



**RECURRENCE**  
**Iceland Symphony Orchestra**  
Daníel Bjarnason, conductor

ISO PROJECT VOL. 1

1	Thurídur Jónsdóttir <b>Flow and Fusion</b>	[11:03]
2	Hlynur A. Vilmarsson <b>bd</b>	[11:33]
3	María Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir <b>Aequora</b>	[12:07]
	Daníel Bjarnason <b>Emergence</b>	
	4 I. Silence	[3:02]
5	II. Black Breathing	[4:51]
6	III. Emergence	[9:06]
7	Anna Thorvaldsdóttir <b>Dreaming</b>	[15:51]
	total time	[68:46]

Recording new Icelandic symphonic music is one of the most important roles of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. Collaborating with Sono Luminus gives us the possibility to reach further and let Icelandic music be heard.

Arna Kristin Einarsdóttir  
ISO Managing Director





***I remember visiting Iceland*** for the first time as vividly as if it were yesterday. It was a short trip, much of it spent marching from one space to another inside Harpa, the glittering conference center and concert hall on Reykjavik's harbor. You can't know an unfamiliar land from an armchair, of course, but I made the most of a brief stay. I stood chest-deep in sky-blue water in a man-made lagoon on a lava field, ducking under a footbridge during a sudden snow flurry. I marveled at geysers and waterfalls, offered respects at ancient churches, and walked across a narrow gorge between two continental plates: one minute, North America; the next, Eurasia.

Like many travelers, I was drawn to Iceland by its culture – in my case, music. Ever since I'd first heard the Sugarcubes, an alt-rock band like no other, I'd been fascinated by a sonic culture that seemed rooted in tradition, yet defiantly askew: Björk and Sigur Rós, GusGus and múm, Valgeir Sigurðsson and amiina. (I'll confess that *Cold Fever*, a paradoxically whimsical and haunting 1995 road film directed by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson, intensified my desire to visit.)

What got me on an airplane, though, was being stunned by the music of Anna Thorvaldsdottir, a young composer whose work indicated Iceland's contemporary composers might be engaged in a similar balance of convention and otherness. Thorvaldsdottir, who finished

her formal training in San Diego, told me once that she viewed herself as a resident of the world. Even so, I needed to experience the place she'd come from.

Can you hear a country in its music? Does Venice echo in Gabrielli's buoyant antiphonies? Can you glimpse Bohemia in the lyrical effusions of Dvorak and Smetana? Does the United States of America sound like Copland's heartland or Ellington's Harlem? Like Peter Garland's desert, or John Luther Adams's tundra? There can be no definitive answer; every traveler usually brings personal baggage.

I reckon that I *do* sense Iceland's mutable skies and rugged terrain in the slow-moving luminosity of Thorvaldsdottir's *Dreaming*. Likewise, the static/chaotic duality in Daniel Bjarnason's shivering, rumbling *Emergence* evokes awesome powers coalescing in some act of primal creation. Thuridur Jónsdóttir's *Flow and Fusion*, with its seamless blend of acoustic and electronic sounds, conjures the ineffable chiaroscuro of Iceland's sky.

Maria Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir, known best for her work in the chamber group amiina, musters rich colors and textures with a full orchestral palette for *Aequora*, yet never loses sight of the telling detail: a cloud's glowing nimbus, a glinting seam in a rock face, a ripple of surface tension. Even the barbaric jolts, judders, slides, and shrieks

of Hlynur Aðils Vilmarsson's *bd* seems to suggest the seismic forces that shaped and continue to shape Iceland's profile.

Maybe you'll see these pieces as I do. Maybe not. What matters is that you seize the opportunity to hear these superb accounts of works by some of the finest young composers Iceland has produced, nurtured, and served to inspire.

— Steve Smith

*Steve Smith is director of publications for National Sawdust in Brooklyn, New York, and wrote previously for The New York Times, Time Out New York, and the Boston Globe.*









ICELAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 11



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## ICELAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1950. Widely praised for its performances and recordings, each year the orchestra presents a full season of subscription series, school and family concerts, and concerts devoted to modern music. Since 2011, the orchestra's home has been Harpa Concert Hall in Reykjavík.

Yan Pascal Tortelier assumed the post of Chief Conductor in September 2016, a role previously held by conductors such as Jean-Pierre Jacquillat, Petri Sakari, Rumon Gamba, Ilan Volkov and Osmo Vänskä, who currently holds the title of Principal Guest Conductor. Vladimir Ashkenazy has conducted the orchestra regularly since the early 1970s and now holds the position of Conductor Laureate. Daniel Bjarnason is the orchestra's Artist-in-Residence and is active in a variety of roles as conductor, composer, and educator.

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra has recorded for a number of international labels, including Deutsche Grammophon, BIS, Chandos

and Naxos. The orchestra's complete cycle of Sibelius symphonies under the direction of Petri Sakari was praised by critics. Most recently, the orchestra recorded the complete orchestral works of Vincent d'Indy with Rumon Gamba for the Chandos label. The first volume of the series was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance.

