



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

IN THE ISSUE Issue 15 • 2011 • September 23 - October 6

+ COMPLETE CITY LISTINGS - INSIDE!

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Comedy Comedian Doug Stanhope is going to prison **p30** **Prison** Will host comedian Doug Stanhope. And many others **p8**

+ Doctors At least two of them in this issue!

Travel Rounding up the sheep! **PLUS Travel tips!**

**Not
Fitting
in.** Will Reykjavík Mayor Jón Gnarr destroy our political system, or will it destroy him?

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



On the cover: Jón Gnarr

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www.arimagg.com

Special thanks:
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 Sveinbjörn Pálsson

WTF IS A 'REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE'?!?

Haukur's 47th Editorial



Dear reader,

thank you for picking up this copy of The Reykjavík Grapevine. I hope you will find something in here to read and enjoy; perhaps some new knowledge or a point of view you hadn't considered.

At least you ought to be able to get a kick out of the comix and the lovely photographs. Also I hear our 'listings' section is quite informative for those that like attending events and going out on the town or whatnot.

Here is a fun fact for you to ponder: This is the 138th issue of Reykjavík Grapevine. Our first issue, which had a soldier on the cover, was published on June 13, 2003. I don't think anyone (including the magazine's founders) could have imagined we'd still be going more than eight years later. But for some reason people keep reading us, so we have kept making new issues and distributing them. For the most part, it is a really fun process. You should try it if you haven't already. And if you feel like contributing to the paper in any way (like by submitting articles or drawings or photographs or ideas), then you should.

Again: The main goal of The Reykjavík Grapevine (aside from being helpful to tourists and travellers) is to reflect the community from whence it springs and the multitude of standpoints that it consists of. The Reykjavík Grapevine does not have 'opinions'—our contributors do. And they

often disagree with one another, and we often disagree with them or their articles. This is the whole idea: to serve as haven for discourse and reflection within our community.

Someone might ask: "But where are all the contributions from Independence Party supporters? Or neoliberals? Or hardcore capitalists?"

And they would be right in asking this. It is a good question. To tell you the truth, as editor of this entity for almost three years now: I have no idea.

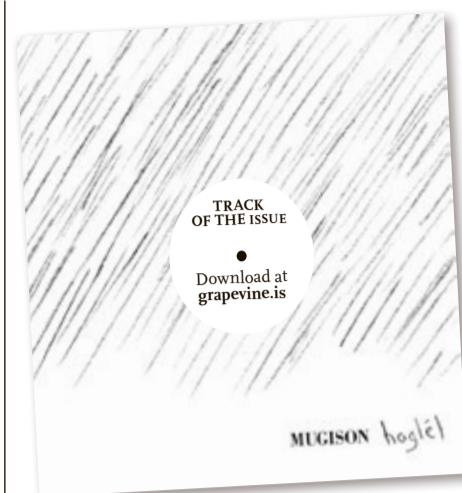
Perhaps they don't think their opinions would be welcome on these pages? They are wrong, if they think that. Speaking for myself, I think few things are more enjoyable and enlightening than reading well thought out and argued for articles that express views or ideas that I disagree with or have in the past thought irrational, and I hope our readers share this sentiment.

I do not believe that I know everything. As a matter of fact I don't think anyone does (although that Noam Chomsky fellow seems pretty smart), and I try to be open to new ideas, and willing to change my mind. I think everyone should strive for this (it is not always easy).

TOTAL CERTAINTY = STAGNATION = DEATH

Right?

So send in your article pitches and ideas, even if you think they counter whatever it is you think



TRACK OF THE ISSUE

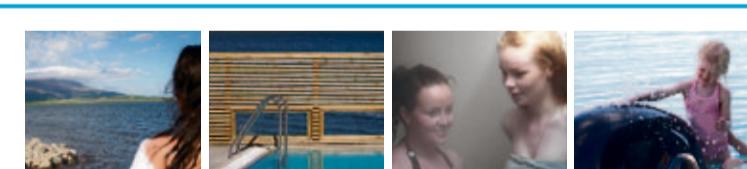
Mugison
Stingum af

Download at www.grapevine.is

Mugison's track 'Stingum af' has grown immensely popular since it was released earlier this summer. We've heard that even preschool kids are coming home singing these friendly lyrics about summer in the Icelandic countryside.

Sadly, summer is now coming to an end. There's really not much you can do about it, but you can download this track from grapevine.is, go to your room and play it over and over until you've stretched and squeezed every last drop out of it.

You can also head straight to www.mugison.is to buy the whole album, which just so happens to be coming out on the very same day that this paper hits the streets! If you're into it, you can wait for the clock to strike 16:00 and then buy tickets to his release concert on October 1 at Frikirkjan.



NATURAL HOT SPRING STEAMBATHS SOOTHING SAUNA RELAXING GEOTHERMAL BATHS

Only an hour by car from Reykjavík and a short distance from Thingvellir national park and world heritage site, nature has created unique surroundings for a new bathing experience – Laugarvatn FONTANA.

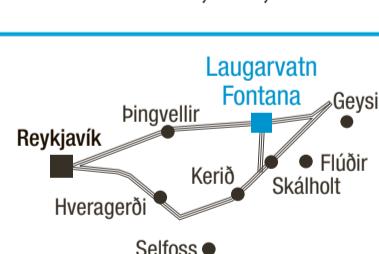
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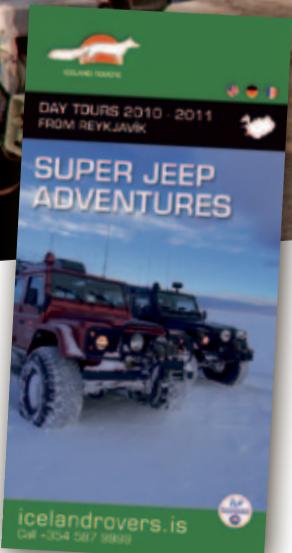
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Did you hear that? Write in and complain about something (in an admirable way), win a gourmet feast at one of Reykjavik's finest? **THIS IS THE DEAL OF THE CENTURY IS WHAT IT IS!**

What's in a 'lobster feast'? Well, one has to assume that it has lobster-a-plenty. Is there more? Probably, but still... Gourmet feast? Wow! **DON'T PANIC** if your letter wasn't picked **AWESOME LETTER**. There's always next month!

Now, if you're in the market for free goodies next month, write us some sort of letter. Give us your worst: letters@grapevine.is

MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Iceland Express for a Day

My mate Ari and I decided at 4:30am one Monday morning that instead of going for a night swim somewhere, we would jump on an Icebreaker fare to Gothenburg for 77GBP a pop. Now we really wanted to go to Oslo, so being a morning flight, due to land in Gothenburg around lunchtime, we figured there would be plenty of time to make our way to Oslo for the night. Not so...

We packed some cool clothes quickly, made our way to the airport, had a quick drink at the "leave your bottles here" section at the airport...including some damn fine VSOP Brandy that we offered around and skinned!

The flight was delayed due to a malfunctioning electrical generator so waited an extra hour to board the plane, and then we realised the plane actually landed in Oslo, before flying into Gothenburg, perfect we thought, it shouldn't be impossible to arrange that we leave the plane in Oslo instead, we would save a lot of our time, and

shouldn't be too much hassle for Icelandexpress.

It turned out 2 people who were supposed to leave the plane in Gothenburg, walked out in Oslo, which is what we asked to do when we realised the plane actually stopped in Oslo first. We were told this was not possible, and the luggage was packed for each destination separately, which seems logical.

So upon hearing the announcement that the plane was now delayed again and looking for 2 bags in the same place as ours would have been, asked if they could look for ours too, so we could get off! Logical one might think... Not IcelandExpress, I was met with "you have 30seconds to take your seat!" from an anxious unfriendly English pilot.

The only compensation I was offered from your attractive but weak and apologetic under pressure hostesses, was water, (which I had already) and a khaki Icewear outdoor jacket, clearly not mine, which I expressed, but it still made it's way to me via Swedish toll, given to them to give to me by a

cabin crew member name starting with H. What is going on?!

So let me know your thoughts!

Cheers Rob Lilley

Dear Rob,

Oh man! What is going on indeed? We aren't totally sure we understand your story 100%—your writing is pretty fancy—but what we are getting is that Iceland Express messed around with you and FUCKED SHIT UP! That sucks! All you were trying to do was to have a nice spur of the moment adventure to Norway via Sweden and then you got sent to Norway first but lost your bags and wouldn't let you off and... wait, what happened? Okay really, we're gonna need you to go eat a shitload of tapas, drink some yummy cava, calm the fuck down and tell us the story again. WE ARE CONFUSED! BON APPETIT!

"Most Icelanders Favor Land Sale"

I think it's a huge mistake. Why does Huang Nubo need so much land for just a hotel? Sounds suspicious to me. The Icelandic government needs to look past the monetary issue and focus on the environmental and what his plans may really be. There are too many questions and suspicions and it sounds like the company he is associated with cannot be trusted. That part of Iceland would make a perfect military installation for the Chinese.

Tread with caution Iceland!

Anonymous

Hey Anonymous,

We have noticed a lot of people (around here and from outside too) expressing concerns similar to yours and getting really nervous about the proposal. We agree wholeheartedly that it's important to ask questions and get as much information as possible where foreign investment is concerned, so we went ahead and put a set of comprehensive articles on Huang Nubo and his fancy eco-resort building plans in our last issue! Check out the great pieces by Marc Vincenz, Paul Fontaine and Egill Helgason in our last issue, with HAM on the cover) on this whole shebang and what it could entail. Cheers!

Licensing and registration of travel-related services

The Icelandic Tourist Board issues licences to tour operators and travel agents, as well as issuing registration to booking services and information centres.

Tour operators and travel agents are required to use a special logo approved by the Icelandic Tourist Board on all their advertisements and on their Internet website.

Booking services and information centres are entitled to use a Tourist Board logo on all their material. The logos below are recognised by the Icelandic Tourist Board.



List of licenced Tour Operators and Travel Agencies on:
visiticeland.com

However, I am not the type to (only) make fun of others mistakes. So I would like to mention something different in this brief letter and something I am more curious about: Why for God's sake are there so many rusty road building wrecks along the Icelandic roads? Since I've been here, every now and then I spotted one of those old construction vehicles at the side of the road. Why do they get stuck there? Will they be there for eternity? It doesn't seem they are still able to do some road maintenance, or do they? Is it maybe too expensive to dismantle them and to get finally rid of it? Are they the remnants of a past glory of a construction age?

It creates however a unique atmosphere between human activity and nature (see picture taken in the West Fjords). Which can less be said about the countless farms with a couple of rusty car wrecks near each other that horses and sheep now use as a windscreen. It is not only ugly, it is also a favourite place for those animals to take a shit! Any concerns or thoughts about the future of those wrecks? Please let me know!

Kind regards,

Dries De Vos (Belgium)

Dear Dries,

Anna is a bit busy right now so we'll just talk to you instead, but thanks for your letter! So, nice point about SAS and whatnot. The article was sort of trying to be fun. Rest assured, through our 'Nordic House' and whatnot, we try to keep a good connection with our Scandinavian brethren. We like to do that sometimes (only sometimes.) We hope you're right.

As for the old rusty construction vehicles, believe it or not some of those DO actually get used for real roadwork. A lot of them just stick around to help fix the roads in an emergency, like in the case of the glacial flooding during the Eyjafjallajökull eruption. It's kind of pointless to drive them all the way back to a town or depot until the roads get fucked up again when conditions can be so unpredictable. So yeah, they mostly do serve a purpose. Think of them as art installations!

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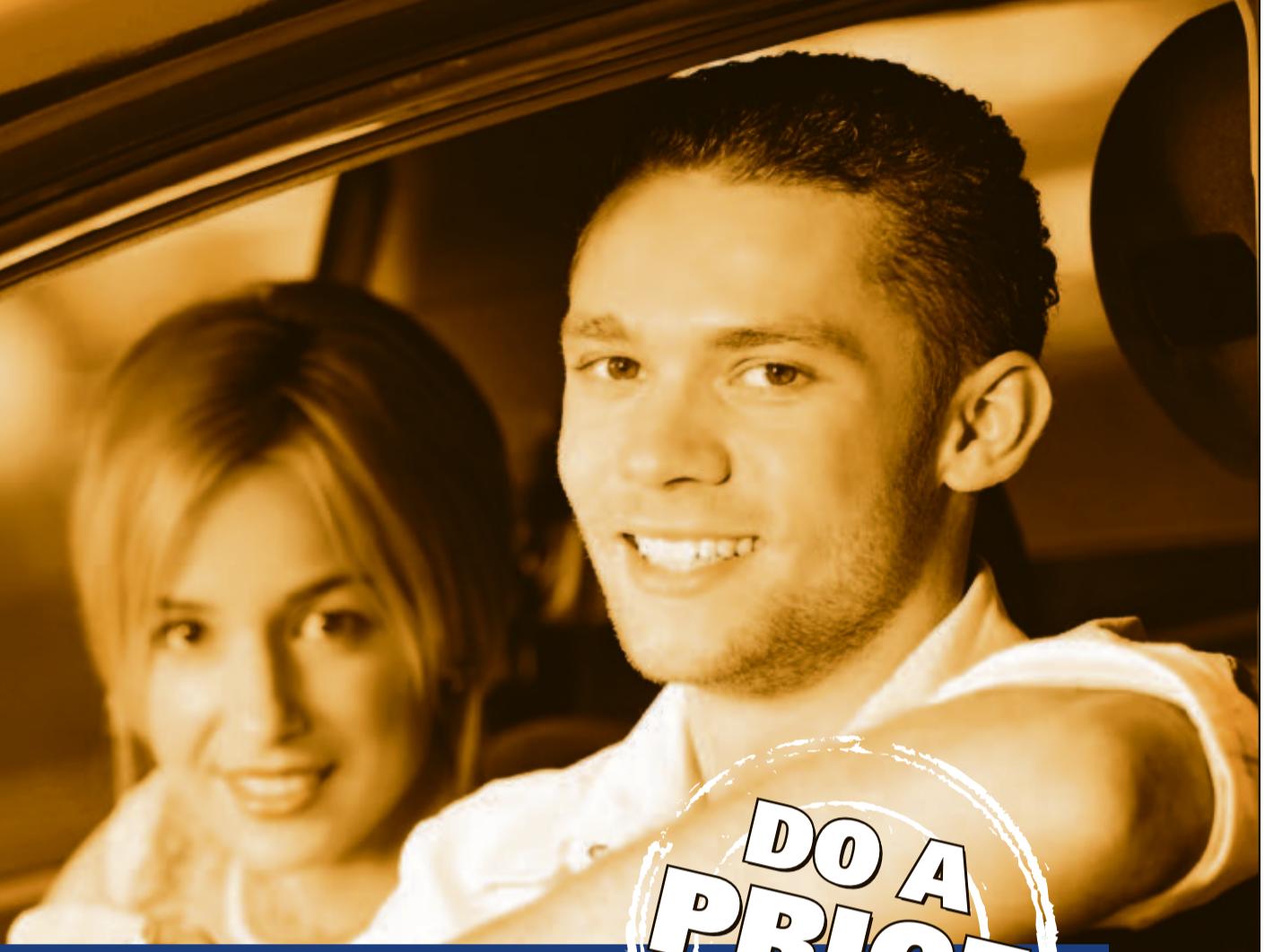
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So guess what! Someone finally wrote us an opinion piece about why they hate Jón Gnarr and why he sucks in their opinion! We thought it would be fun to run it instead of Jón Gnarr's regular 'WELCOME TO REYKJAVÍK' thing, seeing as he's on the cover and all.

Voting For A Better Party



Dear reader, welcome to Reykjavík, the only capital in the world that prides itself of a mayor/comedian. Jón Gnarr's (a)political platform, the so-called Best Party, that has an idealogy best described by its chairman as "anarcho-surrealism," won a majority in the 2010 municipal elections. However, recent polls reveal that 62% of Icelanders are not satisfied with Jón Gnarr's administration of Reykjavík. Jón reacted to the news by claiming that the polls rather suggest that 38% of Icelanders are happy with his work.

Jón Gnarr fails to realise that Reykjavík residents did not vote for him because they adhere to his ideas or lack thereof, but because they wanted to express their disdain and distrust for the traditional ruling class in the wake of the 2008 financial collapse. People

who felt left out by the establishment expected the Best Party to bring fresh ideas into Icelandic politics. Unfortunately for them, Jón Gnarr remains a comedian and has yet to become a mayor. A quick glance at the trailer of 'Gnarr,' a documentary retracing his municipal campaign, shows his lack of interest in mundane administration duties. By boasting his ignorance about political matters and making whimsical and cynical comments about issues that actually matter to the residents of Reykjavík, as illustrated in the Best Party's platform, Jón Gnarr shows his utter lack of respect for the people he is supposed to represent.

As a mayor, Jón Gnarr has often let his personal opinion get in the way of his official duties, as illustrated by his recent refusal to meet the admiral of the German navy, which had three ships

docked in Reykjavík harbour earlier this year, disregarding protocol duties incumbent to his position. Jón Gnarr gives off the impression that he is more interested in issues lying way beyond city limits, for example campaigning in favour of the liberation of political dissidents in China, stirring controversy around NATO's military transit over Iceland and looking for Moomin trolls in Finland.

As a public figure, Jón Gnarr should refrain from expressing his personal and facetious opinions, especially when they fly in the face of values shared by the civilised world (including Iceland). For example, in a recent interview, the mayor of Reykjavík expressed his doubts over the usefulness of compulsory education, suggesting that parents should be able to decide whether or not they want their children to at-

tend school. Jón Gnarr often presents himself as a good example of a person whose lack of formal education hasn't been an obstacle to a successful career, having made the conscious decision to abandon school at an early age and ultimately becoming the mayor of the capital of Iceland. Jón Gnarr conveniently ignores the fact that day-to-day city management tasks are in the hands of the city council, which consists of highly educated and skilled individuals who manage to run the city, despite of the mayor's lack of education rather than thanks to it.

In the meantime, that city council led by The Best Party has been implementing drastic budget cuts, raising taxes and imposing austerity measures with the same zealous fervour that would have been displayed by any of the established political parties so despised

by Jón Gnarr's one-man party. So much for "anarcho-surrealism." As a responsible citizen, Jón Gnarr shouldn't be campaigning to move his party any further towards parliamentary elections—an intent recently voiced by Best Party officials—but rather to step down in the best interest of the people he claims to represent.

It's ironic that the same people who have in recent years been demanding that their politicians be examples of responsibility would rather take part in a political joke taken too far and thus fail to vote responsibly. 🍀

Malcolm Kenneth Fraser
Julia Staples

Comic | Lóá Hjálmtýsdóttir



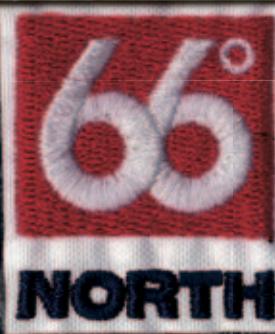
**Suðureyri in Súgandafjörður.
The birthplace of 66°NORTH and me.**



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Doing Time In Iceland

The island's prison system explored



Given that the comedian Doug Stanhope has a gig at Iceland's maximum-security prison (check page 30 for an interview) at the end of September, we figured we would give you the low down—or something short of that—on Iceland's prison system.

For starters, there are six facilities, which house an average of 137 convicts per day, according to data provided by the Prison Administration. That's a prison population of about 43 per 100,000 inhabitants, which is a fairly small number compared to the United States' whopping 756 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants. Most of them are there for drug-related charges, followed by embezzlement and forgery, violent crimes, sex offences, and traffic law violations.

Prisoners spend their days working, making for instance, tic tac toe games, benches, boxes, license plates and cement blocks (which are available for purchase at fangelsi, is), or attending school, which they can do in lieu of work. Prison and Probation Administration representative Hafðís Guðmundsdóttir says compensation varies significantly, but the average prisoner is making 28,000 ISK/month.

With this money they are expected to buy their own groceries and personal items. The iconic image of prisoners eating cafeteria-style meals together in a big dining hall is far from the reality in Iceland where prisoners cook their own meals, with the exception of Hegningarhúsið (on Skólavörðustígur in 101 Reykjavík), which lacks facilities.

FOUR STAR HOTELS

Though they're not as luxurious as Norway's Halden prison, which boasts a rock climbing gym, Iceland's prisons have a reputation for being rather comfortable. As Hosmany Ramos said after his famous one-minute escape last year, "I'm not in prison here. This is like a four star hotel. I've never seen anything like it." Granted, he was used to sharing a similar size cell with 30 to 40 prisoners in Brazil.

In Iceland, prisoners are given their own

cell and are permitted to bring with them items like a radio, a CD player and speakers, a flat screen TV up to 26" or a tube TV up to 21," a personal computer with a 23" flat screen, keyboard, printer, mouse and speakers, 150 CDs and DVDS with see-through cases, reading and writing material, and games. Furnished cells look very much like dorm rooms (though they are leagues above the rooms at UCLA, for instance, where nearly all freshman bunk up with at least one roommate in half the space).

After prisoners have fulfilled one third of their sentence, they can apply for leave from the prison as frequently as once per month to spend a day with family and friends or short-term leave to visit an ill relative, attend a funeral of a close relative, attend the birth, baptism or confirmation of his or her child, and "attend to particularly urgent personal interests."

While this did not allow MP Árni Johnson—who served two years at Kvíabryggja for buying linoleum (and other stuff) on the State's dime for personal use—to go sing and play guitar at the Þjóðhátt festival in Vestmannaeyjar, he didn't seem to have it too rough. During his time there, he reportedly made 40 large-scale rock sculptures, wrote five books on various topics, and as bloggers remarked, "changed the prison into a multiple star hotel" by getting The Red Cross to buy the inmates new beds, which he personally picked out. At the time, Fréttablaðið reported that the same beds were being used at KEA, Hótel Loftleidir, Hótel Saga and Hótel Ísland.

Soon after Árni was released, DV reported that he went on a vacation to the Caribbean with Kvíabryggja's Head Prison Chief Geirmundur Vilhjálmsdóttir, who is now ironically under investigation for embezzling prison funds to buy his personal groceries (among other things). Purchases rang up for 3,5 million ISK in the first ten months of 2010 compared to 1,4 million in 2009, and included "luxury" items like "chicken fillets, rainbow trout, candy and soda," which "aren't served in the prisons," according to the story that appeared in Fréttablaðið.

Shortly after Geirmundur was put on

leave in November 2010 (and given half pay), Fréttablaðið reported that officials found motorbikes, a four-wheeler and a few cars at Kvíabryggja, which also did not belong at the prison, explaining the prison's purchases of spare car parts including 79 light bulbs, car enamel, and fuel for 750,000 ISK.

Of course, as a low-security facility, Kvíabryggja grants prisoners more freedom than the other prisons and so it is generally reserved for the trustworthiest of convicts. Interestingly, it came to light that prisoners there are allowed free use of their cell phones between 8:00 and 23:00 when an accused rapist allegedly phoned his victim, according to an mbl.is story, "Murderer and rapist serving time at Kvíabryggja" (right...).

SORRY, NO VACANCY

Not that people are vying for a nice room at Iceland's "luxurious" prisons, Hafðís says there are 350 convicted criminals waiting to serve their term on any given day. Typically she says the convicted have to wait from one day to four to five years to begin serving their time.

This problem of overcrowding is by no means new news. Plans to build a prison in the capital city have been in the works for nearly fifty years and police in downtown Reykjavík have been waiting for a new temporary detention centre for the last fourteen years, according to a RÚV report.

