



MEDITATIO II

music for mixed choir

SCHOLA CANTORUM
HÖRÐUR ÁSKELSSON



Daniel Elder (b. 1986)

- 1 **Elegy** after 'Taps' by Daniel Adams Butterfield (*GIA Publications*) 4'23
Text: Horace Lorenzo Trim (attr.)

Auður Guðjohnsen (b. 1975)

- 2 **Ave verum corpus** (2019) (*Iceland Music Information Centre*) 3'18
Text: Eucharistic hymn, 14th century

Galina Grigorjeva (b. 1962)

- 3 **In paradisum** (2012) (*Estonian Music Information Centre*) 3'26
Text: Latin antiphon

Hreiðar Ingi Þorsteinsson (b. 1978)

- 4 **Lux æterna** (2018) (*Thorsteinsson Publishing*) 6'08
Text: from the Requiem Mass

Haukur Tómasson (b. 1960)

- 5 **Vor hinsti dagur** (2004) (*Iceland Music Information Centre*) 2'25
Text: Halldór Laxness

Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)

- 6 **Sanctus: London** (2008) (*Walton Music*) 4'27
Text: from the Ordinary of the Mass

- Póra Marteinsdóttir** (b. 1978)
- 7 **Nú legg ég þér í lófa** (2011) *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 2'30
Text: Sigurbjörn Einarsson / Julie Hausmann
- Paul Mealor** (b. 1975)
- 8 **Ubi caritas** (2011) *(Novello & Co.)* 4'02
Text: Gregorian chant
- Trad., arr. Hafsteinn Þórólfsson** (b. 1977)
- 9 **Sofðu unga ástin mín** *(Manuscript)* 4'09
- Björn Thorarensen** (b. 1962)
- 10 **Agnus Dei** *(Manuscript)* 4'00
Text: from the Ordinary of the Mass
- Sigurður Sævarsson** (b. 1963)
- 11 **Ave verum corpus** (2018) *(Iceland Music Information Centre)* 3'57
Text: Eucharistic hymn, 14th century
- Trad., arr. John Hearne** (b. 1937)
- 12 **Fagurt er í fjörðum** (1969) *(Longship Music)* 2'40
Text: Björg Einarisdóttir (Látra-Björg)

Paweł Łukaszewski (b. 1968)

- 13 **Nunc dimittis** (2007) *(Chester Music)* 4'29
Text: Luke 2:29–32

Pärt Uusberg (b. 1986)

- 14 **In paradisum** (2016) *(Estonian Music Information Centre)* 3'53
Text: Latin antiphon

Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

- 15 **Sleep** (2000) *(Walton Music)* 5'16
Text: Charles Anthony Silvestri

TT: 61'20

Schola Cantorum Reykjavicensis

Hörður Áskelsson *conductor*

In 2016, the Icelandic chamber choir Schola Cantorum released *Meditatio*, a disc with music that it has performed at All Saints' Day concerts over the years, commemorating the departed. The programme of this new recording similarly contains compositions that interpret man's thoughts and feelings about death, some with age-old texts from the Requiem liturgy of the church, others with more modern lyrics, and casting a comforting light of hope on sorrow and bereavement. With one exception, the pieces are written in the 21st century, and they originate in America and Europe. Seven Icelandic composers are represented, five of them current or former members of Schola Cantorum.

Daniel Elder is one of the most interesting young choral composers in the United States. He says about his works: 'In my writing I seek to avoid the common focus on "my voice" – rather I attempt to tap the emotions a poet once put into words.' *Elegy* from 2013 is based on 'Taps', a bugle call that is traditionally performed at funerals and commemorative services conducted by the United States Armed Forces. In Elder's piece this simple tune, based entirely on the tones of the major triad, can be heard sung by three solo sopranos. It is thought to have been composed in 1862 by Daniel Butterfield (1831–1901), a Union general in the American Civil War; the text was written at a later date, probably by Horace Lorenzo Trim (1849–1915).

The first representative of the choir members among the composers of the programme is **Auður Guðjohnsen**, a professional singer, choir director and music teacher who has also written a number of choir pieces. In 2019 she composed a setting of the 13th-century Latin Eucharistic chant *Ave verum corpus*, a passionate appeal to Jesus Christ at the hour of death. 'The music came quite quickly to me, in one or two days', Auður says, 'although the arrangement of the material took longer.' As in several of the other compositions on this disc, echoes of music of times gone by blend with mildly modern idioms.

Ukrainian composer **Galina Grigorjeva** was born in Simferopol in the Crimea but lives and works in Estonia. Her compositions, vocal and instrumental alike, are inspired by Slavonic vocal tradition, the music of the Orthodox Church and medieval polyphony. *In paradisum* from 2012 is set to an antiphon from the traditional Latin liturgy of the Requiem Mass sung as the body is being taken out of the church. This text has long been

a favourite of composers with its evocative language mentioning a choir of angels greeting the soul in Paradise.

The composer of the next piece seeks inspiration from the same part of the world as Galina Grigorjeva. **Hreiðar Ingi Þorsteinsson** studied music and choir conducting in Finland and Estonia and has placed great emphasis on the performance of Eastern European music with his choirs since his return to Iceland. *Lux æterna*, written in 2016, is also set to words from the Catholic Requiem tradition. The composer's interpretation of two words of the text is especially striking: midway through the piece, 'requiem'(rest) is heard on an unexpected diminished chord and 'lux' (light) shimmers in quivering repetitions from the singers, imitating the peculiar drumming sound of the common snipe.

Haukur Tómasson is one of Iceland's most eminent composers, known for his dynamic, colourful and energetic instrumental style. In 2004 he received the Nordic Council Music Prize, the greatest honour awarded to a Nordic composer, for the opera *Guðrún's 4th Song* (BIS-908), described by critics as 'overwhelming'. The same year he set music to the poem *Vor hinsti dagur* by Icelandic Nobel Prize winner Halldór Laxness (1902–98). This little piece is worlds apart from the composer's opera, but the topics are the same: love and regret, separation and death.

Norwegian composer and pianist **Ola Gjeilo** is one of the most popular contemporary writers of choral music. He has lived in the United States since he started studying at the Juilliard School in New York in 2001, and he is especially inspired by American musicians like the film composer Thomas Newman, pianist Keith Jarrett and guitarist Pat Metheny. *Sanctus: London* is a stand-alone mass movement written by Gjeilo in 2004 for the Oranienborg Vocal Ensemble in Oslo. The piece is ingeniously composed. Notice, for example, how the exclamation 'Hosanna in excelsis' is sung very softly when it first appears, but then with full volume and a semitone higher as it returns at the end of the piece.

