

FREE



102 REYKJAVÍK

THE MISSING PUZZLE



Sprengjuhöllin and Hjaltalín: Still Promising? • Bobby Fischer: Still Dead, Still Raising Havoc
Björk: Still Controversial • Icelanders: Still Racist • The Lonesome Traveller: Still Wandering

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The Reykjavík Grapevine

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www.grapevine.is

grapevine@grapevine.is

www.myspace.com/reykjavikgrapevine

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Editorial:

+354 540 3600 / editor@grapevine.is

Advertising:

+354 540 3605 / ads@grapevine.is

Publisher:

+354 540 3601 / publisher@grapevine.is

The Reykjavík Grapevine Staff

Publisher:

Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson

publisher@grapevine.is

Editor:

Sveinn Birkir Björnsson / birkir@grapevine.is

Assistant Editor:

Steinunn Jakobsdóttir / steinunn@grapevine.is

Staff Writer:

Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir / vala@grapevine.is

Contributing Writer:

Haukur Magnússon / haukur@grapevine.is

Ian Watson / www.ianwatson.org

Art Director:

Gunnar Þorvaldsson / gunni@grapevine.is

Photographer:

Gunnlaugur Arnar Sigurðsson

gulli@grapevine.is

Marketing Director:

Jón Trausti Sigurðarson / jontrausti@grapevine.is

Sales Director:

Aðalsteinn Jörundsson

adalsteinn@grapevine.is

Support Manager:

Oddur Óskar Kjartansson / oddur@grapevine.is

Distribution:

Þórir Gunnar Jónsson / thorir@grapevine.is

Proofreader:

Jane Victoria Appleton

Press releases:

listings@grapevine.is

Submissions inquiries:

editor@grapevine.is

Subscription inquiries:

+354 540 3605 / subscribe@grapevine.is

General inquiries:

grapevine@grapevine.is

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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').

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From the Editor's Chair

We have just survived February, the coldest, darkest month of the year. Every time we escape this gruelling period alive, and relatively unscathed, it is cause for celebration. So, take a seat by the bar and chuck down a few, and take solace in the fact that you still have 11 months to lead a happy life before February returns again. You find me pessimistic? Well, consider the fact that I am born in February. How do you like them apples?

Let's move on to something lighter. Like, the economy for instance. Everyone seems to agree that economy is going to shit, although opinions vary on whether this development should be blamed on the Icelandic krona, the sub-prime loan crises, Icelandic banking methods, post-heavy industry development hang-over, international

financial crises, or general shitty luck. Wherever you choose to assign blame, the fact remains that recession and lay-offs are just around the corner. Not much lighter, is it? Well, perhaps I just have not been able to get used to the idea that it's March already. Hell, the way things are going, I might as well predict this to be the year of permanent February. Cancel that drink, honey! I'll take the wait-and-see approach on any untimely celebrations for now.

As usual, this issue of the Grapevine is full of entertaining and uplifting (!) stories about life on the Devil's Island. Intellect finally seems to be prevailing in the endless saga of the Reykjavík domestic airport. We look at what lies (or could lie) ahead. The Icelandic Music Awards are soon to be

handed out. We talk to the most promising prospects. We also explain the havoc that lays ahead in the continuous soap opera that is (or more accurately, was) the life (and death) of Bobby Fisher. Stay tuned as the story develops.

In addition, we bring give you a detailed account of what to expect in form of art and culture in the coming month. Looks like the only thing that could keep February at bay is a copy of the Grapevine.



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Sour Grapes

Say your piece, voice your opinion, send your letters to letters@grapevine.is.

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am a 49-year-old Sri Lankan bank employee interested in exchanging ideas through correspondence with a like-minded Icelander. With a view to having my pen pal request published I visited the websites of several leading Icelandic newspapers, but unfortunately, most of them are in Icelandic. I am sending this email to give your newspaper a try. So, if you possibly could publish my request in your newspaper, my details are as follows:

Name: Bandula Idamegama
 Age: 49
 Marital Status: Single
 Sex and sexual orientation: Male, straight
 Interests: Intercultural - learning, foreign languages, reading, correspondence, global governance and environmental issues, trade union education, civil society activism etc, etc.

Postal Address:
 Bandula Idamegama
 National Savings Bank
 Meegoda
 Sri Lanka
 E-mail : manager.meegoda@nsb.lk

It would be gratefully appreciated, if this request of mine is published in your newspaper. Thank you in advance for your kindness in this regard.

Yours sincerely,
 Bandula Idamegama

*Dear Bandula,
 May your mailbox be flooded with letters from like minded Icelanders of straight sexual orientation.
 Editor*

Dear Sir,

I just read the letter from one of your readers in the current issue, i think here name was Jessica but i am not quite sure about it. I got very sad reading it as she, when she finally decided to move here, had no good experiences here at all. I moved myself more than 5 years ago and though my relationship with Iceland and the Icelanders has had its ups and downs i am still in love with the country and with an Icelander (who does great making up for some other sheep-heads, i admit it).

Well, maybe because i got in touch with the language at the age of 18 and as my mother tongue is German, at least the language part was never a big issue for me, at least not in a humiliating way. As i have to admit being very lucky being it this certainly advanced position, i can only offer my help. Currently i am taking a teachers degree for German and (if the ministry of education co-operates) Icelandic for foreigners at the university of Iceland. It would be a pleasure for me trying to find some time to meet and i will do my best to fulfill request regarding the system of this hidden language as well as trying to figure out job ads. If you think i might save a relationship here you could kindly forward this letter or print it in you next issue, thank you.

Kveðjur, best regards, Schöne Grüsse & hej dá!
 Korinna

*Dear Korinna,
 That was kind of you. Now If you have a moment to spare, I'd like to tell you all about my own problems.*

Hello,

My Name is Arne Jantos, I am from Germany. I just read about the plannend or even startet demolition of old houses and big aereas of rekvjavik, and I am really apaled about this really bad news.

Just after the flooding of the Karahnjukar, what was also a badbad news for me and the reputation as a country of pure nature (what makes thousands of people come every year to visit island), the council of reykjavik starts to destroy old houses, the history of a capital, the culturall live, which is really unique.

I've been twice in iceland, as a visitor, cause of the two really unique things there is in this land: the absolute fantastic natur, wich will be slowly destroyed by the flooding plans for the whole country, and because of the culturall live in reykjavik, the absolutly great music scene their, and I really love the bar: the sircus at the klappastigur 30. It's a shame that this all will be destroyed soon to bild some big shopping malls and so on.

I would have written much more an d more detailed, but my english isn't goog enough to express my really really big anger about that all.

It seems to me the two visits were mayby my last ones.
 sincerely, Arne Jantos

*Dear Arne,
 I am grateful for your letter, and while your English may suck, you speak the international language anger just fine. Your feelings are shared by many others, but unfortunately, few of them are in a position to anything about it.
 Editor*

Dear Editor,

I am looking for people with special talents. Some of them might be really sick and urgently need my blood transfusion. Said talents may include: telepathy, flying, extraordinary strength and the ability to travel through time or physical objects. If you, or readers of your magazine know of people with similar talents, please contact me at mohinder@primat-echpaper.com

Dr. Mohinder Suresh

*Dear Dr. Suresh,
 Surely, you must be joking.
 Editor*



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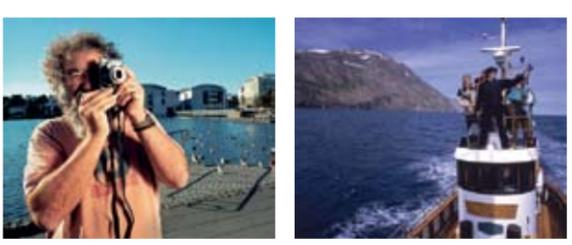
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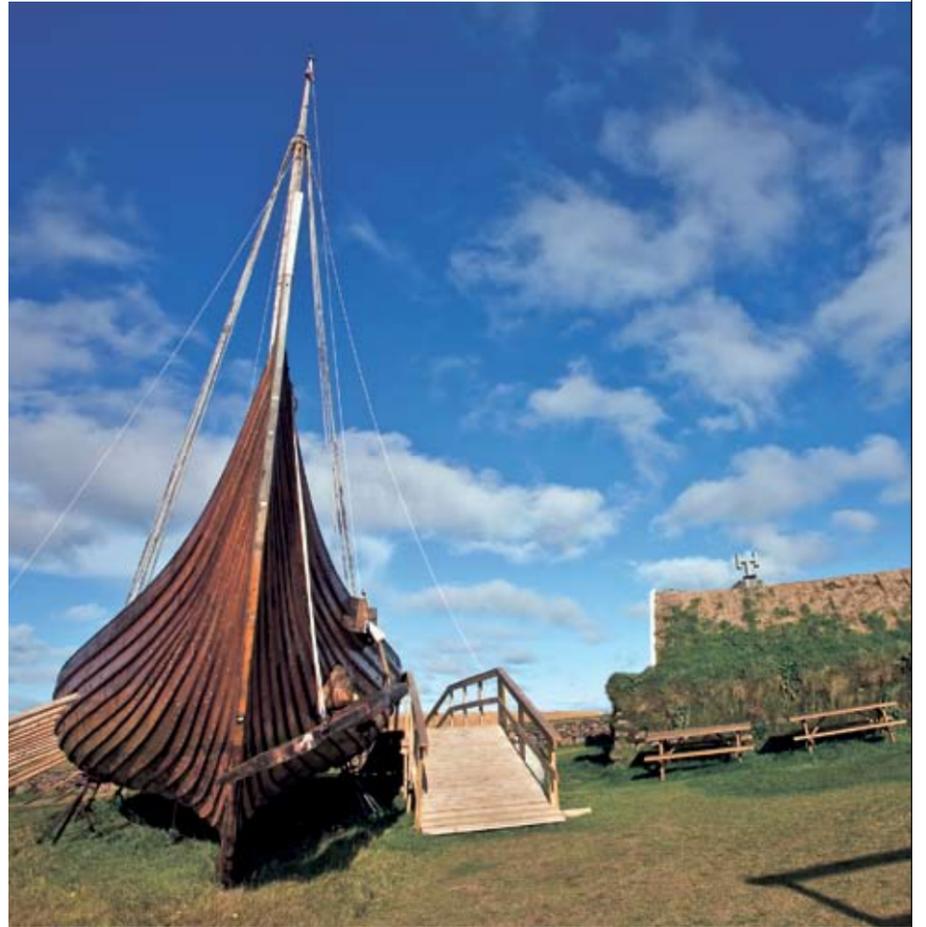
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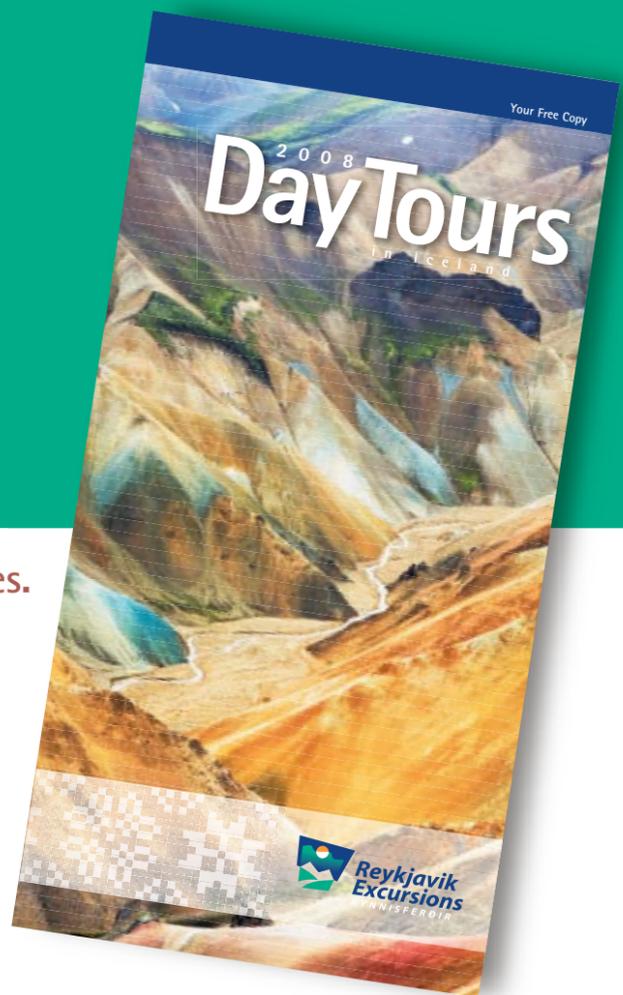


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“Over the past 10 years, things have changed for the worse,” says Dane Magnússon, founder of the The Anti-Racist Movement. Photo by GAS



Anti-racists Unite

“Many people think racism is not a real problem in Iceland, but it is quite obvious that there are groups out there that go around town and attack foreigners without any motive. We know of plenty of incidents but, as I said, most of them are never reported to the police.”

Dane Magnússon immigrated to Iceland from Jamaica in 1991 when he was 12 years old. Over the years, he has experienced increased prejudice against immigrants in Iceland and wants to see a more open discussion on immigrant issues. He took matters into his own hands and is today the chairman and one of five founders of the Anti-Racist Movement, an independent organisation set to fight against racism, discrimination and, in particular, physical violence directed against foreigners living in Iceland.

For how long has the Anti-Racist Movement been operating?

Since September 2006. That's when we got permission to found the organisation and decided to try and see how people would respond to the idea. We had talked about it for over a year and, before we promoted it to the public, approximately 100 people had joined the organisation, which has grown steadily ever since. Today we have about 350 members and we still have lots of applications to look at. [To become a member, one has to fill out an application and have an interview]. Many people think the majority of members are foreigners, but that's not the case. About 30% are immigrants and 70% Icelanders, many of whom have lived abroad and know how it is to be a foreigner.

What encouraged you to start the organisation?

Our goal is to fight against racism and prejudice in society and while prejudice increases we will be there to protest things we find unjust and discriminating. We want to see how we can improve the situation before it gets even worse. What we have aimed at mostly is to offer our support. Foreigners who've experienced injustice come to us because they don't know where to get help. These are people who have been victims of racist attacks out on the streets or harassment in the workplace. Many of them are also afraid to go to the police because they feel that they can't trust the police. Therefore, many violent acts are never reported. What we are trying to do is to change this way of thinking. We try to build up trust, give advice and urge people to report crimes.

We also try to get people's stories told in the media so the public can be more aware of the things happening in society. We have worked mostly with the newspapers DV and 24 stundir and although the media coverage is improving, many news media could do much better. If I name one example, a foreigner was stabbed downtown recently. It happened on a Sunday morning and we wrote about the attack on our website but the story wasn't published in the papers before Wednesday, I think. We found this remarkable, because we know that if it had been the other way around, the story would probably have been on the cover the next day. The media coverage needs to be fair.

Many people think racism is not a real prob-

lem in Iceland, but it is quite obvious that there are groups out there that go around town and attack foreigners without any motive. We know of plenty of incidents but, as I said, most of them are never reported to the police.

You've lived in Iceland for the past 17 years. Do you sense that racism in Iceland is increasing?

Yes. When I moved to Iceland, I first lived in a small country town where people quickly learned to recognise me and got to know me. When I moved to Reykjavík eleven years ago, the experience was quite different. I've been called all sorts of degrading names, often because people think I don't understand the language. I used to answer back but don't really bother anymore. Sometimes I even wish I didn't know the language so I wouldn't have to listen to all the things people have to say about foreigners. But I'm glad I learned Icelandic, because then I can understand what's going on and I encourage people to learn the language.

Over the past 10 years, things have changed for the worse. Iceland has many more immigrants today than it had 10 years ago. There are more rich people today than before but at the same time inflation has gone up and living in Iceland has become more expensive. People get angry and immigrants become easy targets. I can understand, in a way, that Icelanders are worried, and I know many people think that if too many foreigners come to the country it could lead to unemployment. But that's not how things work. Foreigners can't just come and take their jobs. There has rather been a shortage of workforce. Also, it doesn't solve anything to attack one or two immigrants downtown.

One thing that some people tend to point out is that many companies look at immigrants as cheap labour and pay them low salaries because they can get away with it. They are concerned that by being willing to work for a lower pay, immigrants keep the salaries down.

Yeah, I've heard this before and think it is important to keep an eye on it. It's true that many foreigners are willing to work for less pay. They come to Iceland, with perhaps nothing, so they are always making a profit. To fix a problem like this, the government, the Immigration Office and the Directorate of Labour need to work together. But the society has changed in recent years. Today, there are mostly immigrants who work the poorly paid jobs, such as in fish processing or janitorial work. There aren't that many Icelanders who want these jobs anymore, but someone has to do it. There are around 20,000 immigrants living in Iceland and they sure don't come here for the snow. They come here to create a life for themselves and also to assist Icelanders with various projects. I contacted Statistics Iceland to inquire about the number of construction companies and found out that in 1999, there were around 900 companies but in 2007 the

number had gone up to almost 2,500. Many of these companies rely heavily on foreign workers.

People need to ask themselves how things would be if 20,000 foreigners packed up and left tomorrow. How would the situation be then? How much tax do they pay? These are important questions to think about. It is easy to say “fucking foreigner, go home” but how would the society cope if everyone did just that? Icelanders are intelligent people so I'm really surprised that some are so short sighted.

Racist groups like 'Iceland against Poles' and 'Iceland for Icelanders' have been popping up recently. Many young people are joining or even starting these groups and aren't afraid to express their hatred, especially on the Internet. What do you feel about this development?

It's really sad to see that young people think like this and it is important to do something now before this becomes a more serious problem. Many teachers have contacted us and asked us how to handle issues like these. What I think the schools lack the most is educational material to help children get to know different cultures. We are working on a programme to use in the classrooms, which we hope to get approved. But as it is with everything in Iceland, things take time and cost money.

Are you satisfied with the way the government has dealt with issues like violence and prejudice against immigrants? What would you like to see change?

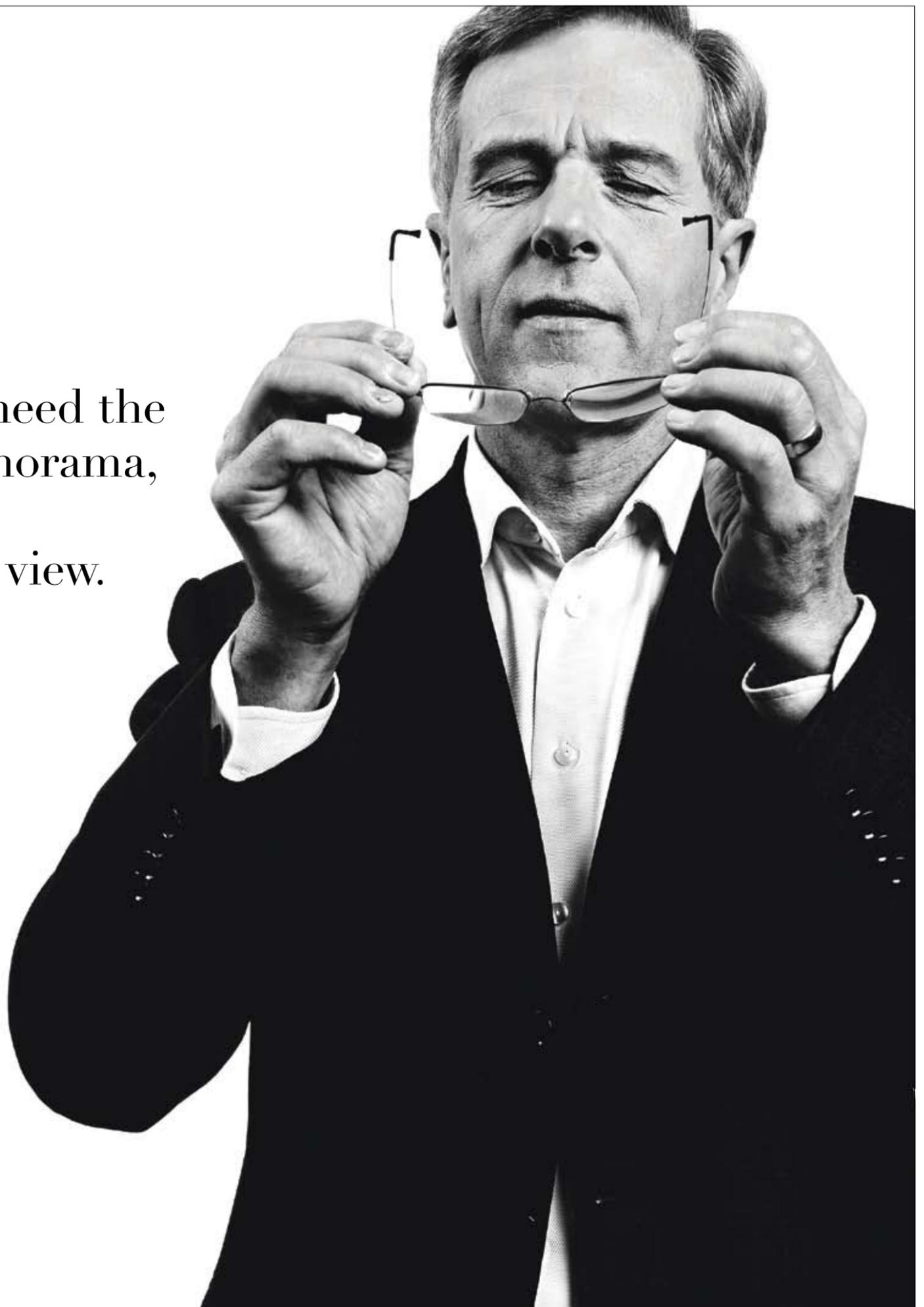
No, not at all. Although Paul F. Nikolov [of the Leftist Green Movement] has tried to do his best, it is important that the authorities intervene right away. The Ministry of Education needs to intervene. The government needs to discuss this problem seriously and, while doing so, they should look to neighbouring countries, see how they have dealt with the issue and learn from their mistakes before things get out of hand. The most important thing is to look at the big picture: stop saying that Iceland doesn't need immigrants because that's just not true. The numbers don't lie. I think everyone needs to be more open and try to get to know one another without judging beforehand. It seems everyone has an opinion on the matter but instead of spending the time on hatred, people should try to find positive solutions so everyone can be satisfied.

The Anti-Racist Movement has a meeting facility at the Intercultural Centre. The easiest way to contact them is through their website, www.antirasista.net.

By Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

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Sparing the Rod



Gabrielle Guðbjartsson moved to Iceland from Brooklyn, New York. She works as a teacher and plans to do her part to make sure Icelandic children receive proper upbringing.

