



jón leifs

EDDA

Part 1: THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

gunnar guðbjörnsson · bjarni thor kristinsson
schola cantorum
iceland symphony orchestra
hermann bäumer



SUPER AUDIO CD

JÓN LEIFS (1899–1968)

EDDA, PART 1: SKÖPUN HEIMSINS (THE CREATION OF THE WORLD)

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING (ICE-MIC)

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|------|--|-------|
| [1] | 1. Ár var alda (Young Were the Years) | 4'19 |
| [2] | 2. Ýmir (Ymir) | 7'22 |
| [3] | 3. Þursa þjóðar sjöt (The Giants' Palace) | 2'53 |
| [4] | 4. Auðhumla, Óðinn ok hans bræðr (Audhumla, Odin and his Brothers) | 2'54 |
| [5] | 5. Sær (Sea) | 2'36 |
| [6] | 6. Jörð (Earth) | 2'27 |
| [7] | 7. Himinn, sól, dagr (Sky, Sun, Day) | 10'21 |
| [8] | 8. Nótt, morgunn (Night, Morning) | 19'17 |
| [9] | 9. Ásgarðr, Askr ok Embla, Miðgarðr (Asgard, Ash and Embla, Midgard) | 3'36 |
| [10] | 10. Scherzo. Allir menn urðut jafnspakir (All Men Aren't Equally Wise) | 3'21 |
| [11] | 11. Viðr, sumar, logn (Wood, Summer, Calm) | 7'59 |
| [12] | 12. Vetr ok vindr (Winter and Wind) | 2'35 |
| [13] | 13. Finale. Ífing, níu heimar (Ifing, Nine Worlds) | 4'44 |

TT: 75'39

GUNNAR GUÐBJÖRNSSON *tenor*

BJARNI THOR KRISTINSSON *bass-baritone*

SCHOLA CANTORUM HÖRÐUR ÁSKELSSON *chorus master*

ICELAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

HERMANN BÄUMER *conductor*

STEFÁN JÓN BERNHARÐSSON · ÞORKELL JÓELSSON

ERÍKUR ÖRN PÁLSSON · GUÐMUNDUR HAFSTEINSSON *lur*

EGGERT PÁLSSON *bagpipes* · DAÐI KOLBEINSSON *ocarina* · DOUGLAS BROTHIE *organ*

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 ancient literary heritage. Leifs' original intention was to become a pianist and conductor, but shortly after graduating from the Leipzig Conservatory in 1921 he began studying a recently published collection of Icelandic folk music and found his calling as a composer: 'This collection opened for me the whole world of folk-song and I felt I had come into contact with its immutable laws... the heritage which no nation can be without. I discovered them only by coincidence, really. But don't many of the most wondrous things in life happen by coincidence?'

Leifs realized that no texts were better suited to the austere style of Icelandic folk-song than the ancient Eddic poetry, and within months he had the texts sent to him from Iceland. His first vocal work, three terse, laconic settings of verses from *Hávamál*, dates from 1924. In the years that followed, Leifs found himself primarily occupied with matters other than composition. These included a tour of Iceland and Norway with the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra in 1926 – the first performance by a full symphony orchestra in Iceland – and ambitious plans for a German 'orchestral academy' for young musicians, which came to naught. It was around this time that Leifs began conceiving a larger work based on *Völuspá*, the Eddic poem in which a seeress describes the creation of the earth and prophesies its destruction.

It was only during the last months of 1930 that Leifs began making headway with his new piece.

Earlier that year he completed three large-scale works: the *Organ Concerto*, Op. 7, *Variations on a theme by Beethoven*, Op. 8, and the *Iceland Cantata*, Op. 13. The concerto and variations had been works-in-progress for a decade or more, but the *Iceland Cantata* was composed within a year and intended for a composition contest to commemorate the millennium of the Icelandic Althing, although it was never submitted. The cantata was Leifs' first large-scale work for chorus and orchestra, and completing it probably gave him the confidence needed to revive his earlier project of a larger choral work based on *Völuspá*.

It took Leifs two years to complete the libretto, not least because the work's dimensions far outgrew his original plan. Leifs expanded his text beyond the verses of *Völuspá*, creating an impressive collage of virtually all the Eddic sources relating to earth's creation and demise, and of the Nordic gods themselves. In the end the text consisted of 350 stanzas and was divided into four large sections: *The Creation of the World*, *The Lives of the Gods*, *Twilight and Resurrection*. 'To be honest, I'm rather worried,' Leifs wrote to his sister in 1932, 'since it is impossible for me to begin such a composition unless I can spend two or three years working on it without constantly being concerned about money.' Yet he was riveted by the libretto as it stood: 'I have now completed the second draft of the text to my *Edda* oratorio. Parts of it are so magnificent that they leave me breathless!' But Leifs' income in Germany was completely dependent on his freelance journalism and so the composition was delayed even further. Between 1930 and 1935 Leifs composed only small-scale works: original

songs with piano, folk-song arrangements, chorale preludes and arrangements of Icelandic traditional hymns. It was as if he needed to 'warm up' for the massive creative task that awaited him, taking great care not to begin any large-scale works that might delay his oratorio even more.

Leifs' work invites the obvious comparison with that other gigantic tetralogy based on Eddic myths of creation and destruction, Richard Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*. Leifs was well acquainted with Wagner's score, having studied it carefully during his student years. But Leifs found Wagner's approach too romantic and sentimental, and claimed that several of his own works, including the *Edda* oratorio and *Saga Symphony*, were created 'in protest against Wagner, who so grossly misunderstood the Nordic character and the artistic heritage of the North'.

Jón Leifs waited three years before commencing work on the music itself. In February 1935 he was appointed music director of Icelandic State Radio and moved back to Iceland while his wife, Annie, stayed in Rehbrücke near Berlin with their two daughters. Leifs accepted the position on the understanding that he would be able to divide his time between office work and composing, and spent much of his time working on the *Edda* oratorio in Viðey, a small island not far from the Reykjavík harbour. The governing board of the State Radio was appalled by what it saw as Leifs' flagrant violation of his contract, and his frequent absences finally cost him the job. At the same time, Leifs' personal situation was fraught with difficulty. His marriage with Annie Riethof was foundering, not least because of his infatuation with the German harpist Ursula Lentrodt in Wiesbaden in 1934.

Upon completing the score in January 1939, Leifs began a hopeless quest for publishers and performers. Europe was on the brink of war and German orchestras were little inclined to take on a demanding work by a composer whose Aryan credentials had recently been cast into doubt on grounds of his wife's Jewish origins. The only one who seemed interested was Rudolf Schulz-Dornburg, music director at Cologne radio, but he was called to join the German air force just as plans were coming to fruition. Music publishers such as Peters and Eulenburg politely refused. Leifs' regular publishers, Kistner & Siegel, finally decided to include *Edda I* in their series, but the scandal at the Berlin performance of Leifs' *Organ Concerto* in 1941 – where most of the audience walked out in protest at Leifs' 'modernist' work – led to the cancellation of the entire project.

