



AN ANTHOLOGY OF ICELANDIC CHOIR MUSIC

Kór Langholtskirkju conducted by Jón Stefánsson



ANONYMOUS (14th century)

- 1 Upphaf þorlakstíða (Andstef) *(Manuscript)* 2'03

ANONYMOUS (16th century)

- 2 Maríukvaeði *(Manuscript)* 1'33

SVEINBJÖRN SVEINBJÖRNSSON (1847–1927)

arr. Sigfús Eymundsson

- 3 Ó, Guð vors lands (Matthías Jochumsson) 2'33

HELGI HELGASON (1848–1922)

- 4 Lofsöngur (Psalm 150) (Gutenberg 1918) 2'57

SIGFÚS EINARSSON (1877–1939)

arr. Guðmundur Gamalíelsson/Hljóðfaerahús Reykjavíkur

- 5 Látum sönginn glaðan gjalla (Lárus Halldórsson) 1'37

- 6 Fjallkonan (Freysteinn Gunnarsson) 4'26

arr. HALLGRÍMUR HELGASON (1914–94)

- 7 Ég að öllum háska hlae (Rímnalög) *(Manuscript)* 1'36

arr. JÓN ÁSGEIRSSON (b.1928)

- 8 Krumma vísa (þjóðvísa) *(Manuscript)* 1'15

- 9 Sofðu unga ástin mín (Jóhann Sigurjónsson) *(Manuscript)* 2'38

JÓN LEIFS (1899–1968)

- 10 Requiem (Þjóðvísa/Jónas Hallgrímsson) *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 5'18

GUNNAR REYNIR SVEINSSON (1933–2008)

- 11 Hún var það allt (Halldór Kiljan Laxness) *(Manuscript)* 3'14
12 Haldið'ún Gróa *(Manuscript)* 1'33

JÓN ÁSGEIRSSON

- 13 Orðskviður Salómons *(Manuscript)* 7'26

ATLI HEIMIR SVEINSSON (b.1938)

- 14 The Sick Rose (William Blake) *(Manuscript)* 2'48

ÞORKELL SIGURBJÖRNSSON (1938–2013)

- 15 Davíð 92 *(Manuscript)* 5'01
16 Hósíanna (Solo: Sigríður Gröndal) *(Manuscript)* 3'38

TT: 51'20

KÓR LANGHOLTSKIRKJU (LANGHOLT CHURCH CHOIR)

JÓN STEFÁNSSON *conductor*

One of the oldest musical documents in Iceland is *Upphaf þorlakstíða* (*The Offices of St Thorlak* from the thirteenth century. St Thorlak was a bishop of the diocese of Skálholt in the late 12th century, a noted singer in his time, and his feast days, 20th July and 23rd December, were celebrated with lavish music-making. On this CD we hear the Introit, antiphon and first verse of the 113th Psalm.

This is followed by an example of folk music which Icelanders practised for six centuries, called twin-song, sung in parallel fifths. Here it is sung to *Mariúkvaedi*, a hymn to St Mary by Bishop Jón Arason (d.1550).

From those six centuries there exist in Iceland scattered references to singing in parts, but no actual musical sources in notation have been preserved. It is not until after the middle of the 19th century that part-singing began to establish permanent roots in Iceland. First there appeared harmonized Lutheran chorales, then patriotic songs and finally original compositions. The style is homophonic, the melody in the top voice, and the other voices support it, note against note.

The Icelandic national anthem, *Ó, Guð vors lands* (*Our Country's God*; 1874) is a majestic choral hymn – not to be sung by lonely souls in remote valleys. Sveinbjörn Sveinbjörnsson (1847–1927), the first professionally educated musician in Iceland's recent history, spent most of his active years abroad. His demands on the choir are ambitious and cosmopolitan, in the prevailing style of his time.

Helgi Helgason (1848–1922) is more cautious. His point of departure is the standard of Icelandic choirs at the turn of the century. *Lofsöngur* (*Psalm 150*) appeared in a collection of 29 songs, published in 1918.

Sigfús Einarsson (1877–1939) brought the standard a few steps forward as a composer, conductor, organist at Reykjavík Cathedral and as an educator. The two songs on this disc bear witness to the demands which could reasonably be made upon Icelandic choirs in the mid-1920s.

Until that period, Icelandic choral pieces had sought their models – both melodically and harmonically – in neighbouring countries. If people wanted to revive a ‘national tone’, however, this would have to be done by arranging folk songs or using their characteristics in original compositions.

