



The
**REYKJAVÍK
GRAPEVINE**

ICELAND: LIFE, TRAVEL & ENT

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“I have no rivalry with the Prime Minister, why should I have a rivalry with this obese two-year-old little boy?”

Insights And Insults From Kári Stefánsson

By York Underwood

+ The Polite Carnage Of Black Metal In Iceland

Our feature story
by Hannah Jane Cohen

+ 24 PAGE
EVENTS &
CULTURE
GUIDE

+ 8 PAGE
SÓNAR
REYKJAVÍK
GUIDE

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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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magnusandersen.co.uk
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Regarding Sustainability

An afterword by Haukur S. Magnússon

Call it growing pains.

As the seemingly interminable influx of tourists to Iceland continues to prop up the nation's economy and fund its consumer electronics habit (thanks, guys!), we have all but ceased debating whether there might be any negative aspects to this apparent windfall.

Because these negative aspects have long since revealed themselves. Because the topic is far beyond debate by now. Because the adverse effects of Icelanders' gold-rush-inspired approach to tourism have been plainly evident for years. As the country's infrastructure struggles to accommodate humans in numbers that far exceed what it was built to sustain, popular tourism destinations rapidly deteriorate, worn down by a constant barrage of excessive foot traffic, and residents of an entire postal code are pushed out to make way for international visitors who wish to experience first-hand the quaint and quirky culture they're displacing.

Turns out a frenzied rush for profit without a hint of planning or oversight hasn't gotten any more viable a strategy in the decade that's passed since we last gave it a go. The circumstances may be different, but the methods are the same and so are the results.

To their credit, Icelanders have acknowledged the problems wrought by their rapid ascent into mass tourism, and have begun taking measures towards crafting a more sustainable environment for the industry, in which tourism can thrive in harmony with Iceland's nature and culture. Now, this is not to say that these measures are working, or that they ever will—as a matter of fact, our government's attempts at regulation have mostly seen its ministers blindly stumble between half-hearted, ill-considered attempts at solutions which rarely make it to even the parliamentary debate stage due to their panicked fumbling. But it's the thought that counts, and it's reassuring to know that we have recognized the need to act, even if we haven't quite worked out what it is that we should be doing.

Wow, this sounds bad huh? But it isn't really. I'll let you in on a secret: None of the stuff I've outlined and complained about really matters, and none of it will have any sort of lasting effect on anything. Ultimately, we can't really fuck up our nature with excessive foot-traffic or by erecting rows of tasteless gift shops. Given half a chance, Iceland's nature will quickly reclaim its space and revert to its barren, unwelcoming and majestic self

And while it's always kind of a bummer when your favourite music venue or art gallery shuts down, that doesn't really mean anything either. Folks will continue to play music and make art, because those modes of expression are intrinsic to human nature, inasmuch that such a thing can be said to exist.

Even though I am prone to nostalgia, I am not conservative. I have accepted that permanence is but an illusion, that our world and our lives are forever in a state of constant flux and all things are subject to change from moment to moment. I'll even celebrate the fact, because motion indicates life, just as stagnation equals death. And life is glorious, and we should all be thankful that we even get to partake.

With time, trampled walking paths are overtaken by vegetation, tourist-poop washes away, and musicians find new buildings to perform music within.

(What's truly harmful is actually the opposite. Attempts to preserve a culture or situation by imposing stasis or freezing it in time will at best serve to murder it, at worst you get like a fascist dictatorship or some other kind of evil shit (I'm not sure, I've never tried, but I surmised this using my philosophy degree)).

So even though Grapevine has been ragging on Iceland's tourism gold-rush vibes for the near-decade that I have helmed it (which always made me chuckle, given that this is a publication that generates all of its income through tourism), we were never really targeting the idea of tourism.

What I, at least, have been rallying against is essentially the same thing I ranted about during those prosperous

bubble years that preceded that gnarly economic collapse of 2008: Blatant cash grabs coupled with a total lack of foresight, care or consideration at the hands of those entrusted with keeping our nation sane, safe and healthy. Ever since our GDP kicked in again around the same time Eyafjallamadaodazxczxr started spewing, we Icelanders have been rockin' out to an exceedingly faithful rendition of that classic hit song "Every Single Mistake We Made A Decade Ago." Or maybe it's a remix. It's a cover song for sure.

Listen: having to repeat all that with the creeping certainty that we learned absolutely nothing the last time we lived through it has been fucking grim. Hell, I even sorta left the country for a while, to avoid going completely nuts. A lot of us have been doing that. For a reason.

Yeah, prospects are grim in that regard, but again: nothing is permanent. And who knows, maybe the Pirates will save us? (They won't).

Either way, I am not concerned.

PS

One last thing. After ten years of working for this magazine, and nearly a decade of serving as its editor, it looks like I've finally managed to successfully resign from the post, after several botched attempts (see for instance my last farewell editorial, issue 1, 2012). What a crazy fucking decade it's been, though.

Wow. I get tired and kinda emo just thinking about it. Being editor is a wonderful, rewarding and well-paid job, which entails a lot of reading and writing and rewriting plus updating a Facebook page every four hours every day of every week of every month—plus, you're never lonely because important people (like marketers and deluded Belgians) will ensure your supply of fresh email never runs dry, while angry musicians and restaurateurs take it upon themselves to call and check up on you from time to time.

Hey that's a joke. Sure, you get a lot of emails, but a lot of them are actually pretty good. And you get to meet and work with and learn from all sorts of wonderful people. And, you know...what can I say. For better or worse, it's been my life. And, what a life it's been! Thank you, The Reykjavík Grapevine. You're the best, you really are. Please take care of yourself as you enter your teens, and try not to pick up a smoking habit even though all the cool magazines are doing it. You're different. You're better.

Love,
Your Friend At The
Haukur S. Magnússon



TRACK OF THE ISSUE

asdfhg.

"Kirkjusandur (óður til strætó nr. 12)"

Download it FREE at grapevine.is

asdfhg.'s "Kirkjusandur (óður til strætó nr. 12)" (in English, "Kirkjusandur, ode to bus 12") is our dreamlike track of the issue! Steinunn and Orri, the two young kids behind asdfhg., both live close to Kirkjusandur, and took frequent walks around the area last summer—as such, they felt the name Kirkjusandur encapsulates their friendship. "Ode to bus 12," however, is a reference to the fact that Steinunn often has to stand out in the cold for extended periods of time waiting for that bus. Bonus fun fact: they have a favourite bus driver who has long hair, who they've given the nickname "Bus Jesus" (the song is not about him, though).

The electro duo recently released their first EP together called 'Skammdegi' ("Short Days," in English), which was written and released in the short Icelandic winter days. asdfhg. will perform for the very first time at Sónar Reykjavík, so be sure to check them out!

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SOUR GRAPES & STUFF

THIS ISSUE'S LOVELIEST LETTER!



Just returned from a weekend in Reykjavik. Amazing snow covered lava landscapes, geysers, iced over Gullfoss, Hekla concert hall, Northern Lights blah blah blah. Whilst visiting Þingvellir for sunrise (not so torcherous at 10.20am) and I needed to use the toilet and the sign for the toilet featured a credit card (see attached photo). Only in Iceland would you need a credit card to "spend a penny".
- Nelly

We highly appreciate you bringing this to our attention. It seems pretty clear to us that this is a contributing factor to the plethora of tourists pooping all over the coun-

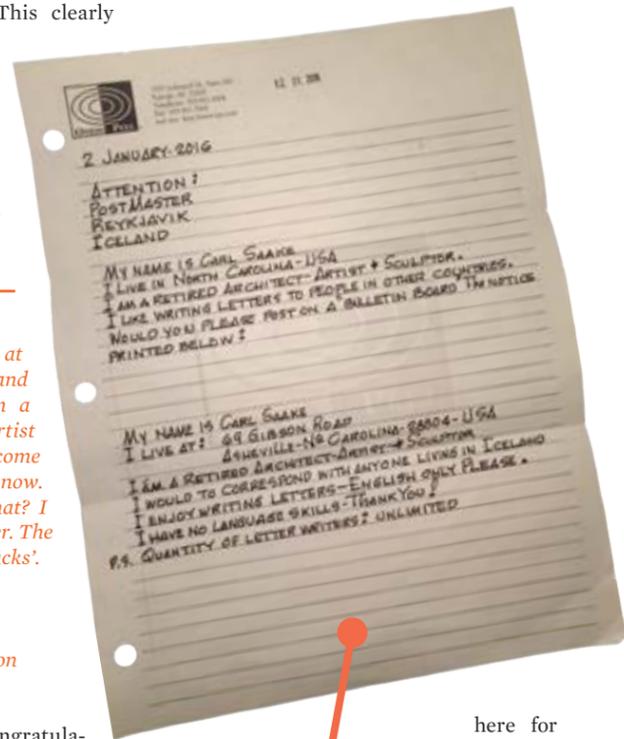
try. Sure, we all had a good laugh about that, but can you blame them, when they're being charged to answer nature's call? This clearly has to change. Public toilets should be free and available to the public at large - credit card holders or no.

Hey!
I was stationed at Rockville in Iceland years ago. I am a world famous artist now, I want to "come back" to Iceland now. How do I do that? I have a lot to offer. The United States 'sucks'. I miss Iceland. Call me.

James Williamson

Hey James!
Well first, congratulations on your stellar post-military art career. We love world famous artists here in Reykjavik! There are many airlines flying into Iceland these days, including, from

what we hear, a handful of \$99 flights via WOWair. But, well, American citizens can only stay



here for 90 days before they have to get a residency permit/ get married/ whatever, or return back to the land of 'suck'. So, good luck with that! Bestu Kveðja,



LOVELIEST LETTER

FREE GRAPEVINE TEE HEE HEE!

Check it out! Whoever sent in this issue's LOVELIEST LETTER gets a free Grapevine T-shirt, featuring the regal G that adorns our cover. DON'T PANIC if your letter wasn't found to be this issue's loveliest. You can still get a tee for a low, low price over our website, www.grapevine.is.

And guess what: we always give out SICK prizes for each issue's LOVELIEST LETTER, so be sure to send in some fun and/or interesting missives.

Give us your worst: letters@grapevine.is



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Icelandic words that didn't make the cut:

Hairy Berry

and Flat Pies - By Eli Petzold

The Icelandic language is famous for rejecting loan words, offering up novel neologisms constructed from native components instead of adopting foreign words. To the relief of language purists, these new words usually stick. Some words, however, just don't roll off the tongue. They gather dust as cute linguistic novelties while their clunky counterparts enter common parlance. Icelandic names for fruits haven't fared so well, perhaps due to the fact that they tend to describe the fruit in gross detail: it's little surprise that *banani* ("banana") has won out over *bjúgaldin*, which literally means "sausage fruit." Yummy. Moreover, *banani* conveniently declines, producing the comical form "banónunum" or "bönnunum" in the dative plural with the definite article suffixed. So too, *kívi* ("kiwi") seems far more innocuous than *lodbær*, which means "hairy berry" and conjures up some unsavory images. *Tómatur* perhaps replaced *raudaldin* ("red fruit") when the Árni Magnússon Institute discovered the joy of fried green tomatoes and realized they need not judge fruits by the colour of their skin.

While Icelandic cocktail culture is still in its nascency, there's no ambiguity that *kokteill* has all but supplanted

hanastél, which literally means "cock tail." Perhaps this is a loss, since *hani* etymologically invokes *hæna*, which means "hen," but can also be used to describe someone who gets wasted on a small amount of booze. After drinking some kokteilar, you'll get funny looks if you ask where the *snyrting* is. Sure, this word still appears on bathroom doors in some more respectable establishments, but it's the English equivalent of asking where the "washroom" is. You'd be better off using the word *klósett* which comes, by means of Danish, from the English "water closet." Be warned, however, that *klósett* refers to the toilet itself, lest you announce that you need to go "into the toilet." After your *klósett* visit, if you have the drunchies and fancy a slab of grease, you won't find any shop advertising *flatbökur*. Quaint as it is to call pizza "flat pie," Icelanders are just fine with *pítsa* or *pizza*. This latter option flouts the language reforms of 1973 whereby the letter "z" was replaced by "s"—thankfully so, lest the word become indistinguishable from the verb *píssa*, which, of course, means "to piss." And who's to say whether that word came from English, or from the universal language of the potty. 🍷



Unless you've been living in a cave for the past five years, you've probably heard it a billion times: **Winter is coming.** Well, in Iceland, winter has already come, there's no doubt about it. And for the most part, it's beautiful! However, while winter's frosty glow certainly renders the local landscapes even more gorgeous and mesmerizing, it also—and more importantly—makes the roads you must drive to view those landscapes more dangerous and slippery.

Indeed, driving in Iceland during winter can be a very dangerous prospect, quite unlike anything you've ever experienced. Now, we want you to be safe, because we love you, so in that spirit, here are some tips and precautions that should be useful to anyone planning to drive around the country during these cold and gloomy months.

- Ensure that your vehicle is well equipped with winter tires. If you're planning on leaving the greater Reykjavík area, studded tires are a must.
- Respect the law, for your own safety, for instance by ensuring that every passenger in your vehicle has fastened their seatbelt and is strapped in tightly.
- The speed limit within city or town limits is usually 50km/h. It is 30km/h in residential areas. Paved highways are generally 90 km/h unless otherwise indicated, while the speed limit for gravel roads is 80km/h. Always respect the speed limit—it's there for a reason—but remember that they are set with optimal conditions in mind, so do adjust your velocity appropriately when driving through snowdrifts or on an icy road, for instance.
- Make sure your vehicle is at all times equipped

with a shovel and a hefty rope. For longer ventures, bring along warm clothes, water and a charged-up cell phone. Jumper cables couldn't hurt, either.

- Pay close attention to the road. We know the landscape is probably the most beautiful thing you'll ever see, but it is also one of the trickiest. You don't want to gamble here.
- Remember to always keep your headlights on, whatever conditions you are driving in, as is mandated by law.
- Always be doubly careful when approaching blind hills, on gravel roads, and before crossing single lane bridges (we do have a lot of these).
- Sheep and horses can cross the road at any moment, even during winter (although that's admittedly kind of rare). Be vigilant!
- Don't go stomping on that gas pedal, you will get to your destination by being as careful as possible—and there's no hurry, is there?
- Follow the signs. Show common sense. Think a little. Understand that even main roads can close up for extended periods of time during winter, and that in Iceland, you cannot reasonably expect to travel anywhere by car.
- Constantly updated information road and weather conditions can be found on the Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration's helpful website: www.vegagerdin.is. Be sure to always check in there before embarking on a trip.
- Further information about weather and potential alerts can be found at safetravel.is.
- Access up-to-date information on road conditions in English by calling 1778.
- In case of an emergency, call 112 (the Icelandic equivalent of 911).
- Stay safe.

A POEM BY
KRISTÍN SVAVA
TÓMASDÓTTIR

Good Times

These were good times. I worked intermittently at the paper, spent my evenings hammering on the typewriter wrapped in a cloud of smoke, but by day I met the girls. We sat in cafés for hours, often at Select where the waiters knew us, drank coffee and aperitifs. Someone read lines from a new poem or from a philosophy essay, sometimes we leafed through the papers. We talked a lot, laughed a lot, and then wandered the streets intoxicated by our own linguistic genius. We were there, Simone and I, Svava, Gertrude, Emma, Rosa, and others, Victoria would join the group if she were alright because of the unreliable depression that tends to accompany the gift of genius. We were utterly destitute but always managed to scrape enough together for aperitifs and the latest work of the poet whom we chose to mock at that moment. In the end most of us got married, as it happens, and a cozy home life was enchanting to a certain extent—but we kept on meeting, always on Thursday evenings, drank together and then went to brothels, where we discussed matters with the sharpest whores of Paris before we went with them into back rooms.

Translated by Philip Roughton

A POEM BY is brought to you by Grapevine's fancy poetry liaison, Jón Örn Lódmjörð

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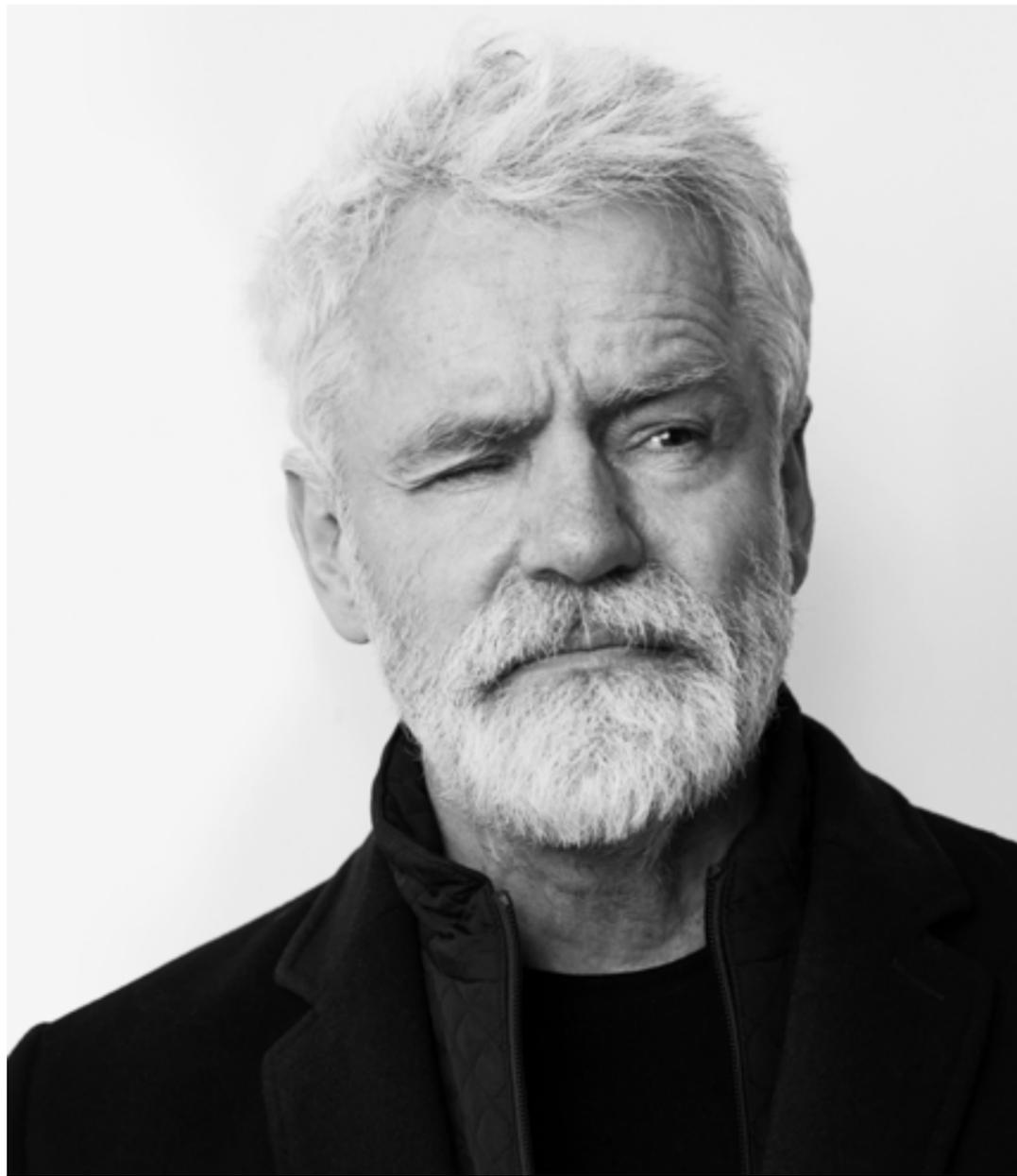


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Kári Stefánsson in Interview by YORK UNDERWOOD

Can A Geneticist Save Iceland's Health Care?

A few thoughts on 2015 and general discontent

Image by MAGNÚS ANDERSEN

After weeks of treatment, targeted zapping of cancerous cells, and immune crushing medicine, you need verify the status of your cancer. Has it shrunk? Have the cells been eradicated—leaving only scar tissue behind? Has the treatment been effective or do you need to discuss another approach with your oncologist? Don't worry. The answer is only a short flight away to Copenhagen. There are no PET scanners in Iceland. In the near future, you will be able to get your PET scan done here in Iceland. Kári Stefánsson, Icelandic neurologist and CEO of DeCode, raised the funds and donated one to Landspítalin, the national hospital.

On January 22, 2016, Kári started an online petition to make the government agree to allocate 11% of the GDP for healthcare. According to the OECD, in 2013, the total amount allocated for healthcare was about 8.7% of the GDP—putting Iceland below average in comparison to the rest of the nordic countries (with Finland also falling below average). Within five days, Kári's petition had more than 50,000 signatures.

"Why did I personally have to raise money to buy a PET Scanner for the na-

tional hospital?" says Kári sitting across from me at his desk in deCODE. "This is an instrument that has been in use in hospitals all over the world for 20 years. It's simple: we haven't been funding healthcare and it is unacceptable, completely.

In my mind, if you ask 'what are the minimum requirements that you make with a group of people with whom you want to live together and call yourselves a society?', the least you can do is attend to the sick and the wounded. That should be an absolute priority. You shouldn't be spending money on drilling holes through mountains before you make sure that you have reasonable ways of attending to the sick and the wounded"

It's clearly a budget. It's got a lot of numbers in it.

In 2014, a doctors' strike lead to an agreement to raise the salaries of doctors over three years. This was not only about compensation, but also about keeping doctors and specialists in Iceland. When interviewed that year, Dr. Íris Ösp Vésteinsdóttir, then head of the Icelandic Association of Junior Doctors,

worried about attracting young specialists to Iceland, with the prospect of 35% of Iceland's specialists slated to retire in the next decade.

"My view on this is simple: before you begin to divvy the budget up for various projects, you should make sure you have a healthcare system. Our healthcare system is not on par with the healthcare systems in the neighbouring countries. There is no question about that," said Kári, straightening up in his chair. "Unbeknown to me, I was copying the policy of the government from 2014. Why is the government opposing this now? Well, it's because they never meant what they said. This is so common amongst politicians, to make promises they never intended to keep. That is the reason direct democracy is necessary. You can look at my petition as an exercise in direct democracy: where you go to the people and ask them to support a cause.

"I started to lobby, forcefully, and I got some allies amongst the members of parliament. It was the view of those who were running the national hospital that it would need about an additional 2.5 billion ISK to be able to run the hospital at the same level as 2015. That was taken to the government and everyone agreed to allocate this additional 2.5 billion ISK—except the minister of finance, he cut it in half. The hospital got an additional 1.25 billion ISK, which is not sufficient to run the hospital at the same level as the previous year. Then a few days later he announced there would be a 300 billion ISK surplus in the government budget next year. So despite a 300 billion ISK surplus, they could not afford an additional 1.25 billion for the national hospital."

An honest politician stays bought

Kári's petition has been met with criticism from the government and a few outside consultants. Recently, Pawel Bartoszek debated Kári's petition—concluding that Kári's 11% of the GDP was unreasonable and that the 8.7% of the GDP being reported by the OECD was misleading. Kári was using the total

expenditure of the GDP on healthcare, which includes public and private expenses on healthcare. If you were to look at only the public expenditure Iceland uses about 7.1% of the GDP; whereas, Sweden, Kári's go to example, used about 9.2% of its GDP on public healthcare.

"I like Pawel, but he's a numbers guy," Kári said with a smile. "He insisted that I was basing my petition on false numbers on false arguments. I was trying to explain to him that the 11% number was not an argument. The 11% number is a goal. There is a difference between your goal and your argument. He's written many interesting pieces for the newspapers, but he is entirely incorrect if he thinks we have been funding the National Hospital well. Walk through the hospital and see the people in the corridors. Go check out the waiting lists for the various operations and procedures. The waiting lists are long and they are not becoming shorter."

Kári has been known to make a scene. Watching him on television, anyone can see he doesn't shy away from conflict. When Pawel attempted to bring up his concerns and criticisms, he didn't really have the same testicular fortitude and showmanship as Kári, which could be a reason for people being sceptical of Kári's motivations.

"On this issue, I don't think my public persona has much impact," said Kári. "The healthcare system is a concern for the majority of people in this country. I don't think it would have mattered who initiated this. This isn't a controversial issue. Who is against better healthcare? How large is the group of people here in Iceland who would not put healthcare at the top of the government's priorities? This is so uncontroversial that I doubt my person has much impact on it. I think the only people really opposed to this are blind loyalists to the government parties and I don't think they are a very large number of people. I think it's a small group of people. If you were in a position to get everyone in this country's opinion, the people opposed would be less than 5% of country."

Heavy lies the crown

On January 1, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, President of Iceland, announced he would not be running for another term in office. Kári's petition coincides with this new available seat of power being available and the use of populism and direct democracy is in tune with other politicians and parties—most notably, The Pirate Party of Iceland.

"This is one way the Prime Minister [Sigmundur Davið] tried discredit my petition by suggesting I was doing this because I was planning to run for office. That is absolutely untrue," said Kári without pausing. "We are doing fascinating work here at deCODE. It's a scientist's dream to be in the position I'm in.

"I have no interest in running for political office. I'm a nearly 67-year-old geneticist. I love to do human genetics. I run the best human genetics operation in the world. Why should I want to become a president. I don't understand how anyone could think it would be more suitable for me. I'm a somewhat uninhibited, forceful, opinionated asshole. Why would I become a president?"

Davið and Goliath

The Prime Minister, Sigmundur Davið, wrote a response to Kári's lobbying for more healthcare funding titled Toppári Íslands, which basically translates to "Topping Iceland." In his response, Sigmundur Davið compares Kári to those

people in conversations who always have to one-up the last speaker—everything they do is better, more exciting, more intelligent. The fact that a Prime Minister is responding directly to Kári, and hurling insults, has created what appears to be a rivalry between the two.

"I have no rivalry with the prime minister," said Kári before breaking into a smirk "Why should I have a rivalry with this obese two-year-old little boy? He's just answered my criticism with juvenile insults. There is no rivalry there. It looks like he's surrounded himself with really bad advisors. It isn't the interest of a Prime Minister to write pieces like he has done in this debate.

"I can write whatever I want. I'm a private citizen, but we have a Prime Minister who basically every time I say something he begins to throw shit. I'm used to shit like that—actually, I've taken the majority of my calories in the form of shit like that—but for a Prime Minister to be doing it, it doesn't make much sense. He just seems very insecure. He becomes defensive almost instantaneously.

"My petition for the improvement of the healthcare system he [Sigmundur Davið] looks at as a criticism of his government. I went out of my way to say that I did not think this was a criticism of his government. I thought this was a criticism of a succession of governments, a string of governments and, therefore, it was the responsibility of the people of this country, the voters who have voted these governments into office. But He took this as a criticism of his government, and by doing this he is claims possession of the mess. He makes the mess his, which is politically and rhetorically stupid. It's unbelievably stupid for a Prime Minister to pull himself into something like that."

Keep The Ball Rolling

"There is absolutely no way we can take these politicians seriously," Kári leans back in his chair and raises his hands

over his head. "They simply don't mean what they are saying. Therefore, I believe, because this has been the experience for the last 20 years or so, that we have to, we the people of this country, seize control of this issue and demand that a specific percentage of the GDP should be allocated for healthcare."

Kári continues to lobby and plead in newspapers and online for more support from the people of Iceland.

If the rate at which the signatures keep coming in continues, it appears to be working. Meanwhile, officials haven't decided where to build a facility to store, let alone run, the PET Scan Kári donated.

"We are up to 55 thousand signatures. This has been a one month effort. I am probably going to recruit some people to help me with this. See whether we can keep revitalizing this initiative. We will make it there. I think an overwhelming majority of the people in this country are in support of this.

"This is a very interesting experiment in direct democracy. In addition to being useful because it improves healthcare, and timely because of how bad of shape the healthcare system is in, it's also interesting to find out if we, the people of this country, can use this method to influence the decision making by the politicians. If not, we are in deep shit."

If you are interested in reading or signing the petition, check it out online at www.endurreisn.is.

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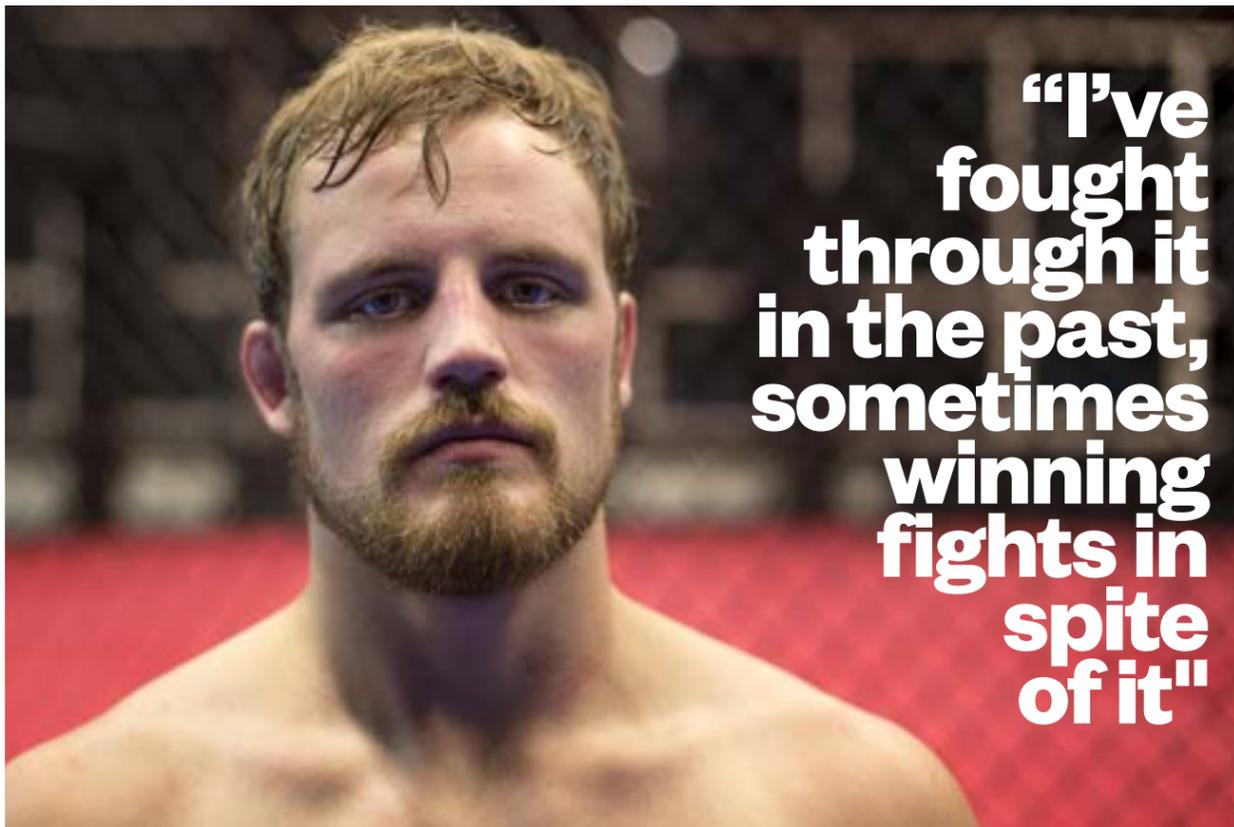


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That Fight:

Gunnar Nelson is down, far from out

By Gabriel Benjamin



“I’ve fought through it in the past, sometimes winning fights in spite of it”

THE EXCITEMENT WAS ALMOST PALPABLE on the evening of December 12, 2015, as Icelanders gathered in pubs, clubs and at house parties to witness local MMA hero Gunnar Nelson fight Brazil’s Demian Maia in a high-profile UFC fight beamed straight from Las Vegas via satellite. The highly publicized fight was dream matchup between two world-class grapplers, an experienced veteran and his hotshot challenger. Anticipation levels peaked as the two fighters stepped into the ring, with viewers from all over the world tuning in to witness the potentially legendary fight.