Because Hegningarhúsið, the temporary detention centre at Skólavörðustígur, only has room for sixteen, police have to send prisoners long distances. A police report from the year 2000 estimated that the city spent at least an additional 10 to 15 million ISK per year on transporting prisoners between the city and Lítla Hraun, which is located 61 kilometres outside of Reykjavík.

Now there are serious plans to build a new prison at Hólmshetið with room for an additional 56 prisoners (we've heard that before), but the project is tied up because government officials cannot agree on whether the project should be financed by the State or a private party.

So Doug Stanhope's fans should be advised that if they commit a crime to get into his show at Lítla Hraun—claiming the 'Stanhope defence'—there's a good chance that they will still miss it by four or five years. While Lítla Hraun's prisoners and a few lucky visitors enjoy his gig, the rest of us law abiding citizens who pay rent in town will just have to catch Doug elsewhere. ☺

BY ANNA ANDERSEN
PHOTO BY RÓBERT REYNISSON

The author is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, University of Iceland

Save Ourselves!

On Noam Chomsky's visit to Iceland



When Noam Chomsky appeared on the stage in one of Iceland's biggest auditoriums on Friday September 9, one could clearly discern cries of joy and excitement through the thundering applause. The guest of honour himself, however, looked unaffected and started his lecture without ado, as soon as the Head of the School of Humanities had introduced him—it would probably be pushing it a little to say that he started in mid-sentence, but still the impression was a little bit like witnessing an old rock band, still very much on top of its act but slightly 'over the hill' all the same, sliding into one of its best-known anthems, not quite for the first time. 'The Two Nine Elevens' was the title of his talk, and Chomsky wasted no time explaining its meaning to his public: not just September 11, 2001, which reportedly is the day that changed the course of history, but also September 11, 1973 which, according to the speaker, should be considered a much more important date.

In keeping with the title, the lecture was largely dedicated to a critique of US foreign policy, with special emphasis on Latin America and the assassination of Osama bin Laden. We will not plunge into the details of Chomsky's presentation here, not least because that seems totally futile in the age of all-encompassing communication: readers can listen for themselves on the University of Iceland's website, or read the lecture, more or less verbatim, at Al Jazeera or on the webzine TomDispatch. During the talk, Chomsky mentioned in passing that the lecture's organisers had specifically asked him to address 9/11 on this occasion, and even if that choice of topic was of course quite appropriate in light of the fact that the lecture took place only two days before the 10th anniversary of 9/11, the current writer cannot help wondering whether it hadn't been nice to have the 'old seer' turn his eyes a little bit more TOWARD THE FUTURE, instead of playing that somewhat familiar tune yet again.

Not to mention that it would have been much appreciated if Chomsky had spoken a little longer than he did—perhaps giving the audience (at least those of them that made it into the auditorium and didn't have to content themselves with watching the show on a screen in the building's smaller auditoriums)

a chance to throw in a few questions or comments. To witness a social critic of Chomsky's calibre leave the podium after barely half an hour's performance, going directly to his seat, and having to swallow the notion of 'that's all, folks,' left a somewhat bitter taste in one's mouth.

Some consolation was provided by the anticipation of an interview with Chomsky in the popular Sunday talk-show Sílfur Egils, mentioned by the Head of the School of Humanities in his closing words. And one can safely say that in that interview, the world-famous social critic abruptly silenced the voice of dismay that had been grumbling in the present writer's head for nearly two days. Not only did he turn his merciless gaze on the role played by "us Icelanders" in that total collapse of financial capitalism that seems to be taking place before our eyes—could one discern a slightly ironic grimace in his otherwise unchanging face when he spoke of the "totally mad policy" that had been upheld in this country in the period before (and maybe also after?) The Crash? He also turned his attention towards what is to come and offered some reflection on the renewed surge of rabid eschatologists within his nation's Republican Party: there we behold a group of people, led by Governor Rick Perry, who really believe that Christ's return to Earth is imminent and that consequently—to take but one example—it is utterly futile to combat such threats as global warming. Furthermore, Chomsky addressed the commonplace hypothesis about China's unstoppable rise in global politics, subjecting it to scathing criticism—China being at best a crumbling giant, seized by internal strife.

Apart from this, of course, he said many other things that won't be detailed here. But, to finish, let us ask, in the giant's wake: what was Chomsky's message to us? Or, rather, how can we put his advice into practice? Three points:

(1) We need to tackle the urgent environmental problems facing us.

(2) We need to harness—and, most preferably, get rid of!—financial capitalism, Iceland's (and the world's) new ancient enemy.

(3) We need to sever the unholy alliance of finance and politics, making politics descend from its pedestal down to its rightful place among the people.

We didn't really need Chomsky to tell us this, but having him on our side certainly doesn't hurt. ☺

BY BJÖRN ÞORSTEINSSON

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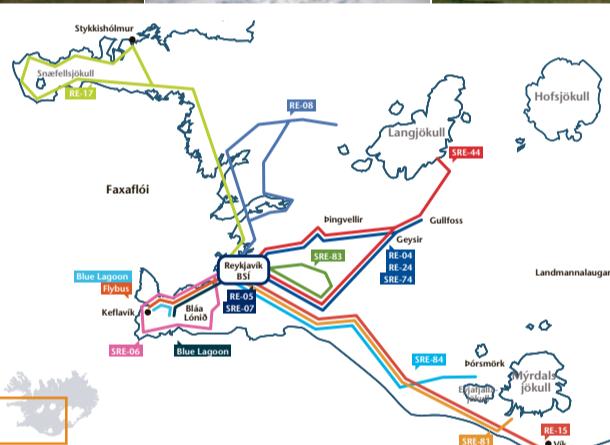
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Re-Imagining Money And Banking

Dr. Margrit Kennedy has some ideas...



For the last three decades, Dr. Margrit Kennedy has been advocating for a transformation of the world money system, for the introduction of complementary currencies and interest and inflation-free money. She proposes a sustainable money system, unlike the current system, which she argues is unsustainable because it builds expectations for exponential "cancer-like" growth into the economy, leading to constant ups and downs, and eventually to a complete collapse.

Dr. Kennedy, a professor of ecological building technologies at the University of Hanover, is an architect by training, with a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning and a Ph.D in Public and International Affairs. However, she is probably better known for her activism and advocacy for the need to transform the global economy. Her best known book, 'Interest And Inflation-Free Money,' which was first published in 1987 and has been translated into more than twenty languages, details her ideas of how to create a currency that works for everybody, not just the rich, while also protecting the Earth.

INSPIRED BY ICESAVE

Dr. Kennedy decided to come to Iceland because she felt something special had happened—the stirrings of important

Words

Magnús Sveinn Helgason

Photo

Hvalreki

change—that gave her hope because, as she argues, small countries can affect change more easily than large countries. "I get invitations to speak all the time, and I regularly turn down invitations, but I had this feeling that here is a country where people are ready for something new. So, I wanted to come to Iceland and see for myself if people have understood the danger of the money system, and to talk to people. I wanted to talk to people and bring these ideas into the public debate."

What she found especially inspiring was the two-time rejection by the Icelandic public of the Icesave deal: "That was brilliant and inspiring," she says. Generally, foreign activists view the Icelandic action as one of defiance, a message to the global financial system that the public does not want to pay for the reckless behaviour of bankers. Dr. Kennedy argues that the international community would be receptive if Iceland were to travel down this road: "People all over the world would be relieved!"

Judging by the reception Dr. Kennedy got at her lecture at Háskólabíó, there is considerable interest in Iceland in rejecting the current money system. The lecture hall originally scheduled for her event turned out to be too small, so she was moved into a second, larger auditorium. Clearly her ideas are finding a receptive audience in Iceland.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE SYSTEM?

Dr. Kennedy explains that it is the money system, based on interest and compound interest, as she puts it, that is the core problem with the current economic system by making actual production

"a side issue" and the real economy "a side issue to a global gambling casino." Her key insight, really, is that the current system fails to serve people: "The major goal of the current money system is to make more money out of money," she says. "Other goals—social, cultural and ecological—have a difficult time making money, so we need to create other money systems for those goals, because they would enrich our lives."

The constant demand for growth, in her view, is a consequence of the need to pay interest. These interest payments also influence all investment decisions, creating a need to cover both the interest payments and a reasonable return on investments. "And on top of everything else, it only serves ten percent of the population!" she says, pointing out that around 90% of all interest payments are accrued by the wealthiest ten percent of society, which make interest payments a very efficient tool of income transfer and exploitation.

"But we can work against this by introducing complementary currencies which will make the whole system more stable," she says, "a system that serves us, money that serves us, rather than a system that we serve."

COMPLIMENTARY CURRENCIES

There are essentially two elements to Kennedy's ideas of social change. Firstly, she advocates credit cooperatives, in which people themselves can control and decide what they invest in. She argues for transparent banking, noting that "it is absurd that the banks know everything about us, but we don't know anything about them."

The second part of her argument is

more original—the creation of complimentary currencies, which are either regional or sectoral. They are called complimentary systems because they are intended to operate alongside the existing system. "This is an evolution-

plimentary currency systems in operation today. She takes the Japanese 'Furei kippu', or "care ticket" system as an example. The basic unit of account in this system is an hour of service to an elderly person. Young people earn these hours

"She argues for transparent banking, noting that 'it is absurd that the banks know everything about us, but we don't know anything about them.'

ary idea," she explains. "I am not interested in a social revolution. I believe in evolution. I am not out to abolish money! Money is an important invention. What I want to do is to make it serve us, not the other way around. These systems will only grow to the extent they are useful. Unlike the present system which grows to the extent it is not useful."

Aside from the main point, that complimentary money systems could avoid the built in inflationary pressures and the demand for interest payments, her argument for complimentary currencies is essentially threefold. First, this kind of system would be more stable than the current system: "Rather than having one monetary system, we should have a multitude. An analogy would be a monoculture forest, which if infested by a beetle, causes the whole forest to collapse, whereas a polyculture forest contains many systems, and it is not as serious if one of them breaks down, because we will still have others."

A second is that they counteract or restrict globalisation. Kennedy argues there are some advantages to globalisation, but at the same time there are big disadvantages, especially when it comes to the globalisation of the world financial system, which has taken on a life of its own. But even when it comes to trade, Dr Kennedy believes finding ways to strengthen local trade at the expense of global trade would be a good thing. "All the things you need to survive—food, water and essential services like waste disposal—all of these things are best organised on a smaller and more local scale. Here we can use specific currencies, like the regional currencies. Strengthening local, regional economies is also consistent with a desire for smaller units, which would benefit greatly from complimentary currencies."

The third argument is that they can help fund sectors including educational, health and ecological projects, that have a difficult time getting funding in the current system due to its demands for growth.

Dr. Kennedy points out that this is no pipe dream: There are numerous com-

by spending time with elderly people, helping them at home, going to get the groceries or simply providing them company. The young people can then keep these credits and redeem them when they themselves get old, or they can send them to their elderly relatives who live in a different part of the country. Obviously this system is free from inflation: An hour is an hour now or twenty years from now, and there is no way to pay interest on an hour of care.

ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

The key issue for Dr. Kennedy is that we need to become aware that these things are in fact possible, that we can reject the current money system. "It is not something we cannot influence, it is something we have created and we can change," she says. "If people understand there is an alternative, they would choose it."

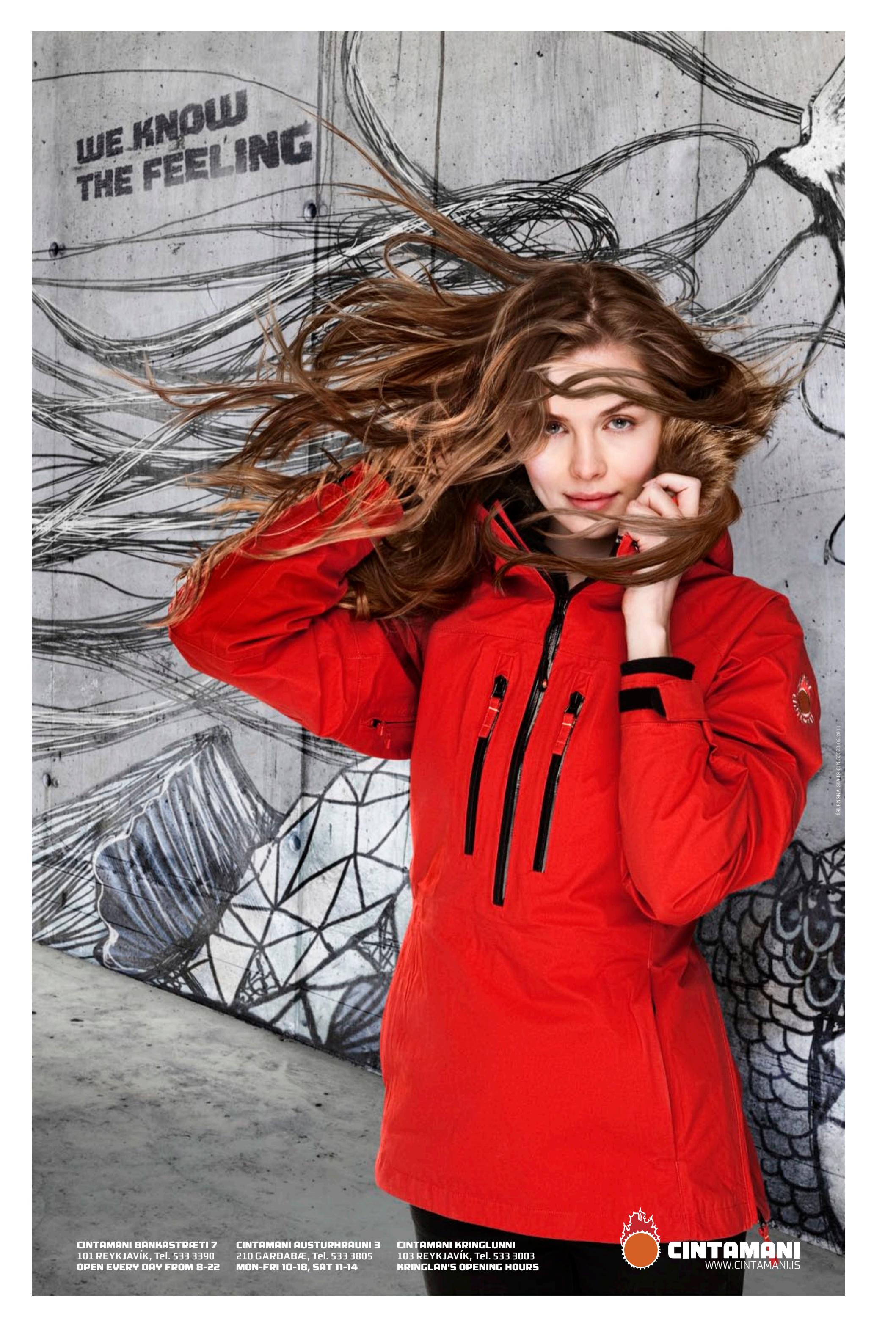
The problem, she argues, is that those who are in the best position to change the system also have the greatest interest in not changing it. "Even if the few rich know the system cannot continue forever, they also have the greatest interest in not changing it."

Despite this, there is a lot we, who do not sit at the apex of financial power, can do: "People can become aware that they have influence, that how they use their money matters, for example whether they support big or small businesses, the globalised economy or the local, regional economy. People can join groups that aim at changing, and criticising the system. For example Attac, which fights financial globalisation. The 'Tobin tax', a financial transaction tax they have championed, is a very good idea—it has been calculated that this tax would eliminate poverty in Germany altogether."

And affecting change is definitely possible in her view. "We need maybe 10% of the general population to understand that there is an alternative. Sociologists have found that if you reach 10% of the population and convince them to change things, then something will change. Not everyone needs to understand! So, this is the good news." ☺

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It's All in the Algae

How Icelanders eat, part five



WHAT IS 'MEAT SOUP'?

Mývatn: We're sitting in what was once a cowshed overlooking clear blue skies and a rippling lake, eating one of the best kjötsúpa I've had in aeons. Waterfowl gently soak in the flickering sun's rays, singular clouds hover over peaked islets. We seem to have more oxygen in our lungs here, we feel light-headed. My friend Gísli tells me that there are more species of duck here than anywhere else on earth.

In this beautifully renovated cowshed-come-bistro, unlike the kjötsúpa being touted in other tourist restaurants all along Iceland's ring road, this one actually contains some serious hunks of lamb meat. It sticks between your teeth. And so it should, since a bowl here costs well over 1.500 krónur—even if it comes with home-baked rúgbrauð (traditional Icelandic rye bread) and a view to die for.

Words

Marc Vincenz

Illustration

Lóá Hjálmtýsdóttir

Yet, as I'm spooning this delight, a thought enters my head: Why the hell do they call it kjötsúpa?

Any Icelander knows that kjötsúpa is bite-sized chunks of lamb meat (probably shoulder), onion, potatoes, carrots, swede, perhaps cabbage, oats or barley—or, possibly as my mother-in-law makes it, with a handful of brown rice and couple of cloves of garlic. In essence kjötsúpa is very similar to Irish stew: a wholesome, warm protein-filled meal conducive to keeping farmers warm during blustery winds, but not a 'meat soup,' which is the literal translation into English.

All over the island, at tourist restaurants, roadside cafes, kjötsúpa hovers somewhere on the menu. You'll find it served in delicate Rosenthal gold-edged bowls or in cheap polystyrene cups. It's almost as common as the Icelandic pylsur (hot dog). And rightly so: it's relatively easy to make, filling, generally tasty, and authentic Icelandic fare. Yet,

"Any Icelander knows that kjötsúpa is bite-sized chunks of lamb meat (probably shoulder), onion, potatoes, carrots, swede, perhaps cabbage, oats or barley—or, possibly as my mother-in-law makes it, with a handful of brown rice and couple of cloves of garlic."

more often than not Icelandic restaurateurs are chalking it on their blackboards as 'Icelandic meat soup'—I mean, think about it? Is a tourist going to consider that appetising?

'Meat soup' sounds like something out of a can, sounds like something you might serve prison inmates. Campbell's isn't even in it.

Why not call it 'Lamb and Rutabaga Stew with Wild Icelandic Herbs?' throw in a sprig of Arctic thyme and a few juniper berries, offer it with a dollop of sour cream; or—for those on a higher budget—a dash of sweet sherry; a couple of cheesy crostinis on the side would certainly not go awry. Suggest the customer in question wash the whole thing down with fabulous Einstök Icelandic Toasted Porter ale. Now you're bloody talking.

The view from here, of course, speaks for itself. No wonder those cows are looking so damn happy.

WHAT MAKES MÝVATN SMOKED TROUT SO DELICIOUS?

Gísli swears it's the midges—tanytarsus gracilis—or, in actual fact, the planktonic blue-green algae that the midge larvae swelling at the bottom of the lake find irresistible.

Talking about literal translations, Mývatn, means 'midge lake' and the fact of the matter is that some years, in July and August, the skies are black with the swarming bugs. In your wildest dreams you wouldn't consider a walk around the lake without a midge head net firmly tucked into your collar. Imagine how the poor cows feel about it. At times the midges are so numerous they can even make breathing difficult. And

forget painting a house near Mývatn in Summer. As Gísli found out, you might as well have your paint premixed with midges.

And in a cycle of life turn of events, the larvae and the midges are a huge draw for the vast array of waterfowl that come here across continents and oceans and for the trout, the Arctic char

dung. Everyone in Iceland knows the best smoked fish is dung-smoked."

DUNG-SMOKING FOR BEGINNERS

In other treeless places like Tibet, dung is used for burning, and apparently burns longer and better than wood. One might imagine that yak meat strung up in the traditional Tibetan yurt also takes on a dung-smoked flavour. One thing I can attest to, however, is that Tibetan food tastes like crap. And either way you look at it, faecal matter is faecal matter—shit is shit. So why in hell does it make fish taste so damn good?

"The dried dung is collected from the sheep pen together with some straw," says Gísli, as he leads me to the farmers smoking shed, a turf shack made the old-fashioned way with stones and peat. "Before smoking, the farmer lightly salts the fish for a day or two. No other spices are added. The fire has to be kept low to achieve the most smoke," he says. And why dung as opposed to wood? Well for one, it's cheap—at least it used to be. But then there's another reason. Sheep dung gives off an incredible amount of smoke so you don't need that much of it.

I can only bear to stand in here for a minute. Tears, not of joy, but of mild 'excremental' pain stream down my cheeks. And as I'm standing there in a dung-daze wondering why the trout tastes that much better when it's dung-smoked, it comes to me: the herbs. Smoking with dung is a cheap and efficient way to get all those wild Icelandic herbs those free-roaming sheep have been eating all those months infused into the fish.

Our scientists tell us that in the scheme of our galaxy, our little blue planet lies in the small band which is the habitable zone; not too far and not too near our sun, just right to create the conditions for life. In the same fashion, the unique ecology of Mývatn holds the ideal conditions for the best smoked trout.

In the end, I would agree with Gísli. It all begins with the algae. Isn't that how everything started? ☺

Next time: I find out why tomatoes love Icelandic volcanoes.



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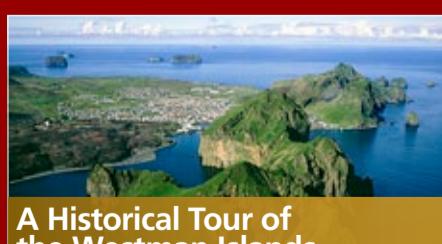
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WHAT DID YOU VOTE FOR, REYKJAVÍK?

Grapevine attempts to find out...

Words Haukur S. Magnússon

Photography Ari Magg

Here is the introduction to our last feature interview with Jón Gnarr, which ran in May of 2010:

"Here at the Grapevine, we are all big fans of Jón Gnarr and his comedic stylings. We were amused when we learned he was putting together a 'parody party' for the upcoming municipal elections, and we enjoyed a lot of his initial media appearances in promotion of it. We were furthermore delighted to learn that some of the people running with him are artists that we know and like, and who's work we've appreciated throughout the years. It's called Besti flokkurinn ("The Best Party"). It was all in good fun."

Then the polls started coming in, and we learned that it was even conceivable that a joke party would win the elections, taking in as many as six city council chairs out of fifteen. A party without platform or policy; a celebrity-lead, vague minded collection of folks whose intentions were totally unclear was going to win Reykjavík's majority vote. All of the sudden it seemed kind of scary. "What if they win?" we asked ourselves. Will they privatise the city's welfare system and sell our power plants to Monty Burns? Will they reinstate the draft? How are we supposed to know?"

Yep, that's what we wrote. And then they did win, mostly. And Jón Gnarr became Mayor of Reykjavík. And as we wrote: no one knew what to expect. As of yet, the city's welfare system hasn't been privatised, and Reykjavík Energy has not been sold to Monty Burns. But lots of other things have happened. And we are still sort of unsure what to make of it all. So we called him up, again, and arranged for another interview with the aim of figuring out what he and his party have been doing, and why. Read on for a transcript of two conversations that took place in early August and early September.

We first meet two weeks before his summer vacation ends. Jón seems relaxed and at ease after a good leave. We talk a little about the upcoming winter, how he has been adapting to the role of mayor and any troubles he and the rest of The Best Party might have had adjusting to their new posts.

...getting used to this [being Mayor] was kind of hard to begin with, but I doubt it'll get worse from here on. I think we're through acquainting ourselves with most of the mess that comes with the territory. People are of course a little nervous to return to work, or at least I am, but I'll get over it.

The whole crew has had to adjust, huh?
Well, yeah, it's really weird. Just look at Elsa Yeoman. She used to be a chef, now she's president of the Reykjavík City Council. This wasn't planned. Like Kalli [Karl Sigurðsson] from Baggalútur—now he has to make policy on waste management. It's a different life for everyone, and it has taken some getting used to. But I think we're finally done with it.

