manipulations, there is a strong ebb and flow in tracks such as 'A Meeting At The Merry Go Round', while 'Red Sky on Fire' could be comparable to an incredibly spaced out Spiritualized tune.

While it doesn't reach out and strike your emotional core, SOBWAK is superior background music for when you absolutely need to zone out of your plane of existence.

✂ - BOB CLUNESS



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Music | Electronic



The Icelandic Electronic Odyssey

On musical segregation and dreamachines

Words

Pórður Ingi Jónsson

It's been a good summer for electronic music in Iceland. At least three interconnected electronica collectives have been wreaking havoc in Reykjavík's music venues: Electric Ethics, Extreme Chill and Hljóðaklettur. These three superpowers, in collaboration with the Icelandic Airwaves festival, will join forces on October 12th and 13th to serve up an "exciting feast of music and visual effects" at Fak-tórý Bar in 101 Reykjavík. And this is a good thing.

DUST IN THE SPIRAL STAIRS

The show on October 12 is an off-venue one with a slender entrance fee of only 1500 ISK. The line-up: experimental Danish quintet Selvhentur, Rúnar Magnússon with Graupan & the Crying Cowboy, the ever-esoteric Inferno 5, experimental stalwarts Stillupsteypa, your favourite DJ (DJ Musician) and the aural terror of Gjöll. Visual/sound artist Finn-bogi Pétursson will also team up with his son Stefán Finnbogason of techno outfit Sykur due to "foster-age-related reasons, for both individuals" (as they put it). October 13 is an Airwaves-exclusive show where the following acts will perform: lo-fi band Peter and Wolf, electronic new-comer Arnliótur (of Grapevine Grassroots infamy), super-duo Vindva Mei, Selvhentur, father and son duo Stereo Hypnosis, industrialists Reptilicus, the psych-italo-disco stylings of Evil Madness and the mustachio'd Hunk of a Man.

But who exactly are these purveyors of electronic music? Promoter Ólafur Þórsson and musician Pan Thorarensen founded Electric Ethics in 2007 in the purpose of stirring up the local electronica scene. In that year they revived the "brute-art band", Inferno 5, and have held a few music nights since that have combined Extreme Chill and Hljóðaklettur.

Extreme Chill was founded by Pan Thorarensen and his father Óskar Thorarensen (the two form Stereo Hypnosis) in 2007 (they were subsequently joined by promoter/DJ Andri Már Arnlaugsson). They've organised many music nights in Reykjavík for the past few years as well as the "Extreme Chill Festival" which was held this summer in Hellissandur.

The record label Hljóðaklettur ("Sound Cliffs") was founded last year by Rúnar Magnússon and Sabrina Joy. It's based in New York, Copenhagen and Reykjavík. The idea of Hljóðaklettur is to release limited edition albums bearing original artwork. The first release, 'Options' was released on a USB drive and the second, 'Hljóðaklettur Dress Up' was a compilation tape that came with a sports jacket. They've also held events, some of which included "dreamachines" a la Brion Gysin and William Burroughs.

"Each time a new genre or trend rears its head, it's only an echo of an older genre, but in mutated form of course"

"We, as experimental groups, promoters, labels and artists are driven by the basic instinct of creating releasing music and promoting electronica both here and overseas," Electric Ethics stalwart Ólafur Þórsson tells me. "Electronica in Iceland is undoubtedly a kind of follow-up to the scene overseas and it's our wish that this will change, and we are giving it our very best.

When asked what kind of music they promoted, the answers got slightly more vague: "It's said that electronica started with avant-garde artists in Eastern-Europe in the beginning of the 20th century. Ambient might be referred to as "dust on blades on grass" or "dust in the spiral stairs" whereas punk is noise. Electronica has the ability to be harsh and experimental and on the other hand as smooth as the summer wind."

IN THE BEGINNING

The scene has been evolving since the dawn of punk in Iceland, which—like everything else—came later than in other countries. In the early '80s, Finnbogi Pétursson was a part of the notorious art collective Bruni BB that received attention from the police for decapitating chickens on stage. The performance was filmed by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson and used in his legendary documentary 'Rökk í Reykjavík'.

"Each time a new genre or trend rears its head, it's only an echo of an older genre, but in mutated form of course," Finnbogi answers when asked if the power of the punk mentality still echoes through the times. "Punk had perhaps a more powerful charm because of all the dreck that came before, so it definitely echoes still."

"The Bruni BB scene [from 'Rökk í Reykjavík'] had an immensely good influence on me. I managed to borrow a very bad copy that thankfully included that scene, because that scene was sometimes cut. That scene was the reason I wanted to see the film," explains Sigtryggur Berg Sigmarsson, member of Stillupsteypa and Evil Madness, proving that the chicken-decapitations resulted in more than just legal problems. "Maybe I didn't realise at the time, but in retrospect, that was what turned me on to what I'm doing now in music and performance art."

A very similar troupe of musicians working with performance art emerged in the '90s called Tilraunaeldhúsið (The Kitchen Motors Family). Composer Jóhann Jóhannsson [of Apparat Organ Quartet and solo fame] explains: "Kitchen Motors Family was a group of artists, who were seemingly very different but shared considerable common ground that remained unexplored. We were three musicians with different backgrounds but we still had a core of things in common. We wanted to create a forum

where these different artists could meet, work and collaborate.

We were occasionally a record label, and we produced and promoted. More often we were instigating, setting things in motion, then stepping back and learning from what happens. Now we're working on bringing together all the documentation of our work for these 10 years and putting together a book and CD box set. Kitchen Motors sparked many good things in the Icelandic music scene, like Apparat Organ Quartet. For example we did a production of a chamber opera in a small cafe-venue with a mezzo-soprano and actor and an electronic group that we did with múm, Sjón and Ásgerður Jónúsdóttir. We also produced a musical with an author, a punk songwriter and an avant-garde theatre group in one month with virtually no budget. The idea was to shake things up a bit."