When I was 9 years old my mother put me in jail. She did it after my brothers and sisters and I tried our luck at the five finger discount. She came home, told us to get in the car, drove straight to the La Palma Police Station and told us to wait for her as she talked to an officer. Ten minutes later all four of us, my older brother and two sisters and I, were locked in a cell with an exposed toilet and a dirty cot. My mother sternly said, "If you continue to live like a thief, this is where you'll end up." She then turned around and left, returning thirty minutes later to four traumatised, yet enlightened children. That was the first and last time I ever stole anything in my life.

I share that story not to indict my parents with charges of cruel and unusual punishment, but rather to show how serious they were about teaching their children a very crucial lesson in life. As a mother and teacher I constantly observe the behaviour of children around me. While living here and experiencing the behaviour of Icelandic children on a daily basis, I see that the respectful fear that was so unforgettably instilled in my mind is lacking. It also disappoints me to see such a deficiency of etiquette and politeness in the way they interact with each other as well as with authority figures. Which leads me to question: what is the reason behind the lack of discipline and etiquette of so many Icelandic children?

The biggest clue I got into answering this complicated question was given to me straight from the horse's mouth. Last week my students had to give oral presentations on their family structures. As the students shared information on what kinds of things their families could do to improve, about 60% of them said that they wished their parents didn't work as much and were at

home more often. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that in order to raise your child with examples of positive behaviour and courtesy you have to be present in their lives enough for them to see it. One of the most famous verses from the Bible on child-rearing is Proverbs 13:24: "He who spares the rod hates his child, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him." What makes this verse so simple and true is that it reaffirms that loving your child involves the act of teaching them how to behave and treat other people in a consistent manner. Although other factors such as peer pressure, TV, music and video games, can easily add to the lack of discipline among Icelandic children, I do believe that the absence of the parental figures in the home is the biggest contributing factor to this collective problem.

Since the Columbine High School shootings in 1999, the media revels in sensationalising the violent and unpredictable behaviour of American school children. However, it's usually a few "bad seeds" that are at the centre of all the controversy. When I taught in Brooklyn, New York, for three years I definitely experienced the "bad seed" behaviour, but the majority of my students showed respect for teachers and other authority figures around them. Most kids understand their purpose in attending and excelling in school because the American culture associates this with success and power. When I arrived at my classroom door every morning, my students would line up before I opened my mouth. They knew that they couldn't enter the classroom unless it was done quietly and in an orderly manner. These were routines that weren't foreign to them. They had done this since kindergarten. There was a legacy of school behaviours that I didn't have to teach and I appre-

ciated that.

In my experience I can honestly say that I was surprised certain school behaviours were not already in place when I started teaching here. Students would often put their feet on their desks, would come into the classroom talking loudly and would constantly have to be reminded of their roles as students. I oftentimes get the question, "Why?" and immediately think, "Do you know who you're talking to?" The interesting thing is that this behaviour is a silent type of rebellion. It's not always loud and obnoxious, but more stubborn and uncooperative. Although this type of dissonance mixed with an absence of basic manners does not always make for a very enjoyable learning environment, I have to think to myself, if it really does take a village to raise a child, then let me be the first to do my part.

Creatures of Comfort



Marie-Alexandra Hertell hails from Puerto Rico. She is fond of Icelandic nature.

I've often wondered how self-proclaimed 101-ers would survive outside Reykjavík, where stiletto heels and converse sneakers would leave toes frostbitten. It really is as if Reykjavík is its own artistic enclave of a country, where Mt. Esja inspires admiration of Mother Nature but no real interaction. City dwellers would rather write songs about it than actually set out to explore the dramatic landscape. Let me begin by stating the obvious, that this is a generalisation, but in many of my interactions with Icelanders living in Reykjavík I've found that they have only a very basic knowledge of the wild and turbulent landscape that surrounds them.

On asking several Icelanders what their favourite part of the country was, the responses varied from Þingvellir to Ásbyrgi. However, asked when they had last visited their cherished site, all replied the same: "I was a young kid. My parents took me." I was really shocked at the oblivion to which vast natural treasures were relegated. Mountains became faded memories with creeping spider webs. The distances are relatively short for one to be able to escape the hustle and bustle of the rúntur and the every day routine. But it seems as though no one is interested in escaping. These creatures of comfort would rather drive their car down Laugavegur all weekend.

Once when I invited some Reykjavík friends to the nearby town of Hveragerði for a day trip, they were warned there was a hike involved but that their efforts would be rewarded with a dip in a hot river that sinuously seduced the fumarole-ridden landscape. When I went to pick up my friends they were wearing rather club-inspired attire and - I kid you not - fancy "these better not get any mud on them" boots. I wondered whether

they had ever been hiking before. I kindly mentioned that their expensive shoes would lose their spunkiness after an hour's hike. We actually had to go buy shoes because my partying pals didn't have a single pair that would withstand dirt or any form of exercise. I began second guessing myself about the trip until we finally arrived at our destination and these rúntur obsessed people seemed like children let out in the wild for the first time. It was great to see the deep joy they felt at being reintroduced to their free spirits. Grass-stains were quickly forgotten and even encouraged.

I know it is really easy to develop a routine and hard to let go and live life to the full. It happens to all of us. So I suggest a trick: behave like a tourist. Create in your mind the ability to think like a foreigner and explore your own backyard. It isn't necessary to always go to Sweden or Denmark to have a holiday. Internal tourism allows for an exploration of one's culture and roots while being reminded of the trivialities that thrive in the city (such as those really expensive neon pink jeans you were eyeing). I practice this myself when I am in my country. I purposefully travel everywhere as much as I can. When I lived in Puerto Rico full-time I tried to leave the capital every other week whenever possible. I would purposefully throw my comfort zone out the window and spontaneously get in the car and just go. And yes, I know Reykjavík is wicked and there are galleries, concerts, and the same bars with the same people, but I think it is a necessary dose of energy that rejuvenates and connects you with yourself and your country.

The other day I was talking to one of my friends who I'd kidnapped from his beloved couch and he proudly showed me all these spectacular

pictures of Iceland. He thanked me and told me he knows he thinks like a tourist and loves looking at himself and Iceland at a distance as an outsider looking in. I think I might convert these creatures of comfort one at a time. It's a great excuse for me to discover more nooks and crannies of the disturbingly beautiful Icelandic countryside.



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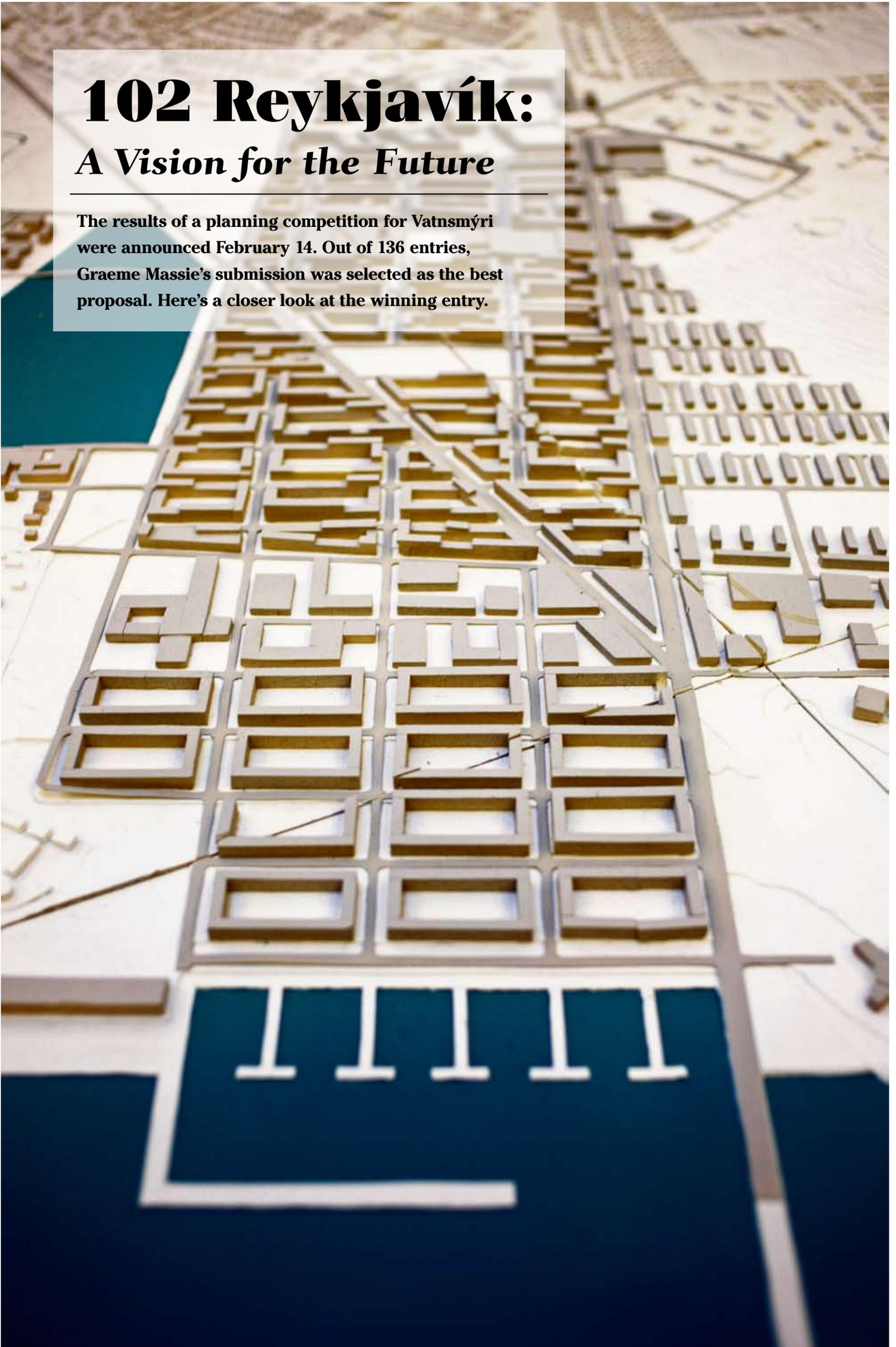
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102 Reykjavík:

A Vision for the Future

The results of a planning competition for Vatnsmýri were announced February 14. Out of 136 entries, Graeme Massie's submission was selected as the best proposal. Here's a closer look at the winning entry.



Vatnsmýri – An Introduction

Vatnsmýri is a 150 hectare area which is currently occupied by the Reykjavík domestic Airport. Located a few minutes walk from the commotion of the city centre, the airport was initially built as a military air base by British occupying forces during WWII. It has been a fact of life in Reykjavík ever since. Although the airport was considered to be a fair way out of town in the 1940s, Reykjavík's expansion from a village of 45,000 at the time, to a modern urban city with nearly 200,000 inhabitants in the Greater Reykjavík Area, has radically altered that reality.

Urban sprawl has troubled Reykjavík planning authorities for a long time. As the population increases, the city's periphery extends further away from the city centre. With an emphasis on sustainable development and more ecologically responsible city planning, problems created by sprawling cities – such as traffic congestion, waste from excessive commuting and expensive public transit – have become particularly relevant.

For more than 20 years, people have discussed and debated the question of whether the airport should be relocated in order to make room for urban development, and the question was one of the central topics of the last two city elections. In 2002, a new detailed land use plan for Reykjavík was approved, which called for a substantial reduction of the airport by 2016, and a full departure by 2024, with the aim of using the land for development. In order to begin preparations for the gradual phase-out of the airport, the City of Reykjavík agreed to organise a two-stage international planning competition, which called for new ideas for the future of Vatnsmýri, in 2005. After some initial resistance and litigation, the competition was finally launched in March 2007.

Looking For That Special Something

"We were looking for a vision for the city," says Steve Christer, architect and member of the jury, when I ask him about the goal of the competition. "We were looking for ideas on how an area like this should develop, looking for things to make Vatnsmýri special. There really was no vision for Vatnsmýri. People have been debating this for nearly 25 years, but there has never been any vision for what the area might look like. Now, we finally have something to develop critically."

Christer is no stranger to dealing with politically charged planning controversies after his firm won the competition to design the Reykjavík City Hall in 1987. He maintains that although planning the area is quite complicated, it still requires answers to specific, simple questions like how people should get in and out of there and what sort of lifestyle people should lead there. "People tried very hard to understand the place, but very few managed to come to grips with it. It is a very complex place," he adds.

A total of 136 entries were submitted for the competition and, after careful delegation, the jury declared Graeme Massie, Stuart Dickson, Alan Keane and Tim Ingleby from Graeme Massie Architects in Edinburgh, Scotland, as the winners. The jury's remarks stated that the scheme had the qualities required as a starting point for the future development of Vatnsmýri and offers a clear and convincing response to the requirements of the competition brief. More importantly, it also says that while transport has not been fully resolved in the proposal, it appears to be robust enough to accommodate further developments and address external realities.

Massie is no stranger to Icelandic planning competitions. He was awarded first prize in a planning competition for a new vision for Downtown Akureyri in 2004. When I ask him if he holds the key to the nation's heart when it comes to planning, he answers, "I think there are similarities between Iceland and Scotland. Perhaps most importantly with regards to the competition successes is the idea of landscape. Both countries have renowned natural landscapes, which can be inspiring, and as such we find the relationship between landscape and building to be fundamental to much of our work. In our proposals for Reykjavík, a landscape infrastructure connects all areas from 101, through Vatnsmýri to the coast. This landscape is continually changing and ranges from a large central park with new lakes, to formal gardens and coastal paths. These areas are important in providing an escape from what will be a dense neighbourhood."

The Missing Puzzle

When I ask Christer what it was that attracted him to this proposal, he explains that many of the entries were fragile because of their complexity.

If one aspect does not work, the whole scheme falls apart. Massie approached things differently. "He dared to be simple. He dared to be clear. It is a strong skeleton that you can mess about with, but it will still keep its shape. You can change it here, or you can change it there, but the plan will still hold," he says, pointing to a poster of the proposal.

Other members of the jury echo Christer's words. City Council member and head of the jury, Dagur B. Eggertsson, says the strength of the proposal is how simple and effortless it is, drawing on time-proven, classic schemes in Reykjavík planning. Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir, another member of the jury and City Council, says the proposal's basis on classic forms that still allow for flexibility was appealing. "To me it felt like the missing puzzle, and I thought it would fit our city and its future especially well."

Put simply, the proposal takes an area that is roughly outlined by the University to the west, Öskjuhlíð to the east, the Lake to the north and the ocean to the south, and replicates certain elements in the surroundings to create an almost-familiar feel to the plan. The public park, Hjóm-skálagarðurinn, is extended southwards and a new pond established as the focus of Vatnsmýri surrounded by new buildings, arranged in a grid that duplicates street plans for the old Þingholt neighbourhood. The principal development area is in a strip between the extended parallels of Baronstígur and Snorrabraut from Þingholt to Fossvogur. A diagonal axis cuts this strip and connects it directly to the city centre. Additional housing is on the flanks of Öskjuhlíð and north of Skerjafjörður and extends the University of Iceland campus to the new pond, while the main transport line from east to west in the city is lead through a tunnel beneath the area. It is genius in its simplicity.

The simplicity of the plan allows for a gradual approach and future revisions as need dictates. "The proposal could be described as a framework," says Graeme Massie. "For the master plan to be successful it must be robust and should be able to accommodate change over time. We will need to consult with all the stakeholders in the area to ensure that their needs are fully addressed in the plan." He adds, "The Vatnsmýri area is of huge importance to the ongoing development of Reykjavík. Cities now compete globally for business and of course tourism, and it is rare for such global cities to have such an area of land right in the city centre. The development of Vatnsmýri should provide Reykjavík with an alternative to 101 as a desirable location to live, work and play."

The Future of the Airport

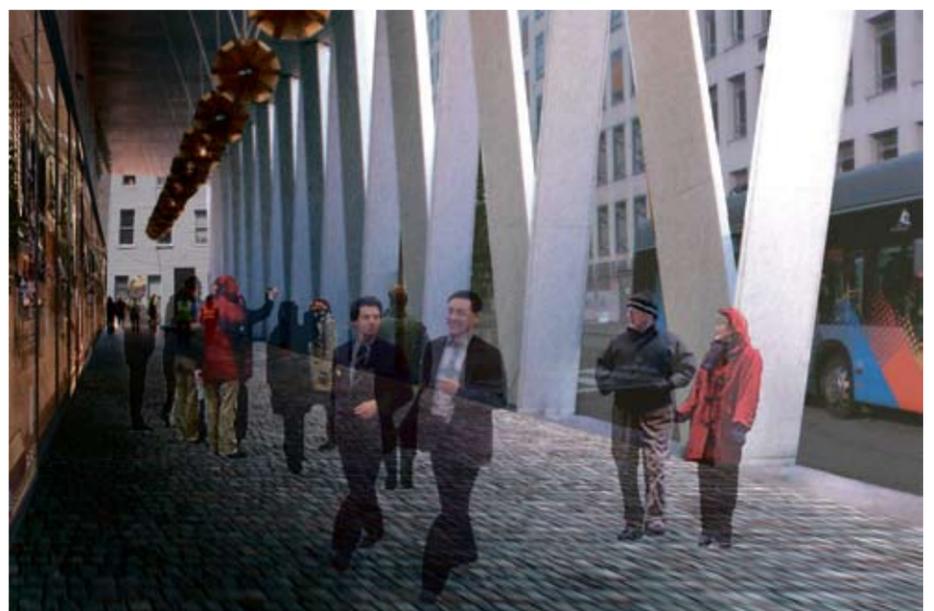
Following the results of the competition, Stuart Massie has been appointed as a consultant for the development of Vatnsmýri and the city has established a steering group that will oversee the future of the area. As of now, no decision has been made on when or how the airport will be relocated, and the City Council majority has stated that no decision will be made this term, as necessary research of available options has still not been concluded. However, work will begin as early as this year on peripheral locations that will not affect the airport in its current form.

According to Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir, the winning proposal is not binding for the future development of Vatnsmýri, but she states that the proposal must nevertheless be the baseline for future plans, as there was wide and important agreement on it." Dagur B. Eggertsson agrees, stating that the proposal serves as a good foundation to work from. "I believe that we should use the momentum right now to support the development of the overall vision as well as looking at the detailed implementation of specific areas," he adds.

While Christer acknowledges that we might still have to wait a few years before developments really begin, time is on our side. "I think it is positive that we can use this time to make sure that we do things correctly. There are still problems that need to be solved. We have ten years to make it better."

An exhibition of the 16 awarded proposals in the Vatnsmýri planning competition is on display in Háskólatorg at the University of Iceland through March.

Opposite page: Large scale model of the winning proposal. This page: Top, Master plan for the winning proposal. Below: Imagined street shots from Vatnsmýri



Högni Egilsson

“There was a kind of mantra following the record which was that ‘more is the new less.’ Just really not holding back with ideas about letting things have wiggle room, not some kind of minimalism. We were really trying to go as big as possible.”

So, you're nominated as songwriter and singer of the year at the IMAs. Hjaltalín, your band, was also nominated for song and record of the year, as well as the Brightest Hope award. But how do you respond to the nominations personally? Do you hold one award in higher regard than the others?

No, not really. We were abroad when we heard the news, so it wasn't like I was watching the news and heard Páll Magnússon saying my name, it wasn't like that. I think it's kind of strangely funny that I was nominated as singer of the year. It's something that comes as a bit of a surprise, and is sort of... not something I would have expected a year and a half ago.

Why's that?

No it's just that, this is the kind of nomination that the big-time singers get; Björgvin and Páll Óskar, Bubbi and Garðar Þór Cortes and so on. It's funny to single me out as a singer because I've never really seen myself as such. I'm in a choir, and was in one in high school for a long time, and I know that, you know, not everyone thought it was really cool to be in the choir at MH.

Not cool?

No. I mean, yeah it was of course really cool, you know, but naturally there were some hotshots who made fun of it, including some guys like the guys in Sprengjuhöllin. It's damn good to have this nomination for their sake, to sort of make fun of them.

When I interviewed the band right before Airwaves last year, your bassist, Guðmundur Óskar, said that the size of your group explains to a certain extent why your songs are so long and contain so many diverse chapters. You compose and arrange for all these instruments and this big group, which must be a challenging task. Do you try to manage beforehand the length or size of the arrangement or song?

Not exactly. I don't think it's completely accurate to say that the length of the songs correlates to the number of members; it's not pandering to that number of people, having the song as long as possible. It's mostly just thickening the web of sound. The number of instruments gives more options in creating a varied musical texture. It doesn't have a lot to do with length. It's not like, ok now we have to have a chapter for the bassoon.

But you are influenced by the musicians when you're creating a song. It's not like you come in with a concrete plan and say, “Ok, I've written a song, it's six minutes long and you are going to do this.”

It varies. The easiest method in all this is writing notes. Of course it's possible that something great and original will come up if people are put together for some time in a group and they make something without having decided beforehand what they're going to do, but that also calls for a kind of communal thought process that takes time to develop and ripen. It's not a very prolific work process to have everyone somehow conspiring. But with notes or something, you've laid some kind of plan that you can build on. Then it works as a kind of frame, both for the musicians and the song itself. The instrumentalists can then take this line that's been decided and make something out of it and spin something around it. It's not as though I write notes for everyone in the band. It's mostly just coming up with something to spark something off. I see it that way rather, that the notes and the arrangements are just to ignite something, and out of that we make a base and from that we can build even further.

Is there a song on your new record that you're particularly happy with? Something that was

maybe especially memorable to write?

I like the idea of hand-crafting, of the handiwork of a song, or some kind of handiwork in art. And when things work on paper really well, and when things are put together in a really, well I won't say complicated, but in a somewhat elaborate way. Like when there are several groups of instruments put together, and out of it comes a kind of a thick web, a web of sound, which is kind of difficult to make, but with the right devices and the right technical execution it's possible. You have maybe drums, bass, guitar, violin, singing, clarinet, bassoon, brass, a choir and this thick sound comes out of it, and nothing gets tangled, there's a trick to that too. But I think it works especially well in one song on the record, which is called Selur. There's a pretty thick sound, with a choir and a variety of instruments, and there's a kind of raging power in it. There are several songs like that, not all, but there are some. There are about five songs on the record that have that sound.

And does that come about with just constant working and reworking the songs? Aiming for these large and intricate weavings?

Yeah, it was a little bit like that. There was a kind of mantra following the record which was that “more is the new less.” Just really not holding back with ideas about letting things have wiggle room, not some kind of minimalism. We were really trying to go as big as possible.