Jón Leifs (1899–1968) was a pioneer in this respect. His *Requiem* from 1949 is a unique jewel among Icelandic choral compositions. It preserves the simple sincerity of the folk song in an original composition. It was written in memory of his young daughter, who died accidentally by drowning.

The examples of folk-song arrangements by Hallgrímur Helgason (1914–94) and Jón Ásgeirsson (b.1928) show two different approaches. Helgason was himself a collector of folk songs and was Iceland’s leading expert in that field. He presents the two songs in a straightforward manner, whereas Ásgeirsson accompanies them with voices of nearly equal importance.

Jón Ásgeirsson and Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson (1933–2008) were both prolific composers of choir pieces, and in other ways they were also direct participants in the development of Icelandic choral music in the 1960s and 1970s. In their works, a melodic turn quite often seems to come directly from a folk song, and in their hands the choir is primarily a deliverer of texts. *Hún var það allt* (*She Was All You Ever Did Love*), ‘valse lento’, is from a cycle of ten songs composed in 1976 to poems by Halldór Laxness. *Haldið’ún Gróa* (*Do You Think That Gróa*) is a folk verse. Jón Ásgeirsson composed *Orðskviður Salómons* (*From The Proverbs*) especially for the Langholt Church Choir in 1977. The initial theme acts as a recurring refrain throughout the piece.

In the last three pieces, by Atli Heimir Sveinsson (b.1938) and Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson (1938–2013), one can say that the timbres of a mixed choir are in the foreground. Both composers treat the choir not only as a combination of four basic parts (sopranos, altos, tenors and basses) but also as a collection of many individuals with various claims to freedom.

Atli Heimir Sveinsson composed *The Sick Rose* in memory of Benjamin Britten in 1978, to a text by William Blake. Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson composed his two pieces, *David 92* – to verses from the 92nd Psalm – and *Hósianna (Hosanna)*, especially for the Langholt Church Choir in 1977.

© *Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson 1983*

Under the leadership of Jón Stefánsson, the **Langholt Church Choir** has become one of Iceland's foremost choirs. In addition to its regular duties as a church choir it has given public concerts, often introducing new works especially composed for the choir. With an orchestra, it has regularly brought some of the classical masterpieces of the international repertoire to its audiences.

Jón Stefánsson began his music studies at the Icelandic National Church Music School with Jón Ísleifsson, Páll Ísólffson and Róbert A. Ottósson and graduated in 1966. He continued his studies in Munich with Karl Richter and a decade later with Michael Radulescu at the Church Music Department of the Vienna Music Academy. In 1964 he became the conductor and organist at the Langholt Church in Reykjavík. In addition to his duties there he has taught liturgical music at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Iceland, and conducted the Icelandic Opera.

Eines der ältesten musikalischen Dokumente Islands ist das *Upphaf þorlakstiða* (*Officium Sancti Thorlaci*) aus dem 13. Jahrhundert. Der hl. Thorlak war gegen Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts Bischof der Diözese Skálholt und ein berühmter Sänger, dessen Gedenktage – 20. Juli und 23. Dezember – mit viel Musik gefeiert wurden. Auf dieser CD hören wir den Introitus, die Antiphon und die erste Strophe des 113. Psalms.

Es folgt ein Beispiel einer volksmusikalischen Vokalgattung, die von den Isländern sechs Jahrhunderte lang ausgeübt wurde: der sogenannte Zwillingsgesang in Quintparallelen. Hier wird er zu *Mariúkvæði*, einem Marienhymnus von Bischof Jón Arason (gest. 1550), gesungen.

In jenen sechs Jahrhunderten findet man auf Island verschiedene Hinweise auf einen mehrstimmigen Gesang, doch haben sich keinerlei notierte Quellen erhalten. Erst nach der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts entwickelte der mehrstimmige Gesang auf Island feste Wurzeln. Zunächst entstanden harmonisierte evangelische Choräle, dann patriotische Lieder und schließlich Originalkompositionen. Der Stil ist homophon, die Melodie liegt in der Oberstimme, während die übrigen Stimmen Note gegen Note begleiten.

Islands Nationalhymne *Ó, Guð vors lands* (*O Gott unseres Landes*; 1874), ist eine majestätische Chorhymne, die nicht für einsame Seelen in entlegenen Tälern gedacht ist. Sveinbjörn Sveinbjörnsson (1847–1927), der erste professionell ausgebildete Musiker der neueren Geschichte Islands, verbrachte den Großteil seiner aktiven Jahre im Ausland. Er stellt hohe und weltläufige Ansprüche an den Chor, ganz im damals dominierenden Stil.