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra has toured in Europe and the United States. Concerts abroad include appearances at the BBC Proms and at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., as well as two concerts in Carnegie Hall, in 1996 and again in 2000. Writing in the *New York Times*, critic Alex Ross described the orchestra's performance under Osmo Vänskä as "sensational... one of the finest Sibelius performances I have encountered."



## DANIÉL BJARNASON

Conductor

Icelandic conductor, composer and curator Daniél Bjarnason is currently artist-in-residence with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and composer-in-residence at the Muziekgebouw Frits Philips in Eindhoven. Daniél's composing and conducting takes him around the world working with, amongst others, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Rambert Dance Company, Britten Sinfonia, So Percussion and the Calder Quartet. Daniél's first opera for the Danish National Opera in Aarhus, *Brothers*, will be premiered in August 2017.

Daniél's music has been performed by conductors such as Gustavo Dudamel, John Adams, André de Ridder, James Conlon, Louis Langrée and Ilan Volkov. Daniél's versatility has also led to collaborations with a broad array of musicians outside the classical field including Sigur Rós, Ben Frost and Brian Eno. More at [danielbjarnason.net](http://danielbjarnason.net).



## MARÍA HULD MARKAN SIGFÚSDÓTTIR

María Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir (b. 1980) is a composer and a violinist. She graduated as a violinist from the Reykjavik College of

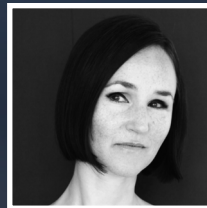
Music in 2000 and with a Bachelor's degree in composition from the Iceland Academy of the Arts in 2007. As well as composing her own music, María has performed music around the world with her band, amiina, as well as recorded and collaborated with a range of other bands and artists. María has also composed music for films and dance and her compositions have been

performed in Iceland, USA, Australia and Europe. Recent work includes film scores, *1001 – for bowed metals* and *Aequora*, commissioned by the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and *Sleeping Pendulum*, *Clockworking* and *Spirals*, composed for the ensemble Nordic Affect.

## ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR

Icelandic composer Anna Thorvaldsdottir works with large sonic structures that reveal the presence of a vast variety of sustained sound materials, reflecting her sense of imaginative listening to landscapes and nature. Anna's music is frequently performed at major venues and music festivals internationally, by today's top orchestras and ensembles. The Iceland Symphony Orchestra has previously

premiered and recorded several of her orchestral works, including *Aeriality* and *Dreaming*. Anna's albums, *Rhizōma* (Innova), *Aerial* (Deutsche Grammophon), and *In the Light of Air* (Sono Luminus) have all been included on "Best of" lists including those of *The New York Times*, *National Public Radio*, *The New Yorker*, *Boston Globe*, and many more. Anna is the recipient of the prestigious Nordic Council Music Prize for her work *Dreaming* and The New York Philharmonic's Kravis Emerging Composer Award. She holds a PhD from the University of California in San Diego. More at [annathorvalds.com](http://annathorvalds.com).



## THURÍÐUR JÓNSDÓTTIR

Thuríður Jónsdóttir (1967) composer and flutist, studied at the Reykjavík Conservatory of Music. She then moved to Italy, studying

composition and electronic music at the Bologna Conservatory and with Franco Donatoni at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena and Alessandro Solbiati at the Accademia di Novara. In her works, Jónsdóttir has frequently tackled the relation between acoustic and electronic sounds. In that regard we might mention *INNI*



- *musica da camera* for baroque violin and sound curtains of an infant murmur, *Flutter* for flute, orchestra and field recordings of insects and *Winter* for voice and electronics. Her compositions are performed at festivals in Europe and USA. She has received commissions from Radio France, NDR, LA Philharmonic among others. Jónsdóttir was awarded a *Civitella Ranieri Music Fellowship* in 2016 and nominated for the *Nordic Council Music Prize* in 2006, 2010 and 2012.

### HLYNUR A. VILMARSSON

Hlynur Aðils Vilmarsson has enjoyed a diverse career in music, be it as a member of Icelandic rock bands or the composers' collective s.l.á.t.u.r. Infused with a passion for experimentation, his work has also extended to the realm of technology within the platform of LornaLab (Reykjavík Media Lab). Vilmarsson's work has earned him commissions from various groups and been performed at festivals such as the Tectonics Festival curated by conductor Ilan Volkov. In recent years his music has been played in Europe, USA and Asia, by groups like Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Brodsky String Quartet, Uusinta Chamber Ensemble and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.



Sono Luminus would like to thank Mikkel Nymand and our friends at Sennheiser for the use of the MHK 800 Twin Microphones used for the main 5 channel array of this recording.

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Recorded in Pyramix with Merging Technologies Horus. Mastered with Merging Technologies Hapi. Recorded in DXD at 24 bit, 352.8kHz in Native Auro-3D 9.1 Immersive Audio.

Mixed and mastered on Legacy Audio speakers.  
[legacyaudio.com](http://legacyaudio.com)



Hlynur wishes to thank Ilan Volkov.





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## ICELAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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## RECURRENCE

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