



jón leifs

EDDA II

THE LIVES OF THE GODS

hanna dóra sturludóttir
elmar gilbertsson
kristinn sigmundsson

schola cantorum
iceland symphony orchestra
hermann bäumer

JÓN LEIFS (1899–1968)

Edda, Part II:

Líf Guðanna (The Lives Of The Gods) *(ICE-MIC)*

64'38

Oratorio in 6 parts, Op. 42, for soloists, mixed choir and orchestra

World première recording

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I. Óðinn (Odin) | 19'00 |
| 2 | II. Synir Óðins (Sons of Odin) | 10'18 |
| 3 | III. Ásynjur (Goddesses) | 20'01 |
| 4 | IV. Valkyrjur (Valkyries) | 2'46 |
| 5 | V. Nornir (Norns) | 4'58 |
| 6 | VI. Einherjar (Warriors) | 6'55 |

Hanna Dóra Sturludóttir *mezzo-soprano*

Elmar Gilbertsson *tenor*

Kristinn Sigmundsson *bass*

Schola cantorum Hörður Áskelsson *chorus master*

Iceland Symphony Orchestra

Hermann Bäumer *conductor*

Hreiðar Ingi Þorsteinsson *assistant choir master*

Anna Guðný Guðmundsdóttir *rehearsal pianist*

Jón Leifs (1899–1968) was Iceland's first nationalist composer. His music draws on the main types of Icelandic folk song and is often inspired by Iceland's powerful nature and literary heritage. Largely neglected and ridiculed during his own lifetime, his music only began to receive wider notice in the decades following his death, and some of his works remain unperformed. His magnum opus is the *Edda* oratorio, a massive (although incomplete) work in three large parts, which occupied him on and off for most of his composing career – from around 1930 to his death in 1968.

From early on in his career, Jón Leifs was profoundly influenced by the medieval tradition of Icelandic literature. Much of the poetry of medieval Iceland is preserved in a handful of manuscripts written in the thirteenth century, although the material is believed to be older. Poems about Odin and other gods, and about the major characters in the heroic story of the Völsungs, are transmitted in an anthology known as *Codex Regius* (*The King's Book*), written about 1270 and traditionally referred to in English as the *Poetic Edda*. Another substantial and slightly older text is the *Prose Edda* (or *Snorra Edda*, as it is known in Icelandic), believed to have been written around 1225 by the chieftain Snorri Sturluson. This work combines a treatise on poetry with an account of the myths and legends also contained in the *Poetic Edda*.

These texts form the basis of the oratorio *Edda* for soloists, choir and orchestra. When he first began contemplating the work, in 1928, he had intended to set only *Völuspá* (*The Seeress's Prophecy*) which is one of the great Eddic poems, a monologue of roughly 60 stanzas in which a sibyl describes a vision of the world's beginning and collapse – the apocalyptic carnage of *ragnarök*, in which many of the gods die and the world is submerged in water. Still, destruction is followed by re-creation: the earth rises from the sea again, and a new generation of gods takes over.

The dimensions of the work far outgrew the composer's initial plan. By 1930, he was referring to an 'Edda-oratorio', the libretto to which he himself had begun to assemble from various Eddic sources. When the oratorio text was complete in May 1933, it consisted of 350 stanzas and ran to 86 typewritten pages. The work was to be divided into four parts: *The Creation of the World* (*Sköpun heimsins*), *The Lives of the Gods* (*Líf guðanna*), *Twilight* (*Sköfnun*), and *The End of the World* (*Sköfnun*).

light of the Gods (Ragnarökr), and *Resurrection (Endurreisn)*. By using the Norse myths as a basis of a tetralogy, Jón Leifs was of course inviting comparisons with Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, with which he was well acquainted; Karl Muck's conducting of *Siegfried* at the 1920 Munich Summer Festival had left a strong impression, and he had studied the score during his years at the Leipzig Conservatory. But he found Wagner's approach too romantic and sentimental for the subject matter, and claimed to have written many of his own works, including the *Edda* oratorio and the *Saga Symphony*, as 'a protest against Wagner, who misunderstood so terribly the Nordic character and Nordic artistic heritage'. In contrast to Wagner, Jón Leifs used the original text (in Icelandic) and his oratorio setting consists largely of static tableaux rather than a dramatic retelling, at least in parts I (depicting natural phenomena, a Leifs hallmark) and II (describing the Gods and their habitat).

Jón Leifs completed *Edda I* in 1939, but did not immediately continue with the project. Performances of *Edda I* proved impossible to procure, and Leifs instead spent several years writing the 'choreographic drama' *Baldr*, itself also based on the ancient mythology. He began composing *Edda II* in 1951, but soon the project stalled. Two movements from *Edda I* were premièred at the Nordic Music Days in Copenhagen in 1952 but were poorly received, and this, along with the harsh criticism of his *Saga Symphony* in Helsinki two years earlier, dealt the composer's self-confidence a severe blow. He only revisited the score to *Edda II* a decade later.

In fact, Jón Leifs only hit his stride with *Edda II* in early 1966, completing the final four movements between January and May. He had originally intended the first movement to be titled *Gods (Æsir)*, a portrayal of each of the male gods in turn (Odin, Thor, Baldr etc.). He later decided to divide it into two movements: the first (*Odin*) depicts the father of all the gods; the second enumerates his sons (*Sons of Odin*) and is referred to in one sketch as a 'Scherzo with trio episodes'. A noticeable feature of the first movement is the marking 'quasi jodeln' ('as if yodelling') in the tenor solo, presumably to give these lines an exotic, even otherworldly, character. The calmer third movement, *Goddesses (Ásynjur)*, is a portrayal of the female characters: Frigg, Freyja, Sigyn etc. The oratorio's last three movements (*Valkyries, Norns* and *Warriors*) are far shorter than the previous ones, perhaps an indication

that Leifs suspected time was running out and that he was determined to finish the work.

Jón Leifs immediately began work on the next instalment. *Edda III – Twilight of the Gods* calls for mammoth performing forces, a decision inspired in part by hearing what he later described as ‘two of the most magnificent Requiems ever written’ – by Berlioz and Verdi – in Paris in November that year. On All Souls’ Day, he heard the Berlioz Requiem performed at the Panthéon by the ORTF Philharmonic and the fanfare band of the Garde républicaine; the Verdi Requiem was given at Saint-Roch three days later. The dramatic qualities of both works, as well as the vast resources of the former, inspired him to make the single-movement *Edda III* his most demanding work by far. Virtually no sketches exist for *Edda III*; it is as if the composer, sensing that time was running out, wrote most of his ideas directly into the full score. In an interview he remarked that ‘I’ve never done anything like it before. It’s impossible to describe such events without employing gigantic forces.’

While composing *Edda I*, Jón Leifs often remarked on his fear of dying before achieving his life’s goals as an artist. In 1932, the death and funeral in Leipzig of the poet Jóhann Jónsson had a profound effect on him and he confessed to his sister his terror of ‘meeting the same fate, before I complete my main works’. A premature death was still on his mind a year later: ‘My main concern is that I will not live to complete the works I must finish, and that no one else can accomplish. Everything else seems to me trivial in comparison.’ It is almost as if he sensed his own fate, for while Leifs did not die young, his epic *Edda* project was doomed to remain incomplete. In April 1968 he began vomiting blood and he was admitted to the Reykjavík City Hospital on 14th May, where doctors discovered a malignant tumour. In response, he briefly put aside *Edda III* to express more tender emotions in a simple, touching work for string orchestra, *Consolation*, Op. 66. He then returned to *Edda III* once more, completing page 200 of the full score at the hospital on 5th June 1968, the day before undergoing an operation. He managed to write twelve more pages before his powers were exhausted. *Edda III* remained incomplete, and to this day has never been performed. Only a libretto draft hints at Jón Leifs’ intentions for the final instalment, *Edda IV*, in which a green and fair earth rises from the ocean and a new world order is established under the leadership of Baldur, the ‘white god’.

The present recording was made following the première performance of *Edda II* in Reykjavík in March 2018. It is the thirteenth volume in the ongoing Jón Leifs Edition on BIS, and presently only two of Leifs's large-scale works for chorus and orchestra remain unperformed: *Darraðarljóð (Song of Dorrud)* from 1964 and the incomplete *Edda III*, of which roughly an hour's worth of music exists.

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Hanna Dóra Sturludóttir, mezzo-soprano, studied in Reykjavík and Berlin, where she received her diploma at the Hochschule der Künste with distinction. She has sung over 50 opera roles in Iceland and abroad, has collaborated frequently with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, and received the Icelandic Music Award in 2014 for her portrayal of Eboli in *Don Carlo*. Most recently she sang the role of Lisa in Weinberg's opera *Die Passagierin* in Gelsenkirchen and received enthusiastic reviews. She has a busy concert and recital schedule alongside teaching at the Iceland Academy of the Arts and at the Sigurður Demetz Academy of Singing in Reykjavík.

Elmar Gilbertsson, tenor, studied singing at the Sigurður Demetz Academy of Singing in Reykjavík, at the Conservatory of Amsterdam and the Royal Conservatory of The Hague with Jón Þorsteinsson and Peter Nilson. Elmar has been a frequent guest in opera houses and concert halls throughout Europe in recent years, but is currently a permanent member of the ensemble of Stuttgart Opera in Germany. Elmar has been awarded the Icelandic Performing Arts Award as singer of the year, as well as receiving the Icelandic Music Award twice, including for his performance of Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* with the Icelandic Opera in 2016.

Kristinn Sigmundsson, bass, began his singing career in the early 1980s. His main focus has been opera, but he has also been very active as a Lied singer, specializing in German Lieder and Icelandic art songs. His opera repertoire is extensive and he has performed in

most major opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and the Opéra National de Paris. Among his signature roles are Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* and Rocco in *Fidelio*, all of which he has sung in major opera houses worldwide. He has received the Icelandic Music Award three times, and was awarded the Icelandic Order of the Falcon in 1995.

Hörður Áskelsson, cantor of Hallgrímskirkja, founded the **Schola cantorum Reykjavicensis** in 1996. The choir's repertoire consists mainly of Renaissance and baroque music on the one hand and contemporary music with special emphasis on Icelandic music on the other. Schola cantorum is one of Iceland's most distinguished ensembles and was appointed the City of Reykjavík's Official Music Ensemble in 2006. It was nominated for the Nordic Council Music Prize in 2007. The choir has taken part in many recordings of Jón Leifs' music for BIS, and its disc *Meditatio*, released in 2016, received outstanding reviews. The choir's normal size of 16 professional members was augmented to 40 in the oratorio *Edda II*.

www.scholacantorum.is

Founded in 1950, the **Iceland Symphony Orchestra** is the national orchestra of Iceland and one of the leading institutions on the Icelandic cultural scene. 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. The orchestra's home is the award-winning 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 honorary conductor. Vladimir Ashkenazy has conducted the orchestra regularly since the early 1970s and now holds the position of conductor laureate. The Icelandic composer Anna Þorvaldsdóttir is the orchestra's composer-in-residence.

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra has a wide-ranging discography including a complete

cycle of Sibelius symphonies and orchestral works by Vincent d'Indy. On the BIS label, the orchestra has previously recorded eight volumes of Jón Leifs' orchestral works, all of which have received great critical acclaim. It also appears on three discs with orchestral works by Nikos Skalkottas.

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra has toured in Europe, Japan, and the United States. Concerts abroad include appearances at the BBC Proms and at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, as well as concerts at Carnegie Hall in New York.

<https://en.sinfonia.is/>

Since the 2011–12 season **Hermann Bäumer** has been principal conductor of the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Mainz and general music director of the State Theatre in the same city. His well-thought-out and imaginative programmes and his involvement with unusual music-dramatic repertoire (e.g. the first German performances of Dusapin's *Perela*, Langgaard's *Antichrist*, Saariaho's *Adriana Mater* and Apherdis' *Avis de Tempête*) have earned him great acclaim from audiences and critics alike.