More than a decade passed before movements from *Edda I* were first heard, at the Copenhagen Nordic Music Days in May 1952 under the direction of Launy Grøndahl. Two of the work's thirteen movements (Nos 7 and 8) had been chosen by the programme committee, and Leifs, who had been suffering a fallow period creatively, was again filled with optimism. He began composing *Edda II* in December 1951, after a nearly 13-year hiatus, and had made good progress with the first movement – a musical depiction of Óðinn – when disaster struck. The audience reception in Copenhagen was hostile and the experience was deeply humiliating for Leifs. In particular, the younger generation of serially inclined composers greeted Leifs' triadic harmony and primitive percussion section with ridicule. Jón Nordal, another Icelandic composer whose work

was performed at the festival, has described how a devastated Leifs ran into the hallway during the lacklustre applause and refused to enter the hall again. Adding insult to injury, Icelandic Radio lost its copy of the performance shortly afterwards. Leifs's reaction was understandable: he shelved the *Edda* project and only returned to it a decade later. He completed *Edda II* in May 1966 and immediately began composing the next instalment. Jón Leifs died in June 1968, leaving *Edda III* incomplete.

Thirty years after the partial première in Copenhagen, Icelandic audiences were finally able to hear portions of *Edda I*, performed by the Polyphonic Choir under the direction of Ingólfur Guðbrandsón. Originally intending to perform the entire piece, the choir finally settled for three movements (Nos 1, 5, and 6), which were performed in Háskólabíó and taken on a concert tour of Spain. Spanish audiences were riveted and one audience member remarked: 'It was as if Iceland's entire history was mirrored in the music of *Edda I*, and in the heartfelt performance.'

Edda I consists of thirteen movements, each of which describes part of the creation according to Nordic mythology. Ýmir, the first giant, is introduced in the second movement and the cow Auðhumla, who fed Ýmir with four rivers of milk, in the third, along with Óðinn and his brethren. Askur and Embla, the Nordic equivalents of Adam and Eve, also make an appearance later in the work. As the headings of the individual movements suggest – *Sea, Earth, Heaven, Sun, Day, Night, Morning*, etc. – Leifs is mostly concerned with portraying nature with appropriately descriptive gestures.

The music carries all the hallmarks of Leifs'

mature style: parallel fifths, irregular metric patterns, and root-position triads. Yet the music is considerably more varied than in Leifs's later works, not least owing to several prominent polyphonic passages. Extended fugal writing occurs in three movements of *Edda I* (Nos 2, 3, and 7), the last of which also contains the theme in inversion. Leifs had certainly written fugues before – his *Violin Studies*, Op. 3 and the *Iceland Cantata*, Op. 13, for example – but this would be the last time that such writing played a prominent part in his music.

Leifs uses a 'motto' consisting of two chords, E flat major and B major, to connect movements of the work. In its characteristic form, the motto is played by trumpets, horns and trombones, and is especially prominent in the work's first seven movements. E is a prominent tonal centre and underpins large portions of the score as a tonic pedal. The orchestra was Leifs' largest to date, and includes his first use of what would become his signature Nordic *lurs* and an extended percussion section, including rocks. The scoring is among Leifs' most colourful and inspired. Among the most memorable passages are the majestic organ entry in the fifth movement as the sons of Bor slay the giant Ýmir, thus effectively creating the world, dark minor harmonies in the nocturnal eighth movement, three-octave unisono choral writing over a static C major chord in the ninth movement, and the chilling semi-quaver depiction of winter in the twelfth movement.

The difficulty of Leifs' choral writing is no doubt the main reason why the *Edda* oratorio has waited nearly 70 years for its first performance. The choir is the work's protagonist; it sings in

every movement and Leifs is merciless in his demands for extreme *tessitura*. The sopranos are required to hit a multitude of high Cs, and the basses go down to low C on occasion. Leifs was never one to compromise in order to make his works easier to perform, even if this meant they would not be heard during his lifetime.

The first complete performance of Jón Leifs' *Edda I*, in conjunction with this recording, was a milestone in Icelandic musical life. At the time of its completion in 1939, the 254-page score was the longest, most ambitious and by far the most demanding Icelandic composition ever created. Its powerful and daring portrayal of the Nordic creation myth is yet another example of the magic Jón Leifs was able to draw from the austere and fascinating world of Icelandic folk-song.

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Gunnar Guðbjörnsson, tenor, studied singing in Iceland and Berlin prior to taking lessons from Nicolai Gedda and joining the London National Opera Studio. Following his début in 1988 at the Icelandic Opera, his reputation spread rapidly and in 1999 he was invited by Daniel Barenboim to join the ensemble of the Berlin Staatsoper as first lyric tenor. His career has taken him to the leading opera houses in Europe and as a concert singer he has also performed in the USA and Asia. In the autumn of 2007 Guðbjörnsson sings his first role in the heroic repertoire, Walther von Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger* at the Halle Opera House.

Bjarni Thor Kristinsson, bass, is one of the best-known Icelandic opera singers of the younger generation. After singing lessons in his home country, he went to the University of Music and Dramatic Arts in Vienna to study under Helene Carusso and Curt Malm. In 1997 he joined the Volksoper Ensemble in Vienna where he sang leading bass roles, and since then his international career has flourished, taking him opera companies all over Europe, including Berlin, Munich, Dresden, Hamburg, Paris, Barcelona, Lisbon, Rome, Florence and Reykjavík. His operatic repertoire ranges from Mozart to Strauss and Wagner.

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 composers on the other. Schola cantorum is one of Iceland's most distinguished music groups and was appointed City of Reykjavík Official Music Group 2006. It was nominated for Nordic Council Music Prize in 2007. The choir's normal size of 14 professional singers is extended to 38 singers in the oratorio *Edda I* by Jón Leifs.

On Iceland, growing prosperity and the dawn of independence at the turn of the 20th century created the impetus for forming a professional orchestra. In 1930, the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service and the Reykjavík College of Music were founded, paving the way for the creation of the **Iceland Symphony Orchestra**, which was formally established on 9th March 1950. The ISO gives

approximately sixty concerts each season, including subscription concerts in Reykjavík and tours both in Iceland and abroad, with recent visits to the Faeroes, Greenland, the Scandinavian countries, Germany, Austria, France and North America. Over the years, numerous renowned guest artists have enriched the ISO's music-making, including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Yehudi Menuhin, Wilhelm Kempff, André Previn, Daniel Barenboim, Luciano Pavarotti, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Mstislav Rostropovich and Joshua Bell.

The post of chief conductor has been filled by many important conductors who, over the years, have greatly influenced the orchestra's development, such as Olav Kielland and Karsten Andersen from Norway, Bohdan Wodiczko from Poland, Jean-Pierre Jacquillat from France, Petri Sakari and Osmo Vänskä from Finland and Rico Saccani from the USA. The British conductor Rumon Gamba has been chief conductor and musical director of the ISO since 2002. The same year Vladimir Ashkenazy accepted the post of conductor laureate of the orchestra. The ISO has made a number of recordings for BIS, including a highly acclaimed series of the music of Jón Leifs and three discs with orchestral works by Nikos Skalkottas.

The reputation that **Hermann Bäumer** has earned through his substantial and highly creative work as director of music for the town of Osnabrück is reflected not only in great public approbation and praise in the specialist press but also in a number of guest conducting engagements in Germany and internationally, for instance with the North German Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Iceland Symphony Orch-

estra and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin.

Born in Bielefeld, Hermann Bäumer started to play the piano at the age of six. He later also received cello and trombone lessons, and studied conducting in Detmold and Leipzig. From 1992 until 2003 he was a trombonist in the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and for many years he enjoyed a collaboration with the orchestra's brass ensemble. Hermann Bäumer has also conducted such orchestras as the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra and the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, and has been a guest at such festivals as the Rheingau Music Festival and the Heidelberg Spring. In addition, Bäumer is well known for his work with young musicians and has collaborated with numerous youth orchestras.