I understand that you get most of your lyrics from sources outside the band. Is it right to assume then that the music is written before and perhaps with little regard to the lyrics?

Yes, the music is written before the lyrics, and consequently the music does not really stem from the lyrics. Instead, the words become essentially just another layer, a specific timbre on top of everything else, all the other colours. Which I think is in itself a kind of interesting concept. There's so much going on, and always some lines going all over the place, so somehow the attention doesn't get directed towards the lyrics, instead they blend really well into this world of sound.

How do you view their importance then, the words in your songs?

I think it's important that they work, that they sound good. This episode with meaning in lyrics, or some kind of narrative thing, that has just been taken out. It was kind of considered on an aesthetic level. We couldn't put a lot of drive into meaning in the text that was never there.

So what happens now, in the aftermath of recently releasing your first album? Have you started working on the next one?

No, not at all. It would be great to put out another record right away. It's kind of uncool to wait a really long time and to make a big deal out of it, always to be making some kind of masterpiece. Mostly it's just really fun to work with a lot of instruments, to have a twelve-person group playing some chords. And writing for that, and conducting it, and recording it, it's just so much fun. A lot more fun than some acoustic guitar record with a couple of melodies. I think it's really amazing when that works, like some musicians who do that, like Ólóf Arnalds and others, who are just alone but somehow manage to expand that, you know, to widen that form. It's really impressive, but it's something that I haven't really mastered yet. I think in the meanwhile I'm just going to try to work on the other route that I've taken, try to tackle that in the interim.

By Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir



Bergur Ebbi Benediktsson

“I would start with the disclaimer that it all revolves around music in the end, even music with lyrics, but not just talking.”

I'll start by congratulating you on your nomination to the Icelandic Music Awards.

Yes, thanks. I was very pleased to hear of it, and, you know, I was a bit surprised.

Were you?

Well yeah, don't you have to say that? To be perfectly honest I haven't really been following Icelandic music very closely. I was kind of excited to hear the nominations now, and had waited for it, but I really have very little by way of comparison, like what music has been getting awards and what hasn't. I've also been stuck in a lot of older stuff, and have been listening to a lot of that, and haven't really been paying attention to what's just come out and what's considered fresh and what's not.

How do you view your success as a band then, comparatively? What's your reference?

I'm actually really pleased with everything. I feel that most people who are writing about us understand our music close to the way we intended it. And if not, then still not in any negative way, they're still finding something positive that maybe we hadn't even considered. I have complete faith in criticism of music and of art generally. I don't think that artists have the last word with their work – that's a big misconception that a lot of artists have. But most people still seem to understand our stuff close to the way we intended it.

Does that apply to your lyrics too then?

Yes. Especially, actually, because despite everything, although a lot of the stuff is really thought-out, a lot of it is also quite light-hearted, and not intended to have any great meaning. But then it's also just really fun when someone else puts meaning into it. It fits with what I said before: you don't have the final word or the decisive perspective on your work.

Do you see a divide between those fans who are interested in your lyrics – or in you on a more highbrow level – and those who are interested in the more playful atmosphere surrounding your music?

I don't see a clear split, that these are two types. I think it mixes up a little bit. Sometimes people who enjoy lyrics don't want to listen only to the lyrics and sometimes the opposite. There's much more interest in the words than I think people realise. Páll Óskar said the other day that Icelanders just want to hear music that they can sing along to. It's maybe not a really deep intellectual interest in lyrics, but people somehow have more interest in the music when they start to recognise the words. That's exemplified in the fact that we have a harder time familiarising ourselves with music that is in different languages, that is, not in English or Icelandic. There are a lot of cultures whose music is sort of closed to us, and that is first and foremost because of the lyrics.

So you feel you've struck some sort of balance between the song's entertainment value and their more intellectual significance?

Yes, definitely. And that's also what we're really all about. This pure-intellectual stuff... it's not just that it's tiresome, but I think that in its essence it's not really sincere. If you're talking to a normal person, you can't separate the two: you have to be entertaining so that people will listen to you, and then you preferably have to have something to say, so you're not just some clown. The stuff that manages to become really timeless, and I'm not going to make any claims that what we're doing is going to become classic, because only time will tell, but I think that things become timeless if they have entertainment value for the moment, and then also if they leave something behind. It's like how sometimes it's said that when high culture and low culture mix, then you have classic material.

I read an interview you did recently in which you declared yourself to be on a personal crusade against irony. Maybe that was intended to be ironic.

No well, of course, it'd be great if I didn't have to say anything more than that. If that was the end of that. But no, no, I'm still actually pretty sincere about that, even if it was a little hyperbolic to put it that way. What I mean is; irony is just a rhetorical device, there isn't infinite wisdom stowed in it. But a certain double meaning in things, making people see things from two sides which you can sometimes achieve with irony by projecting some ridiculous alternative, is still a completely effective rhetorical device, but it's just one of a hundred. Those who put a lot of ambition into something like writing, or just anything, I think they discover very quickly that it's neither the first nor last device in the book. If you look at really excellent poets and such, they really aren't that ironic. Bob Dylan for example, if you look at his lyrics, and look past the fact that it's in his nature to be a kind of a sarcastic personality, to be so incredibly intellectual but at the same time a total brat, it's kind of a crazy contrast, but if you just listen to his lyrics, you see that there really is no sarcasm in the lyrics themselves.

After I read that, your song *Síðasta bloggfaersla ljóshærða drengsins* (The Blonde Boy's Last Blog Entry) immediately came to mind. I listened to it again and tried to imagine that you were being completely earnest, but I couldn't reconcile it. There is something lightly comical about it, I'm sure it's satirical.

It's pretty hard to start making distinctions about it, but it's supposed to be this guy who, well, it's like he's stepped out of his body and he sees how he acts and how he is, and is just articulating that. Of course he has misgivings about it but he's describing his approval of it in the song anyway. The idea is that he's not describing things that are, yes, essentially not good. He's sort of painted himself into a corner ideologically, shouted “Wolf! Wolf!” too often, it's that kind of statement. But he's also not saying that it's wonderful, he's actually rather frantic and scared, so I think in the end there isn't necessarily any irony in it. On the other hand it's true that by projecting this way of thinking, you know, I'm of course pointing to the fact that it's not good, but it's also not being said anywhere that it is good.

I've both seen myself and heard from others that you seem to enjoy talking to and the audience between songs at concerts. On *Sprengjuhöllin's* Myspace page it says you are responsible for “song, guitar and stories.” Do you enjoy talking about your music as much as you do playing it?

Yeah, it varies quite a bit though. I would start with the disclaimer that it all revolves around music in the end, even music with lyrics, but not just talking. There are some artists who have gotten ahead purporting to be musicians but spend all their time talking about how great they are. Rappers often end up doing that. No one knows the music, they just know how mouthy the artist is. But I think with rappers, and with everyone, that the music needs to be number one, two and three. When it's appropriate though, which is not always, I think it's often just as fun to talk about the music as to make it. At certain concerts, like when people are just sitting and listening, I feel like it's just as fun to talk about the songs and talk between songs and make a connection with the audience in that way as when the music is playing. But sometimes it's not applicable. I would put it this way; we would never ever come forward as a band and not play anything, just talk. That would never happen.

Except in an interview.

Well, yes.

By Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

Top of the Pop

The nominations for this year's Icelandic Music Awards were dominated by two of the year's most celebrated bands, Sprengjuhöllin, (four nominations), and Hjaltalín (five nominations). A Grapevine reporter sat down with the bands' respective librettist and songwriter to discuss life at the top of Reykjavík's charts.

CONCERT

Photo by GAS

Hjaltalín**Where:** NASA**When:** February 14, 2008

Dressed in their Sunday best, which in this case included top hats and tails, Hjaltalín took to the purple-lit stage at NASA in front of a dead silent crowd. With the dance floor occupied by chairs and the bordering wings crammed even tighter, the room appeared packed and tense. Warming up, Borko brought an unfocused simplicity of both lyrics and musicianship into a kind of hearty relevance but Ólóf Arnalds, making her post-maternal-leave debut, was almost impossible to follow over a sea of chatter coming from the bar.

With a sudden perky bounce, Hjaltalín launched into their set, the exultant exhibition of their first and recently released album, Sleepdrunk Seasons. Right from the outset it seemed clear that their music, regardless, is most effective, if not impressive, live. Their big-band sound is clean and wielded effectively so as to achieve not simply volume, but a kind of bigness.

At the opening notes of, and the words, "Goodbye July," there was a lively cheer and rustle through the crowd as people started stomping their feet and swaying feverishly from side to side. Though in some measure tiresomely optimistic, the song did stand on its own with a kind of catchy cohesion. It was an effect demonstrated in only a number of the songs, while a few, like the following Kveldúlfur, remained irksomely vague and unassertive.

The song I Lie deftly demonstrated the distinct charm and rustic depth in Högni's voice, which managed to fill an endless amount of space despite being accompanied by a comparatively cut down lineup of instruments. With a standing ovation, the night ended in as much excitement as it had begun. The enthusiasm seemed excessive, but not unwarranted for a well-played and skillfully executed set; limited only perhaps by its seemingly endless and indiscriminate optimism, but certainly not hindered by its exuberance.

By Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

CONCERT**Ólafur Arnalds****Where:** The Water Rats, London**When:** February 14, 2008

As Ólafur Arnalds and his four-piece ensemble trickled onto the stage of The Water Rats in London, something very rare happened - the entire audience risked a beer-soaked backside and got off their feet to sit down in some sort of act of recognition that this wasn't going to be your average gig with loud guitars and a sweaty drummer. Accordingly, the band arranged themselves in classical quartet style, complete with sheet music on stands, while Arnalds sat behind a battery of electronic equipment and a piano to perform.

'Fok', one of the evening's highlights, is typical of the music played by Arnalds; it has a simple, piano-based introduction consisting of single notes played in a slowly-evolving rhythmical manner with a harmonised riposte from the violins and cello, eventually building to a complex crescendo with synthesised percussion adding a modern feel to a piece of music that might otherwise sound at home on an old film noir soundtrack. Other tracks, or should we call them works, such as 'Himininn er að hrynja', show a slightly more thoughtful aspect to Arnalds' music with modern elements - sampled vocals and other percussion effects erupting from his laptop - becoming more prevalent, as is the case on much of '0040' and '3055'.

Like a classical recital, the evening's highlights are the art of composition and musicianship on display rather than individual songs. Arnalds' individual tracks do not stand out from one another easily, so the overall impression is one of restrained respect for making consistently palatable, classically-influenced music rather than wild admiration with arms flung in the air at a favourite song or chorus. The type of music Ólafur Arnalds plays won't win any awards or trouble the charts in any way, but it certainly made people do something rarely seen at a gig - stop completely and listen to every note in near-silence.

By Ben H. Murray

THEATRE**Kommúnan****Where:** Borgarleikhúsið**When:** March 4, 2008

It's the all too familiar scene: naked over oatmeal, the lesbian airing out her yeast infection in the kitchen.

"There's nothing wrong or ugly about this!" she shouts defensively, surrounded on two sides by gawking audience members on Vesturport's elaborate tree-house stage.

To fans of Lukas Moodysson's Swedish comi-drama Tilsammans, on which the play is not so loosely based, the scene is in fact startlingly familiar. The rest of the production's skeletal story line ought to be too, a little too familiar in fact, as the superficial highlights of the film's plot rigidly unfold to a rather underdeveloped and newfangled Icelandic cultural context. Hinging on regurgitated comic climaxes and punch lines, the play only sporadically and superficially indulges in its own interpretation of the film's idealistic assertions and plot.

Yet even as it gets lost trying to establish its own personal character outside of the film's shadow, the production is by no means fruitless, and manages to be entertaining through to the end. The production's primary disappointment lies in its indifference to the sensitive nature of language, casually overlooking Iceland's innate xenophobia, even as the subject subtly takes centre stage. Speaking in English to accommodate the foreign actors, many of the Icelandic performers continually stumbled robotically through their lines, while Elena Anaya and Gael García Bernal, also speaking in a second language, remained gracefully unspoiled by overconfidence in their language.

Not wanting to rest its fate entirely on its success at rehashing the film, the play nevertheless seems to depend on and demand the comparison. Ultimately it is the distinct spirit of the film that is left wanting, misplaced perhaps, somewhere along with a winning cultural subtext; in this case, the not so familiar Icelandic character.

By Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

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ÞJÓÐLEIKHÚSIÐ

CONCERT**Björk****Where:** Shanghai**When:** March 2, 2008

Did she just say what I thought she said?

That was the question on the lips of my fellow revellers as we filed out of a Shanghai auditorium after Björk's March 2nd concert. During her finale, the stomping mad anthem "Declare Independence," the singer had pounded her bare feet, raised her hands, and directly addressed her Chinese fans through anger-swelling lyrics such as, "don't let them do that to you," "protect your language" and "raise your flag." When the backing lulled, Björk whispered against the microphone, "Tibet, Tibet."

Such a direct call for Tibetan freedom is a shocking gesture by a visiting artist. Though many activists have argued that the region's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, is its rightful ruler, China has ruled its westernmost region since 1951 and any discussion against this is taboo. Indeed, although Chinese-language message boards lit up, state-run media did not report on the incident.

Björk has come under fire for this specific song before. The music video for "Declare Independence" may show Björk in a jumpsuit bearing the flags of Greenland and the Faroe Islands, but in Japan last month, she dedicated the tune to Kosovo's struggle – a gesture that angered the organisers of a Serbian music festival at which she had been slated to perform.

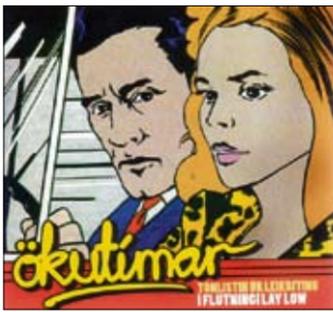
In Shanghai, the controversial protest was a surprising finale for a strong set that otherwise contained few surprises. The act opened with the slowly-building "Earth Intruders" and moved forward with a laser-show that clicked on during a heartfelt "State of Emergency," which played while Chinese security guards wearing white gloves paced the aisles. Hits such as "Army of Me," "Bachelorette" and "Desired Constellation," backed by the all-female Icelandic brass band, Wonderbrass, satisfied Björk fans who had, on the most part, never seen the singer before. Björk has only travelled to China once before, playing in Beijing in the 90s.

Björk's fan base in China is huge. Nicknamed "The China Girl" in her youth, Björk is known to her Chinese fans as "Bi-Ya-Ke," the name they screamed at the 4,000-capacity Shanghai International Gymnastics Centre which looked about 80% full, with seats going for as much as US\$210. The Chinese singer, Faye Wong, claims her own success was based on a youthful desire to imitate Björk, and some Chinese fans at the show even sported Björk's trademark tribal face-paint. When, to acknowledge applause, Björk sweetly whispered "xie xie" (Chinese for "thank you"), fans only applauded even more.

In response to the media hailstorm surrounding her "Tibet Tibet" call, Björk released a quiet statement: "I am first and last a musician," she wrote. "And as such I feel my duty to try to express the whole range of human emotions. The urge for declaring independence is just one of them but an important one we all feel at some times in our lives."

During the finale, the local fans around me belted out every lyric: "Damn colonists/ Ignore their patronising/ Tear off their blindfolds/ Open their eyes." In Shanghai, the "Paris of the East" long ago colonised by the West, the Icelandic singer's lyrics could very well refer to Tibet, as she pointedly argued, but they also said a lot more.

By Adriane Quinlan

CD**Ökutímar**
Lay Low

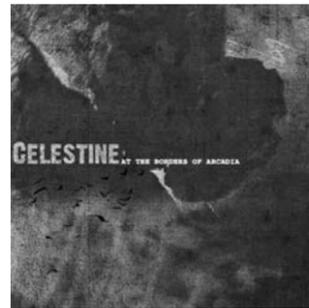
Independent of its theatrical context, the soundtrack to Ökutímar maintains ephemeral relevance. Lay Low's five original acoustic compositions, written in collaboration with the Akureyri Theatre Company, appropriately fall into the background of a distant storyline, simple and un-intoxicating. Forboðin Ást, by far the record's most compelling track, propels the over-all acoustic quality into a newfangled charm; Lay Low's tender conviction is frank yet unostentatious, and the track gracefully complements the play. The following eight Dolly Parton covers are fun, straightforward and clean without being banal. Lovísa's vocal interpretation is not overly earnest, somewhat reconciling the fact that she lacks the dramatic twang distinct of country music, but remains quite passive, bordering on trivial when paired with equally demure instrumental accompaniment. For theatrical background music however, perhaps passive is appropriate. The album can, at least, be appreciated as such, and will certainly be enhanced by nostalgic reference to the play itself. VP

CD**Kiss Your Chora**
Ask the Slave

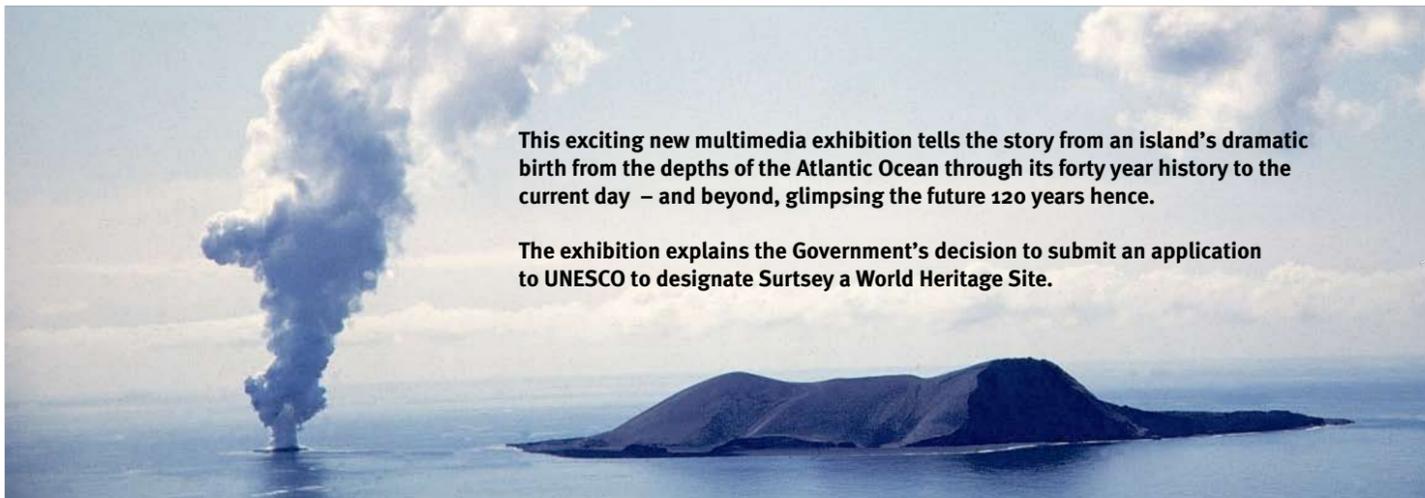
Ask the Slave is a band that has been around for a while, but recent line-up changes seem to have brought the band back from a long hiatus. This album consists of material that was mostly recorded in 2005, and to some extent the age is already showing. The baseline for Ask the Slave's music seems to be the '80s grunge sound, although peppered with influences from prog- and industrial rock. At times, they evoke memories of Primus and even Living Colour, without matching either bands artistry though. The problem that faces Ask the Slave is the considerable discrepancy between the wealth of ambitious ideas that they bring to the table and their ability to execute them. If this band acquires the discipline to step on the brakes and grasp the 'less is more' philosophy, their next release could be very interesting. SBB

CD**Það kólnar í kvöld...**
Rökkurró

The debut full-length release of five-piece Rökkurró, comprised of a group of friends currently enrolled in the Reykjavík secondary schools MR and Kvennó, is a pleasant youthful exercise in krútt classically-inspired pop. The sweet and ever-clear voice of Hildur Kristín Stefánsdóttir rises and falls in soft melodious waves above steadfast, lightly dramatic instrumentals in ruminations that, however, often have trouble sticking. The songs are as gentle as the front cover illustration and title ("It's getting cold tonight") would suggest, and sway playfully and harmoniously without clear bearings. The album is, despite, demonstrates excellent musicianship and does well to secure itself as a creditable first release. VP

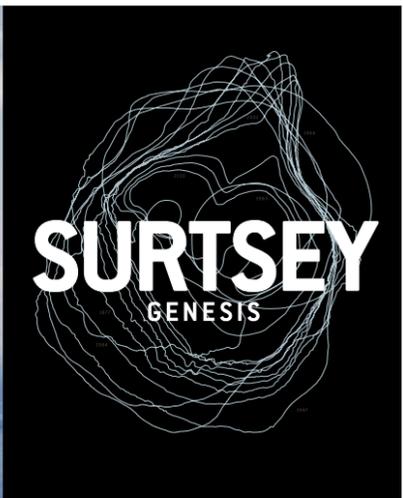
CD**At the Borders of Arcadia**
Celestine

Despite recent break-ups of longtime veterans of the Icelandic underground scene like Changer and I Adapt, there is no need to press the panic button. Judging from the debut album of the young atmospheric post-metallers Celestine, the Icelandic metal scene is ripe. From the opening song, Despair And, Celestine evokes a chilling grind built on heavy guitar sound, guttural vocals from one of the most promising throats in the business, and a gradual devolution of structure that parlays the required despair. Six songs in all (titled Despair And, Witness The, Ruin Of, God And, Me; one is untitled), this recording shows that Celestine has the potential to grab the reins of the underground and make this scene their own. Recent line-up changes promise to bring a further infusion of heaviness that will make this band a force in live settings. SBB



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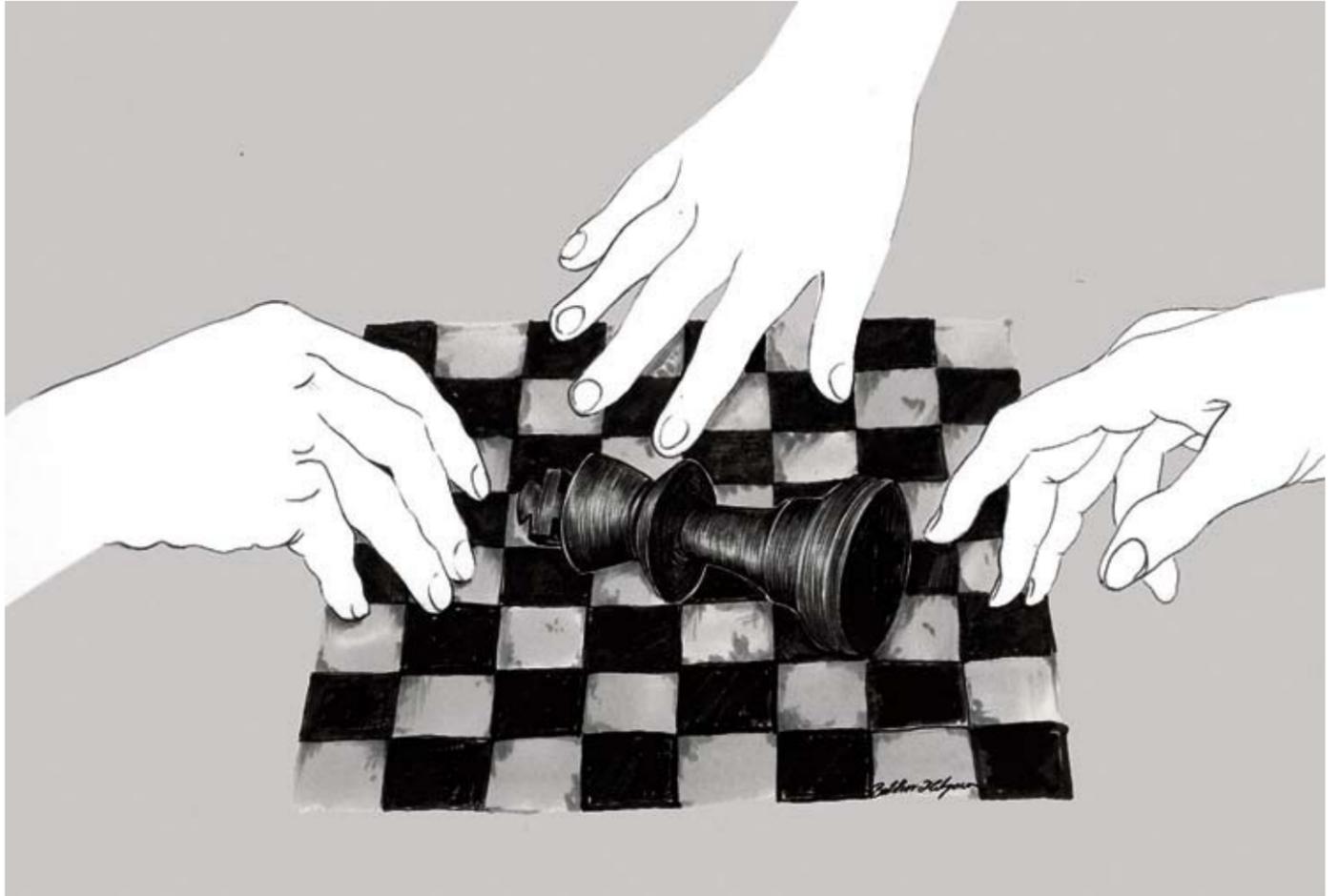
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Open daily between 11am and 5pm

The admission fee grants entry to all exhibitions at the Culture House. Adults ISK 300. Senior citizens ISK 200. Students ISK 200. Free entry for children 16 years of age or younger. Admission is free on Wednesdays.