A former member of the Berliner Philharmoniker, he is well acquainted with the subtleties of good orchestral playing, and is highly regarded by orchestras all over the world for his modest approach that always puts the music first. Among the orchestras he has conducted are the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, the orchestra of the Komische Oper Berlin, the NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, the Bayerische Staatsorchester München, the hr-Sinfonieorchester, the Ensemble Resonanz und Modern and the Norwegian National Opera Orchestra as well as the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra and Tokyo Symphony Orchestra. He is known for his work as an educator and works regularly with the German Federal Youth Orchestra and the Rheinland-Pfalz Youth Orchestra and Choir.

The present recording is his third of music by Jón Leifs with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra.

www.hermannbaeumer.com

Jón Leifs (1899–1968) var fyrsta þjóðlega íslenska tónskáldið. Tónlist hans tekur mið af íslenskum þjóðlagasöng og sækir efnivið í stórgerða náttúru landsins og fornan bókmenntaarf. Verk Jóns fengu misjafnar viðtökur meðan hann sjálfur lifði og það var ekki fyrr en á síðasta áratug 20. aldar sem hann hlaut þann sess sem honum ber í íslenskri tónlistarsögu. Óratorían *Edda* er stærsta verk Jóns og eitt metnaðarfyllsta tónverk íslenskrar tónlistarsögu, þriggja kvölda tónsmíð fyrir kór, einsöngvara og hljómsveit byggt á textum úr Eddukvæðum og Snorra-Eddu. Segja má að smíði þess hafi verið stór hluti ævistarfs Jóns, því hann hóf að leggja drög að *Eddu I* um 1930 og náði ekki að ljúka þriðju óratóriunni áður en hann lést árið 1968.

Fyrstu vísbendingar um að Jón hafi í hyggju að semja verk af þessum toga er að finna í bréfi sem hann ritaði Sigurði Nördal í febrúar 1928. Þar kvaðst hann hafa í hyggju að tónsetja *Völuspá* og það um aðstoð hans við að koma textanum saman. Það tók Jón nokkur ár að fullgera söngtextann enda varð verkið mun stærra í sniðum en hann hafði upphaflega ætlað. *Völuspá* var ekki lengur eina heimildin heldur leitaði hann fanga víða í Eddukvæðum og Snorra-Eddu. Þegar Jón lauk við textahandritið í maí 1933 var það 86 vélritaðar síður og skiptist í fjóra hluta: *Sköpun heimsins*, *Lif guðanna*, *Ragnarök* og *Endurreisn*. Annað tónskáld hafði áður byggt risavaxinn fjórþáttung á frásögn Eddukvæða af sköpun heimsins og lífi hinna norrænu goða. Jón þekkti vel til *Niflungahringsins* eftir Richard Wagner, hafði keypt nóturnar á námsárum sínum og séð uppfærslur verksins í þýskum óperuhúsum. En nálgun Wagners var of faguð og rómantísk til að falla að smekk íslenska tónskáldsins sem kvaðst hafa samið mörg verka sinna, þeirra á meðal *Eddu*-óratóriuna og *Sögusinfóniuna*, „sem andmæli gegn Wagner, er misskildi svo herfilega norrænt eðli og norræna listarfleifð“.

Jón lauk við *Eddu I* árið 1939. Verkið heyrði hann aldrei í heild sinni, en tveir þættir hljómuðu á tónskáldamóti í Kaupmannahöfn árið 1952 og dræmar viðtökur þeirra – sem og *Sögusinfóniunnar* í Helsinki 1950 – urðu til þess að draga úr honum kjark með framhaldið. Fáeinum mánuðum fyrr hafði hann dregið fram nótnapappírinn til að hefja smíði *Eddu II*, sem er í sex köflum. Um það leyti sem hann hélt til Kaupmannahafnar 1952 hafði hann lokið við 48 blaðsíður af fyrsta þætti sem er stórbrotin lýsing á Óðni

hinum alráða. Þegar hátíðinni hafði verið slitið hélt hann til Svíþjóðar og reyndi að taka upp þráðinn þar sem frá var horfið. Kraftarnir dugðu til að semja tvær og hálfa síðu. Jón lagði handritið til hliðar og tíu ár liðu þar til hann tók þráðinn upp að nýju.

Jón komst raunar ekki á fullan skrið fyrr en snemma árs 1966, og síðustu kaflana samdi hann þá um vorið. Fyrsti þáttur átti upphaflega að lýsa öllum guðunum, en Jón ákvað að skipta honum í tvennt; í upphafspættinum er Óðni lýst en þá taka við lýsingar á sonum hans, sem Jón páraði á eitt skissublað að væri eins konar “scherzó með tríó-episóðum.” *Ásynjur* er blíðari þáttur, að mestu sunginn af karlaröddum kórsins og ástaróður til hinna tignu meylla sem eru nefndar hver á eftir annarri: Frigg, Sága, Eir, Gefjun, Fulla og Freyja. Tónlistin fær ekki voldugri blæ fyrr en síðasta ásynjan er nefnd á nafn, enda er það Sigyn sem heldur mundlauginni undir eitrið sem drýpur á Loka. Bæði koma aftur við sögu í næsta hluta óratoríunnar, þegar heimurinn er á vonarvöl. Þrír styttri þættir fylgja í kjölfarið. *Valkyrjur* eru gamansamur þáttur en *Nornir* hæg, ofurveik en magnþrungin lýsing á örlaganornunum Urði, Verðandi og Skuld. *Eddu II* lýkur með bardagalýsingu rétt eins og *Sögusinfóníunni*. Í kaflanum *Einherjar* er þó allt á glaðværum nótum enda er hér ekki barist upp á líf og dauða. Áhrifamiklir hápunktar rísa eigi að síður enda er blásið í lúðra og bumbur slegnar meðan einherjar höggvast á.

Í lokaverki *Eddu*-þrileiksins, hinu enn óflutta *Edda III – Ragnarökr*, er allt lagt undir. Himnar og jörð standa í björtu báli meðan lokauppgjör góðs og ills fer fram. Til að koma slíkum hamförum til skila þurfti stærri flytjendahóp en jafnvel Jón Leifs hafði notað áður. „Það er geysilegur partítúr, ég hef aldrei lent í öðru eins. Það er ómögulegt að lýsa svona atburðum nema með stórum hlutum,“ sagði hann í útvarpsviðtali við Þorkel Sigurbjörnsson. Að hluta sótti hann innblástur í það sem hann kallaði „tvær stórkostlegustu sálumessur, sem tónskáld hafa samið,“ eftir Giuseppe Verdi og Hector Berlioz. Bæði verkin heyrði Jón í París í nóvember 1966, þar sem hann sótti þing höfundarrétthafa – sálumessuna eftir Berlioz í sjálfu Panthéon og Requiem Verdis í Saint-Roch kirkjunni. Lýsingar verkanna á dómi hins efsta dags eru meðal þeirra stórbrotnustu sem um getur. Þar sem Jón sat á kirkjubekkjum Parísarborgar fór ekki hjá því að hann velti vöngum yfir hvernig hann sjálfur gæti notað hljómsveit og kór með jafn dramatískum hætti.

Jón vann að *Eddu III* síðustu tvö árin sem hann lifði, en síðustu vikuna í apríl 1968 fékk hann blóðug uppköst og var lagður inn á Landspítalann. Við rannsókn fannst æxli sem ekki varð komist fyrir með aðgerð. Síðustu mánuðina sem Jón lifði var hann í stöðugu kapphlaupi við tímann og reyndi að festa á blað eins marga tóna og framast var unnt áður en maðurinn með ljáinn færi með óumflýjanlegan sigur af hólmi. Jón Leifs lést frá *Eddu III* ófullgerðri hinn 30. júlí 1968. Endalokin sem völvan spáði hljómuðu hvergi nema í hugskoti hans sjálfs.

Hljóðritunin sem hér heyrir fór fram í Hörpu skömmu eftir heimsfrumflutning á *Eddu II* í mars 2018. Þetta er þrettándi hluti heildarútgáfu BIS á verkum Jóns Leifs, og nú er svo komið að aðeins tvö verka hans fyrir kór og hljómsveit hafa enn ekki hljómað: *Darraðarljóð* frá árinu 1964, við kvæði úr Njálu, og það sem honum tókst að semja af *Eddu III*, samtals um klukkustund af tónlist.

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Hanna Dóra Sturludóttir mezzósópran stundaði söngnám við Söngskólann í Reykjavík áður en hún hélt til framhaldsnáms í Listaháskólann í Berlín. Hanna Dóra hefur sungið yfir 50 óperuhlutverk bæði á Íslandi og erlendis, m.a. við Komische Oper og Ríkisóperurnar í Berlín og München. Hún hefur þrívægis fengið tilnefningar til Íslensku tónlistarverðlaunanna og hlaut verðlaunin sem söngkona ársins 2014 fyrir hlutverk Eboli í *Don Carlo*. Árið 2017 söng hún aðalhlutverkið í *Die Passagierin* eftir Weinberg í Gelsenkirchen í Þýskalandi og fékk feykilega góða dóma fyrir frammistöðu sína. Jafnframt tónleikahaldi kennir hún söng við Listaháskóla Íslands og Söngskóla Sigurðar Demetz.

Elmar Gilbertsson tenór stundaði nám við Söngskóla Sigurðar Demetz, Tónlistarháskólann í Amsterdam og Konunglega tónlistarháskólann í Den Haag þar sem hann lærði hjá Jóni Þorsteinssyni og Peter Nilson. Elmar hefur starfað við óperuhús víðsvegar um Evrópu en er nú fastráðinn við óperuhúsið í Stuttgart. Elmar hefur tvívegis hlotið Grímuverðlaunin í flokknum söngvari ársins og íslensku tónlistarverðlaunin 2014 og 2016 sem söngvari

ársins í flokki sígildrar og samtímatónlistar, í síðara skiptið fyrir túlkun sína á Lensky í *Évgení Onegin*.

Kristinn Sigmundsson er einn ástsælasti söngvari íslensku þjóðarinnar og stendur nú á hátindi ferils síns. Hann hefur komið fram í flestum stærstu tónlistar- og óperuhúsum heims og nægir þar að nefna La Scala í Milanó, Ríkisóperuna í Vínarborg, Þjóðaróperuhúsin í París og Metropolitan óperuna í New York. Hann hefur þrisvar sinnum hlotið Íslensku tónlistarverðlaunin og hann hlaut riddarakross hinnar íslensku fálkaorðu árið 1995.

Hörður Áskelsson, kantor Hallgrímskirkju, stofnaði **Schola cantorum** árið 1996. Efnisskrá kórsins samanstendur aðallega af endurreisnar- og barokktónlist og nútímatónlist með sérstaka áherslu á verk íslenskra tónskálda. Schola cantorum var valinn Tónlistarhópur Reykjavíkur 2006 og var tilnefndur til Tónlistarverðlauna Norðurlandaráðs 2007. Kórinn hefur tekið þátt í fjölmörgum hljóðritunum á verkum Jóns Leifs fyrir BIS og einnig hljóðritað diskinn *Meditatio* sem hlaut afbragðs viðtökur. Kórinn er yfirleitt skipaður 16 atvinnusöngvurum en var stækkaður í 40 fyrir *Eddu II*.

www.scholacantorum.is

Sinfóníuhljómsveit Íslands var formlega stofnuð árið 1950 en þá höfðu ýmsar hljómsveitir starfað í höfuðborginni um nokkurra áratuga skeið. Hljómsveitin heldur um 70 tónleika á ári hverju, m.a. áskriftartónleika í Reykjavík auk tónleika á landsbyggðinni og erlendis. Nýverið hélt hljómsveitin 12 tónleika í Japan undir stjórn Vladimírs Ashkenazy en hljómsveitin hefur einnig komið fram á Proms-hátíðinni í Lundúnum, í Kennedy Center og Carnegie Hall. Fjöldi heimsþekktra hljómsveitarmanna hefur komið fram með hljómsveitinni og má nefna Vladimir Ashkenazy, Daniel Barenboim, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Joshua Bell og Jonas Kaufmann.