Helgi Helgason (1848–1922) ist etwas vorsichtiger. Sein Ausgangspunkt ist das Leistungsniveau der isländischen Chöre der Jahrhundertwende. *Lofsöngur* (150. Psalm) erschien in einer 1918 veröffentlichten Sammlung von 29 Liedern.

Als Komponist, Dirigent, Domorganist zu Reykjavík und auch als Pädagoge

hob Sigfus Einarsson (1877–1939) das Niveau deutlich an. Seine beiden Lieder bekunden die Anforderungen, die man Mitte der 1920er Jahre an Chöre in Island stellen konnte.

Bis dahin hatten die isländischen Chorwerke ihre melodischen und harmonischen Modelle in benachbarten Ländern gesucht. Wollte man hingegen einen „nationalen Ton“ wiederbeleben, so galt es, Volkslieder zu bearbeiten oder folkloristisch inspirierte Originalkompositionen zu schreiben.

Jón Leifs (1899–1968) war ein Pionier auf diesem Gebiet. Sein *Requiem* (1949) ist ein einzigartiges Juwel unter den isländischen Chorkompositionen. Als Originalkomposition wahrt es die schlichte Aufrichtigkeit des Volksliedes. Es entstand zum Gedenken an seine ertrunkene junge Tochter.

Die Volksliedbearbeitungen von Hallgrímur Helgason (1914–1994) und Jón Ásgeirsson (geb. 1928) zeigen zwei unterschiedliche Ansätze. Helgason sammelte selbst Volkslieder und war Islands größter Experte auf diesem Gebiet. Er setzt seine Lieder auf eine schlichte Weise, während Ásgeirsson eine Begleitung mit beinahe ebenbürtigen Stimmen hinzukomponierte.

Jón Ásgeirsson und Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson (1933–2008) waren sehr produktive Chorkomponisten, und sie trugen auch auf andere Weise zur Entwicklung der isländischen Chormusik in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren bei. In ihren Werken finden sich oft melodische Wendungen mit Volksliedcharakter, und in ihren Händen ist der Chor in erster Linie Überbringer der Textbotschaft. Der langsame Walzer *Hún var það allt* (*Sie war das alles*) ist einem Zyklus von zehn Liedern entnommen, die 1976 auf Gedichte von Halldór Laxness komponiert wurden. *Haldið'ún Gróa* (*Glaubst du, dass Gróa*) ist ein Volksgedicht. Jón Ásgeirsson komponierte *Orðskviður Salómons* (*Aus den Sprüchen Salomons*) 1977 für den Chor der Langholt-Kirche. Das Eingangsthema fungiert im Laufe des Stücks als eine Art Refrain.

In den drei letzten Stücken, komponiert von Atli Heimir Sveinsson (geb. 1938) und Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson (1938–2013), steht der Klang des gemischten Chores im Vordergrund. Beide Komponisten behandeln den Chor nicht nur als Kombination von vier Hauptstimmlagen (Sopran, Alt, Tenor und Bass), sondern auch als Gruppe vieler Individuen mit verschiedenen Freiheitsbedürfnissen.

Sveinsson komponierte *The Sick Rose* (*Die kranke Rose*) 1978 zum Gedenken an Benjamin Britten auf einen Text von William Blake; Sigurbjörnsson schrieb seine beiden Stücke *David 92* (auf Verse des 92. Psalms) und *Hósianna* 1977 für den Chor der Langholt-Kirche.

© *Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson 1983*

Unter der Leitung von Jón Stefánsson hat sich der **Chor der Langholt-Kirche** zu einem der besten Chöre Islands entwickelt. Neben dem Kirchendienst gibt der Chor öffentliche Konzerte, häufig mit neuen, eigens für den Chor komponierten Werken. Bei Orchesterkonzerten führt er regelmäßig klassische Meisterwerke des internationalen Repertoires auf.

Jón Stefánsson studierte an der Nationalen Kirchenmusikschule Islands bei Jón Ísleifsson, Páll Ísólsson und Róbert A. Ottósson. Auf den Abschluss im Jahr 1966 folgten weiterführende Studien bei Karl Richter in München sowie, zehn Jahre später, an der Kirchenmusikabteilung der Wiener Musikakademie bei Michael Radulescu. 1964 wurde er Organist und Chorleiter an der Langholt-Kirche zu Reykjavík. Außerdem unterrichtete er liturgische Musik an der Theologischen Fakultät der Universität Island und dirigierte an der Isländischen Oper.