Nú legg ég þér í lófa is an Icelandic translation by Sigurbjörn Einarsson (1911–2008) of *So nimm denn meine Hände*, a beloved hymn by Baltic German poet Julie Hausmann (1826–1901) which is often performed at funerals. According to legend Hausmann wrote

the hymn after travelling to meet her fiancé who was working as a missionary in Africa, only to find out upon arriving that he had just died. In Germany the hymn is usually sung to a melody by Friedrich Silcher but here it is heard in an unassuming setting by **Þóra Marteinsdóttir** from 2011.

Ubi caritas by Welsh composer and professor of composition **Paul Mealor** was commissioned by Prince William for his marriage to Catherine Middleton in Westminster Abbey on 29th April 2011. The text is an ancient hymn that has been attributed to Saint Paulinus, Patriarch of Aquileia in the late 8th century, the traditional melody, which echoes in Mealor's setting, probably stemming from the same time.

Choir member **Hafsteinn Þórólfsen** has performed as a singer for many years both on the classical scene and in popular music. He obtained a master's degree in rhythmic composition and songwriting with a focus on vocal music composition from the Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus in 2015. *Sofðu unga ástin mín* is his personal wordless interpretation of a popular Icelandic folk song usually sung to a poem from Jóhann Sigurjónsson's acclaimed 1911 play about the outlaw Fjalla-Eyvindur Jónsson and his wife Halla who roamed the highlands of Iceland in the 18th century. Halla sings this heart-breaking lullaby to her child before throwing it into a waterfall when the authorities approach their hiding place.

Björn Thorarensen is also a member of the choir, a versatile musician who works as a singer, choir conductor, pianist, arranger and composer. Here we hear Thorarensen's setting of the prayer *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) which has been part of the Catholic Mass liturgy from the 7th century. The music grows organically from Gregorian monophony into a many-voiced invocation. Note that both versions of the text can be heard simultaneously: the female voices pray for mercy and peace while the male voices invoke the prayer for eternal rest from the Requiem Mass.

Sigurður Sævarsson studied singing and composition at Boston University and gained his master's degree in both subjects in the spring of 1997. Vocal music comprises a large part of his oeuvre: operas, oratorios and smaller choral pieces. Sævarsson was a member of Schola Cantorum for several years and the choir has premièred many of his com-

positions, including this second setting of *Ave verum corpus* of the programme. The piece was written in 2018 and first performed in Hallgrímskirkja in Reykjavík in January 2019 conducted by Hörður Áskelsson. Sævarsson's musical language is modest and deliberate, the words always taking centre stage, the music forming a sounding board for the text and its message.

John Hearne is a British composer and choir conductor who lives and works in Scotland. He was a music teacher in Iceland for a while in the 1960s and became interested in the Icelandic folk melody heritage. In 1969 he made a choral arrangement of a melody that is usually sung to the stanza *Fagurt er í Fjörðum* by poet and vagabond Látra-Björg (Björg Einarsdóttir, 1716–84). The poem describes a place in Northern Iceland close to the author's home province and is a poignant snapshot of the beauty and transience of life.

The Song of Simeon from the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke, beginning with the words *Nunc dimittis* in Latin, has been used in the Divine Office of the church since the 4th century. The account of the elderly Simeon's encounter with the new-born Christ in the Temple in Jerusalem, and how he became reconciled with death, has been a perennial favourite with composers. **Pawel Lukaszewski** from Poland composed his version of the canticle in 2007 for the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, and its conductor Stephen Layton. It is written for mixed choir and a quartet of soloists who repeat the word 'Domine' (Lord) throughout the entire piece. This reiterated invocation has a mesmerizing effect, especially in the latter part of the piece when the choir sings about 'a light to lighten the Gentiles'.

The penultimate work on the recording is a second *In paradisum*, acting as an echo of the angelic choir earlier in the programme. It is composed by **Pärt Uusberg**, a young Estonian choir director and composer who has already gained much recognition at home and abroad. The piece was written in 2016 for Head Ööd, Vend, Uusberg's chamber choir.

It is not unfitting to end a programme about death with a work about sleep, sometimes called the brother of death. *Sleep* is one of the earliest compositions by American composer and conductor **Eric Whitacre**. The genesis of the work was troubled: in 1999 Whitacre

accepted a commission to write a commemorative piece to a poem by Robert Frost. The composition was premièred in October 2000 and soon garnered interest from many choir conductors. At this point, however, Whitacre learned that the poet's estate would not give him permission to use the poem for publication or performance. In an attempt to rescue his music from oblivion, Whitacre asked a friend, poet Charles Anthony Silvestri, to write a new text for the piece. Silvestri performed this delicate task in such a way that the listener might feel that the music and words came from the same pen.

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Schola Cantorum Reykjavicensis was founded in 1996 by Hörður Áskelsson. From the very start the choir has played an important role on the Icelandic music scene with a repertoire consisting of Renaissance and baroque music on the one hand and contemporary music with special emphasis on Icelandic works on the other.

Schola Cantorum has given concerts across Europe, and in Japan and USA. In 2017 the choir was invited by the Los Angeles Philharmonic to perform at the Walt Disney Concert Hall during the orchestra's Reykjavik Festival. 2022 saw appearances at the Reykjavik Arts Festival, Oslo International Church Music Festival and Copenhagen's KLANG festival.

The choir's many recordings include the complete choral/orchestral works of Jón Leifs released on the BIS label. Schola Cantorum appears across the musical spectrum, in collaborations with artists such as Björk, Sigur Rós and Jóhann Jóhannsson as well as on the soundtrack of the video game *God of War*.

In 2007 Schola Cantorum was nominated for the Nordic Council Music Prize and in 2009 it was appointed Official Music Ensemble of the City of Reykjavík. The choir was named Performer of the Year at the 2017 Iceland Music Awards.

www.scholacantorum.is

Hörður Áskelsson studied music in Iceland before moving to Düsseldorf to study at the Robert Schumann Hochschule. He graduated *summa cum laude* as organist and cantor in 1981 and was appointed music director of Reykjavík's Hallgrímskirkja the following year. Also in 1982 he founded the Motet Choir of Hallgrímskirkja and initiated the founding of the Friends of the Arts Society of Hallgrímskirkja, two cornerstones of the artistic activities in the church. In 1987 he established the Festival of Sacred Arts, a biannual event on the cultural scene in Iceland, and in 1993 the concert series 'The Hallgrímskirkja International Organ Summer'. In 1996 Áskelsson founded the chamber choir Schola Cantorum. With his choirs Hörður Áskelsson has participated in various festivals and international competitions, winning prizes in Cork (Ireland), Noyon (France) and Gorizia (Italy). He has conducted many oratorios, often with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, and premièred a number of Icelandic compositions. His performances have been recorded for radio and television and issued on numerous CDs.

In 2002 Hörður Áskelsson received the Icelandic Music Prize and in 2004 he received the Knight's Cross of the Icelandic Order of the Falcon. From 2005 to 2011 he served as director of music for the National Church of Iceland.

