

Grapevine Airwaves / Sunday

Featured inside:

Chromeo
Ólöf Arnalds
Grizzly Bear
Skátar
and many more



Rockers of the roundtable by Jói Kjartans





Photo by Gúndi

From the editor

This year's Airwaves has been a beautiful experience. For me it has not been the festival per se that has lifted my spirit, but rather the unique opportunity I have had to work with some great people who volunteered their work to be a part of this publication and this madness that we know as the Icelandic Airwaves. I can only hope that they have gotten as much out this as I have.

This is the third time the Reykjavík Grapevine has taken on the challenge of creating the Grapevine Airwaves, a daily publication of reviews, interviews and other stuff that Airwaves guests might find informative, enjoyable, useful, or none of the above. It was a crazy idea to begin with – doomed for failure, really. But somehow we made it work. My predecessor on the job, Bart Cameron, deserves

a shout-out for his vision in putting this together and showing us how this could be done without losing our minds, collectively. (Actually, we did lose our minds, on more than one occasion, but as luck has it, there was always someone around to pull our shit together.)

The Airwaves this year is the biggest festival so far. With 240 acts playing, it was surely a mixed bag of goodies. Some if was mindblowing, some of it... not so much. But as one of our more established contributors here at the Grapevine Airwaves summed it up: buy the ticket, take the ride. Truer words were never spoken. At least not this weekend.

So, how was my Airwaves you ask. Busy, that's the best description I could give you, really.

Between putting this thing together and trying to get some sleep, I was busy trying to cram in too many bands that I wanted to see in too short of a time. I wish I had seen more bands so I could tell you about highlights, but I hardly feel qualified to drop names based on the all too few bands that I managed to see. Next year I hope to do better.

Look, I know that the Airwaves is supposed to be about the music. To me, however, it will always be about the people. No matter who you put on stage, it all comes down to the people. What makes the Airwaves special is you. The people.

I've enjoyed, I hope you did too.

Festival highlights from our contributors

J. Edward Keyes
eMusic.com

For me, the high point of Airwaves was the sense of enthusiasm. Whether they were playing spritely pop or unrelenting death metal, all of the acts seemed to radiate a genuine joy at the prospect of being on stage. My three favourite shows: <3 Svarhvit!, Strigaskor nr. 42 and the awesomely terrifying Changer.

Ben Murray
VirtualFestivals.Com

This was my first festival in Iceland and if I'm not back by the opening night of Airwaves next year please find, sedate and fly me via DHL (baggage hold class) to Reykjavik immediately. Hraun, Petur Ben, Hafdis Huld and The End made me say this.

Christian Hoard
Rolling Stone

Musically, my highlights were Hoffman, Mugison and !!! – bands that sound nothing alike. Over three years of coming to Airwaves, I've appreciated the strange-bedfellows nature of Airwaves shows – those mishmashes of punks, singer-songwriters, and arty, exuberant natives. I also appreciate your beautiful city, your hospitality, and the even the way you drink like fiends on the weekends. Thanks, Iceland.

Don Bartlett
Chicago Innerview

For good or for ill, at Airwaves bands are aiming at something unique. Often times it pierces the eardrums, but once in a great while you get a Mr. Silla, a Hjaltalin, or a Lights on the Highway. The common thread is that these young artists set their aim at something profound; a goal that is more rare than it ought to be.

Lauren Strain
Plan B Magazine

For me, Iceland Airwaves was all about being trapped in the photographers' pit between the lurching crowds and costumed nutters from Of Montreal; never was anything so colourful, so bizarre, or – frankly – so god-damned hot. In both senses of the word.

Andy Battaglia
The Onion

Airwaves for me involved sleeping too little, drinking pear-soda too much, and meeting more people who commune with music for the right reasons than I had in a long, long time. I was surprised to learn that Icelanders push harder in bars than anyone in New York would ever dream to – not as surprised, however, as I was to see them smile all the while.

Katie Hasty
Billboard Magazine

When I ran into Chris Bear of Grizzly Bear at Organ, we talked about writing meaningful music in a time of political/environmental/economic/religious strife. We decided it best to artistically tend one's own garden, to fix the things that can be fixed. I fixed myself a pocket cocktail.

Jonah Flicker
Village Voice Media

The exotic locale (for us Americans), the drunken rabble crawling the streets at six in the morning, local gems playing alongside indie-rock faves, being offered a menu item with "human-like eyes" (turned out to be seal)... my second time at Airwaves, and this festival hasn't lost its charm, energy, or unpredictability.

Sunday Schedule

Gaukurinn

00:00 **Cut off Your Hands** (AUS)
23:15 **Sudden Weather Change**
22:30 **TBA**
21:45 **Piknikk**
21:00 **BonSom**

2.000 ISK / Passholders free

Organ

00:00 **Plants and Animals**
23:15 **Buck 65**
22:30 **Coral**
21:45 **Helgi Valur & Shemales**
21:00 **Hestbak**

1.000 ISK / Passholders free

NASA

22:15 **Magic Numbers**
21:30 **Horsebox**
20:30 **Skakkamanage**

Photographers

Gunnlaugur Arnar Sigurdsson (GAS)
gulli@grapevine.is
Jóhannes Kjartansson (Jói Kjartans)
www.joi.is – joi@jl.is
Guðmundur Vigfússon (Gúndi)
www.vigfusson.com – vigfusson@vigfusson.com
Emma Svensson
www.emma.rockfoto.nu – emma@rockfoto.nu
Arni Torfason
www.torfason.is – arni@torfason.is
Óskar Hallgrímsson (Skari)
www.myspace.com/skari – skari@remax.is
Leó Stefánsson
www.leostefansson.com
photo@leostefansson.com
Rúnar Sigurður Sigurjónsson
www.r.sigurjonsson.org – r@sigurjonsson.org
Hrefna Sigurðardóttir
www.flickr.com/photos/hrefna_S
hrefnastefna@hotmail.com
Héðinn Eiríksson
hedinne@gmail.com

Masthead

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Assistant Editor: Steinunn Jakobsdóttir
Art Director: Gunnar Þorvaldsson
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Photo by Gündi

The Bronx

Last Thursday at Gaukurinn, LA punkers The Bronx raised the bar for every future Airwaves show with their ferocious delivery of aggressive and obnoxious punk. Shortly before the show, The Grapevine talked to singer Matt Caughtran.

"I don't know how that happened. It was amazing. We had all been in other bands for so long that nobody really gave a shit about. Then you meet the right people and connect with the right guys, and all of a sudden you have a three song demo, and there are 12 labels at your second show and they fly you out to New York and want to give you a bunch of money, taking you to dinner and all this shit. I'm not going to lie, it was absolutely wonderful and it was completely insane. To this day, it still doesn't make sense to me."

Matt Caughtran likes to talk. Ask him a question, and he'll go on and on and on. He is short and stocky, and has a penchant for taking his pants off at any given moment. He is telling me about how his band was formed, and subsequently signed to Island Records after twelve live shows. "It happened and I am really thankful that it did. I think there is something important about this band. I think that when we get together and make records and play, I think it is something creative and beautiful and think that we haven't quite been able to make the statement that we wanted, hopefully this record will do it."

Unlike many punk acts, The Bronx did not go through the usual underground-indie-label chase before arriving at the majors. As a result, they have never had to suffer the wrath of their fans for abandoning their roots, like Gainesville punkers Against Me! who have been chastised for leaving the indie-label Fat Wreck Chords in favour of Sire Records, a subsidiary of Warner Music, on their most recent release, New Wave. "I think that's retarded man," Caughtran says. "Against Me! is a great band. It is horrible to have worked so hard in your life to get to that point, and then you get to that point and everybody turns their back on you. That is a horrible feeling," he adds, and as is to be expected, he has few more words on the subject:

"That is a part of the punk scene that I will never understand. It would be one thing if Against Me! would have totally changed. If a band changes when they sign to a big label, their music changes and they become total assholes, and everything they stood for goes out the window, I can understand that, but that's didn't happen. There is this mystique in the punk world about major labels. I don't care about that. I know who I am as a person, and I know who my friends are, my band mates, and I don't actually care what people think about us and who we are signed to. It all boils down to whether we are happy making the records we are making. If people dig it, that's cool, if they don't, whatever, that's cool too. You don't see a bunch of punks in the street come to the defence of bands that get ripped of by the independent labels. You don't

see them come to the defence of those bands by helping them out. You know, a crook is a crook, and crooks are everywhere in music; they are at the clubs, they are running independent labels, they are running major labels. They are everywhere man. It's just a sack of lies. It doesn't matter where and how you put out a record, as long as your intention is true and as long as it is in the name of the music and creative expression."

In recent years, the punk movement has had its base on the US East Coast, as The Bronx acknowledge in a way, by having one of the five boroughs as their namesake. So how is the LA punk scene developing? "The good thing about LA is that there is so much normalcy that there is always going to be something to counteract that," Caughtran states. "The punk scene in LA is not so much about 'punk music.' It is more about just doing things against the standards and the status quo. There is plenty of that and there is never a shortage of bands in LA that are good and are doing something different. As long as people are doing something creative and straying away from the standards, as long as that's alive and well, I think the punk scene will be fine."

Caughtran was born and bred in LA, in a mostly Hispanic neighbourhood, a fact that he is going to celebrate by naming one of their two upcoming albums El Bronx, instead of The Bronx, as every other record they have ever put out. I ask Caughtran why the band has never named their records: "The reason for that is that [guitarist] Joby has a real great gift as far as graphic design goes and art, and we wanted the records to be distinguished by the covers and the artwork rather than the titles."