At Irish pub The Dubliner in downtown Reykjavík, the crowd turned wild as the fight commenced. And then, it fell silent.

It quickly became apparent that Gunnar Nelson was no match for Maia, who quickly asserted his dominance over the young contender. Our hero didn’t seem to stand a chance. The audience gathered was at a loss for words, much like the Icelandic sport commentators covering the match. Gunnar showed no signs of recovering. By the third round, people had averted their eyes from the screen, instead focusing on finishing their drinks.

Something had gone horribly wrong. Gunnar’s usual spry and confident demeanour was absent in the ring, replaced by what seemed like half-hearted efforts to stay in the fight, which was far from enough against veteran Maia. Gunnar spent the majority of the fight’s fifteen minutes soaking up punches and avoiding Maia’s deft submission attempts.

Wrestling with inner demons, Zombie Mode

After taking a few weeks off, Gunnar agreed to meet for an interview. Stepping into his gym, Mjöllnir, I find it absolutely bursting at the seams. Making my way past a throng of people hitting the showers, I descend to the large boxing and fitness room, where I find Gunnar in the middle of a deep stretch, smiling and laughing with a few friends of his. Saying his goodbyes, he joins me on a couch, squatting, not sitting, sipping on coconut water.

As we discuss that fateful December night, Gunnar doesn’t appear upset over the proceedings. He attributes his positive demeanour to having spent the last month with friends, family, and his eighteen-month-old son. “Lately I’ve been playing Zombie Mode on the new Call of Duty with my friends,” he says, “and going back to the gym.”

Speaking at a measured pace, Gunnar tells me that although he has yet to watch the Demian Maia fight, he’s paid a lot of thought to it. His technique and skills aren’t to blame for the loss, he says. Rather, it was the result of a sort of condition or bad habit that has followed him for a long time, and stopped him in his tracks that night. He’s felt it before, he tells me, but hasn’t been able to properly pinpoint it until now. He describes the sensation like a need to open up his chest, and when affected he feels slowed down, and unable to self-motivate.

“I’ve fought through it in the past, sometimes winning fights in spite of it,” he explains. He felt it during the Rick Story fight of 2014—his first professional loss—he confirms when I ask, noting that it wasn’t as acute then as was with

Maia. He explains: “Dealing with it is a part of me becoming comfortable in my own skin and getting to know your body.”

Gunnar tells me that he’d long been excited about the prospect of fighting Maia. Having discussing the intricacies and challenges of such a matchup with numerous confidants, he says, he specifically requested it happen. “I’ve watched him from the beginning. I have the feeling that he’s on his way out, so I knew this was my chance.”

However bad his defeat might have seemed, it’s clear from talking to Gunnar that he doesn’t see it as anything more than a bump in the road. “You lose, and there’s nothing you can do about it but get back up on your feet,” he calmly explains, betraying the stoic demeanour that has become his trademark.

Local fame, Global acclaim

In the three and a half years that Gunnar has fought with the UFC, he’s won five fights, and lost two, garnering well-deserved international acclaim and becoming a bit of a national icon in the process.

Indeed, Gunnar’s many achievements at the highest level of the MMA world—such as making it to the top fifteen of the UFC’s welterweight division—have served to popularise the sport in Iceland. It has, for instance, resulted in an influx of new members at Mjöllnir, the gym where he trains, making it one of Europe’s biggest. To meet demand, Mjöllnir will move to a new 3,000 square metre space this summer, with twice the floor space.

Gunnar hasn’t gotten into a fight since he was a kid, he says, and he be-

lieves that his sport has nothing to do with violence. Instead, he explains, it taps into something very primal, something that perhaps appeals to Icelanders in particular.

“In all my travels, I’ve discerned that Icelanders are pretty rough people,” he says. “We like full contact sports and action. MMA is just man against man, woman against woman—it’s conflict in its most basic form, with a good set of rules. Maybe I’m biased, because I enjoy it and so do the people around me, but I think it speaks to something instinctive within us.”

As Gunnar grows increasingly popular in Iceland and MMA becomes more prevalent in the local media, detractors have predictably come out of their woodwork, raising various concerns over the merits of “a sport that celebrates barbaric violence” and Gunnar’s own standing as a public figure. Lately, whenever kids get into a schoolyard tussle, a mini-moral panic erupts, where he and his sport are called into question. Most recently, Gunnar was taken to task by commentators after two ten-year-old boys got into a fistfight a couple of days after the Maia bout.

At this point, the discourse is fairly routine. First, various commentators respond to an event by claiming that Gunnar is a bad role model. His defenders will then respond, perhaps noting that kids have been getting into fights since time immemorial and this isn’t likely to change. Predictable and petty as this verbal sparring is, Gunnar becomes visibly frustrated when the topic is brought up, saying he’s fed up with having to repeat himself again and again.

When asked whether he considers

himself a role model, he responds that he’s not the person to answer that. “I try doing what I do to the best of my ability. It’s up to other people to decide if I am a role model, and if so, of what kind.” We discuss role models in general, and their responsibility to the public. After pausing for a moment, Gunnar admits that he’s not sure. “You have to realise the impact you can have, and base your decisions on that,” he says. “Yet at the same time, people have to understand that you’re just living your life. Knowing that young boys and girls might look up to me makes me want to be careful to remain true to myself, and stick to my own values.”

Intense Situations

Gunnar is known for seeming stoic and calm, rarely showing emotion. His friends, however, know that he can be very impatient, and that he hates being delayed. Right now he’s back to training full time and says he’ll be in fighting shape again in a month or two. He’s aiming for three or four bouts this year.

He says he doesn’t want to decide who he fights next, while noting that he wants many fights in quick succession. “The UFC never match you against someone who is far behind you, so we always just say yes to what they suggest. They’re all tough guys, and you can always learn from them, which is what motivates me as a fighter. I’m interested in improving as a fighter, learning new movements, and putting myself into intense situations. I want to keep going and fight the top guys, and then pass on my skills when I’ve retired.”

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Welcome To The Circle

Meet the
men behind
Iceland's thriving
black metal scene

by HANNAH JANE COHEN photos by HAFSTEINN VIÐAR

Hafsteinn Viðar, the man behind the solo black metal project Wormlust, requested that our interview take place at the Cathedral of Christ the King, preferably in the confessional.

If the confessional was unavailable, he said, then we could perhaps walk together in the nearby cemetery. "Black metal is the most beautiful sound in the world if you give it the chance," he whispers carefully as we sit in the pews. "I see it as celestial, but discordant." With his face turned towards the ground and an encyclopaedic knowledge of not only black metal but also art and philosophy, Hafsteinn is the troubled-artist stereotype made flesh. He's sweet and kind, yet a clear introvert. Even in the spa-

cious cathedral, I feel like I'm infringing on him. Along with every other band interviewed, Hafsteinn only agreed to be in this piece if his full name was not mentioned. One has to wonder why.

If Hafsteinn is the troubled artist, then Sturla Viðar, leader of veteran black metal band Svartíðauði, is easily the rock star. "Some people will say it's just artistic expression," Sturla says with an easy confidence, laying out the foundations of his belief system, "but I don't think you should be allowed to form a

black metal band without having been in a fight or in trouble with the law." We're sitting on a couch in his dark apartment.

He hands me a beer and lights a cigarette. "Look, I'm not saying that you have to go out and sell heroin to kids or burn down a church or a school or whatever. Just practice what you preach!" Sturla is intense and opinionated, but he's likable, and charming in that Charles Manson kind of way. He smiles. "Then we just end up with suburban white anthropologists and a bunch of scholarly articles on church burnings." With a sip of his beer, he raises his eyebrows at me.

The boys of Auðn invite me to their practice space. Andri B., their guitarist and composer, proudly declares, "The most important thing in black metal is this ideology: Do whatever the fuck you want, and if you don't like it, fuck you, I'm going to do it anyway." Auðn are rarely invited to play with other Icelandic black metal bands. Without question, they are the outsiders of the already-outsider Icelandic black metal commu-

THE REYKJAVIK GRAPEVINE

INFO

Issue 02 - 2016

www.grapevine.is

GOODBYE WINTER

Reykjavík celebrates the end of the long dark night and the coming of spring with the Winter Lights Festival

Photo by Ragnar Th. Sigurdsson

IMPERFECT PERFECTION

Waxing lyrical about Jón Gnarr's book

THE DOUBLE BASS, REIMAGINED

Bára Gísladóttir plays with audience expectations

CELESTINE RETURN

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Music Legend

- 🎵 Classical, opera.
- ⚡ Electronic, dance, house, techno.
- 🎧 Hip-hop, R&B.
- 🎸 Hardcore, metal, rock.
- 🎸 Troubadour.
- 🎧 Experimental.
- 🎸 Acoustic, folk, jazz.
- 🎧 Indie, pop

Feb 5 - March 3

How to use the listings: Venues are listed alphabetically by day. Events listed are all live performances, with troubadours and DJs specifically highlighted. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit listings.grapevine.is. Send your listings to: listings@grapevine.is.

Friday February 5

- American Bar**
22:00 Troubadour Ellert 🎸 / DJ Maggi ⚡
- Bar 11**
22:00 Bootlegs 🎧
- Bar Ananas**
22:00 DJ Óli Dóri ⚡
- Boston**
22:00 DJ Kári ⚡
- Bravó**
22:00 DJ Silja Glømmi ⚡★
- Café Rosenberg**
21:00 Sigurgeir & Draumabandið 🎸
- Dillon**
22:00 whatsamacallit 🎧
- Gaukurinn**
20:30 THROWDOWN III: Valby Bræður 🎧 / Þriðja Hæðin 🎧 / Kíló 🎧 / Rímnaříki 🎧 / Holy Hrafn & Binni Bó 🎧 / Roycer 🎧 / Bróðir Big 🎧 / Lamako 🎧 / Authentic Exeption 🎧 / Hettumávar 🎧 / DJ Sickario ⚡
- Hressó**
22:00 Span 🎧🎧
- Mengi**
21:00 Alan Courtis
- Paloma**
23:55 Abstraxion ⚡ / DJ Steindór Jónsson ⚡ / DJ Agzilla ⚡ / Plasmic ⚡ / DJ Elvar ⚡
- Stofan**
22:00 DJ Dorrit & Lazybones ⚡

Saturday February 6

- American Bar**
22:00 Troubadour Biggi 🎸 / DJ Bogi ⚡
- Bar 11**
22:00 Nadaclue 🎧🎧 / Qualia 🎧

★ PICKER OF THE ISSUE ★

Karó



This issue's picker is **Karó**, a young and promising singer taking her first steps in the music scene. Karó won a national singing competition on behalf of her upper secondary school early in 2015, attracting a lot of good attention in the process. Since then, she has been in collaboration with artists such as Logi Pedro and Auður. Karó is a regular at the downtown electronic and hip-hop happenings, but admits she's a bit of a slacker when it comes to art exhibitions.

You can find the events our picker of the issue found to be interesting spread out over the music and art pages, marked with this ★ icon.

Photo by Hrefna Björg Gylfadóttir

5 February

An Abstract Of Dance Theory
Abstraxion / Steindór Jónsson

Paloma

Naustin (D3) | 🕒 23:55 | Admission: Free!

Don't let his youthful appearance fool you—**Abstraxion** is an electronic artist you shouldn't let slip by. The Frenchman played here in 2011, and has since built a formidable reputation in the scene, playing with artists like Matrixxman and Roman Flugel, and performing on the prestigious Beats In Space radio show. He's joined by another eternally youthful DJ, **Steindór Jónsson. GB**

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ÓLI G. JÓHANNESSON
STEINUNN THÓRARINSDÓTTIR

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CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

Bar Ananas

22:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson ⚡

Boston

22:00 DJ Herr Gott ⚡

Bravó

22:00 DJ Ernir ⚡

Café Rosenberg

21:00 Hundur í Óskilum 🎧

Dillon

22:00 The Restless 🎧

Gaukurinn

22:00 Toneron ⚡ / Lockerbie 🎧 /
CeaseTone 🎧

Harpa

14:00 ISO: Ævar's Science Fair 🎧★

16:00 ISO: Ævar's Science Fair 🎧★

Hressó

22:00 Dalton 🎧

Húrra

21:00 RVK Carnival: Samúel Jón
Samúelsson Big Band 🎧🎧 /
Reykjavík Batucada 🎧 / DJ KGB
Soundsystem ⚡

Hverfisgata 12

21:00 DJ Ívar Pétur ⚡

Mengi

21:00 Machaut & Rauschen 🎧

Paloma

22:00 RVK DNB DJ Set ⚡

Stofan

22:00 Nolo DJ set ⚡

Sunday February 7

Bravó

22:00 Vinyl Sunday: DJ Logi Leó ⚡

Bryggjan Brugghús

20:00 Sunjazz 🎧

Hressó

22:00 Live jazz jam session 🎧

Mengi

21:00 Music lab for children 🎧

Nordic House

15:15 Caput ensemble & soprano Marta
Halldórsdóttir 🎧

Monday February 8

American Bar

21:00 Troubadour Roland 🎧

Húrra

21:00 Monday Night Jazz 🎧

Tuesday February 9

American Bar

21:00 Troubadour Ellert 🎧

Bravó

22:00 DJ Eyfjörð ⚡★

Café Rosenberg

21:00 Símon Vestar 🎧

Gaukurinn

21:00 Karaoke Night

Húrra

21:00 DJ Sunna Ben ⚡🎧★

KEX Hostel

20:30 KEX Jazz 🎧

Wednesday February 10

American Bar

21:00 Troubadour Alexander 🎧

Bravó

22:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson ⚡

Café Rosenberg

21:00 Tóta & Band 🎧

Thursday February 11

American Bar

21:00 Troubadour Matti Matt 🎧

Bar Ananas

22:00 DJ Atli Kanill ⚡

Boston

22:00 Autonomous 🎧🎧

Bravó

22:00 DJ John Brnlv ⚡🎧

Café Rosenberg

21:00 Amy Winehouse tribute 🎧🎧★

Dillon

22:00 Ofvitarnir 🎧🎧

Gaukurinn

22:00 Vára 🎧 / Milkhouse 🎧🎧

Harpa

19:30 ISO: The Leningrad Symphony 🎧★

Hlemmur Square

21:00 Blöndal Trio 🎧

Hressó

22:00 Sex Ý Fötu 🎧

Hverfisgata 12

21:00 DJ André ⚡

Loft Hostel

20:00 JFDR 🎧🎧

Mengi

21:00 Ljóðfæri: Halldór & Þórarinn
Eldjárn 🎧



28
February

Lose Yourself In The Rat's Forest

Eivør, Album Release Concert

Gamla Bíó

Ingólfsstræti 2a (E4) | 🕒 20:00 | Admission from 4,490 ISK

This Faroese goddess blesses us with contemporary folk music from her newest album 'Slør'. The album is infused with dreamlike sounds and hypnotic compositions, exploring the search for freedom and desire to find a place in life. Accompanying **Eivør** are musicians **Mikael Blak** and **Høgni Isberg**, who have worked with her for many years. Get lost in the magic of Eivør's performance and her futuristic yet nostalgic sound. **HGB**

Photo by Sigga Ella



12
February

The Rock Renaissance

Muck / Pink Street Boys

Húrra

Naustin (D3) | 🕒 22:00 | Admission: 1,500 ISK

Muck and **Pink Street Boys** are two of the bands leading the new wave of rock and punk that's pulling the Reykjavík scene up to new heights. Loud, dirty, provocative and uncompromising, both bands released seminal albums last year and are now playing together for the first time in years. Expect to leave the show with beer-soaked clothes and bleeding ears, and black and blue from the best mosh pit of the year. **GB**

Photo by Hörður Sveinsson

Stofan

22:00 russian.girls ⚡🎧🎧

Friday February 12

American Bar

22:00 Troubadour Roland 🎧 / DJ
André ⚡

Bar Ananas

22:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson ⚡

Boston

22:00 DJ Rix ⚡

Bravó

22:00 DJ Óli Dóri ⚡

Café Rosenberg

21:00 Pálmi Sigurhjartar 🎧

Dillon

22:00 Moonbear 🎧🎧

Gaukurinn

22:00 Reykjavíkurdætur 🎧🎧★

Hressó

22:00 Foreign land 🎧🎧

Húrra

21:00 Muck 🎧 / Pink Street Boys 🎧 / DJ
Simon FKNHNSM ⚡

Stofan

22:00 Hið Myrka Man Vinyl night ⚡🎧

Saturday February 13

American Bar

22:00 Troubadour Siggí Þorbergs 🎧 /
DJ Pétur Valmundar ⚡

Bar 11

22:00 O'bannion 🎧 / Black desert sun 🎧

Bar Ananas

22:00 DJ Pabbi ⚡

Boston

22:00 DJ Eyfjörð ⚡

Bravó

22:00 DJ Davíð Roach ⚡

Café Rosenberg

21:00 Pálmi Sigurhjartar 🎧

Gaukurinn

22:00 Quest 🎧 / Gunnar Jónsson Collider ⚡

/ Kvöl 🎧 / MC Bjór & Bland 🎧

Hressó

22:00 Kviðmágarinn 🎧🎧

Húrra

21:00 Milkywhale 🎧🎧 / Auður 🎧🎧 /
DJ Óli Dóri ⚡

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Hverfisgata 12
21:00 DJ O.D. ⚡
Iðnó
22:30 Páll Óskar's Pink Masquerade Party 🍷
Paloma
23:30 RVK Soundsystem Reggae Night 🎧★
Stofan
22:00 Krystal Carma DJ Set ⚡

Sunday February 14

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Alexander 🎸
Bravó
22:00 DJ Haukur S. Magnússon ⚡★
Bryggjan Bruggús
20:00 Sunjazz 🎷
Dillon
22:00 Barbarosa ⚡🎸
Hallgrímskirkja
17:00 Organ concert 🎹
Hressó
22:00 Live jazz jam session 🎷
Mengi
21:00 Music lab for children 🎵
Stofan
22:00 Ambient Sunday: Valentin Stip ⚡

Monday February 15

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Ellert 🎸
Húrra
21:00 Monday Night Jazz 🎷

Tuesday February 16

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Roland 🎸
Café Rosenberg
21:00 Refur 🎷
Gaukurinn
21:00 Karaoke Night
Húrra
20:00 Rúnar Þórisson 🎷
KEX Hostel
20:30 KEX Jazz 🎷

Wednesday February 17

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Síggi Þorbergs 🎸
Bar Ananas
22:00 Vaginaboys Festival DJ set 🎧
Bravó
22:00 DJ Lamp Vader ⚡
Dillon
22:00 Saktmóðigur 🎸 / Roht 🎸 / Dauðyflin 🎸
KEX Hostel
20:30 Apparat Organ Quartet 🎹
Paloma
21:00 Hið Myrka Man: I - Maud the moth 🎸 / IDK | IDA ⚡

Thursday February 18

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Hreimur 🎸
Bar Ananas
22:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson ⚡
Boston
22:00 Icelandic Underground Hip Hop Night Pt.1: MC Bjór 🎧 / Morgunroði 🎧 / Gráni 🎧 / Ben'Addict 🎧 / Undir Grun 🎧 / Orðljótur 🎧 / KILO 🎧

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17 February

Drown In Distorted Agro Punk!
Dauðyflin / Saktmóðigur / Roht

Dillon

Laugavegur 30 (E5) | 🕒 22:00 | Admission: Fuck Money!

Dauðyflin is Iceland's newest hardcore punk outfit, featuring three members from our "best live band of 2015," Börn, and another from Brat Rock. They've already released a demo and it's tighter than a banker's inner circle, sounding fast, distorted, and full of rage. Their song titles are also pretty great— listen out for "Let's Kill Everything," "Period Stains" and "Codependence." They're joined by punks **Saktmóðigur** and dark wave synth outfit **Roht**. **GB**

/ Peytibrandur 🎧 / Seppi from Rottweiler 🎧 / Vivid Brain 🎧 / Authentic the Exception 🎧 / Bróðir BIG 🎧 / Haukur H 🎧

Bravó

22:00 Hið Myrka Man DJ set ⚡🎧

Café Rosenberg

21:00 Belleville 🎷

Dillon

22:00 Low/mid/high 🎷

Gaukurinn

21:00 Funky Jazz Jam Session 🎷

Harpa

19:30 Iceland Symphony - Barton Sings Brahms 🎹

Hlemmur Square

21:00 Royal 🎷

Hressó

22:00 Sex Ý Fötu 🎸

Hverfisgata 12

21:00 DJ Mokki ⚡

Mengi

21:00 OQKO release night ⚡🎧

Stofan

22:00 Antimony DJ set ⚡

Friday February 19

American Bar

22:00 Troubadour Biggi & Ingunn 🎸 / DJ Bogi ⚡

Bar 11

22:00 Rythmatik 🎸

Bar Ananas

22:00 DJ Silja Glömmi ⚡

Boston

22:00 ogko label night: Lvis Mejía ⚡ / DEKJ ⚡ / astvaldur ⚡ / smog ⚡ / DJ Herr Gott ⚡

Bravó

22:00 DJ Doodlepops 🎧

Café Rosenberg

21:00 Stebbi Jak & Andri Ívars 🎷

Dillon

22:00 Diamond Thunder 🎸

Hressó

22:00 Gorgoroth 🎸

Húrra

ORATION MMXVI

19:00 Azoic 🎸

19:45 Abominor 🎸

20:30 Mannveira 🎸

21:00 Wormlust 🎸

21:40 Shrine of Insanabilis 🎸

22:40 Slidhr 🎸

23:40 Svartidauði 🎸

Mengi

21:00 Óskar Guðjónsson, Valdimar Kolbeinn Sigurjónsson, & Matthías M.D. Hemstock 🎸

Stofan

22:00 DJ Dorrit ⚡

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

Saturday February 20

American Bar
22:00 Troubadour Alexander & Guðmann / DJ André

Bar 11
22:00 Skerðing

Bar Ananas
22:00 Sing-a-long with Valdi Píano

Bravó
22:00 DJ Ísar Logi

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Mandólin

Dillon
22:00 Alchemia

Gaukurinn
22:00 Faces of the Walls album release show / Pink Street Boys

Hlemmur Square
21:00 Stockfish Film Festival final party with Ceastone

Hressó
22:00 Alaska

Húrra
ORATION MMXVI
19:00 NYIP
19:35 Almyrkvi
20:10 Misþyrming
21:10 Rebirth of Nefast
22:00 Mortuus Umbra
22:50 Sinmara
23:45 Malthusian

Hverfisgata 12
21:00 DJ Doodlepops

Mengi
21:00 Steinunn Arnbjörg Stefánsdóttir

Stofan
22:00 Krystal Carma DJ set

Sunday February 21

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Siggí Þorbergs

Bravó
22:00 Vinyl Sunday: DJ Turchi vs. Glømmi

Bryggjan Bruggús
20:00 Sunjazz

Hressó
22:00 Live jazz jam session

Mengi
21:00 Music lab for children

Stofan
22:00 Ambient Sunday: Arnór Kári

Monday February 22

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Roland

Húrra
21:00 Monday Night Jazz

Tuesday February 23

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Ellert

Gaukurinn
21:00 Karaoke Night

KEX Hostel
20:30 KEX Jazz

Wednesday February 24

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Alexander

Bravó
22:00 DJ Óli Dóri

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Elín Ey

Húrra
20:00 Biogen Album Release Concert / Quadruplos / Ruxpin / Futuregrapher / Tanya & Marlon

Mengi
21:00 Iceland Academy of the Arts Experimental Night

Thursday February 25

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Matti Matt

Bar Ananas
22:00 Vaginaboys DJ Set

Boston
22:00 Autonomous

Bravó
22:00 DJ Einar Sonic

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Fræbblarnir

Hlemmur Square
21:00 Kristín Lárusdóttir



3 March
Loss And Seperation
ISO and the Hamrahlíð Choir perform Arvo Pärt

Harpa

Harpa, Austurbakki 2 (C4) | 17:00 | Admission: from 2,400

The **Iceland Symphony Orchestra** and the angelic **Hamrahlíð Choirs** have collaborated for years, and their works are some of Reykjavík's most precious cultural treats. Now they've come together to bring to life the wondrous compositions of Estonian composer **Arvo Pärt**. **Hallveig Rúnarsdóttir**, a former member of the choir, is the soloist of the evening, and Grammy winner **Tönu Kaljuste** is the event's conductor. He has been a fan of the Hamrahlíð Choir ever since he heard one of their rehearsals.

HBG Photo by *Álfheiður Erla*

Hressó
22:00 Sex Ý Fötu

Hverfisgata 12
21:00 DJ Óli Dóri

Loft Hostel
20:00 Baby it's only you

Mengi
21:00 Ecuallly Stupid

Stofan
22:00 Nicolas Kunysz

Friday February 26

American Bar
22:00 Troubadour Alexander & Guðmann / DJ Pétur Valmundar

Bar 11
22:00 Aterna

Bar Ananas
22:00 DJ Atli Kanill

Boston
22:00 DJ Fredi Sirocco from Leipzig

Bravó
22:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Boudoir singing group

Dillon
22:00 Hið Myrka Man DJ set / Fredi Sirocco / Madame Melanocolique

Gaukurinn
22:00 Djúpir Vasar House Band

Hressó
22:00 Mr. Mookie

Húrra
21:00 Singapore Sling / DJ Ívar Pétur

Mengi
21:00 Hekla Magnúsdóttir Theremin

Stofan
22:00 Nolo DJ set

Saturday February 27

American Bar
22:00 Troubadour Siggí Þorbergs / DJ Maggi

Bar 11
22:00 Parðar / Avóka

Bar Ananas
22:00 DJ Sura

Bravó
22:00 DJ Ívar Pétur

Café Rosenberg
21:00 KK & Maggi

Dillon
22:00 Vertigo

Gaukurinn
22:00 Driftoff

Hressó
22:00 Kongó

Húrra
21:00 DJ Óli Dóri

Hverfisgata 12
21:00 DJ Styrmir Dansson

Mengi
21:00 Daisuke Tanabe

Stofan
22:00 DJ Myth

Sunday February 28

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Alexander

Bravó
22:00 Vinyl Sunday: DJ Símon FKNHNSM

Bryggjan Bruggús
20:00 Sunjazz

Gamla Bíó
20:00 Eivør

Gaukurinn
21:00 Jazz and Blues Night

Hressó
22:00 Live jazz jam session

Mengi
21:00 Music lab for children

Stofan
22:00 Ambient Sunday: DJ Dorrit & Bervit

Monday February 29

American Bar
21:00 Troubadour Roland

Bryggjan Bruggús
20:00 Högni Egilsson

Húrra
21:00 Monday Night Jazz

Tuesday March 1

Gaukurinn
21:00 Karaoke Night

KEX Hostel
20:30 KEX Jazz

Wednesday March 2

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Bítladrengirnir blíðu & Gestur

Thursday March 3

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Fræbblarnir

Gaukurinn
21:00 Funky Jazz Jam Session

Harpa
19:30 Iceland Symphony - Arvo Pärt

Hlemmur Square
21:00 Marteinn Sindri

Stofan
22:00 DJ Api Pabbi

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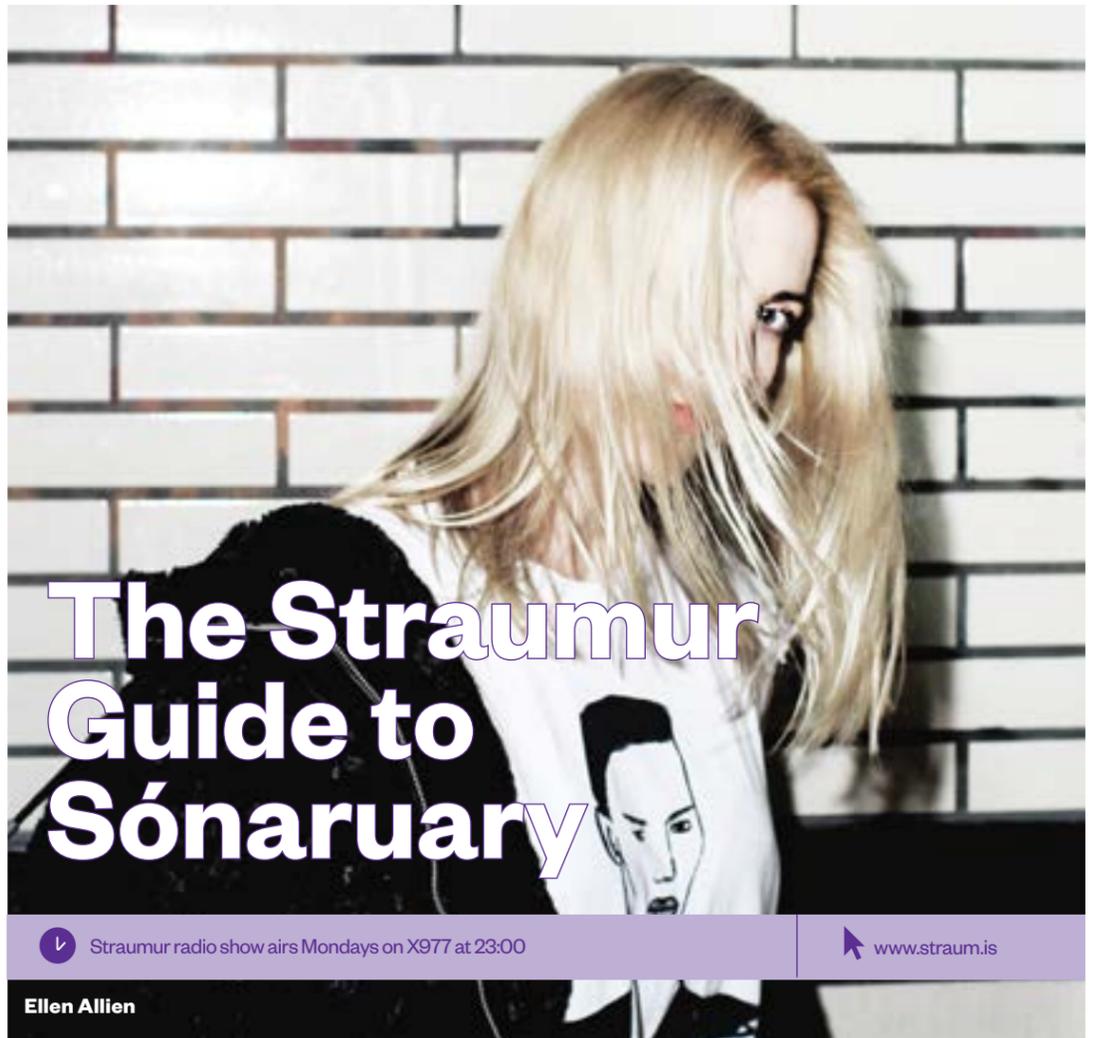
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The Straumur Guide to Sónaruary

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Ellen Allien

STRAUMUR

Once the darkest and dullest month on the Icelandic calendar for music and culture (and other things that make life moderately worth living), February was forever transformed in 2013 with the arrival of Sónar Reykjavík, that annual shining beacon of modern sonic delight. The festival has grown into a three-day extravaganza of sound, vision and excellence since its début, with cutting edge performers turning the Harpa music hall into a gigantic nightclub that is at once refined and debauched. The list of exciting artists performing at Sónar Reykjavík 2016 far exceeds the meagre wordcount we are allotted, so we instead decided to recommend a few choice artists that might fly under some people's radar. In all its glory, and no particular order, we present: The Definitive Straumur Guide To Sónar Reykjavík 2015 Artists That You Might Not Be Aware Of But Should Definitely Try To Catch Regardless!