In the last years, there hasn't really been a parallel to these two groups. We asked industrial duo Reptilicus what they think is going on in the local scene at the moment: "One of the disappointments today is the musical segregation. People that listen to this don't listen to that, and so on: the sheep mentality. We've always felt that commitment in this respect is complacent. That's why we've always mixed genres, ready to embrace contradiction. This has caused occasional confusion amongst our marketing strategists and listeners. What we enjoy most about Icelandic electronica today is the strong element of experimentation. Also, there are interesting contacts across generations of musicians, exemplified by acts like Stereo Hypnosis and Ghostigital. There's definitely something brewing in the crucible of Icelandic electronica, and the lightweight numbness of the "krútt" generation seems less dominating and hopefully fading away."

Bringing it All Back Home

These two concerts in October are the first concerts in the eleven-year history of Iceland Airwaves concentrating solely on electronic music. This will undoubtedly make a few people happy since there has been so little focus on electronica. It fell into the shadow of the guitar and the bass. These concerts are the best introduction to this unique scene. So show up, have a beer and enjoy the sounds. You know we're going to. 🍷

Films | RIFF

'The Four Times'

We checked out this year's Golden Puffin Award winner



It is in every film critic's unwritten code of honour not to give away the entire movie in their review. I unfortunately have to break this golden rule to explain why the jury made the right decision. But I'm fair and am giving you a warning: If you are planning on seeing this movie, stop reading right now, read this article later!!! SPOILER ALERT! All right, that should do. If you're still with me, I'll tell you about this extraordinary film, 'The Four Times', from Italian director Michelangelo Frammartino.

One – The Old Shepherd And His Goats

This very quiet and slow film starts by describing the everyday life of an elderly shepherd and his goats. Without using any dialogue, the film follows the old man driving his animals up the mountain to graze in the morning and back to the stall in the afternoons. The old man is suffering from a bad cough, which he tries to cure by drinking water mixed with blessed dust from the local church. Well, and then he dies. These first thirty minutes are nice to watch, but the story is not that unusual—so far.

Two – A Baby Goat Gets Lost In The Woods

After the shepherd dies, the film performs a surprising change of protagonist. The goats, formally serving more as a background setting for the story of the shepherd, are now the focus. The goats are staged to appear almost human. One little baby goat leaves the herd and gets lost in the woods. And then...

Three - A Tree Comes To Town

... the woods, and especially one tree which was earlier just the setting for the story of the baby goat, becomes the focus. Amazing. Then...

Four - Coal

... the tree becomes coal, and the coal becomes the next protagonist of the film.

In addition to this incredible shifting of protagonists, the film presents the circle of life in a very special way. In many sequences the camera follows the goats or the shepherd's dog and the rhythm is determined by the animal's movements. In the different stages the film uses repeating frames: the village is shot from the same point of view for example, but one time you see the shepherd on his way to church, another time the goats strutting through the alleys or the coal being delivered.

The story isn't told from a human point of view, the observer is further away—is it maybe God? From this distant perspective, what people say is unimportant, the few words you actually hear in this dialogue-less film sound like the baaahs of goats, the wind through the leaves, and the crackling sound of burning coal. 'The Four Times' is a slow and quiet film that surprises you almost more than you can bear. Extraordinary!

Cameron Bailey, co-director of Toronto International Film Festival, Valdís Óskarsdóttir, noted Icelandic director and editor, and Film Comment's Managing Editor, Laura Kern, formed the jury for the Golden Puffin Award. They chose this film out of twelve remarkable debut or second films presented in the main category New Visions. FIPRESCI, the International Federation of Film Critics, came to the same decision and honoured 'The Four Times' with a second award.

🍷 - Wiebke Wolter

Turning Wool Into Gold

Innovative design team Vík Prjónsdóttir draw inspiration from everything from Icelandic folktales to Michael Jackson

Words

Anna Margrét Björnsson

Photography

Marínó Thorlacius

”

Nature can be both romantic and dramatic. Exactly like the ocean that surrounds Iceland, it has a romantic side but also a dramatic and frightening side. The way nature behaves is unpredictable; it can be nurturing or destructive



A decade ago Icelandic knits were dismissed by Icelanders, who deemed anything connected to traditional sheep wool as something only their grandmothers were interested in. The Icelandic woollen industry, after having blossomed in the seventies and eighties, became less popular with locals and now only catered to supplying tourist shops with classical woollen goods.

Around fifteen years ago the woollen industry went into severe decline and factories around the country were shut down. In 2005, an established knitting factory, Víkurprjón, based in Vík, south Iceland, joined forces with five designers with a project in mind to form innovative ideas to elevate this declining industry. The designers set out to make use of the natural materials and conditions that exist locally, rather than using imported materials or outsourcing the production. "Our ambition was to show a fresh image of the Icelandic wool industry by developing new products with traditional Icelandic materials," explains Guðfinna Mjöll Magnúsdóttir, one of the five designers. The collaboration was christened Vík Prjónsdóttir, a label set on turning wool into gold.

A RETURN TO LOCAL PRODUCTS

"When we started, wool wasn't very trendy," explains Guðfinna. "But these days wool is making a comeback. Wool is hip and everyone is knitting. People are using local raw material once again and daring to build on tradition. Asked whether this has to do with Iceland's economic collapse two years ago, Guðfinna replies that she believes this to be a world-wide tendency. "I think people the world over are building on old foundations and using local products for design, appreciating their own backgrounds and not trying to pretend to be something they're not."