The first record Caughtran ever heard was Powerslave by Iron Maiden. It was his sister's. "I was super into metal, 'cause that's what she was into. When I started to discover music on my own, I immediately heard punk and I was just blown away by bands like 7 Seconds, Bad Brains and Black Flag. Those bands really fucking turned me on, it was like a switch in my head," Caughtran says. "I am so thankful for that. It is always going to be a huge part of my life. Now it is all about making my own stamp and making my own mark on this genre and music in general. I want to make as much music as I possibly can while I am on this earth, and I want to leave behind a trail of records with my name all over it."

Here is hoping he does.

Words by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

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Interview



Photo by GAS

Ólöf Arnalds

Twenty-seven-year-old Ólöf Arnalds is one of Iceland's newly discovered gems. Having collaborated with high-calibre musicians in the local scene for years, Arnalds released her debut solo album, *Við og við*, with 12 Tónar last February.

You've been quite prolific at working with Icelandic musicians and people from the scene. What effect does that have on your more private music? On Skúli's record for example, where you got to have some creative input.

On Skúli's record, it's all his songs, but I had my say with some arrangements and the building of some lines and some things like that. But it was writing lyrics that was most important for me because I really just started to write lyrics when I was working with Skúli. I started to trust myself to do it.

For the first time then?

Yeah it was the first time that I started to write lyrics. So that probably had a lot of influence in steering me in the direction of making my own songs. It was something that, well that I had always dreamed about... making my own music. It was something that I always had the feeling was something I wanted to do.

You've been working with múm for almost four years, but there perhaps you are mostly playing someone else's material. How important has it become for you to write your own music and lyrics? You still play with various other bands.

It's of course just very important I suppose, because then you stand and fall with what you are creating and aren't just adding into something that's already underway. And it is of course just expression and a desire perhaps to say something or sing something that is, well it's just an outlet for the creative impulse that I think everyone possesses.

But at the same time do you find it important to have something on the side, to be working in something that is maybe not wholly yours.

I think every collaboration stimulates you in some way and teaches you something. Like just a few days ago I rehearsed for the Lee Hazelwood tribute concert. I was in the band that played those songs, and it was just being a part of it, rehearsing a whole program of someone else's songs, you just listen and become inspired in a way, collect something into your vocabulary. It is essentially just that I think, kind of like a vocabulary.

How is music fitting into your life? Is this something that you can see yourself working at far into the future?

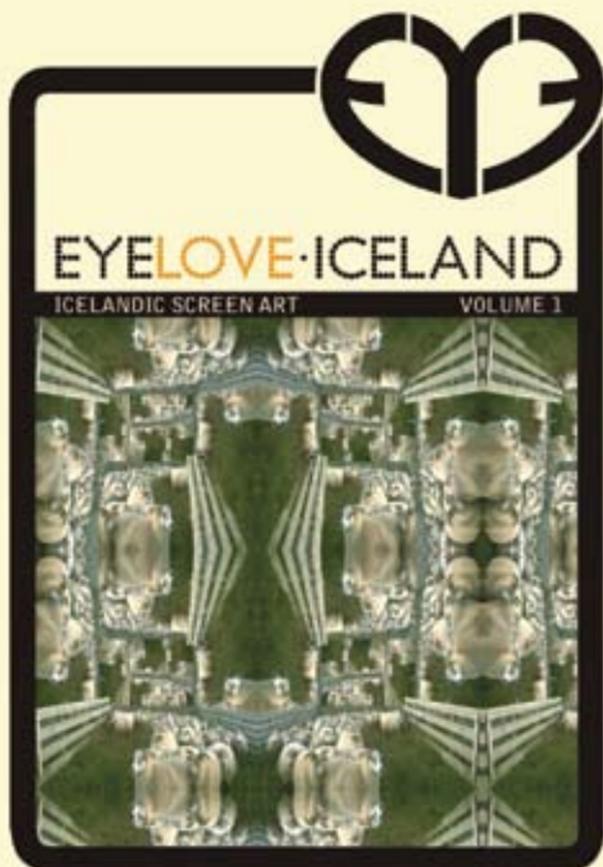
I've just recently been able to have employment first and foremost from music. Now, since the record came out, and it's a fantastic place to be at. But I don't know. I'm really in between daring to take myself seriously enough so that I see this as the only thing I want to do, and then sometimes I get the feeling that, to a certain extent, I think it's important to be able to feel that you can always pack up and go and do something completely different. When I can feel that, that theoretically I have that option, I'm more content with the place I'm at.

Maybe that's something that you fall into, when you've reached a certain level of recognition, when you have enough big projects in the works so that maybe concentrating on something else isn't an option.

Yeah and of course you see that happen. You meet people who you get the feeling have lost some enthusiasm for what they're doing. It's just their job. But it's exactly that about the enthusiasm, you find as soon as you've gained recognition you have to really watch yourself and hold on to it. To feel always like you're just on square one, that's such a good place to be.

Words by Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

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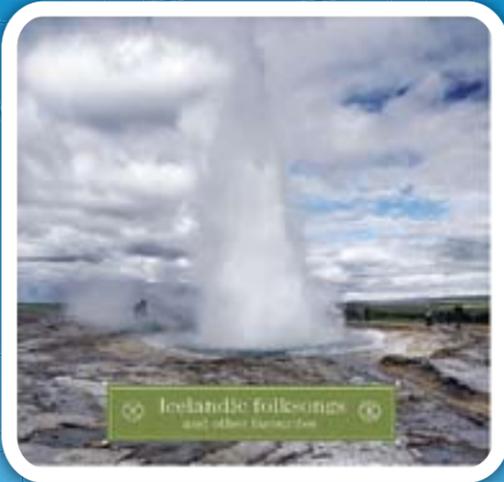


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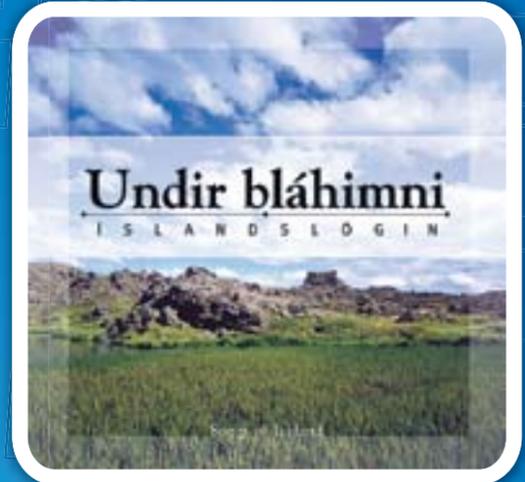
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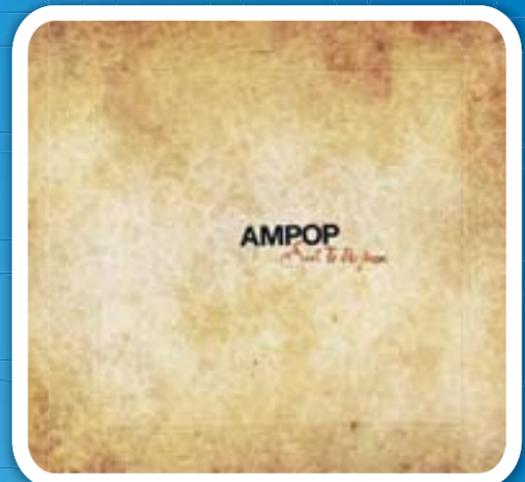


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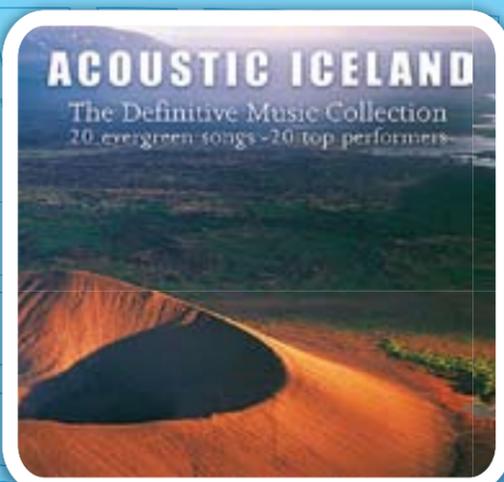
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Interview



Grizzly Bear

Brooklyn's Grizzly Bear isn't the likeliest of success stories. At their earliest shows in 2005 their spooky Beach Boys meets early Pink Floyd take on indie-rock transfixed New York crowds, but it didn't seem to be a prime candidate for breaking through to a larger audience.

Their sophomore record, 2006's "Yellow House," surprised everyone though, riding an early critical buzz to become one of the most talked about albums of the year.

The band's first record, 2004's "Horn of Plenty," was essentially a solo endeavour by singer and guitarist Ed Droste. After a chance introduction by a mutual friend, drummer Chris Bear polished up the tracks Droste had recorded largely in his bedroom, and began playing live with the band. The two were later joined by guitarist Daniel Rossen and multi-instrumentalist Chris Taylor to complete the current line-up. The new members weren't the typical hired help that prototypical solo artists usually employ, however. As the new record came together everyone was involved in the creative process.

"In the beginning we only did one or two of my songs in a set," said Rossen. "And it's been a slow transition. The way we did Yellow House was sort of just slapped together. I had these songs, and some of them I hadn't even played for anyone. And Ed had these songs. And we just kind of tried whatever we could try, and kept whatever worked. We were thinking it would be really disjointed and strange because it's just two very, very radically different styles of writing. But it ended up working out. It kind of got more and more collaborative as it went out."