Hermann Bäumer has a special affinity for unusual works of music drama. For example, during the 2005–06 season he gave the world première of Alexander Nowitz' *Bestmannoper* to great press and public acclaim. No less attention surrounded his performance of Hans-Werner Henze's *Wundertheater* during the season 2004–05.

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. Það var þó hreinasta tilviljun að þannig fór, því að Jón hafði upphaflega stefnt að því að starfa sem píanóleikari og hljómsveitarstjóri. Það var ekki fyrir en að lokinni fjögurra ára námsvist í Leipzig að hann uppgötvaði „lögmál“ íslensku þjóðlaganna, þegar hann var staddur á Íslandi sumarið 1921 og tók að kynna sér þjóðlagasafn sr. Bjarna Þorsteinssonar. Áratugum síðar lýsti hann áhrifunum svo:

„Þá opnaðist fyrir mér heimur þjóðlaganna og ég þóttist kominn í tæri við lögmálin: Safn Bjarna Þorsteinssonar vísaði veginn, þó það væri gallað; hann sópaði inn í það öllu, sem hönd á festi [...] svo er varð ein heljarmikil hrúga. Það varð okkar hlutskipti að róta í þessari hrúgu. Það var erfitt verk og tímafrekt, en eftirtekjan sýnir, að það hefur borgað sig. Þarna voru lögmálin – þessi arfur, sem engin þjóð getur án verið. Tilviljun sennilega að ég fann þau. En verður ekki margt af því stórkostlegasta til fyrir tilviljun?“

Jóni var strax ljóst að enginn kveðskapur félli betur að kaldhömrudum stíl þjóðlaganna en Eddukvæðin og ekki leið á löngu þar til hann bað föður sinn að senda sér Eddurnar til Þýskalands. Þremur árum eftir hin afdrifaríku kynni af þjóðlagasafninu samdi Jón fyrsta söngverk sitt, þrjú skorinort lög, ekki nema blaðsíða hvert, við erindi úr Hávamálum. Þótt Jón helgaði öðrum málefnum krafta sína að mestu næstu árin, m.a. hljómsveitarferð Hamborgarfílharmónífunnar til Íslands 1926 og fyrirhugaðri stofnun þýskrar

„hljómsveitarakademíu“ í kjölfarið, leið ekki á löngu þar til hugmyndir um stærra verk sem byggði á Eddutextum tóku að mótast.

Það var ekki fyrir en síðla árs 1930 sem Jón hrinti hugmynd sinni loks í framkvæmd. Á fyrstu mánuðum ársins lauk hann við þrjú stór tónverk: *Orgelkonsert* op. 7, *Tilbrigði* um *stef eftir Beethoven* op. 8, og kantötuna *Þjóðhvöt* op. 13. Fyrri verkin tvö hafði hann haft í smíðum í áratug með löngum hléum inn á milli, en *Þjóðhvöt* var upphaflega ætluð sem framlag hans í samkeppni um Alþingishátíðarkantötu þótt ýmislegt yrði til þess að hann legði verkið aldrei fram. *Þjóðhvöt* var fyrsta stóra verk Jóns fyrir kór og hljómsveit og líklega hefur sú reynsla talið í hann kjarkinn sem þurfti til að leggja í enn umfangsmeira verk. Í það minnsta tók Jón að huga aftur að nokkurra ára gamalli fyrirætlan sinni að semja stórt tónverk við *Völuspá*. Í september 1930 leitaði Jón ráða um textaval hjá Sigurði Nordal prófessor, sem svaraði að sér væri „auðvitað ánægja að lesa yfir oratoríum-texta yðar, ef þér sendið mér hann.“

Það tók Jón tvö ár að fullgera textann enda varð verkið mun stærra í sniðum en hann hafði upphaflega ætlað. *Völuspá* var ekki lengur eina heimildin heldur leitaði Jón fanga víða í Eddukvæðum og Snorra-Eddu. Þegar upp var staðið taldi textinn 350 erindi og skiptist í fjóra hluta: Sköpun heimsins, Líf guðanna, Ragnarökr og Endurreisn. „Mér lízt satt að segja ekki á blikuna.“ játaði Jón fyrir Þóreyju systur sinni, „líftið þýðir fyrir mig að byrja á slíkri tónsmíð, nema að eg geti verið við hana áhyggjulaus í 2-3 ár. Þ.e. hafi ekki brauðáhyggjur á meðan.“ Á móti kom að honum fannst hugmyndin stórfengleg: „Eg hefi nú

gengið frá öðru uppkasti að texta við Eddusöngverkið; textinn svo stórkostlegur á köflum, að eg „næ stundum bara ekki andanum“ þegar eg er að fara yfir hann!“ En það þýddi lítið fyrir Jón að byrja á slíku risaverki meðan hann þurfti að sinna margs konar aukavinnu til að hafa í sig og á. Á árunum 1930-35 samdi Jón eingöngu smærri verk: rímnadanslög, orgelforspil, nokkur einsöngslög og útsetti íslenska sálma fyrir kór. Í fimm ár hitaði hann sig upp fyrir átökin sem biðu hans, og gætti þess að eyða ekki kröftum sínum í eitthvað sem gæti tafið óratóríuna meira en orðið var.

Eitt tónskáld hafði áður byggt risavaxinn fjórþáttung á frásögnum Eddukvæða af sköpun heimsins og lífi hinna norrænu goða. Jón þekkti vel til *Niflungahringins* eftir Richard Wagner, hafði keypt nóturnar á námsárum sínum og heyrð hann nokkrum sinnum í þýskum óperuhúsum. En nálgun Wagners var of rómantísk og útblásin til að falla að smekk Jóns, sem kvaðst hafa samið mörg verka sinna, m.a. *Eddu-óratóríuna* og *Sögu-sinfóníuna*, „sem andmæli gegn Wagner, er misskilni svo herfilega norrænt eðli og norræna listarfleifi.“

Textinn að *Eddu I* lá fullgerður í þrjú ár áður en Jón hóf að semja tónlistina. Í febrúar 1935 var Jón ráðinn tónlistarstjóri Ríkisútvarpsins og fluttist heim til Íslands en Annie kona hans varð eftir í Rehbrücke nálægt Berlín með dætur þeirra tvær. Jón hafði tekið að sér starfið á þeim forsendum að honum yrði gert kleift að vinna að tónsmíðum jafnframt venjulegri skrifstofuvinnu, og þótti ekki nema sjálfsgætt að Ríkisútvarpið yrði honum að líði í listasköpun sinni. Jón undi sér vel í Viðey við tónsmíðavinnu en Jónas Þorbergsson útvarpsstjóri

brást hinn verst við og tíðar fjarverur Jóns vegna *Eddu I* kostuðu hann að lokum starfið. Það hefur heldur varla auðveldað Jóni tónsmíðarnar að einkalíf hans var í rúst. Það hafði gengið á ýmsu í hjónabandi Jóns og Anniear, ekki síst eftir að ungur hörpuleikari að nafni Ursula Lendtrodt heillaði Jón upp úr skónum á tónlistarhátíð í Wiesbaden 1934. Hún virðist reyndar hafa viljað lítið af honum vita, en Jón átti erfitt með að gleyma henni og vissi vart í hvorn fótinn hann átti að stíga, eins og bréf hans til Anniear á þessum árum bera vitni um.