Arið 2016 kom út geisladiskur með kammerkórnum Schola Cantorum sem bar yfirskriftina *Meditatio* (BIS-2200). Diskurinn geymir tónlist af því tagi sem kórinn hefur sungið á tónleikum sínum á allraheilagramessu í árána rás, þar sem látinna er minnst. Tónverkin á þessum nýja geisladiski eru af svipuðum toga. Þau túlka hugsanir og tilfinningar mannsins gagnvart dauðanum á margvíslegan hátt, sum með hjálp aldagamalla texta úr sálumessuhefð kirkjunnar, önnur með nýrri kveðskap. Þau fjalla um sorg og söknuð á nærgættinn hátt og varpa birtu vonar og huggunar á slóð eftirlifenda. Verkin eru samin á 21. öld, með einni undantekningu, jafnt vestan hafs sem austan. Sjö íslensk tónskáld eiga tónverk á diskinum og eru fimm þeirra núverandi eða fyrrverandi félagar í Schola Cantorum.

Daniel Elder er einn af eftirtectarverðustu höfundum kórtónlistar í Bandaríkjunum. Hann segir um verk sín: „Ég forðast að leggja höfuðáherslu á mína eigin rödd – markmið mitt er að finna uppsprettu tilfinninganna sem höfundur textans orðaði.“ *Elegy* frá 2013 er byggt á stafi sem hefð er fyrir að leika á herlúður við útfarir og minningarathafnir á vegum bandaríska hersins. Þetta einfalda stef, byggt á tónum dúrþríhljómsins, sem má greina í söng þriggja sólósprana um miðbik verksins, er eignað Daniel Butterfield (1831–1901), herforingja í Þrælastríðinu. Textann er talið að Horace Lorenzo nokkur Trim (1849–1915) hafi samið.

Fyrsti fulltrúi kórsöngvaranna meðal höfunda efnisskrárinna er **Auður Guðjohnsen** sem starfar sem söngkona, kórstjóri og tónlistarkennari, en hefur einnig samið fjölda kórlaga. Árið 2019 tónsetti hún latneska 13. aldar altarisgöngusálminn *Ave verum corpus*, innilegt ákall til Jesú Krists um hjálp á dauðastundinni. „Verkið kom fremur hratt til mín, á einum eða tveimur dögum,“ segir Auður, „þótt umgjörð og raddsetning hafi tekið lengri tíma.“ Eins og víðar á þessum geisladiski má í þessu sex radda verki heyra enduróm frá tónlist fyrri alda blandast mildilega nútímalegu tónmáli.

Úkraínska tónskáldið **Galina Grigorjeva** er fædd í Simferopol á Krímskaga en hefur lengi búið og starfað í Eistlandi. Verk hennar, jafnt sungin sem leikin, eru innblásin af slavneskri sönghefð og tónlist Austurkirkjunnar auk fjölröddunar miðalda. *In paradisum* frá 2012 er samið við þann hluta kaþólsku sálumessulitúrgíunnar sem sunginn er þegar

lík hins látna er flutt úr kirkju. Textinn hefur löngum höfðað til tónskálda enda ræðir þar um söngkór engla sem tekur á móti sálinni í Paradís.

Höfundur næsta verks sækir innblástur frá svipuðum slóðum og Galina Grigorjeva. **Hreiðar Ingi Þorsteinsson** stundaði framhaldsnám í tónsmíðum og kórstjórn í Finnlandi og Eistlandi og heim kominn hefur hann lagt áherslu á flutning kórverka frá Austur-Evrópu með kórum sem hann hefur stjórnað. *Lux aeterna* er samið árið 2016 fyrir Barbrúkórinn í Hafnarfirði. Textinn er, eins og *In paradisum*, hluti af hinni kaþólsku sálumessuhefð. Tvö orð vekja sérstaka athygli í túlkun tónskáldsins: „requiem“ (hvíld), sem ómar í óvæntum minnkuðum hljómi um miðbik verksins og „lux“ (ljós), sem kviknar í sindrandi tifi söngvaranna sem á að líkja eftir hneggi hrossagauksins.

Haukur Tómasson er eitt af virtustu tónskáldum Íslendinga, þekktur fyrir afar kraftmikla, litrika og snarpa hljóðfæratónlist. Fyrir óperuna *Fjórða söng Guðrúnar* (BIS-908), sem lýst var af gagnrýnendum sem „yfirþyrmandi“, hlaut hann tónlistarverðlaun Norðurlandaráðs, æðstu viðurkenningu sem veitt er norrænum tónskáldum, árið 2004. Sama ár samdi hann kórlag við ljóðið *Vor hinsti dagur* eftir Nóbelskáldið Halldór Laxness. Þetta litla verk er eins ólíkt hinni miklu óperu og hugsast getur en umfjöllunarefnið þó hið sama: ást og eftirsjá, skilnaður og dauði.

Norska tónskáldið og píanóleikarinn **Ola Gjeilo** er meðal vinsælustu höfunda kórheimsins um þessar mundir. Hann hefur búið í Bandaríkjunum frá 2001, þegar hann hóf nám við Juilliard-skólann í New York, og helstu áhrifavaldar hans eru bandarískir tónlistarmenn á borð við kvikmyndatónskáldið Thomas Newman, píanóleikarann Keith Jarrett og gítarleikarann Pat Metheny. *Sanctus: London*, stakur messukafli sem Gjeilo skrifaði árið 2004 fyrir Oranienborg Vokalensemble í Osló, er hugvittsamlega saminn. Upphrópunin „Hosanna in excelsis“ er til að mynda fyrst sungin ofurveikt en svo í fullum styrk og hækkuð um hálf tón þegar hún er endurtekin í lok verksins.

Nú legg ég þér í löfa er íslensk þýðing Sigurbjörns Einarssonar á *So nimm denn meine Hände*, þekktum sálmi eftir þýsk-baltnesku skáldkonuna Julie Hausmann (1826–1901) sem er oft sunginn við útfarir. Sagan segir að Hausmann hafi ort sálminn eftir að hafa ferðast til fundar við unnusta sinn sem var trúboði í Afríku en komist að því á leiðarenda að hann

væri nýlátinn. Í Þýskalandi er sálmurinn oftast sunginn við lag eftir Friedrich Silcher en hér hljómar hann við yfirlætislaust lag tónskáldsins **Þóru Marteinsdóttur** frá 2011.

Kórverkið *Ubi caritas* eftir velska tónskáldið og tónsmíðaprófessorinn **Paul Mealor** var pantað af Vilhjálmi Bretaprinsi og frumflutt við hjónavígslu þeirra Katrínar Middleton í Westminster Abbey 29. apríl 2011. Textinn er forn hymni sem hefur verið eignaður Pálinusi patriárka af Aquileia á seinni hluta 8. aldar og er sunginn við tón sem er líklega frá sama tíma og má heyrna í tónsetningu Mealors.