The resulting album is a gorgeously surreal piece of work that is, ironically enough, very stylistically cohesive. Released on cutting edge independent label Warp, the album populated nearly every critic's year-end "Best Of" list. The success seems to baffle Rossen and his bandmates. "I don't know. It's hard to say. I think we might be one of these bands where it appears that we're doing a lot better than we are," he says. "I mean, it's true we're making a little money, and I'm sort of able to sustain myself, which is cool. This is the first time in my life I don't have a day job. Even the year before we did the record and about 6 months after we did it I was completely homeless....sleeping on couches or sleeping in the van, and just being a bum. I guess it's working out. It's hard to say."

As the band's popularity soared, they faced the challenge of adapting the songs to larger and more mainstream audiences. The past summer found them playing to massive outdoor crowds at American festivals, including Coachella and the Pitchfork Music Festival. When they spent a month this fall opening for breakout pop singer Feist there was some trepidation as to how the crowd would react to more challenging Grizzly Bear material. "I was concerned about it," Rossen readily admits. "It actually ended up working out pretty nicely. I think we scared some audiences. But we're capable of tailoring our set in different ways. We do have a lot of quieter material. And playing those beautiful huge sit down theatres we were able to do much softer, subtler stuff. So it really worked. Some of them were weird, but many of them were really successful. I think there were certain parents that were mildly appalled by what we were doing."

After a year of touring in support of Yellow House, Rossen is ready to get back to making music. "Some of the touring was fun, but we've just been touring so much that I have lost any concept of what's working and what isn't," he explains. "It's sort of become overkill for me now. It's time for us to hang out in New York and have a life and make some records. That's what I'm planning on anyway. I'm not going anywhere! We have to start working on another record now."

Words by Don Bartlett

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17:10 Hraun (IS)

17:50 TBA

18:30 TBA

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Photo by Gúndi

Skátar

First things first: Skátar are one of the most itchy, tricky bands you'll see at Airwaves. How do I know?

There's this record playing in my room, and it's making everything on the desk jitter and jump; it's making my eyes pop and my ears widen. It's called – wait for it – Ghost Of The Bollocks To Come, and it sounds like someone just threw a freshly-placed jigsaw at the wall. Released through the group's own DIY label, Grandmother's Records, it's an album of sudden colour-rushes, of tiny building blocks flailing noisily through the air. It overrides all your preconceptions of multi-structured music as inaccessible by being simultaneously challenging and melodic; each itty-bitty detail is full of addictive motion. It makes pop difficult again; it sounds scatty, contrary and like the most decisive surge of adrenaline you've ever had. "It's very surprising music," nods guitarist Kolli, peeking cheekily from a furry hood over a bottle of squash. "You're constantly shocked."

"We're all about complicating stuff," says Benni. "There's no reason for it."

"Our lives are very complicated," deadpans Kolli, in mock-serious agreement.

In what way? Musically?

"Nah. Women."

"Just in trying to do different concerts," Benni proffers, as we giggle. "Like, concerts in weird locations; we have really diverse bands playing together."

"I hate going to concerts where there are five heavy metal bands all in a row," details Kolli. "Maybe you're really into it for the first two, but it all sounds the same afterwards."

This attitude towards diversity is a major mainstay of Skátar's own work. One moment you'll hear the prettful sparkles and brushing, synthy waves of 'Skalholt'; then those demanding, ferocious guitars come barreling back in. From nowhere, there's a roar: no, wait, 'roar' doesn't do this justice; it's a protest, a full-blooded, throttle-throated screech from singer Markús. Take 'Taco N' Surf A Prayer', where things begin all gentle and balmy as chords pitch and sway. Before you can breathe, the vocals have broken: "Call me later on the phone, so we can talk things over," he snaps, whilst everything else self-destructs. "My opinion is that music has to change something, politically or personally," decides Benni. "Bands have to inspire you in some way; to make music or to make something different."

"I was talking to Benni when I got here, and I'd been listening to this song by this artist that I really don't like," Kolli regales. "He's like the Bruce Springsteen of Iceland. No, he's worse. He's a lot worse."

"He sold all his integrity to an insurance company."

"Yeah, all the rights to his songs! For like, 12 million krona. But I was listening to this one song, and it totally gave me the goosebumps. It's about whaling, and if it's necessary to shoot the whales. The chorus goes like, [laughing and pointing sternly at me], "What do you think?" I really wanted to make a video to it and play that song at politicians. But yeah, that song is really about something, and that's why it's good."

So, Skátar's music is music to make you think. It's also music to scratch out your brains to; music to dance like a feral child to. It's music to not think about tomorrow to – which is where that intriguing album title comes in. "...The Bollocks To Come means no one knows what's gonna come," suggests Benni. "It's about the unknown; the future, and how it's nonsense. How all the stuff that's happening in the world, especially with the American government, is just bollocks, y'know? We don't know what's gonna happen."

I nod. We wait.

"And also, our music is bollocks."

Words by Lauren Strain

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Photo by Jói Kjartans

Rock n' Roundtable

Present at the Grapevine's round-table discussion on all things Iceland Airwaves are: Kata, the young singer for Airwaves 2005 OTHER success stories, Mammút; Curver, lauded Ghostigital noise sculptor; Egill, growler-in-chief for Big Metal noise-terrorists Changer; and Mugison – one of the most beloved figures in Icelandic music.

Iceland Airwaves: Much ado about nothing? Discuss.

Egill: I've always found this festival a bit boring. But I've never really gone until recently, since I'm playing. The program doesn't reflect my interest too much. Also, some festivals ago, a girl I'd been seeing hooked up with some band-dude at the festival, so I spent the next two years actively hating it. I've since grown fonder and am sure I would appreciate it if I spent some time researching the performing acts.

Curver: All activity is good, and thus Airwaves is good. Then it really depends on what people make of it. Airwaves is a platform, and it depends on the bands how they use it. If you keep your feet on the ground and just enjoy yourself, it's very fun. I've always had an excellent time, especially after the festival came to its own and spread from its mega-venue single nighter beginnings to all the small venues downtown.

Kata: Airwaves is like Christmas for me, all those different bands performing all over the place, and the atmosphere in town is just really fun. Playing Airwaves is also different from other shows, it has an extra special feel – like, you go to the bathroom an extra number of times before hitting the stage.

Do the local bands over-estimate the importance of having a good "slot" at the festival? Is it really important where and when they play?

Mugison: Yeah, they do. Having what's perceived to be a bad "slot" will often work wonders. The first time I played Airwaves, nobody was interested and I was stationed at a 30 capacity room in Pravda, at 5 PM. I stood on a table and sang my songs while people on their way to dinner came flocking to check me out. I've rarely gotten as much feedback as then, and press-wise, it was one of the best gigs I've played.

Egill: I play music that doesn't really appeal to everyone, and we were basically playing to our regular crowd when we played last year. Most of our fans couldn't even come, because they hadn't bought a pass. When you're a metal band, it doesn't really matter where you play. Well, we had some people who thought it was trendy to show up at a metal night. That was pretty funny. I like that.

Curver: It doesn't really matter where you play, it's how you play, and what you put in that counts. I've played strange slots, both with Mínus and Ghostigital. At one show, they hadn't even opened the venue when we went on. Also, the local scene tends to forget that Airwaves is a showcase festival. The attendees have done their research and have pretty much decided what they will see before they even arrive.

Mugison: Another thing is that the Airwaves crowd is one of the best crowds one can hope to play to here in Iceland. It consists of people that have a genuine interest in music, who don't just show up to get drunk and have laughs. It's one of the few times when one gets real feedback on the concert, walk-

ing around town talking to Curver or whoever, everyone commenting on the show, giving big-ups – and if you fuck up, everyone's drunk enough at 2 in the morning to ensure you'll find out about that, too.

Icelandic bands often go to great lengths to reach foreign press and industry, handing out untold copies of demos...

Curver: I'll tell you, it means nothing. It all winds up in the trash at Hótel Borg on Sunday. I've been to a lot of festivals, and at the last days there, you always wind up looking in your bag at 40 burned, Xeroxed demos and wondering how the hell they all got there.

Kata: Oh, I think it works. At SXSW, we handmade some really nifty flyers that got us a lot of feedback.

Mugison: I agree with both. A lot of the industry, it's like they're bloodhounds. They smell out what they want and steer clear away from anything else. But making cool promo stuff can also help, when I was sending out demos to record labels a long time ago, I included a jar of my farts with each package, saying "If you like the smell of my farts, please release my record." One place, I just sent the fart in a jar, and no demo. They ended up signing me.

The Grapevine Airwaves dailies also give the local bands a lot of exposure...

Curver: It's a good effort, but in my experience, from the last two years, there's way too much bitterness and negativity in the actual reviews. Reading through them all gives a negative vibe. It's a great vehicle, of course, and you obviously can't be at every show. It gives an overview about what's happening, but the reviews read like they were written by a bunch of angry outcasts.

Mugison: You could publish these reviews yourself, in advance. They're all so predictable. It's like the people aren't at the concerts to judge them for what they are – of course, a metalhead should review the metal show, a pop-enthusiast the pop show. If you assign an artsy fartsy journalist to everything, you'll always wind up with the same pretentious scribbles.

Curver: I agree with what Mugi says, every Icelandic musician agrees on this. Nobody in the music world takes these writings seriously, because they know they're twice as negative as they need be. We need a basic overview, who was playing where, and how did it go for the most part; not the personal opinions of a young writer who's trying to hard to be cool.

Mugison: People put too much emphasis on those reviews anyway. It's a music festival – our yearly celebration. It's a party, not a Standardised Aptitude test. It's only rock 'n' roll, but we like it.