The fight for the fallen King.
Illustration by Baldur Helgason



Remembering Bobby Fisher – II

Garðar Sverrison, arranged for a private funeral in a small graveyard near Selfoss. Apparently Sverrison did not notify anyone but Fischer's fiancé, Watai, about the arrangements, even the parish priest was caught off guard, showing up for work the next day to find a freshly dug grave in his graveyard.

The Circus Comes to Town

The arrival of Bobby Fischer as an Icelandic citizen on March 24th 2005 was a strange affair. Firstly there were the circumstances of Parliament granting him citizenship. It was passed in a law unanimously; a measure that had never been applied before, nor since. It has been speculated that this act was more a defiant gesture towards the United States government – which demanded that Fischer be extradited from Japan where he was being held on charges of travelling on an invalid passport – rather than an act motivated by humanitarian issues. At the time the Icelandic government was in negotiations with the US regarding the defence of the country and the plans the US had to withdraw its troops from the Keflavík Airport military base. Later, the US did follow through with the plans to withdraw their troops, stationed here since 1951, however that may have related to the Icelandic government's decision to grant Fischer citizenship.

Fischer was flown to Reykjavík on a private jet, leased by one of the country's most influential businessmen, Jón Ásgeir Jóhannesson. When the jet landed in the drizzling rain, a curious welcome committee met Bobby. There were a small number of people assembled, huddling together, hoping to catch a glimpse of the chess master. Drunken teenagers, holding chessboards aloft, were proudly represented. After stepping of the plane, Bobby was whisked into an SUV, which promptly sped away. It was surreal to watch. It grew even more surreal a few minutes later when the live broadcast on Channel 1 had ended and the SUV emerged on the tarmac again, this time so Channel 2 reporters could broadcast an exclusive live interview with Fischer. It turned out that the reason Mr. Jóhannesson, the biggest shareholder in Channel 2 TV station, had put up the money for the private plane was so that the Channel 2 reporters could get an exclusive interview with the chess master. Fischer, who had not shaved or cut his hair for months, said little but grunted some. It was by all standards depressing to watch.

The next day the group responsible for getting Fischer to Iceland, the RJF Campaign (RJF stands for Rights – Justice - Freedom, but is also the acronym for Robert J. Fischer), held a press conference with Fischer, broadcast live on TV. Somebody had provided Bobby with a razor and a haircut and for the first half of the two-hour meeting he was talkative, coherent and in a good mood. The international press was well represented and asked various questions about Fischer's intentions, his past, about a possible match with Kasparov and other things chess related. The Icelandic press asked if Fischer liked herring. Repeatedly. Well into the press conference Fischer delivered an angry speech about the Jewish conspiracy and the "Jewish snakes". It was a tense moment, everyone held their breath in silence, until an Ice-

landic reporter asked: "So... are you planning on eating any herring?" The meeting continued with Fischer raving on about crazy Jewish conspiracies against him, citing the Internet if anyone needed proof. Members of the RJF group sat sheepishly by his side, looking confused, if not ashamed. The Bobby Fischer Circus in Iceland was off to a rocky start.

Intermission

Those who thought Bobby's presence in Iceland would be high profile were quickly proved wrong. Fischer fell of the media radar quickly, declining to grant interviews and it also seemed the media had taken the stance that Fischer was best left alone. He could sometimes be seen in downtown Reykjavík sitting on a bench reading with his Japanese fiancé, Miyoko Watai, or walking briskly from one place to another. Bobby was just another ordinary Icelandic citizen.

And so the years went by. Around New Year, 2008, word spread in chess circles that Fischer was gravely ill with a kidney disease. Some media reports stated that he was on his way to recovery, but then he passed away on January 17, roughly three years after his arrival in Iceland. The Bobby Fischer Circus, which had lain dormant during that time, was instantly brought back to life, more strange and bizarre than ever before.

Closing Act

Soon after Bobby's death it was clear that all was not well in the RJF Campaign group. Various members made contradictory statements about the chess master's estate and the arrangements for his funeral. The wildest ideas called for Fischer to be put to rest at the national cemetery at Þingvellir, a miniscule graveyard once reserved for the most noble Icelanders, but nowadays generally regarded as an arcane, if not an embarrassing, testimony to a class divided society. A full, state paid funeral was called for with live TV coverage and a national day of mourning. While some members of the RJF Campaign debated this in the media, one of them, Garðar Sverrison, arranged for a private funeral in a small graveyard near Selfoss. Apparently Sverrison did not notify anyone but Fischer's fiancé, Watai, about the arrangements, even the parish priest was caught off guard, showing up for work the next day to find a freshly dug grave in his graveyard. Sverrison got a Catholic priest to conduct the funeral service, with only himself, his parents and Watai in attendance.

This did not go down too well with Sverrison's fellow RJF group members and at the time it seemed that an all-out mud slinging competition was to break out in the media. But then the United States Chess Federation stepped in. The USCF had revoked Fischer's membership in 2002, following his remarks in the aftermath of 9/11, when he praised the terrorist act. Now the USCF

sent the Icelandic Chess Federation a letter, asking when Fischer's remains would be sent to the US for a proper burial. Note that it did not say if, but when.

But there was more to come. Fischer left behind a sizeable sum of money, around 140 million ISK, the majority of his prize money from the 1992 rematch with Boris Spassky. His fiancé, Watai, now came forward claiming that she and Bobby in fact were in fact married, rather than engaged. To prove this she produced a photocopy of a Japanese marriage certificate, which the Japanese embassy stated to be insufficient. Bobby's brother-in-law, Russel Targ, hired an Icelandic lawyer to make sure that his sons received a piece of the inheritance if they were entitled to it. This seemed to be a minor dispute, until reports of a child Fischer was supposed to have fathered in the Philippines in 2001 began surfacing. Evidently Bobby had sought the assistance of a friend there to find him a suitable woman to ensure his genes would live on after his death. The name of the friend: Gene. It is impossible to make this stuff up.

A few Icelandic bloggers decided to investigate these rumors, with one of them throwing around the idea that Fischer's remains should be exhumed to get DNA evidence. Then a Philippine lawyer came forward, claiming to represent Fischer's daughter, Jinky Ong. The lawyer, Samuel Estimo, sent scans of postcards Bobby was meant to have sent to his daughter to the Icelandic media and claimed that she had visited him in Iceland and that they spoke regularly on the phone. Later he stated that he was working on getting concrete proof of the girl's fatherhood through a prominent European chess player, who could not, for some reasons, be identified.

And here we are. The matter of Bobby Fischer's inheritance is still under dispute. It could prove to be a long and ugly mess when those things are finally put to rest. But one thing is certain: there was seldom peace and quiet in the Bobby Fischer Circus. Not even posthumously.

By Páll Hilmarrson

Disappointment is a part of the game.
Photo by GAS



Drink Again!

Icelanders love quiz games and Icelanders love to drink. Obviously, finding a way to combine these two things is merely an exercise in time-saving multi-tasking.

For years, the most popular television show in Iceland has been a quiz show between the secondary schools in the country, called Gettu Betur (Guess Again). It has been around for twenty-one years. Although not as old, the pub-quiz Drekktu Betur (Drink Again), is an established institution in the local cultural life. The first quiz took place 4 years ago and April 4 will mark the 250th time it has been held.

It makes sense. After all, Icelanders love quiz games and Icelanders love to drink. Obviously, finding a way to combine these two things is merely an exercise in time-saving multi-tasking. In the nearest toy-store, for example, you can buy a board game, which, if played correctly, will result in the total drunken stupor of all participating players. If you feel inclined to watch this happen, or perhaps you don't have any friends to play board-games with, feel free to join the crowd that gathers on the upper floor of Grand Rokk every Friday night at 18:00 for roughly an hour of answering questions and drinking beer.

The game follows a relatively standard pub-quiz format. The rules are simple: there is a quizmaster armed with 30 questions, participants form teams of two and try their best to outsmart the admittedly smart-ass questions. Answers are written down on paper and, in the end, teams exchange their slips of paper as the answers are reviewed. The team with the highest number of correct answers wins a case of beer. As a bonus, if you get question number 18 correct you get a free beer from the bar. If no team has at least 15

correct answers, the prize is moved to the following week and if two teams are tied then a bonus round is played with 5 additional questions.

Each week there is a new quizmaster, so every week the questions span a wide area of expertise. The quizmaster has free reign over the questions' subject-matter. For example, a recent quiz was composed entirely of questions about Icelandic crime novels. The winning team won with 23 correct answers. The questions are mostly about general knowledge and popular culture, and recent news events are popular too.

Grand Rokk has a somewhat rowdy image in the pub world. One contributor to this magazine has publicly stated on its pages that he is afraid of stepping into the bar, fearing its regulars. I can safely testify that his fears are unfounded; the Friday quiz punters are an easy-going, quiet bunch, more interested in the prize than pounding other patrons.

After the quiz, many of the contestants gather outside to smoke, drink beer and discuss the questions. One participant, Kolbeinn Ó. Proppé, told me that he attended fairly regularly, sometimes as a competitor and sometimes as the quizmaster. "I come for the company, the competition and for a good way to relax after the working week." When asked if he wins a lot he does not comment, but states with a stern face that it isn't really about winning, but about having fun and the true spirit of sportsmanship.

I myself have been attending fairly regularly for the past year, never winning but sometimes

coming close. I have made friends with people I would otherwise never have met and each time has been fun and enjoyable. As an added bonus I am now a lot more knowledgeable about various subjects, ranging from the adventures of Tintin to the Russian revolution.

The Drink Again! quiz is an excellent way to meet the locals in a non-scripted, non-touristy environment. No one is trying to sell you anything (although the bar likes it when you buy beer), entry is free, the people are friendly, the competition is fun and there is a nice prize for the winners. Seriously, who couldn't use a case of beer?

Although the questions (and the answers!) are in Icelandic, the event is highly recommended for foreigners and locals alike. I have never bumped into a foreigner at these events, but hopefully that will change soon. It would be easy enough to perform the whole thing in English, should there be enough interest.

You can find out who the next quizmaster is a week in advance at drekktubetur.blogspot.com

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Grapevine Easter Beer Guide

One Friday after work, The Grapevine team gathered together, along with friends and beneficiaries, to sample this year's Páskabjór (Easter Beer). Although a representative from the smaller speciality breweries was sadly missing, we tried to make do with the offerings of the big warehouses.

From Denmark, we tasted Tuborg's traditional Easter Brew – also known as *Kylle*, *Kylle* (chicken, chicken) – probably the only beer in the world to have its own day of celebration. P-Day or Páskebryg Day is widely (well, somewhat at least) celebrated in Denmark each March when the brew hits the stores. Tuborg's Easter Brew is a full-bodied, amber-coloured beer with a slightly spicy scent and a balanced bittersweet taste.

Viking Páskabjór is modelled on south German "Dunkel" beers. It is dark brown and its taste has a hint of coffee, caramel, chocolate and toasted bread. The beer has a good malt filling and a medium bitterness in the aftertaste. Egils Páskabjór is a rich lager, in the mould of German lagers. It tastes of brown sugar and has a strong malty aroma.

A very informal poll conducted during our not so scientific sampling showed that people's idea of a good beer varies greatly. A slight preference for Viking was noticeable, but the veteran, Chicken Chicken, fought an uphill battle all the way on account of being canned, rather than bottled.

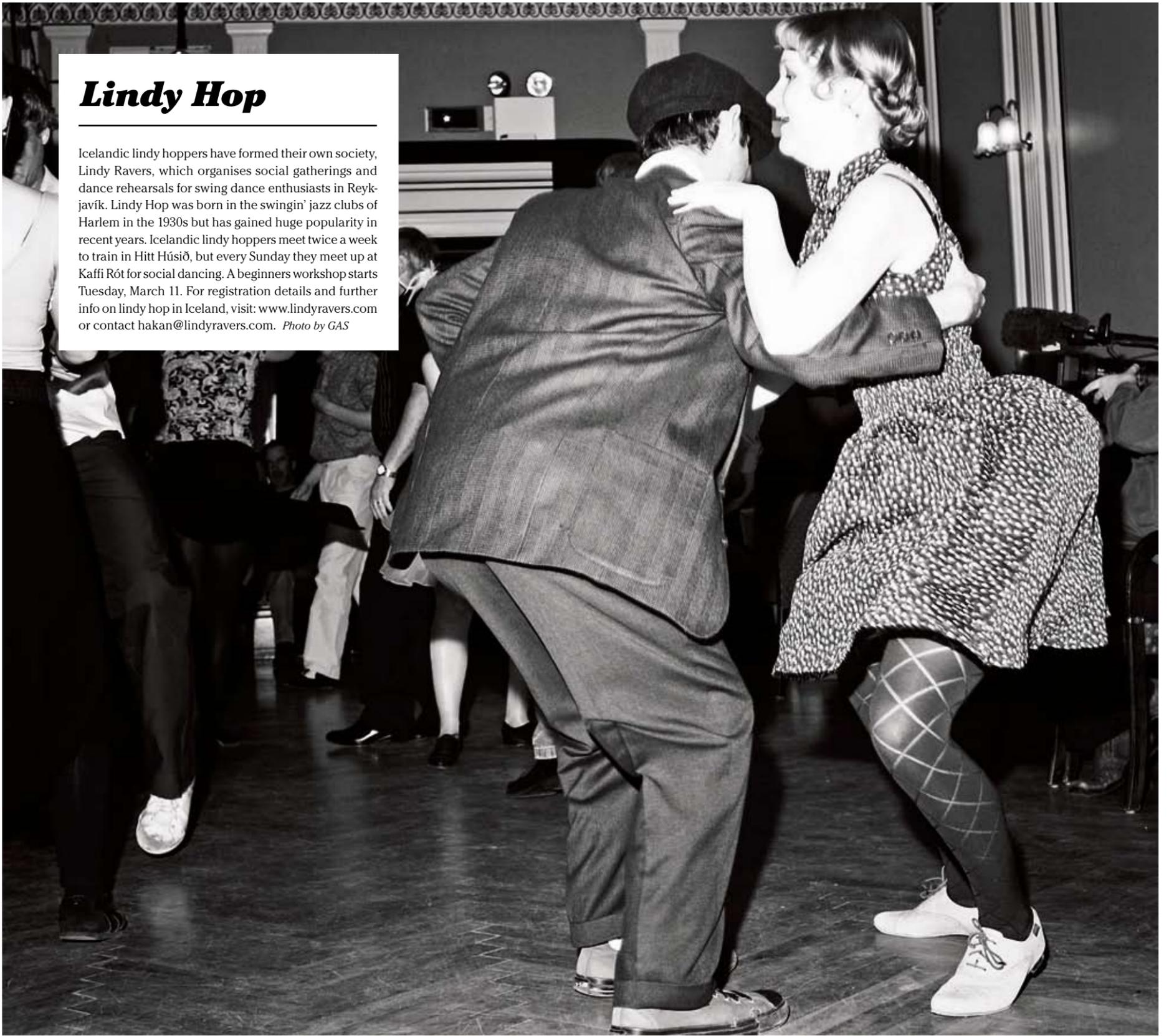
But let's focus on the positives. The good news here is that Easter greatly improves the variety of beer available domestically, and offers an excellent opportunity to host your own sampling party. What else is there to do on Good Friday?



An advertisement for Air Iceland. The top left features the Air Iceland logo (a stylized bird) and the text "AIR ICELAND". Below this is the slogan "Fly and discover" in large white letters. A map of Iceland shows various destinations with orange lines radiating from Reykjavik: NUUK Greenland, GRIMSEY, ISAFJÖRDUR, AKUREYRI, VOPNAFJÖRDUR, EGILSSTADIR, NERLERIT HNAAT Greenland, KULLUSUK Greenland, NARSARSSUAQ Greenland, WESTMAN ISLANDS, and FAROE ISLANDS. At the bottom left, the website "airiceland.is" and phone number "tel. 570 3030" are listed. The background of the advertisement is a scenic photograph of a glacier with blue icebergs floating in a lake under a cloudy sky.

Lindy Hop

Icelandic lindy hoppers have formed their own society, Lindy Ravers, which organises social gatherings and dance rehearsals for swing dance enthusiasts in Reykjavík. Lindy Hop was born in the swingin' jazz clubs of Harlem in the 1930s but has gained huge popularity in recent years. Icelandic lindy hoppers meet twice a week to train in Hitt Húsið, but every Sunday they meet up at Kaffi Rót for social dancing. A beginners workshop starts Tuesday, March 11. For registration details and further info on lindy hop in Iceland, visit: www.lindyravers.com or contact hakan@lindyravers.com. *Photo by GAS*



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Across the Country in 40 Days

A team of Italian “experts” stayed in Ásgarðar just before I arrived. They had laptops, surfed the web through satellite phones, and acted important. They were in search of the Holy Grail. I promptly ask whether this is a joke – but no, they are not teasing me.

Last summer, Fabrizio Frascaroli spent 40 days walking across Iceland from East to West. This is his story.

It is early in the afternoon, July 30, when I finally reach Kerlingarfjöll. A wave of relief pervades me as the familiar sight of Ásgarðar, the celebrated resort at the root of the Kerlingarfjöll Mountains, surfaces through the mist— first the gas pump, then the old Ferðafélag Íslands hut, and the main house surrounded by many smaller cabins, all looking exactly the way I nostalgically remembered it. I am glad that the day is over. In truth, it has probably been the duller and greyest one since I started my long walk across the country, some three weeks ago.

In my plans and expectations, this was to be the moment when I replicated the breathtaking traverse east to west of the Kerlingarfjöll massif, culminating in a swift descent onto Ásgarðar from the hills: one of the brightest memories I carry from last summer and from Iceland in general. In reality, things turned out quite differently, as I ended up merely walking around the mountains, bypassing rather than crossing them. Since the early hours of the morning, the black threat of clouds and fog called for prudence. And so the rest of the day passed in an uninspiring and nearly mechanical march along the jeep track, the surroundings reduced to ghostly and blurred silhouettes, the air ominously humid and stuffy as if the very breath of

the sky were contracting. My steps were heavy as I proceeded, clad like a diver in waterproof fabrics, waiting for a biblical downpour that would never eventuate. Quite an inglorious ending for a stage which I had long envisioned would be one of the highlights of my 40-day trek.

What one year ago was surprise and novelty has now become expectation and almost a sense of homeliness; the casual encounters of that time have turned into bonds of friendship. Þóra and Magda are managing the resort, like last summer, and I meet them just outside the kitchen, occupied with yet another electricity crisis. To my delight, the food of the house has also remained excellent. I definitely do not withdraw when I am asked that night for stories of my journey and am given plenty of conversation time – after all, even in solitary hiking there is unquestionably a fair amount of narcissism. In the end, however, I end up with the role of listener, with a mixture of bafflement, amusement and curiosity about what I am told: apparently summer has brought important news here. A team of Italian “experts” stayed in Ásgarðar just before I arrived. They had laptops, surfed the web through satellite phones, and acted important. They were in search of the Holy Grail. I promptly ask whether this is a joke – but no, they are not teasing me. I am even shown a book in Italian – the very one that the seekers followed in their quest. From what I can gather, the legendary Cup of Christ should have ar-

rived in Iceland with the intermediation of Dante Alighieri and Snorri Sturluson, and has been lying buried close to the Gýgjarfoss waterfall ever since, just waiting for some intrepid people to decipher the riddle and recover it.

I go to bed feeling slightly disturbed. It is around two.