Oneohtrix Point Never

The alias of the US-born Daniel Lopatin, Oneohtrix Point Never's experimental compositions constantly border on the sublime. Small wonder, then, that the project was picked up in 2013 by the prestigious Warp label, home to Aphex Twin, Autechre and other verified IDM legends. His Warp debut, 'R Plus Seven', is one of those records whose beauty transcends genres, transforming your headphones into a wormhole to dimensions far more enjoyable than ours.

Ellen Allien

Hailing from Germany, Ellen Allien is a well-regarded name in electronic music, known for her work as a DJ, label manager and producer. She will close down Sónar Thursday with a DJ set that's sure to electrify.

Angel Haze

This veritable force of hip-hop burst onto

the scene in 2012 with her ode to NYC, "New York," and has been steadily gaining ground ever since. Proudly identifying as agender and pan-sexual, Haze flows like the Amazon river and has an abundance of impressive music to her name. From her performance at Sónar, we expect nothing less than barrels of swagger and microphone murders.

Holly Herndon

The American composer and experimental artist Holly Herndon uses her music to study how modern technologies influence people. Participation is an important part of her live show. Don't miss it!

Hudson Mohawke

Producer wunderkind Hudson Mohawke has actually visited these shores before, giving a thrilling set at Iceland Airwaves 2009, shortly before his career blew up. Since then, he's produced a steady stream of bangers for

folks like Kanye West, TNGHT, and under his own name—it really seems like he can do no wrong. Hudson's sound is maximalist to the extreme, and the things he can do with a brass section are not of this world. By all means, attend his set at Sónar—just keep in mind that once it's over, you'll be left with a sweat-soaked t-shirt and minor neck injuries (don't worry, it's worth it).

Floating Points

Electronic producer/DJ Sam Shepherd (aka Floating Points) started producing music in 2009. Since then, he's since slowly perfected his signature sound—a nifty combination of deep house, hip-hop, soul and jazz. His excellent debut, 'Elaenia', was released last November and is sure to feature prominently on Floating Points's Sónar setlist—we can't help but look forward dancing to live renditions of all of its best songs.

By Óli Dóri & Davíð Roach

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“Marrakech Is Yellow, Orange, Pink...”

Bára Gísladóttir

melds experience, memory, place, and music theory on her innovative debut LP

By John Rogers – Photo by Art Bicnick

In a dimly lit, pin-drop quiet Mengi, young composer and musician Bára Gísladóttir lies onstage on her back, behind her double bass. Barely visible, she starts to make sound—a breathy growling, that builds into a throaty roar, and then a howl. Bára battles with the strings a little, and then starts building again, making a guttural gurgle that builds into a scream. The audience is enthralled, some sitting in silence, whether stunned, hypnotised or giggling with bewilderment.

“I was hoping nobody would see me there, lying there behind the instrument,” Bára explains, later. “I actually don’t know where I got this idea, it seems pretty strange. That piece is called ‘Rooftops of Prague,’ so I guess this piece is what Prague inspired. It’s a bit of a satanic city. That architecture... and, the atmosphere is full of surprises. It’s romantic, but in a punk way—the kind of romantic that I like.”

Spank de bass

The performance was to celebrate the CD & vinyl release of her crowdfunded debut album, ‘Different Rooftops’, and featured live debuts for several of the works contained therein. Bára’s playing style changed dramatically from piece to piece—at one point, accompanied by groaning saxophone and with an intensely furrowed brow, she snapped the strings against the neck violently, as if punishing her bass. At another, she grappled the wide body as if trying to stop it from escaping, wrestling with the bulky instrument before bowing the strings emphatically as if sawing wood. It made for a nervy, disconcerting tableau of sound and a robustly physical performance.

In the most theatrical and visual piece, ‘Rooftops of Berlin,’ Bára was wrapped in a long white cloth band, with four people standing around her in a diamond, tugging at the material to spin her around until she became hopelessly entwined. In the end, her attempts to play were thwarted as the material finally muted the strings.

“I like the challenge of extended playing techniques,” says Bára, “and the physical performance adds another element—whether I’m hiding behind the instrument, or fighting it, or trying to escape from it. What the audience expects shouldn’t always be what happens.”

Push the boundaries

The album was written during Bára’s MA course at the University of Copenhagen. It’s a devoutly experimental work that displays a restless curiosity about the potential of the instrument,

and about composition itself. “My peers gave some mixed reviews,” says Bára. “Most of them thought the album was a bit too long, and maybe too deep into the same colours—this oily-textured mass. But that was kind of what I was going for. I like music to be a challenge, and I don’t feel that everything needs to always be accessible. It’s so important to push at the boundaries, not just in music, but in our life experiences in

“It’s a bit of a satanic city. That architecture... and, the atmosphere is full of surprises.”

general. It sounds like such a cliché to say it! But it’s true.”

This enthusiasm for exploration is a key part of Bára’s process. In fact, the album was inspired by travel—the sounds, sights, smells, sensations, and feelings she experienced whilst walking the streets or viewing the skylines of different cities.

“The work is based on cities that I went to between 2009 and 2015, and felt inspired by,” she explains. “In some of these pieces, like ‘Rooftops of Prague,’ I had this overview of the rooftops, the city, and the atmosphere of the place—then the meat on the bones is details, and things I’d see in the street. But then, in ‘Rooftops of Berlin,’ you never get close to anything. As the performance goes on, I get more and more stuck in the band. It doesn’t have a happy ending—I get stuck and can’t go any further.”

Marrakech was a very different experience. “I was there in the summer, during Ramadan, and there was a heat wave happening,” recalls Bára. “It was chaos. There were a lot of intense salesmen in the streets, but it was so hot they’d be lying in their stalls screaming after you to buy things. That piece is more about that intense experience of being there. But in all of the cities, I’d been up to the rooftops. I do love rooftops, both to look up and see, and to look down from.”

The sound of colour

Bára often talks in visual terms when describing her music, associating notes with colours and textures. In fact, painting is also a part of her writing process.

“I would come home from these places feeling inspired, and paint,” she says. “It was very freeing, because it’s not something I’ve ever trained in or taken seriously, so I can just experiment. When I was in Barcelona, I went to the Picasso museum, and saw some paintings of rooftops from his

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MUSIC

CONCERT REVIEW

8

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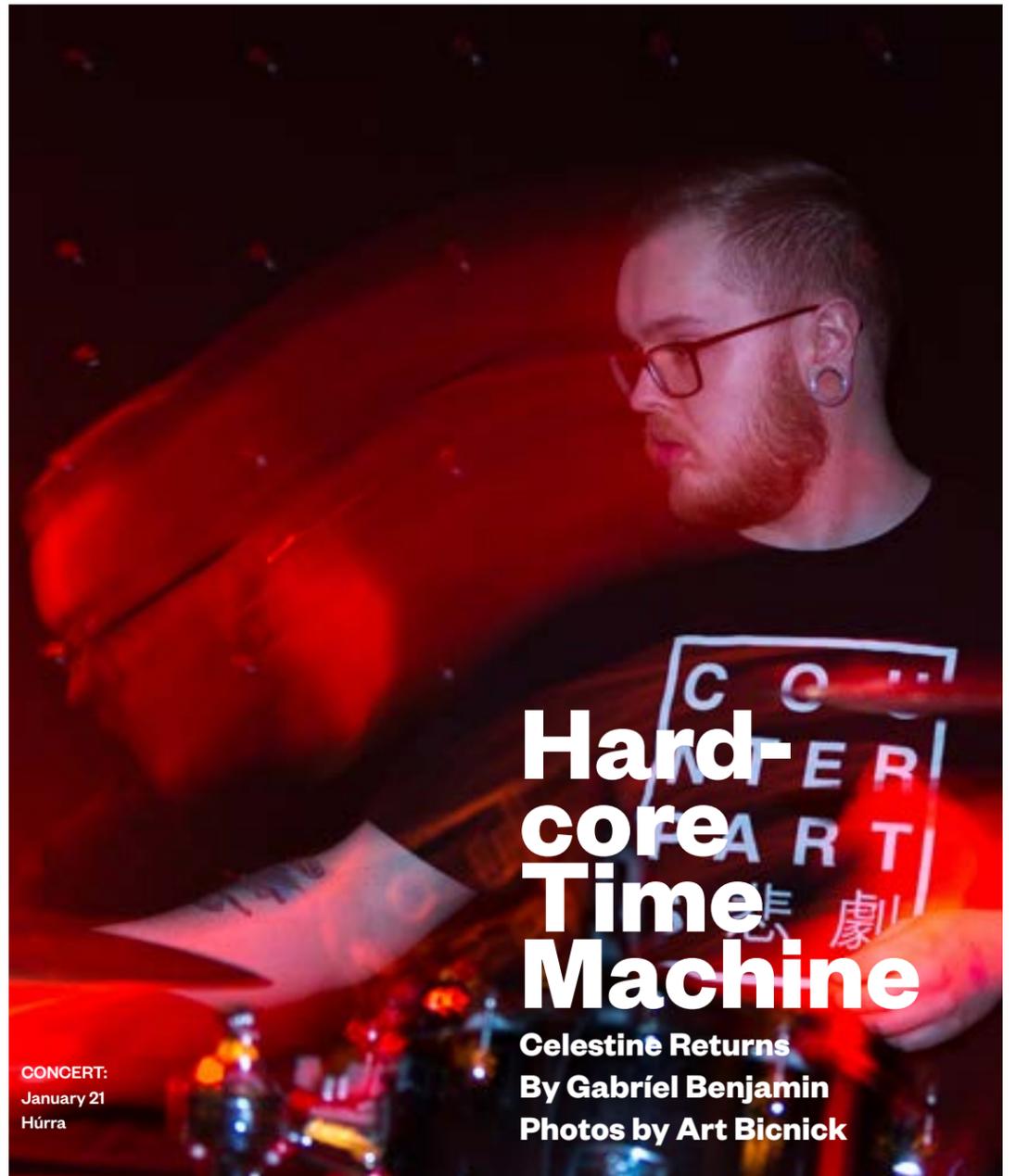
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Hard-core Time Machine

Celestine Returns
By Gabriel Benjamin
Photos by Art Bicnick

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It's been three years since seminal Reykjavík metalcore band **Celestine** hung up their gloves after playing a final show in the late **Faktorý**. Since then the scene has changed, with new faces and new bands stepping up to fill the void. Much like **Mínus**, Celestine's influence runs deep, and it is only appropriate that two frontrunners from the grassroots join them for their reunion concert.

The audience is equally composed of long haired rockers and buzzcut punks, with a refreshingly equal mix of genders. The vast majority is composed of twenty-somethings, but a few older geezers sip their beer patiently, waiting for the main show to start.

Grit Teeth start playing a few minutes after they said they would, and get a mosh pit started from the very first song, with the singer saying at one point: "if nobody gets knocked out in this mosh pit, I'll be disappointed." They earn their applause with dynamic guitar riffs and heaps of volatile energy. And they tell the police to fuck themselves. For me,

however, the show is eerily reminiscent of the one they put on last week with **ITCOM**. Also, I get a lot of beer spilled on me. Oh well, rock on.

Great Grief, formerly **Icarus**, give a good contrast to Grit Teeth, offering a more measured tempo and layered instrumentals. The live performance also matches the music, with band members bouncing around the stage with reckless abandon as the pace picks up. Singer **Finnbogi Örn Einarsson** throws his full body into the performance as he screeches away, gasping for air in between howls, and banging the microphone on his head until he starts bleeding profusely. Then he bangs it some more. There are fewer mosh pits, and their lifespans are shorter, but there is plenty of headbanging. The final song is a heavy and sombre one about disappointment, dragging you down into the undercurrent until you can't breathe.

Speaking to Finnbogi after their set, he tells me it's inspired by a friend of his who came out of an abusive relationship that had a religious element to it.

When Celestine step up, the audience has peaked—they're warmed up and ready to go, and Celestine do not disappoint. Right from the get go, their loud and aggressive music gets sweaty bodies clashing violently. They carry hardcore history on their shoulders, and it is on full display. "Lots of new faces, lots of old faces, we welcome them all," says the singer in between songs.

The show is an absolute monster, with ample heavitude, thumping and booming riffs, pounding drums, and plenty of screechy shouting; heck, there's even a cover of **Nirvana's** "Negative Creep" in there for good measure. When the band pauses for an encore, the crowd all but collapses from exhaustion, mustering up a feeble attempt at clapping them back up on stage. The night ends with 66-second whirlwind of a song "Speaker Bomb," with guest vocals by **Krummi** (of **Mínus** fame).

One by one, the crowd stumbles out into the cold and dark night, hopefully as filled with inspiration and gratitude as I am.

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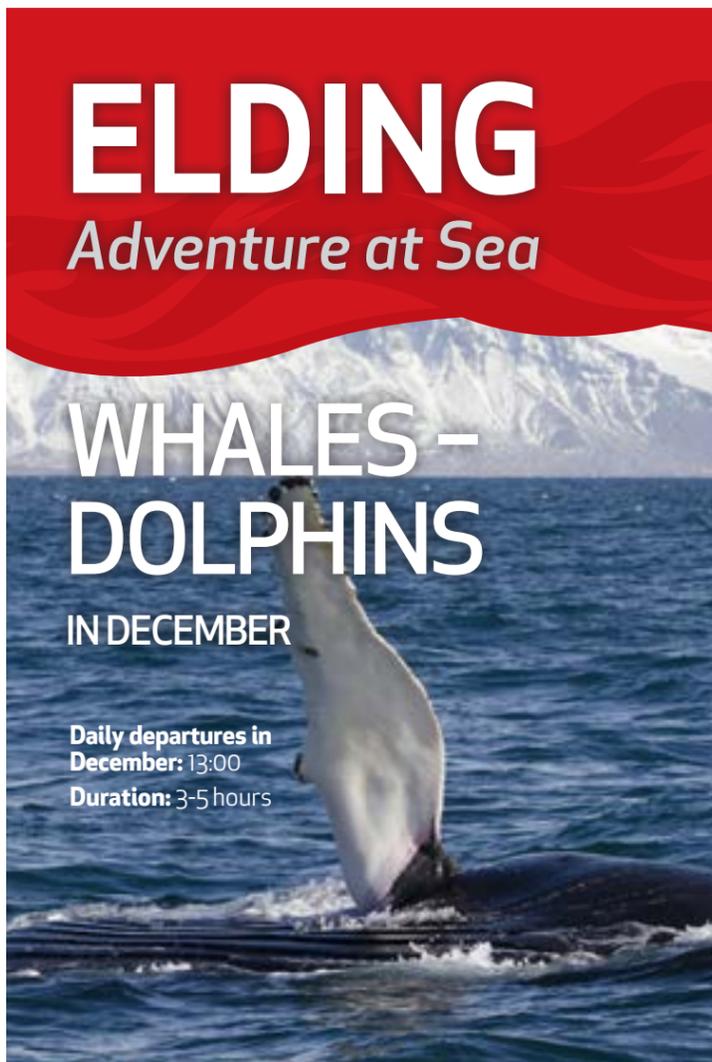
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Adventure at Sea

WHALES - DOLPHINS

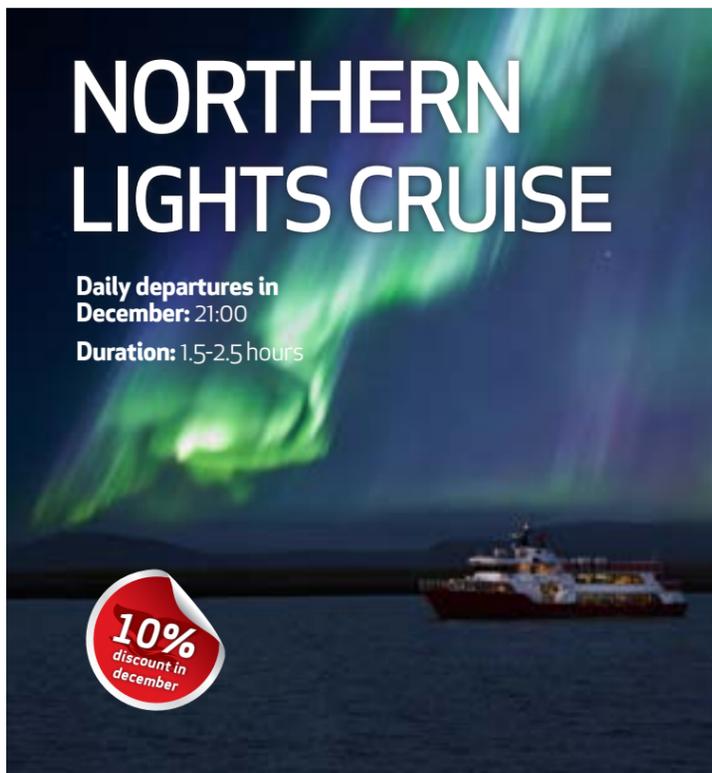
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Photographer **Ingvar Högni Ragnarsson** presents shots taken during a three-week trip to the Romanian capital of Bucharest. The city has been through numerous transformations in past decades, the most dramatic after the fall of the Soviet Union, when the gap between super-rich and very poor became more pronounced. Now, over 60% of the population lives in poverty with limited options, and many vent their frustrations over the broken system by tagging the streets with quotes from 'Fight Club' about working jobs they hate to pay for things they don't need. Ingvar Högni mixes his personal view of Bucharest's everyday environment with a look at the complex interactions between community, class, and personal stories of a broken future—or hopes of another future. **HBG**

Feb 5 - March 3

How to use the listings: Events are listed alphabetically. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit listings.grapevine.is. Send your listings to: listings@grapevine.is

Opening

ASÍ Art Gallery
'Keep Frozen Part Four' by Hulda Rós Guðnadóttir

This mixed-media installation is a reflection on ASÍ's Ásmundarsalur and its history.

Opens February 5
Runs until February 28

'Feral Attraction: The Museum of Ghost Ruminants' by Bryndis Snæbjörnsdóttir & Mark Wilson
Bryndis and Mark's exhibit is an exploration of the relationship between humans and animals in certain environments, and in what way they manifest around Patreksfjörður and Tálknafjörður. There is a special opening party on February 5 at 19:00

Opens February 5
Runs until February 28

Ekkisens

'Un peu de poésie' by David Subhi

This mixed-media installation is a reflection on ASÍ's Ásmundarsalur and its history.

Opens February 12
Runs until February 28

Gallery Tukt Winter Lights Tour

During the Winter Lights Festival, Gallery Tukt has various creative events on, including live concerts and artist talks. The history of the building will also be explored.

Runs February 5 at 19:00

Icelandic Printmakers Association

'Teikning / Rými' by Þóra Sigurðardóttir

Þóra's sketches, print and 3d work exhibition is about the distortion of space and time, the space in sketches, and sketches in space.

Opens February 12
Runs until February 28

Reykjavík Maritime Museum Museum Night

As a treat for Museum Night, guests are invited to attend a special screening of the classic film 'Jaws', which will be shown in the darkened Bryggjusalurinn of the Maritime Museum.

Runs February 5 at 19:00
Ásgrímur Jónsson Collection
'EN PLAIN AIR - ALONG THE SOUTH COAST' by Ásgrímur Jónsson

This collection is from Ásgrímur's return to Iceland after completing studies at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, where he felt compelled to reconnect with his home country and put his newfound knowledge to use, capturing the outdoors in the style of the Golden Age of the French and Danish artists.

Opens February 5

Runs until February 16
Árbær Culture house
Science workshop for kids, no admission.
February 21 at 13:00

Gaukurinn Game Night

Board games, computer games, poker.
Admission is free!

Runs on February 7 at 20:00

'Come Talk Funny'

Open Mic Stand-up Comedy by members of Goldengang.

Admission is free!

Runs on February 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29 & March 2 at 21:00

Anti-Valentines Speed HATING

Instead of meeting your husband- or wife-to-be, you come and meet new people!

Admission is free!

Runs on February 14 at 21:00

Queer Variety Show

Drag queens, music and cabaret! The theme is burlesque!

Admission is 1,000 ISK.

Runs on February 19 at 22:00

Poetry Night

Members of Friyrkjan poetry collective will be performing.

Admission is free!

Runs on February 25 at 21:00

Hallgrímskirkja

'Sólarljóð' by Valgerður Bergsdóttir

Valgerður's work is inspired by an old Icelandic poem called "Sólarljóð," or "Sun Poem," which deals with life and death.

There is a special opening on February 14 at 12:15.

Opens February 14

Runs until May 14

Listastofan

'Soundpainting'

Soundpainting is a universal sign language for composing in real time with musicians, actors and dancers. The conductor-composer, aka soundpainter, uses gestures to communicate with artists on stage, shaping sounds, speeches, movements and space of a unique performance.

Runs on February 5 & 6 at 20:30

Life Drawing Sessions

Every Monday night from 19:00, there is a life drawing session at Listastofan with a professional nude model. There is a special session on February 13 from 15:00 to 18:00.

Runs on February 8, 13, 15, 22 & 29

'Word Loop'

This event invites people that want to practice their Icelandic to do so in a relaxed environment, as well as learn how to knit.

Runs on February 9 at 18:00

'Wheel of Senses' by Art Gamers

This exhibit aims to pass emotions through different art forms, including music, poetry, visual arts, dance, video, and more. There is a special opening party on February 12 from 18:00 to 21:00.

There is also a live concert with Beniovska and a live drawing session with Art Gamers on February 19 at 19:00.

Opens February 12

Runs until February 26

Family Painting Sessions

This inaugural painting session offers families an opportunity to spend a Sunday painting together and network with other families.

Runs on February 14 at 15:00-17:30

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WHAT'S INSIDE | Reykjavík Map | Happy Hour Guide | Places We Like | Best Of Reykjavík | Practical Info

Reykjavík

February 5 - March 3

Keep it in your pocket

Four Weeks

The Grapevine picks the events, places and things to check out in the next four weeks.

Every Monday and Wednesday

Stand-up comedy in English

Every Monday, a group of comedians called the **GoldenGang** get together and perform a free comedy set in English for expats and locals alike. Then on Wednesdays there are improv nights, and a story night at the end of the month—admission to which is 1,000 ISK.

Gaukurinn at 20:30

February 5

Throwdown III

This is the third and final hip-hop Throwdown event, wherein eleven acts rap in Spanish, Icelandic & English. Admission is free!

Gaukurinn at 20:30

February 12

Reykjavíkurdætur

Iceland's 21-member hip-hop fem cee collective takes the night back, rapping about female empowerment and sexual politics. 1,500 ISK entry.

Gaukurinn at 22:00

February 13

Milkywhale & Auður

Milkywhale is the most dance-inducing live band in Iceland, and **Auður** really gets what R&B is all about: sexiness! 2,000 ISK entry.

Húrra at 22:00

February 14

Anti-Valentines Speed HATING

Not looking for a lover, but want to meet cool peeps? Come down to a speed hating session, hosted by Australian comedian **Jonathan Duffy**, where you can make new friends, not spouses. Admission is free, because being single is cheap.

Gaukurinn at 21:00

February 24-27

Annual Beer Festival

Local breweries like **Kaldi**, **Ölvisholt** and **Einstök** present their most exciting beers to connoisseurs. They are joined by international outfits like **Alefarm Brewing**, **Mikkeller**, **To Øl**. On the 27th, the festivities take place at Fiskislóð 27.

KEX Hostel at 17:00

February 26

Singapore Sling

Iceland's premiere neo-psychedelia rockers are fresh off of the release of 'Psych Fuck' and absolutely not to be missed. Admission: 2,000 ISK

Húrra at 21:00

4-7 February Winter Lighting Up Dark Days



Winter Lights Festival

Capital area | Free!

Iceland may still be frozen, but the days are getting longer, and the time of the annual celebration of the rising sun is upon us. The Winter Light Festival programme aims to reflect the intersection of Reykjavík's art, history and culture accordingly, with something on offer for everyone.

On Friday is **Museum Night**, where local venues put on a wide range of events and artist talks, including many new exhibition openings, a Star Wars showcase, and a treasure hunt. Museums remain open for free until midnight, and special buses ferry people between locations (also for free). Some of the participating museums include:

- ASÍ Art Gallery
- Árbær open air museum
- The Einar Jonsson Museum
- Gallery Tukt
- Gerðarsafn
- Museum of Design and Applied art
- National Museum of Iceland
- National Archives of Iceland
- National Gallery of Iceland
- Reykjavík City museum
- Reykjavík Maritime Museum
- The Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Saturday night is **Pool Night**, which sees pools remain open until midnight, again with free admission. There are all sorts of spectacular events taking place at the pools, including live concerts, poetry readings, and installations.

On Sunday there is a **Snow Celebration** out in Blábjöll from 12:00-17:00.

A bus schedule and detailed festival programme can be found on winterlightsfestival.is.

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MAP

Places We Like

Eating

1 Hverfisgata 12

Hverfisgata 12

In an era when everyone is obsessed with visibility and self-promotion, Hverfisgata 12 attracts its own crowd through word of mouth and nothing more. It offers the kind of pizzas you are unlikely to have tried before, with inventive toppings such as barbecue sauce, shredded pork, pears, roasted seeds and horseradish cream.

2 The Cocoo's Nest

Grandagarður 23

Nestled in a refurbished fishing hut in the newly flourishing area of Grandi, The Cocoo's Nest is a cosy and airy cafe, offering California-casual brunch, lunch, and dinner, with an Italian twist. With large windows and light wood throughout, this is perfect for a lazy Saturday get-together or an afternoon "aperitivo" after work. If you are in that part of town, head over for a warm-up.

3 Nora Magasin

Pósthússtræti 9

With its hardwood tables, turquoise blue walls, huge French windows and funk music playing in the background, Nora Magasin has all the makings of a classy place. The food is entirely homemade and designed by an imaginative team that's always adding fun novelties to the menu.

4 Hraðlestin

Lækjargata 8

Despite being the faster and more affordable cousin to one of the top restaurants in the country, Austurindafélagið, flavour is never compromised by promptness. Their short selection of authentic Indian cuisine is cooked with the finest ingredients, the spices are masterfully blended and the experience is wholly satisfying.

5 Uno

Hafnarstræti 1-3

This family-run restaurant has no shortage of authentic and delicious Italian cuisine, as well as dishes with an Italian twist—grab the burger if you can, it is top notch. When the weather allows it, they also offer outdoor seating.

Drinking

6 Bravó

Laugavegur 22

Bravó is your regular run-of-the-mill bar that serves decent drinks and doesn't try to be anything that it's not. The bar plays good music at a comfortable volume that allows for conversation, and provides good seating options even during late nights, when most bars have removed their tables to make room for a dance floor.

Useful Numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **1818**

Taxi: Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir: **588 5522**

BSR: **561 0000**

Tax-Free Refund

Iceland Refund, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

Tourist Information

Arctic Adventures, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

Tourist Info Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions – Grayline Iceland, Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1300



7 Mikkeler & Friends

Hverfisgata 12

Mikkeler & Friends offers twenty different craft beers on draft, and most of them are from Denmark's Mikkeller brewery. Even on a quiet night, this comfortable place is full of beer enthusiasts thirsty for something a little different.

8 Sólun Bistro

Bankastræti 7a

Don't find your crowd at Prikíð? Maybe you'll fit right in on the other side of the street at Sólun Bistro. A café in the daytime, restaurant in the evening and a club at night. A great location in the middle of Laugavegur and ideal for people watching.

9 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

A popular café on weekdays, on weekends Kaffibarinn turns into a ticket for a wild night out, as the space fills up with the late-night souls oozing energy in every corner. With DJs playing and the occasional rock band, the party usually lasts until early morning, yet often manages to leave you begging for more.

The Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2, tel: 522 4979

Trip, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

Pharmacies

Lyf og heilsa, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020

Lyfja, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045 and Lág-
múla 5, tel: 533 2300

Coach Terminal

BSÍ, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10,

tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

Domestic Airlines

Air Iceland, Reykjavíkflugvöllur,

tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

Eagle Air, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562 4200

Public Transport

The only public transport available in Reykjavík is the bus. Most buses run every 20–30 minutes (the wait may be longer on weekends) and the price per fare is 400 ISK for adults and children. Multiple day passes are available for purchase at select locations and through their eponymous app. Complete route map available at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700. Buses run from 07:00–24:00 on weekdays and 10:00–24:00 on weekends. Main terminals are: Hlemmur and Lækjartorg.

Opening Hours

Bars and clubs: According to regulations, bars can stay open until 01:00 on weekdays and 04:30 on weekends.

Shops: Mon–Fri 10:00–18:00, Sat 10:00–16:00, Sun closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

Swimming pools: Weekdays 06:30–22:00 and weekends 09:00–17:00, although each pool varies plus or minus a few hours.

Banks in the centre are open Mon–Fri 09:00–16:00.

Post Offices

Post offices are located around the city. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3–5, open Mon–Fri 09:00–18:00. Stamps are also sold at bookstores, gas stations, tourist shops and some grocery stores.



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Pictures and text by Hrefna Björg Gylfadóttir

FOR A GIRL

asdfhg's Steinunn Jónsdóttir is an accidental musician

When the 2015 Kraumur nominations for outstanding musical achievement were announced, one name—asdfhg—stood out among the usual suspects. Even Reykjavík's most dedicated scenesters hadn't heard so much as a kilobyte of asdfhg music, and absolutely no one knew who on earth was behind the project. Many even doubted that it originated in Iceland.

The story goes that one of the Kraumur panellists stumbled upon asdfhg's 'Steingervingur' during a late-night Bandcamp-browsing session, and was impressed enough to share it with the rest of the committee. Without any idea who was behind the project, the Kraumur folks still liked the album enough to shortlist it among their 21 albums of 2015. Subsequently, 'Steingervingur' was one of six albums to receive the coveted 2015 Kraumur award, touted alongside works of veterans like dj. flugvél og geimskip, Teitur Magnússon and Mr. Silla.