Kórfélaginn **Hafsteinn Þórólfsson** hefur starfað sem söngvari um árabíl jafnt á klassíska sviðinu sem í dægurtónlist en hann lauk meistaranámi í rytmískum tónsmíðum með áherslu á söngtónlist frá Tónlistarakademiunni í Árósum árið 2015. *Sofðu unga ástin mín* er orðlaus túlkun hans á samnefndu íslensku þjóðlagi við ljóð úr leikriti Jóhanns Sigurjónssonar um útilegumanninn Fjalla-Eyvind og konu hans Höllu sem þvældust um öræfi Íslands á ofanverðri 18. öld. Halla syngur þessa harmþrungnu vögguvísu yfir barni sínu áður en hún kastar því í foss þegar yfirvöld nálgast felustað þeirra.

Björn Thorarensen er einnig félagi í kórnum, afar fjölhæfur tónlistarmaður sem hefur komið víða við á ferli sínum sem söngvari, stjórnandi, hljómborðsleikari, útsetjari og tónskáld. Hér hljómar tónsetning hans á bæninni *Agnus Dei* (Guðs lamb) sem hefur verið hluti af kaþólskri messugerð frá 7. öld. Tónlistin vex á eðlilegan hátt úr gregórskri einróddun yfir í margradða ákall. Athygli vekur að Björn notar báðar gerðir textans, kvenraddirnar biðja um miskunn og frið á meðan karlarnir flytja bænina um eilífa hvíld úr kaþólsku sálumessunni.

Sigurður Sævarsson nam söng og tónsmíðar við Boston-háskóla og lauk meistaraáráðu í báðum greinum árið 1997. Söngtónlist er fyrirferðarmikil á tónverkaskrá hans, þar má finna óperur, óratóirur og önnur kórverk. Sigurður söng um árabíl í Schola Cantorum og kórinn hefur frumflutt mörg verka hans. Það á einnig við um seinni túlkunina á hinum sígilda altarisgöngusálm *Ave verum corpus* á þessari efnisskrá. Verkið var samið árið 2018 og frumflutt í Hallgrímskirkju í janúar 2019 undir stjórn Harðar Áskelssonar. Tónmál Sigurðar er högvært og yfirvegað, textinn ávallt í fyrirrúmi og tónarnir eins og hljómbotn fyrir innihald hans og boðskap.

John Hearne er breskur tónsmiður og kórstjóri sem hefur lengst af starfað í Skotlandi. Hann stundaði um tíma tónlistarkennslu á Íslandi á sjöunda áratugnum og hreifst af hinni íslensku þjóðlagaarfleifð. Árið 1969 útsetti hann lag sem sungið er við vísuna *Fagurt er í Fjörðum* eftir skáldið og förukonuna Látra-Björgu (Björg Einarsdóttir, 1716–1784). Vísan er ort um Fjörður á Flateyjarskaga í Þingeyjarsýslu og er snilldarleg örmynd af feruð og hverfuleika lífsins.

Lofsöngur Simeons úr 2. kafla Lúkasarguðspjalls, sem hefst á orðunum *Nunc dimittis* á latínu, hefur verið hluti af tíðasöng kirkjunnar allt frá 4. öld. Frásögnin af því þegar hinn aldni Simeon sér hinn nýfædda Jesú í musterinu í Jerúsalem og sættist við tilhugsunina um dauðann hefur löngum verið tónskáldum hugleikin. Þólverjinn **Pawel Łukaszewski** samdi sína gerð af lofsöngnum árið 2007 fyrir kórinn í Trinity College í Cambridge og stjórnandann Stephen Layton. Verkið er skrifað fyrir blandaðan kór og kvartett einsöngvara. Hinir síðarnefndu syngja í sífellu orðið „Domine“ (Drottinn) og þetta endurtekna ávarp nær dáleiðandi áhrifum, sér í lagi í seinni hluta verksins þegar kórinn syngur um „ljós til opinberunar heiðingjum“.

Undir lok efnisskrárinnar hljómar annað *In paradisum*, eins og endurómur af englasöngnum fyrr á geisladiskinum. Höfundur þess er **Pärt Uusberg**, ungur eistneskur kórstjóri og tónsmiður sem hefur þegar vakið athygli heima og heiman og hlotið fjölda viðurkenninga. Verkið var samið árið 2016 fyrir kammerkór höfundarins, Head Ööd, Vend.

Það er ekki óviðeigandi að ljúka efnisskrá sem hverfist um dauðann og viðbrögð við honum á verki sem fjallar um svefninn, bróður dauðans. *Sleep* var eitt af fyrstu verkunum eftir bandaríska tónskáldið og stjórnandann **Eric Whitacre** sem vöktu verulega athygli. Ekki gekk þó þrautalaust að koma verkinu á framfæri. Haustið 1999 kom söngkona að máli við Whitacre og bað hann um að setja tóna við ljóð eftir Robert Frost til minningar um foreldra hennar. Whitacre tók verkefnið að sér og var tónverkið frumflutt í október árið 2000. Fljótlega fóru Whitacre að berast fyrirspurnir frá áhugasömum kórstjórum sem vildu flytja verkið en þegar hann hugðist gefa það út kom í ljós að erfingjar Frosts meinuðu honum að nota ljóðið. Til að tónverkið sofnaði ekki svefninum langa kom Whitacre að máli við vin sinn, skáldið Charles Anthony Silvestri, sem orti nýjan texta

við hið tilbúna tónverk á þann hátt að halda mætti að orð og tónar væru runnir úr sama penna.

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Kammerkórinn **Schola Cantorum** var stofnaður 1996 af Herði Áskelssyni. Kórinn hefur allar götur síðan verið atkvæðamikill í íslensku tónlistarlífi og sungið gamla tónlist endurreisnarinnar og baroktímans annars vegar og hins vegar samtímatónlist með sérstakri áherslu á frumflutning á verkum íslenskra tónskálda.

Schola Cantorum hefur haldið tónleika víðsvegar um Evrópu en einnig komið fram í Japan og Bandaríkjunum. Árið 2017 bauð Los Angeles Philharmonic kórnum að syngja ferna tónleika í Walt Disney Concert Hall á Reykjavík Festival. Árið 2022 kom Schola Cantorum fram á KLANG tónlistarhátíðinni í Kaupmannahöfn og Alþjóðlegu kirkjutónlistarhátíðinni í Osló auk Listahátíðar í Reykjavík.

Schola Cantorum hefur sent frá sér marga geisladiska sem endurspegla efnisskrá kórsins í gegnum tíðina þar sem mest fer fyrir kórtónlist án undirleiks. Einnig syngur kórinn í heildarútgáfu á kór- og hljómsveitarverkum Jóns Leifs á vegum sænsku útgáfunnar BIS.