Í september 2016 tók franskur hljómsveitarstjórinn Yan Pascal Tortelier við stöðu aðalstjórnanda, en meðal þeirra sem áður hafa gegnt þeirri stöðu má nefna Jean-Pierre

Jacquillat, Petri Sakari, Osmo Vänskä, Rumon Gamba og Ilan Volkov. Vladimir Ashkenazy er aðalheiðursstjórnandi sveitarinnar og staðartónskáld er Anna Þorvaldsdóttir.

Sinfóníuhljómsveit Íslands hefur tekið upp fjölda geisladiska, m.a. heildarútgáfu á sinfóníum Sibeliusar og hljómsveitarverk eftir Vincent d'Indy. Fyrir BIS hefur hljómsveitin hljóðritað átta diska í útgáfuröð með verkum Jóns Leifs og þrjá diska með verkum gríska tónskáldsins Nikos Skalkottas.

<https://www.sinfonia.is/>

Hermann Bäumer er aðalstjórnandi Fílharmoníuhljómsveitarinnar í Mainz og stjórnar einnig óperuhljómsveit borgarinnar. Hann hefur hlotið mikið lof fyrir starf sitt í Mainz en hann hefur einnig stjórnað fjölda annarra hljómsveita, m.a. Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Útvarpshljómsveitunum í Berlín og Bæjaralandi, Bæversku þjóðarhljómsveitinni í München, og Útvarpshljómsveitinni í Helsinki.

Bäumer hóf tónlistarferil sinn sem bassabásúnuleikari í Sinfóníuhljómsveitinni í Bamberg en árið 1992 hlaut hann fastráðningu við Fílharmoníuhljómsveit Berlínar. Hann hefur hlotið mikið lof fyrir hljóðritanir sínar bæði sem básúnuleikari og hljómsveitarstjóri, og má nefna að hann hlaut verðlaun þýskra tónlistargagnrýnenda árið 2010. Bäumer er mikill áhugamaður um tónlist Jóns Leifs og stjórnaði heildarfrumflutningi og hljóðritun á *Eddu I* með Sinfóníuhljómsveit Íslands árið 2006.

www.hermannbaeumer.com

Jón Leifs (1899–1968) war der erste Nationalkomponist Islands. Seine Musik greift auf die Haupttypen des isländischen Volkslieds zurück und ist oft von der kraftvollen Natur und dem literarischen Erbe Islands inspiriert. Zu Lebzeiten weitgehend vernachlässigt und verspottet, wurde seinem Schaffen erst in den Jahrzehnten nach seinem Tod größere Aufmerksamkeit zuteil; einige seiner Werke sind immer noch unaufgeführt. Sein Magnum Opus ist das *Edda-Oratorium*, ein gewaltiges (wenngleich unvollendetes) Werk in drei großen Teilen, das ihn fast seine gesamte Schaffenszeit hindurch – von etwa 1930 bis zu seinem Tod im Jahr 1968 – beschäftigte.

Von Anbeginn an zeigt sich Jón Leifs stark von der isländischen Literatur des Mittelalters geprägt. Ein Großteil der mittelalterlichen Dichtung Islands ist in einer Handvoll Manuskripte aus dem 13. Jahrhundert überliefert, obwohl das Material selber vermutlich älter ist. Gedichte über Odin und andere Götter sowie über die Hauptfiguren der Helden-erzählung der Wälsungen finden sich in einer Textsammlung, die als *Codex Regius* (Buch des Königs) bekannt ist, um 1270 geschrieben wurde und traditionell als *Lieder-Edda* bezeichnet wird. Ein weiterer wesentlicher und etwas älterer Text ist die *Prosa-Edda* (oder, auf Isländisch, *Snorra Edda*), die mutmaßlich um 1225 von dem Stammesführer Snorri Sturluson geschrieben wurde. Das Werk ist zum einen poetisches Lehrbuch und zum anderen eine Kompilation der Mythen und Legenden, die auch in der *Lieder-Edda* enthalten sind.

Diese Texte bilden die Grundlage des Oratoriums *Edda* für Solisten, Chor und Orchester. Als Leifs 1928 mit der Konzeption begann, plante er, nur *Völuspá* (*Die Weissagung der Seherin*) zu vertonen, eines der großen *Edda*-Gedichte in Gestalt eines Monologs von über 60 Strophen, in dem eine Sibylle die Vision vom Anfang der Welt und ihrem Untergang beschreibt – jenem apokalyptischen Gemetzel der Ragnarök, in dem viele der Götter sterben und die Erde im Meer versinkt. Doch auf Zerstörung folgt Neuschöpfung: Die Erde erhebt sich wieder aus dem Meer, und eine neue Generation von Göttern übernimmt die Macht.

Die tatsächlichen Dimensionen des Werks gingen über den ursprünglichen Plan des Komponisten weit hinaus. Bis 1930 sprach er von einem „*Edda-Oratorium*“, dessen

Libretto er selbst aus verschiedenen *Edda*-Quellen zusammenfügte. Als der Oratorientext im Mai 1933 fertig war, bestand er aus 350 Strophen und umfasste 86 maschinengeschriebene Seiten. Das Werk sollte vier Teile haben: *Die Schöpfung der Welt* (*Sköpun heimsins*), *Das Leben der Götter* (*Líf guðanna*), *Götterdämmerung* (*Ragnarökr*) und *Auferstehung* (*Endurreisn*). Indem er die nordischen Mythen als Grundlage für eine Tetralogie nutzte, lud Jón Leifs natürlich zu Vergleichen mit Wagners *Ring des Nibelungen* ein, mit dem er wohlvertraut war: Karl Mucks Aufführung des *Siegfried* bei den Münchner Sommerfestspielen 1920 hatte bei Leifs starken Eindruck hinterlassen, und während seiner Jahre am Leipziger Konservatorium hatte er die Partitur studiert. Doch er fand Wagners Ansatz zu romantisch und sentimental und behauptete, viele seiner eigenen Werke – darunter das *Edda*-Oratorium und die *Saga-Symphonie* – als „einen Protest gegen Wagner, der den nordischen Charakter und das nordische Kunsterbe so schrecklich missverstanden hat“, geschrieben zu haben. Im Unterschied zu Wagner verwendete Jón Leifs den Originaltext (auf Isländisch), und seine Oratorienvertonung besteht größtenteils aus statischen Tableaus und nicht aus einer dramatisierten Nacherzählung – zumindest in den Teilen I (der, ein Markenzeichen von Leifs, Naturphänomene schildert) und II (in dem die Götter und ihr Lebensraum beschrieben werden).

Jón Leifs stellte *Edda I* im Jahr 1939 fertig, legte das Gesamtprojekt aber dann erst einmal beiseite. Aufführungen von *Edda I* waren nicht zu erwirken, stattdessen verbrachte Leifs mehrere Jahre damit, das „choreografische Drama“ *Baldr* zu schreiben, das ebenfalls auf einem mythologischen Stoff basierte. 1951 begann er mit der Komposition von *Edda II*, aber schon bald kam die Arbeit ins Stocken. Zwei Sätze von *Edda I* wurden 1952 bei den Nordischen Musiktagen in Kopenhagen ohne Erfolg uraufgeführt, was, zusammen mit der harschen Kritik an seiner *Saga-Symphonie* in Helsinki zwei Jahre zuvor, dem Selbstvertrauen des Komponisten einen schweren Schlag versetzte. Ein Jahrzehnt sollte verstreichen, bevor er die Partitur für *Edda II* erneut hervornahm.

Tatsächlich kam Jón Leifs erst Anfang 1966 mit *Edda II* ins Reine und stellte die letzten vier Sätze zwischen Januar und Mai fertig. Ursprünglich hatte er den Titel *Götter* (*Æsir*) für den ersten Satz vorgesehen, eine Abfolge von Portraits der männlichen Götter (Odin,

Thor, Baldr usw.). Später beschloss er, ihn in zwei Sätze zu unterteilen: Der erste (*Odin*) stellt den Vater aller Götter dar; der zweite (*Odins Söhne*) widmet sich seinen Söhnen und wird in einer Skizze als „Scherzo mit Trio-Episoden“ bezeichnet. Bemerkenswert ist im ersten Satz unter anderem die Vortragsanweisung „quasi jodeln“ im Solo-Tenor, die dem Gesang vermutlich einen exotischen, ja jenseitigen Charakter verleihen soll. Der ruhigere dritte Satz, *Göttinnen (Ásynjur)*, portraitiert die weiblichen Figuren: Frigg, Freyja, Sigrún etc. Die letzten drei Sätze des Oratoriums (*Walküren, Nornen und Krieger*) sind erheblich kürzer als die vorherigen – vielleicht weil Leifs befürchtete, die Zeit liefe ihm davon, und er sicherstellen wollte, dass das Werk abgeschlossen würde.

Unverzüglich nahm Ján Leifs die Fortsetzung in Angriff. *Edda III – Götterdämmerung* verlangt einen gigantischen Klangapparat, was u.a. auf den Umstand zurückzuführen ist, dass er im November dieses Jahres in Paris bei Aufführungen von „zwei der großartigsten Requiem-Vertonungen aller Zeiten“ (Leifs) zugegen war – derjenigen von Berlioz und Verdi. An Allerseelen hörte er im Pantheon das Requiem von Berlioz mit dem Orchestre Philharmonique de l'ORTF und dem Fanfarenzug der Garde Républicaine, drei Tage später wurde das Verdi-Requiem in Saint-Roch aufgeführt. Die dramatischen Qualitäten beider Werke sowie die enormen Ressourcen des ersteren inspirierten ihn, die einsätzeige *Edda III* zu seinem mit Abstand anspruchsvollsten Werk zu machen. Es existieren praktisch keine Skizzen für *Edda III*; es scheint, als habe der Komponist im Wettlauf mit der Zeit die meisten seiner Ideen direkt in die Partitur geschrieben. In einem Interview bemerkte er: „Nie zuvor habe ich so etwas geschrieben. Es ist unmöglich, derlei Ereignisse zu beschreiben, ohne gewaltige Klangkörper einzusetzen.“

Während der Komposition von *Edda I* erwähnte Jón Leifs mehrfach, er habe Angst zu sterben, bevor er seine Lebensziele als Künstler erreicht habe. Der Tod und die Beerdigung des Dichters Jóhann Jónsson in Leipzig im Jahr 1932 bewegten ihn zutiefst; seiner Schwester bekannte er die Furcht, „dieses Schicksal zu teilen, bevor ich meine Hauptwerke vollendet habe“. Im Jahr darauf hatte er immer noch einen frühen Tod vor Augen: „Meine Hauptsorge ist, dass es mir nicht gelingt, die Werke zu vollenden, die ich vollenden muss, und die niemand sonst vollbringen kann. Alles andere erscheint mir im Vergleich hierzu

trivial.“ Fast will es scheinen, als habe er sein eigenes Schicksal vorausgeahnt, denn obgleich Leifs nicht in jungen Jahren starb, war sein episches *Edda*-Projekt dazu verurteilt, unvollendet zu bleiben. Im April 1968 begann er, Blut zu spucken; am 14. Mai wurde er in das Städtische Krankenhaus Reykjavík eingeliefert, wo Ärzte einen bösartigen Tumor entdeckten. Als Antwort darauf legte er *Edda III* kurz beiseite, um in einem schlichten, berührenden Werk für Streichorchester sanftere Emotionen auszudrücken: *Consolation* op. 66. Dann widmete er sich wieder *Edda III* und beendete Seite 200 der Partitur am 5. Juni 1968 im Krankenhaus, einen Tag vor einer Operation. Er schaffte es, zwölf weitere Seiten zu schreiben, bevor seine Kräfte erschöpft waren. *Edda III* blieb unvollendet und ist bis heute nicht aufgeführt worden. Allein ein Libretto-Entwurf deutet auf Leifs' Pläne für den letzten Teil, *Edda IV*, in dem eine grüne, wunderbare Erde aus dem Meer aufsteigt und unter der Führung von Baldur, dem „weißen Gott“, eine neue Weltordnung entsteht.