Words by Haukur Magnússon

Live Reviews / Saturday

Chromeo by Gúndi



Organ

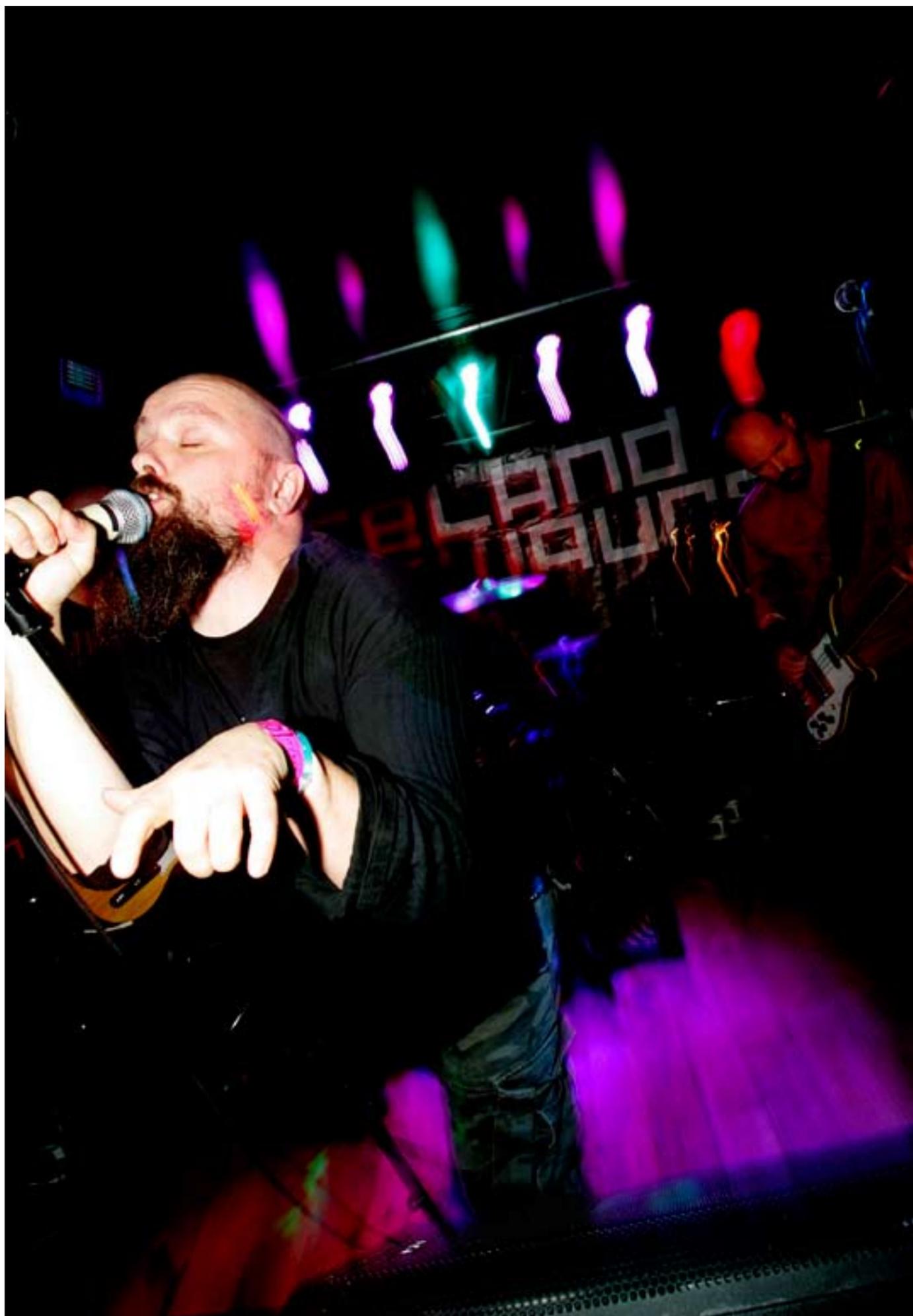
"Let's rob a bank! All we need is a tank," sang *Foreign Monkeys* vocalist Bjarki Sigurjónsson early in their set at Organ Saturday night. As it turns out, that stanza is a handy summary of the group's aesthetic: dark thoughts, delivered directly. The group's music recalls the wild-eyed mania of early Nick Cave, Sigurjónsson's hellfire bellow darting madly across haunted castle organs and razor-wire guitars. There was something thrilling about the group's dedication to devilishness, and each inevitable collapse into screaming feedback seemed to mirror the chaos at the centre of their songs.

Darkness, both sonic and lyrical, turned out to be the evening's reigning theme. *Foreign Monkeys* were followed by a pair of metal bands from Reykjavík, *Drep* and *Perfect Disorder*. The two bands represented opposing schools of hard rock; *Drep's* machine-press grind was heavily indebted to thrash while *Perfect Disorder* burned through a series of mean-eyed motorcycle anthems.

But neither band could compete with *Strigaskór nr 42*. The group is something of a legend; they formed in 1989 and released the revered album "Blót" five years later. In the intervening decade they've split up and regrouped countless times. Saturday's show was their first in nearly a decade and, unsurprisingly, they drew the biggest crowd. The attention was not unwarranted. Simply put, their songs are astonishing, full of clean lines and taut rhythms. They played with stunning precision, employing an economy of sound that recalled groups like *Wire* and *Don Caballero*. Notes came in tight, sharp bursts, more like Morse code than music. Even the few guitar solos were proudly minimalist, favouring single quivering tones over dizzying fretwork.

The evening's remaining bands played it decidedly safer. *Future Future* frontman Sigurður Oddsson was charismatic, but the group's plodding industrial songs suffered from a lack of direction. There seemed to be significant spirit and heart in *Ourlives'* roaring break-up anthems, but the group was sandbagged by persistent sound problems. In the end, they were indistinct, blurry as a landscape as seen from a speeding car.

Sólstafir was blurry, too, but in their case it was intentional. The group is based on a fascinating central premise, reconfiguring the structure of hard rock so that it's based on expanding, liquid pools of guitar. But vocalist Aðalbjörn Tryggvason's brutal bark was a poor fit for the music's ethereal drone. Every time a song was approaching full splendour he'd interrupt, a stubborn pocket of sand in the centre of a meringue. J. Edward Keyes



Drep by Árni Torfason





NASA

"Iceland, you so crazy," said !!! singer Nic Offer around 12:30, by which point the crowd at Nasa had indeed lost its shit over the band's rather excellent set. Along with local hero Mugison, !!! were the best part of a pretty good, fairly diverse evening ñ an eight-band show in which dance-punk and violin-laden American new wave were book-ended by Icelandic folk and hard-rock.

Bob Justman opened the evening with polite singer-songwriter stuff, about half of which was a little drab. But the band sounded alright when they rocked out with bluesy abandon and played some well-written tunes that evoked prime Bright Eyes. Lada Sport and Dikta followed with shambling indie-pop and dark, electronics-specked rock, respectively. Lada were sort of charming, and Dikta were very tight. But without great tunes ñ and, in Dikta's case, too much whimpering melancholia ñ both proved pretty bland.

Even if Mugison is not, as has been said, the king of Icelandic alternative music, he might be the frontman of the country's best bar-band. The bluesy hard-rock he played tonight was a stylistic makeover from the electronica he was doing a few years ago. Between his excellently gritty voice and his catchy tunes ñ not to mention his Joe Cocker-esque stage moves and hot rhythm section ñ Mugison was pretty damn fun to watch.

Ra Ra Riot looked and sounded like a gang of talented misfits: two pretty female string players, a dorky-looking, hard-rocking guitarist, and a singer who has obviously studied his Morrissey. Their hard-driving new wave was at times very catchy, and at times sweetly romantic, but it mostly felt like a warm-up for the mayhem that followed.

!!! have been on a roll for a while, turning out a very good album earlier this year and playing a string of buzzed-over live shows. Tonight, !!! offered all the best parts of being in a dance club ñ plus guitars ñ with a set that touched on indie-disco, stomping pseudo-techno, party-funk, conga-laden funk, and Daft Punkian funk. All their percussion, keyboard and horn parts seemed perfectly placed, and !!! repeatedly whipped the crowd into a frenzy. The songs were jammy, but !!! are no wankers ñ the difference between them and say, Phish, is like the difference between Björk and Celine Dion.

After this, Mínus were bound to be a little disappointing. Their hard-driving, hardcore-influenced set was a lot of bluster and not much payoff. Icelandic audiences were generally very enthusiastic, but the applause for Mínus just felt polite. Christian Hoard



Clockwise from top: Ra Ra Riot by Leó Stefánsson, Mugison by Skari, Mínus by Árni Torfason, and !!! by Leó Stefánsson



TUBORG
LOUD & CLEAR



Barinn by GAS



Bloc Party by Emma Svensson



Ms. John Soda by Leó Stefánsson

Barinn

The highlight at Barinn on Saturday came early, during what felt like a mini Icelandic techno prom. The act onstage was Rafhans 021, a pair of 17-year-old dance producers, and the small crowd there to hear them looked young enough to assume they were their friends. It might have been a merely novel affair, but Rafhans happened to be not only 17(!) but also disarmingly good, both with the sounds they used and the ways they delivered them. They started out with a sampledelic bent (bits of what sounded like movie dialogue, hints of a marching band) and grew more dancey as they worked a table full of pedals and a drum pad to summon the momentous sound of “electro-house.”

Using pedals amounts to an old-school move in the realm of serious techno, and it turned out to rank among the more imaginary moves on an oddly flat night. Biogen went second with a choppy, sloppy breakbeat set that made it all too easy to divide the line between abstraction and malfunction. Tonik swept in after with a serviceable set that made good use of live cello and sandy beats, but failed to evoke more than longings for Boards of Canada. Then came Johnny Sexual, who performed melodic electro-pop in dapper attire but came off as something suspiciously close to a karaoke act.