The design team went to the wool factory, situated in a small coastal village on the black sands of south Iceland, to get acquainted with the machinery and to using wool as a material. "The Vík factory doesn't use the latest machinery or knitting technology," explains Guðfinna. "For example, the knitting machines are run on cassettes that play the patterns, so these cassettes play visuals and not sound. These non-digital circumstances fascinated us but at were a challenge at the same time. The reason that we plunged into this project was the fact that in 1985 there were 52 knitting and sewing factories all over the country but when we started in 2005, there were only three

left, including Víkurprjón. The industry was dying even though the raw material was in abundance. We have plenty of wool in Iceland and we thought it would be really tragic if the entire wool industry died out. We aimed for a new target group as well as extensive collaboration between designers and the factory. We thought that it was pretty exciting to use such traditional material to woo a new clientele.

INTRIGUED BY NATURE'S UNPREDICTABILITY

The resulting designs came together in a unique collection that has gained worthy attention both domestically and abroad. "We started off using the radius around the town of Vík as our design pool. We became inspired by our surroundings, the crazy winds and the raging seas that also feature in local folklore. We often mix together traditional folktales and inject into them our own little stories. For us it was logical to create something new from a base of tradition and nature," says Guðfinna. She explains the background for the "Black and White" collection as having been inspired by Michael Jackson: "He died when we were working on it."

The "Hidden World" designs, on the other hand, are a reference to shamanism. "Our inspiration is obviously not purely from Iceland. We're really fed up with that 'Iceland is the best in the world' idea. Vík Prjónsdóttir is very curious and we just look out for stuff that we find really inspiring."

One of the things that the design team found intriguing is the wild behaviour of nature. "Nature can be both romantic and dramatic. Exactly like the ocean that surrounds Iceland, it has a romantic side but also a dramatic and frightening side. The way nature behaves is unpredictable; it can be nurturing or destructive. Think of snow for instance: it's freezing cold, but if you dig a hole into the snow to seek refuge from a storm then the snow isolates the heat and protects you. A blanket, for example, is a protective object, a mysterious veil that keeps us safe from the elements. A blanket is something in between a piece of clothing and a piece of furniture. It's the owner who decides how to use it."

A SEAL ON THE CATWALK

The quirky innovativeness of the Vík Prjónsdóttir design team caught the eye of Danish designer Henrik Vibskov two years ago, and he asked them

for permission to remix their 'seal pelt' design. "This was a very good collaboration and the design became a part of Vibskov's collection that year, so our seal was on the Paris catwalk that winter," explains Guðfinna.

Vík Prjónsdóttir has also been a regular subject for the international fashion and interior design press in the past year. "We've received great coverage in magazines such as Plaza and Dwell, and this spring we're set to take part in a design exhibition in Istanbul in collaboration with Iceland-based designer Jet Korine."

Currently the team are exhibiting their work at a downtown design gallery in Reykjavík called Spark Design Space, at Klapparstígur 33, and the next product to hit stores is a selection of scarves. "We're pretty much swamped with work; it's a 24-hour day for us," explains Guðfinna and adds that all the designers in the group also have other work to attend to such as lecturing at the Iceland Academy of the Arts. "I'd say that our work is mostly based on a vision, an ideal. Now that we've done a second collection you could say we've built up more of a brand. At the moment we're focusing on making Vík grow and travel further." ☺



Going Surfin

You take your car to work, I'll take my board.



Words

Eimear Fitzgerald

Photography

Eimear Fitzgerald

”Surfing is the last thing that comes to your mind when you think about Iceland

It's hard to imagine 'hurling yourself into freezing North Atlantic waves' would be near the top of many peoples' list of 'things to do at nine am on a Sunday morning in Iceland'. Or even near the middle. Well, in an epic attempt to grab life by the balls, I decided to forego the stodgy breakfast and strong coffee this particular Sunday morning, and replace it with a mouthful of seaweed and a slap of icy water across the face.

Hooking up with 'surf.is' owners Leifur Dam Leifsson and Steinar Bachman at their Kópavogur

base, I was trundled into the fun bus with seven other eager beavers, all Icelanders and all newbies. Leifur and Steinar started the surf school last year with the goal of bringing surfing to Iceland and proving all the doubters wrong. "When we started this, we had no idea if it would be a success or not, or whether we'd just be stuck with expensive surfing gear gathering dust. This is why this project was so exiting to us. Surfing is the last thing that comes to your mind when you think about Iceland."

A thirty minute drive led to Þorlákshöfn on the south coast, its long, black sandy shore empty bar a few old soda bottles in the distance, rattling around in a stiffening breeze. Leifur tells me that introducing surfing to the locals has been a difficult task. The words 'no wonder' spring to mind. However their heroic efforts at convincing both locals and foreigners that Iceland in fact is the Hawaii of the north are beginning to pay off. "We've been doing really well this year; hundreds have gone though our course and rented gear. We knew the ace in our pocket is the world class waves we got here, not to mention the diversity of wildlife". World-class waves AND a motto of 'If you can dream it, we can do it'. Forget the weather, I'm sold!

Psyching myself up, I set to the task of stripping off and getting suited and booted. As I tugged up

zips and struggled with hood and gloves, the guys assured me that I was donning top of the range gear that would keep the cold at bay. Guess I'd know soon enough. Making our way down to the beach, we passed several disbelieving stares from a group of gore-tex'd Americans. It struck me just how trippy nine amphibious looking creatures in a desolate car park might look to your average morning walker.

Once assured that everyone could swim, we hit the beach for surf lessons 101. The company runs surf lessons from May through autumn, finishing up around the beginning of November, depending on conditions. They also rent gear all year round. We were guided through basic moves and positions as well as safety and rules of the water, each student gripped by a golden glimpse of surf-bum glory on the horizon.