Die vorliegende Aufnahme entstand im Anschluss an die Uraufführung von *Edda II* im März 2018 in Reykjavík. Es ist die dreizehnte Folge der Jón Leifs-Edition bei BIS. Bis heute sind nur zwei von Leifs' großformatigen Werken für Chor und Orchester unaufgeführt: *Darraðarljóð (Dorruds Lied)* aus dem Jahr 1964 und die unvollendete *Edda III*, von der etwa eine Stunde Musik vorliegt.

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Die Mezzosopranistin **Hanna Dóra Sturludóttir** studierte in Reykjavík und Berlin, wo sie an der Hochschule der Künste ihr Diplom mit Auszeichnung erhielt. Sie hat über 50 Opernrollen im In- und Ausland gesungen, häufig mit dem Iceland Symphony Orchestra zusammengearbeitet und 2014 den Isländischen Musikpreis für ihre Darstellung der Prinzessin Eboli in *Don Carlo* erhalten. In jüngerer Zeit verkörperte sie die Rolle der Lisa in Weinbergs Oper *Die Passagierin* in Gelsenkirchen und erhielt begeisterte Kritiken. Sie ist eine gefragte Konzertsängerin, gibt zahlreiche Liederabende und unterrichtet an der Isländischen Akademie der Künste sowie an der Sigurður Demetz Singakademie in Reykjavík.

Der Tenor **Elmar Gilbertsson** studierte Gesang an der Sigurður Demetz Singakademie in Reykjavík, am Konservatorium von Amsterdam und am Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag bei Jón Þorsteinsson und Peter Nilson. In jüngerer Zeit war er häufig an Opernhäusern und in Konzertsälen in ganz Europa zu Gast; derzeit ist er festes Mitglied des Ensembles der Staatsoper Stuttgart. Er wurde als Sänger des Jahres mit dem Isländischen Preis der Darstellenden Künste ausgezeichnet und hat zweimal den Isländischen Musikpreis erhalten, unter anderem für seine Darstellung des Lenski in *Eugen Onegin* an der Isländischen Oper im Jahr 2016.

Der Bass **Kristinn Sigmundsson** begann seine Gesangskarriere in den frühen 1980er Jahren. Sein Schwerpunkt liegt auf der Oper, aber er ist auch ein reger Liedersänger, der sich auf deutsche Lieder und isländische Kunstlieder spezialisiert hat. Sein Opernrepertoire ist umfangreich, und er war an den meisten großen Opernhäusern zu Gast, u.a. an der Metropolitan Opera, der Scala, dem Royal Opera House, Covent Garden und der Opéra National de Paris. Zu seinen herausragenden Rollen gehören Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Don Basilio in *Der Barbier von Sevilla* und Rocco in *Fidelio*, die er an den wichtigsten Opernhäusern der Welt gesungen hat. Er erhielt dreimal den Isländischen Musikpreis und wurde 1995 mit dem Isländischen Falkenorden ausgezeichnet.

Hörður Áskelsson, Kantor der Hallgrímskirkja, gründete 1996 die **Schola cantorum Reykjavicensis**. Das Repertoire des Chores besteht einerseits vor allem aus Renaissance- und Barockmusik und andererseits aus zeitgenössischer Musik mit einem besonderen Schwerpunkt auf isländischen Werken. Die Schola cantorum ist eines der bedeutendsten Ensembles Islands und wurde 2006 zum offiziellen Musikensemble der Stadt Reykjavík ernannt. 2007 wurde sie für den Musikpreis des Nordischen Rates nominiert. Der Chor hat an zahlreichen Aufnahmen von Jón Leifs' Musik bei BIS mitgewirkt, und seine 2016 veröffentlichte SACD *Meditatio* erhielt hervorragende Kritiken. Die Normalbesetzung des Chores mit 16 professionellen Mitgliedern wurde für das Oratorium *Edda II* auf 40 erhöht. www.scholacantorum.is

Das 1950 gegründete **Iceland Symphony Orchestra** ist das Staatsorchester Islands und eine der führenden Institutionen der isländischen Kulturszene. Für seine Aufführungen und Aufnahmen erhält das Orchester großes Lob; alljährlich präsentiert es Abonnementreihen, Schul- und Familienkonzerten sowie Konzerte, die sich der zeitgenössischen Musik widmen. Das Orchester residiert im preisgekrönten Konzerthaus Harpa in Reykjavík.

Yan Pascal Tortelier übernahm im September 2016 das Amt des Chefdirigenten, das zuvor Dirigenten wie Jean-Pierre Jacquillat, Petri Sakari, Rumon Gamba, Ilan Volkov und der heutige Ehrendirigent Osmo Vänskä innehatten. Vladimir Ashkenazy dirigiert das Orchester seit Anfang der 1970er Jahre regelmäßig und ist heute ebenfalls Ehrendirigent. Die isländische Komponistin Anna Þorvaldsdóttir ist Composer-in-Residence des Orchesters. Das Iceland Symphony Orchestra verfügt über eine umfangreiche Diskographie mit einer Gesamteinspielung der Sibelius-Symphonien und Orchesterwerken von Vincent d'Indy. Bei BIS hat das Orchester bereits acht Alben mit Orchesterwerken von Jón Leifs aufgenommen, die von der Kritik hoch gelobt wurden. Außerdem hat es drei CDs mit Orchesterwerken von Nikos Skalkottas eingespielt.

Das Iceland Symphony Orchestra hat Konzertreisen durch Europa, Japan und die USA unternommen; zu seinen Konzerten im Ausland zählen Auftritte bei den BBC Proms und im Kennedy Center in Washington DC sowie Konzerte in der Carnegie Hall in New York.
<https://en.sinfonia.is/>

Hermann Bäumer ist seit der Spielzeit 2011/2012 Chefdirigent des Philharmonischen Staatsorchesters Mainz sowie Generalmusikdirektor des dortigen Staatstheaters. Seine durchdachten und einfallsreichen Programme sowie die Auseinandersetzung mit außergewöhnlichem musikdramatischem Repertoire (u.a. deutsche Erstaufführungen von Dusapins *Perela*, Langgaards *Antichrist*, Saariahos *Adriana Mater* und Apherdis' *Avis de Tempête*) bescheren ihm großen Zuspruch von Publikum und Fachpresse.

Als einstiger Berliner Philharmoniker weiß er um die Raffinesen guter Orchesterarbeit und wird für seine bescheidene und der Musik verpflichteten Art von Orchestern auf der ganzen Welt geschätzt. Er dirigierte Orchester wie die Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden,

das Orchester der Komischen Oper Berlin, die NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, die Bamberger Symphoniker, das Bayerische Staatsorchester München, das hr-Sinfonieorchester, das Ensemble Resonanz und Modern, das Orchester der Norwegischen Staatsoper sowie das New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra und das Tokyo Symphony Orchestra. Er ist bekannt für sein pädagogisches Wirken; regelmäßig arbeitet er mit dem Bundesjugendorchester und dem Landesjugendorchester und -chor Rheinland-Pfalz zusammen.

Die vorliegende SACD ist seine dritte Jón-Leifs-Einspielung mit dem Iceland Symphony Orchestra.

www.hermannbaeumer.com



Hermann Bäumer

Jón Leifs (1899–1968) a été le premier compositeur nationaliste de l’Islande. Sa musique s’appuie sur les principaux types de chanson folklorique islandaise et s’inspire souvent de la nature massive de l’Islande et de son héritage littéraire. Grandement négligée et ridiculisée du vivant de Leifs, sa musique n’a commencé à être plus largement remarquée que dans les décennies suivant son décès et certaines de ses œuvres n’ont pas encore été jouées. Son opus magnum est l’oratorio *Edda*, une œuvre compacte (quoiqu’incomplète) en trois grandes parties qui l’ont tenu occupé par intervalles dans la majeure partie de sa carrière de composition – d’environ 1930 à sa mort en 1968.

Dès le début de sa carrière, Jón Leifs subit une profonde influence de la tradition moyenâgeuse de la littérature islandaise. Une grande partie de la poésie de l’Islande moyenâgeuse a été conservée dans une poignée de manuscrits écrits au 13^e siècle, quoiqu’on croie le matériau être encore plus ancien. Des poèmes sur Odin et d’autres dieux, ainsi que sur les principaux personnages de l’histoire héroïque des Völsungs, sont transmis dans une anthologie connue comme *Codex Regius* (*Le Livre du roi*), écrit vers 1270 et appelé traditionnellement l’*Edda poétique*. Un autre texte substantiel et un peu plus vieux est l’*Edda en prose* (ou *Snorra Edda* en islandais) du chef de clan Snorri Sturluson, et qui daterait d’environ 1225. L’œuvre associe un traité sur la poésie et un compte rendu des mythes et légendes contenus aussi dans l’*Edda poétique*.

Ces textes forment la base de l’oratorio *Edda* pour solistes, chœur et orchestre. Quand il commença à considérer l’œuvre, en 1928, il avait pensé à n’arranger que *Völuspá* (*La Prophétie de la voyante*), qui est l’un des grands poèmes de l’*Edda*, un monologue d’environ 60 strophes où une sibylle décrit une vision du début du monde et de son effacement – le carnage apocalyptique du crépuscule des dieux où plusieurs des dieux trouvent la mort et le monde est submergé par l’eau. La destruction est tout de même suivie d’une recréation : la terre surgit encore une fois de la mer et une nouvelle génération de dieux prend la relève.

Les dimensions de l’œuvre dépassèrent de loin le projet initial du compositeur. En 1930, il parlait de «l’oratorio *Edda*» dont il avait lui-même commencé à assembler le livret de diverses sources d’*Edda*. Complété en mai 1933, le texte de l’oratorio consistait en 350 strophes et couvrait 86 pages écrites à la machine. L’œuvre devait être divisée en

quatre parties: *La Création du monde* (*Sköpun heimsins*), *La Vie des dieux* (*Líf guðanna*), *Le Crépuscule des dieux* (*Ragnarökr*) et *Résurrection* (*Endurreisn*). En utilisant les mythes norrois comme base d'une tétralogie, Jón Leifs ouvrait la porte aux comparaisons avec *L'Anneau du Nibelung* de Wagner qu'il connaissait bien ; *Siegfried* dirigé par Karl Muck au festival estival de Munich en 1920 avait laissé une forte impression et Leifs avait étudié la partition au cours de ses années au conservatoire de Leipzig. Mais il trouvait l'approche de Wagner trop romantique et sentimentale pour le sujet et il prétendit avoir écrit plusieurs de ses propres œuvres, dont l'oratorio *Edda* et la *Symphonie Saga*, comme « une protestation contre Wagner qui a si mécompris le caractère nordique et l'héritage artistique nordique. » Par contraste à Wagner, Jón Leifs utilisa le texte original (en islandais) et son oratorio consiste surtout en tableaux statiques plutôt qu'en une narration dramatique, au moins dans les première (décrivant des phénomènes naturels, une caractéristique de Leifs) et seconde parties (décrivant les dieux et leur habitat).

Jón Leifs compléta *Edda I* en 1939 mais il n'alla pas immédiatement plus loin avec le projet. Il lui était impossible d'obtenir des exécutions d'*Edda I* et il passa plutôt plusieurs années à écrire le « drame chorégraphique » *Baldr*, lui-même aussi basé sur l'ancienne mythologie. Il commença à composer *Edda II* en 1951 mais le projet cala peu après. Deux mouvements d'*Edda I* furent créés aux Journées musicales nordiques à Copenhague en 1952 mais l'accueil fut froid ce qui, ajouté à la dure critique de sa *Symphonie Saga* à Helsinki deux ans plus tôt, porta un coup sévère à la confiance en soi du compositeur. Il ne retourna à la partition d'*Edda II* que dix ans plus tard.