The French duo Stairplex followed with a hands-on brand of drum ‘n’ bass – they sampled themselves making noises and playing clarinet – though the crowd in the middle of their set measured in at a vibe-killing 6 people. Clearly there was a problem with the prospect of such functional dance music working as a performative draw. But the problem started to correct itself with Gossi, whose synth-and-siren sound primed an audience that had started to grow. From there, the stage lights dimmed and the sound was handed over to Danish DJ/producer Patrick Chardonnet. He played meticulous minimal-techno. Everyone on the floor, nearing capacity at midnight, began to dance in full. The crowd had become the star. **Andy Battaglia**

RVK Art Museum Iðnó

The final night at the Art Museum had a bill that was classier than gold lamé leggings in Kaffibarrinn on a Monday night. Hraun started the evening with a performance of astounding quality, promoting troll love, formation beer drinking, Jethro Tull and songs so good that even the track marked as being “a downer” required you to match the exuberant flute player’s smile. Jónas Sigurðsson and his band’s massive horn should be mentioned in dispatches for the festival’s most impressive instrument, and they matched Hraun in ambition but fell a xylophone short of the first brennivín-fuelled hoedown that was resurrected by Hjaltalín, despite the band being the sonic equivalent of Greenpeace.

After a series of performances that required concentration and patience to appreciate, Hafdís Huld’s shiny round pop sounds about sunny days and friends arrived as a cute distraction whilst the pink flying-V ukulele that saw action is an instrument to cherish. Finishing with a cover of Madonna’s ‘Material Girl’, the only thing louder than her glassy singing voice was the male element of the crowd cooing after her every word. The sole Americans of the evening, Annuals, have a hint of the Guillemots, the English jazz/rock/indie/improv group rather than the Faroese delicacy, about them and that’s a very positive thing – even the bass player is a Flea for the naughties.

After a hangover-inducing wait, Bloc Party stroll on and claim that it’s their first trip here, but they look too world-weary for that to be true. Actually, it probably is, as Kelle’s pronunciation of “Takk” after almost every song is as tired as their performance until the final song, ‘Pioneers’, whereupon he launches himself into the adrenalinised crowd and re-emerges a hero to the front row, zero to the crowd at the back and something in-between to everyone else. **Ben H. Murray**

Borko opened the night in promising enough fashion, lacing some eerie psychedelia into its Mogwai-ish climaxes. The set eventually squandered its potential with a steady stream of miscues, including a comic but mood-deflating inability to drop a sample from a laptop. In stark contrast to the opening act were the tight German electro-popsters Tied & Tickled Trio. The band was poetic in its restraint and, unlike too many electronic acts, every sound they played added to the momentum of the song.

Those expecting Ms. Josh Soda to “rock you softly” were no doubt shocked by the band’s driving indie-rock send up, but no one in the near-capacity crowd was complaining. It was far more Sleater-Kinney than Sheryl Crow, and the world is a better place for it. Before the set had even finished, the crowd was jockeying for position for the Seabear set, which elicited some of the biggest cheers of the night. The singer seemed to shrink a bit from the more ambitious vocal parts but in the end Seabear trades in ambitious and intelligent pop that will profit handsomely from the passage of time.

Hometown heroes Benni Hemm Hemm took the stage to a predictable euphoria which lasted until the second they left the stage. Iðnó has seen plenty of brass instruments over the last few days but this is the first time they were layered over crisp, thoughtful pop songs. The evening’s anticipation was German group Lali Puna and they didn’t disappoint. They opened with the poetic “Faking The Books”, which singer Valerie Trebeljahr powered through despite suffering through a bad cold. While most pop music trades in the currency that lies between “I’m falling in love” and “I don’t answer your calls,” Lali Puna addresses the wretched grey area in between.

While the rest of Mammút’s stage presence would have to move up several notches to qualify as morgue-tenders, the singer makes up for it with her wildly charismatic vocal turns, following in the proud Icelandic tradition of badass female bandleaders. **Don Bartlett**



Snake and Jet's Amazing Bullit Band by Rúnar



Stafrænn Hákon by Leó Stefánsson



Bloodgroup by Emma Svensson

Lídó

We all attended our school proms in venues like Lídó. It does little to enhance the enjoyment of a clutch of bands who are so devoid of ambition that you're pretty soon calculating how long it would take to burn yourself to death with the one tealight on your big, empty, 10-seater table. Whilst you can't accuse the bill of being unvaried – we've got geek-boy keyboards to bar-room waltz – it's important to bear in mind that diversity doesn't really matter when you're witnessing a showcase not of several types of genius, but a whole spectrum of Dull.

After the consummate but vacuous vocals of Védís and Kenya, VilHelm plies his grumbling, urban folk, but apart from the smacked strings of a fine double bass, he leans too much towards the funereal and lyrically inept. Anecdotaly, VilHelm's girlfriend thinks their record is "the best ever written by a human." But, y'know, love has a tendency to fuck up your critical faculties.

Thank heavens for Leaves. Their dewy aura nuzzles your throat 'til you're sure they've kept you company since way before this show. Whilst they've never generated tidal waves of hype, they steadfastly furrow their way through gullies of drowning cymbals.

Lídó reverts to its stagnant self as four unlikely blokes – Jeff Who? – shuffle through some off-puttingly straight-laced rock. I'm marginally taken by their second effort – a ballad with a smattering of 'meaningful' upper octave notes – but then, I'm a sucker for almost anything with a couple of power chords.

Snake and Jet's Amazing Bullit Band have the odd graze of spunky delivery from a rake-thin singer, but their prolonged form of farty funk-gunk is ultimately directionless and terminally goofy. Lastly, the jarring sparks of Radio LXMBRG mean we're finally in the presence of a band with some notion of performance; the evening ends with their buzzsaw guitars and an almost obscene desire to drink ourselves into oblivion. Lauren Strain

Grand Rokk

Sunday morning coming down got a head start at Grand Rokk with Sickbirds, an Iron & Wine-inspired duo from Akureyri crafting folksy acoustic guitar-based tunes. Though their harmonies were slightly off-key, their bucolic song pastures forgave any minor imperfections. Johnny & The Rest followed up with some soulfully slow-cooked hard-rock blues. With a harmonica player dressed like a blaxploitation movie extra and a pair of singers belting from the gut in between wailing guitar solos, they managed to pull a Rakim and move the crowd.

Stafrænn Hákon, backed by a full band, completely flipped the script with delay-soaked waves of lugubrious post-rock enriched by the occasional programmed drum pattern. Waves of sound enveloped the room like a suddenly active desert awash after a spring deluge. But somewhere in Scotland, Mogwai's ears must have been burning, because the band's valleys and peaks sounded disjointed and unrehearsed at times. They could've definitely done without the addition of vocals as well.

Rock bands fronted by women are cool, no question. South Coast Killing Company's vamp-y Irish singer, Scratch, didn't give a shit that the room had cleared out by the time they began their rockabilly romping. Her erratic stage antics were fascinating, seductive, and slightly awkward as she did her best Karen O. impression over Trouble's whirlwind guitar playing. Hellvar's songbook, on the other hand, written with a drum machine back-story, leaves something to be desired. Still, they looked great up against the boys of Noise, the antithesis to oestrogen: one flying-V guitar, one member actually wearing a "Noise" T-shirt (very tacky), and lots of grunge-metal clichés. The '90s are over – let it go. Fortunately, Dýrðin's spry '60s girl-group indie-pop was able to float up from the dregs, largely due to the unflagging charm and effervescence of their two lead singers. Jonah Flicker

Off-venue

Mál og Menning: The local electro wonder FM Belfast jammed the packed Mál og Menning book store. Their energetic off-venue set certainly aroused the expectations before the nights' party. Their catchy beats made the children, grandparents and other bookstore goers jump for joy. Although the music and the location were in a somewhat charming conflict, the band's looks certainly fitted the location – with all their cardigans and collars you could've taken them for staff members going 'waves wild.

After all the electro action by FM Belfast, the surprise act Annals played a well executed, tight and concentrated set, though they stayed just a little too distant from their restlessly lingering audience. Sari Peltonen

Kaffibarinn: New York based folk singer Sam Amidon of the Bedroom Community hushed the ever so hectic Kaffibarinn with his gentle voice and sweetly, at times off-tune, singing creating a tranquil yet cosy atmosphere. Sari Peltonen

Skífan: When the fictions of a manic Friday night pale with a midday hangover, and Saturday night's fortunes are yet to be predicted, all you can really ask for in a show is something pleasant, warm and relaxed. Skífan's tacky late afternoon show on Saturday was none of these things. Lada Sport, who hail from Reykjavík, came on only to belch out something loudly uninspired – something to file in between early Weezer and Built to Spill – without the hooks or originality of either. Bloodgroup's heavily inappropriate set featured antics so grandiose (e.g. vocalist Lilja's make-believe orgasms and the tank-topped Janus's monkey walk) it just had to be post-modern. Throughout Bloodgroup's set, synths and samplers would unexpectedly fail, bar-raging the eardrums of the audience and inspiring the resident baby to throw a tantrum. Radio LXMBRG, from Sweden, featured mediocre melodies sung with anonymous vocals and pedestrian chord progressions. All five members, including the singer, looked like they were putting themselves to sleep. Chandler Fredrick



TUBORG
LOUD & CLEAR

Gaukurinn

Vice was an appropriate sponsor at Gaukurinn on Saturday night – sex, anger, drunkenness, excess and various other stripes of debauchery (does talk box count?) were in full effect at balmy death-trap Gaukurinn last night.