After a quick jump around and warm up, the fun times commenced. Under the shadow of sleeping Eyjafjallajökull across the bay, the sea was soon a mush of arms, legs and boards, with everyone struggling to practice the instructions and catch their first ride. There were a couple of triumphs but most of the time was spent either under the waves or laughing at each other as we resurfaced red-faced and spluttering. It was fun. Steinar and Leifur

really looked after their brood too, keeping an eye on the currents and swells and gathering us in if we wandered off.

And amazingly, it wasn't cold. At all. Well, maybe a little.

Exhilarated and knackered (though none of the locals wanted to admit to feeling tired or cold... naturally) we dragged our boards up the beach after an hour's session. Not being a super macho Icelandic, I felt perfectly comfortable with my screeches and oohs and ahhs as I peeled off my wetsuit and pranced about trying to dress as quickly as I could without losing my towel in the snapping wind. Wiped out I fell asleep on the ride home, my hot chocolate and snúður sugared drool serving to further cement my loser status among my hardcore compatriots. Ah well, I'd proved enough for one day. My shivers might have drawn eyeball rolls, but I reckon everyone secretly felt that surfing at Þorlákshöfn had earned them a serious step up the kudos ladder.

Oh, and for the record—the stodgy breakfast and strong coffee tasted a hundred times more glorious when I got back. 🍷



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Get Out of Town!

Five great things to do just outside of Reykjavík



Odds are that you're here for the Iceland Airwaves festival—but you just can't come to Iceland without venturing outside of Reykjavík. So we have compiled a short list of great things to do, while keeping the following in mind: You have limited time, you prefer not to miss any of the one million bands playing in Reykjavík, and you probably partied pretty hard last night (in other words, there are no strenuous hikes or whale watching trips on the list).

1. THE GOLDEN CIRCLE – This is a golden oldie. Everyone who has been to Iceland knows the golden circle. The three main attractions on this trip just never get old. The first stop is Þingvellir—a natural and historical phenomenon. There are few places where you can walk between the North American and Eurasian continental plates and this is one of them. It was also once home to Europe's oldest parliament, Alþingi. The second stop is Gullfoss—a beautiful waterfall, enough said. The last stop is Geysir—a geyser. The original Geysir actually doesn't do much anymore, but Strokkur is full throttle. Don't stand too close! The water is hot! By the way, the word, geysir, is one of two Icelandic words that have been adopted by other languages (the other is jökulhlaup).

2. HORSEBACK RIDING – Admittedly this can be a rough ride and you might have to endure a sore bottom for a couple days. Sill, do it! Icelandic horses are one of a kind. As Icelanders are a very proud nation, you'll probably hear that about a number of things, but it is really true about the horses. Although they are a little bit smaller than the average horse (careful not to call them 'ponies'), they can do more than just walk, trot, canter and gallop. They can also tölt, and if they are real superstars, they can skeið as well. Horseback riding is also a fantastic opportunity to get out into Iceland's nature.

3. HVERAGERÐI – This is a little bit more off the beaten track. Hveragerði is a small town about thirty minutes southeast of Reykjavík. The town itself is not exciting per se, but just above town there is a path that takes you on a forty minute walk up a mountain to some natural hot springs. And, this is exciting. Remember to bring a towel and warm clothes because it's cold when you get out of the water. If Iceland's protestors haven't cleaned out all the eggs from the grocery stores, you might want to pick some up so that you can make hard boiled eggs up there. Please don't burn yourself though!

4. THE BLUE LAGOON – Let's face it, you wanted to do the whole hike up Hveragerði to bathe in all-nat-

ural hot springs and eat hard boiled eggs, but you're not feeling up to it. The Blue Lagoon is an alternative way to sit in Iceland's famous geothermal waters. It's nice and relaxing and you can cover yourself with the silica-rich mud, which is supposed to be good for your skin, but always seems to have a bad effect on your hair. Do not be deceived though, the Blue Lagoon is actually man-made even if it is geothermal. In fact, most swimming pools and houses in Iceland are heated by geothermal energy. Also, note that there's an official Airwaves event going on there during the festival, so you can combine your love for music with your love for uh... hot water.

5. SNORKELLING IN SILFRA – If you are up for a little more action, you should go snorkelling. It's incredible. Glacial water flows through this crevice called Silfra before emptying into Þingvellir Lake. You're not going to see any fish, but you are going to see some of the Earth's youngest rock while you float above the Mid-Atlantic Rift. And if you're tall enough, you can even touch two continents at the same time. If you are thinking that glacial water sounds far too cold, you're right! But the trade-off is that you get exceptionally clear water and high visibility. And don't worry, you will be wearing a warm jumpsuit and a dry suit, so won't even really get wet.



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“We Are Never Ready”

‘Transaquania – Into Thin Air’ premiered yesterday. It might not have been ready

Words

Alexander Roberts

We caught up with Erna Ómarsdóttir, Gabriela Friðriksdóttir and Damien Jalet as they were rehearsing their new piece ‘Transaquania – Into Thin Air’ and asked them all about it.

“Normally we are never ready,” a flushed Erna Ómarsdóttir tells me when I ask how the preparations are coming along. “We never look at the premiere as something finished or perfect. It’s a goal, but it would be boring to have everything ready. Often it is when you are confronted with the audience that the performance reveals itself, and from there the piece will continue to grow and develop. Of course we have to be sensible—so in this case everything will be pretty much in place, but you have to leave room for the piece to grow. You hope that you have put it together in such a way that something beautiful can happen – and a sort of magic can take place.”

“I agree with Erna,” Damien Jalet chimes in, “even after a hundred shows the work will still be growing. It’s always a great step to see that a piece suddenly works for itself. You start to understand its needs, and start to see the bigger picture of all the scenes getting together. It’s like seeing the picture of an unknown puzzle appearing clearer and clearer. We have something to show you for sure...”