En fait, Jón Leifs ne prit le taureau par les cornes qu'au début de 1966, terminant les quatre mouvements finals d'*Edda* entre janvier et mai. Il avait pensé d'abord intituler le premier mouvement *Les Ases* (*Æsir*), un portrait de chaque dieu masculin tour à tour (Odin, Thor, Baldr etc.) Il décida ensuite de le diviser en deux mouvements : le premier (Odin) décrit le père de tous les dieux ; le second énumère ses fils (*Les Fils d'Odin*) et on le nomme un « Scherzo avec épisodes de trios ». Un trait notable du premier mouvement est l'indication « quasi jodeln » (presque du yodel) au ténor solo, probablement pour donner à ces lignes un caractère exotique, d'un autre monde même. Le troisième mouve-

ment plus calme, les *Asynes* (*Ásynjur*), décrit les déesses : Frigg, Freyja, Sigyn etc. Les trois derniers mouvements de l'oratorio (*Valkyries*, *Nornes* et *Guerriers*) sont beaucoup plus courts que les précédents, une indication peut-être que Leifs soupçonnait que le temps filait et qu'il était déterminé à finir l'œuvre.

Jón Leifs se mit immédiatement à travailler sur la tranche suivante. *Edda III – Le Crépuscule des dieux* exige des forces énormes d'exécution, une décision inspirée en partie par l'écoute de ce qu'il décrivit plus tard comme « les deux Requiems les plus magnifiques jamais écrits » – par Berlioz et Verdi – à Paris en novembre de cette année-là. Le jour de la Toussaint, il entendit le Requiem de Berlioz joué au Panthéon par l'Orchestre philharmonique de l'ORTF et la fanfare de la Garde républicaine ; celui de Verdi fut donné à Saint-Roch trois jours plus tard. Les qualités dramatiques des deux œuvres, ainsi que les vastes ressources de la première, l'inspirèrent de faire de l'unique mouvement d'*Edda III* sa composition de loin la plus exigeante. Il n'existe pratiquement pas d'esquisses pour *Edda III* ; c'est comme si le compositeur, sentant que son heure approchait, écrivit la plupart de ses idées directement dans la partition complète. Dans une interview, il fit remarquer : « Je n'ai jamais fait quelque chose de pareil auparavant. Il est impossible de décrire de tels événements sans recourir à des forces gigantesques. »

En composant *Edda I*, Jón Leifs remarqua souvent sa peur de mourir avant d'avoir achevé les buts de sa vie d'artiste. En 1932, la mort et les funérailles à Leipzig du poète Jóhann Jónsson l'affectèrent profondément et il admit à sa sœur sa terreur de « rencontrer le même destin avant de finir mes œuvres principales. » Il pensait encore à un décès prématuré un an plus tard : « Mon premier souci est de ne pas vivre pour terminer les œuvres que je dois finir et que personne d'autre ne peut achever. Tout le reste autrement me semble banal. » C'est comme s'il pressentait son propre destin car, même si Leifs ne mourut pas jeune, son projet épique *Edda* était voué à rester inachevé. En avril 1968, il commença à vomir du sang et il fut admis à l'hôpital de la ville de Reykjavík le 14 mai où les médecins découvrirent une tumeur maligne. En réponse, il mit brièvement de côté *Edda III* pour exprimer des émotions plus tendres dans une œuvre simple et touchante pour orchestre à cordes, *Consolation* op. 66. Puis il retourna encore une fois à *Edda III*, terminant la page

200 de la partition complète à l'hôpital le 5 juin 1968, la veille d'une opération. Il réussit à écrire douze autres pages avant d'être épuisé. *Edda III* resta inachevé et n'a pas encore été joué. Seule une esquisse du livret donne une idée des intentions de Jón Leifs pour la dernière tranche, *Edda IV*, où une terre verte de toute beauté surgit de l'océan et un nouvel ordre mondial est établi sous l'autorité de Baldur, le « dieu blanc ».

Cet enregistrement a été réalisé suite à la création d'*Edda II* à Reykjavík en mars 2018. Il est le treizième volume de la présente édition de Jón Leifs sur BIS et, à ce jour, il ne reste que deux des grandes œuvres pour chœur et orchestre à créer: *Darraðarljóð (Chant de Dorrud)* de 1964 et l'inachevé *Edda III* duquel il existe environ une heure de musique.

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Hanna Dóra Sturludóttir, mezzo-soprano, a étudié à Reykjavík et à Berlin où elle a obtenu son diplôme à la Hochschule der Künste avec distinction. Elle a chanté plus de 50 rôles, en Islande et à l'étranger et elle a collaboré fréquemment avec l'Orchestre symphonique d'Islande ; ella a reçu le Prix de Musique en 2014 pour son interprétation d'Eboli dans *Don Carlo*. Plus récemment, elle a chanté le rôle de Lisa dans l'opéra de Weinberg *Die Passagierin* in Gelsenkirchen et a récolté des critiques enthousiastes. En plus d'enseigner à l'Académie des Arts d'Islande et à l'Académie de chant Sigurður Demetz à Reykjavík, elle mène une vie active de concerts et de récitals.

Elmar Gilbertsson, ténor, a étudié le chant à l'Académie de chant Sigurður Demetz à Reykjavík, au Conservatoire d'Amsterdam et au Conservatoire royal de La Haye avec Jón Þorsteinsson et Peter Nilson. Elmar a été un artiste fréquemment invité dans les maisons d'opéra et les salles de concert d'Europe ces dernières années mais il est présentement membre permanent de l'Opéra de Stuttgart en Allemagne. Elmar a reçu l'Icelandic Performing Arts Award comme chanteur de l'année ainsi que le Prix de Musique islandais deux fois, dont pour son interprétation de Lensky dans *Eugène Onéguine* avec l'Opéra islandais en 2016.

Kristinn Sigmundsson, basse, a entrepris sa carrière de chant au début des années 1980. Son principal intérêt a été l'opéra mais il a aussi été très actif comme chanteur de lied, se spécialisant en lieder allemands et en chansons artistiques islandaises. Son répertoire d'opéra est étendu et il a chanté dans la plupart des grandes maisons d'opéra dont l'Opéra Métropolitain, La Scala, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden et l'Opéra National de Paris. Parmi ses rôles principaux nommons le Baron Ochs dans *Le Chevalier à la rose*, Don Basilio dans *Le Barbier de Séville* et Rocco dans *Fidelio*, rôles qu'il a chantés dans de grandes maisons d'opéra mondiales. Il a reçu trois fois le Prix de Musique islandais et on lui a décerné l'Ordre islandais du Faucon en 1995.

Cantor à l'église Hallgrímskirkja, **Hörður Áskelsson** a fondé la **Schola cantorum Reykjavicensis** en 1996. Le répertoire du chœur consiste surtout en musique baroque et de la Renaissance d'un côté, et de musique contemporaine avec accent spécial sur la musique islandaise de l'autre. La Schola cantorum est l'un des ensembles les plus distingués de l'Islande et fut choisi Ensemble de musique officiel de la ville de Reykjavík en 2006. Il a été nommé pour le Prix de musique du conseil nordique en 2007. Le chœur a pris part à plusieurs enregistrements de la musique de Jón Leifs sur BIS et son disque *Meditatio*, sorti en 2016, a reçu des critiques exceptionnelles. L'effectif normal du chœur de 16 membres professionnels a été augmenté à 40 pour l'oratorio *Edda II*.
www.scholacantorum.is

Fondé en 1950, l'**Orchestre symphonique d'Islande** est l'orchestre national de l'Islande et l'une des principales institutions de la scène culturelle islandaise. Largement loué pour ses concerts et enregistrements, l'orchestre offre chaque année une saison complète de séries d'abonnement, de concerts pour les écoliers et les familles, et de concerts dédiés à la musique moderne. L'orchestre réside à la salle de concert prisée Harpa à Reykjavík.

Yan Pascal Tortelier assume le poste de chef titulaire depuis septembre 2016, un rôle tenu précédemment par Jean-Pierre Jacquillat, Petri Sakari, Rumon Gamba, Ilan Volkov et Osmö Vänskä qui est présentement chef honoraire. Vladimir Ashkenazy a régulièrement dirigé l'orchestre depuis le début des années 1970 et il en est maintenant chef lauréat. La

compositrice islandaise Anna Þorvaldsdóttir est compositrice résidente de l'orchestre.

L'Orchestre symphonique d'Islande offre un vaste choix de disques dont un cycle complet des symphonies de Sibelius et des œuvres pour orchestre de Vincent d'Indy. Sur étiquette BIS, la formation a déjà enregistré huit volumes des œuvres pour orchestre de Jón Leifs, tous ayant été reçus avec enthousiasme par la critique. Elle paraît également sur trois disques présentant des œuvres orchestrales de Nikos Skalkottas.

L'Orchestre symphonique d'Islande a fait des tournées en Europe, Japon et États-Unis. Ses concerts à l'étranger incluent des Proms de la BBC, au Centre Kennedy à Washington D.C., ainsi qu'au Carnegie Hall à New York.

<https://en.sinfonia.is/>

Hermann Bäumer est principal chef d'orchestre du Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Mainz depuis la saison 2011–12 et directeur général de la musique du théâtre d'état de la même ville. Ses programmes bien pensés et originaux ainsi que son intérêt pour le répertoire inhabituel musico-dramatique (par exemple les créations allemandes de *Perela* de Dusapin, *Antichrist* de Langgaard, *Adriana Mater* de Saariaho et *Avis de Tempête* d'Aphergis) lui ont attiré l'acclamation autant des audiences que des critiques.

Ancien membre de l'Orchestre philharmonique de Berlin, il connaît bien les subtilités d'un bon jeu orchestral et il est hautement respecté par les orchestres mondiaux pour sa modestie qui met toujours la musique en premier lieu. Parmi les orchestres qu'il a dirigés nommon Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, l'Orchestre du Komische Oper Berlin, NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, l'Orchestre symphonique de Bamberg, Bayerische Staatsorchester München, hr-Sinfonieorchester, Ensemble Resonanz und Modern, l'Orchestre de l'Opéra national norvégien ainsi que le Nouvel Orchestre philharmonique du Japon et l'Orchestre symphonique de Tokyo. Il est connu pour son travail d'éducateur et il travaille régulièrement avec l'Orchestre fédéral allemand de la Jeunesse ainsi que le Chœur et l'Orchestre des jeunes du Rheinland-Pfalz. Ce présent enregistrement est son troisième de musique de Jón Leifs avec l'Orchestre symphonique d'Islande.

www.hermannbaeumer.com

Edda II – Líf guðanna

1 I. Óðinn

Heilir æsir!
Heilar ásynjur!
Heil sjá in fjölnýta fold!
Sigurdрифumál, 4

Óðinn er æztr ok elztr ásanna.
Hann ræðr öllum hlutum.
Gylfaginning, 20

Hann er svá fagr ok göfugr álitum
at öllum hlær hugr við.
Ynglinga saga, 6

Þat kann ek it fyrstu
er gól Þjóðrerir
dvergr fyr Dellings dyrum.
Hávamál, 160

Heill dagr!
Heilir dags synir!
Sigurdрифumál, 3

Afl gól hann ásum
en álfum frama,
hyggju Hroftatý.
Hávamál, 160

Allt veit ek Óðinn,
hvar þú auga falt
í hinum mæra
Mímis brunni.
Völuspá, 28

Edda II – The Lives of the Gods

I. Odin

Hail to the Æsir!
Hail to the goddesses!
Hail to the mighty, fecund earth!
The Lay of Sigdrífa, 4

Odin is highest and most ancient of the Æsir.
He rules all things.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 20

He is so handsome and noble to look at
that it gladdens the hearts of all.
The Saga of the Ynglings, 6

I know a first,
which the dwarf Thiodrerir
chanted before Delling's doors.
Sayings of the High One, 160

Hail to the day!
Hail to the sons of day!
The Lay of Sigdrífa, 3

Powerfully he sang for the Æsir
and before the elves,
wisdom to Sage.
Sayings of the High One, 160

I know everything, Odin,
where you hid your eye
in the famous
well of Mimir.
The Seeress's Prophecy, 28

Hittusk æsir
á lðavelli,
þeir er hörg og hof
hátimbruðu,
afla lögðu,
auð smíðuðu,
tangir skópu
ok tól gerðu.
Tefldu í túni,
teitir váru.
Völuspá, 7, 8

Heilir æsir!
Heilar ásynjur ok öll ginnheilög goð!
Heil sjá in fjölnýta fold!
Sigurdrífumál, 4