The mid-December Kraumur Awards ceremony was therefore first time most local scenesters, including Your Friends At The Grapevine, got a glimpse of the person behind asdfhg. And boy, what a surprise! It turns out the award-winning 'Steingervingur' was written and recorded in a Laugardalur basement, by a sixteen-year-old girl called Steinunn. And now she's on the bill for Sónar Reykjavík, where she'll be making her stage debut! Wow, right? We caught up with her to learn more.

Of course she is a feminist

Yes, the mastermind behind the award-winning 'Steingervingur' is a sixteen-year-old girl called Steinunn Jónsdóttir, who lives in her parent's basement, where she spends her time making music, playing instruments and reading poetry. Usually in the middle of the night.

Steinunn comes from a cultured background, with literary critics for parents and a grandmother who was prominent in the Icelandic feminist movement. Her upbringing was thus quite infused with discussion on matters such as feminism, environmentalism and art. "Of course I am a feminist," she responds when asked, as if anything else would be utterly ludicrous.

This sixteen-year-old might look her age, but getting to know her it seems as if she's al-

ready lived two lives. Bursting with creativity and knowledge, it was clearly just a matter of time until we started noticing her. The funny thing is that it happened completely by accident.

"Crazy week"

Steinunn spent three restless nights this past summer producing an album of electronic music not meant for public consumption. She posted it pseudonymously on Bandcamp under the name asdfhg, sharing it only with a few of her closest friends. And that's as far as it went. Therefore, she was as surprised as anyone, to say the least, when she learned it had been shortlisted by Kraumur.

Steinunn was first made aware of the honours when local hip-hop producer (and frequent Grapevine contributor) Lord Puss-whip uncertainly congratulated her through Instagram. He'd noticed the name written on the album cover—"nnuniets," which was Steinunn's username on Instagram—and deduced that it might be her.

This was the night before Steinunn's Spanish finals and, understandably, she didn't get much sleep at all. Like she tweeted: "uhm, I'm accidentally a musician! Put some shit pseudonymously up on Bandcamp about a year ago not meant for anyone to see and was nominated in Kraum's album selection the other day, crazy week!"

Hidden electro women

Steinunn's life has changed rapidly since she received the Kraumur award. She says she initially felt vulnerable when processing the news. These were songs she had written in a dreamy state in the middle of the night.

"I was actually quite nervous when I found out that people were listening to my music, but when I started noticing all the good reactions to the album, excitement overcame the fear. Of course, making music is very personal. For me, it was more of an outlet for my feelings and for having fun, rather than something I sought acknowledgment for," she says, adding that pseudonymously posting her songs on Bandcamp gave her the courage to release anything she wanted without worrying about criticism.

But how did Steinunn come to be an accidental musician? Inspiration, for the most part. "I've always been making music," she

says. "I was in a band with my sister and friends in the second grade and after that I just never stopped experimenting. I played the flute, the ukulele and the drums. Then, this summer, I started experimenting with electronic music. I get really inspired in the middle of the night, which is when this whole album was produced."

What inspires you?

"My grandmother, Silja, is my biggest inspiration. I've always loved her voice and wanted to be just like her. She's really proud of asdfhg and has already liked our Facebook page! I also love poetry. I've read a collection of poems by Steinn Steinarr every year since I was nine years old. I started writing my own poetry in third grade. The librarian would always hang my poems up in the window, which was sweet, one poem for each week."

What are your thoughts on the discussion in Iceland about women in the electronic music scene?

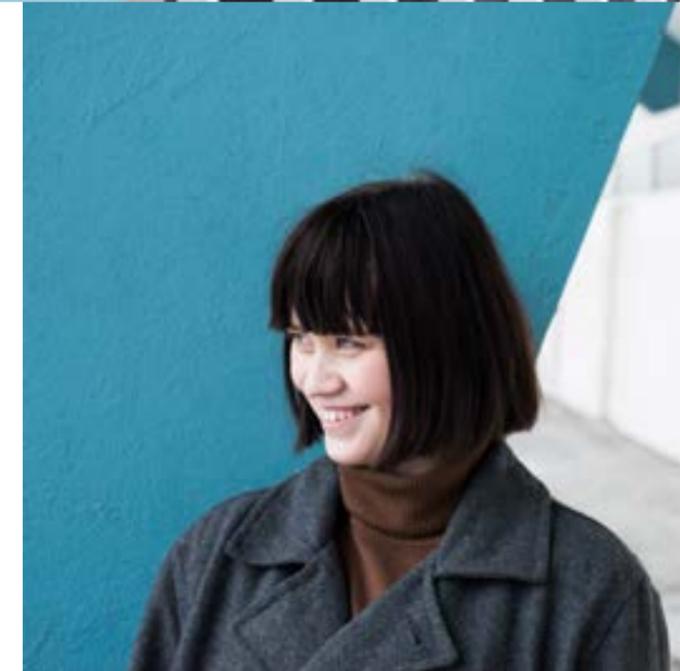
"It's quite complicated. There might be fewer women than men in the electronic music scene, but I'm sure there are more than we think. We just need to look better and draw more attention to them because it's important for us to have role models. It's like in sports, fewer people attend women's sports events, because the media covers less of it... and vice versa."

How do you feel about the fact that you might be opening young girls' eyes to electronic music production?

"I find the idea really beautiful. Really crazy at the same time though."

Asked what's next for asdfhg, Steinunn explains she is currently working with her friend Orri on crafting more tunes. "The award presented us with the perfect opportunity. We first made music together eight years ago, when Orri played the trumpet and I played the flute. We've talked about doing more for a long time, but never took the idea seriously. Orri had no idea about the music I'd produced as asdfhg. Now, we've set up a little studio and even bought our own coffee machine. It's all really exciting."

asdfhg will perform at SonarPub on Saturday February 20, at 8pm.





Gangly: "Oh Grow Up"

By Laura Studarus

In December of 2014, a song called "Fuck With Someone Else" hit the internet. The track was a glacially paced slice of R&B electro-pop, featuring a male and female voice teasing out the title statement over hushed synths and the gentle interruption of drum machines. Not much was known about the band, reported to be a trio, reported to be Icelandic, and (as the accompanying video would suggest) confirmed to be in cahoots with a talented visual artist.

But let's be honest—the Reykjavík scene is many things, but it's certainly not big enough to hide in. For long, anyway. Gangly was quickly unmasked as Jófríður Ákadóttir (Samaris/Pascal Pinon), Sindri Már Sigfússon (Sin Fang), and Úlfur Alexander Einarsson (Oyama). When it comes to the mysterious matter of the masked band, Sindri offers the equivalent of a verbal shrug. Sure, it was fun as an established musician to present music without any preconceived notions attached, but he certainly never expected the ruse to last.

A joke

"That was never a planed out thing. It was more of a joke," he says. "I remember when we put the song online, I got a bunch of messages asking me what this was from my friends who obviously recognized my voice. Me and Jófríður—there wasn't really a question who was doing this."

Well, almost no question. Having never sang in falsetto, it was a while before Úlfur was unmasked as their third member.

"Úlfur, no one knew that he was in the band," Sindri continues, laughing at the memory. "He would be at parties where people were talking about the song, biting his tongue and sending me text messages. That also why we kept it a secret—we thought it was so funny."

Sindri also brushes off the idea of the "supergroup" as something special. Af-

ter all, he notes, a weekend never goes by without some kind of band being formed in a Reykjavík bar. Gangly's first single (and their only one to date) got its start when Úlfur approached Sindri about producing a track that didn't quite fit in with his main band's vibe. A friend of Úlfur, thanks in no small part to Reykjavík's heavily interconnected music scene, Sindri agreed.

Feminine energy

On the suggestion of Sindri's girlfriend, who noted that "Fuck With Someone Else" needed "some feminine energy," Jófríður was added into the mix shortly after. Sindri had known her since she was thirteen, when he invited her band Pascal Pinon to open for him. The pair toured Europe together, and even wrote and performed a collaborative song for British blog The Line of Best Fit. Having just tapped her for vocal contributions to the upcoming Sin Fang album, Sindri was impressed with her fearless musical spirit, and the speed she'd come up with contributing parts in the studio. The trio meshed, and began fleshing out new ideas together.

Too many cooks?

While this situation reeks of having too many cooks in the kitchen, Sindri insists that's hardly the case. The three artists' personalities and creativity energy simply mesh, he says. Why overthink it?

"After we made the first song we figured out what kind of aesthetic we want to work with," he explains. "When you're starting a new project, it's like just finding the tone. When you do land on something, it makes it easier to write into that world. We wanted to do music that we were listening to, R&B and electronic stuff... But we haven't really talked or analyzed anything. I think it's often like that. If something is clicking and working, people don't really analyze it into the ground... We're all used to having a leading role in

our bands. Which is often the case with bands, there's one person who's kind of dragging everything along. It's kind of funny for us three to be working together. But it works well."

But there's still the matter of that name. ("I think that the hardest thing about being in a band is to come up with a name," he moans.) It's a tribute, says Sindri, not to their slick sound, but rather the emotional content of their first song, which sits comfortably halfway between sensual and emotional confusion.

Teenage life

"I was definitely a lost teenager," he reflects. "It was the inspiration for my last Sing Fang album, my teenage life. It was a good well to dive into for inspiration. I was quite lost, a lost young man. I quit school. I dropped out and started working manual labor jobs—laying pavement and digging holes and stuff. I was tired of school. I never really liked school that much. I was tired when I was eighteen or something. I just thought I'd been going to school for long enough and hating it. My life was mine, and I didn't want to go to school anymore."

But it's not as if Gangly will be tapping into that idea of unfettered freedom. True to their name, their interest is the dark, confusing, and emotional growing pains that we all had to trudge through at one point or another.

"I think that people romanticise the idea that when you're that young you have all your whole life ahead of you," Sindri continues, philosophically. "You can basically do anything. But if you think back to the time, that's what you're freaking out about. Who am I? What am I going to do with my life?"

He laughs as he considers all of this. "I'm glad that I did that and didn't carry on with studying things I didn't like."

Gangly performs on Friday 19th in Sónar Club at 19:30

Holly Herndon's 'Platform' is one of the most dense, dizzying, constantly surprising electronica LPs of recent times. Devoutly experimental in nature, it melds broken beats, chopped-up chants, drones, spoken poetic fragments, lush synth textures, and all manner of stretched, shattered, pulverised electronic and vocal sounds into a mind-bending whole.

The record is her second, and was something of a breakthrough, becoming a critical success and a staple on discerning "best of 2015" lists. But all this is still just the tip of the iceberg. Holly is also currently pursuing a doctorate in composition at Stanford University in California, and is an active artist who's presented work everywhere from MoMA PS1 to Berghain. As Sónar Reykjavík draws closer, she'll be defending her thesis, finishing on the day before the festival begins.

"I have to give a public presentation the night before I fly to Reykjavík," she laughs wryly, speaking from San Francisco over a patchy Skype connection. "It's kind of a lot. But my studies are in composition, so it's all connected. I used to separate all these things, but I realised that was unfeasible, and not true to who I was. So I've merged everything."

Holisticism

Merging a wide range of interests into a communicable form is a process that Holly carries out on several levels. The aesthetic of her creative offering, from album art to videos to social media presence, forms an impressively coherent package, as if part of an overall work.

"I do look at things in a holistic way," she explains. "Your online presence can be part of a greater artistic gesture. My partner and collaborator Matt Dryhurst gave a presentation at the Goethe

Institute, four or five years ago, called Dispatch. His thesis, which was really inspiring, was that the music industry is aging—the idea of everything being tied to and documented by an album cycle is no longer sufficient. How can we take a more holistic view of an artistic output?"

"An example of this is someone like Mykki Blanco," she continues. "I don't even think he's released an album yet, but he releases all these videos and has an amazing Instagram account and is super active on social media. Another example would be Lil B. The idea of a Lil B album doesn't capture everything that he is. There's the 'cooking dance,' the Twitter beef, all of this other stuff that creates his whole practise. I'm looking at that a little bit."

Brain trust

Another interesting aspect of her working method comes via the inclusion of academic thought. Holly often refers to "thinkers" when she speaks, leafing through her mental catalogue of the current discussions taking place in contemporary art, music (and the industry), digital life and cultural theory. All of this forms a particularly rich perspective, and sometimes flows into her songwriting directly.

"There's this wealth of thought and information out there—like a crazy brain trust," she explains. "I wanted to shout out to these thinkers and point to some interesting people. I started thinking about how an album release could be used to investigate other things or talk about issues I care about."

That said, the messages on 'Platform' aren't offered up freely—the vocals and voices are often abstract cuts of poetic language, or chopped-up lyrics, semi-observed in a busy sound mix. But despite this fractured lyrical presentation, the album teems with meaning. I wonder out loud if 'Platform' is intend-

ed more as a starting point, than a final work—a piece ideas can grow from.

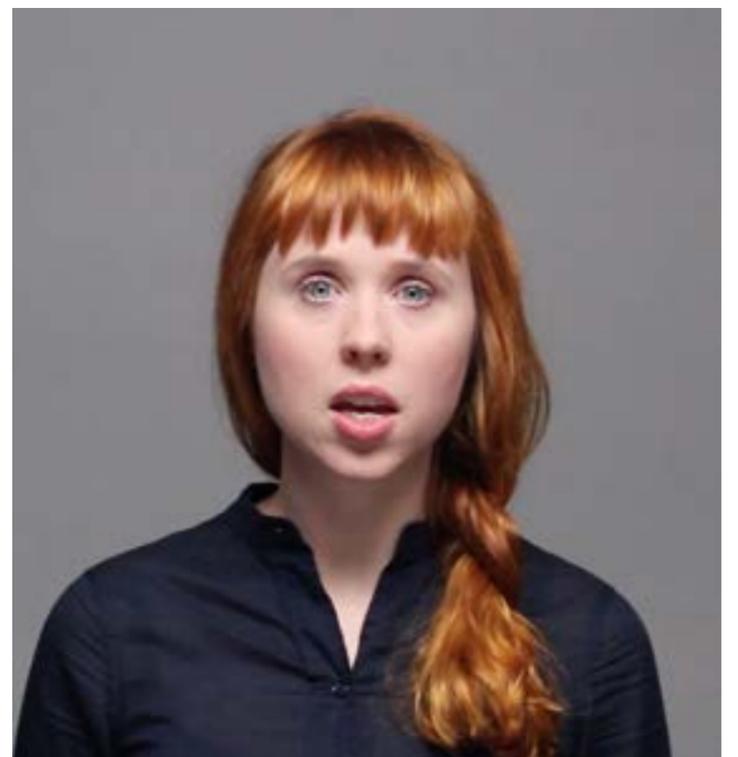
"That's an apt way to put it," says Holly. "The title came from Benedict Singleton's writings on 'The Platform Paradox'. Instead of trying to design a perfect outcome, he talks about building this platform where people can improvise, communicate in new ways, and build their own things. You're constantly having to reassess and respond to the world around you that's constantly changing, so it's impossible to design this perfect future."

"So yes, the idea of it being a growing thing is really beautiful," she continues. "It butts heads with the album-release 'discog culture,' like, 'In 2015, this .WAV file was released,' and that's it. Because no, that isn't it. There's so much more around it, and it's hard for a single .WAV file to capture that. Maybe that's why the album sounds frenetic at times—because there's a lot of ideas going on in there. But I'm also really trying not to prioritise lyrics over conceptual production work. So if I'm working on a piece that's about fractured experiences online, I want to use my computer, which is my instrument to record those experiences and build that into the piece rather relying solely on lyrics. It seems strange to me when I hear a traditional rock ensemble singing about digital issues. Not that it's wrong to do that—but for me, if I'm talking about digital life I want to use those tools to investigate and understand how that changes the aesthetics. With new questions and new problems it behooves us as artists to come up with new aesthetics to express new emotions. We can't rely on the musical tropes of the 70s when we're dealing with entirely new issues."

See Holly Herndon perform on Friday 19th in SónarHall at 22:00.

Future Aesthetics Holly Herndon is pushing the limits of what music can be in 2016

by John Rogers





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We picked some leading voices
in Iceland's various scenes and
asked them to guide us through Sónar
The Essentials' Essential Selection:

Photos by Art Bicnick / Compiled by Sveinbjörn Pálsson



Ben UFO

Ben UFO is a Rinse FM resident who's been one of my favourite DJs for years now. I've seen him play in London, Copenhagen and, most recently, at Panorama Bar in Berlin, earlier this winter. He played for almost 8 hours, very early on a casual Monday morning—a typical German party. He absolutely killed it. He's playing Saturday night in Harpa's little car park club. Do not miss out.

Bjarki

Bjarki is a young (techno) rock star from Reykjavik who's really shaking up the international techno scene at the moment. He's playing the world's hottest clubs week after week, and his tracks are being played by everyone from Nina Kraviz to Skrillex. He's been improving his live set quite a lot in the past couple of years. I really like the new and weird sound he's pushing out these days, it really takes you on a trip. You might find out late on the Friday night that he's more than just a techno producer.

Courtesy

Courtesy is a Culture Box resident, born in Greenland. I wasn't familiar with her at all, until I did my line-up research recently. I checked a couple of mixes and I was really impressed! Super dark stuff—a versatile Copenhagen cool cat.

Kosmodod

Known for being the producer of Samaris, this guy makes some real beats. Most people don't know what he's capable of in the studio. He just launched a super cool label with his friends,

Sweaty Records. His ice cold electro rollers give me the shivers.

Mumdance

This guy is one of London's finest, pushing out monster tracks. It's some experimental grimy techno thing that doesn't sound like anything else, and sure gets me moving. He also made some excellent tracks with Novelist, London's freshest grime MC of the moment.

Skeng The Reykjavik Bass Godfather

Hrefna Björg Grapevine Resident Sonologist

concert to lose yourself to. Learn all the words to "Hæpið" and you'll be the coolest person in the audience. Need I say more? It's Reykjavíkurdætur.

1. President Bongo & The Emotional Carpenters

I am extremely excited about this performance. I was introduced to President Bongo (a former member of Gusgus) not so long ago and haven't been able to stop listening to his album 'Serengeti' since. It's crazy good African electronic dance music.

2. Reykjavíkurdætur

The daughters of Reykjavik are the crème de la crème of the festival. A feast for the ears and by far the best

3. Auður

I saw Auður performing three times at the last Airwaves festival, and I've obviously become a total fangirl. His modern soul music is mesmerising, his voice sensual, and his moves oh so smooth. (Maybe a couple words on what kinda music it is?)

4. Sturla Atlas

This show is going to be insane, as Sturla Atlas's performances always are. The 101 boys attract every norm-

core kid with a thirst for hip-hop to their shows and it's a blast. "San Francisco" was the song of last summer and "snowin" the song of this winter—don't miss them.

5. Sevdaliza

I honestly can't wait for this performance. Being a huge fan of FKA twigs, I correctly assumed that Sevdaliza would be right up my alley. Her music videos are pure art, and her sound is completely hypnotising. "Men of Glass" is my current favourite song.



Thursday 18th February

SonarClub by Tuborg
Silfurberg

19:30 - 20:10 LIVE Stereo Hypnosis
20:30 - 21:20 LIVE Vök
21:40 - 22:20 LIVE Reykjavíkurdætur
22:40 - 23:40 LIVE Angel Haze
00:00 - 01:00 LIVE Páll Óskar

SonarHall
Norðurljós

19:00 - 20:00 LIVE All Inclusive (Martin Kilvady & Mankan)
21:00 - 22:00 LIVE All Inclusive (Martin Kilvady & Mankan)
22:30 - 23:15 LIVE Good Moon Deer
23:30 - 00:15 LIVE Milkywhale

SonarLab

Harpa underground car-park
20:00 - 21:00 DJ Julia Ruslanovna
21:00 - 22:00 DJ DJ Yamaha
22:00 - 23:30 DJ The Black Madonna
23:30 - 01:00 DJ Ellen Allien

SonarComplex

Kaldalón (seated)
Red Bull Music Academy presents
20:00 - 20:30 LIVE Frank Murder
20:40 - 21:15 LIVE Auður
21:25 - 22:05 LIVE Harald Björk
22:15 - 23:00 LIVE Wife
23:10 - 23:50 LIVE Zebra Katz
00:00 - 01:00 LIVE Drippin

SonarPub by Síminn

Hörpuhorn
22:00 - 23:00 LIVE Ruxpin
23:00 - 00:00 LIVE IntrObatz
00:00 - 01:00 DJ DJ Tommi White

Friday 19th February

SonarClub by Tuborg
Silfurberg

19:30 - 20:20 LIVE GANGLY
20:45 - 21:40 LIVE Apparat Organ Quartet
22:10 - 23:10 LIVE Floating Points (live)
23:30 - 00:30 LIVE Kiasmos
01:00 - 02:00 LIVE Squarepusher

SonarHall

Norðurljós
20:00 - 20:40 LIVE Halleluwah
21:00 - 21:40 LIVE Vaginaboyz
22:00 - 23:00 LIVE Holly Herndon
23:20 - 00:20 LIVE Oneohtrix Point Never
00:40 - 02:00 LIVE Lone Live AV Ft Konx-om-Pax

SonarLab

Harpa underground car-park
21:00 - 22:00 DJ RVK DNB
22:00 - 23:00 DJ KSF
23:00 - 00:00 DJ Óðinn
00:00 - 01:30 LIVE Recondite
01:30 - 03:00 DJ Bjarki

SonarComplex

Kaldalón (seated)
Red Bull Music Academy presents
20:00 - 20:30 LIVE Hildur
20:40 - 21:10 LIVE East of My Youth
21:20 - 22:05 LIVE Throwing Snow
22:20 - 22:05 LIVE Larry Gus
23:20 - 00:00 LIVE Sevdaliza
00:15 - 01:30 LIVE Mumdance

SonarPub by Síminn

Hörpuhorn
20:00 - 20:40 LIVE Tonik Ensemble

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REYKJAVÍK

LAUGAVEGUR 36 · 101 REYKJAVÍK

20:40 - 21:20 LIVE Futuregrapher
 21:20 - 22:00 LIVE Kosmodod
 22:00 - 23:00 DJ Tandri
 23:00 - 00:00 DJ Courtesy
 00:00 - 01:00 DJ BenSöl
 01:00 - 02:00 DJ Ultraplay

Saturday 20th February

SonarClub by Tuborg
 Silfurberg

19:30 - 20:25 LIVE AV AV AV
 20:45 - 21:45 LIVE President Bongo & The
 Emotional Carpenters
 22:10 - 23:10 LIVE Hudson Mohawke
 23:20 - 00:20 DJ Annie Mac
 00:30 - 02:00 DJ Boys Noize

SonarHall

Norðurljós

20:00 - 20:25 LIVE Karó
 20:40 - 21:15 LIVE GKR
 21:30 - 22:10 LIVE Sturla Atlas
 22:30 - 23:30 LIVE LEIF
 23:45 - 00:25 LIVE Úlfur Úlfur
 00:45 - 02:00 LIVE !!!

SonarLab

Harpa underground car-park

21:00 - 22:00 DJ DJ E.D.D.E.H.
 22:00 - 23:00 DJ Skeng
 23:00 - 00:30 DJ Ben UFO
 00:30 - 02:00 DJ Rødhåd
 02:00 - 03:00 DJ DJ Margeir

SonarComplex

Kaldalón (seated)

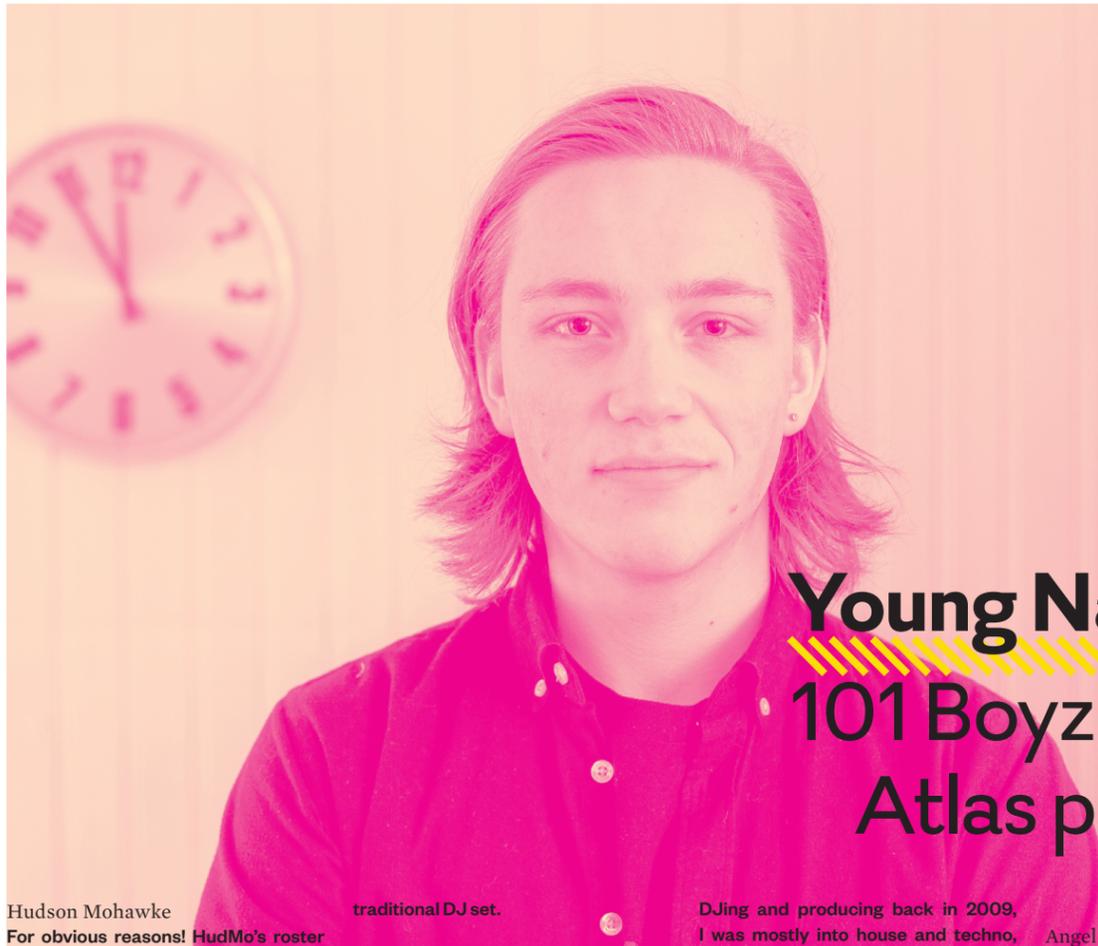
Red Bull Music Academy presents

20:00 - 20:30 LIVE Brilliantinus
 20:45 - 21:20 LIVE Brigitte Laverne
 21:30 - 22:20 LIVE Dorian Concept
 22:30 - 23:15 LIVE James Pants
 23:30 - 00:20 LIVE Koreless
 00:30 - 01:30 LIVE TM 404

SonarPub by Síminn

Hörpuhorn

20:00 - 20:30 LIVE asdfhg.
 20:30 - 21:30 DJ DJ Katla
 21:30 - 22:30 DJ B-Ruff
 22:30 - 23:30 DJ Rix
 23:30 - 00:45 DJ ELOQ
 00:45 - 02:00 DJ Unkwn



Young Nazareth

101 Boyz / Sturla Atlas producer

Hudson Mohawke

For obvious reasons! HudMo's roster

spans from jaw-dropping electronic infused hip-hop/trap bangers such as "Fuse", "Cbat" and "Higher Ground" to Kanye West and Drake production credits ("Connect" is one of my all-time favorite Drake songs). Production-wise I've always looked up to HudMo as he's unafraid of integrating all sorts of fucked up and weird sounds in his productions. Maybe that has something to do that he's from Scotland and everyone from there seems to be either a goblin or a Loch Ness offspring, which seems to translate ideally into hip-hop beats. I'm very excited that he's performing live instead of the

traditional DJ set.

Karó

I'm really looking forward to this show for several reasons. Karó is a newcomer in the Icelandic scene, having released her first single, "Silhouette," back in September. She's also Les Frères Stefson affiliated—a part of the fam. The live set will feature new music only, which Karó, Logi Pedro, Auður and myself have been working on for the past few weeks. She's got an amazing voice and her songwriting skills are also top notch. Not to be missed!

Boys Noize

Another no-brainer. When I started out

DJing and producing back in 2009,

I was mostly into house and techno, with Boys Noize being a leading figure in the scene since '07. His collaborations with Erol Alkan are also ill, not to mention the Chilly Gonzales remake of "Waves". Anywho, with the banging electro house beats of his DJ set poised to fuck your brain cells up real good, Boys Noize is gonna be dope for sure.

Sturla Atlas

I gotta put the boys in here because I'm super excited about our show. We're going to perform new songs which I produced and co-wrote. This show's gonna be a fucking movie.

Angel Haze

Angel Haze, a.k.a. Babe Ruthless, is super cool. When I say "super" I mean she basically oozes swag. I actually just listened to her new album, it sounds really fresh. It's a bit aggressive, but that's the vibe Angel Haze is about. Ruthless. In my opinion there are certain similarities between this album of hers and Travis Scott's earlier stuff, both production and flow-wise. She usually goes quite hard on stage—I just hope the crowd at Sónar dares to get turned with her.

Honorable mention: Annie Mac
 Because she's a legend.

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THURSDAY EVENING
FROM 19-22



ITALIAN MENU
Friday &
Saturday evening
from 17-22

Italian HAPPY HOUR
every evening
from 17-19

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House DJ & Radio Host

just enjoy the whole thing. Playing her music is a joy.

Floating Points

I'm really excited to see Sam and his band play. I've been following his music since 2009—he's such a great great artist and DJ. He translates his signature sound across genres, from house to ambient to trap, and into places where these labels hardly fit. Seeing this on stage with a live band is incredibly exciting. 'Elaenia' was, in my opinion, the best album of 2015.

The Black Madonna

Probably the most interesting female DJ in the world right now, her releases have always impressed me. She's from the cradle of House music, Chicago, and while she represents the Chicago roots of the style, she's bringing it into new spaces. Her music is so tight. Not simple, not complicated, just tight. You

Dorian Concept

This guy is taking music into new places. I could stick some labels on him, but really it's music for people that want to be pleasantly surprised. His track "Trilingual Dance Sexperience" was a staple in Funkpátturinn in 2009, and we've been covering him since. He's one of the many reasons why it's been worthwhile to follow the Ninja Tune label for the last 25 years.

Rodhad

Rodhad is taking techno into new areas with his fresh approach to rhythm. He's backed by many of the older, legendary figures of the genre like Dave Clarke, Exos, Jeff Mills and Laurent Garnier. Also, he's the style twin of Icelandic DJ Omar E. I'm really hoping I'll meet the both of them at the same

time at the festival, and that they'll do that trick where they pretend to be a guy looking into a mirror. His track "Newspeak" got my attention two years ago and after that, I have been a fan. Be sure to check out his DJ sets on Soundcloud!

Kiasmos

One of the best electronic music duos in the world. I don't think I need to say anything else. If you're in Iceland and at an electronic music festival, you know this. But you're probably also in Iceland to bring home stories of new discoveries, so you should also check out Bjarki, Árni Skeng, President Bongo, Intro Beats and Brilliantinus—and the all-female lineup at Sonar Lab on Thursday is not to be missed.