Un des plus anciens documents musicaux en Islande est *Upphaf þorlakstiða* (*Les offices de saint Thorlak*) datant du 13^e siècle. Saint Thorlak était l'évêque du diocèse de Skálholt vers la fin du 12^e siècle, un chanteur remarquable en son temps et ses jours de fête, les 20 juillet et 23 décembre, étaient célébrés en faisant beaucoup de musique. Sur ce disque, nous entendons l'introït, l'antienne et le premier verset du psaume 113.

Ceci est suivi d'un exemple de musique folklorique en pratique en Islande pendant six siècles, appelée, «chant double», chanté en quintes parallèles. Ce chant accompagne ici *Mariukvaeði*, une hymne à la Sainte Vierge, de l'évêque Jón Arason (mort en 1550).

Quelques documents isolés indiquent que le chant à parties existait en Islande pendant ces six siècles, mais aucune source réelle de notation musicale n'a été préservée. Ce n'est qu'après la moitié du 19^e siècle que le chant à plusieurs voix s'implanta en Islande. Des harmonisations de chorals luthériens firent d'abord leur apparition, suivies de chansons patriotiques et, finalement, de compositions originales. Le style est homophonique, la mélodie se trouve au soprano, soutenue par les autres voix, note contre note.

L'hymne national islandais, *Ó, Guð vors lands* (*Le Dieu de notre pays*), de 1874, est un hymne choral majestueux – à ne pas être chanté par des âmes solitaires dans des vallées éloignées. Sveinbjörn Sveinbjörnsson (1847–1927), le premier musicien de formation de l'histoire récente de l'Islande, vécut à l'étranger la plupart de ses années de vie active. Il est ambitieux et cosmopolite dans ses exigences du chœur, écrivant dans le style courant de cette époque.

Helgi Helgason (1848–1922) est plus prudent. Il écrit pour chœur islandais de niveau normal au tournant du siècle comme point de départ. *Lofsöngur* (Psaume 150) apparut dans un recueil de 29 chants, publié en 1918.

Sigfús Einarsson (1877–1939) haussa un peu le niveau en sa qualité de com-

positeur, chef d'orchestre, organiste à la cathédrale de Reykjavík et éducateur. Les deux exemples de ses chansons témoignent des demandes raisonnables faites à un chœur au milieu des années 20 en Islande.

Jusqu'à maintenant, les pièces chorales islandaises ont puisé leurs modèles – mélodiques et harmoniques – dans les pays avoisinants. On ne pouvait cependant faire revivre « une note nationale » sans faire des arrangements de chansons folkloriques ou d'en utiliser les caractéristiques dans des compositions originales.

Jón Leifs (1899–1968) fut un pionnier en ce domaine. Son *Requiem* (1949) est un bijou unique parmi les compositions chorales islandaises. La sincérité simple de la chanson folklorique est préservée dans cette composition originale écrite en mémoire de la petite fille de Leifs, noyée accidentellement.

Des arrangements de Hallgrímur Helgason (1914–94) et de Jón Ásgeirsson (né en 1928) de chansons de folklore montrent deux approches différentes. Helgason collectionnait lui-même les chansons de folklore et il est le meilleur expert en la matière d'Islande. Il présente les deux chansons de façon directe, alors qu'Ásgeirsson les accompagne de voix de presque égale importance.

Jón Ásgeirsson et Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson (1933–2008) ont tous deux été de féconds compositeurs de pièces chorales, et ont d'autres manières participé directement au développement de la musique chorale islandaise dans les années 60 et 70. Dans leurs œuvres, il arrive assez souvent qu'une tournure mélodique semble provenir directement d'une chanson de folklore et, entre leurs mains, le chœur est en premier lieu un narrateur. *Hún var það allt* (*Elle était tout cela*), « vals lento », est un extrait d'un cycle de 10 chansons composées en 1976 sur des poèmes de Halldór Laxness. *Haldið'ún Gróa* (*Pensez-vous que Gróa*) est un verset de folklore. Jón Ásgeirsson écrivit *Orðskviður Salómons* (*Des Proverbes*) spécialement pour le Chœur de l'église Langholt en 1977. Le thème initial sert de refrain revenant tout au long de la pièce.

Dans les trois dernières pièces, de Atli Heimir Sveinsson (né en 1938) et Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson (1938–2013), on peut dire que des sonorités de chœur mixte sont au premier plan. Les deux compositeurs emploient le chœur comme un mélange de quatre parties fondamentales, sopranos, altos, ténors et basses, mais aussi comme un ensemble de plusieurs individus avec différentes revendications de liberté.