Mjök er auðkennt
þeim er til Óðins koma.
Grímnismál, 10

Öllum hlær hugr við.
Ynglinga saga, 6

Bær heitir þar
blið regin
silfri þöktu sali.
Grímnismál, 6

Óðinn heitir Alföður.
Gylfaginning, 20

Mjök er auðkennt
þeim er til Óðins koma
salkynni at séa:
vargr hangir

The Æsir met
on Idavoll Plain,
they built altars
and high temples;
they set up their forges,
smithed precious things,
shaped tongs
and made tools.
They played chequers in the meadow,
they were merry.
The Seeress's Prophecy, 7, 8

Hail to the Æsir!
Hail to the goddesses and all holy spirits!
Hail to the mighty, fecund earth!
The Lay of Sigdrífa, 4

It's very easy to recognize
for those who come to Odin.
Grimnir's Sayings, 10

It gladdens the hearts of all.
Saga of the Ynglings, 6

There is a home
where the cheerful Powers
roofed the hall with silver.
Grimnir's Sayings, 6

Odin is called All-father.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 20

It's very easy to recognize
for those who come to Odin
to see how his hall's arranged;
a wolf hangs in front

fyrr vestan dyrr
ok drúpir örn yfir.
Grimnismál, 10

Óðinn setti lög í landi sínu. Óðinn er sigrsæll
í hverri orrustu. Óvinir hans óttast hann, en
vinir hans treysta honum ok trúa á kraft hans.
Ef hann leggur hendur á höfuð mönnum, þá
trúa þeir at vel muni farast. Óðinn kann þá íþrótt
er seiðr heitir. Gefr hann sigr sumum. En sumum
býðr hann til sín.
Ynglinga saga, 8, 2, 7, 9

Gefr hann sigr sumum
en sumum aura,
mælsku mörgum
ok manvit firum.
Hyndluljóð, 3

Byrði betri
ber-at maðr brautu at,
en sé manvit mikit.
Hávamál, 10

Byri gefr brögnum
en brag skáldum,
gefr hann mansemi
mörgum rekki.
Hyndluljóð, 3

Stundum vegr hann dauða menn
ór jörðu.
Ynglinga saga, 7

Ljóð ek þau kann
er kann-at þjóðans kona
ok mannskis mögur.
Hjálp heitir eitt,

of the western doors
and an eagle hovers above.
Grimnir's Sayings, 10

Odin instituted laws in his country. Odin won the
upper hand in every battle. His enemies feared him,
and his friends had faith in him and his power.
Before sending men to battle, he would lay his hands
on their heads; they they believed they would
succeed. Odin had the skill of sorcery. He gives
victory to some, but others he invites to join him.
Saga of the Ynglings, 8, 2, 7, 9

He gives victory to some,
to some riches,
eloquence to many,
and common sense to men.
Song of Hyndla, 3

No better burden
can a man carry on the road
than a store of common sense.
Sayings of the High One, 10

He gives following winds to sailors,
turns of phrase to poets,
he gives manliness
to many a warrior.
Song of Hyndla, 3

At times he would call to life dead men
out of the ground.
Saga of the Ynglings, 7

I know those spells
which a ruler's wife doesn't know,
nor any man's son;
'help' one is called,

en þat þér hjálpa mun
við sökum ok sorgum.
Hávamál, 146

Óðinn kann þau ljóð, er upp lýkst jörðin
ok björg ok steinar.
Ynglinga saga, 7

Rúnar munt þú finna
ok ráðna stafi,
mjök stóra stafi,
mjök stinna stafi,
er fáði fimbulþulr
ok görðu ginnregin
ok reist Hropr rögn,
Óðinn með ásum.

Veiztu hve rista skal?
Veiztu hve ráða skal?
Veiztu hve fáa skal?
Veiztu hve freista skal?
Hávamál, 142, 143, 144

Óðinn kann at slökkva eld ok kyrra sjá ok
snúa vindum. Allar þessar íþróttir kenndi hann
goðunum. Hann mælir allt hendingum. Hann
talar svá snjallt at öllum er á heyra þykir þat
eina satt. Hann skiptir hömum; liggir þá
búkrinn sem sofinn eða dauðr. Óðinn má
vita örlög manna ok óorðna hluti.
Ynglinga saga, 6, 7

Huginn og Muninn
fljúga jörmungrund yfir
hverjan dag.
Grímnismál, 20

and that will help you
against accusations and sorrows.
Sayings of the High One, 146

Odin knows such magic spells as would open for
him the earth and mountains and rocks.
Saga of the Ynglings, 7

The runes you must find
and the meaningful letter,
a very great letter,
a very powerful letter,
which the mighty sage stained
and the powerful gods made
and the runemaster
of the gods carved out.

Do you know how to carve?
Do you know how to interpret?
Do you know how to stain?
Do you know how to test out?
Sayings of the High One, 142, 143, 144

Odin was able to extinguish fires and to turn the
winds any way he pleased. From him the Æsir
learned all their skills. All he spoke was in rimes. He
spoke so well and so smoothly that all who heard
him believed all he said was true. He could shift his
appearance; when he did so his body would lie there
as if he were asleep or dead. Odin could know the
fate of men and predict events that had not yet
come to pass.
Saga of the Ynglings, 6, 7

Hugin and Munin
fly every day
over the wide world.
Grimnir's Sayings, 20

Margir staðir eru á himni fagrir,
ok er þar allt guðlig vörn fyrir.
Gylfaginning, 15

Valaskjálf heitir ok hásæti þat er Hliðskjálf
heitir, ok Alföðr sitr í. Hann sér of alla heima.
Gylfaginning, 17

Glaðsheimr heitir,
þar en gullbjarta
Valhöll við of þrumir.
Grimnismál, 8

Fimmhundrað dura
ok um fjórum tugum,
svá hygg ek á Valhöllu vera.
Grimnismál, 23

Valgrind heitir
er stendr velli á
heilög fyr helgum durum.
Forn er sú grind
en þat fáir vitu
hve hon er í lás of lokin.
Grimnismál, 22

[2] II. Synir Óðins

Glaðsheimr! Gláðsheimr!
Grimnismál, 8

Burir eru Óðins
Baldr ok Meili,
Viðarr ok Nepr,
Váli, Áli,
Þórr ok Hildólfr,
Hermóðr, Sigi,

There are many beautiful places in heaven and
everywhere there has divine protection round it.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 15

In Valaskjalf is a throne called Hliðskjalf, where
All-father sits. He can see over all the world.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 17

Glaðsheim is called,
there gold-bright Valhall
rises peacefully.
Grimnir's Sayings, 8

Five hundred doors
and forty,
I think there are in Valhall.
Grimnir's Sayings, 23

Valgrind it's called,
standing on the plain,
sacred before the holy doors:
ancient is that gate,
but few know
how it is closed up with a lock.
Grimnir's Sayings, 22

II. Sons of Odin

Glaðsheim! Gláðsheim!
Grimnir's Sayings, 8

Sons of Odin are:
Baldr and Meili,
Viðarr and Nepr,
Váli, Áli,
Þórr and Hildólfr,
Hermóðr, Sigi,

Skjöldr, Yngvi-Freyr
ok Ítreksjóð,
Heimdallr, Sæmingr,
Höðr ok Bragi.
Nafnaþulur, 18

Breiðablik heitir
þar er Baldr hefur
sér of gjörva sali,
á því landi
er ek liggjá veit
fæsta feiknstafi.
Grimnismál, 12

Baldr er svá fagr álitum ok bjartr at lýsir
af honum.
Gylfaginning, 22

Þórr er sterkastr allra goðanna ok manna.
Gylfaginning, 21

Þórr heitir Atli
ok Ásabragr;
sá er Ennilangr
ok Eindriði,
Björn, Hlórriði
ok Harðvéorr,
Vingþórr, Sönnungr,
Véoddr ok Rymr.
Nafnaþulur, 17

Enn skal telja
ása heiti:
þar er Yggr ok Þórr
ok Yngvi-Freyr,
Viðarr ok Baldr,
Váli ok Heimdallr;

Skjöldr, Yngvi-Freyr
and Ítreksjóð,
Heimdallr, Sæmingr,
Höðr and Bragi.
The Language of Poetry (Nafnaþulur), 18

Breidablik is called
where Baldr has
a hall made for himself,
in that land
where I know there are
the fewest evil plots.
Grimnir's Sayings, 12

Baldr is so fair in appearance and so bright
that light shines from him.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 22

Thor is the strongest of all the gods and men.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 21

Thor is called Atli
and Ásabragr;
he is Ennilangr
and Eindriði,
Björn, Hlórriði
and Harðvéorr,
Vingþórr, Sönnungr,
Véoddr and Rymr.
The Language of Poetry (Nafnaþulur), 17

Now I shall list
the Æsir's names:
There are Yggr and Þórr
and Yngvi-Freyr,
Viðarr and Baldr,
Váli and Heimdallr;

Týr ok Njörðr;
tel ek næst Braga.
Nafnaþulur, 22

Þórr hefr Yggs með árum
Ásgarð of þrek varðan.
Skáldskaparmál, 11

Varð einn borinn
öllum meiri;
sá er aukinn
jarðar megni,
Jarðar burr!
Hyndluljóð, 42

Hann á ríki þar er Þrúðvangar heita.
Gylfaginning, 21

En í Þrúðheimi
skal Þórr vera
unz of rjúfask regin.
Grimnismál, 4

Ennilangr ok Eindriði,
Vingþórr, Sönnungr,
Véoddr ok Rymr,
Hlórriði ok Harðvéorr.
Nafnaþulur, 17

Heimdallr er kallaðr hvíti áss.
Gylfaginning, 27

Enn sá staðr er Himinbjörg heita, sá stendr
á himins enda, við brúarsporðinn, þar er
Bifröst kemr til himins.
Gylfaginning, 17

Týr and Njörðr;
next I list Bragi.
The Language of Poetry (Nafnaþulur), 22

Bravely Thor fought for Asgard
and the followers of Odin.
The Language of Poetry, 11

One was born
greater than all,
he was empowered with
the strength
of the earth.
Song of Hyndla, 42

His realm is a place called Thrudvangar.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 21

But in Thrudheim
Thor shall remain,
until the Powers are torn asunder.
Grimnir's Sayings, 4

Ennilangr and Eindriði,
Vingþórr, Sönnungr,
Véoddr and Rymr,
Hlórriði and Harðvéorr.
The Language of Poetry (Nafnaþulur), 17

Heimdall is known as the white As.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 27

There is also a place called Himinbiorg. It stands at
the edge of heaven at the bridge's end where Bifröst
reaches heaven.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 17

Himinbjörg heita,
en þar Heimdall
kveða valda véum.
Gylfaginning, 27

Þar vörðr goða
drekkr í væru ranni
glaðr inn góða mjöð.
Grimnismál, 13

Goðin gerðu brú af jörðu til himins,
er Bifrost heitir; kallið er regnboga.
Gylfaginning, 13

Heimdallr! Hann er vörðr goða við himins
enda ok gæta brúarinnar fyrir bergrisum.
Heimdallr! Hann hefr lúðr þann er Gjallarhorn
heitir, ok heyrir blástr hans í alla heima.
Heimdallr! Hann er mikill ok heilagr.
Hann þarf minna svefn en fugl; hann sér
jafnt nótt sem dag hundrað rasta frá sér.
Hann heyrir ok þat er gras vex á jörðu
eða ull á sauðum ok allt þat er hærra lætr.
Gylfaginning, 27

Enn skal telja
ása heiti:
Þar er Yggr ok Þórr
ok Yngvi-Freyr,
Viðarr ok Baldr,
Váli ok Heimdallr;
þá er Týr ok Njörðr á himni,
þar sem heitir Nóatún.
Nafnaþulur, 22; Gylfaginning, 23

Nóatún heita
þar Njörðr hefr

There is a place called Himinbiorg,
and there they say it is Heimdall
who is ruler of the holy places.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 27

There the glad watchman of the gods
drinks good mead
in the comfortable hall.
Grimnir's Sayings, 13

The gods built a bridge to heaven from earth
called Bifrost; it is what you call the rainbow.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 13

Heimdallr is the gods' watchman and sits
there at the edge of heaven to guard
the bridge against mountain giants.
He needs less sleep than a bird. He
can see, by night just as well as by day,
a distance of a hundred leagues. He can
also hear grass growing on the earth
and wool on sheep and everything that
sounds louder than that.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 27

Still I list
the names of Æsir:
There is Yggr and Þórr
and Yngvi-Freyr,
Viðarr and Baldr,
Váli and Heimdallr;
there is Týr and Niord in heaven,
in a place called Noatun.
*The Language of Poetry (Nafnaþulur), 22;
The Tricking of Gylfi, 23*

Noatun is called
where Niord has

sér af gjörva sali;
manna þengill
ins meins vani
hátimbruðum hörgi ræðr.
Njörðr í Nóatúnum!