Í janúar 1939 gat Jón loks dregið síðasta taktstrikið aftan við hið mikla sköpunarverk sitt og þá hófst næsta vonlaus leit að flytjendum og útgefanda. Heimurinn stóð á barmi styrjaldar og hverfandi líkur á að hægt væri að finna hljómsveit og kór til að ráðast í slíkt stórvirki. Sá eini sem virtist hafa áhuga var Rudolf Schulz-Dornburg, tónlistarstjóri við útvarpið í Köln, en einmitt þegar virtist ætla að draga til tíðinda var hann kvaddur í flugherinn og þar með voru áformin úr sögunni. Útgáfufélagin Peters og Eulenburgildu ekkert með verkið hafa. Loksins þegar Kistner & Siegel fengust til þess að taka verkið í útgáfuröð sína varð sögufrægt hneyksli við flutninginn á orgelkonsertri Jóns í Berlín 1941 – þar sem langflestir áheyrendurengu út meðan á flutningnum stóð – til þess að hætt var við allt saman.

Það leið rúmur áratugur þangað til tónar úr *Eddu I* hljómuðu í fyrsta sinn, á Norrænum tónlistarðögum í Kaupmannahöfn í maí 1952. Þar voru tveir þættir af þrettán valdir til flutnings, nr. 7 (*Himinn, sól, dagr*) og 8 (*Nótt, morgunn*). Jón virðist hafa fyllst bjartsýni þegar hann frétti að loksins ætti að taka *Eddu I* til flutnings. Að minnsta

kosti hóf hann loksins handa við að semja Eddu II skömmu fyrir júl 1951, eftir nærri 13 ára hlé. Hann var kominn vel á veg með fyrsta þáttinn – lýsingu á sjálfum Óðni – þegar ósköpin dundu yfir. Það skipti engu þótt tónskáldið Launy Grøndahl, sem hélt á tónsprotanum í Kaupmannahöfn, væri sjálfur hrifinn af verki Jóns. Viðtökurnar á tónlistarhátíðinni voru afleitar og auðmýkjandi; ungu tónskáldin gátu ekki annað en flissað þegar kom að samstígu fimmundum, hefðbundnum þríhljóðum og formaldarslagverki Jóns Leifs. Jón Nordal var með nafna sínum í Kaupmannahöfn og hefur lýst því hvernig Jón Leifs hljóp niðurbrotin út á gang danska útvarpshússins eftir flutninginn og neitaði að ganga aftur í salinn. Það var svo til að bæta gráu ofan á svart að hljóðritun frá tónleikunum týndist hjá Ríkisútvarpinu skömmu síðar og hefur ekki komið í leitirnar síðan. Viðbrögð Jóns voru skiljanleg. Hann lagði *Eddu II* á hilluna og snerti ekki aftur fyrr en tíu árum síðar. Hann lauk við Eddu II í maí 1966 og hófst þá þegar handa við þá þriðju. Jón Leifs lést frá *Eddu III* ófullgerðri í júní 1968.

Þrjátíu árum eftir hina háðulegu útreið í Kaupmannahöfn fengu Íslendingar fyrst smjörþefinn af *Eddu I* í flutningi Pólýfónkórsins undir stjórn Ingólfs Guðbrandssonar. Upphaflega var ætlunin að ráðast í verkid allt en að lokum voru þrír þættir látnir nægja, nr. 1, 5 og 6 (*Ár var alda; Sær; Jörð*). Kórinn flutti efnisskrána í Háskólabíói og hélt því næst í tónleikaferð til Spánar þar sem þættirnir úr Eddu voru fluttir í Málaga, Marbella, Nerja, Granada og Sevilla. Spánverjum þótti mikið til tónlistarinnar koma og höfðu stór orð um snilligáfu Jóns Leifs. Arnaldur Indriðason

rithöfundur fylgdi kórnum eftir í Spánarferðinni og hafði eftir einum tónleikagestinum: „Það er eins og saga Íslands komi fram í [*Eddu I*] og það var eins og flutningur verksins kæmi frá hjartanu, frá þjóðinni. Það var stórkostlegur flutningur og ef þetta yrði gefið út á plötu er ég viss um að þær myndu rjúka út.“

Edda I er í þrettán þáttum, sem hver fyrir sig lýsir ákveðnum þætti sköpunarsögunnar í norrænni goðafræði. Ýmir kemur til sögunnar í öðrum þætti og í kjölfarið fylgja Óðinn og bræður hans og Askur og Embla nokkru síðar. Jón leitar víða fanga hvað textann varðar en helstu heimildir hans eru *Völuspá*, *Gylfaginning*, *Alvíssmál* og *Vafþrúðnismál*. Eins og yfirskriftir kaflanna gefa til kynna einbeittir Jón sér að sköpun náttúrunnar: *Sær; Jörð; Himinn, sól, dagr; Nótt, morgunn; Viðr, sumar, logn; Vetr og vindr*. Af þessu leiðir að tónlistin er fremur myndræn en dramatísk, og engin bein framvinna á sér stað. Athyglin beinist fyrst og fremst af fyrirbærum náttúrunnar og sköpunarsögu þeirra.

Tónlistinni svipar um margt til annarra verka Jóns. Samstígar fimmundir og óreglulegir rímnataktar eru áberandi, og þríhljómar í grunnstöðu eru einnig sterkt höfundareinkenni. Að mörgu leyti eru stílbrogð Jóns fjölbreyttari hér en í síðari verkum hans. Sérstaklega verður að nefna notkun Jóns á fjölröddun, en fúgatö-þættir, þar sem raddirnar elta hver aðra með samskonar tónefni, koma fyrir í 2. kafla („Ór Elívágum stukku eitdropar“), 3. kafla („Útan garða hann sá upp of koma þursa þjóðar sjöt“) og 7. kafla („Dagr átti Þóru drengja móður“) þar sem Jón bætir reyndar um betur og snýr stefinu á haus. Jón hafði samið

fúguskotna kafla áður, m.a. í fiðluæfingunni op.3 og *Þjóðhvöt*, en þetta er eitt síðasta skiptið sem slík áhrif finnast í tónlist hans.

Til að tengja saman þætti verksins notar Jón einkum tvo hljóma sem mynda „mottó“ verksins, Es-dúr og H-dúr. Oftast eru hljómarnir leiknir af hornum, trompetum og básunum og heyrast aðallega í fyrstu sjö þáttum verksins. Einnig notar Jón gjarnan E sem tónmiðju, m.a. bæði í upphafi og enda verksins, og gefur það sterkan heildarsvip. Jón hafði aldrei fyrr notað jafnstóra hljómsveit – hann notar hér m.a. forna lúðra og steinaspil í fyrsta sinn – og nær oft fram mögnuðum litbrigðum. Sem dæmi má nefna volduga orgelinnkomu í fimmta kafla, þegar synir Bors fella jötunninn Ými, drungalega molhljóma sem tákna neturmyrkrið í 8. kafla, unisónó kórsöng í þremur áttundum yfir liggjandi C-dúr hljómi (9. kafla), og hrollvekjandi lýsingu á Vetri yfir gnístandi sextándupartsáherslum hljómsveitarinnar (12. kafla).