Required Rest in Kerlingarfjöll

I had already decided before setting off that I would take the longest break of my entire journey – two whole days of rest – here in Kerlingarfjöll rather than anywhere else on the way. As the hours pass by, I do not regret the choice. There is an alien flavour to this place, something that sets it apart from any others in the Highlands. It can probably best be grasped by quietly sitting down beside a gas stove in the main hall, staring through the large windows at the sheep, the green pastures and the gushing and muddy waters just beneath. It is no basic shelter, no fragile wooden cabin that was built in Ásgarðar to host the first ski-school that Iceland ever knew. In all other huts that I encountered travelling across the Icelandic interior, the walls were no more than a light membrane barely able to offer refuge from the fury of the wind. They enclosed a space, and yet seemed to provide no neat or impenetrable boundary, as if “the outside” could somehow filter through within: not so dissimilar to the sensation that I habitually experience when camp-



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Photos by Fabrizio Frascaroli

– Adventures of the Lonesome Traveller, Leg 7

ing in my tent. Ásgarðar is different. It stands solid and defined like a welcoming multi-storey house, a nest of warmth and security pulled out of the encircling desert, capable of firmly locking out wilderness' whispers.

And yet, while lingering in the safety and stillness of that hall, it is difficult not to be met by an elusive feeling, akin to longing and nostalgia. Of the many voices, singing and laughter that used to fill those spaces, only a distant echo seems to remain. Since the snow abandoned the peaks and was washed away for good, the many hundreds of visitors that used to reach these slopes for skiing have changed their destinations, and so the number of those who venture into the mountains today has drastically diminished. Hikers come here, and horseback-riders, as well as some tourists of various kinds. But after its demise as a skiing centre, it is true that this place chiefly remains a vivid memory for many, a remote rumour for most. After the glories of its winter, Ásgarðar now seems covertly dormant, patiently waiting for a new spring that has not yet matured.

The fortunes of the resort may well be oscillating, and the preferences of the tourist industry are capricious and inscrutable. The fact remains, nonetheless, that few other locations in Iceland can rival Kerlingarfjöll for magnificence of the natural scenery, variety of landscapes, and opportunities for hiking. These two days provide further confir-

mation of this basic truth as I take my time to explore the area more thoroughly and get to know its most remote niches. Like Askja, Kerlingarfjöll also hides a treasure in its womb, encircled and guarded by the vigilance of the mountains. But whereas the Askja Lake lies motionless, solitary and hieratic like a temple staring at the sky, the geothermal area of Hveradalir – Kerlingarfjöll's not so secret core – rather resembles a sorcerer's maze: a labyrinth of sculptured pinnacles, pointy peaks, emerald-green ponds, deep gorges, and steaming fumaroles, all pervaded by the acrid stench of sulphur and painted in a multitude of shades and vivid colours. In a land where the feeble boundary between what is horrid and what is gorgeous appears so often to be blurred, grotesque and distorted shapes emerge from the soil and the many ravines often disclose precipices of unspeakable depth. Ice and snowfields still blanket the outskirts of Loðmundur, the only remnants of the glaciers that once adorned all the slopes. In the sharp air of late twilight, the alpine-looking mountain range spikes out from a frame of pale violet light, resembling a postcard sent from a fairy tale theme park.

Onwards to Kjölur

I leave Kerlingarfjöll under drizzle and a sullen sky, without turning back to look one last time at Ásgarðar and its green roofs – it is always a bit difficult to leave places that somehow feel like home.

I walk further north until reaching Hveravellir in one day – once the dreaded lair of ghosts and outlaws, today a crowded tourist hub located midway on the Kjölur Route. On the way, I come across two cyclists who are crunching through their lunch by the edge of the road. They glance at me and ask if I am all right. I smile back.

Although "spectacular" is not exactly the first adjective to come to mind, there is undeniably a gentle and pleasant charm to this Hveravellir too, a caressing and hypnotic rhythm woven by its coloured muds, overgrown plains, and ancient lava fields thoroughly covered in moss. Unfortunately, no contrast could be harsher than the one between the languid and vaguely mysterious appeal of the landscape, and the frantic, laborious activity all around. The entire resort appears literally under siege by swarms of visitors, people driving by, and travelling parties. The contemplative pace of the surroundings is irreparably disrupted by an impression of ceaseless emergency: mass tourism at its worst seems to have struck Hveravellir, severely threatening its evocative and arcane identity.

I wait for the night to grow late and the lights to dim before finally approaching the natural hot pot – probably still the place's most appreciated and celebrated attraction – for a restoring bath at the end of the day, a can of cold beer in my hand. I realise just too late, once I am already comfortably inside, that far from being alone I have just fallen

in between a couple making out under cover of the water and the darkness. I know that it would be courteous of me to leave immediately, but something holds me back. They will leave instead, shortly afterwards and with the sulkiest expression on their faces. I remain alone there, drinking my beer and feeling like the worst human being who ever existed.

I leave Hveravellir the next day, along the hiking and horse trail leading southward to Hvítárnes along the course of the Old Kjölur Route. It is foggy and drizzly again, the air sharply cold – thermometers recorded a mere 2° last night. Different sorts of sensations – and not wholly positive – have been pervading me since both Kerlingarfjöll and Hveravellir were put behind, as if I had stepped across an invisible threshold. I am probably beginning to feel that the end is drawing close – by now, in fact, only a risky traverse over the Langjökull Glacier should stand in between me and a safe ending in Pingvellir, in the middle of August. As I push on amid the mists of Kjölur, all my thoughts are leaning on the hope that the weather will assist me for the next few days...

By Fabrizio Frascaroli

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In Iceland, the flag is considered a source of national pride.

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Quiet surroundings, only one kilometer
from Highway 1, Rooms, Sleeping Bag
Accommodation and Camping w/electricity
Mini-Market and Cafe Angling sold for
lakes in Arnarvatnsheiði

Job needed:

My name is tory and i am a 30 year old
australian who loves iceland, (almost more
than the font helvetica.) i am looking to
work in iceland for the summer. i work
in the festival + music realm, but before
that i have worked in publishing and arts.
i love to bake and sew, and make home-
made cordial. please let me know if you
would like to adopt me for the summer
- torybauer1@mac.com

I am a twenty year old American looking
for work in Iceland during my three
month summer recess. Please contact
Paul Shufro at shufro@wisc.edu.

Job openings:

As part of our expansion program,our
company is looking for part time Work
from home Account Manager and sales
representatives, it pays \$500 per week
plus benefits and takes only little of your
time. Please contact us for more details.
Requirements - Should be a computer
Literate. 2-3 hours access to the internet
weekly. Must be over 19yrs of age. Must
be Efficient and Dedicated.If you are inter-
ested and need more information,Contact
ALEX COLE Email: calexco08@yahoo.com

SUMMER JOB IN ITALY

Be a summer camp tutor, teach english
to Italian children while travelling through

Italy. If you have a very good level of eng-
lish, love children and enjoy making new
friends and experiences, check out this
web site: www.acl.org and apply!

For sale:

Pentium 4 desktop,2500mhz cpu,512
ram,80gb hd,64mb nvideo,dual dvd/
cdrw,17"svga,win XP,wireless net,creative
sound system, 45000ISK. contact: valk-nut76@hotmail.com

Education:

Qualified English teacher (native British
speaker) available for private lessons.
Masters Degree Applied Linguistics and
TESOL qualified (University of Cambridge).
Call Russell 849 7337 or e mail: russel-laldersson@hotmail.com for further details

Personals

Looking for a penfriend, preferably an Ice-
landic woman between the age of 45 and
60. I live in north Queensland, Australia,
and I am a family person. I would prefer
the old fashioned method of correspond-
ence. My address: 18 Cedarbrook Ter-
race, IDALIA, TOWNSVILLE 4811, North
Queensland,Australia.
Thanks.
Denise Moore
denise@townsvilleofficefurniture.com.au



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Services

Useful Numbers

- **Emergency number:** 112
- **Police:** 444 1000
- **Medical help:** 1770
- **Dental emergency:** 575 0505
- **AA:** 551 2010
- **Information:** 118
- **Telegrams:** 146

Tax Free Refund

■ **Iceland Refund,**
Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 564 6400
www.icelandrefund.com

Post Office

Post offices are located around the city as well as in the countryside. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5. For a full list and info on opening hours visit www.posturinn.is. Stamps are also sold in bookstores, gas stations, some grocery stores and tourist shops.

Embassies and Consulates

- **United States,** Laufásvegur 21, Tel: 562 9100
- **United Kingdom,** Laufásvegur 31, Tel: 550 5100
- **Russia,** Garðastræti 33, Tel: 551 5156
- **China,** Víðimelur 29, Tel: 552 6751

For a full list visit *Ministry for Foreign Affairs:* www.mfa.is/diplomatic-missions/icelandic-missions/

Internet Access

Most coffeehouses have wireless Internet access. Computers with Internet connections are available at:

- **Ráðhúskaffi City Hall,** Tjarnargata 11
- **BSÍ Bus Terminal,** Vatnsmýrarvegur 10
- **Ground Zero,** Vallarstræti 10
- **The Reykjavík City Library,** Tryggvagata 15
- **The National and University Library,** Arngrímsgata 3
- **Tourist Information Centre,** Aðalstræti 2
- **Icelandic Travel Market,** Bankastræti 2

Opening hours

- **Bars and clubs:** According to regulations bars may be open until 01:00 on weekdays and 05:30 on weekends.
- **Shops:** Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-16, Sun closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

- **Swimming pools:** weekdays 06:30-22:30, weekends 08:00-20:30 although some may be open an hour longer.
 - **The State owned ÁTVR liquor stores:** Mon-Thu 11-18, Fri 11-19, Sat 11-18.
- Banks in the centre are open Mon-Fri 09-16.

Laundry Service

- **HI Hostel,** Sundlaugarvegur 34, Tel: 553 8110, www.hostel.is
- **Úðafoss,** Vitastigur 13, Tel: 551 2301, www.udafoss.is

Getting Around

Public transport

The only public transport system in Reykjavík is the bus. Most busses run every 20 minutes and price per fare is 280 ISK for adults and 100 ISK for children. Complete route map at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700

Busses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends

Rent a bike

- **Borgarhjól,** Hverfisgata 50, Tel: 551 5653, www.borgarhjol.net
- **HI Hostel,** Sundlaugarvegur 34, Tel: 553 8110, www.hostel.is
- **Tourist Information Centre,** Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550, www.visitreykjavik.is

Taxi

- **Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir,** Tel: 553 3500 or 588 5522
- **BSR,** Tel: 561 0000
- **For disabled travellers:** Reykjavík Group Travel Service, Brunastaðir 3, Tel: 587 8030, www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik_group_travel_service/

Car rentals

- **Átak Car Rental,** Smiðjuvegur 1, Tel: 554 6040
- **ALP,** Dugguvogur 10, Tel: 562 6060
- **Avis,** Knarravogi 2, Tel: 591 4000
- **Eurocar,** Hjallahraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
- **A.G Car Rental,** Tangarhöfði 8-12, Tel: 587 5544
- **Atlas Car Rental,** Dalshraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
- **Berg Car Rental,** Tangarhöfða 8, Tel: 577 6050
- **Hertz,** Flugvallavegur, Tel: 522 4400

Airlines

- **Air Iceland,** Reykjavíkflugvöllur, Tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is
- **Air Vestmannaeyjar,** Tel: 481 3255, www.eyjaflug.is

Bus Terminal

- **BSÍ,** Vatnsmýrarvegur 10, Tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

Flybus

Busses run daily from the BSÍ Bus Terminal to Keflavík International Airport in connection with all departing flights. Departures daily from 04:45 to 15:00/16:30 (every 15 - 60 minutes). For Flybus time schedule see: www.flybus.is

Samferda.net

A reasonable choice for the budget traveller. You log on to the website www.samferda.net, choose your destination and hopefully find a travel buddy to share the cost.

Cultural Centres and Tourist Offices

- **The Intercultural Centre**
The Intercultural Centre throws occasional cultural events and conferences but its main purpose is to be an information and counselling centre and serve as an advocate for the rights of immigrants in Iceland.
Hverfisgata 18, Tel: 530 9300
www.ahus.is

- **Icelandic Travel Market**
Bankastræti 2, Tel: 510 5700, www.kleif.is
Information on day tours, accommodations, car rental and everything else you need to know when travelling in Iceland.

- **Iceland Visitor**
Austurstræti 17, Tel: 511 2442, www.icelandvisitor.com
A travel agency offering travelling package trips and custom-made tours as well as car rental, day tours and accommodations for visitors.

- **Tourist Information Centre**
Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550, www.visitreykjavik.is

- Offers information for tourists as well as providing internet access, booking service, a phone centre, money exchange service, tax refund and selling the Reykjavík Tourist Card. The Reykjavík Tourist Card gives admission to city busses, various museums, Reykjavík swimming pools, The Family Park and Reykjavík Zoo, The Culture House and the National and University Library.

- **The Icelandic Tourist Board**
Lækjargata 3, Tel: 535 5500, www.visiticeland.com
All information needed before travelling in Iceland.

- **Nordic House**
Sturlugata 5, Tel: 551 7030, www.nordice.is
The Nordic cultural centre organises various cultural events, conferences

and exhibitions.
All major tourist spots in Reykjavík also offer brochures, maps and information for travellers.

Useful Information

Where to learn Icelandic as a foreign language

- **Icelandic on the Internet,** www.vefskoli.is
- **Mímir Continuing Education,** Skeifán 8, Tel: 580 1800, www.mimir.is
- **Námsflokkar Reykjavíkur,** Fríkirkjuvegur 1, Tel: 551 2992
- **Fjölmenning,** Laugavegur 59, Tel: 511 1319, www.fjolmenning.is
- **The Icelandic College of Engineering and Technology,** Höfðabakki 9, Tel: 577 1400, www.thi.is
- **Iðnskólinn í Reykjavík,** Skólavörðuholti, Tel: 552 6240, www.ir.is
- **The University of Iceland – Department of Continuing Education,** Dunhagi 7, Tel: 525 4924, www.endurmenntun.is
- **Language School Lingva,** The University of Iceland, at Sturlugata. Tel.: 561 0351, www.lingva.is

Religious movements

The national church in Iceland is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Masses are generally held on Sundays at 11:00. Service in English is at Hallgrímskirkja every last Saturday each month, starting at 14:00. The Roman Catholic Church also has masses in English and Polish.

- Other religious movements in Reykjavík are for example:
- **The Muslim Association of Iceland,** Ármúli 38
- **Ásatrú Association,** Grandagarði 8
- **Bahá'í,** Álfabakka 12
- **The Church of Evangelism,** Hlíðasmári 9
- **The Icelandic Buddhist Movement,** Vighólástígur 21
- **Reykjavík Free Lutheran Church,** Fríkirkjuvegur 5
- **Pentecostal Assembly,** Hátún 2
- **Roman Catholic Church,** Hávallagata 14
- **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,** Ásabraut 2
- **Jehovah's Witnesses,** Sogavegur 71
- **Seventh-Day Adventists,** Suðurhlíð 36
- **Zen Buddhism in Iceland,** Reykjavíkurvegur 31
- **Independent Church,** Háteigsvegur 101
- **The Russian Orthodox Church in Iceland,** Sólvallagata 10
- **The Cross,** Hlíðasmári 5-7

Trade Unions

- **The Icelandic Federation of Labour,** Sættún 1, Tel: 535 5600, www.asi.is
- **The Federation of State and Municipal employees,** Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8300, www.bsr.is
- **The Association of Academics,** Borgartún 6, Tel: 581 2090, www.bhm.is
- **Efling,** Sættún 1, Tel: 510 7500, www.efling.is
- **The Commercial Workers' Union,** Kringlan 7, Tel: 510 1700, www.vr.is
- **Union of Public Servants,** Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8340, www.sfr.is

Useful Websites

- **www.visitreykjavik.is** (The official tourist website of Reykjavík)
- **www.gayice.is** (Information about the gay scene in Iceland)
- **www.fjolmenningarsetur.is** (The Multicultural Centre)
- **www.hostel.is** (Hostel International in Iceland)
- **www.vinnumalastofnun.is** (Public employment services)
- **www.gulalinan.is** (The yellow pages)
- **www.leigulistinn.is** (Rent a flat)
- **www.ja.is** (Icelandic telephone directory)

Where to get ...

- **Work and residence permit:** The Directorate of Immigration, Skógarhlíð 6, Tel: 510 5400, www.utl.is
- **Insurance and benefits:** The State Social Security Institute, Laugavegur 114-116, Tel: 560 4400, www.tr.is
- **Icelandic citizenship:** Unless you come from a Nordic country, foreign citizens have to have had an unrestricted residence permit in Iceland for at least seven years in order to get an Icelandic citizenship although some exceptions exist to that general rule. Applications are at the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Skuggasund, Tel: 545 9000, www.domsmalaraduneyti.is
- **Unemployment benefits:** Directorate of Labour, Public Employment Service, Tryggvagata 17, Tel: 515 4800, www.vinnumalastofnun.is
- **Icelandic social security number (kennitala):** National Register, Borgartún 30, Tel: 560 9800, www.hagstofa.is
- **Driver's license:** Applications at police stations. (Those who have a foreign license don't need an Icelandic one for the first six months.)
- **Tax card:** Tax office, Laugavegur 166, Tel: 563 1100, www.rsk.is
- **Social Service:** Information and service is provided by district service centres in Reykjavík. To locate the service centre in your neighbourhood see: www.reykjavik.is

HOW TO DRIVE IN ICELAND

A relatively large percentage of foreign tourists in Iceland travel around the country by car. Conditions in Iceland are in many ways unusual, and often quite unlike that which foreign drivers are accustomed. It is therefore very important to find out how to drive in this country. We know that the landscapes are beautiful, which naturally draws the attention of driver away from the road. But in order to reach your destination safely, you must keep your full attention on driving.

ALCOHOL OR DRUGS



It is against the law to operate a vehicle in Iceland after having consumed alcohol or drugs, and the punishment for violating this law is rather stiff. Those driving a car with more than the legal blood alcohol limit of 0.5 per mill, have to pay a penalty and suffer suspension of their drivers's licence. The penalties for drunk driving are between 70,000 kr up to 140,000 kr. If driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you will not be entitled to compensation in case of an accident and will have to bear the total cost of the accident yourself. This can amount to several million Icelandic krona.

Further information on www.drive.is

WHAT ARE THE SPEED LIMITS?



The speed limit in urban areas is usually 50 km/hr. Speed limit signs are usually not posted unless it is other than 50 km/hr. The limit is often 60 km/hr on thruways, but in residential areas it is usually only 30 km/hr. The main rule on highways is that gravel roads have a speed limit of 80 km/hr, and paved roads 90 km/hr. Signs indicate if other speed limits apply.

The penalty for driving at 30 km over the speed limit is 45,000 kr. The penalty for speeding can be up to 110,000 kr, or even more, plus suspension of the driver's licence.



HOUSING BENEFITS

RENT BENEFITS

Housing benefits are intended for residents of Reykjavík as a financial aid to those who rent in the general market. Application service is provided at the city's 6 service centers and it's also possible to apply electronically through www.rafraen.reykjavik.is. Applicants shall have reach 18 years of age, hold a legal residence in Reykjavík and be able to show a signed rental contract that has been registered at the district magistrate.

For further information contact you nearest service center, either directly or through tel: 4 11 11 11.



Tryggvagata 17
101 Reykjavík
Tel: 411 9000
www.velferdarsvid.is



Stuffed with stuff

Our goal is to fight against racism and prejudice in society and while prejudice increases we will be there to protest things we find unjust and discriminating.

Dane Magnússon has formed The Anti-Racist Movement.
Page 6

I know it is really easy to develop a routine and hard to let go and live life to the full. It happens to all of us. So I suggest a trick: behave like a tourist.

A word of advice from Marie-Alexandra Hertell, who feels Icelanders are not appreciative enough for their country.
Page 8

What I mean is; irony is just a rhetorical device, there isn't infinite wisdom stowed in it.

Sprengjuhöllin's Bergur Ebbi is on a personal crusade against irony.
Page 12

Such a direct call for Tibetan freedom is a shocking gesture by a visiting artist.

Björk visited China, and roused the anger of the locals.
Page 15

From what I can gather, the legendary Cup of Christ should have arrived in Iceland with the intermediation of Dante Alighieri and Snorri Sturluson, and has been lying buried close to the Gýgjarsfoss waterfall ever since.

The Lonesome Traveller is not the only Italian in the Icelandic highlands with lofty ambitions.
Page 20



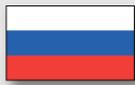
Tax returns are due by next March 26th

You can find a simplified tax return for individuals in several languages at www.rsk.is/international



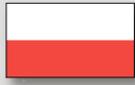
La fecha límite para hacer la declaración de impuestos es el día 26 de marzo

Se puede obtener una versión simplificada de la declaración de impuestos en diversos idiomas en la página www.rsk.is/international



Срок подачи налоговой декларации истекает 26 марта с.г.

Упрощенный вариант налоговой декларации на иностранных языках можно найти на электронной странице www.rsk.is/international



Ostateczny termin rozliczenia podatkowego to 26 marca

Formularz zeznania podatkowego (uproszczony) na stronie www.rsk.is/international

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Music, Art, Films and Events Listings · Eating, Drinking and Shopping · Map
plus Battle of the Bands · Iceland Press Photos · Aldrei fór ég suður



above Egill Sæbjörnsson exhibits at i8 (B14)

icelands best?
independent music!

new releases:



borko- celebrating life



morðingjarnir- áfram ísland!

icelandic music awards:



hjaltalín - sleepdrunk seasons

5 nominations!

best album
best singer
best song
best songwriter
most likely to succeed

please visit...

www.kimirecords.net



Art

Mutes at the Art Museum

On March 13, the renowned Icelandic artist Sigurður Guðmundsson opens a solo exhibition, 'Mutes', at the Reykjavík Art Museum. In his exhibition, Guðmundsson presents twenty photographic works, which he calls 'Speechless Kernels'. These are large-frame an-

logue photographs that show images of various individuals in different circumstances and states of mind. These pictures have never been displayed before and are his first works of photography since the 1980s. He has exhibited in most major European cities and his

large-scale sculptures can be found in public spaces throughout Scandinavia and Central Europe.

Reykjavík Art Museum (Hafnarhúsi),
Tryggvagata 17
March 13 – April 27

If you would like to be included in the Grapevine listings, free of charge, contact the Grapevine by email at listings@grapevine.is.

Music

■ 12 Tónar

Skólavörðustígur 15

Fri Mar 7: Concert: The Fist Fuckers, Skelkur i bringu and Swords of Chaos. Starts at 17:00.

Sat Mar 8: Concert: Jakobínarína. Starts at 15:00.

Mon Mar 10: Concert: Stilluppsteypa. Starts at 16:13.