Grimnismál, 16; Gylfaginning, 23

Hann ræðr fyrir göngu vinds ok stillir
sjá ok eld. Á hann skal heita til sæfara
ok veiða. Hann er svá auðigr ok fésæll
at hann má gefa auðlanda eða lausafjár.
Á hann skal til þess heita.

Gylfaginning, 23

Burir eru Óðins
Baldr ok Meili,
Víðarr ok Nepr,
Váli, Áli,
Þórr ok Hildólftr,
Hermóðr, Sigi,
Skjöldr, Freyr, Ingvi-Freyr
ok Ítreksjóð.

Nafnaþulur, 18

Freyr er hinn ágætasti af ásum. Hann ræðr
fyrir regni ok skini sólar ok þar með ávexti
jarðar, ok á hann er gott að heita til árs ok
friðar.

Gylfaginning, 24

Álfheim Frey
gáfu í árdaga
tívar að tannfæi.
Grimnismál, 5

Freyr er beztr
allra ballriða

a hall made for himself,
the prince of men,
lacking in malice,
rules over the high-timbered temple.
Niord of Noatun!

Grimnir's Sayings, 16; The Tricking of Gylfi, 23

He rules over the motion of wind and moderates sea
and fire. It is to him one must pray for voyages and
fishing. He is so rich and wealthy that he can grant
wealth of lands or possessions to those that pray to
him for this.

The Tricking of Gylfi, 23

Sons of Odin are:
Baldr and Meili,
Víðarr and Nepr,
Váli, Áli,
Þórr and Hildólftr,
Hermóðr, Sigi,
Skjöldr, Freyr, Ingvi-Freyr
and Ítreksjóð.

The Language of Poetry (Nafnaþulur), 18

Freyr is the most glorious of the Æsir. He is ruler of
rain and sunshine and thus of the produce of the
earth, and it is good to pray to him for prosperity
and peace.

The Tricking of Gylfi, 24

Alfheim the gods
gave to Freyr
in bygone days as tooth-payment.
Grimnir's Sayings, 5

Freyr is the best
of all the bold riders

ása gördum í,
mey né grætir
né manns konu
ok leysir ór höptum hvern.
Lokasenna, 37

Viðarr heitir einn hinn þögli áss.
Gylfaginning, 29

Týr. Hann er djarfastr ok bezt hugaðr.
Á hann er gott at heita hreystimönnum.
Gylfaginning, 25

Burir eru Óðins:
Baldr ok Meili,
Viðarr ok Nepr,
Váli, Áli,
Þórr ok Hildólfr,
Hermóðr, Sigi,
Skjöldr, Yngvi-Freyr
ok Ítreksjóð,
Heimdallr, Sæmingr,
Höðr ok Bragi.
Nafnaþulur, 18

Bragi. Hann er ágætr at speki ok mest
at málsnilld ok orðfimi.
Gylfaginning, 26

Svipum hefkr nú ypt
fyr sigtíva sonum.
Vít þat skal vilbjörg vaka.
Grimnismál, 45

Heilir æsir!
Sigurdrífumál, 4

in the courts of the Æsir;
he makes no girl cry
nor any man's wife,
and looses each man from captivity.
Loki's Quarrel, 37

Vidar is the name of one, the silent As.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 29

Tyr is the bravest and most valiant.
It is good for men of action to pray to him.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 25

Sons of Odin are:
Baldr and Meili,
Viðarr and Nepr,
Váli, Áli,
Þórr and Hildólfr,
Hermóðr, Sigi,
Skjöldr, Yngvi-Freyr
and Ítreksjóð,
Heimdallr, Sæmingr,
Höðr and Bragi.
The Language of Poetry (Nafnaþulur), 18

Bragi. He is renowned for wisdom and especially
for eloquence and command of language.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 26

My face have I now revealed
before the sons of the fighting gods,
now the wished-for sustenance will awaken.
Grimnir's Sayings, 45

Hail to the Æsir!
The Lay of Sigdrífa, 4

③ III. Ásynjur

Heilar ásynjur!
Heil sjá en fjölnýta fold!
Sigurdрифumál, 4

Hverjar eru ásynjur? Frigg er æzt;
hon á þann bæ, er Fensalir heita.
Gylfaginning, 35

Frigg of grét
í Fensölum
vá Valhallar.
Vituð ér enn, eða hvat?
Völuspá, 33

Önnur er Sága á Sökkvabekk.
Gylfaginning, 35

Sökkvabekkr heitir,
en þar svalar knegu
unnir glymja yfir;
þar Óðinn ok Sága
drekka of alla daga
glöð ór gollnum kerum.
Grimnismál, 7

Þriðja er Eir; hon er lækniir bezt.
Gylfaginning, 35

Lyfjaberg heitir,
en þat hefr lengi verit
sjúkum ok sárum gaman;
heil verðr hver
þótt hafi heljarsótt,
ef þat klífr kona.
Fjölsvinnsmál, 36

III. Goddesses

Hail to the goddesses!
Hail to the mighty, fecund earth!
The Lay of Sigdrifra, 4

Who are the Ásynjur? The highest is Frigg.
She has a dwelling called Fensalir.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 35

In Fen-halls
Frigg wept
for the woe of Valhall –
Do you understand yet, or what more?
The Seeress's Prophecy, 33

Second is Saga. She dwells at Sökkvabekk.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 35

Sökkvabekk is called
and cool waves
resound over it;
there Odin and Saga
drink every day,
joyful, from golden cups.
Grimnir's Sayings, 7

Third is Eir. She is an extremely good physician.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 35

Lyfjaberg 'tis called,
and long has it a solace been
to the bowed-down and sorrowful:
each woman becomes healthy,
although a year's disease she have,
if she can but ascend it.
The Sayings of Fjölsvinnr, 36

Fjórða er Gefjon; er hon mæ, ok henni þjóna þær er meyar andast. Fimmta er Fulla. Hon er enn mæ, ok ferr laushár ok gullband um höfuð. Hon ber eski Friggjar ok veit launráð með henni.

Gylfaginning, 35

Freyja er ágætust af ásynjum; er hon ferr, þá ekr hon á köttum sínum ok sitr í reið.

Gylfaginning, 24

Fólkvangr heitir, þar er Freyja ræðr sessa kostum í sal; hálfan val hon kys hverjan dag, en hálfan Óðinn á.

Grimnismál, 14

Hon er nákvæmust mönnum til heita; henni líkar ok vel mansöng; á hana er gott at heita til ásta.

Gylfaginning, 24

Freyja giftist manni þeim, er Óðr heitir, þeirra dóttir er Hnoss; hon er svá fögr at af hennar nafni er hnossir kallaðar, þat er fagurt er og gersimligt. Óðr fór í braut langar leiðir, en Freyja grætr eftir, en tár hennar er gull rautt.

Sjöfn! Hon gætir mjök at snúa hugum manna til ásta, kvinna ok karla.

Lofn! Hon er svá mild ok góð til áheita at hon fær leyfi af Alfvör eða Frigg til manna samgangs, kvinna ok karla, þótt áðr sé bannat eða þvertekit fyrir.

Gylfaginning, 35

Fourth is Gefiun. She is a virgin, and is attended by all who die virgins. Fifth is Fulla. She too is a virgin and goes around with hair flowing free and has a gold band round her head. She carries Frigg's casket and shares her secrets.

The Tricking of Gylfi, 35

Freyia is the most glorious of the Asyniur. When she travels she drives two cats and sits in a chariot.

The Tricking of Gylfi, 24

Folkvangr is called, where Freyja arranges the choice of seats in the hall; half the slain she chooses every day, and half Odin owns.

Grimnir's Sayings, 14

She is the most approachable one for people to pray to; she is very fond of love songs; it is good to pray to her concerning love affairs.

The Tricking of Gylfi, 24

Freyia was married to someone called Od. Hnoss is the name of their daughter. She is so beautiful that from her name whatever is beautiful and precious is called hnossir [treasures]. Od went off on long travels, and Freyja stayed behind weeping, and her tears are red gold.

Siofn! She is much concerned to direct people's minds to love, both women and men.

Lofn! She is so kind and good to pray to that she gets leave from All-father or Frigg for people's union, between women and men, even if before it was forbidden or refused.

The Tricking of Gylfi, 35

Hittusk æsir á Iðavelli.

Völuspá, 7

Einn sal gerðu þeir; þat var hörgr, er
gyðjumar áttu, ok var hann allfagurt hús;
hann kalla menn Vingólf.

Gylfaginning, 14

Vár! Hon hlýðir á einkamál, er veita sín á
milli konur ok karlar. Því heita þau mál
várar. Hon hefnir ok þeim er brigað.

Vör! Hon er vitr ok spurul, svá at engi hlut
má hana leyna.

Syn! Hon gætir dura í höllinni ok lýkr fyrir
þeim, er eigi skulu inn ganga; því er þat
orðtak at syn er fyrir sett, þá er maðr neitar.

Hlin! Hon er sett til gæzlu yfir þeim mönnum,
er Frigg vill forða við háska nokkrum.

Snotra! Hon er vitr ok látprúð, af hennar
heiti er kallat snotr kona eða karlmaðr,
sá er hóflátr er.

Gná! Hana sendir Frigg í ýmsa heima
at erendum sínum. Hon á þann hest, er
rennr loft ok lög ok heitir Hófvarpnir;
af Gnár nafni er svá kallat at þat gnæfir,
er hátt ferr.

Gylfaginning, 35

Nú skal ásynjur
allar nefna:

Frigg ok Freyja,
Fulla ok Snotra,

The Æsir met on Iðavoll Plain.

The Seeress's Prophecy, 7

They built a hall, this was the sanctuary that
belonged to the goddesses, and it was very beautiful.
This building is called Vingolf.

The Tricking of Gylfi, 14

Var! She listens to private agreements that women
and men make between each other. Thus these
contracts are called varar. She also punishes those
who break them.

Vor! She is wise and enquiring, so that nothing
can be concealed from her.

Syn! She guards the doors of the hall and shuts them
against those who are not to enter; thus there is a
saying that a denial (syn) is made when one says no.

Hlin! She is given the function of protecting people
whom Frigg wishes to save from some danger.

Snotra! She is wise and courteous. From her name
a woman or man who is a wise person is called
snotr.

Gna! She is sent by Frigg into various worlds to
carry out her business. She has a horse that gallops
across sky and sea, called Hofvarpnir. From Gna's
name a thing is said to tower (gnæfa) when it goes
high up.