What is Transaquania – Into Thin Air about?

Erna: It started with a performance in the Blue Lagoon last year, where we wanted to create our own mythology of the Blue Lagoon about these creatures we call Transaquanian. Now it is as if the Lagoon has dried up and these creatures that lived there are venturing onto dry land.

Damien: Yes I think after our project in the Blue Lagoon—where we experienced what it was to dance in water; how breathing becomes a struggle, and where your body floats—we really took oxygen and gravity as central themes. And it is still a story of mutation and of evolution—looking at how human nature finds its roots in the animal and vegetal world, and how we are a part of something much bigger than culture or civilization.

Gabriela Friðriksdóttir: I feel also that creating a certain universe gives you so much space for surprises—it allows things to grow inside it. Even by just finding a space and giving the first creatures a name, like Transaquanians, it starts to evolve by itself. This story or fiction of an evolution becomes our way of thinking, it becomes our daily lives and that’s how it starts to grow naturally. It mutates and it is reborn and it dies—and it’s sucked into a black hole and spat out again.

What have been your main influences and sources of inspiration?

Damien: Gabriela, Erna and I have some common gods: Jan Svankmajer, David Attenborough, Tarkovski... we also had a few images of certain things including a population residing on an island in Japan that live permanently with gas masks, because of the possible gas eruptions from a volcano they are living on, the recent discovery of an animal that doesn’t need oxygen to live, cos-



“We never look at the premiere as something finished or perfect. It’s a goal, but it would be boring to have everything ready. Often it is when you are confronted with the audience that the performance reveals itself, and from there the piece will continue to grow and develop”

monauts in zero gravity and the opening scene of 2001 Space Odyssey...

Gabriela: Also the Sun, the Moon and all the other planets. As well as the elements: earth, fire, water, air and space.

Transaquania has been created by three of you in collaboration, can you tell us a little about how you work together?

Damien: It’s very intuitive and I think the three of us really rely strongly on intuition whether we work together or not. What is really inspiring for Erna and I is seeing what Gabriela creates—the costumes and sculptures—because they become a departure point for us to create movement, or a scene, or a new species. Sometimes Gabriela has an idea of a costume and we realise afterwards that it fits perfectly into a scene we started to work on. So we never talk too much.

Erna: Often Damien and I do not even need to speak and we are working like kindred spirits. Then on other occasions it can be difficult and Damien and I fight like cat and dogs. But that’s why we do it—it is a total collaboration. Obviously Damien and I have focused more on the choreography and Gabriela on the costumes, but the process is very close.

Gabriela: I think all three of us just love to work. There is this satisfaction in the process that is so generous and inspiring. We always try to be completely

Transaquania premiered in Borgaleikhúsið yesterday—with further shows planned tonight, and then every Sunday until the end of November.

In addition to this Erna Ómarsdóttir, Valdimar Jóhannsson’s and Shalala will perform a dance piece entitled ‘Teach Us to Outgrow Our Madness’ at Norðurljólinn on Sunday October 10, at 2 pm and 6 pm. Transaquania – Into Thin Air and Teach us to Outgrow Our Madness are both being performed as part of Keðja—a huge, one off dance convention taking place this weekend in Reykjavík. For further details about Keðja and other events taking place check out www.kedja.id.is.

open to changes and possibilities whilst working on a piece, and the life with all its elements joins into this collaboration also—adding to it humour, pain and joy.

Now we’re working with the dancers from the Iceland Dance Company and they add their personalities, with their humour, pain and joy as well. 🍷

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Yoga, Insomnia And Going Crazy

Psychologist Paola Cardenas answers your dilemmas

 Lately I have been very interested in the whole business of yoga and meditation. There is something fascinating about the calm and peaceful attitudes of those who practice these ancient techniques. When we think of meditation the first thing that comes to mind is a person sitting quietly with legs crossed and concentrating on his or her breath. However, meditation may also be achieved laying down, walking, standing or practicing everyday activities.

The word meditation is derived from the Latin words "meditari" which means to think or to dwell upon and "mederi" which means to heal. It also means awareness, and whatever you do with awareness, is meditation. For example watching your breath, practicing relaxation or yoga and observing the nature around you is meditation. Provided that these activities are free from any other distraction to the mind, it is effective meditation.

To me, meditation also means peace of mind to contemplate life without judgment. In this fast and competitive world we often forget to observe the world around us with awe and admiration instead of with criticism. Noticing little things like the way the rain touches our skin, the smell of freshly baked bread and the landscape around us can help us connect to the more human part of us and feel more at peace. Meditation is not reserved for the Himalayan monks, it is something that all of us can practice. So let's "om" together while we read your dilemmas and my answers to them!

I have a very difficult time falling as sleep at night and when I finally manage to fall asleep I usually wake up before the alarm rings. Needless to say, I am usually very tired

at work. I have tried medication but I usually wake up after a few hours and can't fall as sleep again. Is there a cure for my situation?

The sleeping difficulty you describe, also called insomnia, is characterized by persistent difficulty falling asleep when you first go to bed at night, difficulty staying asleep, waking up frequently during the night, and/or waking up too early in the morning. Insomnia is also one of the most common sleeping disorders affecting around 30% of all adults. Unfortunately, the lack of restful sleep can be quite debilitating and people affected by this condition can have diminished energy to carry on throughout the day, might have difficulty concentrating and might even feel emotionally drained. However, much research has shown that the amount of sleep we need at night varies between people, with adults needing from 4 hours of sleep at night to 10 hours or more.