■ **Austurbær**
Snorrabraut 37

Mon Mar 10: Músíktilraunir 2008 (Iceland's Battle of the Bands): Starts at 19:00

Tue Mar 11: Músíktilraunir 2008: Starts at 19:00

Wed Mar 12: Músíktilraunir 2008: Starts at 19:00

Thu Mar 13: Músíktilraunir 2008: Starts at 19:00

Fri Mar 14: Músíktilraunir 2008: Starts at 19:00

■ Barinn

Laugavegur 22

Fri Mar 7: DJ Ernir (1 floor) / DJ Ter-rordisco (2 floor)

Sat Mar 8: DJ 4/4

Wed Mar 12: Japanese night

Thu Mar 13: Triangle night

Fri Mar 14: DJ Manny (1 floor) / DJ Fknhdsm (2 floor)

Sat Mar 15: Hugsandi danstónlist

Wed Mar 19: Blues night

Thu Mar 20: DJ Sveinbjörn

Fri Mar 21: DJ Leifur (1 floor) / DJ Barcode (2 floor)

Sat Mar 22: DJ OR

Sun Mar 23: DJ Mio (1 floor) / Italo-

disco: live music and DJ set (2 floor)

Wed Mar 26: Unity hip-hop night

Thu Mar 27: Triangle night

Fri Mar 28: DJs Buzby and Eyþór

Sat Mar 29: DJ Árni Japan (1 floor) /

DJs Karius and Baktus (2 floor)

■ Brons

Pósthússtræti 9

Fri Mar 7: DJ Haukur Heiðar

Every Thursday: DJ Lucky

Every Friday: House DJs

Every Saturday: DJ Gauti

■ Café Paris

Austurstræti 14

Thu Mar 7: DJ Stjáni

Fri Mar 8: DJ Stjáni

Fri Mar 14: DJ A. Ramirez

Sat Mar 15: DJ A. Ramirez

Fri Mar 21: DJ A. Ramirez

Sat Mar 22: DJ A. Ramirez

Fri Mar 28: DJ A. Ramirez

Sat Mar 29: DJ A. Ramirez

Fri Apr 4: DJ A. Ramirez

Sat Apr 5: DJ A. Ramirez

■ Fríkirkjan Church

Laufásvegur 13

Fri Mar 8: Reykjavík Blues Festival

2008: Deitra Farr and Borgardætur.

Starts at 20:00. Tickets at www.midi.is

■ Gaukurinn

Tryggvagata 22

Sat Mar 15: DJ Premier. Starts at 23:00.

Tickets at www.midi.is

■ Háskólabíó

At Hagatorg

Thu Mar 13: The Icelandic Symphony

Orchestra: Easter concerts. Tickets at

www.midi.is

Sat Mar 29: The Icelandic Symphony

Orchestra: Maximus Musicus family

concert. Tickets at www.midi.is

Thu Apr 3: The Icelandic Symphony

Orchestra: A very special guest. Tick-

ets at www.midi.is

Fri Apr 4: The Icelandic Symphony

Orchestra: Concert for young people.

Tickets at www.midi.is

■ Hilton Nordica Hotel

Suðurlandsbraut 2

Tue Mar 8: Reykjavík Blues Festival

2008: Magic Slim and the Teardrops.

Tickets at www.midi.is

Wed Mar 19: Reykjavík Blues Festival

2008: The Yarbards. Tickets at www.

midi.is

Tue Mar 20: Reykjavík Blues Festival

2008: Five year anniversary. Tickets at

www.midi.is

■ Hressó

Austurstræti 20

Fri Mar 7: Tepokinn jazzband / DJ

Maggi

Sat Mar 8: Troubadours Alexander and

Örvar / D Maggi

Thu Mar 13: DJ Towels

Fri Mar 14: Concert: Dalton / DJ Maggi

Sat Mar 15: Troubadours Alexander

and Örvar / DJ Bjarni

Wed Mar 19: Public concert / DJ Maggi

Fri Mar 21: DJ Maggi

Sat Mar 22: Live music from 22:00 to

03:00

Thu Mar 27: DJ Towels

Fri Mar 28: Public / DJ Maggi

Sat Mar 29: Tepokinn jazzband / DJ

Maggi

Thu Mar 3: DJ Paul Wayne

■ Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Fri Mar 7: DJ Margeir

Sat Mar 8: DJ Maggi Legó

■ Laugardalshöll

Engjavegur 8

Fri Mar 14: Concert: Sálin hans Jóns

míns 10 year anniversary. Tickets at

www.midi.is

Sat Mar 22: Concert: Celebration of

The Beatles masterpiece 'Sgt. Pepper's

Lonely Hearts Club Band'. Tickets at

www.midi.is

■ Nasa

by Austurvöllur

Sat Mar 8: Exos.is presents: Sander van

Doorn. Starts at 23:00

Sun Mar 9: Concert: For a Minor Reflec-

tion. Opening acts are Ólafur Arnalds,

Shadow Parade and Hraun. Starts at

21:00.

Wed Mar 12: UNICEF benefit concert

Thu Mar 13: Standup (TBA)

Fri Mar 14: Concert (TBA)

Wed Mar 19: Flex Music presents:

D.Ramirez

Fri Apr 4: Concert: Low (US) and Skak-

kamanage. Tickets at www.midi.is

■ Organ

Hafnarstræti 1-3

Fri Mar 7: Jón Jónsson presents: Yuk-

sek (live). Tickets at www.midi.is

Sat Mar 8: Organ and 12 Tónar present:

Jakobínarína's farewell concert. Also

performing are Singapore Sling, Mam-

mút, DJ Lazer, DJ Sonic, DJ Faust and

Jakobínarína DJ Set.

Wed Mar 12: LHÍ's Music night: Diagon,

Coral, Shadow Parade, Toi and Kristín

Thu Mar 13: Steintryggur release

concert.

Fri Mar 14: Pop-Quiz at 18:00 / DJ Crust

Sat Mar 15: (TBA)



Music

Rock Festival for the Public

The annual Aldrei fór ég suður rock festival will be celebrated during the Easter weekend, March 21 and 22, in the remote town of Ísafjörður in the West Fjords. Since the inaugural festival in 2004, Aldrei fór ég suður has been permanently established as the pre-Airwaves music event of the year. Like many good ideas, Aldrei fór ég suður was born out of conversation over beer. Mugison, one of Iceland's most

celebrated musicians and Ísafjörður's own, and his dad, affectionately known as Papamug, had this crazy idea one night that it would be cool to invite top musicians to Ísafjörður to play second fiddle to the local talent, which would be the real star-attraction. The idea quickly moved from the concept phase to production phase. Every musician Mugison approached with the idea was generally excited and willing

to be a part of it. At the time of printing, the confirmed line-up includes: Bob Justman, Hjaltalín, Retro Stefson, Sprengjuhöllin, XXX Rottweilerhundar, Sign, SSSól, Mysterious Marta, Morðingjarnir and Múgsefjun, with more to be announced soon. Check www.aldei.is for further details.

Ísafjörður, March 21-22.

Tue Mar 18: Concert: Boys in a Band (FO)

Wed Mar 19: Weircore

Thu Mar 20: Monitor concert: Hjaltalín, Sprengjuhöllin and The Ghost (FO)

Sat Mar 22: Electronic Ethics (Red Symphony – Live), Sterio Hypnosis featuring Óskar Th. and his son Pan. Gjöll featuring Jói Eiríks. Ghost Digital, Inferno 5 and Paraselsus.

Wed Mar 26: Stand-up with Snorri Hergill

Thu Mar 27: Concert: Misery Index (USA)

Fri Mar 28: Pop-Quiz at 18:00

Sat Mar 29: Kraftwerk Orange night (Indie Disco)

Thu Apr 3: Monitor party

Fri Apr 4: Pop-Quiz at 18:00

■ Q-Bar

Ingólfsstræti 3

Fri Mar 7: DJ Tryllti Hjörtur

Sat Mar 8: Disco Theme Night: Diva De La Rósa and Ási

Sun Mar 9: DJ Ási

Thu Mar 13: DJ Sexual Chocolate

Fri Mar 14: Diva De La Rósa and Tryllti Hjörtur / Liquid Sky Theme Night

Sat Mar 15: DJs Kárius & Baktus

Wed Mar 19: DJs Eva María & Birna

Fri Mar 21: DJ Shaft

Sat Mar 22: DJ Manny

Sun Mar 23: DJ Anna Brown & DJ Kvikindi / Yellow Theme Night

Thu Mar 27: DJ Manny

Fri Mar 28: DJs Ýr & Ási

Fri Apr 4: Hip-hop weekend

Sat Apr 5: Hip-hop weekend

■ Reykjavík Art Museum

Tryggvagata 16

Sat Mar 15: Músíktílaunir 2008

(Iceland's Battle of the Bands): Finals! Starts at 16:00

■ Reykjavík City Theatre

Listabraut 2

Wed Mar 19: Eagles Tribute concert.

Tickets at www.midi.is

■ Vegamót

Vegamótastígur 4

Fri Mar 7: DJ Jónas

Sat Mar 8: DJ Danni Delux & DJ Jói

Thu Mar 13: Mr. GorilaFunk

Fri Mar 14: DJs Jónas & Símon

Sat Mar 15: DJ Anna

Wed Mar 19: DJ Jónas

Thu Mar 20: DJ Hjalti

Fri Mar 21: DJs Símon & Dóri

Sat Mar 22: DJ Símon & DJ JBK

Sun Mar 23: DJ Danni Delux

Thu Mar 27: DJ Símon

Fri Mar 28: DJs Jónas & Dóri

Sat Mar 29: DJ Jónas

Thu Apr 3: DJ Símon

Fri Apr 4: DJs Jónas & Dóri

Art

■ 101 Gallery

Hverfisgata 18

Thu.–Sat. 14–17 and by appointment

www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/

■ Artótek

Tryggvagata 15

Mon 10–21, Tue–Thu 10–19, Fri 11–19,

Sat and Sun 13–17

www.sim.is/Index/Islenska/Artotek

■ ASÍ Art Museum

Freyjugata 41

Tue–Sun 13–17

Free Entrance

Mar 8 - Mar 30

About a Woman

Exhibition by painter Sigurður Örlýgsson

■ The Einar Jónsson Museum

Eiríksgata

Tue–Sun 14–17

www.skulptur.is

Permanent exhibition:

The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson.

■ The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15

Open daily 11–17

www.thjodmenning.is

Permanent exhibitions:

Medieval Manuscripts; The National

Museum – as it was; The Library

Room; The Road to Zion; Berlin Excur-

sion.

Current exhibitions:

Surtsey – Genesis

The exhibition traces the emergence

and evolution of the island Surtsey

until the present day and predicts its

geographical and ecological develop-

ment over the next 120 years.

Journey's End - Jónas Hallgrímsson

1807-1845

This exhibition focuses on renowned

Icelandic scientist and poet Jónas Hallgrímsson and is a celebration of his 200th birthday.

The Nation and Nature

A nature film by filmmaker Páll Steingrímsson.

■ Dwarf Gallery

Grundarstígur 21

Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18–20

www.this.is/birta

■ Fotografi

Skólavörðustígur 4a

www.fotografi.is

Mar 8 – April 5

Nudity

Photographs by Anna Ellen Douglas.

■ Gallery 100°

Bæjarháls 1

www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/

Open weekdays from 08:30 – 16:00

Current Exhibition:

Kraftbirting

Photographic exhibition that focuses

on water.

■ Gallery Ágúst

Baldursgata 12

Wed–Sat 12–17

www.galleriagust.is

Mar 1 – Apr 5

Víma / Intoxication

Sara Björnsdóttir solo exhibition. The

exhibition consists of photographs and

video.

■ Gallery Fold

Rauðarárstígur 14–16

Mon–Fri 10–18

Sat 11–16

www.myndlist.is

Sun Mar 9

Auction of the museum's art collec-

tion. The auction takes place at Radis-

son SAS Hotel Saga at Hagatorg and

starts at 19:00.

■ Gallery Gel

Hverfisgata 37

Mon–Fri 13–18

Sat 11–16

Sun 14–16

www.myspace.com/gallerigel

■ Gallery Kling & Bang

Hverfisgata 42

Thursday - Sunday from 14-18

Free admission

this.is/klingogbang/

Mar 8 – Apr 5

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Upcoming concerts

EASTER CONCERT

THURSDAY, **MARCH 13TH** @ 7:30 PM

Conductor ::: Johannes Fritsch
Soloists ::: Dorothee Jansen and Terje Stensvold
Choir ::: Söngsveitin Filharmónía
Choir master ::: Magnús Ragnarsson
Bohuslav Martinu ::: Memorial to Lidice
Johannes Brahms ::: Ein Deutsches Requiem

MAXIMUS MUSICUS - A FAMILY CONCERT

SATURDAY, **MARCH 29TH** @ 14 PM

Conductor ::: Bernharður Wilkinson
Aaron Copland ::: Fanfare for the Common Man
Ludwig van Beethoven ::: Symphony nr. 5, 1st mvt
Maurice Ravel ::: Bolero
Sigvaldi Kaldalóns ::: A ride through the highlands

A VERY SPECIAL GUEST

THURSDAY, **APRIL 3RD** @ 7:30 PM

Conductor ::: Carlos Kalmar
Soloist ::: Robert Levin
Antonín Dvorák ::: Othello, overture op. 93
Ludwig van Beethoven ::: Piano Concerto nr. 3
Richard Strauss ::: Don Quixote, op. 35

NOW LISTEN!

FRIDAY, **APRIL 4TH** @ 9 PM

A CONCERT / PARTY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
Beethoven ::: Piano Concerto nr. 3

A LATE MASTERPIECE

THURSDAY, **APRIL 10TH** @ 7:30 PM

Conductor ::: Vladimir Ashkenazy
Soloists ::: Joan Rodgers (more to be announced)
The Reykjavík Opera Choir
Choir master ::: Garðar Cortes
Ludwig van Beethoven ::: Missa solemnis

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OR TEL. 545 2500

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Art

Kling & Bang Returns

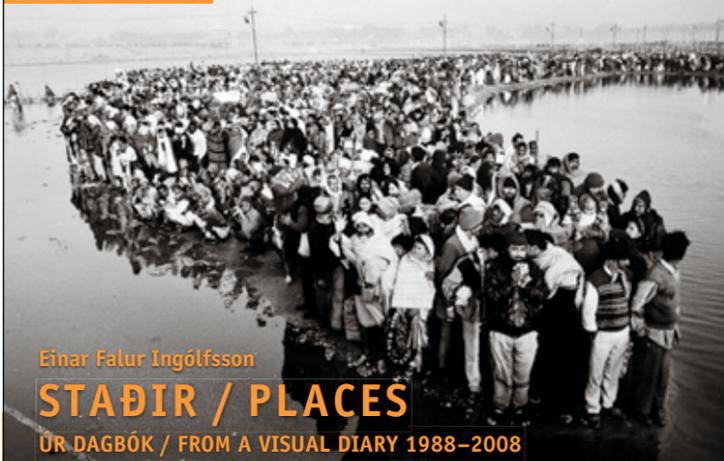
Due to demolition plans on Laugavegur, the artist run gallery Kling & Bang has been homeless for the past few months. The many art lovers that have flocked with anticipation to every Kling & Bang openings in the past can cheer up again, as the gallery has relocated at Hverfisgata and will open their new

premises on March 8. Artist Kristján Björn Þórðarson gets the pleasure to bless the new location with an opening exhibition. Entitled 'The Mirror has no Imagination,' the exhibition is described as a journey through the National Park of the human spirit and the walking paths of the mind. The open-

ing will be celebrated this Saturday and everyone is welcome. The party starts at 17:00.

Gallery Kling & Bang, Hverfisgata 42
March 8 - April 5

23.2.-25.5.2008



Einar Falur Ingólfsson

STAÐIR / PLACES

ÚR DAGBÓK / FROM A VISUAL DIARY 1988-2008



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The Mirror has no Imagination
Kristján Björn Þórðarson exhibition. This is the first exhibition at Gallery Kling & Bang's new location on Hverfisgata 42. Everyone is welcome to celebrate the opening on March 8. The party starts at 17:00.

■ Gallery Turpentine

Ingólfsstræti 5
Tue-Fri 12-18
Sat 11-16

www.turpentine.is

Mar 7 - Mar 22

Bernd Koberling exhibition

■ Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

Gerðuberg 3-5
Mon-Thu 11-17
Wed 11-21

Thu-Fri 11-17

Sat-Sun 13-16

www.gerduberg.is

Mar 4 - Apr 20

A Date with Collectors III

All of the pieces exhibited are connected with music in one way or another

Mar 4 - Apr 20

Boginn gallery: a Vision of Seven Lands

Artist María Loftsdóttir exhibits water-colour paintings

■ Hitt Húsið - Gallery Tukt

Pósthússtræti 3-5
www.hithusid.is

Mar 4 - Mar 12

Enchanted Trees

Exhibition by Jonny King

■ i8 Gallery

Klapparstígur 33
Tue-Fri 11-17

Sat 13-17 and by appointment

www.i8.is

Feb 28 - Mar 29

Exhibition by Egill Sæbjörnsson.

■ Living Art Museum

Laugavegur 26

Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17

Thu 13-22

www.nylo.is

Feb 2 - May 2

Hildigunnur Birgisdóttir exhibition

■ The Lost Horse Gallery

Skólastræti 1

Open on weekends from 13- 19 and by appointment on weekdays.

www.this.is/subaqua/losthorse.html

Mar 8 - Mar 31

Paul LaJeunesse exhibition. LaJeunesse is an American artist who primarily works with painting and realism. He has studied landscape painting and exhibits a collection of pen and ink paintings of Icelandic landscapes.

■ The National Film Archive of Iceland

Hvaleyjarbraut 13

www.kvikmyndasafn.is

The National Film Archive of Iceland screens old movie classics and masterpieces twice a week for 500 ISK per ticket.

■ The National Gallery of Iceland

Fríkirkjuvegur

Tue-Sun 11-17

Free Entrance

www.listasafn.is

Feb 23 - May 1

La Duré

Group exhibition featuring Emmanuelle Antille, Gabriela Friðriksdóttir and Guðný Rósa Ingimarsdóttir. The artists pay tribute to duration, the inner experience of time, in their varied and dissimilar approaches.

■ The National Museum

Suðurgata 41

Open daily 10-17

natmus.is/

Permanent exhibition:

The Making of a Nation

Feb 8 - May 4

Two-thousand-and-eight

Photographer Vera Pálsdóttir exhibits fashion photographs

Feb 8 - May 4

Exhibition based on Æsa Sigurjónsdóttir's research on Icelandic fashion

from 1860 to 1960.

Oct 20 - May 2

Ancient carved piney-boards found around the farm Bjarnastaðahlíð in Skagafjörður.

■ The Nordic House

Sturlugata 5

Tue-Sun 12-17

www.nordice.is/

Mar 8 - Apr 6

Nordic Thoughts from Mexico

Trine Ellitsgaard exhibition

■ The Numismatic Museum

Kalkofnsvegur 1

Open Mon-Fri 13:30-15:30.

Free admission.

Permanent exhibition:

The Central Bank of Iceland and the National Museum of Iceland jointly operate a numismatic collection consisting of Icelandic notes and coins.

■ Reykjavík 871 +/- 2

Aðalstræti 16

Open daily 10-17

Permanent exhibition:

The Settlement Exhibition

■ Reykjavík Art Museum - Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum

Sigtún

Open daily 10-16

Free entrance.

www.listasafnreykjavikur.is

Current exhibition:

The Shape of Line

A new retrospective of works by Ásmundur Sveinsson. The exhibition focuses on abstract works from 1945 onwards.

■ Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús

Tryggvagata 17

Open daily 10-17 and on Thursdays from 10-22

Free Entrance.

Feb 7 - Apr 27

Superheroes

Erró exhibition curated by Ólöf K.

Sigurðardóttir. The exhibition focuses



Art

Photographic Diary

An exhibition by photographer Einar Falur Ingólfsson is currently on display at the Reykjavík Museum of Photography. Entitled 'Places - From a Visual Diary 1988 to 2008' the exhibition features the photographer's diary for the past two decades where the entries are

recorded with a camera rather than a pen. As a photojournalist, Ingólfsson has travelled extensively around the world and the collection of photographs document a broad range of places, people and events the world over.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography, Tryggvagata 15 (6th floor) February 23 - May 25

on Erró's use of heroes from the world of comic strip
Feb 7 - Apr 27

Silence

Curator JBK Ransu has commissioned four well-known visual artists, Finnogi Pétursson, Finnur Arnar Arnarson, Haraldur Jónsson and Harpa Árnadóttir, to create an exhibition which revolves around silence.

Mar 13 - Apr 27

Mutes - Speechless Kernels

Photographic exhibition by Sigurður Guðmundsson

Mar 13 - Apr 27

D8: Exhibition by Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir

Reykjavík Art Museum - Kjarvalsstaðir

Flólagata

Open Daily 10-17

Free entrance.

Jan 5 - Apr 6

Jóhannes Sveinsson Kjarval - From the Museum's Collection.

Jan 26 - Apr 6

Selected sculptures by Nína Sæmundson (1892-1965) from the Reykjavík Art Museum's collection.

Jan 26 - Apr 6

Mikines - A Retrospective

A retrospective of the work of the distinguished Faroese painter Samuel Joensen-Mikines.

Sep. 8 - Apr 6

Architecture at Eyelevel.

Curated by Guja Dögg Hauksdóttir.

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Grandagarður 8

www.sjominjasafn.is

Closed for renovations.

Reykjavík Museum (Árbæjarsafn)

Kistuhylur 4

Open daily from 10-17

www.arbaejarsafn.is

Current exhibitions:

Building Techniques in Reykjavík 1840-1940; Disco and Punk - Differ-

ent cultures?; Christmas is Coming; History of Reykjavík - from farm to city; Memories of a House; Living and Playing

The Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Grófarhús, Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor

Weekdays 12-19

Sat-Sun 13-17

Free entrance

www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is

Feb 14 - Apr 8

Memories in Photographs

Photographs by Guðmundur W Vilhjálmsson

Feb 23 - May 25

Places - From a Visual Diary (1988 - 2008)

Photographs by Einar Falur Ingólfsson

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Laugarmestangi 70

Open Tue-Sun 14-17

Permanent exhibition:

Works of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson.

Start Art / Art Shop

Laugavegur 12b

Tue-Sat 13 - 17

Free entrance

www.startart.is

Mar 6 - Apr 2

Exhibitions by Rósa Sigrún Jónsdóttir, Hildur Margrétardóttir, Peter Anderson and Edda Þórey Kristfinnsdóttir.