At first it seemed that Bertell's lightning speed songs seemed to go nowhere, but they caught their stride with "Sunshine," a dense mish-mash of growls and beeps that led into the delicious "Hetjuborg," which featured a welcome return of The Superfluous Yet Strangely Necessary Emotional Saxophone Solo. Also, chicks apparently dig saxophone solos. The Musik Zoo, a menagerie consisting of only a beatmaker and a rapper, at first cleared the room but wooed a few more bodies interested in getting yelled at in five minute intervals.

Speaking of shouting, Ultra Mega Technobandið Stefán frontman Sigurður Ásgeir Olsen did some of that, plus punched his bassist, shoved a photographer, spat beer into the sound booth, body surfed twice, hung from (and bent) the rafters, and told half the crowd to go fuck themselves. He also sometimes made some music happen when the mic was plugged in and his keyboard was right side up. It's no wonder the remaining three band members in this amazing electro-punk circus act are so airtight – with such an unpredictable character, some elements need to keep people's heads above water.

One head easily stood out from the rest, as Steed Lord's Kali took the stage with a wig shaped like popcorn and the size of an industrial colander. Presentation is everything with this quirky house crew, as no line could be cooed without a dramatic hand gesture and no skittering beat hiccupped without an appropriate dance. Her brother, Mínus vocalist Krummi, also made a special appearance, working up a pretty sweat over his impressive tattoos even within a single song.

Brazilian threesome Bonde do Role parked their sample-heavy party wagon on stage, easily working the crowd into a frenzy of cartoonish revelry. Never ones to deny their heavy metal pasts, the group mixed baile and funk with samples from groups like AC/DC and Van Halen, dancing all the while. It's difficult to tell if the band had more fun than the crowd did, but either way the audience won. Also, chicks also dig Europe's "The Final Countdown"

As a friend suggested at the Chromeo set, "They're so O.K. with being cheesy." The Canadian duo pumped out crowd favourites like "2-Step" and "Bonafide Lovin," as both boys and girls mentally disrobed handsome front-dork Dave 1, who couldn't stop smiling. Katie Hasty



Top: Bonde de Role by Gúndi. Bottom: Steed Lord by Gúndi





Late Night

Lidó at 1.15 felt, looked and was like a singles convention in a sad, sad way. 60 people or so sat around with their feet firmly planted on the carpet floor and *Radio LXMBRG*'s slow, symphonic synth-rock did nothing to get people out of their chairs.

Fortunately *Morðingjarnir* came to the rescue, filling the floor in front of the stage with their three chord punk rock and even managing to get some punters dancing shirtless and spilling their beers. *Morðingjarnir* obviously know the subtle art of connecting with their audience with the result being one of this festival's best shows. Páll Hilmarsson

Organ: Though the pube-faced baldies in *Dimma* played overcooked numetal and made cliché Creepy Faces of Frustration, their set was definitely one of the tightest I've seen so far at Airwaves. Contrast that with *Atomstation*, who might be one of the most incomprehensible live acts on earth. I could see the guitarists energetically riffing and the beshirted singer howling away, but I couldn't hear a damn thing. The drums were just too loud. Chandler Fredrick

NASA: Who thought heavy metal, polka, pink spandex pants and yellow rubber gloves would be a good mix? *Dr. Spock*, that's who! And the stuffed NASA more than agreed. *The Glove* took the charge, brought in *Mugison* and *MugiSpock* closed the night in insanity. Madness in all its freaky glory. Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

Gaukurinn: *FM Belfast* brought the party on stage and invited everybody to join. With their toe-tickling dance beats and irresistible stage fest, the group has rapidly gained a reputation as a wild live act not-to-be-missed and boy, did they live up to it.

The NY girls from *Roxy Cottontail* finished the night by rapping over a rapidly changing set of party-proof beats, thus keeping the crowd busy on the dance floor. Sari Peltonen

NASA by Emma Svensson



TUBORG
LOUD & CLEAR



Clockwise from top-left:

Good times at the Airwaves Blue Lagoon Party by Rúnar, !!! by Skari, Hafðis Huld by Leó Stefánsson, Seabear by Skari, Chromeo by Leó Stefánsson, and Bloc Party by Emma Svansson.



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Vegamót
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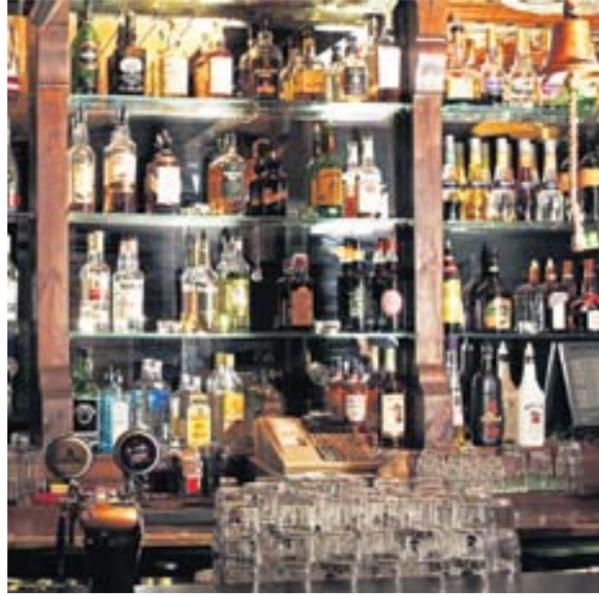
Vegamót can be everything from a casual lunch café, a trendy dinner spot to a vibrant nightclub, all depending on the time of your arrival. One certain thing though, the place will always be busy. Snag a table, look at the extensive menu and you'll understand its popularity. Try the fish of the day, Louisiana chicken strips, tortilla wrap or steak-sandwich a la Vegamót. This place provides it all, coffee, dinner and lots of dancing.



Kaffi Hjómáland
Laugavegur 21

Not the place for beer drinking, but definitely a must-visit for tea fans, vegetarians and those looking for a nice sofa to relax on. This homey antique-style fair-trade café offers organic vegetarian dishes that will fill the stomach and nurture the soul in addition to hosting live music on occasional weeknights. This cosy coffeehouse is a great place to grab a healthy bite and catch local talent, and happens to be one of the many off-venues for this year's Airwaves.

Drinking



Dillon
Laugavegur 30

Legendary rock-pub Dillon is a dark and atmospheric tavern, popular among hard-core rockers and late-night souls in the city centre. Dillon's veteran DJ's usually play pretty damn good rock music while the energetic crowd slurps down litres of beer and gets sweatier by the minute. Great fun! Dillon also hosts a couple of live gigs with local acts each week and will of course do the same during the Airwaves weekend.



Belly's
Hafnarstræti

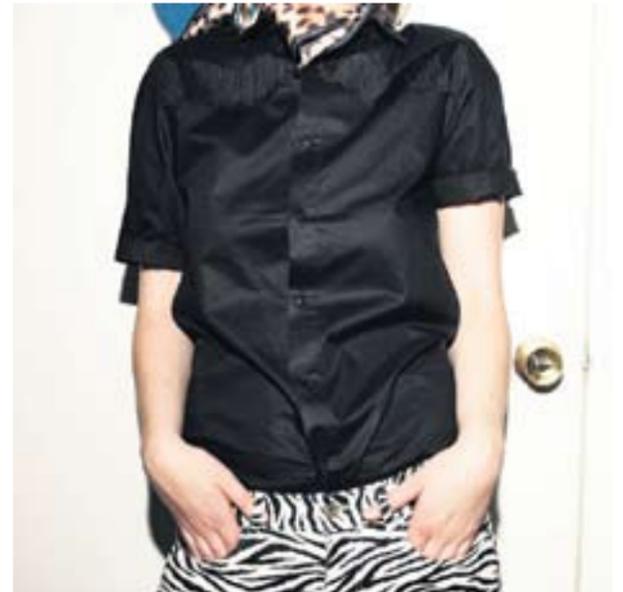
It might not be the hippest drinking venue, but the spacious pub Belly's offers the cheapest price in the centre, charging 390 ISK for a large beer on draft. Add that with lots of seats, chilled atmosphere and TV's in every corner and you'll have a nice drinking hideout that attracts young students and middle-aged locals alike. Although there isn't any clear music policy or a good party to expect, the beer is cheap and that counts for something.

Shopping



Liborius
Laugavegur 7

Liborius specialises in high-fashion designer wear for both genders where edgy creations and quality fabrics go hand in hand. The stock is a mix of unique feminine clothing and sophisticated menswear and includes, among others, designer brands Undercover, Bless, Geoffrey Small, ThreeAsFour, Number N(i)ne and Belgian designer Ann Demeulemeester. A selection of accessories, shoes, perfumes and underwear are also in store. Prices are high but the designs are stunning.



Photos by GAS

Dead
Laugavegur 29

Jón Sæmundur Auðarson's new fashion shop Dead is tucked away in a Laugavegur ally, next door to his studio and record label, Dead Records. Artist and designer Jón Sæmundur sells clothing labels such as April 77, Pleasure Principle and Licentious and of course his own rock'n'roll trademark, Dead. His collection includes hand printed T-shirts and jackets to ties and bags, all bearing the notorious Dead skull. His designs are especially popular among local rockers and Hollywood filmmakers.



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The Classic Tourist (12-20 points)

You fall into the 'classic' category of Iceland's tourist friends. Here since long before Björk sang her first notes and Reykjavík was any kind of attraction (or even had a café), your kind has been cavorting in Iceland's hills, small towns and public pools longer than most. Often operating on a budget, you may often be found hitch-hiking your way around the country, climbing mountains, sleeping in emergency shelters or sneaking single-serve packets of butter into your pockets at breakfast buffets. You are most easily recognised by your brightly coloured all-weather apparel.