Karó: Newcomer of the year

Pictures and text by Hrefna Björg Gylfadóttir

Karó is an exciting new artist who popped onto our radar last autumn with the release of the single “Silhouette.” Made in collaboration with producer and performer Logi Pedro, this earworm has amassed almost 70,000 plays on Spotify—a runaway success for such a new project. Soon thereafter, those eagle-eyed folks at Sónar contacted her, offering her a spot in the lineup. Since then, Karó has diligently worked on new music, and decided that Sónar is the perfect platform to debut some fresh material.

Music comes naturally to Karó. With no formal training whatsoever, she has somehow always found herself performing—whether it’s winning a national singing competition for her school, or just singing while doing the dishes.

There’s something fascinating about Karó. She is the sort of cool and collected individual who makes everyone around notice and want to get to know her better. Being a student, barista, Twitter enthusiast and amateur actress, Karó says she still finds the time to create music because it’s something she is deeply passionate about. “If I am enthusiastic about a project I give it my all,” she says, “and my new material, for example, is something I really believe in.” After Sónar, however, she says she’ll have to focus on her studies again.

Karó will be performing at SonarHall Saturday, February 20 at 20:00. With visual art designed by Hlynur Snær and collaborations with Auður and Young Nazareth, it’s safe to say the performance will slay.

“Exploring The Way We Play And Create Sounds” Kiasmos’s Ólafur Arnalds discusses his many lives as a composer

By Hadrien Chalard / Photo by Marínó Thorlacius / Mercury Classics



The city is covered in fresh snow, and flurries keep whitening the windy shores of Reykjavík as we head to Ólafur Arnalds’s studio. Now that we see what he sees when he’s composing, the core of this talented and prolific artist’s music suddenly seem so clear. Ólafur’s pieces have a lot in common with Iceland’s weather during winter: they often start softly, like a whisper of wind in the silence of a snowfall, before gradually expanding and releasing their emotional might with a blizzard ardour. Whether on his own or as half of the techno duet Kiasmos, his music always carries that same melancholic passion that has brought him international recognition—such as a BAFTA for his work on the BBC’s critically acclaimed ‘Broadchurch’, and the opportunity to give his own reinterpretation of some piano works by Chopin, in collaboration with the accomplished German-Japanese pianist Alice Sara Ott.

Back in Iceland after a year of extensive touring, Ólafur receives us in his recording room, where most of his recent works were born, to talk about Kiasmos, his interest in new technologies and the future of (his) music. We start by talking about what excites him in the Icelandic music scene these days, and learn that just like the Grapevine, he’s really digging on that new Icelandic hip-hop thing. “I love Úlfur Úlfur, Emmsjé Gauti and all this mainstream hip-hop that’s going on,” Ólafur says as we get settled for a conversation. “I think it’s really cool, and it’s new in Iceland—we’ve never had this kind of hip-hop before.”

Ólafur gets loud

The year 2015 was been a really busy one for Kiasmos, touring almost every month, all over the world. How important is the project to your career at this point?

More than we meant to [laughs]. Just after our album came out [in October of 2014], the project kind of just

blew up and we decided to seize the opportunity and take it on tour and just concentrate on that for a while. But we’ll be slowing it down a little bit this year, although it’s great and refreshing for me to do something so completely different.

How would you say your work with Kiasmos has influenced your solo work?

I think my solo work might start leading a little bit more towards what I am doing with Kiasmos, because I had so much fun playing all those festival shows, which I couldn’t really do before as my music has been so quiet. Now I kind of want to make my music a little bit louder [laughs]. I would like to keep a bit more electronics in it, introduce some more techno-inspired beats, but I think they will really stay pretty soft and subtle. I just want something maybe more danceable...

But aren’t you afraid that some of your fans might not like this new musical direction?

It’s hard to tell, because I have so many different fans, and I can’t always please everyone. I have decided not to make that my goal. I just do music that I enjoy making and playing.

Now you’re back in the studio and working on a new solo album. What can you tell us about it?

Actually I can’t tell much. I’m working on four different projects, but at the moment, I’m just writing music, without really aiming for anything. But I’m planning a release pretty soon, for one of my projects, just not a full-length album. I’m planning that for 2017.

SUB: Classic Ólafur Arnalds move

The Chopin Project marked another step forward in international recognition for your music. How was it, working with a musician like Alice Sara Ott, from the classical scene?

Working with her was amazing, because she’s just amazing [laughs]. One of the reasons why we chose to do this together was because we became very good friends, and she is very open, she’s willing to try new things as long as we still respect the original work. That was kind of the main rule we had in the project. And touring with her was also a great experience. To her, that was a totally new thing—touring with a band, a crew, lighting designers, etc.—but she had a lot of fun, and that brought me a lot of fun.

Could this be the beginning of more classical reinterpretations?

I don’t think so, it was a one-off project for me, and it came from Chopin’s music, it didn’t come from the idea to reinterpret just any classic music. If in the future I discover another composer that inspires me, then sure, I’ll do it. But I’m not looking for another project like that.

Why do you love Chopin’s music so much?

I grew up with it, it’s very personal and nostalgic to me, it reminds me of my family, my childhood... It really influenced me to start writing classical music myself, and I think the music that I have written very often takes elements of what Chopin did. It felt right to pay him a tribute.

An identity thing

Tell me about Arnór Dan (Agent Fresco), who contributed vocals to your last solo album (‘For Now I Am Winter’, 2013) and has been a part of your journey on ‘Broadchurch’. Is he the “official voice of Ólafur Arnalds?”

Well, at the moment I guess he is. We keep doing these one-off projects together, we’re currently recording a cover song, as a single, and he might come back for the next season of ‘Broadchurch’, but I don’t think I’m really looking to have vocals on my next album. I think

it’s also an identity thing, I don’t really want to have someone else as the identity for my music, so I try to limit myself in these collaborations.

You have never stopped experimenting, constantly trying new approaches on each of your releases. What are you currently interested in doing that you maybe haven’t tried before?

I’ve been really interested in technology recently. I’ve been working with a couple of software engineers to build software for creating music. I’m interested in seeing how technology changes the way we write music. I’m exploring the way you create and play those sounds, and how we can use technology to take our creative intuition to a place that it wouldn’t otherwise venture.

Let’s go back to Kiasmos. How is a Kiasmos song usually produced? Does Janus first come up with a beat and then you sit at the piano to try and come with something to play over it, or is it perhaps the other way around?

It goes both ways. Usually, we make some kind of a beat first, and then I very often play some piano on top and improvise until we find something. But other times, we just use synths, and the piano or strings only come at the very end. It’s joint work, we’re usually in this room together, experimenting and trying out different things.

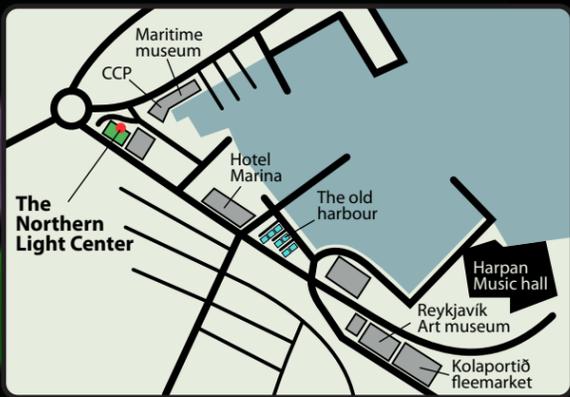
What does Kiasmos’s 2016 look like?

We will do a lot of festivals in the summer, Sónar is the first one. It starts more or less in April and we have a lot of festivals until the end of August, mostly in Europe, and some in America. But there’s no album planned at the moment, because I’m concentrating on my own work.

Kiasmos storms Sónar Club
Friday 19th at 23:30



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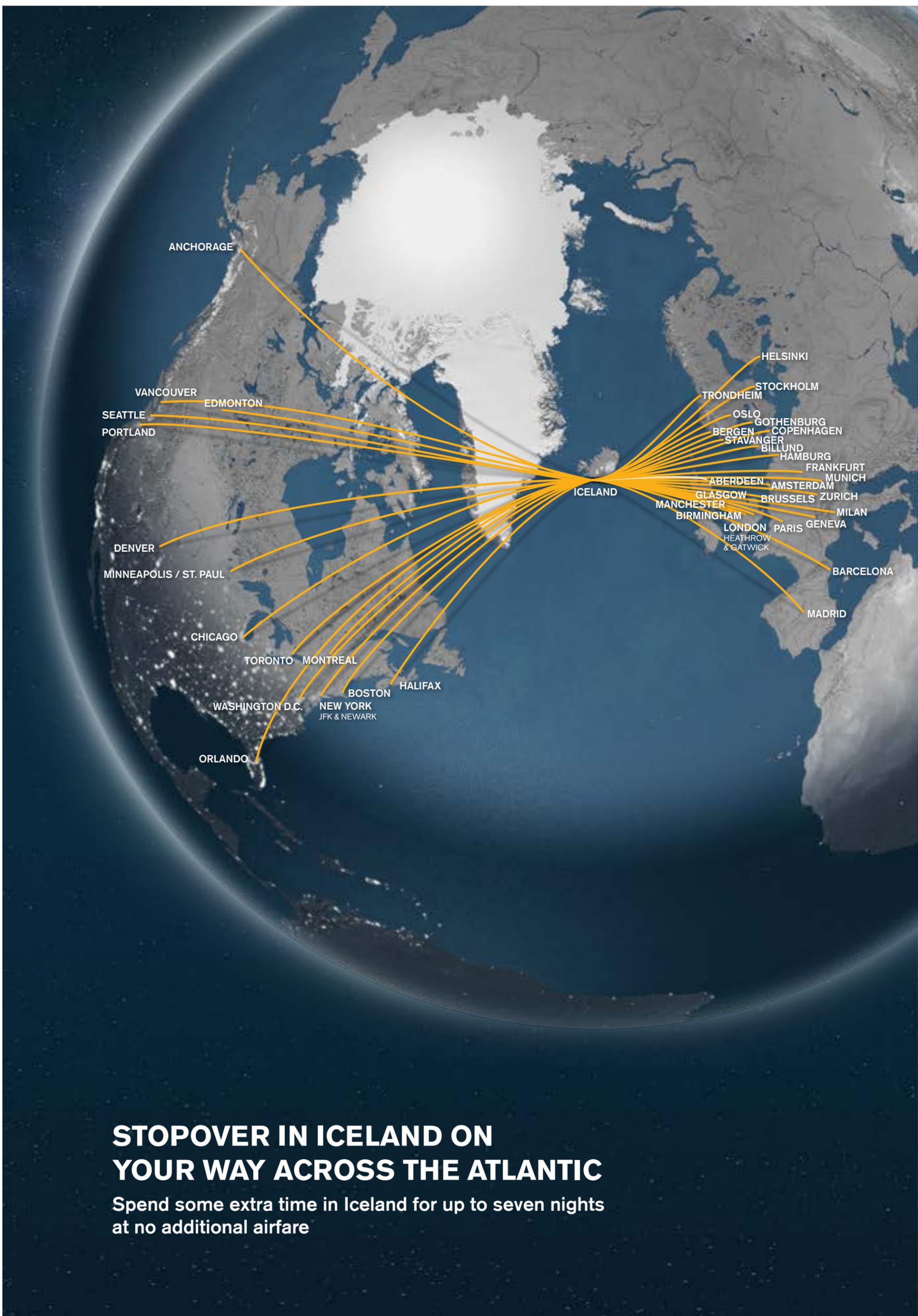
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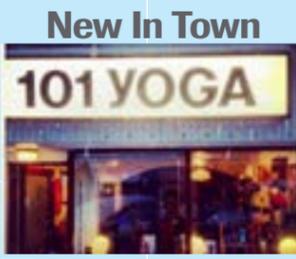
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13 101 Yoga
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LAUNDROMAT CAFE

The LAUNDROMAT Cafe



Shopping

10 Geysir
Skólavörðustígur 16
This tourist shop gathers memorabilia, souvenirs, clothing and gift items from all over Iceland at a convenient location. Great for loading up at the last minute, as their stock is diverse and high-quality.

11 KronKron
Laugavegur 63b
If it's cutting-edge, international big name designers you are in the market for, then this store will be to you like Willy Wonka's factory was to Charlie. Fully stocked in the chicest young names in fashion and some one-of-a-kind local designs too—the shoes are not to be missed!

12 Red Cross
Laugavegur 116
With two locations right in the downtown core, real second-hand pickers and diggers will delight in sifting through the hidden treasures of these goodwill shops. The neighbourly staff and quirky decorations will take you through a little slice of history.

Public Phones
There aren't many public payphones in the city centre. The tourist information centre at Aðalstræti 2, City Hall, Kolaportið, entrance at Landsbankinn and in Lækjargata. Prepaid international phone cards are recommended for int'l callers.

Internet Access
Most cafés offer free wireless internet access. Computers with internet connections are available to use at: Ráðhúskaflí City Hall, Tjarnargata 11 Ground Zero, Frakkastígur 8, near Laugavegur 45, The Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15

The National and University Library, Arngrímstorg 3
Tourist Information Centre, Aðalstræti 2
Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2
Reykjavík Backpackers, Laugavegur 28

Swimming Pools
There are several swimming pools in Reykjavík. The one in 101 Reykjavík, Sundhöll Reykjavíkur, is an indoor one, located at Barónsstígur. It features a nice sunbathing area and some outdoor hot tubs. Opening hours: Mon-Thu from 06:30–22:00, Fri from 06:30–20:00, Sat from 08:00–16:00 and Sun from 10:00–18:00.

Public Toilets
Public toilets in the centre can be found inside the green-poster covered towers located, for example, at Hlemmur, Ingólfstortorg, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavík Art Museum, Lækjargata and by Eymundsson on Skólavörðustígur. Toilets can also be found inside the Reykjavík City Hall and the Reykjavík Library.

Venue Finder Music & Entertainment

- Austur**
Austurstræti 7 | D3
- B5**
Bankastræti 5 | E4
- Bar 11**
Hverfisgata 18 | E5
- Bar Ananas**
Klappastígur 28 | E5
- Bío Paradís**
Hverfisgata 54 | E5
- Bjarni Fel**
Austurstræti 20 | E4
- Bravó**
Laugavegur 22 | E5
- Boston**
Laugavegur 28b | E5
- Bunk**
Laugavegur 28 | E5
- Café Rósenberg**
Klappastígur 25 | E5
- Cocoo's Nest**
Grandagarður 23 | B2
- Den Danske Kro**
Ingólfstræti 3 | E4
- Dillon**
Laugavegur 30 | E5
- Dubliner**
Naustin 1-3 | D3
- Dúfnhólar 10**
Hafnarstræti 18 | D3
- English Pub**
Austurstræti 12 | D3
- Gaukurinn**
Tryggvagata 22 | D3
- Hressó**
Austurstræti 20 | D3
- Húrra**
Naustin | D3
- Kex Hostel**
Skúlagata 28 | E7
- Kaffibarinn**
Bergstaðastræti 1 | E4
- Kaffi Vínul**
Hverfisgatur 76 | E6
- Kaldi Bar**
Laugavegur 20b | E5
- Kiki Queer Bar**
Laugavegur 22 | E5
- Lavabarin**
Lækjargata 6 | E4
- Loft Hostel**
Bankastræti 7 | E4
- Paloma**
Naustin | D3
- Prikið**
Bankastræti 12 | E4
- Reykjavík Roasters**
Kárástígur 1 | F5
- Stofan Café**
Vesturgata 3 | D3
- Ölsmiðjan**
Lækjargata 10 | E3
- Ölstofan**
Vegamótastígur 4 | E5

Museums & Galleries

- ART67**
Laugavegur 67 | F7
Open 09-21
www.aurorareykjavik.is
- ASÍ Art Gallery**
Freyjugata 41 | G6
Open Tue-Sun 13-17
www listasafnasi.is
- Aurora Reykjavík**
Grandagarður 2 | B1
Mon-Fri 12-18 / Sat 12-16
- Ásgrímur Jónsson Museum**
Bergstaðastræti 74 | G4
Mon-Fri through Sep 1
- Better Weather Window Gallery**
Laugavegur 41 | E6
www.windandweather.is
- The Einar Jónsson Museum**
Eiríksgrata | G5
Tue-Sun 14-17
www.skulptur.is
- Ekkisens**
Bergstaðastræti 25b | F4
- Galleri List**
Skiopholt 50A | H10
M-F 11-18, Sat 11-16
http://www.gallerilist.is/
- Hafnarborg**
Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður
www.hafnarborg.is
- Hannesarholt**
Grundarstígur 10 | F4
www.hannesarholt.is
- Hitt Húsið**
Gallery Tukt
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | D4
www.hitthusid.is
- Hverfisgallerí**
Hverfisgata 4 | D4
www.hverfisgalleri.is
- i8 Gallery**
Tryggvagata 16 | D3
Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by appointment. www.i8.is
- The Icelandic Phalological Museum**
Laugavegur 116 | F8
www.phallus.is
- Kirsberjatræð**
Vesturgata 4 | D3
www.kirs.is
- Mengi**
Óðinsgata 2 | F5
www.mengi.net
- Mokka Kaffi**
Skólavörðustígur 3A | E5
www.mokka.is
- The National Gallery of Iceland**
Frikirkjuvegur 7 | F3
Tue-Sun 11-17
www listasafn.is
- The National Museum**
Suðurgata 41 | G2
Open daily 10-17
www.natmus.is
- The Nordic House**
Sturlugata 5 | H2
Mon-Sun 11-17
www.nordice.is
- Reykjavík Art Gallery**
Skúlagata 30 | E7
Tue-Sun 14-18
- Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús**
Tryggvagata 17 | D3
Open 10-17
Thursday 10-20
- Kjarvalsstaðir**
Flókagata 24 | H8
Open 10-17
- Ásmundarsafn**
Sigtún
Open 10-17
www listasafnreykjavikur.is
- Reykjavík City Library**
Tryggvagata 15 | D3
www.borgarbokasafn.is
- Reykjavík City Museum - Árbæjarsafn**
Kistuhylur 4
Daily tours at 13
- The Settlement Exhibition**
Aðalstræti 17 | D3
Open daily 9-20
- Reykjavík Maritime Museum**
Grandagarður 8 | B2
Open daily 10-17
- Reykjavík Museum of Photography**
Tryggvagata 15 | D3
Mon-Thu 12-19 / Fri 12-18 / Sat-Sun 13-17
- Víðey Island**
Ferry from Skarfabakki Harbour, Sat-Sun only
www.videy.com
- Saga Museum**
Grandagarður 2 | B2
www.sagamuseum.is
- Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**
Laugarnestangi 70
www.iso.is
- SÍM**
Hafnarstræti 16 | D3
Mon-Fri 10-16
www.sim.is
- Sólun Bistro**
Bankastræti 7a | E4
Mon-Thu 11-23:30
Fri-Sat 11-01
Sun 11-23
- Spark Design Space**
Klappastígur 33 | E5
M-Fri 12-18, Sat 12-16
www.sparkdesign-space.com
- Tveir Hrafnar**
Baldursgata 12 | G4
Thu-Fri 12-17, Sat 13-16
www.tveirhrafnar.is
- Wind & Weather Gallery**
Hverfisgata 37 | E5
www.windandweather.is

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BEST OF REYKJAVÍK



Every year around the beginning of July, we make a BEST OF REYKJAVÍK ISSUE celebrating some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, posting some good entries into a hopefully never-ending discussion. The following are some nice tips we pulled from BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2015, which you can read in full at www.grapevine.is.



THE COOLEST GASTROPUB IN TOWN
Kitchen open until 23



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publichouse.is

Dining and Grubbing

Best Specialty Burger
Reindeer burger at Gallery Hotel Holt



Bergstaðastræti 37

If you want to treat yourself, then why not splurge on the most decadent and luxurious burger in Iceland. Gallery Restaurant at Hótel Holt is an institution of white tablecloth dining in Reykjavík. In the evening this is where you go to enjoy roasted langoustine tails and take advantage of an eclectic wine cellar, but for lunch the brasserie offers a truly special burger. It's a locally sourced 100% reindeer burger topped with blue cheese, blueberry jam and a poached egg in beetroot juice. It comes served with house fries and a proper hollandaise sauce. It is literally Rudolph with a red eggy nose. It will set you back 3450 ISK but this unique spin on the classic cheeseburger is worth every drool-covered penny.

Activities and Funtimes

Best Place To Read A Book
Stofan



Vesturgata 3

We'll be honest, this wasn't such an easy one. There was pretty tough competition between this beautiful, warm and comfortable café in downtown Reykjavík and the Reykjavík City Library, a mere block away. The library is of course a building full of books built with almost the exclusive purpose of facilitating reading, but Stofan has a certain je-ne-sais-quoi that is so inviting to bringing your own and sitting there for hours. "The downstairs level is especially nice to read in," said one person. "It's spacious and cavernous but gets lots of light and you can just sink into the vintage couches." Plus, with a great menu of coffees, cakes and light meals, there's no need to relocate when your reading energy starts to fade. We'll be doing our reading down there, thank you.

Shopping and Commerce

Best Cheap Store
Tiger



Laugavegur 13 & Kringlan

Where can you go to find a nice new cookie jar, some lemonade glasses, finger paints for your little brother, googly-eye glasses for your niece, cards for your relatives' birthdays, new candles for your bathroom, comfortable long-johns, a discreet toilet brush, and a large bag of turmeric powder, all for under 10,000 ISK? No, not seven different stores. Just the single, wonderful entity known as Tiger. It's a big international Scandinavian chain but damn, they are excellent and cheap cheap cheap. Tiger, always there, always reliable.

A Guide That Fucks You Up

A list of every Happy Hour in 101 Reykjavík

American Bar

Friday and Saturday from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

Austur

Thursday to Saturday from 20:00 to 00:00.
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

B5

Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Cocktails 1,100 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.

Bar 7

Every day from 16:00 to 21:00.
Beer 350 ISK, Shot 350 ISK.

Bar 11

Friday to Saturday from 21:00 to 01:00.
Beer 500 ISK.

Bar Ananas

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Cocktails 1,650 ISK.

Barber Bar

Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 700 ISK, selected cocktails 1,150 ISK.

Bíó Paradís

Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 500 ISK.

Bjarni Fel

Monday to Friday from 21:00 to 23:00.
2-for-1 Beer 1,090 ISK, single with mixer 1,500 ISK.

Boston

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 650 ISK.

Bravó

Every day from 17:00 to 21:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

Bryggjan Brugghús

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 750 ISK.

Bunk Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

Café Haiti

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

Den Danske Kro

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2-for-1
Beer 1,000 ISK and Wine 1,200 ISK.

Dillon

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 550 ISK, Wine 700 ISK, Whiskey 550 ISK.

Dubliner

Every day from 12:00 to 22:00
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 800 ISK

Dúfnhólar 10

Every day from 17:00 to 22:00.
Beer 490 ISK, Wine for 700 ISK.

Einar Ben

Every day from 17:30 to 20:00.
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

English Pub

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

Frederiksen Ale House

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2-for-1
Beer 900 ISK and Wine 1,100 ISK.

Forréttabarninn

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 650 ISK.

Gaukurinn

Every day from 14:00 to 21:00 Beer 600 ISK, Wine 750 ISK, Shots 750 ISK.

Glaubar

Thursday to Saturday from 20:00 to 00:00. Beer 500 ISK, Shot 390 ISK.

Hótel 1919

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 575 ISK, selected cocktails 1,090 ISK.



Download the FREE Grapevine Appy Hour app!

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Hótel Holt Gallery Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 750 ISK, selected cocktails 1,200 ISK.

Hótel Natura

Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. 50% off all drinks. Beer 550 ISK, Wine 1,000 ISK, selected cocktails 1,600 ISK.

Hótel Plaza Bar

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

Hraðlestin

Monday to Friday from 16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 590 ISK, Wine 590 ISK.

Húrra

Every day from 18:00 to 21:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

Íslenski Barinn

Everyday from 16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 700 ISK, selected cocktails 1,000 ISK.

Íða Zimsen

Every day from 17:00 to 22:00.
Beer 450 ISK.

Ísafold Bistro

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

Kaffibarinn

Every day from 15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 650 ISK.

Kaldi Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 650 ISK.

Kiki Queer Bar

Thursday from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Shots 500 ISK.

Kitchen & Wine Bar

Thursday from 16:00 to 18:30.
Beer 750 ISK, Wine 900 ISK, selected cocktails 1,500 ISK.

Klaustur Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

Konsúll Café

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

Kryddlegin Hjörtu

Mon-Fri 15:00-17:00, Sat 12:00-15:00. Beer 650 ISK, Wine 750 ISK, Mojito 1,500 ISK.

Lebowski Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2-for-1
Beer 1,100 ISK and Wine 1,100 ISK.

Loft Hostel Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

MarBar

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

Matur og Drykkur

Thursday to Sunday, 21:00-22:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 500 ISK.

Micro Bar

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 700 ISK.

Nora Magasin

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.

Petersen Svítan

Wed-Sat from 17:00 to 20:00.
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

Prikið

Monday to Friday from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 500 ISK.

Public House

Every day from 14:00 to 18:00. 50% off beer and wine. Beer 495 ISK, Wine 695 ISK.

Reykjavík Chips

Every day from 20:00 to 22:00. 2 beers and fries 2,000 ISK.

Río Sportbar

Every day from 12:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

SKY Bar & Lounge

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

Skuggi Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2-for-1
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

Skúli Craft Bar

Every day from 14:00 to 19:00.
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 1,000 ISK.

Slipparinn

Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.
Beer 500 ISK, Wine 600 ISK, selected cocktails 1,000 ISK.

Sólón Bistro

Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

Sushisamba

Every day from 17:00 to 18:30.
Beer 645 ISK, Wine 745 ISK.

Tíu Dropar

Every day from 18:00 to 21:00. 2-for-1
Beer 1,000 ISK and Wine 1,000 ISK.

Tacobarinn

Mon-Sat from 16:00 to 19:00.
Fri-Sat from 22:30 to 01:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

Uno

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00.
Beer 545 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.

Uppsáir

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. 2-for-1
Beer 950 ISK and Wine 1,200 ISK.

Vinsmakkarinn

Monday to Sunday from 17:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.

Ölstofan

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 490 ISK, Wine 890 ISK, gin & tonic 990 ISK.

'Mandala - The Colour Experience'
by Dario Massarotto ★

This workshop, led by Italian visual artist and designer Dario, sees participants work together to make a mandala, a ritualistic symbol for the cosmos.

Runs on February 28 at 15:00-18:00

Loft Hostel

LHI clothing market

Students of the art college are sell their clothes.

Runs February 6 from 12:00 to 17:00

Pub quiz - 90s pop culture

Runs February 10 at 20:00

Poetry slam night ★

Hosted by actress Guðrún Ásmundsdóttir and rapper Vigdís Ósk Howser from Reykjavíkurdætur.

Runs February 14 at 20:00

BAST magazine clothing-market

Runs February 21 at 14:00

Once Upon a Human ★

This event is meant to create both dialogue and understanding between people. Individuals volunteer as human "books," and then participants "read" the books by having a one-on-one conversation with the volunteer.

Runs February 28 at 17:00

Swap Till You Drop

This swapping event has very simple rules: bring your items (jewellery, books, clean clothes, etc.) and exchange them for free with objects brought by other people.

Runs February 24 from 16:30 to 19:30

Mengi

'Crisis Meeting'

Kriðpleir is an interesting theatre group that hosts unusual performances.

Runs February 12 & 13 at 21:00

Ongoing

Anarkía

'Í Mínu Ástandi' by Anna Hansson ★

Anna Hansson found it helped her in times of trouble to paint portraits of herself. She exhibits these oil paintings and ink and coal sketches, that all have bold colours and forms.

Runs until February 7

ART67

'NATURE' by Gugga

Gugga, Guðbjörg Sigmundsdóttir is ART67's guest artist for the month of February—her work primarily focuses on Iceland's awe-inspiring nature.

Runs until February 29

Better Weather Window Gallery

'Bein í Skriðu' by Steingrímur Eyfjörð

Steingrímur, Iceland's artist for the 2007 Venice Biennale, has set up a site-specific exhibition of wood cut-outs, fabrics and paints called 'Bones In A Landslide'.

Runs until February 27

Dead Gallery

'Black Spot' by Kristinn Már Pálmason

This exhibition of acrylic and airbrush paintings explores Kristinn Már's process of self-psychoanalysis, which alternates between obsession and deconstructing that obsession. The works touch on the system of semiotics he's developed over the years.

Runs until February 7



Of Sheep And Men
'Feral Attraction: The Museum Of Ghost Ruminants' by Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir & Mark Wilson

The National Gallery of Iceland

Fríkirkjuvegur 7 (F3) | January 21-November 9 | Admission: 1,200 ISK

Bryndís and **Mark's** show explores the relationship between humans and animals in certain environments, specifically around Patreksfjörður and Tálknafjörður. They focus in particular on a flock of feral sheep that had occupied the mountains for decades before being herded and slaughtered between 2009 and 2010. The exhibit asks questions about animals' right to live, and in what way different species have different rules and regulations in place to protect them. **AH**

The Einar Jónsson Museum

The museum contains close to 300 artworks including a beautiful garden with 26 bronze casts of the artist's sculptures.

On permanent view

Galleri Skilti

'Flicker' by Anna Hallin & Olga Bergmann

This photography exhibit is different from most artist collaborations, in that it doesn't concern itself with mankind's relationship with nature and other systems, nor is it site-specific. 'Flicker' is a personal piece, with strong elements of projection and silhouettes, and can be said to be a tableau of a certain period in the two artists' lives.

Runs until June 15

Gallery Tukt

Eva Rós Bjarnadóttir ★

Eva Rós is a member of a street art group responsible for making several commissioned pieces in Breiðholt. She has a solo exhibit at Gallery Tukt.

Runs until February 13

Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

'A Visit to the Monsters'

A child-friendly exhibit that shows the daily

lives of Little Monster and Big Monster. See how they live, where they sleep, and what they do to pass the time.

Runs until April 24

'My world' by Guðrún Ingibjartsdóttir

Guðrún has been painting with watercolours for more than twenty years, and has attended various masterclasses in Iceland, England and France. She gets much of her inspiration from nature, and is fascinated by the vibrant shapes watercolours take on paper.

Runs until March 6

Hafnarborg Kristbergur Pétursson

This exhibit features new oil and watercolour paintings by Kristbergur, an artist who has devoted himself to painting for over twenty years. His aesthetic leans toward the abstract, where the flow of colours and space are explored within dark, gloomy landscapes.

Runs until March 13



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Fields of Lava

January 23rd - March 13th
New oil- and watercolor works by artist Kristbergur Pétursson

DIKTUR

January 23rd - March 6th
Bookworks and visual poems by artist Ragnhildur Jóhanns.