Apr 3 - Apr 30

Exhibitions by Mary Ellen Croteau, Rafn Hafnfjörð and Aðalheiður Skarphéðinsdóttir.

Outside Reykjavík

Hafnarborg

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður

Mon.-Sun. 11-17

www.hafnarborg.is

Gljúfrasteinn

- Halldór Laxness museum

270 Mosfellsbær

Open daily except Mondays from

10-17.

Kópavogur Art Museum - Gerðarsafn

Hamraborg, Kópavogur

Open daily 11-17 except Mondays

www.gerdarsafn.is

Feb 23 - Mar 16

Press photos of the Year 2007

The Icelandic Museum of Design and Applied Art

Lyngás 7-9, 121 Garðabær

Opening hours: Tues.-Fri. 14-18; Sat. and Sun. 16-18.

www.mudesa.org

Exhibitions devoted to Icelandic design.

The Icelandic Settlement Centre

Brákarbraut 1-15, Borgarnes

Opening hours: May to Sep 10-20; Sep to May 11-17.

www.landnam.is

Permanent exhibitions:

The Settlement of Iceland: The Saga of Egill Skalla-Grimsson

Current theatre productions:

Brák - a monologue by Brynhildur Guðjónsdóttir

Mr. Skallagrímsson - a monologue by Benedikt Erlingsson

Suðsuðvestur

Hafnargata 22, Keflavík

Thu.-Fri. 16-18

Sat.-Sun. 14-17

www.sudsudvestur.is

Mar 1 - Mar 30

Illusion's Palace

Eyrún Aigurðardóttir exhibition

Vatnasafn / Library of Water

Bókhöðustígur 17, 340 Stykkishólmur

www.libraryofwater.is

Open daily from 11-17.

Permanent exhibition:

Roni Horn installation. She has replaced stacks of books with glass columns containing water gathered from Iceland's glaciers and glacial rivers.

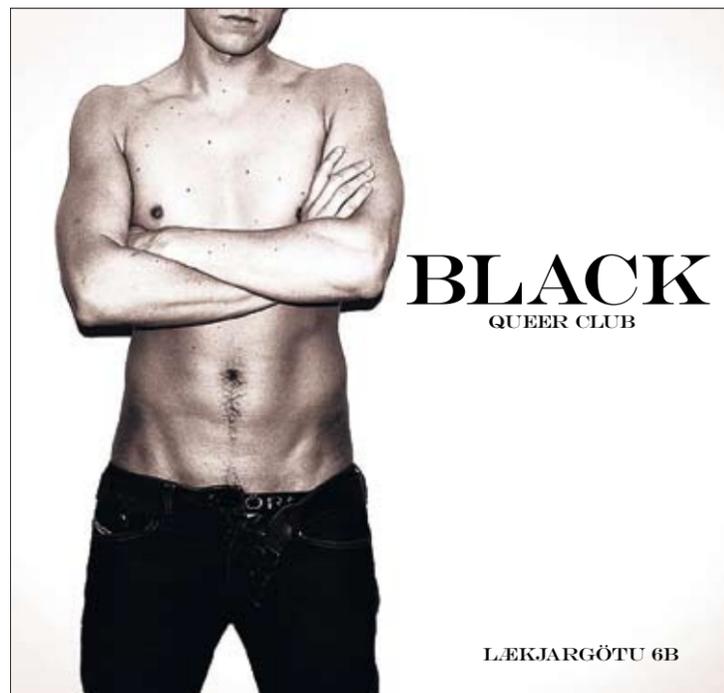
Sandgerði Museum

Gerðavegur 1, Sandgerði.



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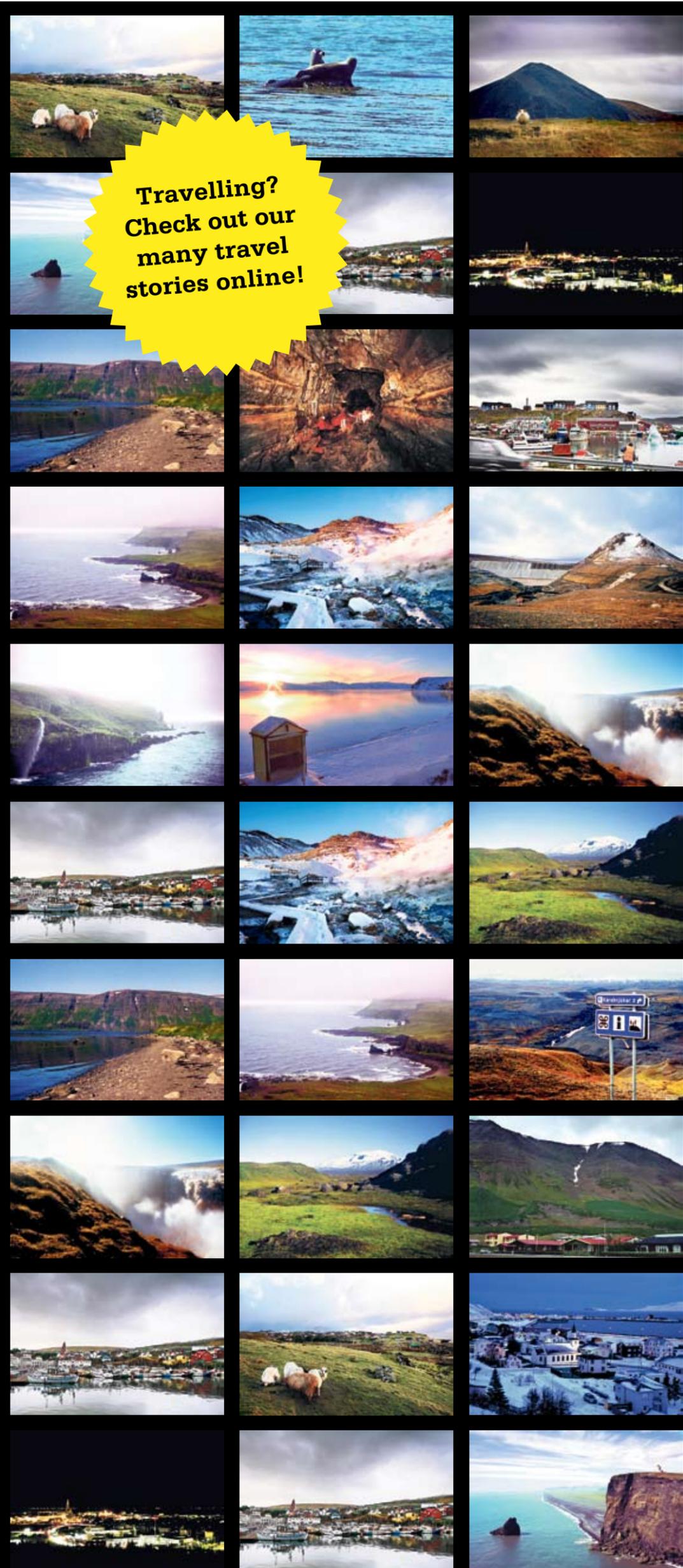
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Sacha sauce
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Film

Fjalakötturinn

During this Easter weekend, the Fjalakötturinn film club, in association with the Reykjavík International Film Festival, will screen five classic films by famed French filmmaker François Truffaut. Truffaut is perhaps best known for being a key member of the informal French New Wave which he broke ground for with his directorial debut, *Les 400 Coups*, in 1959. The five Truffaut films scheduled for screening span the early 60s and early 80s and include *Jules et Jim* (1962), *La Peau Douce* (1964), *Les*

Deux Anglaises et le Continent (1971), *Le Dernier Métro* (1980), and *La Femme d'à côté* (1981). *Jules et Jim* is set during WWI and centers around a love triangle between two bohemians who fall in love with the same woman. The film takes after a novel by Henri-Pierre Roché, which Truffaut described as "an ode to love and life itself."

For more information and a complete schedule, visit www.riff.is.

■ Jónas Viðar Gallery

Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri
Fri.–Sat. 13–18
www.jvs.is/jvgallery.htm
Feb 16 – Mar 9
Björg Eiríksdóttir exhibition

■ Akureyri Art Museum

Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri
Tue.–Sun. 12–17
www listasafn.akureyri.is

■ DaLí Gallery

Brekkugata 9, Akureyri
Mon.–Sat. 14–18
www.daligallery.blogspot.com

■ GalleriBOX

Kaupvangstræti 10, Akureyri
www.galleribox.blogspot.com

■ Current exhibition:

Þorbjörg Halldórsdóttir exhibition

■ Kunstraum Wohnraum

(Home gallery)
Ásabyggð 2, akureyri
Open by appointment. Tel.: 462 3744
Mar 16 – Jun 22

■ Ragnar Kjartansson exhibition

■ Skafffell

Austurvegur 42, Seyðisfjörður
www.skafffell.is
Mar 2 – Apr 27

■ El Grillo

Students from the Icelandic Academy of the Arts exhibit their artwork. The exhibition is an annual collaboration between the Dieter Roth Academy, Icelandic Art Academy and Skafffell.
Feb 15 – Mar 18

■ Bridge in a Bag

Bjarki Bragason exhibition

■ Regnboginn

■ **Be Kind Rewind**
Smárabíó, Regnboginn, Borgarbíó

■ Brúðguminn

Smárabíó, Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Selfoss

■ Dark Floors

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin Kringlan,

■ Death at a Funeral

Sambíóin Álfabakki

■ Into the Wild

Háskólabíó

■ Jumper

Smárabíó

■ Juno

Sambíóin Kringlan, Sambíóin Akureyri

■ Meet the Spartans

Sambíóin Selfoss

■ No Country For Old Men

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin Keflavík, Sambíóin Selfoss

■ P.S. I Love You

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin Keflavík

■ Rambo

Laugarásbíó, Sambíóin Selfoss

■ Step Up 2

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin Kringlan, Sambíóin Keflavík, Sambíóin Selfoss

■ Sweeney Todd: The Demon

Barber of Fleet Street

Sambíóin Kringlan

■ The Diving Bell and the

Butterfly

Regnboginn

■ The Kite Runner

Háskólabíó, Laugarásbíó, Borgarbíó

■ There Will Be Blood

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Háskólabíó

■ Underdog

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin Keflavík, Sambíóin Akureyri, Sambíóin Selfoss

■ August Rush (Mar 7)

■ The Orphanage (Mar 7)

■ The Bucket List (Mar 7)

■ Semi-Pro (Mar 7)

■ In Bruges (Mar 14)

■ The King of Kong (Mar 14)

■ 10,000 BC (Mar 14)

■ Awake Drama (Mar 14)

■ Lars And The Real Girl (Mar 14)

■ Horton (Mar 14)

■ The Fox & the Child (Mar 21)

■ Shutter (Mar 21)

■ Pathology (Mar 21)

■ Vantage Point (Mar 28)

■ The Other Boleyn Girl (Mar 28)

■ The Hunting Party (Apr 4)

■ Fool's Gold (Apr 4)

■ Doomsday (Apr 4)

Films

■ 27 Dresses

Smárabíó, Laugarásbíó, Regnboginn, Borgarbíó

■ Alvin and The Chipmunks

Laugarásbíó

■ Asterix at the Olympics

Smárabíó, Laugarásbíó, Sambíóin Keflavík

■ Atonement

Háskólabíó

■ Before the Devil Knows Your

Dead





Music

Even Vikings Get the Blues

The annual Reykjavík Blues Festival returns this March, with a very respectable programme that should attract blues lovers around the world. Out of Mississippi, the heartland of the blues, via Chicago and Nebraska, comes the legend Magic Slim, guitarist and singer, with his band The Teardrops. Slim captures the essence of the Delta-Chicago blues sound that countless blues artists have tried to emulate. From England come the Yardbirds, the legendary band that launched the careers of Jimmy

Page, Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck. The Yardbirds were at the forefront of the British Invasion in the 1960s and one of the catalysts in developing the modern sound of rock 'n' roll from 12-bar blues. Chicago's Deitra Farr is one of the top blues vocalists in the world. In addition, the cream of the crop of Icelandic blues musicians will perform.

Reykjavík Blues Festival – March 18-21

■ Fjalakötturinn

Mar 10: Leinwandfieber / Suden vuosi / Yella

Mar 16: Ketill + other short nordic films / Så som i Himmelen

Mar 17: Leinwandfieber / Suden vuosi / Så som i Himmelen / Suden vuosi

Mar 22: Truffaut weekend: Le Dernier Métro / La Peau Douce / La Femme d'à côté / Jules et Jim

Mar 23: Truffaut weekend: Jules et Jim / Les Deux Anglaises et le Continent / Le Dernier Métro / La Femme d'à côté

Mar 24: Truffaut weekend: Les Deux Anglaises et le Continent / Le Dernier Métro / Jules et Jim / La Peau Douce

Movie Theatres

■ Regnboginn, Hverfisgata 54

101 Reykjavík, Tel. 551-9000

■ Háskólabíó, Hagatorg

107 Reykjavík, Tel. 525-5400

■ Laugarásbíó, Laugarás

104 Reykjavík, Tel. 565-0118

■ Smárabíó, Smáralind

201 Kópavogur, Tel. 564-0000

■ Sambíóin, Álfabakki 8

109 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900

■ Sambíóin, Kringlan 4-12

103 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900

■ Sambíóin Akureyri, Ráðhústorg

600 Akureyri, Tel. 461-4666

■ Nýja-Bíó, Hafnargata 33

230 Reykjanesbær, Tel. 421-1170

■ Selfossbíó, Eyrarvegur 2

800 Selfoss, Tel. 482-3007

Events

■ Lókal Theatre Festival

March 5 – 9

Lókal is a non-profit international theatre festival held in Reykjavík. Lókal blends Icelandic theatre artists and traditions with influences from the theatre scene abroad. Among the artists visiting Iceland to take part in the festival are Richard Maxwell, who Variety listed as one of the most influential artists in America, Pavol Liska and Gaetan Vourc. With its unique goal and experienced participants, Lókal might be the event which will have the most profound effect on the dramatic arts in Reykjavík today.

■ Icelandic Music Awards

March 18

The Icelandic Music awards have been

an annual event since 1993. Although it started out as a small ceremony held by The Icelandic Musicians Association the awards are now a popular, televised event. The award ceremony will be broadcast live on RÚV, the public television channel.

■ Kvat - Station Gray: Last Stop

March 9 – March 14 – March 16

The Iceland Dance Company's February performance promises to be one of the largest this year. The company will show two different dances by two of the most influential dance composers today, Jo Strömgren and Alexander Ekman. Strömgren's "Kvat" focuses on dance styles that are not usually displayed on stage but are used when dancers show one another their skills. "Station Gray: Last Stop" by Alexander Ekman is a theatrical and comedic piece about the unattainable wish of eternal youth.

■ Lebowski Fest

March 8

A year ago, inspired young men decided to honor their hero "The Dude" by starting an annual "Lebowski Fest" where participants bowl, drink White Russians and watch the movie that drove them to this feat of greatness. 20 people attended. This year the hosts are hoping for a slightly larger crowd and with the press coverage, better organization and the ever growing fan base of what has to be called the most intellectually pleasing of stoner-comedies, their wishes might just come true. A costume competition with prizes will be held and the age requirement for entry is 20.

■ Embassy Opening – NSK

March 22

The artistic group NSK will open an "embassy" in Reykjavík on Saturday the 22nd. Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK for short) was formed in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 1984, when the experimental music group Laibach and their artistic collaborators declared NSK an independent state - "the first Global State of the Universe" - not of territory, but rather a "virtual state in time". NSK will undoubtedly bring much of the raw energy from the Eastern-European art scene with it to Iceland. The opening ceremony which will include a lecture by Dr. Alexei Monroe, who has a PhD in cultural theory studies, will be held at the Reykjavík Academy.

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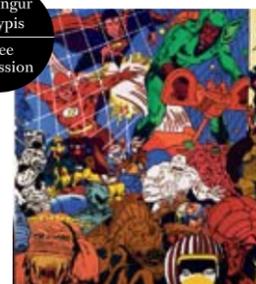
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1 EATING

Vor
Laugavegur 24

Vor's refreshing take on café-style dining is distinctive for its use of fresh ingredients and a health-conscious menu that emphasises French and Mediterranean cuisine. Fresh spring salad and carrot-ginger soup are excellent pick-me-ups on rainy days, and the coffee served is of the highest quality.

2 Jómfrúin
Lækjargata 4

If your stomach is aching for some traditional Danish smørrebrød with all the proper toppings, Jómfrúin is the place to go. Reasonably priced hearty dishes and a variety of lunch specials, Danish style of course, should satisfy anyone looking for a nice meal. Add to that a large Danish beer and a shot of Akvavit, and you have a cocktail that can't fail to impress.

3 Argentina Steakhouse
Barónstígur 11

True to its name, Argentina Steakhouse restaurant specialises in Argentinean steaks and has been cooking up juicy char-grilled steaks since 1989. The tender meat, excellent wines, generous portions and a selection of quality cognac, whiskey, liqueurs and cigars all add to its reputation as a place for fine dining in Reykjavik.

4 Icelandic Fish Chips
Tryggvagata 8

This is not the regular fish'n'chips diner but a healthy restaurant using only organic vegetables, quality fish products and no wheat or white sugar in its kitchen. Deep-fried catch of the day served with oven baked potatoes and Skyronnes – a sauce made out of the fat-free milk product Skeyr and flavoured with all sorts of spices – on the side is 1350 ISK.

5 Sægreifinn
Verbúð 8, Geirsgata

Located right next to the Reykjavik harbour, fish shop and restaurant Sægreifinn is truly like no other you'll experience in the country. The menu offers various fish dishes and a rich portion of the best lobster soup we've ever tasted. The good food and welcoming service make this place a must-try.

6 Við tjörnina
Templarasund 3

One of Reykjavik's classics, with a view over the pond and a menu dominated by traditional Icelandic dishes, this restaurant is just as popular among tourists as it is among Reykjavik's residents. The reindeer steak with port-wine sauce or the pickled herring and fermented shark served with Icelandic schnapps both come highly recommended.

7 Indian Mango
Frakkarstígur 12

Located on a quiet Laugavegur side street, Indian Mango has infused the Reykjavik restaurant scene with incredible delicacies originating in the rich food traditions of the Goa region in India, honed to perfection at Four Seasons during the owner's stint there as head chef. A local favourite, Indian Mango is known both for the quality of the food as well as the service.

8 Hornið
Hafnarstræti 15

This casual family-friendly Italian-style corner restaurant has been operating at the same location since 1979 and has become a steadfast part of the Icelandic dining-out tradition. Most famous for its pizzas and the generously stuffed calzone, the wholesome menu boasts all sorts of high-quality pasta dishes, as well as vegetarian and meat dishes, all easily affordable.

9 Sjávarkjallarinn
Aðalstræti 2

In an elegant setting, the Seafood Cellar chefs serve gourmet fusion-style dishes, where the emphasis is not only on the ocean's delights, but all sorts of tempting Asian-inspired dishes. The most fun is to order the exotic menu – an array of courses carefully selected by the chef – to share with your dining companions.

10 Hamborgarabúllan
Geirsgata 1

Frequently lauded by Iceland's hamburger aficionados as the best place to get a real hamburger in Reykjavik, 'Búllan' does indeed serve up some extra-tasty burgers that are sure to take the edge off any hangover. What makes it so good is hard to say, but liberal helpings of rare beef and the old-school basket you eat from contribute a lot to the experience.

11 Sushibarinn
Laugavegur 2

The Sushi Bar on Laugavegur has fast become the talk of the town among Reykjavik sushi-lovers, and for good reason as their rolls are among the best in the city. The whole atmosphere inside the small bar is a good blend of oriental tradition with the somewhat more familiar settings of the West.

12 Great Wall Restaurant
Vesturgata 6-8

This newly opened addition to the Reykjavik Chinese palate offers great service and a staggering 100-plus traditional Canton, Szechuan and Peking dishes, as well as a weekday lunch buffet. Specialties include the duck and the "magic hot plate."

13 Garðurinn
Klapparstígur 37

Ecstasy's Heart Garden, as Garðurinn is called in English, is a small, simple, friendly, family-operated vegetarian restaurant on Klapparstígur. The menu is no-nonsense, and consists of the ever-changing soup de jour and other daily specials. Open until 17:00, closed on Sundays.

14 Á næstu grösum
Laugavegur 20B

Many locals claim this to be the best vegetarian restaurant in town offering a menu with plenty of vegan and vegetarian options. Ask for the day's special or simply try the selection of three different courses. The Indian theme on Fridays is usually a hit and the sugar free banana cake is just one of the highly tempting desserts.



SPOT THIS: Organ

15

Hafnarstræti 1-3, 101 Reykjavik

This stylish two-floor bar and concert venue presents a diverse range of concerts by local and international acts at least four times a week. The venue features established bands

and young and emerging musicians. It can accommodate 300 people and has enough seats for weary concertgoers to rest between sets. Open until way past late on weekends.



15 DRINKING
Organ
Hafnarstræti 1-3

This stylish two-floor bar and concert venue presents a diverse range of concerts by local and international acts at least four times a week. The venue features established bands and young and emerging musicians. It can accommodate 300 people and has enough seats for weary concertgoers to rest between sets. Open until way past late on weekends.

18 Café Paris
Austurstræti 14

On a sunny day, Café Paris is one of the busiest outside cafés in the city centre, featuring fine food and attentive service. The stylish interiors, relaxing music and friendly evening atmosphere make it a cosy inside bar as well. DJs play soul and funk on weekends.

21 Hress
Austurstræti

A spacious neutral type of clientele where the menu specialties during the day and tab-beer are the norm. It becomes a somewhat lively weekend spot with a large amount of seats.

16 Belly's
Hafnarstræti

A spacious pub, yet the complete opposite of bright and airy, Belly's deserves praise for having the cheapest bar-price around, selling a large beer for only 390 ISK. Attracting a mixture of students, sailors and anyone who doesn't want to drain the wallet, there are enough tables for everyone and TVs on every wall for all you sports enthusiasts out there.

19 Café Cultura
Hverfisgata 18

Located inside the Intercultural Centre, Cultura is a restaurant/bar with a cosmopolitan feel, hosting an array of events and various theme nights such as Salsa lessons, tango nights and fusion parties. The menu features all sorts of international dishes like Thai soup, Spanish tapas, fajitas and falafel as well as bistro regulars such as sandwiches and salads.

22 Vegamót
Vegamót

Nothing really beats a Vegamót with its dishes served until the fish of the day, dishes that attract usually packed during hours every day of the kitchen closes, Vegamót is a popular hangout for trekkers into a lively nightclub.