En 1978, Sveinsson composa *The Sick Rose* (*La rose malade*) en mémoire de Benjamin Britten sur un texte de William Blake. Sigurbjörnsson composa ses deux pièces, *David 92* – sur des versets du Psaume 92 – et *Hóstianna* (*Hosanna*) spécialement pour le Chœur de l'église Langholt, en 1977.

© *Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson 1983*

Le **Chœur de l'église Langholt** est devenu, sous la direction de Jón Stefánsson, l'un des chœurs les plus éminents d'Islande. En plus de ses activités régulières comme chœur d'église, il s'est produit en concerts publics, présentant souvent de nouvelles œuvres composées spécialement pour des chorales. Accompagné d'un orchestre, il a régulièrement offert à son public quelques-uns des chefs-d'œuvre classiques du répertoire international.

Jón Stefánsson commença ses études musicales à l'Ecole Nationale Islandaise de Musique d'église avec Jón Ísleifsson, Páll Ísólfsson et Róbert A. Ottósson; il obtint son diplôme en 1966. Il continua ses études à Munich avec Karl Richter et, dix ans plus tard, avec Michael Radulescu au département de musique d'église de l'Académie de Musique de Vienne. En 1964, il devint maître de chapelle et organiste à l'église Langholt à Reykjavík; en plus de son travail là, il a récemment enseigné, entre autre, la musique liturgique au département de théologie de l'Université d'Islande.

1 Anonymous: Upphaf þorlakstíða (The Beginning of the Offices of St Thorlak)

Adest festum perce lebre,
quo effungantur tenebre,
mentem lumen iradiat,
gens devota tripudiat.
Laudate pueri Dominum,
laudate nomen Domini.
Gloria Patri et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper,
et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.

2 Anonymous: Mariúkvæði (Ode to the Virgin Mary)

María meyjan skæra,
minning þín og æra,
verðugt væri að færa
vegsemd þér og sóma,
soddan sólarljóma.
Þú varst ein, ein, ein
þú varst ein, ein, ein.
Þú varst ein svo heil og hrein
hæstum vafin ljóma.

O Mary, maiden bright,
Your glory and your might
No one can tell aright
Or worthily declare.
O Sun without compare.
Only you, you, you.
Only you, so pure and true
Heaven's bright crown couldst wear.

3 Sveinbjörn Sveinbjörnsson: Lofsöngur / Ó, Guð vors lands (Icelandic National Anthem)

Ó, guð vors lands! Ó, lands vors guð!
Vér lofum þitt heilaga, heilaga nafn.
Úr sólkerfum himnanna hnýta þér krans
þínir herskarar, tímanna safn.
Fyrir þér er einn dagur sem þúsund ár
og þúsund ár dagur, ei meir:
eitt eilíðar smáblóm með titrandi tár,
sem tilbiður guð sinn og deyr.
:: Ísland þúsund ár, ::
eitt eilíðar smáblóm með titrandi tár,
sem tilbiður guð sinn og deyr.

Our country's God! Our country's God!
We worship Thy name in its wonder sublime.
The suns of the heavens are set in Their crown
By Thy legions, the ages of time!
With Thee is each day as a thousand years,
Each thousand of years, but a day,
Eternity's flow'r, with its homage of tears,
That reverently passes away.
Iceland's thousand years!
Eternity's flow'r, with its homage of tears
That reverently passes away.

4 Helgi Helgason: Lofsöngur (Psalm 150)

Lofið Drottin.

Lofið Guð í hans helgidómi,
lofið hann í hans útpöndu alveldis-
viggirðingu,

lofið hann fyrir hans stórvirki,
lofið hann samkvæmt hans mikilleika,
lofið hann með lúðurhljómi,
lofið hann með hljóðfærum og hörpu,
lofið hann með bumbum og dansi,
lofið hann með strengjum og organi,
lofið hann með hljómfögnum hornum,
symblum,

lofið hann með hljóðhvelið symblium.

Allt sem andardrátt hefur, lofi Drottin.
Hallelúja. Hallelúja. Lofið Drottin.

Praise ye the Lord.

Praise God in His sanctuary:

Praise Him in the firmament of His power.

Praise Him for His mighty acts:

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet:

Praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance:

Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.

Praise Him upon the loud cymbals:

Praise Him Upon the high sounding cymbals.

Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.

Praise ye the Lord.

5 Sigfús Einarsson: Látum sönginn glaðan gjalla (Let Our Joyful Voices Ring)

Látum sönginn glaðan gjalla,

göfga Drottin ár og síð.

Lofgjörð hans til himins halla

hefst upp frá öllum lýð.