Double Happiness

Katrín Elvarsdóttir
15/1 - 27/2 2016

Deltas

Ingvar Högni Ragnarsson
15/1 - 27/2 2016

KEEPERS

Icelandic design highlights, from the Collection

ICELAND IS SO CERAMIC

- a retrospective of Steinunn Marteinsdóttir's works
Jan 9, runs until Feb 28 2016

Hafnarborg / The Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture and Fine Art

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður
Open 12-17 / Thursdays 12-21
Closed on Tuesdays
www.hafnarborg.is

Gerðarsafn - Kópavogur Art Museum

Hamraborg 4, Kópavogur
Open 11-17 / Closed on Mondays
www.gerdarsafn.is

Hönnunarsafn Íslands / Museum of Design and Applied Art

Garðatorg 1, Garðabær
Open 12-17 / Closed on Mondays
www.honnunarsafn.is

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sjónarhorn
points of view



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CHECK OUT THE NEW

REYKJAVÍK CITY MUSEUM

COMPRISING 5 TOP MUSEUMS:

Árbær Open Air Museum

The Settlement Exhibition

Reykjavik Maritime Museum

Viðey Island

Reykjavik Museum of Photography

More information in the Museums & Galleries section.



Every Road Is The Same
'MOODS' by Friðgeir Helgason



Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Tryggvagata 15 (D3) | January 16 – May 15 | Admission: Free!

After hitting rock bottom and recovering from his addiction in 2006, **Friðgeir Helgason** took up photography. Some of the results are on display in his new exhibition, which features pictures taken whilst roaming his native Iceland and adopted home of Louisiana between 2008 and 2013. The roadside shops and dusty landscapes take on an uncanny resemblance when presented together, revealing similarities, differences, and the identity-shaping powers of place. The pictures are taken on Kodak film and developed the old-fashioned way. **GB**

'Diktur' by Ragnhildur Jóhanns ★

Ragnhildur uses mediums such as sculpture, collage, drawing, and print to explore the relationship between language and art.

Runs until March 6

Hverfisgallerí 'Óvera' by Sigga Björg Sigurðardóttir

Sigga Björg Sigurðardóttir presents her work at Hverfisgallerí.

Runs until February 27

The Icelandic Phallogical Museum ★

The museum contains a collection of more than 215 penises and penile parts belonging to almost all the land and sea mammals that can be found in Iceland. There's also a penis sculpture honouring the Icelandic men's handball team.

On permanent view

i8 Gallery 'Untitled' by Margrét H. Blöndal

For the paintings in this exhibition, Margrét began by looking at an image, and allowing her focus to fluctuate. The drawings then become almost architectural, making the boundary between oil and paper nearly tangible. The page becomes more than just imagination and project, it becomes material fact.

Runs until March 5

Kópavogur Art Museum Gerðarsafn

'Double Happiness' by Katrín Elvarsdóttir

In this exhibit, Katrín exhibits work created

in China in 2010-2014. There is a special artist talk on February 21 at 15:00.

Runs until February 28

'Deltas' by Ingvar Högni Ragnarsson

Ingvar took a lot of photographs during his three week stay in Bucharest, Romania. In this exhibit, he focuses on quiet spaces within the bustling city, shedding light on the interactions between everyday life and complex social issues.

Runs until February 27

Listastofan

'What this is, is not' by Íris Indriðadóttir, Ólöf Björk Ingólfssdóttir & Signý Jónsdóttir ★

In this installation, the three artists present objects in a manner that gives them new meaning.

Runs until February 11

Living Art Museum

'Boekie Woekie - 30 years - Books and More'

Boekie Woekie is a bookshop in Amsterdam, founded by two of Nýló's founders, Rúna Þorkelsdóttir and Jan Voss. This exhibit reconstructs the original Boekie Woekie.

Runs until February 21

Mokka-Kaffi

'Aðeins undir vatnsfletinum og rétt fyrir ofan fjallið' by Sesselja Björnsdóttir ★

Sesselja is deeply inspired by nature, and attempts to put its texture, magic and majestic weather onto canvas.

Runs until February 10

Museum of Design and Applied Art

'Iceland is so ceramic' retrospective of Steinunn Marteinsdóttir's works

Icelandic artist Steinunn has had a long and successful career as a ceramicist in Iceland. She is known for her elegant, diverse works, as well as her influence on the field of Icelandic ceramic art.

Runs until February 28

'Keepers'

This exhibit focuses on the collections in the Museum of Design and Applied Art, displaying a few key pieces, and explores how and why the museum curates the works that it does. The title refers both to the objects themselves, the ones worth keeping, as well as the people who preserved them, kept them, and eventually gave them to the museum for safekeeping.

Runs until June 10

The National Gallery

Vasulka Chamber

Steina and Woody Vasulka are some of the pioneers of multimedia and video art, and have a show at the National Gallery. They began experimenting with electronic sound, stroboscopic light, and video in the late '60s, and haven't stopped since. The chamber's purpose is not only to present art from the genre, but to encourage preserving and mediating such works.

On permanent view

'The First Exhibitions of Icelandic Art in Copenhagen'

In 1927, the exhibition 'Udstilling af islandske kunst (An Exhibition of Icelandic Art)' presented Icelandic art to the public in Copenhagen for the first time. This exhibition explores some of the works presented at this landmark event. Guided tours in Icelandic February 14 at 14:00.

Runs until September 11

'Quartet' by Chantal Joffe, Gauthier Hubert, Jocken Nordström, & Tumi Magnússon

This exhibit brings together the work of four contemporary artists: Gauthier Hubert, Chantal Joffe, Jockum Nordström, and Tumi Magnússon. These works all centre on the human being as depicted in various stages of art history, with each artist taking aesthetic inspiration from a different period.

Runs until May 1

The National Museum of Iceland

'Bundled Up In Blue' ★

This exhibition is centred around new archeological findings from bones believed to belong to a woman from the settlement era, discovered in 1938 in East Iceland. New research provides answers as to the age of the woman in question and where she came from, together with indications of what she may have looked like and how she would have dressed.

Runs until August 31

'The Making Of A Nation'

This exhibition is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from Settlement to the present day.

On permanent view

'What Is So Interesting About it?'

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote in Iceland, this exhibit presents examples of the work and struggles women have faced since gaining that suffrage. This show celebrates women who have achieved in fields that were previously dominated by men, such as politics, business, arts, and sports.

Runs until August 31

'Sjálftæðar mæður' by Annie Ling

In this photography exhibit, Canadian Annie Ling showcases the lives of single Icelandic mothers.

Runs until February 28

'Breeze' by Katrín Elvarsdóttir

'Andvari', or 'Breeze', features black and white landscape pictures by five contemporary photographers, as well as Sigurður Tómasson and Arngímur Ólafsson. Katrín Elvarsdóttir curates the exhibit.

Runs until February 28

Nordic House

Pippi Longstocking

An exhibition about Pippi Longstocking due to her 70th birthday.

Running until February 28

Traveling Sun by Christine Istad and Lisa Pacini ★

A large light sculpture bringing light to dark places in the North.

Running until February 28

Reykjavík Art Museum -

Ásmundarsafn

'Yearning for Space'

This exhibit presents dreams of the future from the eyes of the 50s and 60s, during the age of space exploration. It addresses

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the dialogue between visions of the future, spatial and formal perception, and the genre blend between science fiction and modernist art.

Runs until February 7
Reykjavík Art Museum - Hafnarhús

'The Making of Erró' ★

This exhibition explores Erró's early days as an artist, showing his experiments with self-expression, and his move from impressionist art to collages.

Runs until October 9
'Back to the Sandbox: Art and Radical Pedagogy'

Some evidence suggests that potential for learning declines while in school. This exhibit features works by artists who are inspired by this paradox and who consider learning and education a key issue in today's world.

Runs until April 10
'Envoi' by Monika Grzymala ★

Monika Grzymala is known for her three-dimensional drawings, as well as her unique and innovative approach to contemporary drawing and installation art.

Runs until April 10
'Rate of Return %' by Sæmundur Þór Helgason

In this exhibit, Sæmundur Þór explores the functions and pathways of art in today's technologically advanced and economically-driven world. Gallery D at Hafnarhús primarily shows work by artists who have not yet held a solo show in one of Iceland's major galleries.

Runs until February 21
Reykjavík City Library

'Drawings and Nice Things - A Comics Exhibition' by Lilja Hólmfríðar Pétursdóttir & Sigmundur B. Þorgeirsson

The exhibition features a variety of drawings and sketches by cartoonists Lilja and Simmi, some of which are taken from Simmi's graduation project, the graphic novel 'Super Viking Boy: When Alien Robots Attack!'

Runs until February 27
Reykjavík City Museum

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 09:00-20:00.

On permanent view
'Settlement Sagas - Accounts from manuscripts'

This special exhibition is held in collaboration with the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies. At the centre of this special exhibition are rarely seen manuscripts that tell the history of the settlement of Reykjavík.

On permanent view
Reykjavík Maritime Museum
The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn

This vessel sailed through all three Cod Wars and has also served as a rescue ship to more than 200 ships.

On permanent view
'From Poverty to Abundance'

Photos documenting Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century.

On permanent view
The History of Sailing

Iceland's maritime history that showcases the growth of the Reykjavík Harbour.

On permanent view

'Wigry - a wrecked polish cargo ship'

On January 15, 1942, the Polish cargo ship Wigry was wrecked while sailing through heavy weather on the southwest coast of Iceland. This exhibition is dedicated to that ship and its perilous voyage.

Runs until February 5
'Seawomen - the fishing women of Iceland, past and present' ★

This exhibition, in celebration of the centennial anniversary of women's suffrage in Iceland, explores Icelandic women at sea. The exhibit presents not only historical material but also interviews with Icelandic women who work in the fishing industry today.

On permanent view
The Reykjavík Museum of Photography

'The Eye of Timelessness' by Arnór Kári

The Eye of Timelessness is the name of a new exhibition in Skotið at Reykjavík Museum of Photography with photos shot by Arnór Kári.

Runs until March 29
'MOOD' by Friðgeir Helgason

This exhibit features photographs from both Friðgeir's homeland, Iceland, and the United States. The exhibit brings attention to the identity-shaping powers of location. Filmmaker Þorgeir Guðmundsson talks about the Friðgeir Helgason Moods exhibition February 5 at 19:00.

Runs until May 15
Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum
'Female Idols' by Sigurjón Ólafsson

To mark the centennial anniversary of women in Iceland winning the right to vote, Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum has created an exhibition of classical portrait sculptures of women produced by Sigurjón.

Runs until May 31
Spark Design Space's Annual SALON
'Female Idols' by Sigurjón Ólafsson

Spark's Annual SALON shows work by designers and artist that have exhibited in the space during the past five years.

Runs until February 27
Tveir Hrafnar Gallery

'Nýtt Ár / New Year'
 This exhibit shows selected works from some of the gallery's most beloved artists, including Guðbjörg Lind Jónsdóttir, Hallgrímur Helgason, Húbert Nói Jóhannesson, Jón Óskar, Óli G. Jóhannesson, Steinnun Þórarinsdóttir, Georg Óskar, Hadda Fjóra Reykdal, Hulda Hákon, Nína Tryggvadóttir, and Kristján Davíðsson.

Runs until further notice
Wind And Weather Gallery
'Svona sirka nákvæmlega svona' by Halldór Ragnarsson

Halldór's exhibition is a mixed-media installation with text on paper and wood.

Runs until February 27
Volcano House

'The Volcano House Geology Exhibition'
 The exhibition gives a brief overview of Iceland's geological history and volcanic systems with superb photographs of volcanic eruptions and other magnificent aspects of Icelandic nature. Oh, and you're allowed to touch the exhibits.

On permanent view

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BOOKS

USE OF PLURAL NOT EXPLAINED



How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Love The Garbageman

BOOK:
'Gnarr! How I Became the Mayor of a Large City in Iceland and Changed the World'
By Jón Gnarr
Translated by Andrew Brown
Melville House, 2014

Being an anarchist can be a thoroughly depressing exercise. On the one hand, your principles yearn for a perfect world—a “system” where violence isn’t necessary, where people have the means to work together and live with dignity, and where individual people are given freedom and treated with respect.

On the other hand, nothing in the world matches up to your idea of how things should be. Rather than being merely an imperfect democratic system, the whole of society is a total fucking mess, with all wealth and power centralised in the hands of a few people.

Being an anarchist means simultaneously existing as one of the world’s biggest pessimists, and one of its biggest optimists. It can mean constant disappointment. It is emotionally exhausting.

“The perfect system that has an answer to every problem and will put the world to rights just doesn’t exist,” former Reykjavík mayor Jón Gnarr argues in his new book, ‘Gnarr! How I Became the Mayor of a Large City in Iceland...’. His book is, ironically, a sort of attempt to answer this problem we anarchists have faced since time immemorial: how to start giving more of a shit by giving less of a shit; by meeting “insults with courtesy,” “ill will with indulgence,” and “stubbornness with tolerance.”

How, in other words, to ensure “the good is always getting stronger.”

A punk comedian, an anarchist mayor, Jón has always been a man of contradictions. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the haphazard structure of the book itself. One minute, we’re treated to a rare interview with Jón’s wife, Jóga, one of the major forces behind the scenes of the Best Party—the next minute, Jón is talking about what he likes about Facebook. It feels as if we’re almost given a glimpse into Jón’s own way of thinking. The structure is messy, the ideas frequently silly, much of it seemingly irrelevant, but all of it combines to paint a picture of a man, this outcast, this misfit, who believes in nothing more than the power of human kindness.

It is this common thread—kindness—that ties the chaos of the book together. This is an honest book, one whose words you feel you can trust. You know that Jón is not lying when he says he has always identified with the rejects—such as the garbagemen, the disabled, or the immigrants—because he’s always been one. We know this because the book is not just a collection

of his ideas, but a memoir in the truest sense. It is, in parts, a deeply personal account of his own struggles with acceptance. He is dismissed as a “retard” by his family and his school. He is dubbed “the Clown” by his political opposition in the Independence Party. Throughout his life, he is ostracised

by those living and thinking within systems in which there is never a place for him.

Yet, he never fights back. At no point does he treat anyone with contempt,

but as people who believe in the idea of a perfect system—systems which can never fit everything into them, systems which have never fit him in. Instead, he lets it “wash over” him. He expresses this most concretely in his interpretation of the Taoist principle of wu wei, an action of “non-doing,” or non-intervention, which demands you never stoop to the level of an opponent, instead allowing them to exhaust themselves and to knock themselves off-balance through their own negative momentum.

To return to anarchism, then: from the very first page of the book, Jón is

firmly against the dream of a perfect system, of the perfect box that will fit everything within just right. People are angry and unhappy, not because the world is chaotic and imperfect, but because they strive to impose a perfect order onto the chaotic, imperfect world around them. It’s not just the teachers, the parents, and The Man who are guilty of this, but also the punks, commies, and the anarchists too. Jón is not an anarchist because he believes anarchism to be the perfect system, he says, “but because the perfect system does not exist.”

Jón’s anarchism is thus not utopian, because it holds that utopia can never exist. His anarchism revolves around finding one’s centre in the river of bullshit rather than swimming against the current—and about helping those drowning within it to find their own balance. His anarchism is an anti-ism, a worldview opposed to big, clever theories and boxes of ideas, something that is not just about shouting “fuck the system,” but quietly detaching from the idea of systems themselves through re-

spect, love, and kindness.

Herein lies the answer to the entire contradiction that was The Best Party. How can an anarchist possibly become a mayor and remain an anarchist?

Tens of thousands of years ago, it was the politically sceptical Taoist sages who proved the greatest advisers

to the kings and lords of ancient China. Today, little has changed. Opposition to getting involved in politics is a byproduct of the systematic mindset—and so is the belief that politics holds all the answers. Moving past binary, rigid thinking allows

us to realise that, through embracing contradiction, the biggest sceptics of the system are also the most capable at ensuring things work for the better of everyone in it.

This book is a love letter to the misfits, the losers, the pirates, and the clowns—and the powerful, dangerous idea that those we think have the least to say might just have the most to offer.

It is this common thread—kindness—that ties the chaos of the book together. This is an honest book, one whose words you feel you can trust.

You know that Jón is not lying when he says he has always identified with the rejects—such as the garbagemen, the disabled, or the immigrants—because he’s always been one.

By Ciarán Daly / Photo by Baldur Kristjánsson

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Black Metal: A Beginners Guide

First Wave: The bands that inspired the second wave of black metal, typically dated from around 1980 to 1991.

Check out:
Celtic Frost—'Morbid Tales'
Venom—'Black Metal'
Bathory—'The Return'

Second Wave: The Norwegian scene, which created the black metal "image" (corpse paint, church burning etc). These bands were more extreme in both music and ideology than the first wave. From 1991 to around 2000.

Check out:
Mayhem—'De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas'
Taake—'Hordalands Doedskvad'

Darkthrone—'A Blaze In The Northern Sky'
Burzum—'Filosofem'

Third Wave: Definitions get hazy here, but loosely, these are bands that were inspired by the second wave. Third Wave music was much more experimental. Here, many sub-genres of black metal, like post-black metal, depressive suicidal black metal, avant-garde black metal, were created.

Check out:
Deathspell Omega—'Si Monumentum Requies, Circumspice'
Funeral Mist—'Salvation'
Shining—'IV: The Eerie Cold'
Agalloch—'The Mantle'

Why Iceland?

What is it about Iceland that created this scene?

Aðalsteinn (Auðn): Have you looked outside? It's fucking dark and depressing.

Andri (Auðn): There are like four guys that have formed fourteen black metal bands, so that might have something to do with how many there are. They keep making side projects with the same people.

Hafsteinn (Wormlust): Svartidaði. They had a great release so people found out about black metal bands in Iceland. They found out that Iceland is a thing, you know?

Stephen (Sinmara): With the exception of the younger guys—Misþyrming, Naðra, etc.—most of these guys have been doing this for nigh over a decade. Somewhere in the media something has now clicked, like "We should check this out!" Now they are discovering all

these bands and as a result there are more bands popping up, being inspired by them.

Sturla (Svartidaði): What makes Iceland so special? I don't know. I don't care. Let's burn some churches and we can get some unemployed anthropologist to explain that shit to us.

Tómas (Misþyrming, Naðra): It's the isolation. Like Taflan, everybody knows each other online and in real life so then everybody ends up listening to the same albums, and wanting to create similar types of music.

Þorir (Sinmara, Svartidaði): It's a prolonged effect of what a lot of us guys have been doing for years. It's finally starting to come to full fruition.

Hannah Jane Cohen

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SOUP TUESDAY:
LAZY GREEK SOUP

fish

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steamed fish
fish stew
fish soup

If you paid attention to the economic problems in Greece, you'll notice all the comparisons that were made between Iceland and Greece. Both were dealing with two issues: the banking system and membership (or lack thereof) with the European Union.

More importantly, Icelanders love putting lemons in things. It makes everything seem more healthy—even though it might not be. Who cares? Lemons are bright and yellow and Iceland is cold and dark. The lack of solar energy correlates to a lack of actual energy, so here's a soup that will brighten your day without taking too much effort.

This soup is best enjoyed when you borrow money off your German friend to buy the ingredients and the German then bills you while insisting on cooking it for you and pouts when you don't have the money to pay him back.

Laturgreksúpa: Lazy Greek Soup

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 60 minutes

Ingredients:

- 2 Medium Zucchini
- 3 Red Bell Peppers
- 350g Long Grain White Rice
- 8 Free-range Eggs
- 3L Cold Water
- 1 Handful of Parsley

Salt, Pepper, enough Vegetable Bouillon for 3L of water, slices of Lemon and 3 or 4 big scoops of dried Oregano.

Directions:

1. Pour 3L of water into your pot with your vegetable bouillon, boil and add rice. When water comes back to a boil, turn the heat down to low and simmer for 20 minutes (or until rice is tender).



Rice

2. Finely dice your parsley and add to the pot.



Flat Parsley

3. Peel and dice your zucchini into 1cm cubes and add to the pot.



Zucchini



Diced Zucchini

4. Beat your eggs in a bowl until smooth and even. You then add lemon juice to the eggs and dried oregano. Mix gently.



Eggs



Lemon juice



Oregano, Eggs, Lemon Juice

5. Dice the red bell peppers and add to the pot. Make sure the soup is not boiling and is set at low heat. Slowly stir in the egg/lemon juice/oregano mix. Let simmer for 15 minutes.



Red Bell Peppers



Lazy Greek Soup

6. Serve immediately with a garnish of lemon slices. This sour/savoury soup will have you salivating every time you think about it. This might be the laziest way to make Agolemon Soup, and is in no way traditional, but the flavour is no slouch. This soup will straddle your tastebuds like a colossus.



Lazy Greek Soup

Remember to share this recipe with your friends and loved ones. Also, send us your recipes. Let's get through this winter together.

One Soup Tuesday at a time.

WTF is a Soup Tuesday?

Winter is here. The darkness that abounds will likely bring a lot of you down, but don't fret or give up—there are a number of methods for fighting off the winter blues: Reading, lýsi, sex, drugs, alcohol, and—of course—soup. Now, doing most of those things would be mostly inappropriate, if not illegal, at the Reykjavik Grapevine's offices (if it were one of those "appropriate" offices)—except for maybe the lýsi and reading. And of course, the soup.

Lýsi is kinda disgusting and reading is for nerds, so to combat the coming full-scale attack of the SADs, we decided to started a new tradition to help us make it through the coming winter: SOUP TUESDAYS. Yes! Soup Tuesdays! Every Tuesday, we'll be making a different soup in our shitty little office, document the process and then show you how to make one for yourself.

You can also send us your best recipes (on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or email), with a photo, so we can share soup knowledge throughout the world. Together we can make it through the bad weather.

Solace and Solidarity in Soup.

Happy Soup Tuesday.

Skugga-Baldur



A Czech-Icelandic theater project based on the novel Skugga-Baldur by Sjón

The performance will be in English

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March 3rd 9pm public dress rehearsal
March 4th 8pm premiere
March 5th 8pm

March 6th 6pm
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The project is supported by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway grants

FOOD

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I ♥ U BÓNUS AVOCADOS

by Eli Petzold

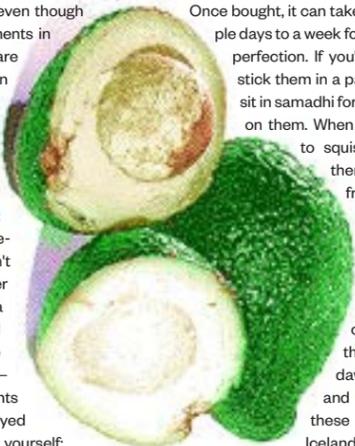
If you've ever found yourself pushing your cart through the bright reds and yellows of generic brands at your neighborhood Bónus, thinking to yourself that nothing is real—not this store, not this food, not your life—don't worry. Even though you're born to die, even though you'll only have a few moments in life where you really, truly are "feeling" something, even though you live on this island of overpriced, under-ripe exports, there's some good news yet, and it's hiding in the warmer of the two Bónus walk-in refrigerators: those avocados, man. Iceland's best-kept secret isn't some puddle of warm water in the mountains—no, it's a sack of green-black ovoid fruits imported from Chile and waiting—just for you—under the fluorescent lights in the temple of the lazy-eyed pig. Don't believe me? Suit yourself; more guac for me. If you're willing to invest six lumpfish coins and a little patience, however, you're halfway to rich, creamy, green heaven.

The Bónus avocados are rock-solid on the shelves, a far cry from the mushy ones Hagkaup peddles for a considerable markup (practically unseasoned guacamole in a shell). Make sure you grab the mesh sack; the shrink-wrapped avoca-

dos in styrofoam might be good for your compost, but not much else. Weirdly cheap, a Bónus mesh-sack of avocados costs less than you'd find them for in California.

If you crave instant gratification, give up now. Once bought, it can take anywhere from a couple days to a week for these beauts to reach perfection. If you're not patient enough, stick them in a paper bag with bananas, sit in samadhi for a day or so, then check on them. When they're supple enough to squish when you squeeze them, stick them in the fridge and they'll keep for longer than you'd expect. Congratulations, you've made it. If you're a fancy jet setter on one of those cute #MyStopover things in Iceland for three days, you're out of luck and you'll never get to try these elf-touched, traditional Icelandic Chilean avocados. Sucks for you! For us here, it's these little victories that allow us to get by in a country that has no satisfactory salsa offerings.

Clever things you can make with avocados include, but are not limited to: guacamole, face cream, salads, and avocado toast. Here's a great recipe for avocado toast: make toast, put avocados on it. Salt optional. Wow! You saw it here first!



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samba

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A unique Icelandic Feast



Starts with a shot of the Icelandic national spirit "Brennivín"

Puffin

Smoked puffin with blueberries, croutons, goats cheese, beetroot

Minke whale

Date purée, wakame, teriaki

Arctic charr

"Torched" arctic charr with parsnip purée, fennel, dill mayo

Lobster

Lobster cigar with chorizo, dates, chili jam

Reindeer

Reindeer slider with blue cheese, portobello, steamed bun

Free range Icelandic lamb

Lamb with coriander, pickled red cabbage, fennel, butternut squash purée, chimichurri

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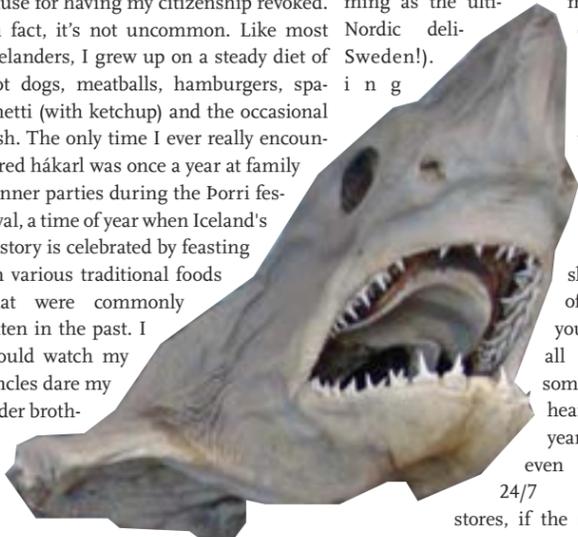


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The Truth About Fermented Shark

By Andri Gunnar Hauksson - Photo by Ragnar Egilsson

I remember the first time I had fermented shark. Actually, I don't. I have a confession to make: I've never tried it. In case you were wondering, no, this is not cause for having my citizenship revoked. In fact, it's not uncommon. Like most Icelanders, I grew up on a steady diet of hot dogs, meatballs, hamburgers, spaghetti (with ketchup) and the occasional fish. The only time I ever really encountered hákarl was once a year at family dinner parties during the Þorri festival, a time of year when Iceland's history is celebrated by feasting on various traditional foods that were commonly eaten in the past. I would watch my uncles dare my older broth-



ers to eat sheep's testicles, in a strange rite of passage that required no skill except folding under peer pressure. Icelandic traditional cuisine, in all its fermented and pickled glory, was developed under the constraints of long dark winters and the necessity to make food last over a long period of time while nothing could grow. It's not really something to enjoy. People had two options: Eat smelly things or die.

As soon as Iceland became industrialised in the 20th century, that urgency to make food last by any means necessary subsided. I didn't really see hákarl in supermarkets when I was growing up. No one wanted it. When Þorri sea-

son was gone, so was the hákarl. But with Iceland's growing popularity as a destination, so grew hákarl's infamy. It has arguably surpassed surströmming as the ultimate putrid Nordic delicacy (suck it, Sweden!). People staying in Iceland can't wait to try it and the rising demand has far exceeded the short season of Þorri. Now you can get it all year round, something unheard of twenty years ago. It's even available in 24/7 convenience stores, if the sudden urge

to eat for shark that was buried in the ground for three months hits you at four in the morning. The old tradition of eating hákarl once a year to celebrate Iceland's history is all but gone now. The new tradition has become sadistically convincing visitors that they must eat it or else commit a faux pas, and then laugh at the inevitable writhing, groaning or possibly barfing that comes with it.

So when you go to a supermarket and think to yourself, "Wow, those Icelanders sure eat some weird things. We gotta try it!", know that those things are actually there for you. Meanwhile, I will be by the condiments section, filling my cart with oyster sauce and yellow mustard. 🐟



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Flavour
loeländic

Ambiance
Oh-so-trendy

Service
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ing, and escorted me to my seat where I perched, looking a bit out-of-place while hiding my bag full of beer for a party I was going to later. Everyone in the restaurant looked cool and fashionable. York waltzed in a few moments later wearing a black suit, fitting right in with the elites.

Hrefna:
I feel like Kitchen & Wine is the kind of place where I'll be lunching on the regular once I've made it in the biz. The journalism biz. Walking in, I was glad I'd dressed up because the place is really fashionable. Everything is stark white, in more ways than one, and their playlist consists exclusively of fashion runway music.

I was early. The friendly waitress was very welcoming,

For the night, Kitchen & Wine was hosting a special pop-up bartender, and offering a special cocktail menu. So a pair of cocktails seemed like the obvious thing to do. Me, the cocktail neophyte, felt this would be a grand warm-up to the Saku six pack I had tucked under my seat. The oh-so-currently-named "The Man Who Sold The World" (2,200 ISK) turned out to be incredibly tasty, an unusual mix of Einstök white ale, orange and Reyka vodka. I'm getting thirsty just thinking about it.

The menu is refreshingly traditional and frill-free. For starters we ordered baked brie (1,950 ISK). Oozing, creamy brie fresh out of the oven is a classic for a reason, and this was simply delicious. I then ordered a half-portion of garlic butter langoustine (3,600 ISK) washed down with a bottle of what I believed to be champagne (7,700 ISK) to drink. All of it was delicious, simply a joy for the taste buds.

After the meal we tried another cocktail. I ordered the Blackwood Brunch Smash, the best whiskey cocktail I've ever tried. The grand finale to the luxurious meal was the delicious dessert cocktail, a White Russian (2,450 ISK), sipped through a layer of cream.

Kitchen & Wine supplied a wonderful night out—the service, the atmosphere, the food and the drinks. I can imagine it being the perfect place for a celebration with friends. Just make sure the friends you bring are swanky enough.

York:

Kitchen & Wine is the perfect place to have an affair like an adult. It's sexy, connected to a hotel, and the whole place is tiled with black marble (maybe granite or dolomite... is dolomite even a thing?).

I'd previously enjoyed lunch there, and can attest that they really do a great job of changing the atmosphere from lunch to dinner. Our appetizer was cooked perfectly, not that baked brie is particularly difficult to accomplish. It's this attention to detail that sets Kitchen & Wine apart. The pop-up bartender mixed me a Don Lockwood (2,200 ISK), a smoky blend of bourbon, Islay scotch, bitters, and maple syrup named after the protagonist of 'Singin' in the Rain'.

I told Hrefna that we would have champagne with dinner, but I ordered a reasonably priced prosecco (7,700 ISK). The ice bucket is stowed tableside and it's served professionally—treating us like a pair of stock brokers, even if we looked like lost siblings with a stolen credit card.

For an entrée, I had the miso cod (4,100 ISK), which wasn't overcooked or over-seasoned. Iceland is a competitive market for fish, and Kitchen & Wine served up one of the best fish dishes I've enjoyed in the country.