MR. GARBAGE GUY

Speaking of waste management, you had some controversy surrounding the topic last year, when the city instated a new trash removal plan.

Yes, there was some disapproval. I was reminded of this a while ago while I was visiting some friends in The Netherlands. I was telling what an issue our changes with garbage pickup had been, how angry people had been that they would possibly have to bring their trash to the curb—and they just started laughing. "How is it in Reykjavík? How has it been until now?" they asked. And I told them of our current arrangement, and they just laughed harder. "What, Mr. Garbage Guy comes into your front yard to get your garbage, like a reverse Santa Claus? Or a Postman Pat?"

They thought it was surreal. And it sort of is. And the thing is, waste management is really, really expensive. We could save a whole lot of money if we got everyone to curb their trashcans, and if everyone started sorting and recycling. I feel it's important that we take a closer look at how we are going about our daily business, in terms of

the environment, and start to take a greater responsibility for ourselves. For example, the way some people behave when they are downtown drinking, breaking their beer glasses or just breaking random stuff for no reason. That sort of behaviour is so useless and expensive; why people insist on behaving like that to the detriment of their community is beyond me.

Does this mean you'll go further with altering Reykjavík's waste management system?

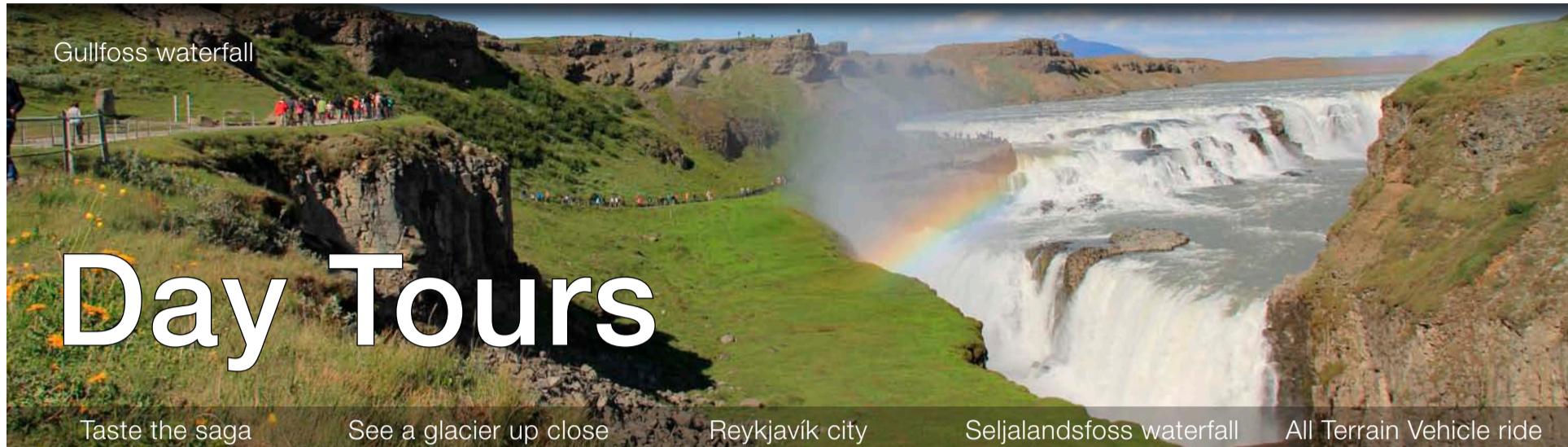
Yes. I would like to install containers in every neighbourhood, units for plastics and glass and maybe plastics, as in every civilised country. Ideally, everyone should be able to take their nondegradables out to a neighbourhood corner for recycling, and then we should have a two or three bin system and so on and so forth. Eventually we would like to have all organic waste collected and turned into biofuel and soil. All of these are ideas that we like and are interested in implementing. However, any change in Reykjavík's current waste management system is easier said than done, partly because ownership of Sorpa [the local waste



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management] is shared by our neighbouring towns. It's enough for one person on the board to oppose such changes, that would halt them. Just the same as with the bus system. This is a lesson I keep learning: just because you want to change something within this system doesn't mean you can. There are a lot of barriers to cross.

Did you feel people were generally against the changes you made with the trash pickup?

No. Well yeah. Well, it's fabricated. Fabricated hysteria. Like a lot of last year's outcries and scandals have been. But there is a lot to it. Like when we were combining elementary level schools last year. There was so much anger, and there were certain powers that propagated that anger and distrust, and actively fanned its flames. I went to meetings with people that were screaming and shouting, people were... seriously upset and disturbed for often very unclear reasons.

BEING MAYOR IS LIKE BEING SANTA CLAUS

You've now been Mayor of Reykjavík for over a year. The last time we spoke you were trying to settle in and figure out what it was you were supposed to be doing. Can you now tell us what it is your job involves? What does being Mayor of Reykjavík entail and what does it mean?

Looking to the mayor for answers is a little bit like believing in Santa Claus. As Santa Claus you can exert some good influence and try to steer things in the right direction, encouraging people, spreading joy and making something magical... but how you perform as Santa Claus depends a lot on how people see you and whether they have faith in you.

Being Santa Claus does not grant you the power to do all of the good things you would like. It's far easier to use your Santa

live. And there are a lot of them planted in Reykjavík, and they are ruining our sidewalks and our plumbing and infrastructure. And they breed like crazy. Growing these kinds of trees in downtown Reykjavík is a great mistake that we need to reverse as soon as possible. I have been trying to make that happen ever since I took my post working within the system, and very little has happened. In the end I took it up with City Council, which discussed the issue in a meeting before proposing a resolution.

I am happy to say that the poplar will be replaced in downtown Reykjavík, and the trouble I had to go through to exert my influence in this way is a fine example of what my 'powers' really entail.

"IF I COULD RULE REYKJAVÍK FOR A DAY..."

If you did have absolute power for a day, and if using those powers conformed to your convictions, what would you do?

If I could rule Reykjavík for a day [laughs], I would move the District Court from Lækjartorg and replace it with a nice store or something. I would close the jail on Skólavörðustígur and turn it into a cosy restaurant—imagine, one of our oldest and most historic houses is being used as a jail in the centre of our capital!

I have actually tried to bring this up with every minister that I have met with; moving the jail and the courthouse, as this is not decided on the municipal level. They don't seem interested. Maybe I could promise them to quit politics and return to comedy? That might work...

THE GUY MENTALITY

A common theme through this conversation has been that your role as mayor is a symbolic one... is that correct?

It depends a little on what you mean. No I am not necessarily saying that I or we as a

built a society where women ruled everything. It might not work out for the long run, I think in the end we'll always need to strive for balance, but it could prove an important lesson.

PART II

We meet again a few weeks later. Jón has been back in charge for a while now, and seems unfazed by it all. He starts off by discussing his party's rumoured running in the 2013 parliamentary elections...

...it does look like a new political entity is being created, a liberal centrist party—we're teaming up with Guðmundur Steinþrímsson [formerly of The Progressive Party and The Social Democratic Coalition]—it hasn't become public yet, but it'll be public today or tomorrow. I could not have foreseen that. It's mostly Heiða's doing [Heiða Helgadóttir is The Best Party's manager]. She's the main plotter. She is The Young People, they are the future. I am the past, so I won't interfere.

Another fun thing that happened is that I had a very interesting meeting with Noam Chomsky. He came by for breakfast and stopped for an hour and a half—way longer than we had planned for. It was great, meeting someone inspiring like that. I would like to have another meeting with him where we could discuss how to organise anarchism for the public good. We did discuss anarchism a bit, and the messed up state of politics. He left me with some important thoughts.

I think there's something in there... there's something about the alienating nature of politics. This system, it's become so... so false. We vote for representatives that then go and represent us in some sort of higher plane, and as soon as they do that, we lose all connection with them, it becomes impossible for them to have a personal relationship with us all. I attempted to change that by becoming active on Face-



A mayor that is maybe mentally ill or an alcoholic, he can make lots of bad decisions on behalf of the city. He could sign all sorts of legally binding contracts that wind up costing the people of Reykjavík a lot of money, for instance, without even consulting City Council.

This has certainly happened in the past.

Claus powers for evil [laughs].

Municipal government is very different from governing on the national scale. It is a polycratic authority; the real leader of Reykjavík is the City Council, which consists of many people. The Mayor is more of a personification of the City Council, he or she explains and espouses its views and decisions, and tries to influence it in a positive way.

So you can encourage City Council to go certain ways, but you cannot randomly decide to, say, close Laugavegur for traffic this coming Monday?

No, I don't really have that kind of power. Unless I were interested in doing bad things. A mayor that is maybe mentally ill or an alcoholic, he can make lots of bad decisions on behalf of the city. He could sign all sorts of legally binding contracts that wind up costing the people of Reykjavík a lot of money, for instance, without even consulting City Council. This has certainly happened in the past.

As I said, Reykjavík's Municipal Government is a polycratic authority. My powers or 'power' are greatly overestimated. And there is another factor; it doesn't really fit in with my conviction, this idea of a singular, powerful ruler. That any one person can make serious decisions about issues that affect a lot of people. There are of course a lot of changes I have wished for in my new position, changes that I know would greatly benefit society if they were implemented. But it's not so simple that me wanting something would be enough to make it happen.

To name a concrete, if minor, example: The poplar trees in downtown Reykjavík. I am a gardening enthusiast, and I know for a fact that aspen are not very suitable for vastly populated downtown areas, and they are banned in many places. Those trees are very fast-growing, and they have a very vast and extensive system of roots that reach wherever they can for nourishment and water and other stuff that trees need to

party cannot do anything that matters. We have been able to bring about some very positive change. We have taken steps to ensure that Reykjavík will finally have a city centre, a real city centre. I believe that is important, and I believe most people would agree with me. So we can nudge things in the right direction in various ways, but we cannot achieve any grandiose and revolutionary change like some people seem to be expecting.

Another thing I am actively trying to do, which I believe is very positive and which I am proud of, is placing a conscious emphasis on hiring women for management and upper level positions within the city. When we are appointing people to boards and committees for instance.

This is very important to me, because I believe that a large reason for a lot of today's problems is men. This guy mentality, important guys with their bow ties and cellphones and pickup trucks and whatnot.

I believe a healthy society must build equally on the forces of men and women; it must be based equally on masculine and feminine values. When I look at the world today and observe how male oriented it is, all the world's problems... It's sad. Our culture is just insanely male dominated and oriented, and we as a party wish to confront and change that.

And this is something we are trying to alter slowly, by taking the abovementioned steps, and also by making the demand that those organisations that accept financial support from The City of Reykjavík follow the city's human rights charter, which among other things states that you need to have gender balanced councils and committees. We are not comfortable with providing grants to associations and clubs unless they have an even gender balance in their boards. And when we started looking into it, I was surprised. It's usually something like one woman for every twelve men on board. That's just not good enough.

I think a lot of the world's problems would automatically fix themselves if we

book, with 'Diary of a Mayor' and all that. But it just didn't work. For several reasons I don't really want to go into...

In any case, we are voting for representatives that we then have no access to. I would like to see some sort of system, at least at the municipal level, where politics vanishes from the equation. Abandoning the political system would be a great relief for municipal governance. It would be a great relief if we could settle on a system that involved voting for individual candidates that aren't members of organised clubs running as a whole. The system would be structured so that only individuals could run for office, and everyone had an equal chance.

POLITICS = DAMAGE

What would be gained by such a system?

The elimination of political cliques from municipal governance would immediately be a great relief and a great blessing for all people, because running a municipality has very little to do with politics. Very little. Politics are important on the nationwide scale, and on an international scale, but in terms of running a city they are extremely insignificant. Maybe not entirely insignificant nonetheless.

When I observe communication within the city structure and between municipalities and such, I feel very strongly that politics are doing a lot of damage. I think for instance that if there were no politics involved, we would have long since combined the Reykjavík area municipalities, with great benefits for the inhabitants. It would reduce costs and overhead structures. But doing that is a politically sensitive thing, and the only real reason we haven't done it that I can imagine is because political entities—who want to hold on to their powers and are dependent on the whole party structure and apparatus—oppose it.

There is a certain feudal system in operation in Iceland; there are so many chief-

tains around. And by sweeping all these local chieftains aside—we wouldn't even need to sweep them aside, we could just sort of ask them to leave—we could make everything so much easier.

I think our form of government in the future will involve more direct democracy as a result of more local governance, in the form of neighbourhood councils and such, and then direct democracy through the internet, where we could vote and make decisions online. Without the interference of political parties, with a strict focus on doing 'what makes sense.'

Does it make sense to unite Reykjavík and Kópavogur into one municipality? Of course! It would save hundreds of millions of krónur. I think everyone agrees that it would make sense, aside from maybe politicians—and possibly officials—that are afraid of losing their jobs or powers. And by not involving political parties or politicians in the process, we would be rid of all the political jargon.

I think this is really, really important.

MACHIAVELLIANISM AND BULLYING

This opinion, you talked a lot about it before you were voted, you spoke a lot about problems with the system, the 'rotten system that needed shaking' and especially language and jargon that needed cleansing—has this view been strengthened by your year as mayor, and lead you further towards these conclusions?

Yes, it has strengthened my belief that this is something that needs to be done and is a big problem. Right now, we are taking political culture in the wrong direction and emphasising the wrong things, things that simply do not apply any more. This Machiavellian mode of thinking; it doesn't work anymore. It's not called for, and I think people do not like it. That's the whole thing. Right now, we have a consensus to oppose school bullying. We want programmes that counter bullying and that kids be left alone in their schools. And in that same spirit, Machiavellianism is done for, but politics haven't figured that out; people engaging in politics haven't reached that conclusion.



and not enough time on confronting real issues?

Yes. I think this is the saddest thing of all. The ratio between energy and time we spend on political carping and trivialities versus actual practical issues is sinfully great. The ratio should be twenty percent politics, but is actually eighty percent. And I think that is the biggest waste.

Could you name any examples?

It's hard to put a finger on it or name specific examples because they can always be contested and argued about. And by doing that you have begun participating in the game that they try to drag you into as soon as you enter the realm of governance. If you participate in that political game, you have become part of it and then you cannot cast judgement because you are participating, you are making allegations.

It is therefore very important for me to keep clear of any allegations or mudslinging. To not honour it with my attention if I can help it, and certainly to not engage in it myself. But to say this and then let people judge for themselves how politics are being

engaged in.

As for concrete examples, I would name Reykjavík Energy. I think political interests and the preservation of those made it so that everyone involved was afraid to do something about Reykjavík Energy, and to address the increasingly concerning situation that was building up there for a long, long time. And these are people from every party I am talking about; every political party was involved in what happened to Reykjavík Energy and how its present situation came to be. A certain irresponsibility is created, an irresponsibility that involves always blaming someone else.

job we are advertising, the one of City Secretary, and I thought it was important that Hanna Birna's statements not scare people away from applying. I felt it was unfair, I wanted to say something; that this wasn't true, that the system wasn't expanding. One person is quitting and we are hiring another in its stead.

So yeah. I felt there was a large difference between what I wrote yesterday and 'the game.' I tried to not to be rude in my letter...

Do you believe your hesitancy in responding to political attacks—and

I am not seeking re-election. People are coming to me and saying, "If you do this, that or the other, or if you don't do this that or the other, I am not voting for you again, Jón!" I usually reply with: "well, how do you know I am even running again?"

That involves repeating at all times some version of: "This isn't the fault of us Independents, we were in charge from Smarch seventh, two thousand and ass to August fiftieth 1984, and that decision was made a month before we had anything to do with anything."

And the other side will counterclaim: "It's all the Independence Party's fault! This is a sign of the neoliberal policies of the bla bla bla bla bla bla..." And what's worst about it is that everyone involved in politics carries around some baggage that doesn't always have anything to do with them personally, but is part of some party they belong to.

I think that when we [The Best Party] entered the stage as a political power, an opportunity was created that wasn't there before; dealing with problems without taking in consideration all these political complexes.

What we try and do at all times is not to engage in a blame game. This is why we usually do not respond to allegations or rudeness. We try and use brotherly love; we always turn the other cheek when we are attacked, and a lot of people have criticised us for that, for not responding in kind, saying that we allow everyone to walk all over us. But we want to change this system and change how people communicate and talk to one another within it. What kind of interaction they have. And not grow accustomed to it or adopt it, which is what the system would really prefer. Joschka Fischer, the German green party man... he turned into a system enforcer in no time. He turned from hippie to bank manager.

ATTACK ATTACK!

It's interesting to note that yesterday saw the publication of what might be construed as your first political 'attack letter'; in any case the open letter where you wrote and addressed [Independence Party municipal head] Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir was a direct and somewhat angry response to public comments she had made. This might be construed by some as 'participating in the game'...

I tried to be civil in that letter, but I had to respond because... this is an important matter. We are hiring a City Secretary, which is not unusual and which in fact Hanna's own party proposed back in 2007. It frustrates me to see something so casual and simple being used to claim that I am a lunatic and a clown and that anarchism is crazy and I have no idea what I am doing and that everyone will have to pay a lot of money because of my lunacy and incompetence in this regard, which simply isn't right. Because it's not true. And they are implying that our officials are at all times acting as my replacements, and that I don't do anything because I have an army of bureaucrats that do everything for me.

"The mayor's replacements are growing in number!" they'll claim. And it's simply not true, and they know this! This annoys me, this wilful misrepresentation of facts and truths that they are all too familiar with.

Are you saying that they are lying?
Yes. These are untruths.

This is serious. Are you saying that people, politicians, are speaking against their better knowledge?

Yes, they know this isn't the case. I guarantee that. And then, this is a very important

People will remember you for the things you do, less so for the things you say. Even though the song says "You will be remembered by the things you say and do, la la la la la la..."

GUIDING LIGHT

This is a principle of The Best Party. From the beginning, we have had our convictions as guiding light, and try to follow them as best we can. I confront every task with them in mind. The Golden Rule of the Best Party is: "Confront any issue and resolve it in accordance to your conscience

and what it commands."

This has been our motto, and we regularly meet to remind ourselves of the fact that we need to work in a manner that our conscience commands. Nothing changes the fact that I have my conscience as yardstick, and while I am faithful to my conscience and convictions, and don't act against them just because someone wants me to, then I can sleep soundly.

I believe that if you work according to your conscience and try and resolve things as well as you possibly can; if you are honest and simple and follow the main principles of Jesus Christ—if that doesn't work and you don't succeed, then that's that. If abiding by those rules and acting in a meek and considerate manner does not work, then that is surely some sort of message for us as a society and community. To love your neighbour, to avoid anger and the use of violence against other people, instead turning the cheek; if that doesn't work, then maybe all the faith, hope and love are for naught. That would mean that they don't work in the society we have created; that it doesn't foster or encourage such behaviour. And then that'll be that. We'll know. It will be sad and awful, but we'll know.

Earlier, you spoke of more direct democracy through the web. What happened to the 'Better Reykjavík' web that you set up and started last year, which was meant to encourage direct democracy and decision making. It has been awfully quiet lately...

That has been one of my main interests; getting 'Better Reykjavík' up and running. This has been a really hard and technically complicated process; and later an administratively complicated one—getting it in sync with the city administration and its procedures. However, I understand that this week saw the finalisation of the website, and we are aiming to re-launch and start using it for real by the end of this month.

I am really looking forward to that, this is where we start doing something tangible, a real direct democracy. We can start seeking people's viewpoints and opinions. And not in the sense of Gallup polls and whatnot. There is a big difference between pity and love. There is a difference between feeling sorry for someone and caring about them. And there is an equally big difference between seeking someone's viewpoint and thoughts, and populism.

Jón's personal assistant, S. Björn Blöndal, enters the room and ushers him out: "We need to go. You are already late for that opening speech!" The Mayor reluctantly stands up, but continues speaking...

Wait... I also have a great idea! I want to build a tattoo museum in Reykjavík. I want to talk to the tattoo guys over here and get their help in setting it up. It will be a real museum, where you can donate your tattoo and it will be dried and tanned and then placed in a box alongside a picture of you with the tattoo. It'll be dried morbid stuff in glass boxes next to photographs. We could get all of Slash's tattoos. He would donate them, when he's dead they'd be cut off. You come to Reykjavík and go into a dank basement and looked at dried and tanned pieces of Slash! This would bring in some tourist dollars, for sure! ☺

“IT’S ALL IN THE GAME, YO”

So in essence, you're saying that too much time is being spent on politics,

Lights, Streaming, Action!

A new website allows one to watch Icelandic films online... Cool!



Our current digital environment has permanently altered the way most people purchase, rent and view movies, and also how they're distributed (see: Netflix, Pirate Bay). However, this 'digital revolution' has mostly left the Icelandic film industry untouched, with nary a legal option on offer for streaming and downloading enthusiasts. Two visionary women have started up a new venture, Icelandic Cinema Online, to bring the idea of watching Icelandic films on-line to reality. We sat down with founders Sunna Guðnadóttir and Steffi Thors to talk about it.

Do both of you come from a film background?

Sunna Guðnadóttir: I don't have a background in film. I finished school with a Master's in Culture Management, and this project was the subject of my final thesis. Before that, I mostly worked in the field of fashion, along with some project management.

Steffi Thors: I studied acting and performance in the Czech Republic, where I lived for thirteen years. Then, a few years ago I began working in film editing, which is where I work now.

How did the idea for Icelandic Cinema Online come about?

SG: I wanted to write about the current changes in film distribution for my final thesis. Steffi and I were sitting together in Prague when we came up with the idea, after learning that it was very hard to access Icelandic films online. We decided to improve this by making our website, and then I wrote my thesis about the project itself.

So you saw a gap in the market, so to speak.

ST: Yeah, we thought why don't we try and do this ourselves?

INTERNET-O-PHOBIA

Why do you think this sort of thing hasn't happened before? Why has the film industry in Iceland has been slow picking up on this?

SG: I think that film producers in general are a little bit afraid of the internet, but Icelandic producers are also very lacking in resources. Often, production companies are small concerns, with only a few employees. They simply don't have the capacity to investigate the newest developments in distribution.

How much work was involved in setting up Icelandic Cinema Online? How long did it take?

SG: We had the idea back in December 2009. Then we took it to competition for young start-ups called Gulleggið ("The Golden Egg") last February, where we got to the final ten. That was a kind of a kick for us to take it more seriously, in making business plans and other things.

Has there been any resistance to your idea?

SG: Actually we've had an amazing reaction from people we've approached. Our main stumbling block, though, was getting proper funding from the state. This is a project that's very national in the way it introduces and promotes Icelandic films abroad, so you'd think that this sort of venture would get support from the department of culture, especially with the importance of culture industries in Iceland.

ST: It all comes down to a lack of understanding that Icelandic films can sell on the internet, and that there's a market for it.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

How do I operate your website then?

SG: You simply go to the site and register for free. Once logged in, you can buy credit for your account, such as five, ten, fifteen Euros or more. Then you just choose a film and it's deducted from your credit. You get access to the film for 24 hours and can watch it as many times as you like.

Who do you think will be your market with this? Will this be for Icelanders, or for people who live outside the country?

SG: Well the site is in English, because we feel the market for this is bigger outside of Iceland. It's been online now for some weeks and we've received about 23,000 hits. But what's surprised us is that two thirds of the traffic has been from abroad. We expected it to be fifty-fifty, but I think that this does show that there is a real interest abroad in Icelandic films.

LOST TREASURES

How are you faring with increasing your catalogue?

SG: We're working on it. It's all about getting permission to show the film and ensuring that the owners get a share from streaming and contracts. With some films, the filmmaker owns the film outright, sometimes it's owned between the backers/producers.

ST: It's very time-consuming contacting the people behind the films. They're often very busy, and then they have to

track down who has the rights, and then find the original film, and it's not easy. Some older classic films have been lost altogether.