17 Kaffibarinn
Bergstaðastræti 1

Kaffibarinn is a popular coffee place on weekdays, especially among students and downtown workers who like to enjoy a beer after a busy day. On weekends, it becomes a very lively destination as its two floors fill up with late-night souls. With DJs playing live sets from Wednesday to Saturday the party doesn't start winding down until early morning.

20 Kaffi Amsterdam
Hafnarstræti 5

Kaffi Amsterdam is a 101 tavern which seems to have been in business forever, as some of their decorations bear witness to. Recently reinvented as a live venue, weekends see some of Reykjavik's most rockin' bands strap on their guitars for some... rockin'. The beer's also cheap and you will get exposed to some 'colourful' characters.

23 Óliver
Laugavegur

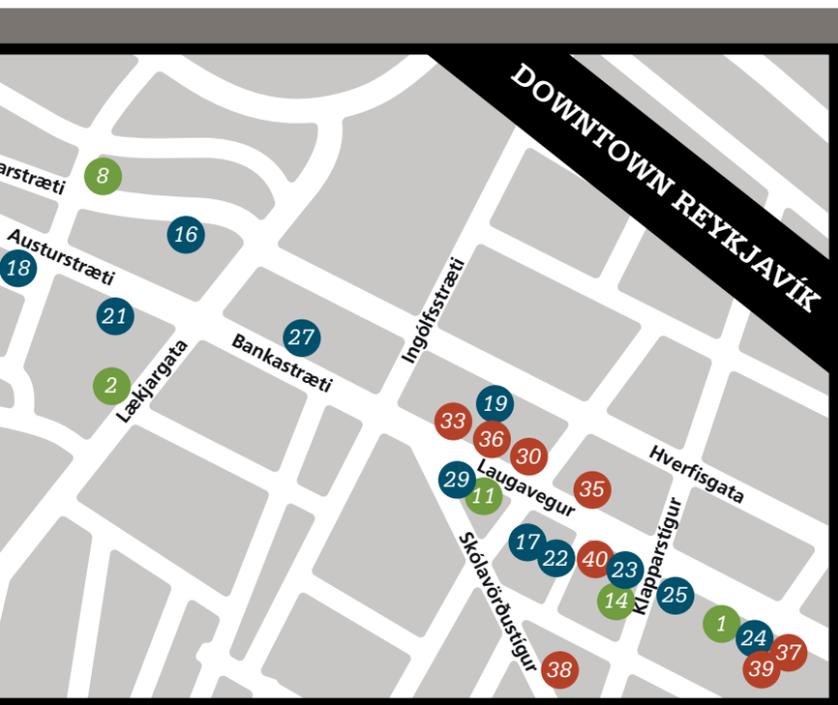
If you like trendy parties like crazy to a lively glamour is all that's missing a dance floor, nightclub for you. For those who hate that kind of conditioning, fine brunch served during the day. Óliver a recommended priced meals.

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30 SHOPPING

Cintamani Laugavegur 11

Cintamani stocks quality Icelandic outdoor-gear and travel equipment, guaranteed to keep the whole family nice and warm in any type of weather. Here you'll find almost everything needed for your trip across the country and beyond, and you can book an adventure excursion on the spot.

37 Laugavegur 28 Laugavegur 28

Four separate stores under one roof, second-hand clothing and accessories store Elvis, Rokk og Rósir and the Smekkleysa record store. In addition, the new store, Pop, supplies smart stuff for the home. The collective offers all kinds of unique clothing and ornaments.



31 Glamúr Laugavegur 41

Vintage clothing shop Glamúr stocks everything from second-hand boots, capes, Japanese kimonos and fur coats to 60's style party-dresses and big leather belts. A selection of glamorous necklaces and accessories will help sharpen the look. They just love vintage!

38 12 Tónar Skólavörðustígur 15

Walk into 12 Tónar on any day of the week and the friendly folk inside will sit you down, fix you a nice cup of coffee, and tear open jewel cases just to show you the latest in Icelandic music. A record label as well a record store, this place features all the best local music and hosts concerts almost every Friday at 5 pm.

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Tryggvagata 20 - Tel: 562-3456
www.grillhusid.is

32 Húfur sem hlæja Skólavörðustígur 18

Loosely translated as 'Happy Smiling Headwear', the shop's owners have designed whacky hats and headwear since 1994 and stock a good selection of warm handmade products for women and children at the downtown store. Check out the elf hats if you want to look different.

39 Spúútnik Laugavegur 32

Who knows why this hip second-hand clothing shop is named after the first Russian spaceship? Spúútnik is the one of the best second-hand stores in the country, with great recycled designer clothes at a range of prices. Expect to see the cream of the bohemian crop shopping here.

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33 Álafoss Shop Laugavegur 1

The downtown outlet store for the Álafoss factory – the famous makers of traditional Icelandic wool sweaters. Here one can also find woollen mittens, gloves, caps, scarves and blankets as well as other woollen goods.

40 Mál og menning Laugavegur 18

Mál og Menning book store occupies three levels on Laugavegur. It sells stationary, children's games, foreign newspapers, Icelandic books, CDs, postcards and souvenirs. You'll find the always-bustling café and the foreign book section on the top floor.



Charming seafood restaurant who offers the best in food and Wine

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34 The Viking Hafnarstræti 3

The large tourist shop The Viking sells all sorts of souvenirs and smart gift items to bring back home. The selection includes postcards, outdoor clothing, teddy bears, maps, books, woollen sweaters and plastic Viking helmets as well as Viking statues and shot glasses.

41 Friða Frænka Vesturgata 3

This small boutique is a treasure trove overflowing with antique furniture and items to perk up your apartment. In every corner of the shop, you'll find some unique items, including lamps, pillows, gorgeous 60's sofas, tables, and a selection of vintage jewellery.



The best Vegetarian Restaurant in the World?

Laugavegur 20b Tel: (+354) 552 8410
anaestugrosum.is

24 Boston Laugavegur 28b

At Boston, the casual atmosphere, stylish interiors, low-volume music and nice crowd create a laid-back vibe on any given day, ideal for early drinks and chitchats. The comfy two-floor bar provides plenty of seats and recently started serving great traditional Icelandic dishes to hungry regulars – try the 'kjötsúpa' (meat soup) and 'plokksúpa' (fish and potato dish).

27 B5 Bankastræti 5

By day, B5 is a chic little bistro with good food and a prime location on Laugavegur for people watching. By night, B5 is one of the most stylised bars in town, with a "whiskey room" resembling a buccaneer's jail, and another room reminiscent of a high-class Manhattan bar.

25 Barinn Laugavegur 22

Barinn is quite a popular hangout among Reykjavik party scenesters. Its three floors and equally many bars become quite crowded on weekends where its mix of dancing downstairs and chatting upstairs makes for a good night out. Though mostly a DJ bar, Barinn occasionally hosts live gigs and is always a fun party place.

28 Gaukurinn Tryggvagata 22

Also known as Gaukur á stöng, this is the oldest standing bar in Iceland. Gaukurinn is considered to be one of the rowdiest rock clubs in Reykjavik. This is the place to enjoy live music from upcoming bands (at a high volume) and some of the cheapest beer prices in town.

35 Blue Lagoon Store Laugavegur 15

The Blue Lagoon geothermal spa is a world famous healing spot as the water is rich with silica, minerals and algae, which are extremely good for the skin. The natural skin care products made from the geothermal seawaters active ingredients are sold at the downtown Blue Lagoon shop.

42 Dogma Laugavegur 32

Dogma offers street clothing with interesting prints. Hooded sweaters and shirts made by both Icelandic and foreign designers can be found, including the "How do you like Iceland?" shirt and band shirts from groups such as The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. You'll also find a Dogma stall in the Kringlan shopping mall.

26 Glaumbar Tryggvagata 12

Glaumbar follows in the American sports bar tradition as it boasts a humungous satellite television that broadcasts matches from across the globe. This is the place to be on the night of any big game. Glaumbar is also notorious in town for its late closing hours and loud music.

29 Kofi Tómasar frænda Laugavegur 2

With its basement location, Kofi Tómasar Frænda (Uncle Tom's Cabin) has the feel of a tucked-away alley café in London. During the day, the café has a relaxed feel with easy access to Laugavegur and Skólavörðustígur. At night, it becomes a happening and diverse bar.

36 Kisan Laugavegur 7

Kisan sells goods that you're unlikely to find elsewhere in Reykjavik. The selection is a mix of interesting items from around the world, such as high-street brands, children's clothing, household items, stationary, toys, DVDs and even books on Japanese street fashion.

43 Fígúra Skólavörðustígur 22a

The small designer shop Fígúra stocks a nice selection of fashionable Icelandic designer wear, from casual street-clothing to elegant party dresses. Fígúra is owned and run by six young designers in their early twenties who needed a place to sell their designs and promote other young designers in the meantime. The selection today features printed T-shirts, hair accessories, sweaters, leggings and more.

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Photos by GAS

Brons

Snow was falling heavily when the four of us arrived at Brons. We didn't quite know what to expect since the last time we'd been there the place had been called Kaffibrennslan and it hadn't exactly been renowned for its exciting menu. Upon entering I was glad to see that the old wooden and dreary furniture had been swept out to make room for a more modern, stylish and, I must say, tasteful interior. The comfortable atmosphere was further enhanced by the soft music of *Novelle Vague*.

Once seated our attentive waiter suggested that we let the chef decide our courses. This sounded like a good idea so we all settled on that.

While we waited for our first course I took a closer look at the menu. I must admit I had been expecting something resembling the old and boring menu of Brons' predecessor. Boy was I wrong. The only thing the two menus had in common was, well, just that – they were both menus. Brons' menu mainly consists of a good and exciting variety of tapas courses, but should you be in the mood for a more conventional meal like steak, burgers or salad you'll find that too.

For starters, the chef sent us cheesecake with smoked salmon, a surprising combination none of us had ever encountered. Despite being taken a little aback by this exotic blend, we were all pleasantly surprised. The rich taste of smoked salmon in conjunction with cheese and a crunchy crust made the dish one to remember.

Our main course consisted of three kinds of tapas. First we had chicken with mashed sweet potato. Next up was bruschetta with pesto, Parma ham and parmesan cheese. Last but not least was grilled lobster with garlic and chilli-mango salsa. All the dishes were absolutely delicious, my favourite being the bruschetta – there's just something about the salty taste of Parma ham I can't resist.

For dessert we had "Brons chocolate cake", which was certainly one of the highlights of the evening.

Brons simply has it all: tasty food, good wine and excellent service.

Address:
Pósthússtræti 9
Tel.: 578 2020

Reviewed by
Sverrir Hjálmarsson

Gullfoss

The Gullfoss restaurant is on Pósthússtræti, across the street from Hornið and Bæjarins Bestu. In spite of its modest neighbours, Gullfoss should by no means be considered cheap or everyday for us commoners: the restaurant is well suited for fine dining, for big or small parties.

The atmosphere at Gullfoss is good. The interior design is warmer than in many Icelandic restaurants and its minimal rustic feel is surprisingly charming. The black and white of every other eatery in town is nowhere to be seen. Instead, guests can enjoy the relief of a completely echo-free environment. The menu is classic, with a fine blend of traditional Icelandic produce and Southern European ideas brought together in a formal French style. I started the meal with a delicious monk fish carpaccio. The blend of monk fish, assorted greens and pink grapefruit was a fresh reminder of spring and a perfect companion to the meat that followed. Of course I tried my companion's lobster, which was good, but I liked the monk fish better. The main course was beef tenderloin and an open duck breast ravioli. I'm a big fan of beef and I was very excited to try Gullfoss' take on the tenderloin. Although the meat was cooked perfectly, I would have preferred the dish a little lighter and with more vegetables. The duck was a pleasant surprise and I was very jealous of my companion for ordering it. A much lighter meat than the beef, it was served in an open ravioli with delicious caramelised red onions. The combination had me begging my friend for more bites to taste – the sweetness of the red onions complimented the duck perfectly. For desert we had the "Choco Shock" and Crème Brûlée. The former is a must for every chocolate lover. The dish incorporates many different chocolate desert styles and together they melt into a fantastic chocolate orgasm. The always classic Crème Brûlée was well done too, especially in combination with the blood orange sorbet. Gullfoss is pricey – the main courses range from 3,200 to 4,700 ISK – but for an upscale restaurant the quality of the food easily justifies the prices.

Address:
Pósthússtræti 2
Tel.: 599 1030

Reviewed by
Helga Þórey Jónsdóttir

b5

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Iceland Press Photo

The Association of Icelandic Press Photographers recently awarded the press photo of the year. An exhibition of selected photos is on display in Gerðarsafn in Kópavogur until March 16. The Grapevine offers you a little sneak peak. Clockwise from top left: A weightlifter is pushed to the limit, this photo was awarded as the Sports Photo of the Year (Kristinn Magnússon); Continuous construction in Reykjavík (Hörður Sveinsson); Fire laid claim to two historic buildings in downtown Reykjavík this summer (Hörður Sveinsson); Memorial service for the dog Lúkas who was believed to have been brutally molested and left for dead but was later found alive (Rósa Jóhannsdóttir); Former West Ham Chairman Eggert Magnússon prepares for the day in his London Home (Valgarður Gíslason); Rescue helicopter approaches on a mission to save lost tourists in the highlands (Vilhelm Gunnarsson); A women surveys the damages from the Ungdomshuset riots in Copenhagen (Teitur Jónasson).





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Egill Sæbjörnsson, ready to get undressed and take on the world..Photo by GAS.



Art n' Roll

“I’ve had this vision ever since before I started art school, to experiment with art and music and mix the two together. But making music has always been more of a passion than anything else.”

Egill Sæbjörnsson is one of Iceland’s leading young artists. For the past nine years, he has been based in German’s creative capital Berlin, lived in Rio de Janeiro and travelled the globe to exhibit his curious and often humorous creations. At Gallery i8 on Klapparstígur, Sæbjörnsson recently opened his first exhibition in Iceland for almost two years.

In his exhibition he deals in an intriguing way with various conceptions of reality and interprets the way art can reflect the way people experience their existence and surroundings. The exhibition features three new video-installations in which sounds, everyday objects and animated videos combine in an unusual way. One displays three coloured glass-bottles, another three rocks he found in Brazil and the third shows various plastic items. These objects are lined up in front of video projectors that project animated images of coloured lines and forms on the objects, which then cast a shadow onto the walls behind and create a new picture. While all the different shapes and colours stimulate the imagination, exotic sounds recorded in Brazil’s forest create a soothing atmosphere inside the gallery.

“I’ve been focusing on works where I project a video onto an object. For me, this makes you consider that when you look at an object you are always projecting the ideas you have about this object onto the object,” he explains and adds that this could represent the way we project our imagination onto reality.

Sæbjörnsson has worked with a range of media but video-installations and animation have been prominent in his previous art works. “I stud-

ied art [at the Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts and at the University of Paris, St.Denis] and my background is drawing and painting. What I’m doing today is sort of a continuation of that. I use technology that landscape painters like Ásgrímur Jónsson and Kjarval didn’t have back in the days when they painted pictures of, for example, Mt. Hekla. I’m sure that those painters would be working with video and video-installations to interpret their surroundings if they were young today. That’s a modern way to look at the world, a logical continuation of the painting. I don’t want to be misunderstood, that I’m saying that painting is dead, like some people always have to focus on. This is rather just a step forward.”

A Replica of Reality

Sæbjörnsson goes on to explain how he has always been particularly fascinated with video and animation: “When you look at a painting, of perhaps two people sitting at a table inside a house, talking, first you might see what these two people look like. Then you notice the red wallpaper in the background and a window in the corner. Outside the window you see a clear blue sky and perhaps a hearse driving by. With a painting like this, of course someone is trying to tell a story. You look at this picture and a storyline starts to unfold inside your head, creating a sort of video. I always wanted to make pictures that could move and that’s why I started working with animation. That’s just like a moving painting. What I also find interesting is how the video is a replica of reality. I find it interesting to work with this replica on the one hand and the real items on the other. To have a

video-image projected onto reality.”

Music is an integral part of Sæbjörnsson’s art creations. He’s been writing music since he was 14, released his first album, “The International Rock ‘n’ Roll Summer of Egill Sæbjörnsson”, in 1998 and the LP “Tonk of the Lawn” two years later. His passion for art and music often merges in his performances and exhibitions. “I’ve had this vision ever since before I started art school, to experiment with art and music and mix the two together. But making music has always been more of a passion than anything else. When I released ‘Tonk of the Lawn’ it was just because I had fun making that kind of music at that time.” The album received well-earned attention and many fans are waiting for the next release. “I’ve been planning to release an album for a long time. I’ve written loads of songs and even recorded them.” So what’s the hold up, I ask. After some contemplation he replies: “I really don’t know”.

Egill Sæbjörnsson’s exhibition is open until March 29. Gallery i8, Klapparstígur 33, www.i8.is.

By Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

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NORRÆNA HÚSIÐ

Shogun, winners of last year's Battle of the Bands. (Actually, this is not Shogun's singer, as he missed the event due to a previous engagement. This is Celestine's singer Axel who filled his shoes for the show.) Photo by Billi.



When the Garage Doors Open

The new romantics had left off and the happy-go-lucky pop bands found that they didn't have many voters among the crowd that once hailed them. Instead, death metal bands dominated the contest until finally the more intellectual alternative rock took over.

Since 1982 Iceland's very own garage band music competition, Battle of the Bands (Icel. Músiktilraunir), has taken place annually. The competition has allowed young artists to gain more attention in the Icelandic music scene than they otherwise could have hoped for, as well as providing the top three bands with studio hours, industry connections and priceless attention. Instead of only playing small venues for their parents, teachers and friends, young musicians found an opportunity to play in front of music enthusiasts as well as to be heard on the radio and sometimes gain national fame. Many young musicians have competed during the 25 years or so in which the competition has been held. The once modest contest now admits about 50 bands every year and many others have to be turned away.

The Beginning

The competition should not be confused with The Global Battle of the Bands, or any other competition by that name. The Icelandic version has been running for almost fifteen years longer and has produced a few very popular acts, at least in Iceland.

Even in the first years of the competition the media paid attention. The all-girls band Dúkkulísurnar (Eng. The Paper Dolls) won in '83 and got considerable radio play. In '86 a band from Húsavík, Greifarnir (Eng. The Counts), exploded onto the Icelandic pop-music scene and enjoyed wide popularity for a couple of years. At the height of their fame the band received so much attention that it became a small time mania. Teenagers cut their hair to emulate their look and the trendset-

ting singer (his glasses also became a hit), Felix Bergson, became a national celebrity – today he's a well known actor.

A couple of other borderline boy-bands followed in the late '80s but in the '90s the music scene changed and so did the bands that competed. Around 1990 rock 'n' roll picked up where the new romantics had left off and the happy-go-lucky pop bands found that they didn't have many voters among the crowd that once hailed them. Instead, death metal bands like Infusoria (later Sororicide) dominated the contest until finally the more intellectual alternative rock took over. Many of the winners in the '90s became very popular in Iceland. 1992's winners, Kolrassa Krókríðandi (Eng. Bellatrix), performed abroad, as did Botnleðja (Eng. Silt) and Mínus – both winners in the '90s. Maus ('94) became a very well known name in Iceland as did Stjörnukisi and Yukatan.

New Sounds

In the year 2000 the hip-hop band 110 Rottweiler hundar (Eng. 110 Rottweiler dogs) won the competition and started a powerful wave of homemade hip-hop in Iceland. Árni Matthíasson, a music writer at Morgunblaðið, has led the panel of judges in the competition almost from the beginning and has seen different fads come and go. He points out that Battle of the Bands "serves as a glimpse into the garage and therefore a window into the future of the Icelandic music scene". Rottweiler's success is a good example of how freshness can move the scene because in the years that followed their victory Icelandic hip-hop became very popular. Countless rappers and producers gained fame

and paved the way for a more innovative music scene in later years. In the years 2001-02, dozens of hip-hop albums came out in Iceland, which is a lot for a small market. Rottweiler shrewdly used Battle of the Bands to their benefit and their debut album went platinum.

Grass Roots Competition

It's important to remember that the competition also serves as a breeding ground for young musicians. Members of well known bands such as Sigur Rós and Quarashi started out in Battle of the Bands and 2005's winners, Jakóbínarína, have gained favourable reviews in the international music press. The competition doesn't only produce musicians but also movers and shakers in the industry such as concert promoters, music writers and editors as well as TV personalities.

The winning bands of the new millennium are different from each other but still a valuable part of the music scene – perhaps they represent the diversity we now face as more music genres co-exist than ten or 20 years ago. According to Árni Matthíasson, the professionalism of the judging process has become higher over the years. He adds that the competition is still an "important step for new bands to gain experience and a chance to step into the limelight".

This year's Músiktilraunir will take place in Austurbær, March 10-14, with the final night at the Reykjavík Art Museum, Hafnarhús, on March 15.

By Helga Þórey Jónsdóttir

Breakfast special



Cappuccino + bagle + yoghurt = 650 kr.

roma Rauðarárstígur 8

MUSIKTILRAUNIR 2008

- 1982 - *Lron*
- 1983 - *Lakkublaumar*
- 1984 - *Trekfall kennara keppi fell vidur*
- 1985 - *Gipsy*
- 1986 - *Grefjarnir*
- 1987 - *Stadkompanið*
- 1988 - *Sjón*
- 1989 - *Laglausir*
- 1990 - *Habbastengir (Ambulans)*
- 1991 - *Tafasoria (Svarir)*
- 1992 - *Kolrasa Keokridandi (Kallar)*
- 1993 - *Tuktan*
- 1994 - *Maus*
- 1995 - *Botuleja (Sill)*
- 1996 - *Hjörnakísi*
- 1997 - *Sódn Tíða*
- 1998 - *Stær*
- 1999 - *Maus*
- 2000 - *XXX Rottweiler hundar*
- 2001 - *Snúllur*
- 2002 - *Búkyggindi*
- 2003 - *Váðalengir*
- 2004 - *Mannútt*
- 2005 - *Jakobinnarinn*
- 2006 - *The Foreign Monkeys*
- 2007 - *Shogun*

Music Festival 10th to 15th of March

Music Festival/Competition
Discover the next big thing
 Semi-finals from 10th to 14th of March
 in Austurbær, starts at 19:00h,
 ticket price: 800 kr.
 Finals on saturday 15th of March
 at Reykjavik Art Gallery in Hafnarhúsið,
 starts at 17:00h, ticket price: 1000 kr.
 For more info go to:
www.myspace.com/musiktilraunir