Svíf þú, söngur, hægun hreimi

hress og gleð og styrk þú sál,

yfir synd og sorg í heimi

svíf þú frjáls með hjartans mál.

Látum sönginn glaðan gjalla,

göfga Drottin ár og síð.

Lofgjörð hans til himinshalla

hefst upp frá öllum lýð.

Látum sönginn glaðan gjalla,

göfga Drottin ár og síð.

Let our joyful voices ring.

Never cease to praise our Maker.

Let his worship to the skies

Rise in song from all his people.

Float, O song, in sweet accord

Fill our souls with joy and gladness.

Raise the language of our hearts

High above all sin and sorrow.

Let our joyful voices ring.

Never cease to praise our Maker.

Let His worship to the skies

Rise in Song from all His people.

Let our joyful voices ring.

Never cease to praise our Maker.

6 Sigfús Einarsson: Fjallkonan (The Mountain Lady)

Ein hún starir yfir mar
yst á hjara veraldar,
há und himintjaldi,
hjúpuð aldafaldi,
ein hún starir yfir mar.
Ymur hret og yfist sær,
oft er vetur henni nær,
samt er sól á vanga
sumardaga langa,
þegar andar blíður blær.
Ár og aldir þungar yfir hana liðu,
ætið vonir ungar eftir henni biðu.
Þegar harðindi í hamför geystust,
hennar kraftar úr ánauð leystust,
þegar elli til útfarar bjó,
hin unga sveit gegn feiknstöfum hló.

Drottning hranna, íss og elds
allir, fram til hinsta kvelds,
synir þínir sverja,
sóma þinn að verja
Drottning hranna, íss og elds.
Þó að gnauði hret og hrið,
herði nauð og æði stríð,
enn skal áfram halda,
allar skuldir gjalda.
Biður síðar betri tíð.
Geyma skal og skíra skjaldargullin fögur,
ættararfinn dýra, óð og tungu og sögur.
Muna blómin sem bjartast skína,
bindur æskan í krónu þína,
djásnin fögur sem dýró þín oss gaf,
þú, drottning, fjærst við haf, við ysta haf.

(The title of the poem is a symbolic name for Iceland)
In the first stanza the poet describes the Mountain Lady as she sits gazing out over the ocean from her high seat on the northern edge of the world, for the most part swept by raging seas and arctic blizzards but also at times visited by long summer days of bright sun and gentle breezes. He recalls the heavy misfortunes she has suffered in past ages but also the ever-renewed hope for her future that no adversity could crush. He speaks of new energies called forth by the very hardships she has had to endure and of the new generations that sprang up to brave dangers with a smile as their elders sank to rest, worn down by their burdens.

In the second stanza the poet addresses Iceland as 'Queen of ocean, ice and fire'. He assures her that all her sons have sworn to defend her honour to their last hour and that however storms may rage, however bitter the need and desperate the struggle, they will move forward undaunted until every last debt is paid, for there will be better times coming. The golden heirlooms contained in her language and her songs and stories shall be cherished and kept shining. Her youth will take the fairest ornaments she has given them and twine a garland of bright forget-me-nots for the crown of their Queen by the far northern sea.

7 arr. Hallgrímur Helgason: Ég að öllum háska hlae (Waves May Rage)

Ég að öllum háska hlae
heims í éli ströngu.
Mér er sama nú hvort næ
nokkru landi eða öngu.

Stundum þungbær þögnin er
þrauta lífs á vöku.
Alltaf lifnar yfir mér
er ég raula stöku.

Waves may rage and winds may roar
At will, they cannot scare me.
Since it does to me no more
Matter where they bear me.

Silence at night can sometimes be
A source of grief and pain,
But humming a bit of balladry
Will brighten life again.

8 arr. Jón Ásgeirsson: Krumma vísa (The Raven's Song)

Krummi krunkar úti,
kallar á nafna sinn:
Ég fann höfuð af hrúti,
hrygg og gæruskinn.
Komdu nú og kroppaðu með mér
krummi nafni minn.

I heard a raven crying,
Calling to its mate,
There's a carcass lying
By the pasture gate.
A fat old wether, let's fly together
And fall upon it straight.

9 arr. Jón Ásgeirsson: Sofðu unga ástin mín (Sweetly Sleep)

Sofðu unga ástin mín,
úti regnið grætur.
Mamma geymir gullin þín,
gamla leggi og vóluskrín.
Við skulum ekki vaka um dimmar nætur.

Það er margt sem myrkið veit,
mínn er hugur þungur.
Oft ég svarta sandinn leit
svíða grænan engireit.
Í jöklinum hljóða dauðadjúpar sprungur.