Lost? I find that really surprising. Aren't there institutions in Iceland that archive old Icelandic films, like they do with music?

ST: Well there is Kvikmyndasafn Íslands, which has this role in terms of archiving, but some originals of films have been lost.

Wow, that's... shocking! You'd have thought, for the size of the industry, that archiving and cataloguing its films wouldn't be so difficult.

SG: Yeah. Right now we've tried to find three old Icelandic films and the originals have been lost. There's also the issue that they're on actual film and haven't been digitised. And to take the film and digitise it takes time and money. That's the biggest obstacle with regards to enlarging the catalogue right now.

So what are the other plans on taking the site further?

SG: What we want to do next is make the site more interactive, to make a community and discourse site for Icelandic film, such as building forums, for example.

As a non-profit organisation, you're always looking for people to help. What do people need to do to get in touch with you?

ST: We always need people to help with things, such as translating for example. If people want to volunteer their time in any way, they can contact us at info@icelandiccinema.com

THEIR FAVOURITE FILMS

Sunna

'Nói Albínóí' ("Noi The Albino", 2003): This is my favourite. It catches really well the core of the Icelandic mentality and describes what it's like to live in a remote place in Iceland.

'Stella í orlofi' ("The Icelandic Shock Station", 1986): It's a really funny film. It has lots of jokes about the typically funny aspects of Icelandic people.

Steffi

'Okkar eigin Oslo' ("We Have Oslo", 2011): This is a really funny new film.

'Véðramót' ("The Bitter Storm", 2007): It was the first movie I worked on, so it has a special place for me.

'Englar alheimsins' ("Angels Of The Universe", 2000): This is such a brilliantly directed film. Ingvar E. Sigurðsson's acting is superb.

BOB CLUNESS

NATSHA NANDABHIWAT

Showtimes for 'El Bulli: Cooking In Progress' at the Reykjavík International Film Festival // 25.9.2011 18:00 - The Nordic House (opening party with appetizers from Dill restaurant) // 28.9.2011 20:00 - The Nordic House // 2.10.2011 18:00 - The Nordic House

Food And Film | Ragnar Egilsson

EL BULLI: COOKING IN PROGRESS

 It starts with a fella chomping on a fluorescent fish in the dark, light pouring out of his mouth. Unfazed, his first words are "what protein is this?"

Ferran Adrià is a chef's chef. If he were a musician, then that would translate to a lifetime of obscurity. But in the world of high cuisine, the lines between the consumers, producers and critics are blurred. We may not all know how to play music but we all know a little about making food. And we are all capable of appreciating food, even if it's from an alien culture and based in a system of foreign notes and tones.

elBulli's name has spread far beyond the confines of Cataluña and many more knew of elBulli than ever had a chance to indulge their palates there. I use the past tense as on July 30, 2011, this haven of mad food scientists, food geeks and snobs, closed its doors for the last time. The three Michelin star restaurant that revolutionised modern cuisine, the prime mover of the craze known by some as molecular gastronomy (Adrià preferred 'Cocina de vanguardia' or 'deconstructivist cuisine'). Running at a massive loss for a decade, closed six months out of the year and having employed over 2,000 chefs, cooks and waiters over the last 25 years, the broth did seemed destined to spoil.

The documentary 'El Bulli: Cooking In Progress' documents the closing and reopening of elBulli during one of its six month hibernation cycles, its final cycle as fate would have it.

The film is a German production, which seems fitting seeing it was German Hans Schilling that founded elBulli in 1961 as a minigolf beach bar. Although the film is practically anti-Herzogian with its lack of narrative or confrontation, an unkind soul could say that there's something very Germanic about it. It's a distant affair, the camera hovers around the peripheries like a student unobtrusively observing masters at work. The texture of the film is typical for Spain. Digital footage of Spain tends to be suffused with a slick of ochre-silver dawn (Almadovar fought this by filling his frames with humans and bombarding everything with primary colours). But the cool texture and reverential approach is perfectly suited to elBulli.

For all his accusations of insanity, elBulli was always a pared-down affair. It was a place where talented, creative people came to methodically work their way through every food stuff known to man and explore as many of the combinations and transformations it could undergo. And this is why the doc is being covered in the food section instead among the general population. Unless you are already passionate about experimental cuisine, this film is likely to be a little dry for you. The techniques are probed in a way the main players never are. But to call 'El Bulli: Cooking In Progress' boring is to miss the point. Like a chef in training you're expected to be silent and pay attention. Would-be-chefs and foodies are sure to pore over this fascinating insight into the creative process at elBulli in the way Beatles fans do with Abbey Road footage.



www.laekjarbrekka.is



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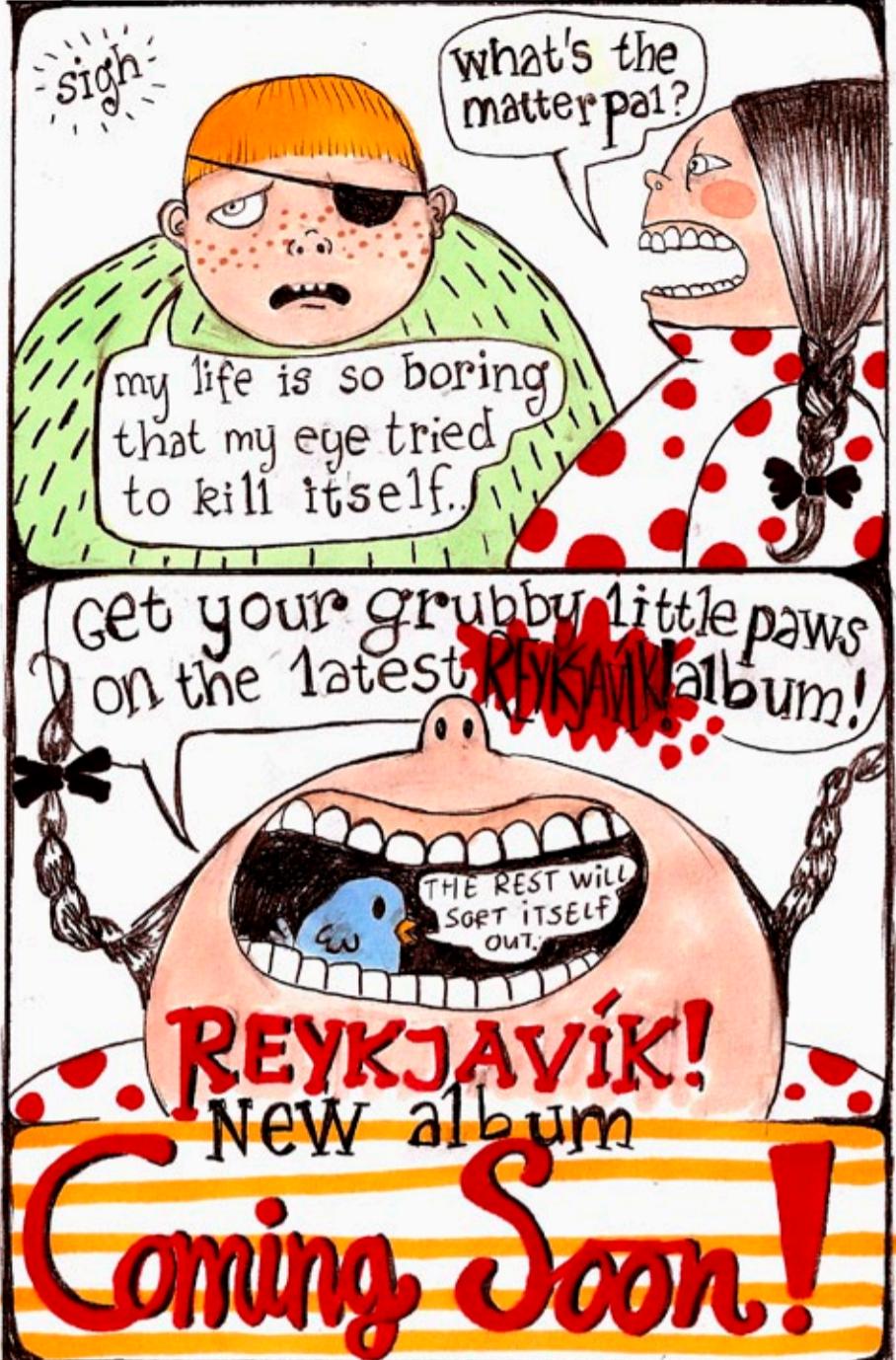
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Music | Dr. Gunnar's History Of Icelandic Rock: Part 30

Sálín Reign Over The Country Balls

March 10, 1988 was a big day for Icelandic music. In a long-since burnt down club called Tunglið, HAM were playing their first ever concert, and in the building's basement—at an adjoining club called Bíókjallarinn—Sálín hans Jóns míns were also making their stage premiere. Sálín ("The Soul"), as they are usually referred to, started out as a soul revival cover band, but soon evolved into Iceland's most popular pop act of the nineties.

A SOUL COVER BAND

Putting together a cover band to perform the then-increasingly in vogue soul music had originally been radio presenter Þorsteinn Joð's idea. He asked Jón Ólafsson—a piano man and frisky radio DJ at the time—to get some guys together to play songs from the Blues Brothers movie at club Sigtún in 1987. This is where Sálín's future core first met singer Stefán Hilmarsson and guitarist/songwriter Guðmundur Jónasson. The band did not have a name at the time, but when Jón revived the band in early 1988, Sálín hans Jóns míns (a silly play on an old folk tale with the same name) had been decided upon as a suitable name for the collective.

Jón Ólafsson (who you might know from the band Ný dönsk) got two friends from his other cover band (sixties tribute act Bítlavinafélagið ("The Beatles' Friends' Society), drummer Rafn Jónsson and bassist Haraldur Þorsteinsson to join, along with Stefán and Guðmundur. Shiny golden band uniforms were purchased, and Sálín harked on into the autumn. Their first LP came in the summer of 1988, 'Sungjandi sveittir' ("Singing and sweaty"), with four original compositions and six covers songs, all recorded live at Bíókjallarinn.

The album was successful. Singer Stefán had already become famous after he sang Iceland's third Eurovision entry in the spring of 1988 (Sverrir Stormskei's 'Sókrates' – final Eurovision position: 16) and that added to the draw. The LP had some popular songs, including 'Kanínan' ("The Rabbit"), a song that had already served as a hit for drummer Rafn with his Ísafjörður band Ýr in 1976. For decades, nobody in Iceland knew who wrote 'Kanínan' (with Ýr stating that they had pieced it together from a song they had taped off Radio Luxembourg), but last year the inspirational Radio Lux track was located: 'Kanínan' is originally a Greek pop song from 1972 called 'Ela Ela' by the band Axis.

THE "REAL" SÁLÍN EMERGES

Bítlavinafélagið started playing again after a brief hiatus in the autumn of 1988, so Stefán and Guðmundur found themselves without a band to perform with. The pair thus had to locate new members for Sálín, which they kept going even though the band was by then an altogether different outfit. After some shuffling in the personnel, they had acquired bassist Friðrik Sturluson, saxophone/keyboard player Jens Hanson and drummer Magnús Stefánsson, formerly of Bubbi's Utangarðsmenn and Egó. This fivesome went on to record Sálín's first "proper" LP in 1989, which was named 'Hvar er draumurinn?' ("Where's The Dream?") and became a big hit.

"What were you listening to at the time?" I asked singer Stefán ten years later. "Guðmundur listened to U2 a lot, but I was such a kitten and didn't dig deep for music. Our primary goal was to make music to play live at whatever venues were available. Subsequently, our music became poppy and easy to digest. It wasn't made to be played at



It remains Sálín's bestselling album to this day.

By this time Sálín's "sound" was fully formed, and the Guðmundur/Stefán written songs were the usual fare, even though other members occasionally contributed. Guðmundur made pure "Icelandic" pop out of international influences (traces of popular artists like U2 and Lenny Kravitz can be heard in his songwriting) and Stefán wrote bombastic lyrics, usually about girls, relationship and/or love in general.

Iceland laid panting at Sálín's feet but of course that wasn't enough, so in 1992 the men of Sálín tried their hand at some good ol' fashioned world domination through their record label, Steinar Records, that had ten years prior scored a hit with Mezzoforte (the effervescent 'Garden Party'). The second Sálín album's vocals had been re-recorded in English, and it was now released in the

"The band had a roadie that was very fond of his own faeces. They reportedly got a kick out of holding his arms while he shat out of the bus (bonus points for hitting a cycling tourist), and at an afterparty in Ísafjörður Sálín roadie's faeces fetish hit overdrive when he encountered a table with a glass plate."

best playing all over the country at various dances and balls. The band dignified old Icelandic band rites of 'running around naked whilst on the road' while going from one small town to the next in their tour bus. Sálín's streaking specialty was to run naked through every tunnel they came across.

The band had a roadie that was very fond of his own faeces. They reportedly got a kick out of holding his arms while he shat out of the bus (bonus points for hitting a cycling tourist), and at an afterparty in Ísafjörður Sálín roadie's faeces fetish hit overdrive when he encountered a table with a glass plate. The giggling band got comfy under the table face up and then the roadie... well you know what. Tales of Sálín's shit prank travelled at light speed in Ísafjörður and did not dent the band's popularity in the town at all.

CANTEENS IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE

Sálín went on a leave in the autumn of 1990, but when the band returned in the spring of 1991 a new drummer, Birgir Baldursson (formerly of my own bands, S.H. Draumur and Bless) had replaced Magnús. A sixth member, keyboardist Atli Örvásson (formerly of Stuðkompanið), had joined Sálín's ranks as well. The band soon was up to its old form, playing all over the reef and putting out new songs that swiftly got hugely popular. Before Christmas it was time for the third album, which they simply called 'Sálín hans Jóns míns,' and which sold 14.000 copies.

Benelux countries and Scandinavia as 'Where's My Destiny?' Sálín reportedly came close to signing with Warner Brothers, but a while after informing the Icelandic media about that pending contract, it turned out that big business had no interest in the band. Maybe Sálín's English name had something to do with it. They called themselves "Beaten Bishops" abroad.

Sálín/Beaten Bishops toured a few times through Sweden and Norway, sometimes playing for mildly enthusiastic crowds and something playing to almost nobody in canteens in the middle of nowhere. Being used to wildly passionate fans back home, Sálín put dreams of international fame soon to rest and instead went to work cementing their position in the motherland.

The summer of 1992 brought the compilation 'Garg' ('Scream') with eight previously released songs from various compilations and three new ones that all went wildly popular: The Red Hot Chili Peppers-y 'Krókurinn' ("The Hook")—performed with legendary singer Pétur Kristjánsson—the superballad 'Hjá pér' ("With You"), and the title track from Óskar Jónasson's Sóðoma Reykjavík. The song is probably Sálín's best-known song, and was recently voted the "Most fun Icelandic song ever." At the same time, a Sálín documentary was released on VHS showing the band on the road, warts and all. The highlight of the film is Stefán's tantrum after his baseball cap is snatched off his head by a drunken fan.





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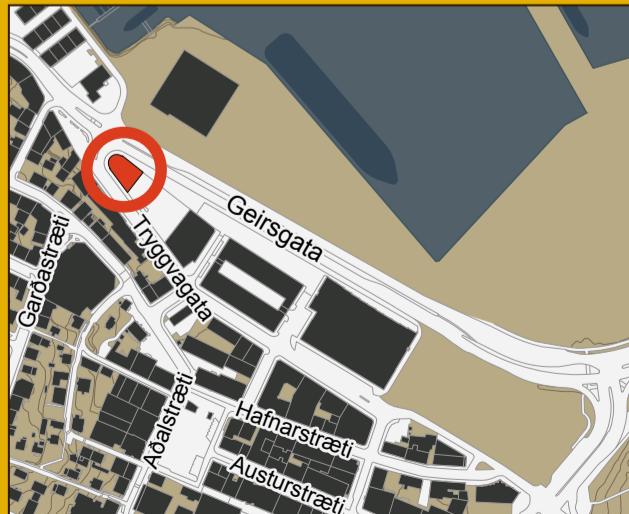


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DUDAMEL, THAT WAS AWESOME!

Two classical superstars rock the roof off Harpa



The gala audience gathered for Sunday night's concert at Harpa had come to see two freshly minted superstars of the classical scene, each with a compelling back story.

Dazzlingly gifted Swedish clarinettist Martin Fröst is in the process of transforming his instrument—long associated with high school marching bands, Dixieland festivities and cartoon sound tracks—into a musical protagonist worthy of the solo spotlight. Gustavo Dudamel's meteoric rise to fame as Music Director of the LA Philharmonic, as well as principal conductor of the Gothenburg Symphony that he conducted that night, has made him an international media sensation, and an inspiration to the young and underprivileged youth in the Venezuelan El Sistema programme where he himself got his start. His refusal to take solo bows and his ability to conduct the major works of the repertoire from memory have earned him the

respect and admiration of players and audiences alike.

Neither of these artists disappointed their audience. In fact, each managed to astonish in the most difficult way possible: with soft playing, and even with silence.

The concert opened with an intelligently crafted new work structured around the cross-play of orchestral tone colours by Swedish composer Karin Rehnqvist, a 30th birthday present from the orchestra to Dudamel.

Fröst followed in a performance of the Mozart A major clarinet concerto which gave life and living breath to each phrase of the piece, and in which we heard new sounds from an instrument we thought we knew. What astonished most were the softest passages that pulled the ear into a creamy world of sound colour few in the hall thought even possible. Emblematic of Fröst's intense involvement in the score was his performing stance, knees bent in the

classical pose of the goat-footed satyr playing his Pan pipes.

Dudamel's task in taking on the Tchaikovsky Sixth Symphony was formidable, posing all the interpretive difficulties of Late Romanticism itself: intense personal introspection, at expansive length, a combination that risks tipping into either Victorian melodrama or the tedious ramblings of a drunk friend crying into his beer.

With careful attention to the pulse and emotional potential of each phrase Dudamel achieved that pathos which gives this symphony its name, the 'Pathétique', and no more convincingly than in the silence that followed its dying last notes, a silence that lasted a full minute, in which no one dared even breathe in the immense hall.

DONALD GÍSLASON
 DONALD GÍSLASON



Ikea Satan

Tom Tom Bike

gogoyoko.com/artist/ikeasatan

Music that has most of the bits missing

Ikea Satan are three guys who have decided on an ironic band name that conveys a somewhat powerful image ("Satan") with something flimsy and second rate ("Ikea"). You know, wouldn't it be funny if their music actually contained the same elements as their band name?

Wow, I didn't think they would actually do it! 'White Cat Blues' contains three tracks of that acme garage psych rock that you heard everyone doing a decade ago (The Raconteurs, Jet, et al). Yes there are basic tunes here, but the more times I listened to it, the more it seemed to fade away into insignificance, like staring at shop brand toilet paper. Beyond its gossamer sheen of

cool, it has NOTHING to raise it above the ordinary and hold your interest beyond a few listens. 'Leaning On The Leader' would be great as incidental music for a Stöð 2 sports commercial though.

- BOB CLUNESS



Stjörnuryk

Petta reddast

myspace.com/stjornuryk

The Westfjords' finest

When I received a copy of Stjörnuryk's debut, all I knew about them was that they are from Ísafjörður, the capital of the Westfjords of Iceland. I hadn't heard one song of theirs, so I really didn't know what to expect. Was it going to be the East Coast sound, West Coast or even UK influenced? One thing I was not expecting was the semi-electro feel about the beats, which is a positive thing... but was it going to be enough?

The album in a whole is really raw from the beats to the rhymes and from the rhymes to the cover art. The rhymes range from being about enjoying a burger to partying, and from partying to judging the public's opinion on how rappers should act and dress. Not bad, but

nothing new. The production has some potential with my personal favourites being 'Vertu sjálfstæður' ('Be Independent'), 'Sega Mega' and 'Marco Polo' but the sound is just too raw—it kinda sounds like a radio rip.

Stjörnuryk have some good guests on this album, with cameos from MCs such as G. Maris, BlazRoca and Ramses. However, the standout guest performer is the 12-year-old MC Ísaksen from Ísafjörður, definitely one to watch if you ask me.

Even with all the good guests and the potential in production, it just doesn't cut it all the way. I would advise them to step their sound quality game up for their future releases.

- ATLI HELGASON

DELICIOUS, SALTY AND SWEATY

Just like the food!



A heavy cloud of cigarette smoke and a gloss of leathery inebriation lined the gateway into NASA that night. A sense of powerful debauchery was spilling out of the door, onto the sidewalks of Austurvöllur, and festering among the pockets of people soiling their larynxes, perfecting their pre-show growls. It was almost 23:30, and the scent in the air was strong. It was the smell of HAM.

BETRAYAL ...

As my cohorts and I enter the hall, we cross paths with Raggi from Swords Of Chaos, sadly informing us that we just missed their set—entirely unintentional and horribly devastating. It was reportedly one of their greatest performances, one of the biggest crowds they have played to and got an incredible reaction. We felt thoroughly like pieces of shit and envious of those who did catch their set. My apologies, Swords.

GRIEF ...

Our late entrance has also assured us a fantastic spot at the very back of the sold out room. We took our places firmly underneath the sound booth, where your writer's view consisted of a sea of leather jackets and long, greasy hair. Despite of having no view of the stage whatsoever, the rumble of the room was palpable as HAM marched onto the stage brimming with the murderous rage that comes with maturity.

The occasion was not just one of unadulterated rock and disjointed thrashing; it was a joyful celebration of their much awaited and greatly anticipated sophomore album, 'Svik, harmur og dauð' A twenty-two year wait for it has not only allowed the members of the band to engage in various acts of joining municipal government and raising hell in other bands, it has given the good name of HAM time to simmer in caché. A gestation period to become legendary.

The crowd in attendance was a balanced mixture of the old, the young and the infantile. Those who were around from the beginning, when HAM released their first album in 1989, an album bred out of green, youthful fury and fun. The ones who were raised on them, who grew up listening second-hand because of their parents or siblings and eventually adopted the album themselves. And the new breed, either unaware until now or freshly exposed to HAM in their current state: cured, roasted and whisky glazed.

DEATH ...

The songs that pulsed through the room that night were anthemic. Having the advantage of playing in one of the best concert venues and clearly having a sound-tech who cares about them made the sound nothing short of impeccable. The only sounds of grime and disgust were those intentionally written into the music. Not only did they churn

out the bulk of their new record, including the head-smashing hits 'Ingimar' and 'Dauð hóra,' but delivered their old songs with tall pride.

The crowning glory of the night happened when they launched into one of their biggest hits 'Partybær,' which was famously featured in the classic movie 'Sódóma Reykjavík.' The entire room was suddenly hypnotised into a simultaneous surge, throwing their heads forward and back with a collective grace and intensity. Having found a good spot on the back steps with a full-room view when this happened, it actually caused this writer to quietly declare: "Whoa."

Looking straight ahead at the men on the stage by now was mesmerising. At the very least because we were appropriately inebriated by now, but mostly from the sheer power exuded by their playing and their presence. The odd combination of personalities and styles they bring forth through both their musician- and performanceship is the true essence of their success and mystique, and whether they ever make another album together again, they have had new life breathed into them. They are not even close to dead. They are delicious. ☺

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SJÁVARGRILLIÐ

'Volcano' plays at RIFF on September 29 and opens to the general public on September 30. FUN FACT: This article's author, Atli Bollason, works for Zik Zak, and one of his jobs is promoting 'Volcano'. So who better to interview Rúnar than someone who has seen the film a lot of times? Atli surely values his credibility, but you should still read the interview with this in mind.