Helsta ástæða þess að aldrei hefur áður verið ráðist í heildarflutning á *Eddu I* er vafalaust sú hve miklar kröfur Jón gerir til flytjendanna, ekki síst kórsins. Hann syngur í öllum þáttum verksins og Jón reynir stöðugt á þol söngvaranna í allar áttir. Söpranar þurfa margsinnis að fara upp á háa C og bassar niður á djúpa C. Jón lagði það aldrei í vana sinn að taka tillit til flytjenda og taldi mikilvægt að tónskáldið gæti komið hugsunum sínum á blað algjörlega án málamiðlana, jafnvel þótt það þýddi að verkin yrðu ekki metin að verðleikum fyrr en áratugum síðar.

Hvað sem mönnum kann að finnast um tónsköpun Jóns Leifs verður því ekki neitað að

Edda I er ein merkasta tónsmíð íslenskrar tónlistarsögu. Þegar Jón setti taktstrikið aftan við 254ra síðna raddskrána í janúar 1939 var *Edda I* lengsta, víðamesta og metnaðarfyllsta tónverk sem nokkur Íslendingur hafði samið. Það ber vott um ótrúlegan stórhug og dirfsku, og er enn eitt dæmið um þann magnaða tónagaldur sem Jón Leifs gat framið úr kaldhömrudum efniviði hinna íslensku þjóðlaga.

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Gunnar Guðbjörnsson tenór nam söng á Íslandi og í Berlín auk þess sem hann sótti tíma hjá Nicolai Gedda og tók þátt í Þjóðaróperustúdíóinu í Lundúnum. Hann debúteraði við Íslensku óperuna 1988 og á næstu árum fór orðspor hans hratt vaxandi. Árið 1999 bauð Daniel Barenboim honum stöðu lýrísks tenórs við Staatsoper í Berlín. Gunnar hefur sungið í helstu óperuhúsum Evrópu og hefur einnig haldið tónleika í Bandaríkjunum og Asíu. Haustið 2007 syngur hann sitt fyrsta hlutverk sem hetjutenór, Walther von Stolzing í *Meistarasöngvurum* Wagners við óperuhúsið í Halle.

Bjarni Thor Kristinnsson bassi er einn kunnasti óperusöngvari yngri kynslóðarinnar á Íslandi. Hann sótti söngtíma á Íslandi en hélt því næst til Tónlistarháskólans í Vínarborg þar sem hann nam hjá Helene Carusso og Curt Malm. Hann gekk til liðs við Volksoper í Vínarborg 1997 og söng þar leiðandi bassahlutverk um árabil. Síðan hefur hann sungið við fjölda þekktara óperuhúsa, m.a. í Berlín, München, Dresden, Hamborg, París, Barcelona,

Lissabon, Róm, Flórens og Reykjavík. Hann hefur sungið óperur sem spanna allt frá Mozart til Strauss og Wagners.

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 tilnefndur til Tónlistarverðlauna Norðurlandaráðs 2017. Kórinn er yfirleitt skipaður 14 atvinnusöngvurum en var stækkaður í 38 fyrir Eddu-óratoríu Jóns Leifs.

Sinfóníuhljómsveit Íslands var formlega stofnuð árið 1950, en þá höfðu ýmsar hljómsveitir starfað í höfuðborginni um nokkurra áratuga skeið. Hljómsveitin heldur um 60 tónleika á ári hverju, m.a. áskrifartónleika í Reykjavík auk tónleika á landsbyggðinni og erlendis. Nýverið hefur hljómsveitin haldið tónleika á Færeyjum, Grænlandi, Norðurlöndum, í Þýskalandi, Austurríki, Frakklandi og Bandaríkjunum. Fjöldi heimsþekktra listamanna hefur komið fram með hljómsveitinni, og má þar nefna Vladimir Ashkenazy, Yehudi Menuhin, Wilhelm Kempff, André Previn, Daniel Barenboim, Luciano Pavarotti, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Mstislav Rostropovich og Joshua Bell.

Meðal þeirra hljómsveitarstjóra sem mestan þátt hafa átt í mótun Sinfóníuhljómsveitar Íslands má nefna Norðmanninn Olav Kjelland, Pólverjann Bohdan Wodiczko, Norðmanninn Karsten Andersen, Frakkann Jean-Pierre Jacquillat og á

síðari árum þá Petri Sakari og Osmo Vänskä frá Finnlandi. Árið 2002 tók Rumon Gamba við stöðu aðalhljómsveitarstjóra og listræns stjórnanda, og sama ár tók Vladimir Ashkenazy við stöðu heiðursstjórnanda sveitarinnar.

Sinfóníuhljómsveit Íslands hefur tekið upp fjölda geisladiska fyrir BIS, m.a. mikilsvirta útgáfurð með hljómsveitarverkum Jóns Leifs og þrjá diska með verkum gríska tónskáldsins Nikos Skalkottas.

Hermann Bäumer hefur getið sér gott orð sem tónlistarstjóri í Osnabrück og hefur stjórnað fjölda þýskra hljómsveita, m.a. Norður-þýsku fílharmóníunni og Þýsku sinfóníuhljómsveitinni í Berlín. Bäumer er fæddur í Bielefeld og hóf píanónám sex ára. Hann lærði einnig á selló og básúnu auk þess sem hann stundaði nám í hljómsveitarstjórn. Hann var básúnuleikari í Berlínarfílharmóníunni frá 1992-2003 og lék um árábil með málmblasturshópi sveitarinnar. Bäumer hefur einnig komið fram á fjölda tónlistarhátíða, m.a. í Heidelberg og Rheingau. Auk þess hefur hann starfað mikið með ungu tónlistarfólki og fjölda æskuhljómsveita. Hann hefur stjórnað fjölda óhefðbundinna verka, m.a. *Wundertheater* eftir Hanz Werner Henze og frumflutt *Bestmannoper* eftir Alexander Nowitz.

Jón Leifs (1899-1968) war Islands erster Nationalkomponist. Seine Musik stützt sich auf die Haupttypen des isländischen Volkslieds und ist oftmals inspiriert von Islands gewaltiger Natur und den alten literarischen Überlieferungen. Leifs wollte ursprünglich Pianist und Dirigent werden, doch als er bald nach seinem Studienabschluß 1921 am Leipziger Konservatorium eine gerade veröffentlichte Sammlung isländischer Volksmusik durchsah, entdeckte er seine Berufung zum Komponisten: „Diese Sammlung erschloß mir die ganze Welt des Volkslieds und ich spürte, daß ich mit ihren unwandelbaren Gesetzen in Berührung gekommen war ... das Erbe, ohne das keine Nation auskommt. Tatsächlich entdeckte ich sie nur durch Zufall. Aber geschehen nicht viele der wunderbaren Dinge im Leben durch Zufall?“

Leifs erkannte, daß keine Texte so gut zu dem herben Stil des isländischen Volkslieds paßten wie die Dichtungen der „Lieder-Edda“; binnen Monaten ließ er sich die Texte aus Island kommen. Sein erstes Vokalwerk – drei knappe, lakonische *Hávamal*-Vertonungen – stammt aus dem Jahr 1924. In den darauf folgenden Jahren war Leifs vornehmlich mit anderen Dingen als dem Komponieren beschäftigt. Hierzu gehörten eine Island- und Norwegen-Tournee mit den Hamburger Philharmonikern (1926) – der erste Auftritt eines großen Symphonieorchesters in Island – und ehrgeizige Pläne zu einer deutschen „Orchesterakademie“ für junge Musiker, die sich allerdings zerschlugen. Zu jener Zeit begann Leifs mit den Entwürfen für ein größeres Werk nach *Völuspá*, einem Gedicht aus der *Edda*, in dem eine Seherein die Erschaffung der Erde beschreibt und deren Untergang voraussagt.