Sofðu lengi, sofðu rótt,
seint mun best að vakna.
Mæðan kenna mun þér fljótt,
meðan hallar degi skjótt,
að mennimur elska, missa, gráta og sakna.

Sweetly sleep, my dear young love
Outside rain is falling.
Mother safely away will stow
Horse and sheep and swan and dove.
Then we'll rest, we two, for night is calling.

Darkness spreads o'er many a woe,
Sore hearts, broken pledges.
Meadows green laid waste I saw,
Scythe of sand the field did mow,
Death call from the glacier's cruel ledges.

Sweetly sleep, and peacefully sleep,
And let us awake after break of day.
Our misery will teach you this,
As darkness upon us falls so deep,
That people do love and lose and weep and miss.

10 Jón Leifs: Requiem

Sofinn er fífill
fagr í haga,
mús undir mosa,
már á báru,
lauf á limi,
ljós í lofti,
hjörtr á heiði
en í hafi fiskar.

Sefr selr í sjó,
svanr á báru,
már í hólmi,
manngi þau svæfir.
Sofa manna börn
í mjúku rúmi,
bía og kveða,
en babbi þau svæfir.

Sof þú nú sæl og sigrgefin.
Sofðu, eg unni þér.
Sofinn er fífill
fagr í haga,
mús undir mosa
már á báru.

Blæju yfir bæ
búanda líns
dimmra drauma
dró nótt úr sjó.

Við skulum gleyma
grátí' og sorg;
gott er heim að snúa.
Láttu þig dreyma
bjarta borg,
búna þeim, er trúá.
Sofinn er fífill
fagr í haga,

Now sleeps the dandelion
In the field,
The mouse in its mossy bed,
The mew on the billow,
The leaf on the twig,
The light in the sky,
The heart on the hearth,
The herring in the deep.

The seal on the skerry,
The swan on the moat,
The newt in the pond,
With no one to lull them.
The babies sleep
In their beds of down,
And Daddy sings them
Softly to sleep.

Sleep, my love, in the Lord's keeping.
Sleep, my daughter dear.
Now sleeps the dandelion
In the field,
The mouse in its mossy bed,
The mew on the billow.

Over the weary
Workman's cottage
A veil of dreams
Is drawn by the night.

Let's forget
Our grief and care,
Going home is blessedness.
Dream about
The city fair,
That the faithful shall possess.
Now sleeps the dandelion
In the field,

mús undir mosa
már á báru.

Sof þú nú sæl og sigrgefin.
Sofðu, eg unni þér.

The mouse in its mossy bed,
The mew on the billow.

Sleep, my love, in the Lord's keeping.
Sleep, my daughter dear.

11 Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson: Hún var það allt (She Was All You Ever Did Love)

Hún var það alt sem þú unnir,
alt sem þig dreymdi og þú þráðir.
Þú kvaðst henni alt sem þú kunnir,
þú kenndir henni alt sem þú kunnir.
Ég fann í brjósti þér falinn
frumgróða hins eina sanna,
þá ímynd sem öllu er talin
æðri í jarðlífi manna.
Og saklaus við reyndum til samans
þau sannindi er heimana binda,
frá harmleik hins hverfula gamans
til helgidóms æðstu synda.

She was all you ever did love,
All you dreamed of and longed for.
You sang her the songs you knew,
You showed her all you had learned.
Hidden in your breast I found
The first fruits of what alone is true,
The image ever to prize
Over all things in human life.
And blameless we tasted together
The truths that bind up the worlds,
From tragic transient joys
To the temple of loftiest sins.

12 Gunnar Reynir Sveinsson: Haldið'ún Gróa (Do You Think That Gróa)

Haldiðún Gróa hafi skó,
þá held eg hún verði þvengjamjó
þegar hún fer að búa.
Trall-all-a lall-a lall-a
trall-all-a lall-a lall-a
trall-all-a lall-a lall-a
þegar hún fer að búa.

Do you think that Gróa's got some shoes,
Got some shoes, got some shoes?
Then I think she won't have much to lose
When she starts to marry.
Got some shoes, got some shoes,
Do you think that Gróa's got some shoes?
Then I think she won't have much to lose
When she starts to trallalala.

13 Jón Ásgeirsson: Orðskviður Salómons (From the Proverbs)

Ótti Drottins er upphaf þekkingar,
visku og aga fyrirhlíta afglappar einir.

Hljóð son minn á áminning föður þíns
og hafna eigi viðvörun móður þinnar,
því að þær eru yndislegur sveigur á höfði þér
og men um háls þinn.