More At Stake

'Volcano' director Rúnar Rúnarsson interviewed



Rúnar Rúnarsson is a young Icelandic director who became somewhat of a starlet when he was nominated for an Oscar for his short film 'Síðasti bærinn' ("The Last Farm") in 2006, before even entering the Danish Film School whence he has now graduated. His first feature-length film, 'Eldfjall' ("Volcano"), premiered as part of the Director's Fortnight in Cannes in the spring and was nominated for the Camera d'Or award for best debut film. After the premiere, the film and the director have travelled widely, drawing tears and applause from audiences in places as far apart as Kazakhstan and Toronto. It only reaches the shores of Iceland this September 29, when it will premiere in Háskólabíó and open to the general public the following day.

'Volcano' tells the story of Hannes, a 67-year old janitor who retires at the beginning of the film. An old-schooler defined

by his job, the retirement leaves him restless, and the estrangement from his family becomes clearer than ever. His children only ever come around to see their mother, and they scold him for his cold, brusque and distant manners. Once in a while his wife and he manage to rekindle their flame, but she soon suffers a stroke, leaving Hannes all alone and unloved. He decides to take care of her at their home, in a sense to atone for all the years of neglect, and this proves to be somewhat

TRANSITION ATTRACTION
Your shorts, 'Anna,' 'Smáfuglar' ("Two Birds") and 'Síðasti bærinn,' have been very successful ventures, gathering awards at film festivals and even an Oscar nomination. One could say that you've mastered the short form. Did you find the jump from shorts to feature filmmaking hard?

Yes and no. I am a control freak and I do a lot of preparation before I start shooting.

"Most of the time, stories that interest me and stories that I want to tell are about people who find themselves at some sort of crossroads in their life"

of a challenge, forcing Hannes to take a deep, hard look at himself.

We spoke briefly to Rúnar about the film, filmmaking and being anal in your preparations.

I guess the biggest difference between those two forms of filmmaking is time consumption. The feature tells a story on a much bigger scale than a short. It is easier to have oversight over a film of

fifteen minutes, whereas it is actually quite hard to maintain control over every detail over the space of ninety minutes or more. Everything takes so much longer. The preparation time was very long, the shooting and the postproduction took a long time.

You are a young man making your feature film debut, yet you have made a film about people who have recently retired. Why were you attracted by the lives of seniors?

Most of the time, stories that interest me and stories that I want to tell are about people who find themselves at some sort of crossroads in their life. You could call it a transition period; a child becoming a teenager, a teenager becoming an adult, and then, like in this film, senior adults facing their last stage in life. Most films are about some kind of development of the main character, and in a late stage of life the opportunities in front of you could be your last. So there is more at stake.

"ANAL PREPARATION"
The effects of the Vestmannaeyjar eruption of 1974 lingers in the background of the film, is of course in its title, but the theme not extensively developed. Would you care to comment on the relevance of the eruption for Hannes and for the film?

The volcanic eruption serves as the backdrop of Hannes' life. Because of the eruption, he had to leave his home and that became a big influence on the person he has become at the time of the film. Hannes is an old-fashioned kind of guy that finds it hard to express love or emotions, but underneath his cold surface he is boiling with feelings. So the title of the film is also a metaphor for the main character.

The camera work in 'Volcano' is absolutely stunning at times. What can you tell us about the co-operation between you and cinematographer Sophia Olsson?

I was so lucky to meet Sophia when we studied together in the National Film School of Denmark. During our time there we did many productions together and developed our mutual way of narrating a story. She has an exceptional eye and good dramatic understanding. We plan the shootings in a very detailed manner by creating a photographic storyboard of each and every scene of the film that we act through ourselves. This, if you will, anal preparation gives us a visual narrative overview that makes it easier for us to improvise and capture moments during the actual shooting.

The star of the film, Theodór Júlíusson, despite his old age, has never played a leading role before. Why did you decide to cast him?

When I wrote the screenplay I had him in mind for that role already. I think he is an amazing actor, and I don't know why he has never had a main role before. As a person and as an actor, he can be the softest and sweetest man, and in the very next minute be a very tough guy, and this paradoxical quality gives an extra layer or added dimension to the characters that he plays and is the foundation of the depth of the main character of the film.

COMING HOME

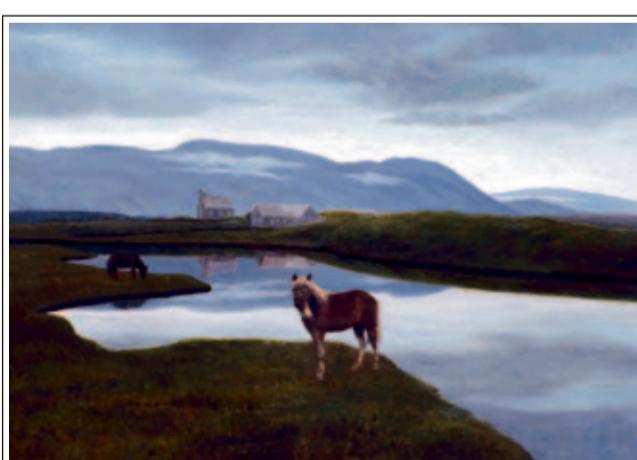
The film has already done well at renowned festivals such as in Cannes and Toronto. Now, when it is about to open in Reykjavík, how important is the reception at home for you?

Even though it has been well received abroad, it's a film about Iceland and Icelandic reality. Therefore I am of course curious to see the reactions of the Icelandic audience. Also, the film was made here, my crew was almost entirely Icelandic and therefore the premiere here means harvesting and celebrating with the people that made it possible.

What is your opinion of Icelandic filmmaking?

In terms of the size of Iceland, and how late we began funding film productions, relatively, compared to many other countries, it's unbelievable what we have achieved in that field. But the industry is young and fragile and therefore the cutbacks to the Icelandic Film Fund have resulted in productions here becoming smaller and fewer, and skilled filmmakers leaving the country to earn a living. I hope that those cutbacks will be reversed before it is too late.

ATLI BOLLASON
HVALREKI



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Dance | Dance dance

A Gathering of Dances

Reykjavík movement artists' own private visions



In Iceland, seeing the arts requires going to festivals. It's a mode I'm still getting used to, and I'll admit to a lingering attachment to being able to imbibe slowly, one performance a week. This means I sometimes forget the festival format's chief merit: beyond convenience for travellers, it offers the chance for individual works to coalesce into a greater whole, each piece a tiny jewel on a grand, shiny necklace. At the Reykjavík Dance Festival 2011, a multiplicity of short pieces based on diverse, personal visions brought this phenomenon to the fore.

Nowhere was it clearer than on Saturday afternoon, when two downtown museums hosted three performances. At the National Gallery, Katla Þórarinsdóttir and Laura Murphy showed 'Lost Ballerina,' which took off from Davide Bozzalilla's photographs of the tutu-clad Katla in the Icelandic highlands. In the museum environment, as in nature, a ballerina is out of her element, and our plucky heroine (Katla) got caught upside-down in a corner, waded through the museum's moat and screamed, and spun plaintively on a miniature chair. Searching for the dancer flitting unpredictably around the museum gave viewers a taste of that same lost feeling, making for an utterly charming, if non-ground-breaking, experience.

Hafnarhús, two works of similar singularity were shown in a room by the building's entrance. For '> a flock of us >', the audience stood in the outer rings of concentric circles plotted on the floor, while, in the centre, Guðrún Óskarsdóttir and Keren Rosenberg became birds. Every detail was lovingly attended to—there was a chirp-filled soundscape (by Lydia Grétarsdóttir), shiny unitards with contrasting thumb colours, silvered hair and ear tips, and atmospheric wall projections (by Uri Rosenberg). But what really enthralled was how the dancers managed, with movement, but without a single arm flap or other literal imitation,

to get birdy-ness exactly right.

Afterwards, the room was swiftly transformed for visual artist Bjargey Ólafsdóttir's 'Now Now,' an alternate world found below a circus tent, in which the piano can be played from underneath, with one's head, and gymnasts descend on a rope to circle the stage on their hands.

TRADITIONAL SEATING, NON-STANDARD WORK

More conventional theatre spaces also hosted innovative performances. At the dance atelier in the Kex Hostel, Margrét Sara Guðjónsdóttir's research showing, 'Dedication,' had Laura Siegmund carrying out deliberate, weighty actions such as uhmming in the dark, methodically surveying the audience with her eyes or rippling her arms above her head. Often, Laura appeared to be at a crossroads: facing the audience, she turned her back and walked upstage, only to pivot and return towards us, repeatedly. Or she found herself beached on her back, doing a kind of elegant sit-up. Perhaps because it was a research showing rather than a finished piece, 'Dedication' was pleasingly pared-down, without the surface ruffles of last year's 'Soft Target.'

At Tjarnarbió, Samsudan & co's 'What a Feeling!' featured three dancers (Berglind Pétersdóttir, Cameron Corbett and Saga Sigurðardóttir) each giving a short verbal introduction and then performing a solo, choreographed by the group based on the individual's innermost desires. Saga showed a dance about mortality, by a pregnant woman in a black bodysuit, to music from the second act of Gisele. Berglind told us about Chlamydia, and Germany, and performed an equally discombobulated dance. Cameron's piece involved the pursuit of love, and sex, and illustrated this clearly. The dances were fresh, and the trio's deadpan wackiness stayed on the right side of cute—though just barely.

Also at Tjarnarbió, Sveinbjörg Þórðallsdóttir and Steinunn Ketilsdóttir showed 'Belinda and Goddess,' an ode to female friendship, duality, godliness,

or all three. The work began with the pair, backs to us, shifting from leg to leg so that their butts swayed rhythmically left to right, and ended with them lying on their stomachs singing tragedy into ground microphones. It was terrific. Jónf Jónsdóttir's costumes, which featured sleek Lycra in back, and demure dresses in front, are also worth mentioning.

NOT QUITE AS SHINY

Other pieces were less surprising. Lára Stefánsdóttir's 'Braindust' was supposed to be about our crazy thought processes, but appeared to be the usual Euro agitation, expertly performed. A take on Stravinsky's 'Rite of Spring,' by Helena Jónsdóttir and Pálína Jónsdóttir, mostly went for stage images, but those pictures weren't particularly arresting. The music also sounded awful, a frequent occurrence in the revamped Tjarnarbió.

'Court 0.9144m,' by the dance collective Raven, was performed in the courtyard next door to Tjarnarbió. It attempted to push ordinary activities—knocking on a door, say, or reading a book—into the sublime. If it didn't get there, well, it was a lovely fall night out-of-doors, and there was live music by Atos, an experimental jazz group, played from a rooftop.

John the Houseband's 'Trippin' North' featured the five members of the ensemble prancing about the stage, playing various instruments, making silly jokes, and singing without skill. Although it added to the variety of the festival, the piece was the opposite of the best presentations, in which the creators looked inside and came up with something new. Here, the makers attempted to use their incredibly cool presence to transform banal material. And it was true: with their fashionable clothes and facial hair, innocent enthusiasm for the plastic bag as an instrument, and amazing ability to take on even black street dance, the group was extremely cute, if also more than a little bit repulsive. ☺

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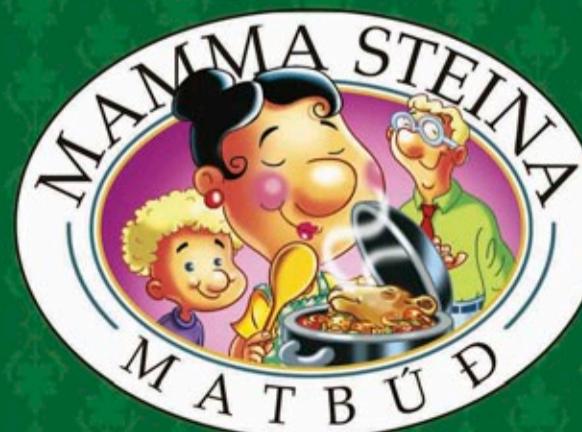
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Top 10 in Iceland

In this new and fascinating book photographer Vilhelm Gunnarsson takes us on a unique journey.

From the vast highlands to the lush lowlands, these are truly the Top Ten Places in Iceland.

A couple of weeks ago both Icelandic daily newspapers published a very similar headline about the Reykjavík International Film Festival: "Over a hundred films at RIFF!" the headlines screamed—and you got the feeling everybody felt it was a good thing. Understandably perhaps, but this overwhelming amount of films is becoming the festival's biggest problem. It means the programme is turning into a labyrinth (some people I know refer to it as 'the phonebook') that many people can't find their way through—and the quality suffers. The best festival films usually don't come cheap, so you can't help but wonder: are there top films out there RIFF couldn't afford because they had to pay fees for a lot of mediocre ones? I don't know but it's worth mentioning that Cannes, the world's most prestigious film festival, only features around fifty films in its official selection. There's a lesson in there somewhere.

That said, I am very much looking towards the festival, as always. For us movie geeks of Iceland this truly is a sort of 'Christmas.' And for us at the Grapevine, 'Christmas' came early: we got a rather random collection of screeners to look at so we could give you a sneak peak at what the festival had to offer. I'm still waiting for the masterpieces, but I'm sure a few are waiting for me in a darkened cinema. And the best advice I can give moviegoers is: do your research. I did last year, and the first ten films I saw were really good. That is usually the case with RIFF: a dozen or more of true gems hidden within its phonebook of a programme.



"Hold Me Tight" ('Hold om mig') is a film about how peer pressure on the school grounds ultimately affects both the bullied and the bullies. It's partly a feel-good movie and partly a heartbreak one—with a great lead actress (Julie Andersen) who gives the film a lot of soul. The bullies also intrigue us when we get to know them better, and it's an interesting insight into how videos and cell phones have changed youth culture since my days on the school lot.

The plot does have certain weaknesses, but somehow none of them really bothered me, since it has enough heart to cover the cracks. And it's shown in the youth programme, which may be a bit misleading since it's definitely not a film only for kids.



"The Cat Vanishes" ('El gato desaparece') is not really that much about the absent cat, but rather about how mental problems can be contagious. The film focuses on Beatriz, who gets her husband

Words
Ásgeir H. Ingólfsson

Photos
Promotional stills

Luis back from the mental asylum, and while Luis seems quite mentally stable by now (for the most part) Beatriz becomes more and more nervous, jumpy and finally unhinged.

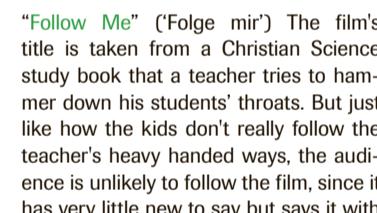
It's an interesting trip into a (mildly) mad mind, showing well how the right circumstances can make us all go a bit loopy. But the film is never really involving enough, with all its cold colours and rather distant characters. And finally, more on Donatello the cat: despite being mostly absent he does get the best scene, even if he's not actually seen but only heard.



"Habibi" is the first film to be filmed in Gaza for fifteen years—and frankly, it does tell that it comes from a filmmaking world that has not yet reached maturity. The whole thing feels quite wooden, particularly at the beginning. Yet the doomed romance between Layla and Quays ultimately turns out to be rather charming, with both leads growing into their roles when the supporting actors (none of them very good) mostly fade from view.



"In the Open" ('El Campo') follows an Argentinean couple and their child coming to terms with life in the countryside. The subtle tensions are convincing, as is the uneventful country life itself, but very little happens and there is little involving about those characters. It's all been done much better before.

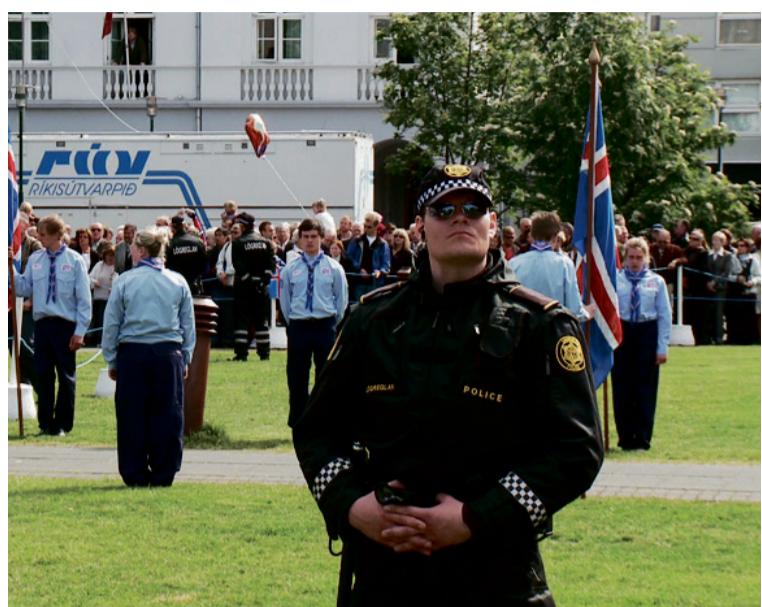


"Thors' Saga" is a documentary about the Thors family, probably Iceland's most infamous business dynasty. It follows Thor Jensen, a famous Icelandic businessman in the first half of the twentieth century, and his great grandson, Björgólfur Thor Björgólfsson, once Iceland's richest people and one of the leading characters in the banking crisis. And it does two things very well; it gives you background to how the two Thor's built their empires (something many of us have an inkling about without knowing the whole story)—and also how they were destroyed and rebuilt. The saga of Björgólfur Thor's Russian brewery adventures was particularly interesting. The filmmakers also have good access to Björgólfur Thor and we see him on the phone talking deals and plotting, and considering how open he is about it, one grows to suspect this was shot pre-crisis.

But here we come to the film's weakness. The crisis isn't really dealt with head-on and you do wonder if it's critical enough of its subject matter. That's frankly something I'm still deliberating, so my advice is: go see it—and then ask an economics expert you trust if it got the story straight.

And finally, here are the ten films I'm most excited to see at RIFF:
Rúnar Rúnarsson's 'Volcano,' Martha Marcy's 'May Marlene,' Andrea Arnold's 'Wuthering Heights,' Wim Wenders' 'Pina,' 'Sons of Norway,' 'We Need to Talk About Kevin,' 'Once Upon a Time In Anatolia,' 'Let England Shake,' 'The Turin Horse' and 'Project Nim.'

Pushing A9ainst



'Ge9n' ("A9ainst") surveys many pressing and intertwined social, economic, and environmental concerns needing in-depth and interdisciplinary re-evaluation now. Yes, now.

At the height of the post-kreppa "pots and pans revolution" of 2008/9, nine individuals were charged with attacking the Icelandic Parliament. Citizens from many backgrounds, ideologies, and persuasions rose their voices as one to contest the singling out of these individuals through such a significant charge, and this voice asked, "Why them and not us?"

Why were these nine individuals targeted and charged? What possible usefulness does the public persecution of nine individuals through Icelandic media serve, and who is it meant to serve?

What comes of the failure of a public system that pushes an "erroneous"

case through its court system? What is the fall-out to the Icelandic legal system? How could this difficulty be turned to societal benefit, where the court case provides an opportunity to address pressing issues?

Through sequential interviews with the nine individuals, 'Ge9n' boldly presents a myriad of urgent, ethical considerations relevant to the larger Icelandic society. The documentary raises questions around Iceland's possible xenophobia, the implications of nationalist-socialist tendencies, a co-dependent and floundering capitalist system, and the anthropocentric pitfalls and hubris attached to ownership of environments.

Director Haukur Már Helgason has previously and collectively pioneered alternative community actions through the Nýhil Poetry Collective and online political commentary magazine NEI. These past ventures and consuming passions of Haukur's inform the

documentary's structure and content, creating socio-politically urgent art or perhaps a sociopolitics formed through years of communitarian and activist engagement.

As the film opens, print layers over itself and pulses larger than life, its wordplay and interpretation accessible through concise vocabulary. Later, newspaper clippings amass over moving image, an obscuration of reality by re-presentation through media.

'Ge9n' sizzles with a soundtrack of experimentation designed by producer Bogi Reynisson, including the cut-up and collagist sound poetry of Jón Örn Loðmifjörð; excerpts featured in the soundtrack are from his epic poem recently exhibited in Nýló's group show 'Koddu.'

Arguably the most daring and jolting moment in the film is a Cage-ian screech carried through many solo voices. The viewer has time to move through "who?", "what?", and "why" during its duration, and the multitude of interpretations from this singular gesture leaves a body opened, angered, upset, ready to act, eager to respond.

So raise your voice. Let it out. Push against; push through. Stop it. Change this. Watch 'Ge9n'. Question. React. Discuss.

Most importantly, do something.

a.rawlings

Iceland From The Moon

September 27, 21:00

Bakkus

During RIFF last September, celebrated independent filmmaker, Vincent Moon, known for such works as the indie rock film 'Miroir Noir' on Arcade Fire, and the intimate 'Little Blue Nothing,' visited Iceland on RIFF's invitation.

Over a period of two weeks, Moon filmed a selection of musicians, dancers, and artists based in Reykjavík, such as Retro Stefson and Helgi Jónsson. During a special evening later that week, he introduced several of his previous works, and discussed his approach to filmmaking based on human exchange. As many of Vincent's films are produced with no budget, he showed us how the relationship with his subjects has granted him the mobility (and trust) to access even the most intimate artistic spaces.

A year later, RIFF will present this series of portraits, based on Vincent Moon's vision of Iceland's eccentric cultural scene. It's all happening at Bakkus, and it's free, so come see what all the fuss is about next Tuesday! - **Bowen Staines**

"We tried this place

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Sheep | Meeeeee! ("Baaaaaaah!")

NO SHEEP LEFT BEHIND!



“As we neared town, however, this surreal experience—which was all the while accompanied by a many hour long chorus of ‘baahs’ and ‘mees’ and ‘aaahs’ and ‘uhhs’ and whatever else sheep say—was interrupted by the law-bound reality of civilisation.

Words

Anna Andersen

Photography

Valgerður Valmundsdóttir

Come end of September, the days grow noticeably shorter, the grass turns yellow and it's time to bring the sheep in for the winter. This is a two-part affair beginning with the act of rounding them up in the mountains—'að smala'—and ending with the act of driving them into a fold where owners pick theirs out from the mix—'réttir'.

It happens all over the country—which is home to more sheep than people—but on this particular Sunday we were going to the Þórkötustaðaréttir roundup, which was scheduled to start at 7 AM. Getting up at the ungodly hour of 4 AM, Grapevine photo intern Natsha and I met up with horse trainer Katrine Bruhn Jensen to pick up her horses in Álfanes—one of the few places in Reykjavík where you'll see horses basically grazing in people's front yards.

From there, it was an hour or so drive out to Grindavík, a fishing hamlet on the Reykjanes Peninsula. Reykjanes is best known for being home to the Keflavík International Airport, and many tourists simply book it to the city, bypassing the area completely. This is a mistake for the lava fields there are definitely worth a closer look, and as we

would find out, so are the beautiful mountains and valleys.

GRINDAVÍK HAS SHEEP TOO

Once a community of farmers, Grindavík is primarily a fishing town today. Only a few still live on 'lögbylli' or 'legal farms,' Ólafur Sigurðsson told me. Ólafur, who is a captain by profession, was there with his daughter Jóhanna to round up their two sheep and four lambs.

"Most people in Grindavík are hobby farmers," Ólafur said, pointing out that it costs more to do this than to buy lamb at a store. Nonetheless, he didn't think there was any danger of the tradition dying down in Grindavík. If anything, he expected the tradition to grow. "There will be more kids than sheep when we get to town," he told me.

Hobby farmers or not, they had nearly 2,000 sheep and lambs to round up from 1000 hectares of rough terrain. If that sounds like a large area to cover, Ólafur said the area was significantly larger-reaching as far east as the Bjárfjöll mountains—until this 'smaller' area was fenced off four years ago.