With a Gin Gin Mule (2,200 ISK), a twist on a Moscow Mule, and a White Russian (2,450 ISK) for dessert, this might be the best dinner out I've had this year. (I know it's January. I go out a lot.)

By Hrefna Björg Gylfadóttir & York Underwood



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My co-worker and I took our place

Hrefna:

We visited Sólon on a particularly ordinary Wednesday afternoon. The place felt familiar. Maybe because I pass it every day on my way to work, envying the patrons who always seem so happy with their curly fries and drinks. Its location, right where Laugavegur morphs into Bankastræti, is perfect for people-watching and coffee drinking in the sun, although February in Iceland means you're more likely to find patrons tucked away by the geothermal

radiators. When we arrived at 3pm those patrons were mostly tourists grabbing a bite between sightseeing.

I was excited to try this restaurant, mainly because it's one of those places that has always just been there. Sólon sticks by Laugavegur like an old friend and this has earned it some goodwill.

A friendly waitress served us right away. I ordered the minke whale, because in Icelandic minke is called Hrefna (get it?). At 3,990 ISK, it was relatively fairly priced, especially since the dish made for such a nice meal. So long Veganuary, I guess. A bottle of Rosso Di Toscana (5,700 ISK) served to perfect my entrée—it was superb!

Sólon's interior could do with some renewing, though, and the playlist that blared throughout our meal was quite awful. However, those are things that likely don't bother guests who are simply looking for good, fairly priced Icelandic food.

York:

Wednesday seemed like as good a day as any to review a restaurant. The first thing I noticed walking into Sólon was these large paintings of horses—especially the close-up one of a horse's eye glaring at our table for two right next to the bar.

My co-worker and I took our place

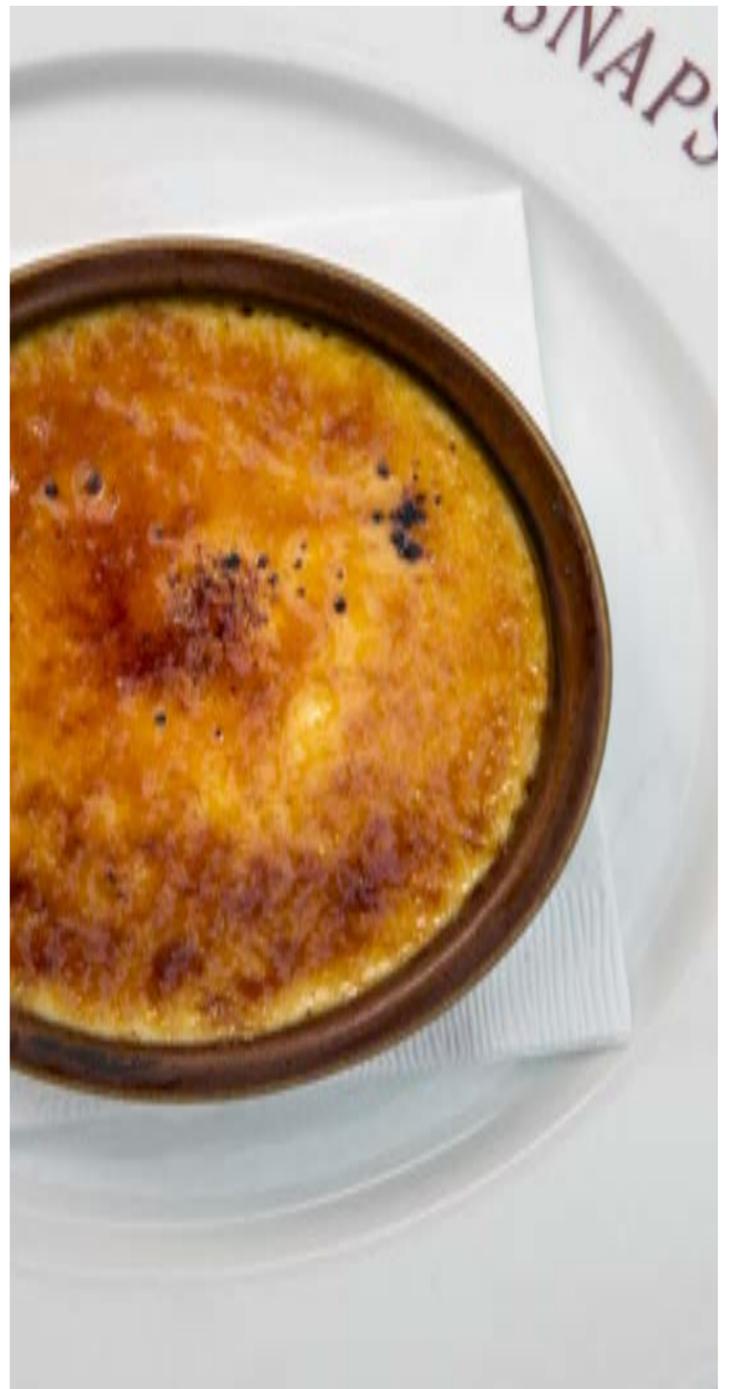
under the Eye of Sauron and delved into the menu, which has an assortment of light and fresh lunch items, but also features some decidedly heavier fare. The wine list was more than sufficient for Reykjavík. As an avowed carnivore, I went with the grilled salmon (3,990 ISK).

The service was quick, and the room was bright and open. I would recommend going there with friends or on your own. It's the type of room that has so much sunlight you could eat your wintertime blues away alone, with the light as your only friend (though, if light is your only friend you may want to consider joining a club or volunteering somewhere).

The presentation of our food was surprisingly artistic—Instagram food porn, if that's what you're into. My co-worker wouldn't stop talking about 'Sex and the City', which I was under the impression had ended many years ago. She may or may not be aware of that fact, but we decided to have a few digestives—or in her case, a cocktail.

We also had shots. I'm not sure who's idea that was, but I didn't hate it. Sólon turned out to be a pleasant surprise, and I will definitely be going back there.

By Hrefna Björg Gylfadóttir
& York Underwood



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 - 26. **DJ Ívar Pétur**
 - 27. **DJ Óli Dóri**
 - 28. **Monday night jazz** 21:00 free entry
 - 29. **Hefnendabíó: Cult Movie Night** 20:00 free entry
 - 30. **Hí á Húrra: Stand-up Comedy** 20:00 free entry



MARCH

VÍKING

nity. There's an awkward silence when I ask why. They all look at each other, as if daring one another to say something that's unspoken. Andri finally jokes, "I guess we're not kvlt enough."

Mannveira meet me at Bar 7 during happy hour, when beers are only 350 ISK. They're young—newcomers, with only an EP and a few shows to their name. "We wear corpse paint," Illugi K., their singer, tells me, "but we're not into like crucifying people onstage." At this, Axel F., their bassist, immediately pipes up, "Wait, can we do that?" They all start to argue, trying to top each other with more graphic and shocking ideas. I jokingly suggest they could start out by cutting themselves. Illugi plays along, "Nah, do you know how expensive razors are?"

I speak with Sinmara at Studio Emissary, a primarily black metal recording studio run by their bassist, Stephen Lockheart. They had just gotten back from playing at a festival in New York City. "Black metal is different than a lot of other musical genres, and art in general," guitarist Þórir G. emphasizes. He speaks softly, disaffected; it's clear he takes this very seriously. "It needs a unified look and an enveloping feel. The aim is to be as all-encompassing as possible to achieve a feeling of utter disconnect from the mundane world."

"In black metal, musicians have high standards," Dagur G. of Misþyrming and Naðra tells me. "Not just the songs, but the lyrical content, the image, how the members choose to appear. It's all related. You'd never see that in death metal." Bandmate Tómas I. from Misþyrming and Naðra nods and interjects, "Yeah, you'd never see a death metal band rent out an art gallery and spray-paint the walls with blood and cover the ground with earth and rotting meat." He's referring to the Úlfsmessa performances—by now a staple at East Iceland metal festival Eistnaflug—where a group of Icelandic black metal bands have gotten together for the past two years and staged a Black Mass. We sit in Dagur's room, the erstwhile headquarters of a black metal record label run by the pair, Vánagandr, which involves all of the above-mentioned bands—save for Auðn. With clean-cut hair and a button-down, Dagur doesn't seem like the kind of fellow who enjoys covering himself in sheep's blood. But appearances can deceive. "There needs to be an atmosphere. There need to be theatrics," Tómas says. Dagur nods before adding in something sarcastic, "Yeah, and death metal guys play in their normal clothes. We aim to do way more than that."

Throughout the interview, Dagur continually does this. He jokes or says something sardonic, pauses, and then in an instant becomes severe and cold as he discusses the same topic. It's a trait I've noticed in every black metal musician I've ever met, whether in Iceland, the US or elsewhere—and I've met a few. They laugh and joke about some of more audacious elements of the music—the corpse paint, the theatrics—but then instantly turn gravely stern as they emphasise the importance of these things. It reminds me of the response given to a reporter in 2003 by legendary Norwegian black metal stalwart Gaahl. "What's your music about?" the interviewer asks. Gaahl swirls a glass of red wine. "Satan," he responds coldly, after a long pause. His seriousness feels instinctively humorous, but you know he's not really joking.

The makings of a scene

The general consensus around Iceland's black metal history is mixed—some start by trying to figure out which old Icelandic groups influenced Iceland's first "proper" black metal bands, others just start there. But when I ask about old Icelandic black metal, the majority begin by mentioning a band named Myrk, which started around 2000. Hafsteinn was a

"It's like who's playing guitar? Tómas? Who's playing drums? Tómas? I thought he was on bass. So if you don't like each other, you can't kill each other like the Norwegians, 'cause then we are all lacking a drummer, you know?" -Aðalsteinn, Auðn

member. "[Myrk's singer] was a really charismatic guy," he tells me, "so what he listened to, everybody listened to. He was the black metal tastemaker back then." During the early 2000s, the scene was small, overwhelmed by the massive death metal scene and later the hardcore scene, which was more in fashion at the time.

"I remember hearing all these horror stories," Garðar J. of Sinmara says, raising his eyebrows, "like [the singer of Myrk] would go on stage and cut himself and get all fucked up. One time he had to go to the hospital." Stephen looks puzzled. "That's the guy who poured salt and pepper into his wounds onstage, right?" They then debate over whether or not this really happened. Other bands spout similar rumours—the salt, the blood—but no one can give a definitive answer. The myth of Myrk just grows and grows.

Sólstafr, which began in 1995, produced two demos in the late 90s that could solidly be defined as black metal. There was also a band named Potentiam, formerly named Thule, around this time. Their sound is really unique: black metal with a touch of late-90s gothic metal mixed in. "I remember listening to Potentiam a lot," Örygur S. from Naðra and Mannveira tells me, "but really Iceland had this scene where people would make one demo, or maybe one album, and then just break up. Nothing lasted." Such was the fate for Myrk. Aside from that, people mention a few other names, but none carry the same loaded legacy. Dagur remembers Dysthymia; Sturla names Withered; Tómas credits Ámsvartnir. All of them are represented on a compilation released by former Sólstafr drummer Gummi called 'Fire & Ice'. "You have got to find that," Hafsteinn says seriously.

The black metal scene was pretty barren during these years in mid 2000s; bands maybe made a demo, but they rarely played live. Hafsteinn had left Myrk and was working on solo projects that would eventually become Wormlust.

This landscape didn't change drastically until Svartidaudi's first release. Though they had been playing casually since 2002, Svartidaudi only became serious around 2006, when they recorded their tape demo, 'Temple of Deformation', and started playing live. This was incidentally the first time the Grapevine profiled Sturla and the Icelandic black metal scene, in a piece entitled "Icelanders Don't Care About Satan." "We had really chaotic live shows back then. We used to drench ourselves in blood and just go completely crazy and beat people up," Sturla smirks, "so we were never really stable." He laughs, and emphasises the word stable. "We had like a revolving door policy when it came to the lineup. We kept kicking people out." He tells me he's fired members for being alcoholics or drug addicts, among other things. One got the slip for attempting to burn down a church.

Incidentally, Dagur's first show black metal show was Svartidaudi. "I just took it by chance," he tells me, "walking into the bar at age fifteen. Luckily, I didn't

get asked for ID." Tómas smiles at this. "I remember this epidemic of metal kids sneaking into bars when there were concerts," he says. "There was even this one night where somebody broke a monitor so a lot of bars banned metal shows." He raises his eyebrows. "Well, they used that as an excuse, but I think it was because they had all these underage kids sneaking in, not to buy booze but to watch the show."

Every member of every band interviewed talks about how inspired they were by Svartidaudi. In 2010, they achieved what no one expected of an Icelandic black metal band—they played a show abroad, joining the Nidrosian Black Mass in Trondheim, Norway. Getting involved in the international community got them a record deal with Terratur Possessions, and they then released 'Flesh Cathedral' in 2012. "Bands that are active today, like Mannveira and Naðra," Dagur relays, "were all in the idea stage at that point. The release of 'Flesh Cathedral' changed everything in the Icelandic black metal scene. Everybody realised it was possible to make a good black metal album in Iceland, even though it's so isolated."

The explosion of a scene

Today, it's impossible to name all of the black metal projects currently going on in Iceland—that's how many exist. Since the release of 'Flesh Cathedral', a whole new generation of black metal has emerged. "The scene is just really fucking lively." Misþyrming's Helgi R. tells me. "It's like a golden age for us black metal-heads here." The relics of this purported golden age are recent releases like Sinmara's 'Aphotic Womb', Misþyrming's 'Söngvar elds og óreiðu', Wormlust's 'The Feral Wisdom', Naðra's 'Allir Vegir Til Glötunar' and Auðn's self-titled debut, which have all sold out and garnered almost unanimous praise from the most credible sources.

There's been international media coverage and multiple European/US tours planned. Misþyrming in particular has been prolific. The band was named the Artist-In-Residence at the Roadburn festival this year, and their album the ninth best record of 2015 by Vice's Noisey. They also recently received a Kraumur award and a Grapevine music award (fun fact: we made up a category just so we could award them with something).

But while the black metal community is tight-knit, there are still clashes. Some bands would only agree to be interviewed with the assurance that other bands weren't going to be in this piece. Others refused to be photographed together. And every band shared some harsh opinions about others within the scene—off the record, of course.

Auðn remain remarkably calm about such comments, when I bring them up. They seem happy in their role as the outsiders—proud to be nonconformists. "It's been weird to experience the black metal community today to be very con-

formist to the set rules of black metal and very aggressive against outside influence," Hjalti S., their singer, tells me. "It seems counterproductive." It's true that their sound is completely different from the Vánagandr bands: melodic instead of harsh, slow instead of furious—which many see as just cause for a rift. Even so, Auðn feel no animosity, laughing as they acknowledge how bizarre their situation is. "I mean, if you're on the fringe of the black metal scene in Iceland," Hjalti says, strongly emphasizing black metal and Iceland, "what does that leave you with?"

No group, though, was exempt from criticism. "A lot of people are jumping on the bandwagon now. They're just Svartidaudi clones," one musician tells me when I ask about some smaller black metal projects in Iceland. Even popular bands like Misþyrming and Svartidaudi aren't left out. "They are just mimicking that French black metal sound. It's not original," an unnamed black metallor says with a sigh. The French black metal sound refers to bands like Deathspell Omega, which have a rough dissonant style. He might have a point—Misþyrming and Svartidaudi are all about dissonance. But Sturla scoffs when I mention this to him. "C'mon," he tells me. "You do one discordant note and suddenly you are Deathspell Omega. Fuck that!" He puts down his beer and turns serious. "Great band though." This comment feels like a "Hail Mary" after cursing—an attempt to appease the black metal gods after a harsh word.

To be fair, the comparison to Deathspell Omega is a bit of a stretch—Misþyrming and Svartidaudi both have respectively unique sounds, and that's what has gotten them where they are.

The aim is to be as all-encompassing as possible to achieve a feeling of utter disconnect from the mundane world." -Þórir, Sinmara

Misþyrming—which literally means "abuse"—is unrelenting and wrathful. The band sucks you in so much that it is impossible to turn their album off once it gets going. Meanwhile, Svartidaudi has a sophistication to their evilness. It's polished—these guys really understand and appreciate the mechanics and nuances of black metal. Mannveira, then, is pure viral anger. The howls of their singer, Illugi, are despondent and haunting—you won't be able to forget them. Sinmara has a gothic grandiosity and beauty to their tunes not normally found in Icelandic black metal. Their music is intricate and well-thought-out. If young

and prolific Misþyrming is the Mozart of the scene, then Sinmara is most definitely Beethoven. Wormlust, though, is psychedelic—black metal you'd want to trip to. I imagine 'The Feral Wisdom', his last album, would be the soundtrack to that fabled acid ego death. As I sit with Hafsteinn in the church, he tells me about how he started a project once based on near-death experiences, inspired by one he had himself. I can't help but hear these musings in his music.

"There's a lot of diversity," Dagur says, yet Tómas looks less than convinced. "Yeah, there's a lot of diversity in sound, but if you look at the line-ups..." He trails off. Indeed, every band notes that the scene is relatively inbred—understandable considering Iceland's small population. Most point to Tómas as a prime culprit: in addition to owning Vánagandr, Tómas himself plays in Naðra, Misþyrming, Carpe Noctem, O, Grafir, and Nornahetta. He then starts naming inactive bands, or ones without studio releases and literally loses count. Even Auðn—a band that Tómas is not associated with—jokes about his prolific attendance. Andri smirks, "It's like who's playing guitar? Tómas? Who's playing drums? Tómas? I thought he was on bass." Aðalsteinn M., another member of Auðn, grins. "So if you don't like each other, you can't kill each other like the Norwegians, 'cause then we are all lacking a drummer, you know?" Andri mocks fury in response, "You killed the only black metal drummer in Iceland!"

The understanding of a scene

But why black metal? What is appealing about this harsh and—to most people—ugly music? Why dedicate years of your life to a scene that glorifies Satan and suicide?

At first, every band loves getting into the nitty-gritty of why they love the genre. They get nostalgic—reminiscing about lending each other CDs in their preteen years, discovering Mayhem or Burzum, growing enamoured, and ultimately obsessed, with the genre's legends. But when I start to ask each band deeper questions about their psyches and themselves, most brush me off with sarcasm or a joke. There is a wall.

But, then, one does let me in. It's Tómas. "I think that if you go against the prominent values of society long

enough," he tells me, "then black metal is likely to appeal to you somewhere along the way." At this, his bandmate Örygur nods. "Iceland is really rotten," he says seriously. "It's not the magical-fairy-elf-land that people want it to be. Both in terms of corruption and urban decay. Just look at the streets, they're ruined."

They start to tell me about the horror of working in slaughterhouses or the monotony of working in fish factories. "I had to do it all," Örygur continues. "Shoot it, hang it up, rip the wool and the whole skin off, empty the guts out. Nasty shit. It's backbreaking." Being so close to



death will make anyone obsessed with it, it seems. “Everything is futile when you look at it from far away enough. Nothing is of any consequence,” he says seriously.

Futility is a word that continually comes up, as is defeat. “Defeat is the key concept here in Mannveira,” Illugi tells me. The name literally translates to “Human Virus.” I ask him to explain that to me, but he answers with a joke. “I mean, go to downtown Reykjavík at 6am and the name will make perfect sense!” There’s the wall. A short silence follows. Finally, drummer Jón Arnar steps up. “Look, the human being on Earth is not doing anything good. It is a virus.” Axel, their bassist, nods, then adds, “We are just a cosmic accident.”

“Iceland is dark, depressing, and cold.” Hjalti from Auðn tells me, when I ask what it is that created this scene. Auðn means “Desolation.” “Desolation is both a horrible place and a place that draws you in,” Hjalti tells me. Illugi says something similar: “We live in a small, isolated, cold, place. No one speaks our language. You have to find something to make meaning of it all.” But make meaning of what? Life? Death? I ask Hafsteinn. “I avoid death-worship or outright death-worship,” he says, “but black metal always reminds you—memento

mori—it screams it.”

Every band, at some point, mentions the financial crash. Of course, all of them were fans of black metal before the upheaval, but it’s impossible to emphasize how much this event affected everyone, taking these nihilists and making them even more pessimistic. “Would it be better for tourism and the Grapevine if we said yeah, the scene is inspired by nature and the power of the geysers?” Mannveira’s Jón Arnar asks with a smirk. Everyone laughs. “And the elves!” Axel adds. Tómas is more serious: “Iceland never knew true poverty before the crash.” He tells me about how families were homeless, how lives were ruined, and how the bankers were barely even punished. If any event has coloured, or perhaps finalised these boys’ perception of their own society, this is it.

“Look, I think some people either get black metal or they don’t,” Stephen tells me. “It’s not something that you can prescribe to somebody. It just kind of clicks, and you either feel it or you don’t.” Þórir nods at this. “With the risk of sounding like an exclusionist asshole,” he says, “it is to a point something which picks you, and not the other way around.” Garðar laughs. “You’re right, but this is black metal,” he smiles. “We’re supposed to be exclusionist assholes.”

The future of a scene

Sinmara are currently recording a new album. “I think it’s just going to get stronger,” Stephen tells me, discussing the future of the Icelandic scene. “People keep wanting to do more and they keep making good music. In terms of public perception though, I don’t know.” He pauses and narrows his eyes, as if he doesn’t know how best to approach this issue.

“Black metal fans get into fads,” he says, “and when something is not cool anymore, they don’t just move on from it—they hate it.” Any notoriety is like a double-edged sword. “You can already find backlash online,” he adds with a laugh. “People are like ‘I am so sick of Sinmara already!’ C’mon, we just released our album last year!” Þórir rolls his eyes. “They’ve got a thousand fans!” “Yeah! They’ve played to more than six people!” Stephen responds. “They are fucking sell-outs.”

No one can hold their laughter—these statements feel a little too lifelike. Garðar shrugs. “Well, we didn’t start this to get popular,” he says with a smile,

“so it’s not going to stop the madness.”

Meanwhile, Hafsteinn just finished his long-awaited new album ‘Hallucino-genesis’. “Wormlust has changed from being this cathartic weekend diary,” he tells me, “to something more like a long-form novel.” He doesn’t want to make any predictions about the scene. “Time is fleeting, of course,” he says, looking down.

Mannveira just finished a new album, which should be released soon, and Auðn is looking for producers and studios to record their next album. Both bands hope to soon play outside of Iceland.

Sturla is, fittingly, more pessimistic about the future of Icelandic black metal. “It’ll fade into obscurity as soon as the next big thing happens,” he says with a smirk. As with most things he says, it’s hard to tell just how sarcastic he’s is.

When I ask Dagur and Tómas for predictions, they both shrug. Dagur is writing new material for Misþyrming. Tómas hopes that they can begin to release vinyl on Vánagandr. Naðra just released a new album, and there are a few new Vánagandr releases coming out soon. Tómas finally gives me a small smile. “I guess we’re just going for world domination.”



The Book of Genesis

Loosely, black metal can be musically defined as an extreme type of metal characterised by shrieking vocals, fast tremolo riffs, high distortion, and low-production recording. But this description is vastly insufficient—there’s not only an aesthetic legacy to the music, but an infamous history inseparable from the genre itself.

Black metal—as it is known today—was most prominently defined in Norway in the late 80s and early 90s, where bands like Mayhem, Darkthrone, and Burzum started creating low-production, raw, brutal music with misanthropic and anti-Christian themes. On stage they wore corpse paint and used satanic imagery. The whole package is iconic, and this is evident when I ask Sturla of Svartíðauði to define black metal. He smirks and responds quickly, “De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas”—the title of Mayhem’s first record. Dagur of Misþyrming and Naðra says the same thing.

The scene first came into mainstream media, spreading the genre’s sound and ideas worldwide, when these guys began to burn churches around Norway. This wasn’t just one or two isolated events: fifty churches were eventually destroyed. So even from the start, black metal was heavily connected with ideology and action, giving it a more sinister edge than the already kind of creepy image death metal bands had cultivated.

But arson was only the beginning—eventually more extreme acts occurred. First, Per “Dead” Ohlin, the singer of Mayhem, shot himself in the head. The band took a picture of his corpse and made it an album cover. It was also rumoured that the band took his skull and made necklaces out of it. Later, Varg Vikernes, aka Burzum, killed local scenelord Euronymous, Mayhem’s lead guitarist, stabbing him 23 times. The international news showed the long-haired 20-year-old smiling unaffected as they read out his guilty verdict. On YouTube, the clip has millions of views.

In the 20 years since, black metal has continued to hone an extreme reputation, from the pro-suicide messages of bands like Shining to ideological radicalism to arrests for grave desecration and murder. At the same time, the scene has also continued a legacy of anonymity. Black metal musicians are notoriously faceless, using pseudonyms and obscuring their appearances in photographs. Many don’t play live. And, as we’ve confirmed, most refuse to give out their full names in interviews.

See also: **BLACK METAL GUIDE on P: 19 in INFO**

The Legion

Svartíðauði
Translation: Black death
Ideology: “Apocalyptic nihilism combined with a certain degree of occult perspective.”
Listen to: Venus Illégitima

Auðn
Translation: Desolation
Ideology: “Depression. If we aren’t talking about depression directly, we are talking about the destruction of the world by the hands of nature.”
Listen to: “Þjáning Heillar Þjóðar”

Misþyrming
Translation: Abuse
Ideology: “Fury, I guess. It’s visceral fury.”
Listen to: Söngur heiftar

Sinmara
Translation: A female figure in Norse mythology, who is the wife of the fire jötunn Surtr.
Ideology: “Death. A singular expression of darkness. I have been trying to aim for outright death-worship in many of these lyrics.”
Listen to: “Aphotic Womb”

Naðra
Translation: Serpent or viper, also a backstabber
Ideology: “It’s very much inspired by nature, the highlands in particular. It’s about trauma, loss, the fall from one’s ivory tower and remaining true to your moral codes, even after it ceases to matter, because all paths to oblivion are equal.”
Listen to: “Sár”

Wormlust
Translation: “There was a Finnish band called Wolfheart, so I decided to go a little more underground—literally from the wolf to the worm and from the heart to the lust.”
Ideology: “A lust for the grave, for the void, for the afterlife.”
Listen to: “Sex augu, tólf stjörnur”

Mannveira
Translation: Man virus
Ideology: “Really conflicting ideas about mortality, death, existence, and consciousness, mixed in with some really depressing nihilism and anger. It’s the

anguish of being. The torment of consciousness. There’s some really conflicting ideas about being and not being.”
Listen to: “Von er eitur”

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BLUE LAGOON
ICELAND

by Rebecca Conway
Illustration by by Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

Getting In With The Whales: The Politics Of Research

Panellists from the Lífriki foundation conclude their presentation at the 2015 Arctic Circle conference. Hands start to shoot up, even before the rest of the audience finishes its polite clapping. Despite the numerous upcoming questions, no panellist looks fazed. Not only do they expect a discussion, they seem to welcome one.

Lífriki's research is a question-magnet, as it centers on the very politicized humpback whale. Using new, longer-lasting, and more sensitive tagging devices developed by Icelandic company Star-Oddi, the foundation will gather a wide variety of invaluable data from the humpback whale. With this data, they plan to distribute information about humpback whales and oceanic conditions for both scientific and educational purposes.

Most of the audience's questions revolve around how Lífriki's research will interact with the pro- or anti-whaling agendas. Again and again, panellists state their intention to present their data in an honest, holistic, and unbiased form. Still, the questions continue. Even I asked them, months later, when I spoke with Lífriki's educational and research coordinator, Edda Elísabet Magnúsdóttir.

Tag teaming

Perhaps their expectation of and willingness to answer questions stems from a core part of the foundation's structure, which relies heavily on discussion and communication between seemingly divergent parties. Lífriki is composed of a wide variety of experts, and depends upon a wide variety of technologies. At the Arctic Circle conference, for example, their panel consisted of a biologist, a game designer, a marketing specialist, and an engineer, to name a few.

The diversity of their team is essential in carrying out their goal, which involves not only tagging whales, but also gathering, organising, and relaying data. "This core team has brought us quite far. We have specialists in every corner, and once we start producing, we'll need even more scientists, teachers, and designers," Edda tells me.

Tagging technology

As evidenced by their assorted team members, the Lífriki foundation draws on several levels and types of innova-

tion. The basis of the project, however, is the aforementioned new and improved tagging device design produced by an Icelandic technology company, Star-Oddi.

This new tag not only stays on the whale for a longer time, it can gather a wider variety of information. The longevity of the tag gives it a greater research potential, as the foundation can gather more geographically and temporally consistent data regarding the whale's movement and oceanic conditions.

In addition to its longer lifespan, the tag is also less invasive. Past tags have always been more harpoon-like, as they're inserted directly into the whale's body. This tag, however, is more belt-like, and fits around the whale's back tail. It even has a silicone surface and adaptable joints, so as not to bother the humpbacks as they swim.

The destination of data

Despite working with numerous types of expertise, Edda notes that all members are in constant contact, and often go back and forth with ideas. With this multi-talented team, the Lífriki foundation will relay data from the tag in several ways: in the form of raw data, reports in scientific journals, and educational material for children.

Rather than promoting marketing strategy or political agenda, the foundation aims to make people engage with the ocean in productive, creative, and interesting ways. Ultimately, Edda notes, "we want to put science in human language and make it interesting, fun,

and engaging."

Follow that whale

Part of this engagement involves incorporating young voices into conversations about the ocean. As opposed to many research foundations that specifically cater to scientists and politicians, Lífriki encourages interactions between children and data. To that end, they are currently designing and developing an online encyclopaedia, various app-based educational games for children and educational materials for the classroom.

The games, made with the help of Cape Copenhagen, will incorporate the whale tracking data, along with oceanic environmental data (such as temperature and salinity), allowing children to "follow a whale" in real-time and engage in various fun problem-solving tasks while learning valuable knowledge about the ocean.

Children won't only learn about humpback whales through Lífriki's games, however—the information offered also will provide insight into other marine organisms, such as plankton. Focusing on an organism located high in the food chain, like the humpback whale, means that other, smaller organisms and ever-changing oceanic conditions play a part in the application as well.

Children are the future

The ocean, in short, will be presented as a complex ecosystem, of which all organisms are an important part. Get-

ting children involved is related to the current climate crisis, which has an especially grave impact on marine organisms.

"Children will be the ones to make decisions in the future. We want to give them the opportunity to be incredibly well-informed," Edda tells me, noting increasing ocean acidification, higher accumulation of garbage in the ocean, and rising levels of plastic in seabirds' digestive systems as some of the featured subjects. "We also place great emphasis on providing the kids with tools they can use to take meaningful action," Edda continues, "through small, doable steps that they can easily resort to if they wish to have a positive impact. For instance, they'll learn how even a small plastic drinking straw can cause major harm to individual marine animals, and how we can prevent that from happening. Basically, we want to clearly demonstrate how every small action counts."

The political fray

Of course, translating data—especially when it's about an organism as politically touchy as the whale—comes with certain risks and implications, and even more so when it's so strongly linked to climate change.

When asked about the potential humanisation of whales in the children's "follow your whale" game, Edda admits, "Sometimes what we will show will be emotional and evoke some emotional feelings among people." However, she is quick to assert that the foundation will not force ideas and will simply present

information that reflects the true daily happenings of the ocean.