The Tricking of Gylfi, 35

Now we name
all the goddesses:
Frigg and Freyja,
Fulla and Snotra,

Gerðr ok Gefjon,
Gná, Lofn, Skaði.
Nafnaþulur, 23

Jörð, móðir Þórs, ok Rindr, móðir Vála,
eru taldar með ásynjum.
Gylfaginning, 36

Hlín ok Hanna,
Hnoss, Rindr ok Sjöfn,
Sól og Sága,
Sigyn ok Vör.
Nafnaþulur, 24

Sól ok Bil eru taldar með ásynjum.
Gylfaginning, 35

Hapt sé ek liggja
und Hvera lundi
lægjarns líki
Loka áþekkjann.
Völuspá, 35

Sigyn heldr mundlaugu undir eitrit.
Þá slær hon út eitrinu.
Gylfaginning, 50

Þar sitr Sigyn
þeygi of sínum
veri vel glýjuð.
Völuspá, 35

Þá kippist hann svá hart við at jörð öll skelfr.
Gylfaginning, 50

Vituoð ér enn, eða hvat?
Völuspá, 35

Gerdr and Gefjon,
Gná, Lofn, Skaði.
The Language of Poetry (Nafnaþulur), 23

Thor's mother Iord and Vali's mother Rind
are reckoned among the Asyniur.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 36

Hlín and Hanna,
Hnoss, Rindr and Sjöfn,
Sol and Sága,
Sigyn and Vör.
The Language of Poetry (Nafnaþulur), 24

Sol and Bil are reckoned among the Asyniur.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 35

I see a captive lying
under the grove of hot springs,
that evil-loving form,
Loki.
The Seeress's Prophecy, 35

Sigyn holds a basin under the drops of poison.
And when the basin is full she goes and pours
away the poison.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 50

There sits Sigyn,
not at all happy
about her husband.
The Seeress's Prophecy, 35

Then he jerks away so hard that the whole earth shakes.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 50

Do you understand yet, or what more?
The Seeress's Prophecy, 35

IV. Valkyrjur

Enn eru aðrar
Óðins meyjar:
Hildir ok Göndul,
Hlökk, Mist, Skögul;
þá er Hrund ok Eir,
Hrist, Skuld talið.
Nafnapulur, 26

Þessar heita Valkyrjur. Þær sendr Óðinn
til hvernar orrustu; þær kjósa feigð á menn
ok ráða sigri.
Gylfaginning, 36

Sé ek valkyrjur
vitt af komnar,
görvar at riða
til Goðþjóðar;
Skuld helt skildi
en Skögul önnur,
Gunnr, Hildir, Göndul
ok Geirskögul.
Völuspá, 30

Skeggöld ok Skögul,
Hildir ok Þrúðr,
Hlökk ok Herfjötur,
Göll ok Geirahöð,
Randgríðr ok Ráðgríðr
ok Reginleif,
þær bera Einherjum öl.
Gylfaginning, 36

Taktu á gólfi
gangfögr kona,

IV. Valkyries

And these others
are Odin's maidens:
Hildir and Göndul,
Hlökk, Mist, Skögul;
there is Hrund and Eir,
Hrist and Skuld.
The Language of Poetry (Nafnapulur), 26

These are called valkyries. Odin sends them
to every battle. They allot death to men and
govern victory.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 36

I see valkyries
coming from far and wide,
ready to ride
to the Gothic nation;
Skuld held one shield,
Skogul another,
Gunn, Hild, Gondul
and Spear-Skogul.
The Seeress's Prophecy, 30

Skeggiöld and Skogul
Hild and Thrud,
Hlokk and Herfjotur,
Goll and Geirahod,
Randgrid and Radgrid
and Reginleif.
These serve ale to the Einherjar.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 36

Take up from the floor,
O fair-going woman,

horn hválfanda!
Hefik af drukkit.
Friðþjófs saga frækna

Enn eru aðrar
Óðins meyjar:
Snót, brúðr, svanni,
svarri, sprakki,
fljóð, sprund, kona,
feima, ekkja,
rýgr, víf ok drós,
ristill, sæta,
man, svarkr ok hæll,
mær ok kerling.
Nafnaþulur, 27

Nú eru taldar
nönnur herjans,
gjörvar at riða
grund, valkyrjur.
Völuspá, 30

5 V. Nornir

Nornir heita,
þær er nauð skapur.
Nipt ok Dísi
nú mun ek telja.
Nafnaþulur, 26

Þessar meyjar skapa mönnum aldr;
en þeir menn er fyrir ósköpum verða,
þá valda því illar nornir.

Þar stendr salr undir askinum við brunninn.
Gylfaginning, 15

The horn cast adown,
Drunk out to the end!
The Story of Frithiof the Bold

Still there are other
maidens of Odin:
Gentlewoman, bride, lady,
proud lady, spark,
woman, dame, female,
sweet thing, widow,
housewife, wife and sweetheart,
slender lady, matron,
bondswoman, haughty one and war-widow,
maiden and old lady.
The Language of Poetry (Nafnaþulur), 27

Now the ladies of the General,
the valkyries are counted up,
ready to ride
the earth.
The Seeress's Prophecy, 30

V. Norns

Those who shape need
are known as norns;
Nift and Dísi
I will now name.
The Language of Poetry (Nafnaþulur), 26

These maidens shape men's lives; but as for those
people that become the victims of misfortune,
it is evil norns that are responsible.

There stands one beautiful hall under the ash by the well.
The Tricking of Gylfi, 15

Þaðan koma meyar
margs vitandi,
Þrjár ór þeim sal
er und þolli stendr.
Urð hétu eina,
aðra Verðandi,
skáru á skíði,
Skuld ina þriðju.
Þær lög lögðu,
þær líf kóru
alda börnum,
örlög seggja.
Völuspá, 20

6 VI. Einherjar

Hvötum er betra
en sé óhvötum
í hildarleik hafask,
glöðum er betra
en sé glupnanda,
hvat sem at hendi kömr.
Fáfnismál, 31

Ár skal rísa
sá er annars vill
fé eða fjör hafa.
Liggjandi úlfr
lær of getrat,
né sofandi maðr sigr.
Hávamál, 58

Fimm hundruð dura
ok um fjórum tögum,
svá hygga ek á Valhöllu vera.

From there come three girls,
knowing a great deal,
from the lake which
stands under the tree;
Fate one is called,
Becoming another –
they carved on wooden slips –
Must-be the third;
they set down laws,
they chose lives,
for the sons of men
the fates of men.
The Seeress's Prophecy, 20

VI. Warriors

Bravery is better
than cowardice
to have in battle-sport;
cheerfulness is better
than snivelling,
whatever may be at hand.
Fáfnismál, 31

He should get up early,
the man who means to take
another's life or property.
The slumbering wolf
does not get the ham,
nor a sleeping man victory.
Sayings of the High One, 58

Five hundred doors
and forty
I think there are in Valhall;

Átta hundruð Einherja
ganga ór einum durum,
þá er þeir fara með vitni at vega.
Grímnismál, 23

Allir Einherjar
Óðins túnum í
höggvask hverjan dag;
val þeir kjósa
ok riða vígi frá
sitja meir of sáttir saman.
Vafþrúðnismál, 41

Ár valttívar
veiðar námu
ok sumblsamir,
áðr saðir yrði,
hristu teina ok á hlaut sáu,
fundu at Ægis
örkost hvera.
Hymiskviða, 1

Andhrímnir
lætr í Eldhrímn
Sæhrímn soðinn,
fleska bezt,
en þat fáir vita
við hvat Einherjar alask.
Grímnismál, 18

Skeggöld ok Skögul,
Hildr ok Þrúðr,
Hlökk ok Herfjötur,
Göll ok Geirahöð,
Randgríðr ok Reginleif,
þær bera Einherjum öl.
Grímnismál, 36

eight hundreds of warriors
will go together from one door
when they go to fight the wolf.
Grimnir's Sayings, 23

All the Einheriar
fight in Odin's court
every day;
they choose the slain
and ride from the battle;
then they sit the more at peace together.
Vafthrudnir's Sayings, 41

Once, the victory gods
ate their catch from hunting,
they were keen to drink
before the got enough;
they shook the twigs and looked at the augury,
they found that at Ægir's
was an ample choice of cauldrons.
Hymir's Poem, 1

Andhrímnir
has Sæhrímnir boiled
in Eldhrímnir,
the best of pork;
but few know
by what the Einheriar are nourished.
Grimnir's Sayings, 18

Skeggiöld and Skogul,
Hild and Thrud,
Hlokk and Herfjotur,
Goll and Geirolul,
Randgrid and Reginleif;
they bear ale to the Einheriar.
Grimnir's Sayings, 36

Öl heitir með mönnum,
með ásum bjórr,
kalla veig vanir,
hreinalög jötnar,
en í helju mjöd.
Kalla sumbl sittungs synir.
Alvissmál, 34

Gera ok Freka
seðr gunntamiðr,
hróðigr Herjaföðr,
en við vín eitt
vápngöfugr
Óðinn æ lifir.
Grimnismál, 19

Askr Yggdrasils,
hann er æztr víða,
en Skíðblaðnir skipa,
Óðinn ása,
en jóa Sleipnir,
Bifrost brúa,
en Bragi skálda,
Hábrók hauka
en hunda Garmr.
Grimnismál, 44

Svipun hefk nú ypt
fyr sigtíva sonum,
vit þat skal vilbjörg vaka.
Öllum ásum
þat skal inn koma
Ægis bekkir á.
Grimnismál, 45

Ale it's called among men,
and beer by the gods,
the Vanir call it liquor,
clear-brew the giants,
and mead in hell,
the sons of Suttung call it feasting.
All-Wise's Sayings, 34

Geri and Freki, tamed to war,
he satiates,
the glorious Father of Hosts;
but on wine alone
the weapon-magnificent
Odin always lives.
Grimnir's Sayings, 19

The ash of Yggdrasill
is the noblest of trees,
and Skidbladnir the best of ships,
Odin best of the Æsir,
Sleipnir of horses,
Bifrost of bridges,
Bragi of poets,
Habrok of hawks,
and Garm of dogs.
Grimnir's Sayings, 44

My face have I now revealed
before the sons of the fighting gods,
now the wished-for sustenance will awaken;
all the Æsir it shall bring in
onto Ægir's benches,
at Ægir's feast.
Grimnir's Sayings, 45

Heilir æsir!
Heilar ásynjur!
Heil sjá in fjölnýta fold!
Sigurdrífumál, 4

Textar úr Hávamálum, Völuspá, Alvissmálum, Fáfnismálum, Fjölsvinnsmálum, Friðþjófs sögu frækna, Gylfaginningu, Grímnismálum, Heimskringlu (Ynglinga sögu), Hymiskviðu, Hyndluljóðum, Lokasenna, Nafnapulum, Sigurdrífumálum, Skáldskaparmálum og Vafþrúðnismálum.

Hail to the Æsir!
Hail to the goddesses!
Hail to the mighty, fecund earth!
The Lay of Sigdrífa, 4

Texts from the Hávamál (Sayings of the High One), Völuspá (The Seeress's Prophecy), Alvissmál (All-Wise's Sayings), Fjölsvinnsmál (The Sayings of Fjölsvinnr), Friðþjófs saga frækna (The Story of Frithiof the Bold), Grímnismál (Grímnir's Sayings), Gylfaginning (The Tricking of Gylfi), Heimskringla/Ynglinga saga (Saga of the Ynglings), Hymiskviða (Hymir's Poem), Hyndluljóð (Song of Hyndla), Lokasenna (Loki's Quarrel), Sigurdrífumál (The Lay of Sigdrífa), Skáldskaparmál (The Language of Poetry), and Vafþrúðnismál (Vafþrúdnir's Sayings).

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The music on BIS's Hybrid SACDs can be played back in Stereo (CD and SACD) as well as in 5.0 Surround sound (SACD).

Our surround sound recordings aim to reproduce the natural sound in a concert venue as faithfully as possible, using the newest technology. In order to do so, all channels are recorded using the full frequency range, with no separate bass channel added. If your sub-woofer is switched on, however, most systems will also automatically feed the bass signal coming from the other channels into it. In the case of systems with limited bass reproduction, this may be of benefit to your listening experience.

Recording Data

Recording: April 2018 at the Harpa Concert Hall, Reykjavík, Iceland
Producer: Ingo Petry (Take5 Music Production)
Sound engineers: Hans Kipfer (Take5 Music Production); Matthias Spitzbarth
Equipment: BIS's recording teams use microphones from Neumann, DPA and Schoeps, audio electronics from RME, Lake People and DirectOut, MAD1 optical cabling technology, monitoring equipment from B&W, STAX and Sennheiser, and Sequoia and Pyramix digital audio workstations.
Original format: 24-bit/96 kHz
Post-production: Editing and mixing: Ingo Petry
Executive producer: Robert Suff

Booklet and Graphic Design

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Photo of the orchestra: © Haraldur Jónasson
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JÓN LEIFS



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