KINGS OF THE MOUNTAIN

Everything had been planned out and orchestrated by the elected 'Fjallakóngar' or 'Kings of the Mountain' Guðjón Þorláksson, Hörður Sigurðsson and Þórir Kristinsson. Still, it was often difficult to decipher who was in charge of the group, which has been going through this drill for years upon years.

From our starting point at Borgarhóll, the bunch of us—some on horseback and others on foot—were strategically sent along the perimeter of the area, sweeping across it in an arc until all of the sheep had been driven to a central path leading up to a fenced off enclosure at Vigdísavellir.

With the exception of a few stay sheep that had managed evade the group and had to be collected separately, the group was generally pleased and they were confident that no sheep had been left behind.

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

At Vigdísavellir, we got off our horses and took an hour or so break to eat and chat with crowd. Even



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Four Autumn Excursions



as an outsider to what was clearly a tightly knit community, I was warmly welcomed and offered a swig of Tópas—black liquorice flavoured vodka—which is a recent sheep roundup staple.

Einar Dagbjartsson, a friendly Grindavíkingur who flies for Icelandair when he's not participating in réttir, spoke fondly of his sheep, which he called Marilyn Monroe and Judy Garland. This year he said he was thinking about keeping one of their lambs for his ten-year-old son. He would call her Doris Day.

Naming sheep like this is not an unusual practice as Theodór Vilbergsson, who was collecting 57 sheep and lambs from the mountains, would later confirm. He told me he recognised all of his sheep—though not the lambs, which are sent into the mountains shortly after they are born. A moment later he slowed down in front of me, and said, "see the gray one there," pointing to a rather large, pushy sheep in the middle of the crowd, "that one's mine," he said with a fat grin on his face.

BACK TO CIVILISATION

When it was time to get going again, I climbed up onto Prince's back and we began the slow fifteen kilometres ride down the mountain and back to town. By now I felt like Prince and I had developed a mutual respect for one another. I was quite pleased with him, though my tailbone and inner thighs were less so.

Riding and walking along side the sheep, we worked together to keep the herd in line, literally speaking. Every once in a while a few defiant sheep would break away from the group, and a few stragglers or injured ones had to be picked up by car and driven the rest of the way, but it generally went smoothly.

As we neared town, however, this surreal experience—which was all the while accompanied by a many hour long chorus of 'baahs' and 'mees' and 'aaahs' and 'uhhhs' and whatever else sheep say—was interrupted by the law-bound reality of civilisation.

A policeman approached two riders ahead of me and asked them to take a breathalyser test. When an inebriated rider protested, he was yanked

off his horse in a most violent manner. After continued struggle, he was cuffed and escorted to the car, leaving his friend to take his horse. Don't drink and ride, I guess.

INTO THE FOLD

It was seven o'clock when we finally reached town with the sheep—which had been far more interested in eating than burning calories for fifteen kilometres—and as Ólafur had said, there were thousands of people waiting to witness 'réttir.'

That's the last part of this affair when all the sheep are packed into a circular enclosure and the farmers—or fishermen and pilots—and their family and friends jump in to sort their sheep from the mix.

To see owners pick out their Marilyn and Judy without so much as checking their ear marker is a sight to see, but after the twelve-hour long journey, we—and our horses—were knackered. It was time to go home—until next time. ☺

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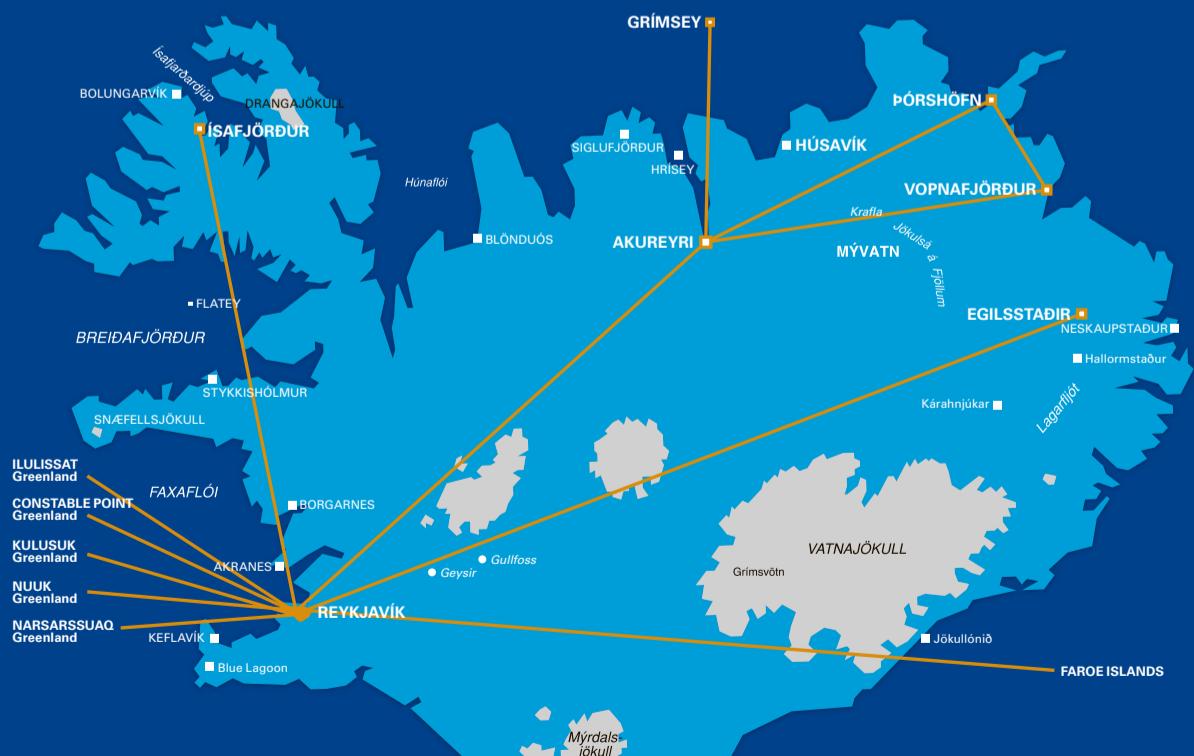
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So a great comedian is performing in Iceland and none of us can see him! What a fucking bummer! We hereby dare Mr. Stanhope to set up some sort of one-off performance while he's here. For fun. And profit. COME ON DOUG! YOU'VE GOT NOTHING BETTER TO DO!

Doug Stanhope Is Going To Prison In Iceland

If you see him around, buy the man a drink



Doug Stanhope is well-known for his irreverent and socially critical style of comedy. He is also visiting Iceland soon, specifically to perform at the Lítla-Hraun prison on September 25. We got in touch with him to learn more about the man and how he got this idea.

So, I understand you're going to do some stand-up at our prison. What was the inspiration for that?

Well, a friend of mine came over to my house and said, "You know where would be weird to go for Christmas? Iceland." I've always wanted to go to Iceland, and I know that the mayor [of Reykjavík, Jón Gnarr] is a comedian that got elected, so I look him up online and found a website that was all in Icelandic but also what looked like his e-mail address. So I shot off an e-mail, and somehow we got to talking about prisons ...

Somehow you got on the subject of prisons?

Yeah, he said he used to have a prison penpal in Arizona, where I live. And I

"Well, it's a prison. I'm sure they're not going to have cocktails available. Although, a prison in Iceland, they might have rations of cocktails. 'Only three Bloody Marys at breakfast, guys. You know the drill.'

said I used to have a death row penpal, so maybe that's something I should do when I go over there. Because you know, visit your prisons—I don't really want to do any touristy shit. I didn't want to do a show, because shows always ruin vacations. But at a prison? I can do whatever old shit I want. In fact, I'm going to have to go back and relearn old shit, just to have the fun of do-

ing old shit in front of people who don't know it's old shit. And that was before I knew about his series ['Night Shift', 'Day Shift' and 'Prison Shift']. We watched all three and the [Georg Bjarnfreðarson] movie. I didn't expect to like the series but it's fucking brilliant. It seemed Icelandic comedy would be more pie-in-the face stuff.

AN EXCUSE TO USE THE WORD 'FISTFUCK' IN A PARAGRAPH HEADLINE

What made you decide to use socio-political commentary as a vehicle for comedy as opposed to, say, observational humour?

I think closer to the truth would be that I use socio-political commentary as an excuse to deliver fistfuck jokes. They think it's the other way around. It's a scam, really. It's a cheap way to do dick jokes. Makes you look like you're really bright.

I think you're maybe being modest there. But in any event, usually when I see people take this tack for comedy, they tend to fall squarely in one political camp or another, but it doesn't seem you've planted your flag on any side.

No, and it's always disconcerting when you think someone is really, really bright, but you see that they are learning towards one branch or the other. That's the whole point of this, you know, it's all bullshit. I don't want to use names, but these comics are still playing this game that's so incredibly rigged. I don't fall into any camp, and I think that in the UK, they assumed that I was part of the

liberal camp, just because I was critical of George Bush. Doesn't mean I'm for you just because I'm against that. I'm pretty much against most forms of government.

Are you worried about some of your material not being able to translate well to the audience?

Oddly, for a gig we're doing for fun, with no money and no critics in the audience, yeah, I'm more worried about

this than the gigs I should worry about [laughs]. It's the truth. I go through all the material in my head, old and new, and I'm like "I don't know if any of this shit's gonna work."

Why would it make you more nervous to perform in a closed setting, without critics there to write reviews of the show?

I mean, they're putting them out. They didn't necessarily want to see me. I don't know if they even have a choice. They might be forced to sit through my show. Maybe as some sort of punishment for not doing their mess duties. Anyway, it always hurts to suck, and you're not supposed to suck later in your career, because you're playing to people who already like you. So if you go back and just eat a miserable dick, in a prison, doing it sober, too ... I can't remember the last sober show I did.

ONLY THREE BLOODY MARYS AT BREAKFAST, GUYS

Why are you going to be sober for this one then?

Well, it's a prison. I'm sure they're not going to have cocktails available. Although, a prison in Iceland, they might have rations of cocktails. "Only three Bloody Marys at breakfast, guys. You know the drill."

You could load up before performing, too.

Yeah, I'm sure I'll do that, too.

I wouldn't be too worried about the crowd. Believe it or not, it's not like a lot of comics or bands perform at the prison.

Oh, yeah, I've always wanted to play at a prison. I've just never had the opportunity. It's not a big circuit over here. When I first started out I had a friend who did a show in a prison. And the amount of trouble it took—getting background checked and all that—it just wasn't worth the trouble. It's not like they have a guy in charge of booking. I can't just call up a prison and be like, "Yeah, can I have the booking agent?"

The conventional wisdom has been that truly funny comedians are often angry, bitter, miserable people in their personal lives. Why do you think this is?

I don't know if that's necessarily true. It is for me, obviously. I envy the comics who can just go up there and say whatever's on their minds. I feel some pressure, which is probably completely

imaginary, to live up to expectations that probably aren't there. I guess anyone who drinks to excess, or parties to excess, probably spends half their time miserable just to make up for it. And a lot of these great comics did that. But yeah, a lot of comics just go home, make their wives some lasagne, and have normal lives. But they're pretty boring, too. I don't hang out with them, so I'm just assuming they exist.

ONE LITRE?

Why is comedy so hard?

It's harder to do for a duration like this. Because there's only so many things that strike me. I find myself trying to force myself to get angry or have an opinion about things. I just don't give a fuck about writing Libya jokes. In this day and age, there's one news story and one news story only on any given day. And it's the most important thing in the world, until a tsunami comes. I mean, when I saw that opening day [for football season] was going to be on the 10th anniversary of 9/11, I was just like ... oh, Jesus. We're sitting here boozing the TV, like 'Showtime At The Apollo' levels of boozing.

Is there anything Iceland's prisoners should be aware of regarding your material, or what you plan on bringing to them?

Tell them to stand behind me with a cup if I cough, because I'm going to be smuggling vodka. They're so tight with the duty-free over there. One litre?

Yeah, and that's actually an improvement over the previous law.

I know, I read that last July. It's the only thing I'm caught up on about Iceland. I don't know if a litre would stop my hands from shaking in the morning. ☺

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PAGE 14

I am not seeking re-election. People are coming to me and saying, "If you do this, that or the other, or if you don't do this that or the other, I am not voting for you again, Jón!" I usually reply with: "well, how do you know I am even running again?"

PAGE 12

'Meat soup' sounds like something out of a can, sounds like something you might serve prison inmates. Campbell's isn't even in it.

We give you the lowdown on Iceland's kjötsúpa, which is far more appetising than it sounds!

PAGE 20

The band dignified old Icelandic band rites of 'running around naked whilst on the road' while going from one small town to the next in their tour bus.

Dr Gunnar talks about Sálín hans Jóns míns, who rocked countryside balls in the '80s and '90s

PAGE 30

Oddly, for a gig we're doing for fun, with no money and no critics in the audience, yeah, I'm more worried about this than the gigs I should worry about...

Stand-up comedian Doug Stanhope is doing a gig at Iceland's maximum-security prison

PAGE 24

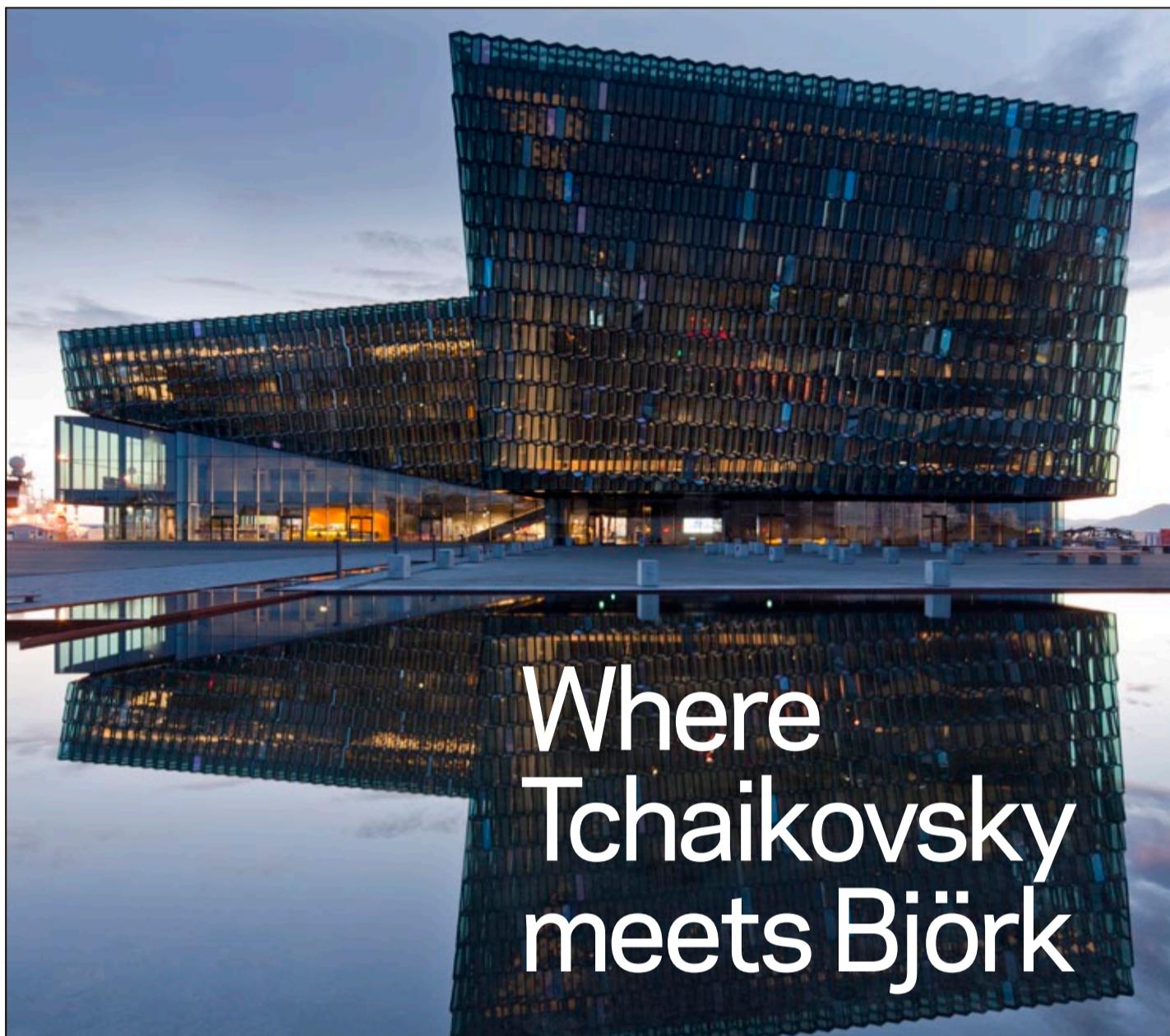
Hannes is an old-fashioned kind of guy that finds it hard to express love or emotions, but underneath his cold surface he is boiling with feelings. So the title of the film is also a metaphor for the main character.

Rúnar Rúnarsson on his film 'Volcano,' which is premiering at RIFF

PAGE 08

Not only did he turn his merciless gaze on the role played by "us Icelanders" in that total collapse of financial capitalism that seems to be taking place before our eyes—could one discern a slightly ironic grimace in his otherwise unchanging face when he spoke of the "totally mad policy" that had been upheld in this country in the period before (and maybe also after?) The Crash?

Noam Chomsky came to Iceland



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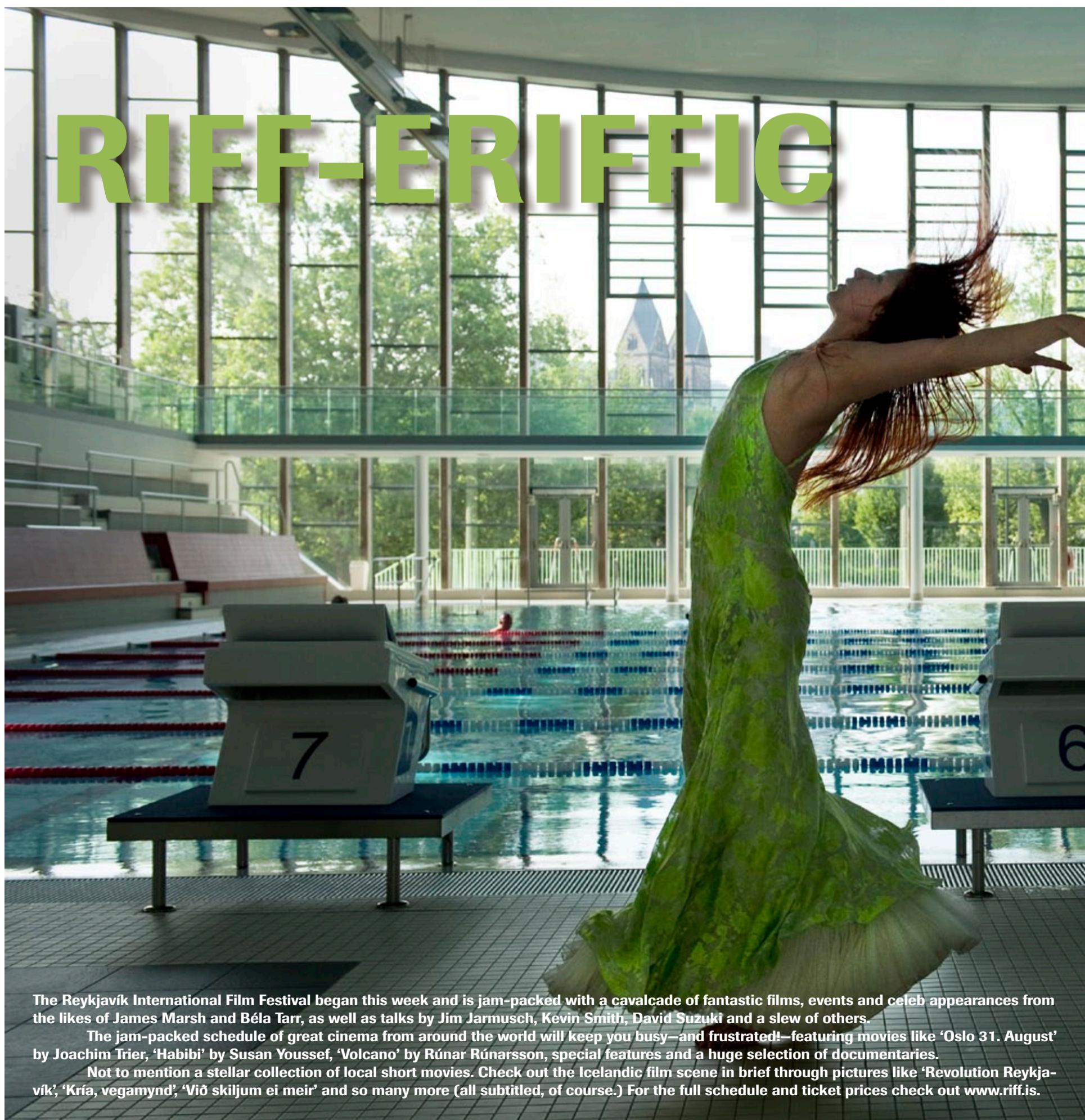


Music, Art, Films and Events Listings + Eating, Drinking and Shopping + Map

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL AND
ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue 15 - 2011

www.grapevine.is



RIFF-ERIFFIC

The Reykjavík International Film Festival began this week and is jam-packed with a cavalcade of fantastic films, events and celeb appearances from the likes of James Marsh and Béla Tarr, as well as talks by Jim Jarmusch, Kevin Smith, David Suzuki and a slew of others. The jam-packed schedule of great cinema from around the world will keep you busy—and frustrated!—featuring movies like ‘Oslo 31. August’ by Joachim Trier, ‘Habibi’ by Susan Youssef, ‘Volcano’ by Rúnar Rúnarsson, special features and a huge selection of documentaries. Not to mention a stellar collection of local short movies. Check out the Icelandic film scene in brief through pictures like ‘Revolution Reykjavík’, ‘Kría, vegamýnd’, ‘Við skiljum ei meir’ and so many more (all subtitled, of course.) For the full schedule and ticket prices check out www.riff.is.

MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN SEP & OCT

PRESCRIBING WITH LOVE
MUSIC FOR YOUR LIVE
EXPERIENCE

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

23 FRI

Bakkus
21:30 Hávaraleiki by Ásdís Sif. Free.
Followed by DJ Hashi

Barbara
23:00 DJ Kollster goes cray cray

Boston
00:00 Live music: Kári

Café Paris

23:00 Jazz

Celtic Cross
22:00 Live music until 4:30, 2-1
Tuborgs

Den Danske Kro

19:00 Tryggvi
00:00 Hreimur

Dubliner

21:30 Live music
00:00 Live band upstairs until 4:00

English Pub

21:30 Live music

Esja

22:00 Lounge DJ
00:00 DJ Bogi

Faktóry

22:00 Pétur Ben and Eberg, 1500 ISK

Gaukur á Stöng

22:00 Sveitaball with Með Læti

Glaumbar

00:00 Local DJ

Harpa

19:00 Rock musical Hair, 3,950 ISK.

Hvíta perlan

23:00 DJ Geiri Flóvent

Hressó

22:00 Silfur, followed by DJ Elli

Kaffibarinn

22:00 KGB plays

Prikið

22:00 Film Screening: Dead Snow

23:00 DJ Krúsi

Trúnó

22:00 Brazilian Night. Crazy offers on

Caipirinhas.

Vegamót

22:00 Gorilla Funk

24 SAT

Bakkus
22:00 Couch Film Fest Afterparty

23:00 DJ Maggi Lego

Barbara

20:00 Private Party until midnight.
Haffi haff's Wild Western Birthday
Rodeo with guests.