The Eurohippie (21-30 points)

A somewhat modernised version of the nature fetishist, the Eurohippie started rearing his dreadlocked head in Iceland sometime during the mid-nineties. The recent Kárahnjúkar Dam dispute / Sigur Rós free concert series accounts for a massive surge in their numbers lately, along with increased tofusales. If the numbers place you in this group (and magazine lifestyle quizzes never lie), chances are that you've studied liberal arts, experimented with various mind-altering substances and ideologies, and enjoy conspiracy theories and acting as a conscience for the rest of us. You are most often recognisable by a weird hairstyle, earth-tone clothing and some facial hair.

The Trendy Tourist (31- 40 points)

Congratulations! You are the trendy tourist type traveller, and thus probably the latest addition to Iceland's foreigner fauna. And a true pioneer! You may have some ties to Iceland's music, fashion or arts scenes, and were most likely inspired to come here by someone you met in Berlin or New York. You count Björk among your icons, but you also enjoy several obscure things that are guaranteed to be all the rage shortly. Your feelings about Reykjavík (101 Reykjavík) will be mixed, although you will most likely enjoy the opportunities for social climbing and to be instantly notorious in the 300-person scene. You are easily recognised, as you look, talk, sound and smell like next month is already here.

The Dirty Weekender (40+ points)

God. Then there's you. You are likely a decent, hard working fellow lured to Iceland by Reykjavík's party-hard notoriety and some Tarantino fuelled misconceptions about the nature of Icelandic nightlife and its female participants. Most often seen in groups, you will be drunk by 7pm, walking down Laugavegur wearing a Viking helmet by 9pm, kinda let down by constant refusals by midnight and a patron of one of the city's strip-clubs by 2am (at which point you will be too intoxicated to notice that the Icelandic females you're supposedly associating with all have thick Eastern-European accents). You can be recognised by an expensive watch and baseball-cap combo that nicely accent your leather-jacketed mid-life crisis.

1. Which of the following lyric-snippets do you most identify with?

- a) 'Tschüüüüü, wüüü, tsjüühü, sææææljóóóóó'
- b) 'Coca-loc dancing like a maniac. Coca-loc dancing in the dance-room.'
- c) 'Emotional landscapes, they puzzle me – confuse.'
- d) I identify with mountains, not lyrics.

2. What is your favourite nature reserve?

- a) The Hornstrandir Nature Reserve.
- b) The Human Nature Reserve.
- c) Will there be girls there?
- d) I never reserve. I just show up and get a table.

3. Pick an event:

- a) Iceland Airwaves.
- b) The 'SnowGathering 2007' int'l Pornographers Conference.
- c) The Hafnarfjörður Viking Festival.
- d) International Food and Fun.

4. Whilst travelling the Ring Road, you happen to hit one of those infamous jaywalking sheep. Your next step would be to...

- a) Drag the carcass into nature and perform a small ritual before respectfully burying it.

b) B-B-Q!

- c) String it upside down in a small gallery.
- d) Hitchhikers don't hit sheep, and neither do mountain-bikers.

5. Which of the following entities would you prefer to blow up?

- a) The Kárahnjúkar Dam. And those Alcoa Bastards.
- b) The remaining copies of my pre-fame B-class porn movie.
- c) Fireworks!
- d) I would like to blow up a balloon and bounce it around somewhere in nature, preferably while naked.

6. Which of the following 'Icelandic icons' are you most familiar with?

- a) Björk Guðmundsdóttir, pop singer/composer.
- b) Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, the president of Iceland.
- c) Hófi Karlsdóttir, Miss World 1985.
- d) Those retarded kids from the Sigur Rós videos.

7. Your stance on whaling?

- a) Whales are for watching. And petting.
- b) Reinstating whaling is typical for these capitalist

bastards who are intent on spoiling Iceland's niche as an unspoiled haven, the last bastion of unspoiled nature in Europe, etc., etc.

- c) Do whales make for good sushi?
- d) Hehe... Free Willy! Hehehe.

8. You feel most at home:

- a) I do not subscribe to the capitalist-enforced/endorsed concept of 'home'.
- b) When surrounded by mirrors, girls and shiny metal poles.
- c) Amidst majestic mountains, glacial landscapes, rivers, trees, elves, etc.
- d) Jumping the queue at some trendmaster bar or club. People know me, you know.

9. Pick a drink:

- a) Organic Cruelty-Free Fair Trade Whey Chai Soy Latte.
- b) Beer!
- c) Pure, glacier-strained, Icelandic Wasser.
- d) My favourite drink hasn't been invented at the time of writing.

10. Your preferred daytrip out of Reykjavik:

- a) The Golden Circle.
- b) A spray-paint and explosive-laced trip to the

Alcan aluminium factory in Hafnarfjörður. That'll show those nature-killing bastards.

- c) The Goldfinger Strip Club. That's in Kópavogur, right?
- d) Do I absolutely have to? I'd really rather not leave the 101 area.

11. Icelandic women are...

- a) Allowed to vote since 1915.
- b) The most beautiful in the world.
- c) The most beautiful sluts in the world.
- d) Elfin.

12. Finally, why are you here?

- a) To experience the unspoiled nature and landscapes that inspired the ethereal sounds of múm, AmiinA and Sigur Rós. I might also try and stalk the latter's studio for a couple of weeks.
- b) To get laid. Don't tell anyone I said that.
- c) I've heard it's a place to be. I also have some real edgy art/ music/ fashion accessories/ writing/ etc. that would really benefit from less competition with my peers. There are only 300,000 of you, right?
- d) To bathe naked in natural hot springs. And steal some butter.

Words by Haukur Magnússon – Illustration by Bobby Breidholt

Key to calculating your score:

1. a)2 b)4 c)3 d)1 2. a)1 b)2 c)4 d)3 3. a)3 b)4 c)1 d)2 4. a)2 b)4 c)3 d)1 5. a)2 b)3 c)4 d)1 6. a)3 b)1 c)4 d)2 7. a)1 b)2 c)3 d)4 8. a)2 b)4 c)1 d)3 9. a)2 b)4 c)1 d)3 10. a)1 b)2 c)4 d)3 11. a)1 b)3 c)4 d)2 12. a)2 b)4 c)3 d)1

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Imagine Peace on Viðey Is- land

Take a reviving pre/post-party walk on the wild side and spot Yoko Ono's new Imagine Peace Tower on Viðey Island, just around the corner from downtown Reykjavík.

Yoko Ono, accompanied by the Beatles drummer Ringo Starr switched on the lights of her Imagine Peace Tower light house on October 9 to mark what would have been her husband's 67th birthday. "It's the biggest birthday present I ever gave to John", she says.

The impressive 2000–7000 watt lamps (powered by geothermal energy) shining the light of peace will stay on until December 8, the anniversary of Lennon's murder in 1980, and the plan is to make this an annual routine.

The tower, originally planned by Ono and Lennon already in 1960s, is surrounded by a wishing well that carries the words "Imagine peace" in 24 languages. In addition, over a half million wishes from all over the world are spread around the island.

Other attractions on Viðey include the first house ever constructed of stone in the country (now a café), and a church dating back to 1774, usually open for freezing Viðey visitors.

Take bus number 5 from Hlemmur bus station (280 ISK for a journey) to Skarfabakki pier, hop off at "Flytjandi".

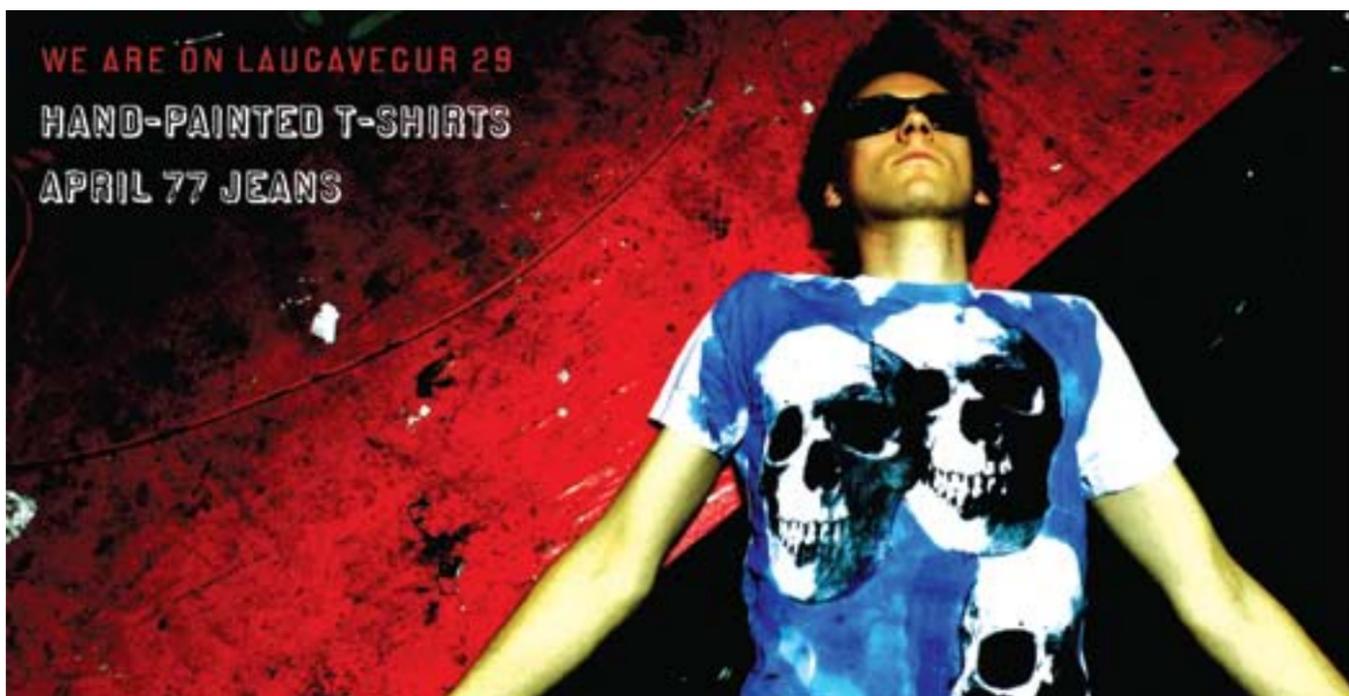
Imagine Peace Tour by Elding leaves the Skarfabakki pier at 8pm every (for 1500 ISK it includes hot drink and waffles, duration 1h). Regular ferries to Viðey on Sat at 1:15pm, 2:15 pm and 3:15pm (800 ISK a roundtrip).