There are several things you can do that might help you with your situation and here are my suggestions: when you lay in bed at night try not to worry about not being able to sleep and remember that we don't all need the same amount of hours of sleep, make sure the environment in your bedroom is optimal (check for example for noise, brightness, mattress comfort, and bedroom heat), diminish caffeine intake specially four hours before you go to bed, try not to smoke before you go to bed, exercise regularly, use your bed only for sleeping (for example: don't read, watch television, eat or speak on the phone while laying in bed) and if you have not fallen asleep within thirty minutes leave your bedroom and do something relaxing until you feel tired again. These are just a few tips but there are loads of books about the subject and information on the Internet. Good luck and keep in mind

that you will eventually fall asleep!

I moved to Iceland a few years ago and pretty much since I moved I have been feeling miserably. I don't speak to anyone about this (my partner does not know about it) and I even feel ashamed about writing to you about it!! I don't know, I sometimes feel as if I am going crazy and that scares me. HELP!

First of all, I want to ask you to give yourself a clap on the back for opening up to us. There are many people out feeling just like you so let me start by saying that you are not alone. Learning a new language, leaving your family and mates behind, meeting new people, finding a new job, redefining yourself in a new land and learning new social norms and rules are all challenges you have to face when you move to a new country. The whole process of adaptation can be quite traumatic for some people and can cause what we call "culture shock," stress, anxiety and even depression. Let me reassure you that you are not "going crazy," research on migration has shown that people around the world experience the same feelings that you have described so there is no need to feel embarrassed about what you are going through. This is not the right time for you to be alone with your feelings so I suggest you get yourself some support. Communicating your feelings to your partner and friends might seem difficult but try to keep in mind that the people who care about you won't be judgmental and can help you get through this difficult time. Talking to other foreigners in Iceland can also be helpful but if feelings persist I suggest you seek professional help. Don't despair and remember that with the adequate support this too shall pass. ♥

✍ PAOLA CARDENAS

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Some of the Icelandic brochures have been translated in all the languages, others in some of them.

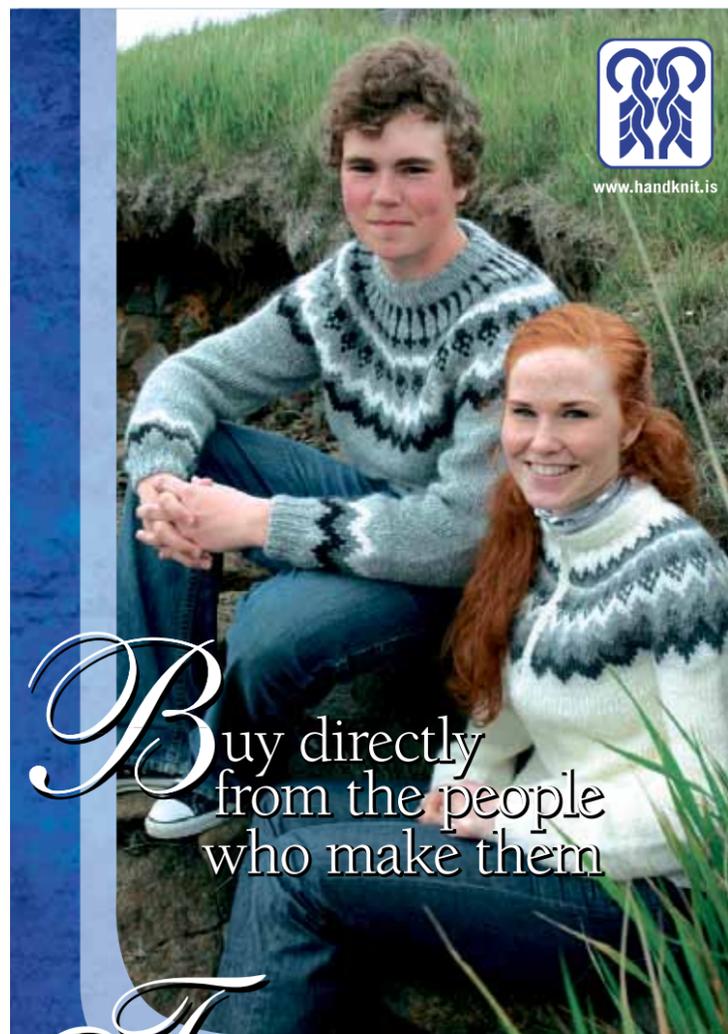
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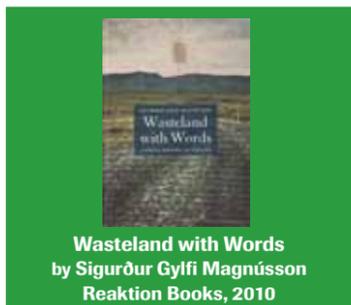
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Literature | Review

This Was The Real Iceland



It is a little difficult to decide which of two ways to describe Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon's new book 'Wasteland With Words'. Fifteen of the book's eighteen chapters are about Iceland from roughly 1800 to 1940, with particular stress on the years from 1870 to 1920. Trained in social history, Sigurður Gylfi focuses on now-classic themes such as childhood, death, literacy, housing, work, settlement patterns and emigration.

He uses a lot of examples from the Strandir region, which he has studied in depth.

In this way the book is about the years when Iceland was transformed from a very poor farm-based peasant society into a semi-modern, semi-independent European country with a fishing-based economy.

On the other hand, the book is subtitled 'A Social History of Iceland'. One chapter (chapter ten) deals with the history of Iceland from 800 to 1800, and two chapters (the final ones) cover 1940 to the present. Including these chapters makes the book into an alternative to the "standard" English-language histories of Iceland, on sale at every bookstore here, that usually trace the island's history from settlement almost up to the present.