Boston

00:00 Live music: Gíslí Galdur

Café Haiti

21:00 Jussanan - Brazilian Jazz
Sessions

Celtic Cross

00:00 Live music until 4:30, 2-1 beer

Den Danske Kro

21:00-00:00 Live music with Tryggvi

00:00 Live music with Biggi

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

00:00 Live band upstairs until 4:00

English Pub

21:30

Esja

22:00 Lounge DJ

00:00 DJ Bogi

Gaukur á Stöng

23:00 Nevermind, Nirvana Tribute,
1,500 ISK.

Hvíta perlan

23:00 DJ Geiri Flóvent

Hressó

22:00 Silfur, followed by DJ Elli

Kaffibarinn

22:00 Alfons X

NASA

00:00 Helmet, "Hurts" album release

concert

Doors open at 23:00, 2,000 ISK.

Prikið

22:00 Film Screening: RAW

Salurinn

20:00 Johanna Guðrun, Eva Cassidy

Tribute

Trúnó

22:00 DJ Blue Screen

Vegamót

22:00 Jónah



AMFJ Record Release Concert

October 5, 21:00

Bakkus

Free

Local noise hero AMFJ celebrates the release of his second album, 'Bæn', at Bakkus with some, yet to be announced bands.

Since his debut album in 2009 he's been a prolific musician, playing gigs and putting on shows. Bæn is released on the label Wokalookalike and Electric Ethics is organising the show.

Get ready for a night of extreme noise and electro! See you there!

25 SUN

Bakkus
16:00 Ping-Pong Beer & Whiskey.
Discounts on drinks.

Barbara

21:00 Screening of RuPaul's Drag Race.
Drag queens and kings.

Celtic Cross

19:00 Game Night, cards until 00:00

Den Danske Kro

21:00 Live music with Tryggvi
Hangover night; Large Beer from draft
650,- after happy hour

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

Harpa, Kaldalón

20:30 Lockerbie, 2,000 ISK.

Prikið

22:00 Film Screening: House of
Satisfaction

26 MON

Café Rosenberg
20:30 Trio KremKex, 1500 ISK

Bakkus
21:00 RIFF: Animated Shorts Program,
Free.

Barbara

21:00 Screening of RuPaul's Drag Race.
Drag queens and kings.

Den Danske Kro

21:00-01:00 Hjálmar, shots for 500 ISK.

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

English Pub

21:30 Live music

Prikið

22:00 DJ News



Trúnó

21:00 Acoustic Monday – Live music/
various artists.

27 TUE

Bakkus

21:00 RIFF: Vincent Moon Portraits, Free

Barbara

21:00 Eurovision Pub Quiz with Reynir
Pór Reynisson

23:00 Hipster Night

Celtic Cross

19:00 Game Night 00:00

Den Danske Kro

21:00 Tryggvi

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

English Pub

21:30 Live music

Kaffibarinn

22:00 HalliValli

Priki

20:00 Game Night

22:00 DJ Blús

Salurinn

20:00 Felix Bergsson

Trúnó

20:00 Truck Night, special offers

28 WED

Bakkus

20:30 Pub Quiz, cash prizes, cheap
drinks, 500 ISK to play.

22:00 DJ Cool in the Pool

Bar 46

21:00 Swing Dancing Group

Barbara

20:30 Live Electro Concert #5

30

LJÓSMYNDASAFN
REYKJAVÍKUR
Reykjavík Museum of Photography

1981-2011

GRÓFARHÚS 6th floor

Tryggvagata 15, 101 Reykjavík

Opening hours:

12-19 mon-fri, 13-17 weekends

www.photomuseum.is

**FALL ERÍ
FAIL ERA**

SÓLEY WE SINK

Sóley (from Sin Fang and Seabear)
with her debut album. Out now on
CD and 2xLP (LP with etching by
Ingibjörg Birgisdóttir)

ADHD 2

So much more than an
instrumental jazz album,
contains traces of pop, rock,
shoe-gaze and progg!

KIMI records

Celtic Cross

9:30 Open mic, offers on beer until 00:30

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Pub Quiz, offer on beer, large draft beer 600.

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

English Pub

21:30 Live music

Gaukur á Stöng

22:00 Hellvar album release concert

Hafnarhús

20:00 Fagverk, free.

Kaffibarinn

22:00 RIFF Pub Quiz

Prikið

22:00 DJ Óli Hjörtur

21:00 Wall Street Night. Ridiculous offers on drinks from 50 ISK on wall street tempo.

29 THU**Bakkus**

22:00 DJ Einar Sonic

Barbara

20:00 Foundation of the Icelandic Eurovision Association

22:00 Eurovision star and DJ Haukur Johnson

Boston

22:00 Andrea Jóns

Celtic Cross

19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00

22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

Den Danske Kro

20:00 PolarBeer Bingo, Polarbeer for 650 ISK while the Bingo is being played

22:00 Magni

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

English Pub

21:30 Live music

Esja

22:00 Live music, jam session

Faktorý

23:00 FM Belfast, 1500 ISK

Gaukur á Stöng

22:00 Sagtmóðigur album release concert w/ Otto Katz Orchestra

Glaumbar

22:00 Corona night, Local DJ

Hafnarhús

20:00 Automatic instruments, Áki Ásgeirsson, Erla Axelsdóttir and Guðmundur Steinn Gunnarsson, free.

Harpa

19:00 Rock musical Hair, 3,950 ISK.

19:30 Melkorka and Mahler

Hvítá perlan

21:00 DJ Randomystic

Hressó

22:00 Trúbbarnir, Böddi & Davíð

Kaffibarinn

22:00 HúsDJús, followed by DJ Kári

Obladi Oblada

22:00 The Beat Boys

Prikið

22:00 Surprise Night

Salurinn

20:00 Þuriður Sigurðardóttir, and

Vanilla Men

Vegamót

22:00 DJ Jónas

30 FRI**Bakkus**

23:00 DJ Halli Valli

Barbara

22:00 DJ Dramatik

Boston

22:00 DJ KGB

**Keep It Down!***Hellvar album release show!*

September 28, 21:30

Gaukur á Stöng

500 ISK

Gall darn kids these days, with their tight pants and floppy hair! Making the loud music and raising all kinds of hell! Why back in our day... we did the same fucking thing. And so did the cool folks in Hellvar. They are still making so much damn noise that they went ahead and named their second album 'Stop That Noise'! Oh ho ho. Good one, you guys. So they're having a noisy show with Nolo and they'll be keeping the whole neighbourhood up. Dang blast it.

Café Paris

23:00 Jazz

Celtic Cross

19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00

22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

Den Danske Kro

19:00-22:00 Hjálmar

00:00 DJ Biggi

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

00:00 Live band upstairs until 4:00

English Pub

22:00 Live music

Esja

22:00 Lounge DJ

00:00 DJ Hlynur Mastermix

Gaukur á Stöng

23:00 Live music

Hafnarhús

12:15 Bernhard Gál and Belma Beslic-Gál from Vortex Project lecture, free.

20:00 Fengjastrútur, free.

Glaumbar

00:00 Local DJ

Harpa

19:00 Rock musical Hair, 3,950 ISK.

Hressó

22:00 Trums, followed by DJ Elli.

Kaffibarinn

22:00 Åskell plays

Prikið

23:00 DJ Gísli Galdur

20:00 Húsbandið

Trúnó

21:00 Champagne Glamour with DJ Glimmer, champagne on crazy glamorous offer.

Vegamót

22:00 DJ Benni

Barbara

21:00 Private Wedding Party until midnight

24:00 DJ Manny

Café Haiti

21:00 Jussanam - Brazilian Jazz Sessions

Café Paris

23:00 Jazz

Celtic Cross

00:00 Live music until 4:30, offers on beer.

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

00:00 Live band upstairs until 4:00

English Pub

21:30 Live music

Esja

22:00 DJ Hlynur Mastermix

Hressó

22:00 Live music

Gaukur á Stöng

23:30 Momentum with guests

Hafnarhús

21:00 Vortex Project, free.

Glaumbar

00:00 Local DJ

Kaffibarinn

22:00 Gísli Galdur

Prikið

23:00 DJ Árni Kocoon

Trúnó

21:00 Resident DJ

Vegamót

22:00 DJ Símon

2 SUN**Bakkus**

16:00 Ping-Pong Beer & Whiskey, discounts on drinks.

Barbara

21:00 Queer Movie and Date Night

Celtic Cross

19:00 Game Night, cards until 00:00

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

English Pub

21:30 Live music

Gaukur á Stöng

22:00 Live music

1 SAT**Bakkus**

21:00 RIFF: Sudden Weather Change, documentary and concert, free.

**From This Moment ...***Momentum, Angist and Moldun fundraiser show*

October 1, 19:00 all ages / 23:30 over 18

Faktorý

1.000 ISK

Try as we might, we just can't stop the outvasion! This time though it is for pure, honourable and true purposes—spreading the darkness of Icelandic METAL! Three of our local heavyweights are shipping off to France to growl and gurgle and hail the master of darkness and all that fun stuff. But even evil must pay a high price! And so they are having a tour fundraiser double-bill show to help them get where they need to go. Go wish them góða ferð!



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and Design



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except Mondays
www.gerdarsafn.is



Hafnarborg
The Hafnarfjordur
Centre of Culture
and Fine Art
Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður
Tel. +354 585 5790
Open every day 12-17
Thursdays 11-21
Closed on Tuesdays
www.hafnarborg.is

From Reykjavík

ROUTE
40
Art&Design



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and Applied Art
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www.hönnunarsafn.is

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Lagoon

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ORCHESTRA

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MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN SEP & OCT

Hafnarhús

15:00 Sternucker, free.

Prikið

22:00 Hangover movie night: Grand
Theft Auto, free popcorn.

Trúnó

20:00 Golden Oldies of Icelandic
Music with DJ Gamla

3

MON

Bakkus

22:00 Cinema Bakkus, showing
Sergei Parajanov's **'The Color of
Pomegranates'**

Barbara

21:00 Screening of RuPaul's Drag Race.
Drag queens and kings.

Celtic Cross

19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00
22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

English Pub

21:30 Live music

Hemma og Valda

21:00 Christoph Schiller, free.

Prikið

22:00 Local DJ

Trúnó

21:00 Acoustic Monday – Live music

4

TUE

Barbara

21:00 Hipster Night

Celtic Cross

19:00 Game Night, cards until 00:00

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

English Pub

21:30 Live music

Harpa

20:00 Paul Young

Obladi Oblada

22:00 The Beat Boys

Prikið

20:00 Game Night

22:00 Local DJ

5

WED

Bakkus

21:00 Robot Disco, electro DJs.

Bar 46

21:00 Swing dancing group

Barbara

21:00 Live Electro Concert

Bakkus

21:00 AMFJ record release concert

Celtic Cross

9:30 Open mic, offers on beer until 00:30

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

English Pub

21:30 Live music

Prikið

22:00 Local DJ

Trúnó

21:00 Disco Night

6

THU

Bakkus

22:00 DJ Two Step Horror

Bar 46

18:00 Oktoberfest with art and quiz
activities. Price TBA

Barbara

22:00 Dance Party with DJ Kollster

Celtic Cross

19:00 Happy Hour until 00:00

22:00 Offers on beer until 01:00

Dubliner

21:30 Live music

English Pub

21:30 Live music

Esja

22:00 Live music, jam session, free

Gaukur á Stöng

22:00 Live music

Glaumbar

00:00 Corona night, local DJ

Harpa, Eldborg Hall

19:30 Nordic Music Days, featuring
the Icelandic Symphony performing the
music of Einar Torfi Einarsson, 3.500 ISK.

Hressó

Troubadours Svanir and Halli

Obladi Oblada

22:00 The Beat Boys

Prikið

22:00 Breakbeat.is

Trúnó

21:00 Resident DJ

Vegamót

22:00 DJ Benni

4
Oct



FUGLABÚRIÐ—IT'S BACK!

The wonderful concert series where past meets present RETURNS!

Fuglabúrið featuring Ragnheiður Gröndal and Magnús Þór Sigmundsson

October 4, 21:00

Rósenberg

1.500 ISK

Your Friends At The Grapevine™ are proud to present—in conjunction with FTT and Rás 2—the return of Fuglabúrið ("The Birdcage"), a series of concerts that bring together some lovely young musicians with the senior generation that inspires them.

Shows take place at Reykjavík's favourite live venue, Rósenberg, and there are some pretty fabulous acts scheduled for this winter. The series kicks off on Tuesday October 4 with the enchanting Ragnheiður Gröndal performing alongside Icelandic music legend Magnús Þór Sigmundsson. The winter's program will also include performances by Snorri Helgason (alongside his musician father!), Benni Hemm Hemm and Jón Ólafsson and many more!

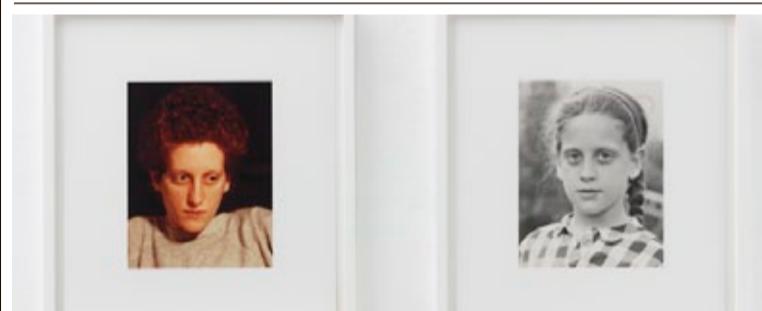
Follow the programme here in the Grapevine (or on Rósenberg's wonderful blackboard whenever you get there) and join in for some fun!

ONGOING

Vikingakráin

20:00 Let's Talk Iceland: Comedy Show.

22:00 ISK. Everyday



The Muse Receives

Roni Horn photo exhibit

Runs until October 29

Gallery i8, Tryggvagata 16

Free

When a land such as this one has such tremendously powerful imagery and natural traits, it is not to be taken for granted when it is bestowed the honour of musedom. For the past 30 years, multimedia visual artist and writer Roni Horn has held Iceland at the pinnacle source of her artistic influence and incorporating its ideas and majestic scenery into the collective body of her work. She even has a photographic installation on permanent display at the University of Akureyri (not to mention the whole 'Library of Water' in Stykkishólmur). Her latest collection will be on display at Gallery i8 for the month so don't miss the chance to see her work.

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A FULL LIST OF EVERY HAPPY HOUR OFFER IN IOI!

B5

Happy Hour every day from 17-19, beer and wine for 650 ISK.

Bakkus

Happy hour from 16-22, beer 400 ISK and wine glass 500 ISK.

Bar 11

Beers & shots for 450 ISK on Thursdays.

Bar 46

Happy Hour every day from 16-20, beers and shots are for 500 ISK.

Barbara

Happy hour from 20-22, large beer, white/red wine & selected shots, 500 ISK.

Barónspöbb

Beer is 500 ISK until 19.

Bjarni Fel

Mojitos 750 ISK every weekend from 23:00.

Boston

Happy Hour every day from 16-20, two for one on beer.

Celtic Cross

Happy Hour every day from 19-00, Tuborg for 500 ISK.

Den Danske Kro

Happy Hour every day from 16-19, two for one. Shots for 500 ISK every Monday.

Dillon

Happy Hour every day from 16-20, two for one.

Dubliner

Happy Hour every day from 12-19, two for one Polar Beer and a pint plus a shot of Hot N' Sweet shot for 1000 ISK.

Faktorý

Happy Hour every day from 17-20, large Egils Gull 500 ISK.

Hotel 101 Bar

Happy Hour is daily from 17-19, all drinks are 50% off.

Hôtel Holt Gallery Bar

Happy Hour every day from 16-19, beer and wine 50% off. Cocktail of the day is 50% off.

Íslenski Barinn

Every day, beer of the day for 650 ISK.

Kaffibarinn

Red wine special on Wednesday evenings at 600 ISK a glass.

Kaffi Zimsen

16:00-20:00 large beer and shot for 500 ISK every day.

Nýlenduvörverzlun Hemma & Valda

Happy Hour every day from 16-20, Viking Beers for 550 ISK.

Óliver

Happy Hour Fridays and Saturdays from 23-01, 3x1 cocktails.

Obla Di Obla Da

Happy Hour every day from 12-20, 500 ISK beers, 600 ISK shots and 800 ISK single + mixer.

Prikið

Happy Hour on weekdays from 17-19, large beer 400 ISK. Buy four large beers, get free nachos.

Trúnó

Happy Hour from 16-20, large beer, white/red wine & selected shots, 500 ISK.

Stofan

Refills on beer 600 ISK all day.

Pingholt bar (Center Hotel Pingholt)

Happy Hour every day from 17-19 as of June 1 (currently every Friday and Saturday), all drinks are half off.

ART

IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

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

OPENINGS

Couch Fest Film Festival

September 24

In Reykjavík, the cost will be 500 ISK per house, and 2000 ISK for a day pass with access to all 10 locations. Addresses and directions will be posted prior to the event on September 22.

Dwarf Gallery

2 Birds

September 17

A joint exhibition by Bergur Anderson & Baldwin Einarsson, graduate students from the Icelandic Academy Of The Arts.

Gerðuberg

A Feast of South American dances

September 24, 14:00

Music and dances from South America for the whole family

Harpa

Charlie Murphy's Acid Trip

October 1, 20:00

Charlie Murphy from the critically acclaimed hit television show 'Chappelle's Show' will be performing in Reykjavík to kick off his all-new tour "Charlie Murphy's Acid Trip" - also features comedian Freeez Luv a.k.a Paul Farmer (Def Comedy Jam).

Nordic House

Storytime

September 24, 11:00

Nordic House offers Finnish and Finnish-speaking people with story time once a month, reading to children and providing coffee for parents. All are encouraged to chat in Finnish!

Gerðuberg

Prumpuhóllin

September 25, 14:00

A play for children by Þorvaldur Þorsteinsson. In Icelandic. Admission 2000 ISK.

Literary coffee session

September 28, 20:00

Marín G. Hrafnssdóttir, great-granddaughter of Guðrún from Lund discusses the novelist's life and work.

Rounds of Joy

October 2, 14:00

Old and young sing and dance together in the spirit of the good old days. Open to all aged from 6 to 100. Admission 1200 ISK.

Hafnarborg

Family Tour and Workshop

September 25, 14:00

A guided tour for children and their parents around the current exhibitions In Between works by 16 different artists. The exhibition refers to the Curiosity cabinet, a Renaissance cultural phenomenon known to be the predecessor of modern public museums.

Earthward

September 29, 16:00

Earthward is a large and extremely well crafted volume of photographs by Sigurður Sigurðsson that do magnificent justice to Iceland's wildernesses with photos taken from the air.

Runs until October 23

Artists' Talk

October 2, 15:00

Ólöf Nordal and Olga Bergmann give a tour and discussion. Ólöf's work she explores the fabric of mythologies. Olga has addressed issues in her work related to natural sciences, as well as the role of today's museums.

Listamenn Gallery

Solo Exhibition

September 24

Paintings by Alexander Zaklynsky

Runs until October 4

Reykjavík Art Gallery

Cyprislandia

October 1, 17:00

Paintings by Demetris Neokleous, Panikos Tembriotis, Panayiotis Michael, Michalis Nikolaides, Elina Ioannou, Evelin Anastasiou, Athina Andoniadou, Katerina Neophytidou, Tony Masli.

Runs until October 23

Paintings by Hildur Hákonardóttir

Runs until October 9

The Culture House

Bundle of words

Art exhibition series in the café and shop are new and older works by artist Ragnhildur Jóhanns who interlaces visual art, literature and poetry in an innovative way by using old texts and poetry books to create her works.

Runs until November

Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurðsson

Exploring the life of Icelandic national hero Jón Sigurðsson, made especially accessible to children, families, and school groups

On permanent view

Medieval Manuscripts - Eddas and Sagas

Some of Iceland's medieval manuscripts on display. Guided tour in English on Mondays & Fridays at 15:00

On permanent view

Millennium - phase one

Selection of pieces from the collection of the National Gallery displaying a variety of works by Icelandic artists in the last two centuries.

On permanent view

The Library Room

The old reading room of the National Library. Displaying books of Icelandic cultural history dating from the 16th century to the present. Works include oldest published versions of the Sagas, Eddic Poems, and more

On permanent view

Einar Jónsson Museum

Einar Jónsson

The museum contains close to 300 art works spanning a 60 year career: carvings from the artist's youth, sculptures, paintings and drawings. A beautiful tree-clad garden adorned with 26 bronze casts of the artist's works is located behind the museum

On permanent view

Gallerí Ágúst

Picture Of Her

Hulda Vilhjálmisdóttir has been working on for the past few years. Her beautifully honest and almost naive approach to the painting has thrilled the guests of the gallery and she has a strong fan base in Iceland. Her women in the paintings are strong and have a story to tell, but it is the audience which needs to interpret the message.

Runs until September 25

Gallerí Fold

Marta Rosolska Photography

Runs until November 14

Oil paintings by Soffía Sæmundsdóttir

Runs until September 25

Oil paintings by Hrafnhildur Inga Sigurðardóttir

Runs until September 25



Hornið opened in 1979 was the first restaurant of its kind in Iceland, a restaurant with a true Italian atmosphere. Hornið is known for good food made out of fresh raw materials, good pizzas baked in front of the guests, good coffee and comfortable service.

Lunch offers every day.

Open every day from 11:00 to 23:30

For reservations call 551-3340

ONGOING

ASÍ Art Museum

Hildur Hákonardóttir

Den Danske Kro

* Mondays *

Shot's night - all shots ISK 400.-

* Tuesdays *

Live music and Beer Bingo night

* Wednesdays *

POP-QUIZ night (special offer on drinks) & Live music

* Thursdays *

Live Music / Scandinavian nights

* Fridays *

Live music / Sing-along nights

* Saturdays *

Live music / Sing-along nights

* Sundays *

Gljúfrasteinn
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Café Loki

in front of Hallgrímskirkja

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MAP

Places We Like

1 Á Næstu Grösum

Laugavegur 20B

Á Næstu Grösum is an all vegetarian restaurant right in the city centre that features a friendly atmosphere and fair prices. There is always at least one vegan soup on offer and the daily special portions are big and always satisfying. There is even some organic wine on offer.

2 Sægreifinn

Geirsgötu 8

Down by the Reykjavík harbour, Sægreifinn fish shop and restaurant is a pretty unique establishment. The menu features various fish dishes (including most of the "crazy Icelandic food" you'll want to tell your friends you had) and a rich portion of some pretty good lobster soup. Good food and welcoming service make this place a must-try.

3 Deli

Bankastræti 14

Getting a good slice of pizza on the go can be an utter ordeal. If you're not careful, you'll frequently wind up paying good money for a cardboard wafer that has been sitting in a heater box for a week. Not at Deli, however. Their slices are consistently awesome and fresh, the topping selection is intriguing and tasteful and, best of all, they're really cheap.

4 Hamborgarabúllan

Geirsgata 1

Considered by some to be the best real hamburger in Reykjavík, "Bullan" does serve some mysteriously delicious burgers, guaranteed to take the edge off any hangover.

5 Boston

Laugavegur 28

Like an older sibling to the fabled (now deceased) Sirkús, Boston is a warm and mellow second-floor bar on Laugavegur that plays host to the arty party crowd. The baroque wall dressings and deep, rich coloured décor make this bar feel pretty swank, but Boston also serves up some reasonably priced food earlier in the evening, so it's not too swank.

6 Dillon Rock Bar

Laugavegur 30

Led Zeppelin, Iron Maiden and Black Sabbath are what you'll often hear, along with more local and recent spin-offs as well as the odd live show. And if you have other requests, they are accepted and considered by resident DJ, Amma Rokksins, Iceland's grandmother of rock, still spinning her stuff on Saturday nights.