Erst in den letzten Monaten des Jahres 1930 kam Leifs mit seiner neuen Komposition voran. Anfang des Jahres hatte er drei großformatige Werke fertiggestellt: das *Orgelkonzert* op. 7, die *Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven* op. 8 und die *Island-Kantate* op. 13. Das Konzert und die Variationen waren langjährige *works-in-progress*, die *Island-Kantate* dagegen wurde innerhalb eines Jahres für einen Kompositionswettbewerb anlässlich des tausendjährigen Jubiläums des isländischen Althing (Parlament) geschrieben – jedoch nicht eingereicht. Die Kantate stellt Leifs erstes großes Werk für Chor und Orchester dar; ihre Fertigstellung gab ihm wohl das Selbstvertrauen, das er benötigte, um sein früheres Projekt einer größeren *Völuspá*-Komposition wieder in Angriff zu nehmen.

Leifs brauchte zwei Jahre zur Fertigstellung des Librettos, nicht zuletzt weil die Dimensionen des Werks den anfänglichen Plan erheblich überschritten. Das Libretto begnügte sich nicht mit *Völuspá*, sondern wurde eine eindrucksvolle Collage nahezu sämtlicher Edda-Quellen, die sich auf die Erschaffung der Erde und ihren Untergang sowie den der nordischen Götterwelt bezogen. Am Ende bestand der Text aus 350 Strophen, die in vier große Abschnitte unterteilt waren: *Die Erschaffung der Welt*, *Das Leben der Götter*, *Götterdämmerung* und *Auferstehung*. „Um ehrlich zu sein, ich bin etwas besorgt“, schrieb Leifs 1932 seiner Schwester, „weil ich eine solche Komposition unmöglich anfangen kann, wenn ich nicht zwei oder drei Jahre daran arbeiten kann, ohne dauernd ans Geldverdienen denken zu müssen.“ Doch er war von seinem Libretto überzeugt: „Ich habe jetzt den zweiten Textentwurf

für mein *Edda*-Oratorium fertiggestellt. Manche Teile sind so großartig, daß sie mir den Atem verschlagen!“ Doch Leifs war in Deutschland auf sein Einkommen als freier Journalist angewiesen, und so wurde die Komposition noch weiter hinausgeschoben. Zwischen 1930 und 1935 komponierte Leifs nur kleinere Werke: Eigene Klavierlieder, Volksliedbearbeitungen, Choralpräliminarien und Bearbeitungen traditioneller isländischer Kirchenlieder. Es war, als ob er sich für die gewaltige Aufgabe, die vor ihm lag, „aufwärmen“ mußte, wobei er sorgsam darauf achtete, keine großformatige Komposition zu beginnen, die sein Oratorium noch weiter hinausgezögert hätte.

Leifs Werk fordert den Vergleich mit jener anderen gigantischen Tetralogie auf der Grundlage von Erschaffungs- und Zerstörungsmäthen der *Edda* geradezu heraus: Richard Wagners *Ring des Nibelungen*. Leifs war mit Wagners Partitur vertraut, hatte er sie doch während seiner Ausbildung genauestens studiert. Aber Leifs hielt Wagners Ansatz für zu romantisch und sentimental; mehrere seiner eigenen Werke, darunter das *Edda*-Oratorium und die *Saga-Symphonie*, seien „als Protest gegen Wagner [entstanden], der den nordischen Charakter und das künstlerische Vermächtnis des Nordens grob mißverstanden“ habe.

Jón Leifs wartete drei Jahre, bevor mit der Arbeit an der Musik begann. Im Februar 1935 wurde ihm der Posten eines Musikalischen Leiters des Isländischen Staatlichen Rundfunks angeboten, worauf er nach Island zurückkehrte, während seine Frau Annie mit den beiden Töchtern in Rehbrücke bei Berlin blieb. Leifs nahm die Stellung unter der Bedingung an, daß er seine Zeit zwischen Büro-

arbeit und Komponieren aufteilen könne. Auf Viðey, einer kleinen Insel unweit vom Hafen von Reykjavík, widmete er einen Großteil dieser Zeit dem *Edda*-Oratorium. Der Verwaltungsrat des Staatlichen Rundfunks allerdings war empört über Leifs' angebliche schamlose Verletzung vertraglicher Pflichten, und seine häufigen Abwesenheiten kosteten ihn schließlich den Job. Gleichzeitig war seine private Situation höchst schwierig. Seine Ehe mit Annie Riethof kriselte, nicht zuletzt weil er sich 1934 in Wiesbaden in die deutsche Harfenistin Ursula Lendtrodt verliebt hatte.

Nach Abschluß der Komposition im Januar 1939 begann Leifs eine hoffnungslose Suche nach Verlagen und Aufführungsmöglichkeiten. Europa stand am Rande des Krieges, und deutsche Orchester waren nicht sonderlich gewillt, sich ein schwieriges Werk eines Komponisten vorzunehmen, dessen arischer Leumund erst unlängst aufgrund der jüdischen Abstammung seiner Frau in Frage gestellt worden war. Als Einziger zeigte Rudolf Schulz-Dornburg, GMD des Reichssenders Köln Interesse, doch als es zur Umsetzung des Vorhabens kommen sollte, wurde Schulz-Dornburg zur Luftwaffe eingezogen. Musikverlage wie Peters und Eulenburg lehnten höflich ab. Schließlich entschloß sich Leifs' Hausverlag, Kistner & Siegel, *Edda I* in sein Programm aufzunehmen, doch der Eklat bei der Berliner Aufführung von Leifs' *Orgelkonzert* im Jahr 1941 – die meisten Besucher verließen im Protest gegen das „modernistische“ Werk den Saal – führte zur Einstellung des gesamten Projekts.

Mehr als ein Jahrzehnt sollte vergehen, bevor erstmals Teile aus *Edda I* zu hören waren. Der Pro-

grammausschuß der Nordischen Musiktage in Kopenhagen wählte zwei der dreizehn Sätze (Nr. 7 und 8) aus, die dann im Mai 1952 unter Leitung von Launy Grøndahl aufgeführt wurden. Leifs, der eine kreative Brachezeit durchlitten hatte, schöpfte wieder neue Hoffnung. Im Dezember 1951, nach fast 13 Jahren Pause, begann er mit der Komposition von *Edda II*. Er war mit dem ersten Satz – der musikalischen Darstellung von Óðinn – bereits gut vorangekommen, als das Desaster geschah: Das Kopenhagener Publikum reagierte ablehnend und Leifs war tief verletzt. Insbesondere die jüngere Generation seriell orientierter Komponisten quittierte Leifs' Dreiklangsharmonik und die primitive Schlagzeuggruppe mit Spott. Jón Nordal – ein anderer isländischer Komponist, dessen Werk bei diesem Festival aufgeführt wurde – hat berichtet, wie ein vernichteter Leifs während des mäßigen Applauses in das Foyer eilte und sich weigerte, den Saal wieder zu betreten. Zu allem Unglück verlor der Isländische Rundfunk wenig später auch noch das Band mit der Aufnahme des Konzerts. Leifs' Reaktion ist verständlich: Er steckte das *Edda*-Projekt in die Schublade und kehrte erst ein Jahrzehnt später wieder zu ihm zurück. Im Mai 1966 stellte er *Edda II* fertig und widmete sich sofort dem nächsten Teil. Jón Leifs starb im Juni 1968 und hinterließ *Edda III* als Fragment.