Looked at in this way, 'Wasteland With Words' could be seen as a challenge to what we could call the Saga-age view of Icelandic history: the idea (common among tourists and newcomers to Iceland) that understanding the age of settlement is key

to understanding the country. 'Wasteland With Words' reads like a long, and in my view successful argument that if any period is the key to understanding Iceland today, it's the Nineteenth century.

As in Sigurður Gylfi's other writing—most of it available in Icelandic only—he tells the story of Iceland from the bottom up, through examples culled from diaries, newspapers, and the histories of particular families. He avoids discussing the ceremonial and official. He has read an amazing number of Icelandic autobiographies. His writing is fluid, lithe and informal.

The book opened my eyes to the Nineteenth-century roots of some current Icelandic customs. The popularity of summer work for teenagers goes right back to the ubiquity of child labour a hundred years ago. I understand the ambivalent attitude towards dogs in Iceland better now: dogs on farms were the key vector in the spread of hydatid disease (echinococcosis), a revolting and sometimes fatal parasitic infec-

tion that afflicted as much as a quarter to a half of Icelanders in the late Nineteenth century. And one reason for the tradition of out-of-wedlock births in Iceland is that until surprisingly recently—well after America freed its slaves—powerless, disenfranchised servants made up 35–40% of the Icelandic population and were not allowed to marry.

More depressingly, the shackles on consumer freedom in Iceland and the near-Soviet feeling to the retail experience here can be traced to the days when trade with Iceland was in the hands of a few Danish merchants. The poor condition of the older housing stock in places like Ísafjörður and downtown Reykjavík is a problem with very old roots. Our relatively low rate of high school graduation today and the delayed development of the Icelandic educational system in the Nineteenth century are two chapters of the same story. Iceland was not the only part of Europe that was impoverished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but the situation here was unusually

bad and unusually slow to improve. Sigurður Gylfi's book shows how far we have come.

'Wasteland With Words' is a very fine introduction to Icelandic history, but I want prospective readers to know in advance that it's mostly about daily life in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries. My biggest criticism is that the design and print quality is not what one would expect of a forty-dollar book that's being distributed by the University of Chicago Press. The margins are too big and the print is too small. The photos would be easier to appreciate if they extended to the page edges. Both the ink and the paper are a bit grayish. I doubt that Sigurður Gylfi is making a lot of money off this book. I wonder if it would have gained more readers published simultaneously online, with open access, and on paper, in a cheaper paperback format.

IAN WATSON

Poetry | Review



Divided into sections ('Intro', 'Death and Life', 'Cosmic Dreams', 'Day to Day') with colour-coded titles, 'antennae scratch sky'

touches on life cycles, animal instincts, sexuality, cosmos, fruit and the meaning of the word "motherfucker". The 64-page book contains some good, some bad poems behind a cover sporting drawings of what looks like a fat flamingo and a sad, radioactive bunny.

The poems' are peppered with Greek gods' names and vague personifications of death, life and beauty, like in the poem 'Centaur,' but which lacks the ingenuity of more descriptive poems like 'Sabbath' in which Þórunn describes snowfall as "Unwritten snowy paper/ in the homedrive/ makes a marring sound./ An Arabic snow-poem/ written by tires." The poems that begin with simple ideas and expand out create

more poetic congruency than the those that begin with vague ideas and try to tie in intricate details.

One example where the simple to complex construction works is in the poem 'Beyond the Line'. The poem begins with the image of a woman throwing fruit waste into a compost and connects it to the process of a decomposing human body. "...no pollutive pyre/ or costly grave. It would serve humans best/ to be stewed into compost/ reviving dead forests and deserts." The poem describes the metamorphosis of a lifeless human body into an apple, maggot, bird and back to an apple, etc. The language of the poem turns an old idea into something new without being overly complicated.

The two biggest problems with the book are the lack of punctuation and centre alignment of every poem. Some of the longer poems like 'mama' and 'you're a good poet/ I can see it in your face' read more like stream of conscious and could greatly benefit from a more "streamlined" construction instead of centred alignment. Centre aligning every poem, without explicit reasoning, seems lazy and uninventive.

Þórunn's more playful poems (with some serious undertones) like 'Folk and Felines' describing the differences between dogs (who view humans as gods) and cats (who think they are dogs) are much more enjoyable to read than some of the heavier poems like 'mama'. The poem 'mama' ram-

bles on about how "motherfucker is a negative concept/ making it seem bad to service her/ let's make it beautiful, and being a bitch too" for nine pages. Unfortunately, the controversy overrides the lyricism. The poem lacks poetic forcefulness to merit such a complex topic.

Some of the descriptions of fruit relating to human sexual organs are pretty hilarious, especially in the poem 'L'amour dans le jardin/ or a fantasy about edible pulpy plants'. Avid poetry readers might not be too impressed, but for the casual one, 'antennae scratch sky' is worth a read.

EMILY BURTON

Poetry | Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl

Future Perfect Poetry

When this text is eventually published the world will know who received the 2010 Nobel Prize for Literature. It will have been announced yesterday. The person in question will already be lauded worldwide, in today's newspapers next Friday, with a few dissenting voices perhaps mentioning cultural politics and even fewer voices claiming that prize-giving is invalid, that it reduces literature (and by association, the human spirit) to a competitive sport. But mostly we'll just participate in the joy, because everybody loves a party. And just like we know that our birthdays and Christmases and whatever don't have any gigantic "actual" meaning, they're still fun and we'd like to keep 'em fun, if possible.

When this text is written, however, the world (with me in it) does not know who will receive the 2010 Nobel Prize for Literature,

seeing as now it's Sunday the 3rd of October and the announcement isn't due until Thursday. That is to say, your yesterday, in my four days time. This is all due to a complicated lag in publishing tangible printed material that I won't go into. Suffice it to say, it could not have been otherwise.