To add your wish on Viðey Island, visit www.imaginepeace.com.

Words by Sari Peltonen



Photo by Gúndi



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Reykjavík City Museum

Experience Viking-Age Reykjavík at the new Settlement Exhibition. The focus of the exhibition is an excavated longhouse site which dates from the 10th century AD. It includes relics of human habitation from about 871, the oldest such site found in Iceland.

Multimedia techniques bring Reykjavík's past to life, providing visitors with insights into how people lived in the Viking Age, and what the Reykjavík environment looked like to the first settlers.

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How was last night?



Sveinn / Student, Iceland
The best thing I've seen so far was Electron. I think the festival is too indie. It's always been too indie, but especially now.



Logi / Musician, Iceland
The festival has been absolutely crazy. It's the best festival I've been to. Actually it's the only one I've been to. Annuals and Bloc Party were my highlights.



Arni / Student, Iceland
I love wandering around, it's like Roskilde but inside a city. I've probably seen 15 bands. The best thing I saw was Benny Crespo's Gang. I saw them in Keflavik back in the day.



Inga / Student, Iceland
I haven't been wandering around all that much, maybe two or three places a night. I think the lines have been decent, considering. Plant & Animals were a pleasant surprise for me.

Interview



Just like that...

The worst kept secret at this year's festival is that England's The Magic Numbers are playing on Sunday at NASA. They are, to put it nicely, virgin visitors to Iceland and they can't wait to go from one cold, windy country to another. Really.

"We've always wanted to go and I'm really excited about it to be honest," enthused lead singer and guitar player Romeo Stoddard in advance of their appearance, which is also part of the Coke Discovery Music Sessions, an initiative that showcases interesting bands in interesting places around Europe with support from hand-picked unsigned acts. "I think we're going for a couple of days before the show as well to see the country. We've become friends with the guys from Sigur Rós so hopefully a couple of them and a few of their friends are going to show us round - we caught up with them recently at the Q Awards - and we're hoping to see as much as possible." With friends like that you'd expect the four piece, made up of two brother/sister combinations, to be shown a very good time in Reykjavik and beyond and who knows, you may even see them in the Blue Lagoon at Sunday's hangover party, that's if the wholesomely innocent band do hangovers and parties in one go.

The previously mentioned unsigned bands were selected on a merit basis from dozens of acts with the blessing of The Magic Numbers - so who are they? "One is a girl from Denmark called Katrine Ottosen, we really loved her music, and from London we've got a band called Horsebox. I just think that they're really different, their songs are really catchy with quirky lyrics - they sound very different from a lot of the current UK bands." The Magic Numbers,

for those not familiar with their work, are known for making sunny pop songs with harmonious chorus lines that have successfully propelled their first two albums to chart success and supported numerous festival worldwide appearances since the band started performing in 2002. "They're both very different from what we do," continues Romeo as we move onto how their music will sit alongside that of the other two bands on the billing. "Horsebox are more about London in their lyrics, and have an Ian Dury thing about them."

A pleasant surprise is that the band will be playing some new material at the festival and all you lucky people will be able to hear the new songs before their forthcoming EP hits 12 Tonar and Skífan's shelves. "We've been really excited, playing the new songs and we like to play around with arrangements, have fun with the set list and so on. There's a song called Fear of Sleep that's been going down well over the last few gigs, and The Shooter, which sounds very different from the Magic Numbers. When I wrote it I thought it sounded a lot like Radiohead." So new material that sounds like Radiohead, played in a new way and old material played in a new way, The Magic Numbers really will be really spoiling everyone who's still standing on Sunday night.

Words by Ben H. Murray

What did you think?



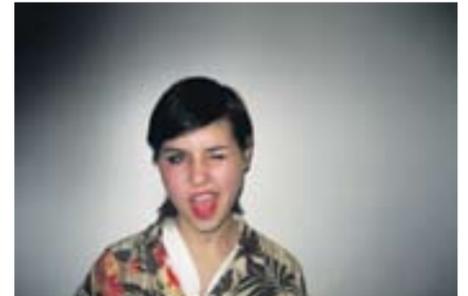
Viðir / Student & Musician, Iceland
Bloc Party was clearly my favourite act so far. I was in the front row with my shirt off. I haven't had too much trouble with lines, actually I chose venues accordingly.



Hildur / Works at a preschool, Iceland
I have no idea what Airwaves is and I have no interest in knowing. I don't like tourists. Do you realise that 10% of Icelanders are foreign?



Kitty / DJ, UK
I've been to 7 out of the 9 Airwaves festivals. To be a sourpuss, I liked it previous years more because it was a showcase festival and now they're catering to more established artists. I'd like to find out about new acts.



Nina / Student, Iceland
I most enjoyed how many off-venue events were happening around the festival. The best thing I saw was MC Pluto play with Retro Stefson at the Naked Ape, although Best Fwends was a nice surprise.

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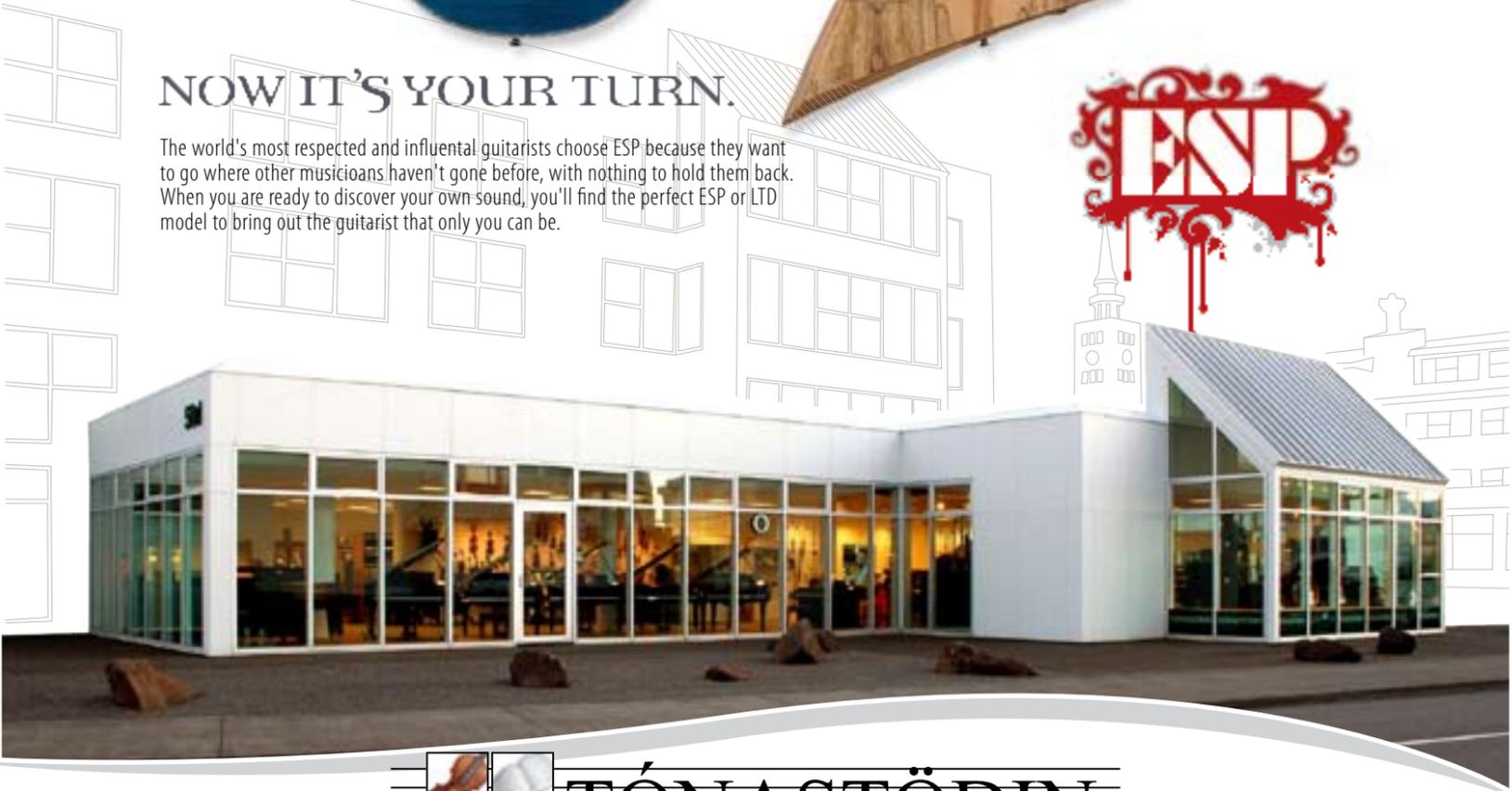
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