Schola Cantorum hefur í gegnum tíðina komið að fjölbreytilegum verkefnum í félagi við listafólk á borð við Björk, Sigur Rós og Jóhann Jóhannsson auk þess að syngja inn á tölvuleikinn *God of War*.

Árið 2007 var Schola Cantorum tilnefndur til Tónlistarverðlauna Norðurlandaráðs eftir að hafa verið valinn tónlistarhópur Reykjavíkur árið áður. Kórinn var svo útnefndur tónlistarflytjandi ársins á Íslensku tónlistarverðlaununum 2017 í flokki sígildrar og samtímatónlistar.

www.scholacantorum.is

Hörður Áskelsson stundaði tónlistarnám á Akureyri og í Reykjavík og lauk framhaldsnámi frá Robert Schumann Hochschule í Düsseldorf í Þýskalandi árið 1982. Sama ár kom hann til starfa hjá Hallgrímskirkju þar sem hann starfaði sem organisti og kantor í tæp 40 ár.

Þar gegndi hann lykilhlutverki í uppbyggingu listalífs kirkjunnar og stóð meðal annars að stofnun Listvinafélags Hallgrímskirkju, Kirkjulistahátíðar og Alþjóðlega orgelsumarsins.

Árið 1982 stofnaði Hörður Mótettukór Hallgrímskirkju og kammerkórinn Schola Cantorum árið 1996. Með kórunum hefur hann flutt margar helstu perlur kórbókmenntanna með og án undirleiks auk þess að frumflytja fjölmörg verk íslenskra tónskálda. Kórarnir hafa undir stjórn Harðar unnið til verðlauna í alþjóðlegum kórakeppnum á Spáni, Ítalíu, Frakklandi og Írlandi. Hörður hefur haldið tónleika sem organisti víða í Evrópu svo sem í Kölnardómkirkju, París og Sankti Pétursborg. Jafnframt hefur Hörður kennt orgelleik og kórstjórn við Tónskóla Þjóðkirkjunnar auk þess sem hann gegndi embætti söngmálastjóra Þjóðkirkjunnar árin 2005–2011.

Hörður Áskelsson hefur hlotið fjölmargar viðurkenningar fyrir framlag sitt til tónlistarlífs á Íslandi og má þar nefna Íslensku tónlistarverðlaunin árið 2001, riddarakross hinnar íslensku fálkaorðu árið 2004 og Íslensku bjartsýnisverðlaunin árið 2006. Þá var hann borgarlistamaður Reykjavíkur 2002.

Im Jahr 2016 veröffentlichte der isländische Kammerchor Schola Cantorum *Meditatio* – ein Album mit Musik, die er im Laufe der Jahre bei Allerheiligenkonzerten zum Totengedenken aufgeführt hat. Das Programm dieser neuen Aufnahme enthält ebenfalls Kompositionen, die sich mit den Gedanken und Gefühlen der Menschen anlässlich des Todes beschäftigen: einige mit uralten Texten aus der kirchlichen Requiem-Liturgie, andere mit moderneren Texten, die ein tröstliches Licht der Hoffnung auf Trauer und Verlust werfen. Mit einer Ausnahme sind sämtliche Stücke im 21. Jahrhundert entstanden, und sie stammen aus Amerika und Europa. Sieben isländische Komponistinnen und Komponisten sind hier vertreten, fünf davon aktuelle oder ehemalige Mitglieder der Schola Cantorum.

Daniel Elder ist einer der interessantesten jungen Chorkomponisten in den USA. Über sein Schaffen sagt er: „In meinen Kompositionen versuche ich, die übliche Fokussierung auf die ‚eigene Stimme‘ zu meiden – vielmehr möchte ich die Emotionen erschließen, die ein Dichter einst in Worte fasste.“ *Elegy* aus dem Jahr 2013 basiert auf „Taps“, einem Trompetensignal, das traditionell bei Beerdigungen und Gedenkgottesdiensten der US-Streitkräfte gespielt wird. Elder lässt diese einfache Melodie, die ausschließlich auf den Tönen des Dur-Dreiklangs beruht, von drei Solo-Sopranen singen. Man nimmt an, dass diese Musik 1862 von Daniel Butterfield (1831–1901), einem Unionsgeneral im amerikanischen Bürgerkrieg, komponiert wurde; der Text wurde später verfasst, wahrscheinlich von Horace Lorenzo Trim (1849–1915).

Das erste Chormitglied unter den Komponisten dieses Albums ist **Auður Guðjohnsen**, eine professionelle Sängerin, Chorleiterin und Musikpädagogin, die darüber hinaus eine Reihe von Chorstücken komponiert hat. 2019 vertonte sie den lateinischen Eucharistiegesang *Ave verum corpus* aus dem 13. Jahrhundert, eine leidenschaftliche Anrufung Jesu Christi in der Stunde des Todes. „Die Musik fand sich recht schnell ein, in ein oder zwei Tagen“, sagt Auður, „wenngleich das Arrangement des Materials länger dauerte.“ Wie in einigen anderen Werken dieses Albums verbinden sich Anklänge an die Musik vergangener Zeiten mit dezent modernen Idiomen.

Die ukrainische Komponistin **Galina Grigorjeva** wurde in Simferopol auf der Krim geboren, lebt und arbeitet aber in Estland. Ihre Kompositionen, sowohl vokal als auch

instrumental, sind von der slawischen Vokaltradition, der Musik der orthodoxen Kirche und der mittelalterlichen Polyphonie inspiriert. *In paradisum* aus dem Jahr 2012 ist die Vertonung einer Antiphon aus der traditionellen lateinischen Requiem-Liturgie; sie erklingt beim Auszug des Leichnams aus der Kirche. Der Text erzählt mit suggestiver Sprache von einem Engelschor, der die Seele im Paradies willkommen heißt, und erfreut sich seit langer Zeit großer Beliebtheit unter Komponisten.

Der Komponist des nächsten Stücks bezieht seine Anregungen aus demselben Teil der Welt wie Galina Grigorjeva. **Hreiðar Ingi Þorsteinsson** studierte Musik und Chorleitung in Finnland und Estland und legt seit seiner Rückkehr nach Island großen Wert auf die Aufführung osteuropäischer Musik mit seinen Chören. *Lux aeterna* aus dem Jahr 2016 ist ebenfalls auf Worte des katholischen Requiems komponiert. Die Ausdeutung zweier Begriffe durch den Komponisten sticht dabei besonders hervor: In der Mitte des Stücks erklingt „requiem“ (Ruhe) überraschend auf einem verminderten Akkord; „lux“ (Licht) hingegen schimmert in zitternden Repetitionen der Sänger, die den eigentümlichen Trommelklang der Schnepfe imitieren.