Þegar illræðismenn kalla til þín:
Kom með oss, leggjumst í launsátur til manndrápa.
Alls konar dýra muni munum vér eignast,
fylla hús vor ræðum fjármunum.
Þú skal taka jafnan hlut við oss.

Son minn haf ei samleið við þá,
því fætur þeirra eru skjóttir til ills
og slíkir menn sitja um sitt eigið líf
og fíknin verður þeim að fjórlesti.

Ótti Drottins er upphaf þekkingar.
Visku og aga fyrirhlíta afglappar einir.

Ég hef búið rúm mitt ábreiðum,
marglitum úr egyptsku líni.
Myrru og alöe og kanel
hefi ég stökkt á hvílu mína.
Sá sem drýgir hór, er vitstola,
sá einn gjörir slíkt, er tortíma vill sjálfum sér.
Kom þú við skulum drekka okkur ást drukkin fram á kvöld
en að síðustu er hún beiskari en malurt
og beitt eins og tvieggjað sverð.
Hunangseimur drýpur af vörum annars manns konu
og gómur hennar er hálli en olía.

Ótti Drottins.

Heyrið mig því synir,
vikið eigi frá orðum munns míns
og legg þína leið langt frá henni
og kom ekki nálægt húsdryum hennar,
því afbrýði er karlmanns reiði
og hann hlífir ekki á hefndarinnar degi.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge:
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

My son, hear the instruction of thy father,
And forsake not the law of thy mother.
For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head,
And chains about thy neck.

My son, if sinners entice thee saying: Come with us,
Let us lay wait for blood.
We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill
Our houses with spoil; let us all have one purse.

My son, walk not thou in the way with them,
For their feet run to evil.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge:
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry,
With carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.
I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning.
But who so committeth adultery with a woman lacketh
understanding:

He that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.
The lips of a strange woman drop as a honeycomb,
And her mouth is smoother than oil.
But her end is bitter as a wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.

Hear me now therefore, O ye children,
And depart not from the words of my mouth.
Remove thy way far from her and come not
Nigh the door of her house,
For jealousy is the rage of a man:
Therefore he will not spare in
The day of vengeance.

Sá sem áminnir spottara, bakar sér smán
og þeim sem ávitar óguðlega verður það til vansa.
Ávita eigi spottarann svo hann hati þig eigi,
ávita hinn vitra og hann mun elska þig.
Visku og aga fyrirlíta afglapar.

Drekk þú vatn úr vatnsþró þinni
og rennandi vatn úr brunni þínum.
Gleð þig yfir festarmey æsku þinnar
brjóst hennar gjöri þig ætíð drukkinn.
Uppspretta þín sé blessuð.

Amen.

He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame:
And he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot.
Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee:
Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge:
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.
Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters
Out of thine own well. Rejoice with the wife of thy youth.
Let her breasts satisfy thee all times.
Drink waters out of thine own cistern,
And running waters out of thine own well.
Let thy fountain be blessed. Amen.

14 Atli Heimir Sveinsson: The Sick Rose

O, Rose thou art sick
The invisible worm
That flies at night
In the howling storm
Has found out thy bed of crimson joy
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.
O, Rose thou art sick.

15 Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson: Davíð 92 (David 92)

Gott er að lofa Drottin
og lofsyngja nafni þínu, þú hinn hæsti,
að kunngjöra miskunn þína að morgni
og trúfesti þína um nætur
á tístrengjað hljóðfæri og hörpu
með strengjaleik gígjunnar.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,
And to sing praises unto thy name, O most high:
To show forth thy loving kindness in the morning,
And thy faithfulness every night.
Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery;
Upon the harp with a solemn sound.

16 Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson: Hósianna (Hosanna)

Hósianna. Davíðsson.

Blessaður sé sá sem kemur í nafni Drottins.

Hósianna í hæstum hæðum.

Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

KÓR LANGHOLTSKIRKJU (LANGHOLT CHURCH CHOIR)

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RECORDING DATA

Recording: April 1983 at the Skálholt Church, Iceland
Producer and sound engineer: Robert von Bahr
Equipment: Neumann and Sennheiser microphones; SAM82 mixer; Sony PCM-F1 digital recording equipment
Post-production: Editing: Robert von Bahr
CD transfer: Robert Suff

BOOKLET AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

Cover text: © Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson 1983
Translations: Per Skans (German); Arlette Lemieux-Chené (French)
Front cover photo: © Halldór Torfason
Typesetting, lay-out: Andrew Barnett (Compact Design)

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