Dreißig Jahre nach der Teil-Prémère in Kopenhagen konnte schließlich auch das isländische Publikum Teile aus *Edda I* hören, aufgeführt vom Polyphon-Chor unter der Leitung von Ingólfur Guðbrandsson. Obschon ursprünglich das gesamte Stück zur Aufführung kommen sollte, entschloß sich der Chor letztlich zu drei Sätzen (Nr. 1, 5 und

6), die in Háskólabíó erklangen und mit auf eine Konzertreise nach Spanien gingen. Das spanische Publikum war begeistert; einer der Hörer sagte: „Es war, als hätte die Musik von *Edda I* und die von Herzen kommende Aufführung die gesamte Geschichte Islands widergespiegelt.“

Edda I besteht aus dreizehn Sätzen, deren jeder einen Teil der Schöpfungsgeschichte aus der nordischen Mythologie schildert. Ýmir, der erste Riese, wird im zweiten Satz vorgestellt; die Kuh Auðhumla, die Ýmir mit vier Milchflüssen nährte, im dritten, gemeinsam mit Óðinn und seinen Brüdern. Askur und Embla, die nordischen Äquivalente zu Adam und Eva, erscheinen ebenfalls im Verlauf des Werks. Wie die Überschriften der vier einzelnen Sätze nahelegen – *Meer, Erde, Himmel, Sonne, Tag, Nacht, Morgen* etc. –, geht es Leifs vor allem um Naturschilderungen mit geeigneten deskriptiven Gesten.

Die Musik enthält alle Kennzeichen von Leifs' Spätstil – Quintparallelen, irreguläre Metrik und Dreiklänge in Grundstellung –, weist aber erheblich mehr Variationsreichtum auf als Leifs' spätere Werke, was nicht zuletzt an einigen markanten polyphonen Passagen liegen mag. Ausgedehnte Fugatos begegnen in drei Sätzen von *Edda I* (Nr. 2, 3 und 7), deren letzter außerdem das Thema in Umkehrung aufgreift. Natürlich hatte Leifs schon früher Fugen geschrieben – u.a. in seinen Violinetüden op. 3 und der *Island-Kantate* op. 13 –, hier aber spielt diese Satztechnik letztmals eine prominente Rolle in seiner Musik.

Leifs verwendet ein „Motto“ aus zwei Akkorden – Es-Dur und H-Dur –, um Sätze des Werks zyklisch zu verbinden. In seiner charakteristischen

Gestalt wird das Motto von Trompeten, Hörnern und Posaunen gespielt; besonders in den ersten sieben Sätzen spielt es eine größere Rolle. Als tonales Zentrum sticht der Ton E hervor; weiten Teilen der Musik ist er als Pedalton unterlegt. Das Orchester ist das größte, das Leifs bis dato verwendet hat, und zum ersten Mal sind hier seine späterhin typischen nordischen Luren vorgesehen sowie eine erweiterte Schlagzeugsektion, zu der auch Steine gehören. Die Instrumentation zählt zum Farbigsten und Inspiriertesten in Leifs' Schaffen. Zu den unvergänglichsten Stellen gehören der majestätische Auftritt der Orgel im fünften Satz (wenn Bors Söhne den Riesen Ýmir erschlagen und damit tatsächlich die Welt erschaffen), die dunklen Mollharmonien im nächtlichen achten Satz, der drei Oktaven weite Oktavunisono-Chorsatz über einem statischen C-Dur-Akkord im neunten Satz sowie die klammen Sechzehntel, die im zwölften Satz den Winter darstellen.

Zweifelloso ist der schwierige Chorsatz der Hauptgrund dafür, daß das *Edda*-Oratorium beinahe 70 Jahre auf seine Uraufführung warten mußte. Der Chor ist der Protagonist des Werks; er singt in jedem Satz und Leifs ist gnadenlos, was die Ansprüche in extremen Registern betrifft. Die Soprane müssen eine Vielzahl hoher C's treffen, während die Bässe gelegentlich zum tiefen C hinabsteigen. Leifs ist nie Kompromisse eingegangen, die seine Werke leichter aufführbar gemacht hätten – selbst wenn dies zur Folge hatte, daß sie zu seinen Lebzeiten nicht aufgeführt wurden.

Die erste vollständige Aufführung von Jón Leifs *Edda I*, die in Zusammenhang mit dieser Einspielung stattfand, war ein Markstein im islän-

dischen Musikleben. 1939, zur Zeit ihrer Fertigstellung, stellte die 254seitige Partitur die längste, ambitionierteste und bei weitem anspruchsvollste je geschaffene isländische Komposition dar. Ihr kraftvolles und kühnes Portrait des nordischen Schöpfungsmythos' ist ein weiteres Beispiel für die Magie, die Jón Leifs der herben und faszinierenden Welt des isländischen Volklieds zu entlocken in der Lage war.

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Gunnar Guðbjörnsson, Tenor, studierte Gesang in Island und Berlin, bevor er Unterricht bei Nicolai Gedda nahm und dem London National Opera Studio angehörte. Nach seinem Debüt an der Isländischen Oper im Jahr 1988 macht er sich rasch einen Namen und wurde 1999 von Daniel Barenboim eingeladen, dem Ensemble der Staatsoper Berlin als Erster lyrischer Tenor anzugehören. Seine Karriere hat ihn an die bedeutendsten Opernhäuser Europas geführt; als Konzertsänger ist er darüber hinaus in den USA und in Asien aufgetreten. Im Herbst 2007 singt Guðbjörnsson an der Oper Halle als Walter von Stolzing (*Die Meistersinger*) seine erste Rolle im Heldenfach.

Bjarni Thor Kristinnsson, Baß, ist einer der bekanntesten isländischen Opernsänger der jüngeren Generation. Nach Gesangsunterricht in seinem Heimatland ging er an die Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, wo er bei Helene Carusso und Curt Malm studierte. 1997 wurde er Mitglied des Ensembles der Volksoper Wien, an der er führende Baßrollen sang. Seither genießt er eine er-

folgreiche internationale Karriere, die ihn an Opernhäuser in ganz Europa geführt hat, u.a. nach Berlin, München, Dresden, Hamburg, Paris, Barcelona, Lissabon, Rom, Florenz und Reykjavík. Sein Opernrepertoire reicht von Mozart bis zu Strauss und Wagner.

Hörður Áskelsson, Kantor der Hallgrímskirkja, gründete die **Schola cantorum Reykjavicensis** im Jahr 1996. Das Kernrepertoire des Chors besteht zum einen aus Musik der Renaissance und des Barock, zum anderen aus zeitgenössischer Musik vor allem isländischen Ursprungs. Die Schola cantorum ist eines der renommiertesten isländischen Musikensembles und wurde 2006 zur City of Reykjavík Official Music Group ernannt. 2007 ist sie für den Nordic Concil Music Prize nominiert worden. Die normale Chorgroße von 14 Berufssängerinnen und -sängern wurde für das Oratorium *Edda I* von Jón Leifs auf 38 Sängerinnen und Sänger aufgestockt.