Haukur Tómasson ist einer der bedeutendsten isländischen Komponisten, der für seinen dynamischen, farbenreichen und energiegeladenen Instrumentalstil bekannt ist. Im Jahr 2004 erhielt er den Musikpreis des Nordischen Rates, die höchste Auszeichnung für nordische Komponisten, für seine Oper *Guðrúns 4. Gesang* (BIS-908), die von der Kritik als „überwältigend“ gefeiert wurde. Im selben Jahr vertonte er das Gedicht *Vor hinsti dagur* des isländischen Nobelpreisträgers Halldór Laxness (1902–1998). Dieses kleine Stück ist Welten entfernt von besagter Oper, die Themen aber sind dieselben: Liebe und Reue, Trennung und Tod.

Der norwegische Komponist und Pianist **Ola Gjeilo** ist einer der beliebtesten zeitgenössischen Chorkomponisten. Seit Beginn seines Studiums an der Juilliard School in New York im Jahr 2001 lebt er in den USA und lässt sich vor allem von amerikanischen Musikern wie dem Filmkomponisten Thomas Newman, dem Pianisten Keith Jarrett und dem Gitarristen Pat Metheny inspirieren. *Sanctus: London* ist ein eigenständiger Messesatz, den Gjeilo 2004 für das Oranienborg Vocal Ensemble in Oslo schrieb. Das Stück ist raffi-

niert komponiert; man beachte etwa, wie der Ausruf „Hosanna in excelsis“ bei seinem ersten Erklingen sehr sanft gesungen wird, um dann, wenn er am Ende des Stücks wiederkehrt, in voller Lautstärke und einen Halbton höher zu erklingen.

Nú legg ég þér í lófa ist eine isländische Übersetzung von Sigurbjörn Einarsson (1911–2008) von *So nimm denn meine Hände*, einem beliebten geistlichen Lied der Deutsch-Baltin Julie Hausmann (1826–1901), das oft bei Begräbnissen gesungen wird. Der Legende nach schrieb Hausmann das Gedicht, als sie erfuhr, dass ihr Verlobter, der als Missionar in Afrika arbeitete und den wiederzusehen sie dorthin gereist war, kurz vor ihrer Ankunft verstorben war. In Deutschland wird der Hymnus meist auf eine Melodie von Friedrich Silcher gesungen, hier ist er in einer schlichten Vertonung von **Póra Marteinsdóttir** aus dem Jahr 2011 zu hören.

Das *Ubi caritas* des walisischen Komponisten und Kompositionsprofessors **Paul Mealor** wurde von Prinz William für seine Hochzeit mit Catherine Middleton in Westminster Abbey am 29. April 2011 in Auftrag gegeben. Der Text ist ein alter Hymnus, der dem heiligen Paulinus, Patriarch von Aquileia im späten 8. Jahrhundert, zugeschrieben wird, und die traditionelle Melodie, die in Mealors Vertonung nachklingt, stammt wahrscheinlich ebenfalls aus jener Zeit.

Das Chormitglied **Hafsteinn Þórólfsson** ist seit vielen Jahren als Sänger sowohl in der klassischen als auch in der Populärmusik aktiv. 2015 erwarb er einen Master-Abschluss in Rhythmischer Komposition und Songwriting mit Schwerpunkt Vokalkomposition an der Königlichen Musikhochschule Aarhus. *Sofðu unga ástin mín* ist seine persönliche, wortlose Interpretation einer beliebten isländischen Volksweise, die normalerweise zu einem Gedicht aus Jóhann Sigurjónssons gefeiertem Drama aus dem Jahr 1911 über den Geächteten Fjalla-Eyvindur Jónsson und seine Frau Halla gesungen wird, die im 18. Jahrhundert das isländische Hochland durchstreiften. Halla singt mit diesem herzerreißenden Wiegenlied ihr Kind in den Schlaf, um es dann in einen Wasserfall zu werfen, als sich die Häsher ihrem Versteck nähern.

Björn Thorarensen ist ebenfalls Mitglied des Chors, ein vielseitiger Musiker, der als Sänger, Chorleiter, Pianist, Arrangeur und Komponist tätig ist. Hier hören wir Thoraren-

sens Vertonung des Gebets *Agnus Dei* (Lamm Gottes), das seit dem 7. Jahrhundert Teil der katholischen Messliturgie ist. Die Musik entwickelt sich organisch aus gregorianischer Einstimmigkeit zu einer vielstimmigen Anrufung. Man beachte, dass hier beide Textversionen gleichzeitig zu hören sind: Während die Frauenstimmen um Gnade und Frieden beten, stimmen die Männerstimmen das in der Totenmesse abgewandelte Gebet um ewige Ruhe an.

Sigurður Sævarsson studierte Gesang und Komposition an der Boston University und erwarb im Frühjahr 1997 seinen Master in beiden Fächern. Vokalmusik macht einen Großteil seines Schaffens aus: Opern, Oratorien und kleinere Chorwerke. Sævarsson war mehrere Jahre lang Mitglied der Schola Cantorum, und der Chor hat viele seiner Kompositionen uraufgeführt, darunter auch das *Ave verum corpus*, die zweite Vertonung dieses Texts auf diesem Album. Das Stück wurde 2018 geschrieben und im Januar 2019 in der Hallgrímskirkja in Reykjavík unter der Leitung von Hörður Áskelsson uraufgeführt. Sævarssons musikalische Sprache ist schlicht und bedachtsam, die Worte stehen im Zentrum, die Musik bildet einen Resonanzboden für den Text und seine Botschaft.

John Hearne ist ein britischer Komponist und Chorleiter, der in Schottland lebt und arbeitet. In den 1960er Jahren war er eine Zeitlang Musiklehrer in Island und beschäftigte sich mit dem Erbe der isländischen Volksmelodien. Im Jahr 1969 schuf er ein Chorbearbeitung einer Melodie, die gewöhnlich zu der Strophe *Fagurt er í Fjörðum* des Dichters und Vagabunden Látra-Björg (Björg Einarsdóttir, 1716–1784) gesungen wird. Das Gedicht beschreibt einen Ort in Nordisland in der Nähe der Heimatprovinzen des Autors und ist eine ergreifende Momentaufnahme der Schönheit und Vergänglichkeit des Lebens.

Der Lobgesang des Simeon aus dem zweiten Kapitel des Lukasevangeliums, der mit den lateinischen Worten *Nunc dimittis* beginnt, wird seit dem 4. Jahrhundert im Offizium der Kirche verwendet. Der Bericht von der Begegnung des alten Simeon mit dem Christuskind im Tempel in Jerusalem und seiner Versöhnung mit dem Tod ist unter Komponisten seit jeher beliebt. **Pawel Łukaszewski** aus Polen komponierte seine Vertonung 2007 für den Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, und seinen Dirigenten Stephen Layton. Sie ist für gemischten Chor und ein Solistenquartett geschrieben, das während des gesamten

Stücks das Wort „Domine“ (Herr) intoniert. Diese wiederholte Anrufung hat eine faszinierende Wirkung, vor allem im Schlussteil, wenn der Chor von einem „Licht, das die Heiden erleuchtet“ singt.