Useful numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **118**

Taxi: Hreyfill-Bærarleiðir: **588 5522**

BSR: **561 0000**

Tax Free Refund

Iceland Refund, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

Tourist information

Arctic Adventures, Laugavegur 11, tel: 562 7000

City Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions – Grayline Iceland,



7 Den Danske Kro

Ingólfssstræti 3

The Danish Bar is located on Ingólfssstræti, just off Laugavegur. They serve up Danish favourites, such as open faced smørrebrød sandwiches, Danish Tuborg beer and Akavit schnapps. Their 'Happy Hour', every day between 16–19, is a great source of fun. How to ask for a large beer in Danish: "Hej, jeg vil gerne ha' en stor øl, tak".

8 Þingholt Bar

Þingholtsstræti 5

Located in CenterHotel Þingholt, Þingholt bar is tucked away just outside of the mayhem that is Laugavegur on a weekend night. For a quieter evening, Þingholtbar is definitely worth a closer look. Show up between 17–19 for the daily happy hour.

9 Cintamani

Bankastræti 7

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

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 350 ISK for adults and children. Multiple day passes are available for purchase at select locations.

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 05:30 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.

Raggi from the band Árstíðir
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10 Handprjónasambandið

Skólavörðustígur 19

The Hand-knitting Association of Iceland's official store, Handprjónasambandið, sells wool products of uncompromising quality. The store features pullover sweaters, cardigans and other woollen accessories.

11 Fríða Frænka

Vesturgata 3

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

12 Spúútnik

Laugavegur 28b

This super hip vintage shop in the heart of downtown is quintessential to Icelandic fashion trends. Ranging from classic, national pattern sweaters to some of the craziest throwback fashions from eras we thought we were glad to see gone, Spúútnik can make a pair of flowered, day-glow parachute pants seem like a smart buy.

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:
Ráðhúskafla City Hall, Tjarnargata 11
Ground Zero, Frakkastígur 8, near Laugavegur 45
The Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15

The National and University Library, Arngrímsgata 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, Sundhóll Reykjavíkur, is an indoor one, located at Barónsstígur. That pool features a nice sunbathing area and some outdoor hot tubs. Opening hours: Monday to Thursday from 06:30-22:00, Friday from 06:30-20:00, Saturday from 08:00-16:00, and Sunday 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.

PUNJABI LUNCH & PUNJABI DINNER every day

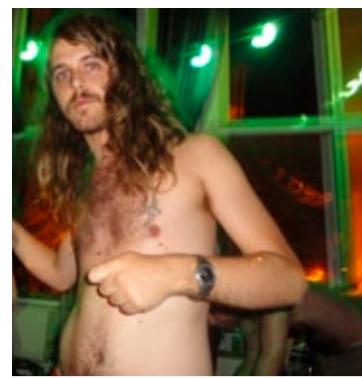
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Gaukur á Stöng, Tryggvagata 22

An old friend has returned to Reykjavík to show you a good time! Gaukur á Stöng, the seminal '80s and '90s hangout, now replaces the former Sóðóma on Tryggvagata. Once a venue famous for producing 'bjórlíki', Iceland's clever and safe equivalent to bathtub gin, the veteran social space reasserts itself as an edgy artistic presence in the city centre. Being a clear gathering place for the minds of the music industry and curious passersby alike, a journey to this prodigal pub promises to be a fun time. Welcome back, Gaukur á Stöng. Open Thursday through Saturday, 21:00 to 3:00.



A DAY IN THE LIFE

Atli Bollason

What's up, Atli?

I've been wrapping up the last part of my master's degree in English literature. I'm writing a small paper about the Coen Brothers' use and abuse of the frontier myth as it has come down through American history and politics over the last century in four of their films. Apart from that, I'm listening to a lot of haze music and trying to lead a hazy lifestyle.

EARLY MORNING >

I love to sleep, so preferably I will spend early morning in bed. Once I do get up, however, I like to eat AB-mjólk or skyr and a flatkaka with hangikjöt while I sift through my e-mails. If it's a weekend, lunch has already rolled around by the time I get out of bed.

LUNCH >

Oftentimes, I will go for a hamburger at Búllan (Bankastræti 5, and other locations). At first I didn't really get all the fuss about Búllan, but those days are long gone. Especially when you substitute the soda for one of their delicious milkshakes. Just don't forget to add your own pickle and mustard.

MID-DAY >

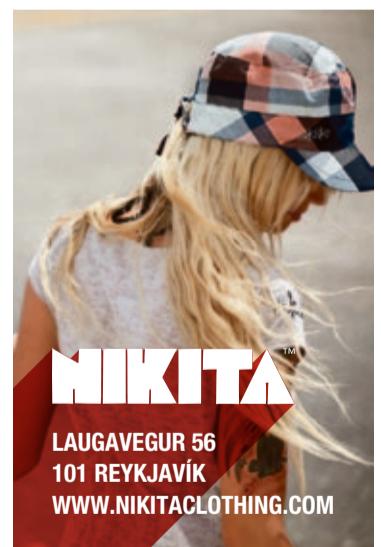
Mid-day is the time to haze out, so go find a terrace or a coffee shop or, better yet, a residency where you can just sort of sit around with your friends and listen to tracks and off-handedly throw around philosophical remarks mixed in with comments about girls and aesthetics (separately or jointly). This is also easy to do in a swimming pool or steam bath.

AFTERNOON >

Go for a run on the coast. Then see a film! Films are great, and they're even better on the big screen. The next few days will be governed by whatever RIFF has to offer, but if that's not happening when you read this, repertory/independent theatre Bíó Paradís (Hverfisgata 54) tends to have decent programming.

HEAT OF THE NIGHT >

Dance. I don't care where you go, just make sure that the bass drum is pounding and that the drops are epic. If the music is hazy too, that's a massive bonus. Faktory (Smíðustígur 6) has been supplying nights like these, so go find out what they're doing.





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Jan-Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct-Dec		
	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00		
			10:00	10:00	10:00				
13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00		
			14:00	14:00	14:00				
			17:00*	17:00	17:00	17:00	17:00*		
			20:30**	20:30	20:30	20:30**			

* From 15 May to 15 September

** From 15 June to 15 August

Other Elding adventures

EL-07 Viðey ferry

on Saturdays and Sundays from 1 September to 14 May

EL-08 Imagine Peace Tours

Daily at 20:00 from 9 October to 8 December

EL-09 Lennon Tribute in Viðeyjarstofa Restaurant

9 October, 21 October, 4 November and 18 November



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OPENING HOURS : 11³⁰-23⁰⁰

ART

IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER



Birds Of Plastic Feather

2 Birds

September 22-25, 15:00-18:00

Gallery Dwarf, Grundarstígur 21

Free

A slanted floor. A 1.5 metre ceiling. The hanging smell of fresh paint over dirty cellar walls. Seemingly haphazardly placed light bulbs sidling up to your temples and catching you off-guard. Printed illustrations of the absurdist. And oh, the avatar. That duck. That monstrous plastic creature full of air... it is everywhere. In this body-stash of a cellar, you might not fly, but you will find wings.

If all of that just went right over your head, we'll put it in plain English: newly graduated artists Bergur Anderson and Baldvin Einarsson are putting on a joint exhibition that you may want to check out!

Gallerí Tukt

Hildur Eivalíð Unnarsdóttir

Exhibition inspired by Mother Nature.
Feminine figures and colours of nature.
Runs until October 1

Gerðuberg

Game Works

Designers, craftsmen and artists present works inspired by games and amusement in one way or another
Runs until November 6

New art Iceland 2011

An exhibition of oil paintings by the naïve artist Ármann Kummer Magnússon in the Boginn exhibition area
Runs until October 16

Without consideration

An exhibition in the Cafeteria of pastels by Stefán Hermannsson
Runs until October 9

Stone – scissors – paper and the keys to heaven

An exhibition in the Collectors' Corner
Runs until June 22, 2012

Handicraft and coffee session

October 5, 20:00
The artist Nadine presents how to make glass pearls, free.

Iðunn, the traditional poetry society

October 5, 20:00 practice session, 20:00
October 7 society meeting 20:00

Practice and performance of traditional Icelandic poetry.
Runs until May

Opportunities in handicrafts and art production

October 6, 17:00
Sunneva Hafsteinsdóttir, manager of Crafts and Design / Handwerk og hönnun, talks about opportunities for commercial projects based on the arts and crafts.
Runs until November 6

Hafnarborg

In Between

The exhibition refers to the Curiosity cabinet, a Renaissance cultural phenomenon known to be the predecessor of modern public museums.
Runs until October 23

Works from the collection

Runs until September 25

Hönnunarsafn – Museum of Design Our Objects - from the Museum's Collection

Objects acquired by the Museum since its opening in 1998 will be put on display in the exhibition area. Objects include Icelandic and foreign furniture, graphic design, textiles, ceramics, and glass.
Runs until October 16

i8 Endless Longing, Eternal Return

Ragnar Kjartansson's works pushes himself and his audience to physical and psychological limits, suspending them in an ambivalent state of happiness and mourning, beauty and horror, humor and drama.
Runs until October 16

Robert Mapplethorpe

Runs until October 9

Harpa

Icelandic Opera: The Magic Flute
The great adventure is about to begin -

the Icelandic Opera stages its first opera performance, self-Magic whistle by WA Mozart, in his new premises in Harpa. Oct 9, 20:00, Oct 22, 20:00, Nov 5, 20:00 12000 ISK / 4000 ISK

The Icelandic Printmakers Association

Night Cometh, Philip Van Keuren

Exhibition
Comments on the mortality of man
Runs until October 2

Knitting Iceland

Come and knit at Laugavegur 25, 3rd floor, every Thursday, 14:00 - 18:00
On permanent view

Latin Dance Studio, Faxafen 12

Guided Practice
Argentine tango, Register by phone 821 6929 or email tango@adventure@gmail.com, 500 ISK for students, 800 ISK for others. Six week courses are also available
Sundays from 17:30-19:30

The Living Art Museum

Grassroots IX
Exhibiting the works of Bryndís Björnsdóttir, Helga Björg Gylfadóttir, Irene Ósk Bermudez, Klængur Gunnarsson, Kolbrún Ýr Einarsdóttir, Kristín Rúnarsdóttir, Sigríður Tulinius and Sigurður Atli Sigurðsson
Runs until October 30

National Gallery of Iceland

Strides
Changes in Icelandic painting from the late 1800s to the 2000s
Runs until December 31, 2012

Then And Now

The exhibition is an attempt to emphasise the main features of Icelandic Modern and Contemporary art. The exhibit is in connection with 'History of Icelandic Art, from late 19th century to the beginning of the 21st century, being published by the National Gallery of Iceland and Forlagið Publishers
Runs until December 31

The National Museum

The Making of a Nation - Heritage and History in Iceland
This exhibition is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

On permanent view

BE YE WELCOME, MY GOOD FRIENDS!

Collection of carved Nordic drinking horns
Runs until December 31

Ásfjall

Collection of Pétur Thomsen's photographs
Runs until October 2

Kurt Dejmø exhibition

Collection of Kurt Dejmø's photographs
Runs until October 2

The Nordic House

The Library
The collection centres on new Nordic literature, both fiction and non-fiction. The library lends out novels, academic publications, audio books and more
On permanent view

ART

IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

Reykjavík Art Museum

Ásmundarsafn

From Sketch to Sculpture - Drawings by Ásmundur Sveinsson

The exhibition offers a first insight into the rich collection of drawings by the sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, as the Reykjavík Art Museum has recently completed the digital registration of about 2000 drawings that the artist bequeathed to the Museum.

Runs until April 22, 2012

Magnús Árnason - Homage

Árnason's works, whether in his sound-pieces, sculptures or performances, stand on a vague line between the real and unreal, fiction and facts. In his recent work, he has worked with nature and natural history; moving away from the mythological references seen in his earlier work.

Runs until April 22, 2012

Hafnarhús

Erró - Drawings

The exhibition consists of 180 drawings Erró has done since 1944 until the present day.

Runs until August 26, 2012

Attersee - Dance in Shirt-Valley

The museum was gifted 63 works by Christian Ludwig Attersee from 1970 - 2010. Most of them are on display

Runs until November 6

Faster and Slower Lines - From the Collection of Pétur Arason and Ragna Róbertsdóttir

The exhibition explores the extensive element of the drawing through a selection of two- and three dimensional works by fifty Icelandic and international artists.

Runs until November 20

Tiger Butter - Ósk Vilhjálmisdóttir

In this exhibition Ósk Vilhjálmisdóttir criticizes both the society's generally accepted values and the demand for a steady stream of progress. She exposes the tension and anger that has been seething in Icelandic society since the collapse in 2008.

Runs until November 20

D21 Hildigunnur Birgisdóttir

Hildigunnur Birgisdóttir experimental works are often based on games, which in turn are based on rules and the rules are of course systems.

Runs until November 20

Kjarvalsstaðir

A New Art Emerges

What happens when a new paradigm in art takes over from another? Does one simply merge into another or are there conflicts and cross currents? The exhibition explores the exciting new art produced in this period and atmosphere on the cultural scene as a new art began to emerge in the first half of the century.

Runs until November 7

Jóhannes S. Kjarval - Key Works

Reykjavík Art Museum draws on its extensive collection of works by Jóhannes S. Kjarval for ongoing exhibitions at Kjarvalsstaðir. The exhibition in the Kjarval Gallery features key works from the museum's collection.

Runs until January 15, 2012

Reykjavík City Museum

Reykjavík 871 +/- 2 (The Settlement Exhibition)

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 10:00-17:00, 600 ISK per adult,

300 ISK for children (children under 12, free) and 450 ISK per person in groups (10+)

On permanent view

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Japan After The Flood

Photos of the damage caused by the March 2011 tsunami taken by Egill and Yoko Arai Thordarson

Runs until October 7

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 and the growth of the Reykjavík Harbour

On permanent view

The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn

Display of vessel that took part in all three Cod Wars

On permanent view

Baiting Bright Fishhooks

Exhibition about the Little Fishing Book by Jón Sigurðsson, containing guidelines to fishing equipment and processing.

Runs until December 31

The Call of Sagas

A exhibition from Finland about a adventurous voyage in an open boat from Finland to Iceland, honoring the old viking shipping routes.

Ongoing

The Watercolours of Ólafur Thorlacius

Ólafur Þór worked with the Icelandic Coast Guard for many years as a mapmaker. He is now retired and paints beautiful watercolors in his free time.

Ongoing

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

50 Years Of Photography

An exhibition of photograph Marc Riboud spanning 50 years of his career as a photo journalist. His work has appeared in Life, Géo, National Geographic, Paris Match and Stern

Runs until January 8, 2012

Leifur Þorsteinsson exhibition

The fourth part of Leifur Þorsteinsson's photo-series is dedicated to portrait photography. The exhibition consists of 20 b/w photos, mostly shot around 1980, of Iceland's most prominent artists in that period.

Runs until November 3

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Hryggjarstykki (meaning "Backbone", referring to a lost medieval manuscript of Kings Sagas)

Exhibition of Svava Björnsdóttir's new sculptures, made of compressed paper, and selected sculptures of Sigurjón Ólafsson

Runs until November 2

Spark Design Space

Katrín Ólina

September 16

Graphic artist and illustrator Katrín Ólina exhibits her work, including a 4 x 6 metre rug

Runs until November 16

SÍM (CIA) House

Margrét Zóphóniasdóttir

SÍM Artist Margrét Zóphóniasdóttir shows off her work.

Runs until September 28

Skaftfell, Seyðisfjörður

Check www.skaftfell.is for latest shows

Sláturnúsið, Egilsstaðir

Check www.slaturhusid.is for latest shows

HOW TO DRIVE ON GRAVEL ROADS

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

GRAVEL ROADS, BLIND HILLS & BLIND CORNERS



Where paved road suddenly changes to gravel is a common place for accidents to occur on rural roads. The main reason is that drivers do not reduce speed before the changeover to gravel, and consequently lose control.

Slow down and move your car as far to the right as is safely possible when approaching another car coming on a gravel road from the opposite direction.

Blind hills, where lanes are not separate, should be approached with caution. The same applies to many blind curves.

Loose gravel on road shoulders has also caused a great number of accidents.

See further instruction on www.drive.is



ROAD TRAFFIC DIRECTORATE



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POLITICS AND FLAVOUR

Grænn Kostur

Skólavörðustígur 8, 101 Reykjavík

What We Think: Filling home-cooking that happens to be vegetarian. The rennet complaint goes out to all the vegetarian places out there.

Flavour: Yummy pies, stews, soups and cakes.

Ambiance: Well-staffed cafeteria. Your mom will like it.

Service: Well informed and matter-of-fact

"I would never diss someone for being a fucking broccoli head"

- Immortal Technique (Beef & Broccoli)

Vegetarians and vegans are often seen as needlessly confusing flavour with politics. The more sanctimonious among them have certainly gotten to me a couple of times in the past. But at the end of the day, vegetarians and vegans have my sympathy and support—ethics simply are an unavoidable part of cuisine and now more than ever. The ethics of production and distribution may very well be the last meaningful conversation to be had over food. And the conclusions of that dialogue are still to turn a blind eye, embracing the current standards without concern or adapting your palate to the political realities.

Vegetarians/vegans have reached a conclusion and the ones I know are very reasonable about that conclusion. They are aware of the public perception

(in those areas where vegetarians are a minority, which is by no means a given) and are friendly and adaptive people. So, I'll leave the macho chest-thumping to Jeremy Clarkson and Gordon Ramsey (I would also be angry at the world if I looked like a pickled boxing glove). Grænn kostur is advertised as a vegetarian place but there are two reasons it needn't be considered as such. First of all, at the heart of it it's a place with basic home cooking and big portions. The food is vegetable-based but just unhealthy enough to keep everyone smiling. I'm not a vegetarian—I just go there to stuff my belly.

Secondly, and this is a more serious reason, Grænn kostur can't be considered a true vegetarian restaurant because, like most vegetarian places in Iceland, they use Icelandic cheese and Icelandic cheese is made using natural calf rennet (which is a by-product of veal production). I am not singling Grænn kostur out, and they do of course offer a dairy-free option for vegans. But a vegetarian dish containing cheese made from baby cow stomachs has to be advertised as such. There is no reason to assume that a vegetarian would know this going into the place and for Hindu and Buddhist vegetarians this would be considered a grave oversight.

Enough preaching. What's the food like? This is actually my favourite vegetarian restaurant out of the local bunch. Sure it does have that middle-aged lady vibe which the old Icelandic veggie places all have. To be expected since I suspect a large portion of veggie restaurant patrons in Iceland are older people moving to a fibre-rich diet for their cardiovascular health.

The daily specials at Grænn kostur are listed on their website in advance (www.graenkkostur.is). There's a nice variety of Latin-American, Mediterranean and Asian dishes, and a full plate goes for 1.490 ISK, which in Iceland is dead cheap considering how much you have to pay for vegetables here (a half portion is 1.090 ISK). Grænn kostur offer a vegan version of most of their dishes.

I ordered the vegetarian lasagne, which came low on spinach, heavy on basil pesto. Salad, rice and a raw beet and apple salad on the side. The lasagne and salad were delicious, but I am a huge fan of the beet and I'm of the opinion that it should never be served raw. I also must say that I look forward to the date when vegetarian restaurants start serving edible bread. Last time I checked, a decent yeast culture was vegetarian.

For dessert I had a fantastic slice of vegan chocolate cake, a lovely egg- and butter free surprise. The owner also came to my table and brought two of their most popular dipping sauces, a delicious fig relish and a nondescript sauce I found to be much too salty.

Overall I really like Grænn kostur. Aside from the rennet issue, and I will be only too happy to issue a statement if they switch to vegetarian cheese or make a clear mention of it, I find the place to be welcoming, affordable and a great addition to the usual meaty grub. I would certainly choose Grænn kostur over the 1.800 ISK flavourless chicken breast on a bed of brown iceberg salad that seems to be the current favourite in downtown Reykjavík. ☺

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REVIEWS



FUNKY CHICKEN

Haninn

Suðurlandsbraut 46, 108 Reykjavík



What We Think: Grilled chicken. Tastier and slightly healthier. By default, the best fast food chicken option in Iceland.

Flavour: Spicy, sweet&sour or BBQ. Like Nando's.

Ambiance: Diner-chain feel. Like Nando's.

Service: Fast and friendly but a tiny bit defensive.

"You know I don't eat pork, not because I'm a Muslim—I just don't really like it. But I really will fuck a bird up"

— Immortal Technique ('Beef & Broccoli')

My favourite chicken place when I was living in New York was called Kennedy Fried Chicken, down the street from Otto's Shrunken Head. Not because it was good chicken—truthfully it was disgusting—no, I liked it because the suffering I would feel the day after provided a karmic balance to the way I assume the chickens must have been treated.

I'm not a big fan of chicken, especially now that the body worship culture in Iceland has voted that chicken breasts are the only acceptable foodstuff, sent down from the heavens to maximize ripped- and sixpackness.

People assume they are gaining a health benefit because they have chosen the most tasteless cut. Just the opposite, the dark meat is generally richer in high quality protein (makes sense, since those are the bits the chicken uses

to move, even if it's just inside his tiny steel cage), the calorie count is roughly the same and although it is, on average, 35% leaner, people more than make up for it by slathering it with sauces and marinades.

The worst is that Icelanders seem perfectly willing to delude themselves that this massive chicken demand isn't being met by factory farming methods. Haninn does not offer free-range chicken but the owner did use the opportunity to lecture me about the heightened risk of infection in free-range chicken by quoting the TV series 'Bullshit!' (everything you need to know about the accuracy of that show is in the title). He also insisted that the American style CAFO factory farming doesn't exist in Iceland. He is patently wrong about both, but the Grapevine should address that at length another time.

Ethical treatment aside, Haninn does offer a transfat-free, non-deep-fried, BBQ chicken which is saner and healthier than anything on offer at a certain unnamed fried chicken chain (call it 'Kompletely Fukd Chicken'). And a little bit goes a long way, as Haninn is offering the best fast food chicken I've tasted in Reykjavík. But then that might not be saying much since there is no one doing a great southern-fried chicken in Iceland. At least at Haninn the chicken tastes of something other than a wasted 'oppoultunity' (poultry opportunity—you're welcome).

Interior design is very franchise-ready, which is the norm with Icelandic fast food places. Few are in this without intentions of spreading their wings. It's basically an Icelandic version of the UK chain Nando's.

All dishes come with a side. Three pieces of chicken come in at 1,390 ISK (I actually received four pieces as they threw in an extra wing) and considering that you probably won't need to eat another big meal that day, I'd say that's a fair price.

The omnipresent chicken breasts go for a rich 1,790 ISK, while a chicken burger is at 1,390. Half and whole chicken, chicken salad, wings. That's the whole menu right there. Everything grilled, even the whole chicken. But everything has been partially pressure-steamed beforehand (as opposed to "pressure-fried" like our friends at Kompletely's do).

Haninn only offers two sides—fries and rice—and being a place that prides itself on its lack of transfats, the French fries were predictably not up to much. Haninn definitely should look into expanding its selection of sides. But they do get a big plus for making "kókosbolur" their only dessert option (uncooked meringue in a thin coconut-chocolate shell). They also have free coffee! ☕

✉ RAGNAR EGILSSON
⌚ HVALREKI

A NOTE ON OUR RATINGS SYSTEM:

Ratings run from zero to five Gs and reflect the overall experience of the reviewer. A fast food place will be compared to other fast food places and rated accordingly. Note that 2.5 Gs is not a failing grade—it means 'average'. A solid 5 Gs means 'as good as it gets'. Zero means food poisoning. You get the idea.



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