Lífriki's determination to relay honest data has been positively received, Edda says, with the problem's urgency becoming increasingly apparent to the public. Of course, there are always detractors—the foundation has heard hesitations, and even accusations, from pro- and anti-whaling groups alike. Edda tells me that all data should be honest, though "when people are trying to speak for conservation or its opposite, they can often be bit biased, and their research might only be based on the narrow part of the whole story."

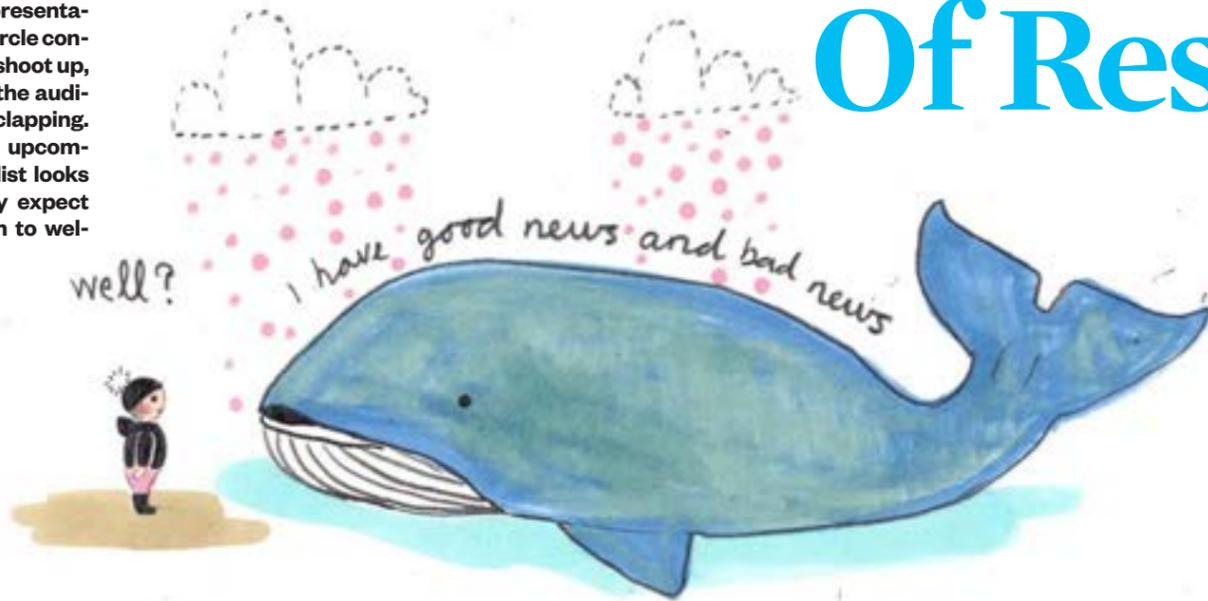
The dangers of scientific research, it seems, lie not only in incorporating personal bias, but also in relaying narrow or limited data. By generating a comprehensive and comprehensible game system, the foundation aims to limit bias, and effectively illustrate the actual conditions of the world's oceans.

Reasons for research

Despite the challenges in studying such a politically charged organism, Edda is confident that the humpback is the best oceanic ambassador to start with. Not only does the humpback whale travel far and wide, but it also offers valuable information about the oceans, which Edda calls "the heart of the planet."

While Lífriki will have more political accusations and obstacles to work around in the future, the foundation seems confident that they can shed more light on and draw more interest in the wide swathes of unexplored ocean.

Given the varied technology and diverse platforms they're working with, what can one do but swim along—even if just for the ride?





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Breaking Into House

The second coming of intr0beatz

by Haukur S. Magnússon

Most of our local readers will have known 34-year-old Ársæll Þór Ingva-son—AKA intr0beatz—since way back in the day, first as a DJ/producer for seminal Icelandic hip-hop act Forgotten Lores, and in later years as a resident DJ at establishments like Prikið and Kafibarinn. A stalwart proponent of hip-hop-as-lifestyle since his early teens, it came as a surprise to many when intr0beatz launched into a second, altogether different phase of his musical career at Sónar Reykjavík 2014, where he debuted a set of original house music. Now, two years later and with a slew of well-received releases to his name, intr0beatz is excited to take the Sónar stage again and enjoy the privilege of watching people dance and celebrate life to the sound of his compositions.

Breaking into the House (Scene)

For the sake of our friends from abroad, who might be less familiar with your oeuvre, could you briefly tell us about how you got into making music, and how your career has evolved through the years?

As a kid, I was exposed to some wonderful people and music through skateboarding [an avid skater, intr0beatz even made a series documenting Iceland's skating scene a few years back, 'First Try Fail Mondays', which you may view at www.vimeo.com/introbeatz]. I soon found that I really wanted to belong to that world. At the time, techno, house, drum 'n' bass, trip hop and hip-hop were all in the same category as far as I was concerned: underground music. I was buying techno and drum 'n' bass records long before I got into hip-hop. Scratching was always my thing, though, and that eventually led me to focus exclusively on hip-hop. All I wanted back then was to be a turntablist and compete in DJ battles—so that's what I did.

It's funny, I've never really considered music as a career of mine, mainly because I've been doing it for the better part of my life. Performing, DJing, making beats... It's simply a part of who I am. And every aspect of life has to evolve at some point, so breaking into the house scene was a pretty natural progression for me. Anyway, all these different styles stem from the same background, breaks, and that's what I've been messing with my whole life.

You've been branching out of late, releasing some fine house music as intr0beatz, a moniker you also go by when DJing and producing hip-hop. Did you ever consider adopting a different artist name for your foray into a new genre?

No. I use intr0beatz for all of my creative output, whether I'm making skateboarding videos, hip-hop beats or, most recently, house music. To me, intr0beatz isn't any one thing. It represents all the elements that got me into what I do and made me what I am. I figure that when people see the name, they'll know it might be something interesting.

How many house records have you released so far? Where can we hear them? And can we expect more?

In that genre, I've thus far released three EPs and a few singles and remixes on various labels. All of it came out in 2015, and it's all available on Beatport, Traxsource and Juno Download, and some are also on iTunes. If you want to check 'em out, just remember to search for intr0beatz, not Introbeatz.

There's definitely plenty more the



way. This month, I have an EP coming out on a label called Disco Kicks with my good UK homie Kit Leonard, AKA Twin//Peaks. We met a year ago, when he was here with City Fly Records' Jonna & James for a show at Dolly (RIP). Kit and I are also both signed to another label, Closer To Truth, and we're featured on a compilation that's also out this month. I have lots of other projects coming out in the near future that I can't speak of at the moment, but stay tuned.

The ol' box of floppies

You've said that house music appeals to you in the same way that the jazz and soul vibes that have always informed your work in hip-hop do. Can you pinpoint this appeal any further? What is it about house that so entrances you?

Right before I devoted myself to house full force, the music I was making was all over the place. I was clearly looking for something new. I guess I started drifting towards house around the time mainstream hip-hop shifted to incorporate pop sensibilities that interest me less. The hip-hop I've always loved, the golden age stuff [late 80s to early 90s], is based on the jazz, funk and soul that preceded it—and those sounds have also very audibly informed house music since its inception.

And, like I noted earlier, both genres are break-based in nature. So I kinda knew just from the sound of it that I wouldn't have a problem making house music, 'cause all I ever do is dig for breaks, samples and sounds to use for my own tunes. I've since learned that the production methods I developed making hip-hop work just as well for house. I'll often go back to my old box of floppies and dig out some of my ancient hip-hop beats, to mine sounds I sampled more than a decade ago for a fresh new house tune.

I guess what I'm trying to say is: I still bump my head the same way to house as hip-hop. It's the same love. The house stuff is just more uptempo, which is refreshing. Seeing people actually dance to my music, instead of just standing around and nodding their heads, is such a rewarding feeling. Don't get it twisted though: I was raised by hip-hop, and will always try to contribute to the scene. At the moment, I'm just busy with something else.

The Icelandic House Institute

How do you view Reykjavík club culture? How does it compare to other cities you're familiar with? Do you feel there is a lack of proper "clubs," like many local DJs claim, and too big an emphasis on "bars you can dance at"—or is that maybe a special type of atmosphere that forms?

First of all, there's only one proper club in Reykjavík: Paloma, which has two floors and a really nice sound system. On the other end of the spectrum, Kafibarinn maybe isn't the typical club you'll know from other cities, mostly because it's tiny. Despite this, it has very much earned its reputation as The Icelandic House Institute, as I like to call it. They were the first to set a real standard in the Icelandic club scene, and they re-

main he only establishment that is dedicated to evolving and adopting the latest technologies, providing their DJs with everything they need; turntables, a mixer and CDJs.

Everything else is just bars with good music.

No Dabblers, No Dilletantes

What about all the local DJs? There seem to be so many skilled ones around these days—do you think the people of Reykjavík are perhaps spoiled for choice, or are we lacking in some respects?

Icelanders are definitely super spoiled from having so many active quality DJs around. Some are more prominent than others, but most have something special to offer. I think this abundance of talent might stem from how our local DJs take pride in knowing good music, old and new. The scene is full of dedicated music lovers, as opposed to dabblers and diletantes, which makes a real difference. All we need now is better clubs!

Who are the top DJs in the game at the moment? Who should our readers seek out and see during Sónar weekend? I did my first show as a house musician at Sónar two years ago, so I'm really stoked about returning this year. And I'm not exaggerating when I say every DJ on the bill is top quality, well worth seeing, so it should be a great weekend if you're looking to dance.

To name names, there's for instance DJ Kári—AKA Formaðurinn—who's been the busiest DJ in the game for the last twenty years, and has mastered all kinds of styles, incorporating everything from old Icelandic tunes to techno bangers. Then there's DJ Frímann, who has been my absolute favourite since I was a thirteen-year-old. I've recently enjoyed the opportunity to do sets with him, an idol of over twenty years. What a humbling experience. No one is as mean on the mixer as DJ Frímann!

I also can't forget my BLOKK brothers, Lagaffe Tales, BORG and Simon FKHNDSM. And of course... YAMAHO! (hollatcha boi).

What are your top picks for Sónar Reykjavík 2016, international and local?

Floating Points is the number one act I plan to witness. I've been following that dude for a long time now. I think he's performing with a live band at Sónar, so that's going to be interesting.

And Kiasmos, for sure, 'cuz they're so fucking good. And Lone!

Lastly, Forgotten Lores came together a couple of months ago to play a gig that drove RVK hip-hop heads up the wall, and is still being talked about in almost hushed tones. Are there any plans for further activity in that camp?

We actually have show at Stúdentakjallarinn on February 13, again along with our good friend Kött Grá Pje. As for future plans, I really can't say at this point. Who knows...

Dot Dot Dot



POS PUA MIA

Something to keep in mind regarding the power of public protest: Daryush Valizadeh, also known as Roosh V. He was supposed to be hosting public "neo-masculinist" meetings around the world this weekend, including a public meeting here in Iceland, in front of Hallgrímskirkja. Just so we're clear here, we're not talking about a "pick-up artist" who teaches lonely neckbeards about negging and other tedious mind games in an effort to get laid. No, Roosh has straight-up admitted to rape, publicly recounting how his encounter with one woman during his last visit here "would have been rape" in the US, "since she legally couldn't give her consent" on account of how drunk she was. That's the kind of POS we're talking about here. Well, news of his public meetings spread, and a protest was organised to meet and greet Roosh's would-be minions, both here and around the world. The result? He canceled the meetings, specifically citing the protests as the main reason. No cops, no immigration authorities, no politicians needed to be involved—just good ol' fashioned organising was all it took to shut it down. Feel good about yourself, Iceland: you've joined the ranks of other countries that have sent this asshole packing. Hooray! PF



Listen To Your Tour Guides

As this is being written, so is yet another news story about tourists who almost got themselves killed. Not because they were taken by surprise by foul weather, or because a glacier they were walking on suddenly cracked open and almost swallowed them whole. These were tourists who were warned, by their tour guides, to avoid wading into the waters at the notorious Reynisfjara beach—but went in anyway, and were almost washed out to sea. This isn't the first time this has happened there, either. Folks, people actually drown in these waters. Wherever your tour guide takes you, please assume they know what they're talking about when they caution you against going into the water, up the hills, or across that mountain path. The expense of having to rescue tourists for their carelessness is one thing; that's nothing compared to the pain you'll cause loved ones by dying, and the

legacy you'll leave behind for dying like an idiot. Don't die like an idiot. Listen to your tour guides. PF



Tourist-Friendly Restaurant Opens In Tourist-Friendly Location

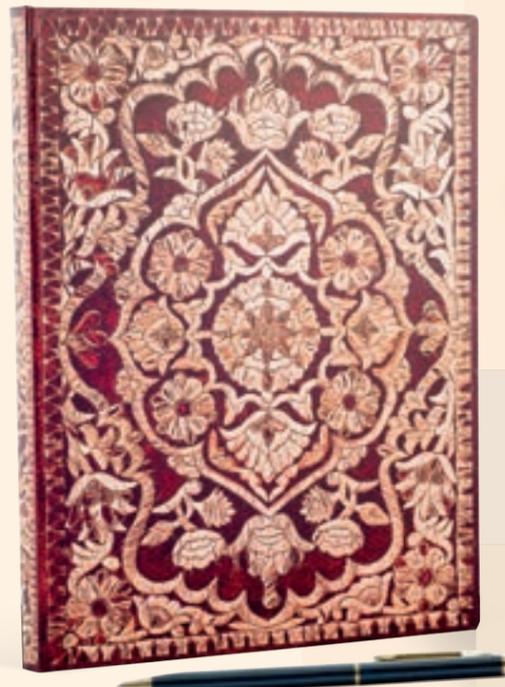
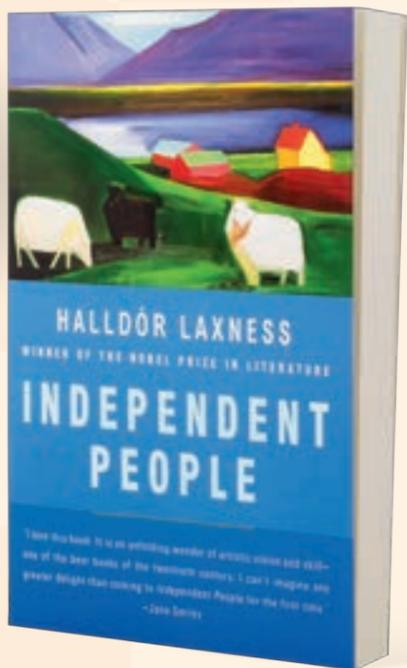
At the exact point where thousands of tourists board Reykjavík's many whale watching ships, the men behind Joe & The Juice homage Lemon have opened Verubúð 11 Lobster & Stuff. Close to tourist darlings and legendary lobster soup maker The Sea Baron, Verubúð 11 Lobster & Stuff is not only going to feature lobster soup but many other variations of the large marine crustaceans. And stuff, of course. The location has not been kind to restaurants, having housed a few in the last couple of years. Perhaps going Full Tourist will be the winning formula. Verubúð 11 Lobster & Stuff, Geirsgata 3. RGV



Sónar Reykjavík Emphasises Presence Of Female Artists

Sónar Reykjavík organisers have revealed that they are working on increasing the presence of female artists at the festival. We reached out to head booker Steinþór Helgi Arnsteinsson, who gave a very Trudeauian answer as to why. He says female representation has been a hot topic in the largely male-dominated scene, and there has been a call for positive female role models for young creative girls. Further, he says Sónar isn't just about booking good acts, but about sowing the seeds for the future generation: "There are lots of female artists doing cool things, and we're particularly honoured to get to premiere new talent like Karó, Hildur, and asdfhg." GB

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Snowmobiling In The Land Of Mordor, Or, There And Back Again

Frodo ain't got nothing on me



Words Hannah Jane Cohen

Photos Art Bicnick

In the land of Iceland, in the heart of 101, I meet my fellowship companion Art Bicnick—the photographer—outside Grapevine HQ at 9:45am on a brisk Saturday morning. I am burdened with one small hangover, and one large quest: to travel to Langjökull to meet the snowmobilers down yonder. To prepare for this journey, I have laced up my Timberlands, which are heavy and clunky, weighing down my body and soul much like that One Ring of Power.

I imagine this is what Frodo felt like as he set off from Rivendell: anxious, filled with regret at that decision to go to Paloma last night, filled with longing for a boy named Samwise. We set off, unfortunately not in slow motion to the inspiring soundtracking of Howard Shore. No, in this car, we listen to Feist.

As Art and I land outside the city,

we are immediately struck by a vast white wasteland surrounding us. There are few trees in Iceland, and the sharp, jagged mountains come out of nowhere, capturing us in a harsh vista that's beautifully photogenic. We stop the car and gaze at the desolate wilderness—the icy lakes and small cabins in the distance.

As I contemplate my destiny, I look to the surrounding mountains and see a line of big bonfires on them. Holy shit, the beacons are lit. The beacons are literally fucking lit. Someone is calling for aid. I know now that I am here for a reason.

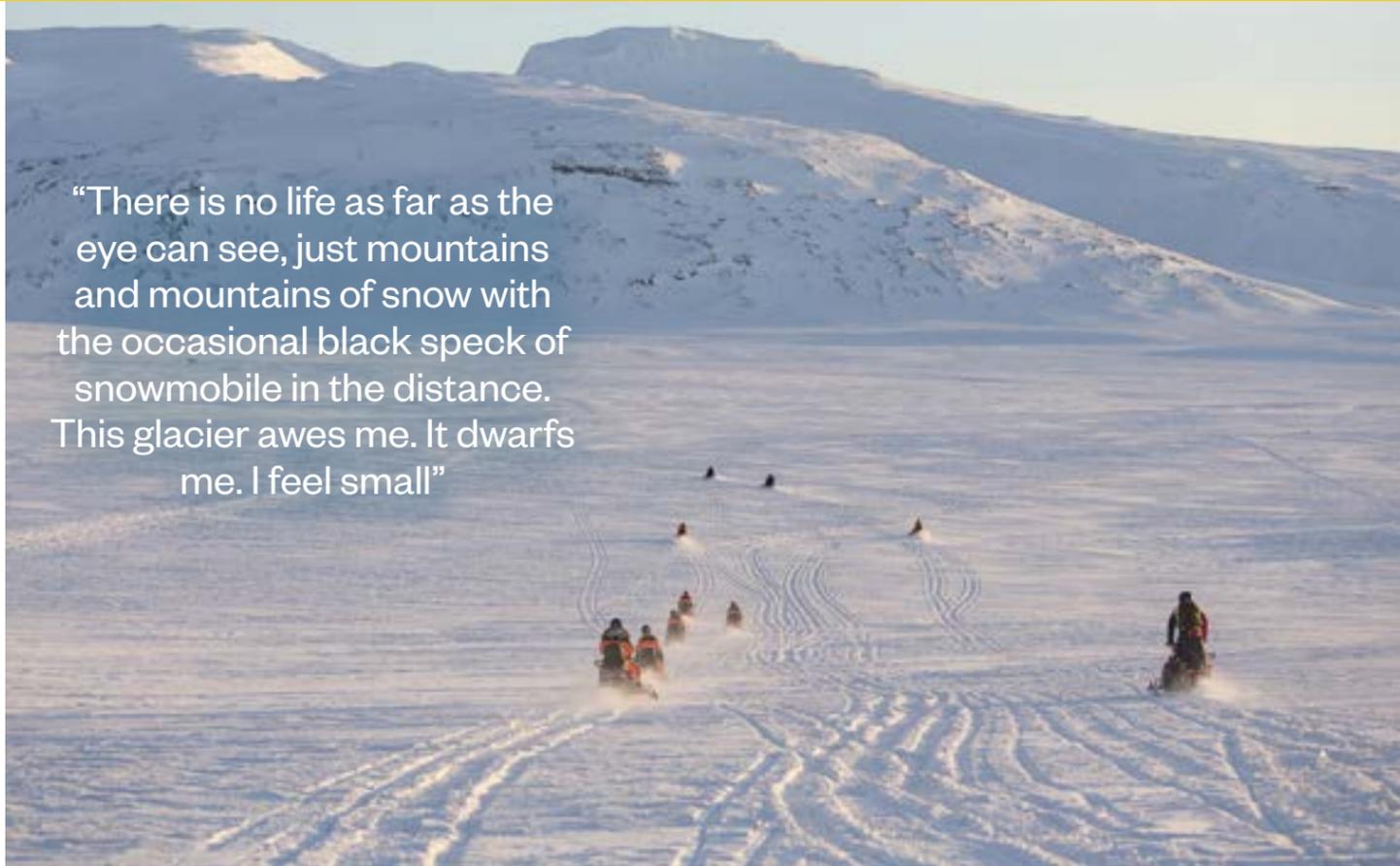
Many Meetings

We stop at Geysir, land of the geysers. I've been to this kingdom many times in the summer, but I must say the snow



Snowmobiling Tour provided by:
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www.adventures.is - Snowmobile.is

Distance to Langjökull
160 km



“There is no life as far as the eye can see, just mountains and mountains of snow with the occasional black speck of snowmobile in the distance. This glacier awes me. It dwarfs me. I feel small”

on the snowmobiles, and I finally get a chance to look around. “Whoa,” I blurt out. I am surrounded by dusty badlands—a Mordor of white. There is no life as far as the eye can see, just mountains and mountains of snow with the occasional black speck of snowmobile in the distance. This glacier awes me. It dwarfs me. I feel small.

But I can't spend too much time looking around—I'm in action! Happily for me, the snowmobile is easy to use. With only one gear and one accelerator, it's easy to speed off. As we move down the first hill, all of my fellowship immediately overtakes me. I'm left at the back of the bunch. So I guess perhaps I'm not Frodo after all, but Sam.

The Breaking of the Fellowship

The activity of snowmobiling turns out to be surprisingly meditative. It's calming and soothing—like an adult colouring book, but significantly less lame. As the wind blows in your face, it chills you, but the adrenaline (and the hand warmers on the bike) keep you warm and toasty. In the least cheesy way possible, I felt at peace on the snowmobile. I started to think about my writing, my family, and a whole host of other deep topics. I end the first half of my ride with the decision that this could be a real hobby for me.

After posing for some pictures, we entered the second half of the ride. Growing in confidence, I started to forge my own path in the snow, jumping the 'mobile a bit. It was freeing—I heard nothing but the buzz of the wind and the laughter of my fellowship around me. I felt at one with everyone.

But alas, all great voyages must come to an end. Without having to throw a ring into a live volcano or get rescued by eagles, we hit the jeep and make our bumpy way back to Gullfoss. Our fellowship breaks up, invigorated and smiling, into our respective rental cars, to journey far away from this icy, glacial land, and back to the well earned of warm fires and second lunches.

complements it. Beautifully, it melts around the hot pools, revealing vivid green and gold vegetation beneath it like an Impressionist peek-a-boo.

We then journey over to the Kingdom of Gullfoss, which I now believe should only be viewed in winter. The waterfall is spectacular, even more awe-inspiring than it is in the summer. Half is frozen—an icy tundra of Hen-neth Annûn—while half runs wild like a stallion of Rohan.

At 12:30, we finally meet up with the rest of our fellowship, now deemed Arctic Adventures, who lead us over to a big SUV with hilariously large wheels. I think back to my pony (bike) in the Shire (New York City) with a sense of nostalgic longing.

However, soon after we set out on our perilous road through mounds of snow, I'm grateful for the gargantuan

tyres. The car bounces and falls and bounces and falls until I am convinced I am about to, as they say, journey west into the undying lands. But those trusty tyres save us. While I panic, there's a lot of joyful “whooping” coming from the back passengers. Hobbits.

Mount Doom

We finally get to the edge of the glacier and enter a small campsite. There we get our new accoutrements—a row of gleaming red snowmobiles. I feel like I have been gifted by Galadriel herself—but this is so much better than some stupid elven rope.

After the gift of the snowmobiles, we receive our cloaks—red jumpsuits of the finest polyester, with a helmet of the most solid plastic. After some quick instruction, we set off



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RECAP: Njáls Saga

Episode four: Or, the one where they burn that motherfucker down

We need to talk about Njáls Saga. Fully titled the Saga of Burned Njál, it is considered the absolute zenith of literary brilliance in Iceland's original prose genre. It is basically THE SAGA. The one and only. Some particularly stuffy Icelandic writers would have you believe that it (written in the late 13th and recorded in the early 14th century) and 'Independent People' by Halldor Laxness from 1934-5 are the only real achievements in Icelandic literature and everything before, between, and after has just been pulp. (Fuck those guys, though.)

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So what New York City is to cities, what the Mona Lisa is to paintings, what In-N-Out Burger is to fast food, what Jesus Christ is to prophets, Njáls Saga is to the Sagas. Now that you've sat through that list, you realize what it's like to hear people who love Njáls Saga talk about it. It's kind of annoying, right?

It's a trap!

Njáls Saga is talked about so often in both scholarship and Icelandic popular culture that it's one of very few sagas to have a cutesy nickname, dropping the word "Saga" —it's just "Njála." Even one of the cutest streets in Reykjavík is Njálgata. But don't let all this hype and cuteness fool you. It's boring and everyone sucks and then dies. You can literally stop here if you want. I wouldn't blame you.

Just like New York, Mona Lisa, In-N-Out, and Jesus, Njála is just an exhaustingly over-pimped, tediously mediocre pile of whatfuckingever. None of these things are necessarily bad, and each have their merits, but overall they are no more intrinsically amazing than Osaka, Odd Nerdrum's NSFW self portrait with boner, Pret a Manger, The Flying Spaghetti Monster, or Eyrbyggja Saga. Or anything, really.

Now that we've appropriately deflated Njál's ego, we can get to the ac-

tion. Or some of it. The problem is that Njála is longer than God's dick and has more characters than the average Reykjavík resident's sex life, so I can't even dismiss all the subplots with single, sassy clauses in longer sentences. I'll do my best, but most of it I'll just skip completely. This is for the best. I do it for you.

So we start this one with some cougar-hunter who's after the queen of Norway, but she curses him with impotence because he already has a wife, it turns into some weird dowry dispute, he mentions his niece Hallgerður has "a thief's eyes" and she turns out to be a super shitty person. Big surprise.

Feudz b4 dudez

Now enter the main characters, Njáll and Gunnar. Njáll is supposed to be some sagely lawyer revered for his advice (most of which turns out to be terrible and only exacerbates the feuds), and Gunnar is a big, strong, manly dude. They're best bros, even though people think Njáll is basically a homo because he has no beard. Gunnar is like, "I totes wanna marry that thiefy-eyed biddie Hallgerður," and even Njáll is like, "Not cool, man, she's already had two husbands killed." But Gunnar thinks the third time's the charm or some dumb shit like that and marries

her anyway.

She doesn't get along so well with Njáll's wife Bergþóra and there's this weird sequence where they each convince random dudes to kill each other's slaves, for which their husbands then pay each other back. Although this makes no fucking sense, it happens three times.

Hallgerður must really love cheese (well, who doesn't?) because she

Morals of the story:

- 1. Everyone is the worst and will die eventually, including you.**
- 2. Cheese will not only provide nutrients to postpone your inevitable death, but it is also good.**
- 3. Njáls Saga is not. It will only bring you closer to death. So don't bother.**

sends another rando to steal cheese from some other rando. The first rando gets caught. When she and Gunnar are arguing about it, the douche hits her. (Pro-tip: even if you have the shittiest, most thiefy-eyed skinka of a wife in all of Iceland, you don't get to hit her.) In her only act of appropriately placed spite, she swears she'll get even.

Like ten boring feuds and some bad advice from Njáll later, Gunnar ends up getting exiled but refuses to leave because Iceland is just too pretty. Fair enough. He's then ambushed in his

home, and when he asks Hallgerður for some of her hair to use as a bowstring she basically asks, "Are you gonna die if I refuse?" And he's like, "Yeah, duh." So she says, "Remember that time you hit me? Oops, you're dead!" She basically flips her hair and keeps eating her cheese while she watches him get mowed down by a bunch of dudes and she's probably totally into it. Then she basically disappears from the story and good riddance 'cause she fucking nasty.

Just play it by beard

Njáll's sons come back from Norway with some guy named Kári and he marries into their family. They also bring back some unsavoury characters that help to stir some spice into this giant pot of lame-sauce. Three or four feuds later, there's a scuffle involving some of these new jerks and Skarphéðinn, one of Njáll's sons, literally slides past the troublemaker on ice and beheads him along the way. It's basically the only cool killing in the book until the burning. Even so, I like to imagine him doing the moonwalk instead. Another feud or two later, Njáll adopts the dead guy's son Höskuldur.

He becomes the favourite son and grows up to be a great chieftain and score a hot wife. Some other chieftain, Mördur, gets so jelly that you could spread him on toast and he convinces Njáll's sons and son-in-law to murder Höskuldur. One of his relatives, Flosi, wants settlement. They take up a giant collection to pay off the murder and Njáll throws in a fancy cloak, but Flosi is insulted that some beardless homo has offered him a unisex article of clothing (what's next, gender-neutral bathrooms?! The horror!) so he decides

to kill Njáll's family instead.

More like the Saga of Böred Njál

He descends upon Njáll's house with an army of one hundred other assholes and they burn the motherfucker down. He allows the women and beardless Njáll to leave first, but he and Bergþóra, who is the real hero of this story if you ask me, refuse to leave their sons. So they all burn. Except Kári, who escapes along the roof-beams so he can avenge them. This sounds all noble and shit, but allow me to remind you he leaves his own son to die in the fire so he can avenge him... rather than just saving him. There is certainly not a "World's Best Dad" mug in Kári's office.

Anyway, Kári chases the attackers literally all the way to Scotland and kills them. He even breaks into the feast hall of the Earl of Orkney to kill a man who is shit-talking Njáll. I guess that's kind of cool, but it doesn't make any of these people any less stupid assholes than they all were. Even Bergþóra had all those slaves killed. Eventually some peace is achieved when Kári marries into Flosi's family. Don't even worry about what happened to his first wife. Now, fucking finally, is the end.

If you think my recap was too reductive but you're too lazy to read all bajillion pages of the saga to prove me wrong: A. reductive is the point, duh; and B. you're in luck. Borgarleikhúsið is currently staging an adaptation of Njála and the poster has a dude in a shiny gold tunic, so maybe they've spiced it up for you. Or at least abridged it to trick you into thinking it's good.



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P.15



“In all my travels, I’ve discerned that Icelanders are pretty rough people. We like full contact sports and action. MMA is just man against man, woman against woman—it’s conflict in its most basic form.”

Iceland’s MMA hero Gunnar Nelson speaks after his bruising recent defeat.

INFO P.9



“The aim is to be as all-encompassing as possible to achieve a feeling of utter disconnect from the mundane world. There needs to be an atmosphere. There need to be theatrics.”

We delve into the murky world of Icelandic black metal.

INFO P.18



“Physical performance adds another element—whether I’m hiding behind the double-bass, or fighting with it, or trying to escape from it. What the audience expects shouldn’t always be what happens.”

Composer and musician Bára Gísladóttir pushes the boundaries of performance.

P.24



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