Das vorletzte der hier vorgelegten Werke ist ein zweites *In paradisum*, das gleichsam ein Echo auf den Engelschor zu Beginn des Albums darstellt. Es wurde von **Pärt Uusberg** komponiert, einem jungen estnischen Chorleiter und Komponisten, der bereits große Aufmerksamkeit im In- wie im Ausland genießt. Das Stück entstand 2016 für Uusbergs Kammerchor „Head Ööd, Vend“.

Es ist nicht abwegig, ein Programm über den Tod mit einem Werk über den Schlaf zu beenden, der manchmal auch der Bruder des Todes genannt wird. *Sleep* ist eine der frühesten Kompositionen des amerikanischen Komponisten und Dirigenten **Eric Whitacre**. Die Entstehungsgeschichte des Werks war kompliziert: 1999 nahm Whitacre den Auftrag an, eine Gedenkmusik auf ein Gedicht von Robert Frost zu schreiben. Die Komposition wurde im Oktober 2000 uraufgeführt und fand alsbald das Interesse zahlreicher Chorleiter. Da aber erhielt Whitacre die Nachricht, dass die Erben des Dichters ihm nicht gestatteten, das Gedicht zur Veröffentlichung oder Aufführung zu verwenden. Um seine Musik vor dem Vergessen zu bewahren, bat Whitacre einen Freund, den Dichter Charles Anthony Silvestri, einen neuen Text für das Stück zu schreiben. Silvestri bewältigte diese heikle Aufgabe so vortrefflich, dass der Zuhörer meinen könnte, Musik und Text stammten aus derselben Feder.

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Die **Schola Cantorum Reykjavicensis** wurde 1996 von Hörður Áskelsson gegründet. Mit einem Repertoire, das zum einen aus Renaissance- und Barockmusik und zum anderen aus zeitgenössischer, insbesondere isländischer Musik besteht, spielte der Chor von Anfang an eine wichtige Rolle im Musikleben Islands.

Die Schola Cantorum ist in ganz Europa sowie in Japan und den USA aufgetreten. Im Jahr 2017 wurde der Chor vom Los Angeles Philharmonic eingeladen, während des Reykjavík Festivals des Orchesters in der Walt Disney Concert Hall aufzutreten. 2022 folgten Auftritte beim Reykjavík Arts Festival, beim Oslo International Church Music Festival und beim Kopenhagener KLANG-Festival.

Zu den zahlreichen Aufnahmen des Chors gehört das gesamte Chor- und chorsymphonische Schaffen von Jón Leifs, das bei BIS erschienen ist. Man begegnet der Schola Cantorum quer durch das musikalische Spektrum – in der Zusammenarbeit mit Künstlern wie Björk, Sigur Rós und Jóhann Jóhannsson, aber auch auf dem Soundtrack zum Videospiel *God of War*.

2007 wurde die Schola Cantorum für den Musikpreis des Nordischen Rates nominiert, 2009 zum Offiziellen Musikensemble der Stadt Reykjavík ernannt. Bei den Isländischen Musikpreisen 2017 gewann der Chor in der Kategorie „Künstler/Ensemble des Jahres“. www.scholacantorum.is

Nach seinem Studium in Island ging **Hörður Áskelsson** 1976 nach Düsseldorf, um an der Robert Schumann Hochschule zu studieren. Er schloss sein Studium als Organist und Chorleiter 1981 mit *summa cum laude* ab und wurde im Jahr darauf zum Musikalischen Leiter der Hallgrímskirkja ernannt. Ebenfalls 1982 gründete Áskelsson den Motettenchor Hallgrímskirkja und initiierte die Gründung der Gesellschaft der Kunstfreunde Hallgrímskirkja, zwei Eckpfeiler der künstlerischen Aktivitäten dieser Kirche. Im Jahr 1987 etablierte er das Kirchenkunstfestival, ein zweijährliches Ereignis im isländischen Kulturleben, und im Jahr 1993 die Konzertreihe „The Hallgrímskirkja International Organ Summer“. 1996 rief Áskelsson den Kammerchor Schola cantorum ins Leben.

Mit seinen Chören hat Áskelsson bei verschiedenen Musikfestivals gastiert, an interna-

tionalen Wettbewerben teilgenommen und in Cork (Irland), Noyon (Frankreich) und Gorizia (Italien) Preise gewonnen. Er hat zahlreiche Oratorien geleitet, oft mit dem Isländischen Symphonieorchester, und eine Reihe isländischer Kompositionen uraufgeführt. Seine Konzerte wurden für Rundfunk und Fernsehen aufgezeichnet und auf vielen CDs veröffentlicht.

Im Jahr 2002 wurde Áskelsson mit dem Isländischen Musikpreis ausgezeichnet, 2004 erhielt er das Ritterkreuz des Isländischen Falkenordens. Von 2005 bis 2011 war Hörður Áskelsson Musikdirektor der Isländischen Staatskirche.

1 Daniel Elder: Elegy

Day is done, gone the sun
from the lakes, from the hills, from the sky.
All is well, safely rest:
God is nigh

Fading light dims the sight
and a star gems the sky, gleaming bright.
From afar, drawing nigh,
falls the night.

Thanks and praise for our days
'neath the sun, 'neath the stars, 'neath the sky
As we go, this we know:
God is nigh.

Text: Horace Lorenzo Trim (1849–1915) (attr)

2/11 Auður Guðjohnsen / Sigurður Sævarsson: Ave verum corpus

Ave verum corpus,
natum de Maria Virgine,
vere passum, immolatum
in cruce pro homine:
cuius latus perforatum
unda fluxit et sanguine: / fluxit aqua et sanguine:
esto nobis prægustatum
in mortis examine.

O dulcis, O pie
O Jesu Fili Mariæ,
miserere mei. Amen.

Text: Eucharistic hymn, 14th century

Hail the true body,
born of the Virgin Mary:
You who truly suffered and were sacrificed
on the cross for the sake of man.
From whose pierced flank
flowed water and blood:
Be a foretaste for us
in the trial of death.

O sweet, O merciful,
O Jesus, Son of Mary,
have mercy on me. Amen.

3/14 Galina Grigorjeva/Pärt Uusberg: In paradisum

In paradisum deducant te angeli
in tuo adventu suscipiant te martyres
et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem.

Chorus angelorum te suscipiat
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere
æternam habeas requiem

Text: Latin antiphon

May the angels lead you into paradise,
in your coming may the martyrs receive you
and may they guide you into the holy city, Jerusalem.

May the chorus of angels receive you
and with Lazarus once poor
may you have eternal rest.

4 Hreiðar Ingi Þorsteinsson: Lux æterna

Lux æterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in æternum,
quia pius es.