I am terribly excited, of course. The front-runner for the LitNobel this year, at Ladbrokes bookies, is Sweden's own Tomas Tranströmer—a poet most people in the world have not heard of, but is an immense presence within the inconceivable world of poetry. The Swedes have not got a LitNobel since 1974, when Harry Martinson and Eyvind Johnson had to share one. I don't know how that works. Maybe you get half a gold medal. Or each winner gets a smaller medal than had he or she won alone.

And it seems Ladbrokes feels poets are particularly thinkable winners this year, with

Adam Zagajewski (Poland), Adonis (Syria), Ku On (Korea) and Les Murray (Australia) following Tranströmer on the list. They are mostly as or more obscure than Tranströmer (nobody reads poetry anymore, I say, shaking my head indignantly, last Sunday).

By now (or then, I mean, at publication), I guess you will know who got it. It probably wasn't Tranströmer, was it? Nor was it Philip Roth? It never is. But they always mention him. He's the guy that never gets it. Apparently he's nonchalant about it, doesn't feel it's any special honour—he feels American literature has towered over world literature for decades and that they don't need Swedish Nobels for justification. Maybe he's right. But it still sounds a bit arrogant, with a tinge of bitter disappointment. And, I would venture, it has something to do with his involvement with American literature—I doubt that he has read Tranströmer or Ku

On. Americans don't translate much, as Horace Engdahl, member of the Swedish academy has pointed out, they don't speak other languages much—and they're mostly not in any position to judge non-English literature (whereas most people, worldwide, read English-language literature—either in the original or in translation—which is one of the reasons why Philip Roth is so famous).

The race for the Nobel is no longer exciting, not where you are sitting, but over here, in the past last Sunday, we're still all very anxious to know. The writer chosen will enjoy immense rekindling of sales and translations worldwide, increased respectability and mentions, interviews, acknowledgment and critical response. But it doesn't last. It never does. In three or four months people will be going: "Tomas who?" Or "Did Philip Roth ever get it?" Or "Ko Un who?" (Am I right, was it Ko Un?) Oh, sure, a few nerds

still remember Elfriede Jelinek and Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio—and a few will remember Thursday's winner, but not many will be able to spell their names correctly and even fewer than that will be familiar with their work (although some will have bought it today—or tomorrow at the latest).

Because despite the good party, the good fun, the medals and the boatloads of cash—despite the respect, the myth-making qualities, the critical debates and the high-fallutin' rhetoric—we all know that literature isn't a competitive sport and nobody can tell you which books enlighten and which don't. Except for you, of course. But then again, you might wrong.

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PAGE 14

Accompanying the article is a large attention-grabbing photo of three important professional looking men. The caption reads, "Iceland's friends: Venky Vishwanathan, Jan Olsson, and Hakan Wohlin from Deutsche Bank say Icelandic companies will come out strong from the down-swing."

The story of how the Icelandic media TOTALLY FAILED is a sad one.

PAGE 6

Many of those responsible for the collapse have had their huge debts written off, while common folks with far smaller debt face the prospect of being carried out of their houses.

What's the deal with that?

PAGE 24

Often it is when you are confronted with the audience that the performance reveals itself, and from there the piece will continue to grow and develop.

Dancer Erna Ómarsdóttir just can't quit.

PAGE 8

So my explanation of their success is that many voters thought that they could, by voting for the best party, show their dislike of the established parties—at low risk.

Political Scientist Ólafur Harðarson explains the success of the Best Party.

PAGE 10

After watching our country suffer a meltdown induced by half-witted Gordon Gekko wannabes, I sense that a large majority of Icelanders think that the Independence Party can offer a soothing return to blissful ignorance.

Marvin Lee Dupree is really pissed off about stuff.

PAGE 16

We did not have any fans for the first three years or so.

The legendary S.H. Draumur got off to a slow start...

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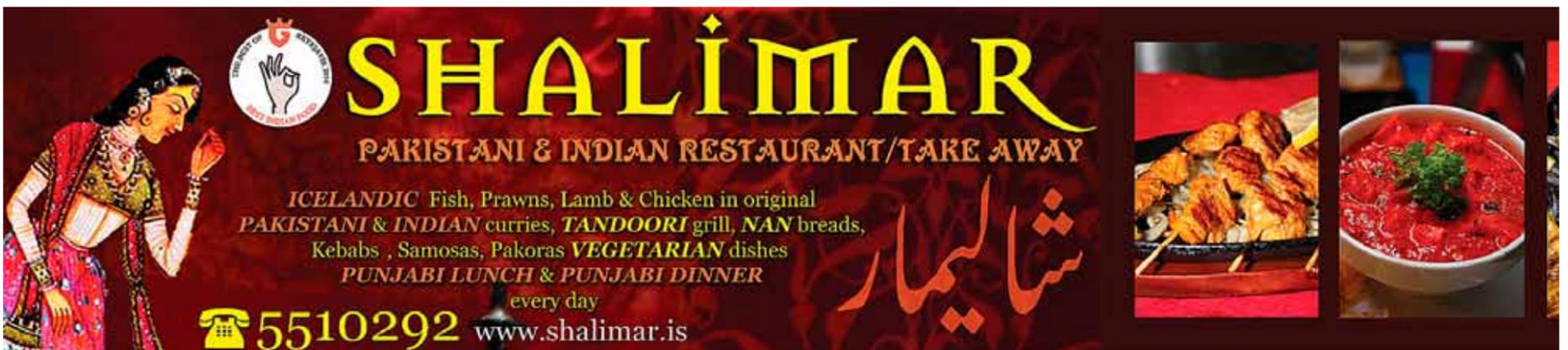
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