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine.
Lux æterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in æternum,
quia pius es.

Text: from the Requiem Mass

Let perpetual light shine upon them, O Lord,
with your saints for ever,
for you are merciful.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord.
Let perpetual light shine upon them, O Lord,
with your saints for ever,
for you are merciful.

5 Haukur Tómasson: Vor hinsti dagur

Vor hinsti dagur er hniginn
af hinmun í saltan mar
Sú stund kemur aldrei aftur,
sem einu sinni var.

Og sólbrendar hæðir hnípa
við himin fölván sem vín:
Það er ég sem kveð þig með kossi,
kærasta ástin mín

Our final day has fallen
from heavens to the sea
The moment not returning
that once and only lived.

The sunburned slopes are crouching
by heavens pink as wine
It is I who kiss you when leaving
loveliest love of mine.

Því okkur var skapað að skilja.
Við skiljum. Og aldrei meir.
Það líf kemur aldrei aftur,
sem einu sinni deyr.

Text: Halldór Laxness (1902–98)

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For we were meant for partings.
We part. And nevermore.
That life, it will not come knocking
When it is dead and cold.

Translation: Sigurður Ingólfsson

6 Ola Gjeilo: Sanctus: London

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Text: from the Ordinary of the Mass

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he that cometh
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

7 Þóra Marteinsdóttir: Nú legg ég þér í lófa

Nú legg ég þér í lófa
mitt líf og veg,
minn Guð, svo lífs og liðinn
þér lifi ég.
Hvar sé ég ljós sem lifgar
og lýsir mér?
Það get ég aðeins öðlast
og átt hjá þér.

Þú vilt, minn faðir, vera
mér vörn og skjól
og hjartans hlýja birta
þó hverfi sól,

Lord, take my hand and lead me
upon life's way;
direct, protect, and feed me
from day to day.
Without your grace and favour
I go astray;
so take my hand, O Saviour,
and lead the way.

Lord, when the tempest rages,
I need not fear;
for you, the Rock of Ages,
are always near.

Því fell ég þér að faðmi
og fel þér mig
í barnsins blinda trausti
og blessa þig.

Þótt heilög máttarhönd þín
sé hulin mér
hún leiðir mig að marki
um myrkrin hér.
Því legg ég þér í lófa
mitt líf, minn veg,
að bæði lífs og liðinn
þér lífi ég.

*Text: Sigurbjörn Einarsson (1911–2008), after ‘So nimm denn meine Hände’ by Julie Hausmann (1826–1901).
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Close by your side abiding,
I fear no foe,
for when your hand is guiding,
in peace I go.

Lord, when the shadows lengthen
and night has come,
I know that you will strengthen
my steps toward home,
then nothing can impede me,
O blessed Friend!
So, take my hand and lead me
unto the end.

Translation: from the Lutheran Book of Worship

8 Paul Mealor: Ubi caritas

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exultemus, et in ipso jucundemur.
Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.
Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Amen.

Text: Gregorian chant

Where charity and love are, God is there.
Christ's love has gathered us into one.
Let us rejoice and be pleased in Him.
Let us fear, and let us love the living God.
And may we love each other with a sincere heart.
Where charity and love are, God is there.
Amen.

9 Trad., arr. Hafsteinn Þórolfsson: Sofðu unga ástin mín

(sung without words)

Sleep my newborn, night is cold
Outside the rain is crying.
Mother keeps your games of gold
Gems and bones and things of old,
Let us not stay awake, the day is dying.

The night has secrets that darkness knows
My dreary mind is dreaming
I have have seen how the black sand blows
Burning land and all that grows
The glaciers' rifts are deadly deep and screaming.

Sleep for long now, sleep in peace,
Slowly wake from kisses.
Never will the sadness cease
Showing you without release,
That mankind loves and loses, cries and misses.

English translation: Sigurður Ingólfsson

10 Björn Thorarensen: Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis / dona eis requiem.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem / dona eis sempiternam requiem.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us / grant us rest.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace / grant us eternal rest.

Text: from the Ordinary of the Mass

11 Sigurður Sævarsson: Ave verum corpus

See track 2.

12 Trad., arr. John Hearne: Fagurt er í fjörðum

Fagurt er í Fjörðum
þá frelsarinn gefur veðrið blítt,
hey er grænt í görðum,
grös og heilagfiskið nýtt.

Fair are the Firths
when the Redeemer makes fine weather,
green hay in the fields,
herbs and halibut to gather.

En þá veturinn að þeim tekur sveigja
veit eg enga verri sveit
um veraldar reit. –
Menn og dýr þá deyja.

Text: Björg Einarsdóttir (Látra-Björg) (1716–84)

But when winter bears down
I know of no worse place
on the face of the Earth;
men and beasts die then.

*Translation: Bernard Scudder.
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13 Paweł Łukaszewski: Nunc dimittis

Domine, domine
Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine,
secundum verbum tuum in pace:
Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum.
Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum:
Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam
plebis tuæ Israel.

Text: Luke 2:29–32

O Lord, O Lord
Now lettest thou thy servant depart
in peace according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the glory
of thy people Israel.

14 Pärt Uusberg: In paradisum

See track 3.

15 Eric Whitacre: Sleep

The evening hangs beneath the moon
A silver thread on darkened dune
With closing eyes and resting head
I know that sleep is coming soon.

Upon my pillow, safe in bed,
A thousand pictures fill my head,
I cannot sleep, my mind's aflight;
And yet my limbs seem made of lead.

If there are noises in the night,
A frightening shadow, flickering light;
Then I surrender unto sleep
Where clouds of dreams give second sight

What dreams may come, both dark and deep,
Of flying wings and soaring leap
As I surrender unto sleep,
As I surrender unto sleep

Text: Charles Anthony Silvestri (b. 1965)

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Schola Cantorum Reykjavicensis

Soprano

Elfa Margrét Ingvadóttir
Fjóla Kristín Nikulásdóttir
Ingibjörg Friða Helgadóttir
Rakel Edda Guðmundsdóttir (solo, tracks 1 & 12)
Ragnheiður Sara Grímsdóttir (solo, track 1)
Vigdís Sigurðardóttir (solo, track 1)

Tenor

Björn Thorarensen
Guðmundur Vignir Karlsson
Helgi Steinar Helgason
Þorkell Helgi Sigfússon
Þorsteinn Freyr Sigurðsson

Alto

Auður Guðjohnsen
Halla Marinósdóttir
Hildigunnur Einarsdóttir
Jóhanna Ósk Valsdóttir
Lilja Dögg Gunnarsdóttir

Bass

Benedikt Ingólfsson
Björn Bjarnsteinsson
Hafsteinn Þórólfsson
Pétur Oddbergur Heimisson
Philip Barkhударov

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Executive producer: Robert Suff

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HÖRÐUR ÁSKELSSON