Der wachsende Wohlstand Islands und sein Unabhängigkeitsprozeß an der Wende zum 20. Jahrhundert erzeugten den Wunsch, ein professionelles Orchester zu etablieren. 1930 wurden der Isländische Rundfunk und die Musikhochschule Reykjavík gegründet, was den Weg für die Institutionalisierung des **Iceland Symphony Orchestra** ebnete, das am 9. März 1950 formal gegründet wurde. Das ISO gibt rund 60 Konzerte pro Spielzeit, wozu Abonnementkonzerte in Reykjavík und Konzertreisen durch Island ebenso gehören wie Gastspiele im Ausland – in jüngerer Zeit etwa auf den Färöer-Inseln, in Grönland, Skandinavien, Deutschland,

Österreich, Frankreich und Nordamerika. Im Laufe der Jahre haben zahlreiche renommierte Gastmusiker das Spiel des ISO bereichert, darunter Vladimir Ashkenazy, Yehudi Menuhin, Wilhelm Kempff, André Previn, Daniel Barenboim, Luciano Pavarotti, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Mstislaw Rostropowitsch und Joshua Bell.

Viele bedeutende Dirigenten haben das Amt des Chefdirigenten des ISO innegehabt, und sie haben die Entwicklung des Orchesters erheblich befördert: Olav Kielland und Karsten Andersen aus Norwegen, Bohdan Wodiczko aus Polen, Jean-Pierre Jacquillat aus Frankreich, Petri Sakari und Osmo Vänskä aus Finnland und Rico Saccani aus den USA. Seit 2002 ist der britische Dirigent Rumon Gamba Chefdirigent und Musikalischer Leiter des ISO. Im selben Jahr wurde Vladimir Ashkenazy zum Ehrendirigent des Orchesters ernannt. Das ISO hat etliche Aufnahmen für BIS eingespielt, u.a. eine hoch gelobte Reihe mit Werken von Jón Leifs sowie drei CDs mit Orchesterwerken von Nikos Skalkottas.

Der hervorragende Ruf, den **Hermann Bäumer** seine nicht nur solide, sondern auch äußerst kreative Arbeit als Generalmusikdirektor für das Musikleben der Stadt Osnabrück eingebracht hat, spiegelt sich nicht nur im großen Publikumszuspruch und im Lob der Fachpresse wider, sondern auch in einer Vielzahl von Gastdirigaten im In- und Ausland, u.a. bei der NDR Radiophilharmonie, dem Iceland Symphony Orchestra und dem Deutschen Symphonie-Orchester Berlin.

Der in Bielefeld geborene Hermann Bäumer begann mit sechs Jahren, Klavier zu spielen. Später

erhielt er auch Violoncello- und Posaunenunterricht und studierte dann in Detmold und Leipzig Dirigieren. Von 1992 bis 2003 war er Posaunist bei den Berliner Philharmonikern, mit dessen Blechbläserensemble ihn eine langjährige Zusammenarbeit verband; außerdem stand Hermann Bäumer u.a. bei der Deutschen Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, beim Radiosymphonieorchester Oslo oder den Bamberger Symphonikern am Pult und war bei Festivals wie dem Rheingau Musik Festival und dem Heidelberger Frühling zu Gast. Darüber hinaus wird Hermann Bäumer landesweit besonders geschätzt für seine Jugendarbeit, die sich in der Zusammenarbeit mit zahlreichen Jugendorchestern äußert.

Eine besondere Affinität hat Hermann Bäumer zu außergewöhnlichem musikdramatischen Repertoire. So hatte in Osnabrück in der Saison 2005/06 Alexander Nowitz' *Bestmannoper* unter großer Beachtung von Presse und Publikum ihre Uraufführung; bei nicht minder großer Aufmerksamkeit stand in der Saison 2004/05 Hans-Werner Henzes *Wundertheater* auf dem Spielplan.

Jón Leifs (1899-1968) fut le premier compositeur nationaliste d'Islande. Sa musique puise dans la chanson folklorique islandaise et est souvent inspirée par la puissance de la nature et l'héritage littéraire ancien de ce pays. Originellement, Leifs souhaitait devenir pianiste et chef d'orchestre mais peu après avoir obtenu un diplôme du Conservatoire de Leipzig en 1921, il entreprit d'étudier un recueil alors récemment publié de musique folklorique islandaise et trouva sa vocation de compositeur : « Ce recueil ouvrit chez moi le monde entier de la chanson folklorique et je sentis que j'avais été mis en contact avec ses lois immuables... l'héritage dont aucune nation ne peut se passer. Certes, je la découvris de manière fortuite. Mais les choses les plus extraordinaires de la vie ne se produisent-elles pas par hasard ? »

Leifs réalisa qu'aucun texte ne convenait davantage au style austère de la chanson folklorique islandaise que l'ancienne poésie eddique et en quelques mois, il se fit envoyer ces textes d'Islande. Sa première œuvre vocale, trois adaptations sévères et laconiques de vers de *Hávamál*, date de 1924. Au cours des années qui suivirent, Leifs fut occupé par d'autres activités que la composition. Parmi celles-ci, une tournée à travers l'Islande et la Norvège avec l'Orchestre philharmonique de Hambourg en 1926 (le premier concert donné par un orchestre symphonique en Islande) et le projet ambitieux – qui n'aboutit pas – d'une « académie d'orchestre » allemande pour jeunes musiciens. C'est à cette époque que Leifs commença à concevoir une œuvre de grande dimension basée sur la *Völuspá*, le poème eddique dans lequel une voyante raconte la création de la Terre et annonce sa destruction.

Ce n'est qu'au cours des derniers mois de 1930 que Leifs commença à travailler sur sa nouvelle œuvre. Plus tôt au cours de l'année, il réalisa trois œuvres de grandes dimensions : le *Concerto pour orgue* op. 7, les *Variations sur un thème de Beethoven* op. 8 et la *Cantate islandaise* op. 13. Le concerto et les variations furent des *work-in-progress* pendant plus de dix ans mais la *Cantate* qui se destinait à un concours de composition à l'occasion du millénaire de l'Althing (Parlement) islandais mais qui ne fut jamais soumise, fut composée en moins d'un an. Cette cantate fut la première œuvre de dimension importante de Leifs pour chœur et orchestre et sa complétion lui donna probablement la confiance dont il avait besoin pour raviver son projet d'une grande œuvre chorale basée sur la *Völuspá*.

Il fallut à Leifs deux ans pour terminer le livret, entre autre parce que les dimensions de l'œuvre dépassèrent de loin ses intentions originales. Leifs développa le texte bien au-delà des vers de la *Völuspá* ce qui contribue à donner l'impression d'un collage de pratiquement toutes les sources éddiques liées à la création et la destruction de la Terre et aux dieux nordiques même. Dans sa version finale, le livret compte 350 stances et est divisé en quatre grandes sections : *La création du monde*, *La vie des dieux*, *Crépuscule et Résurrection*. « Pour être franc, je suis assez inquiet, écrivit Leifs à sa sœur en 1932, car il est impossible pour moi d'entamer une telle composition à moins de compter sur deux ou trois années durant lesquelles je pourrais travailler sans avoir continuellement des soucis d'argent. » Mais il était captivé par son livret dans son nouvel état : « Je viens de compléter la seconde version du texte de mon oratorio *Edda*. Certains passages sont

d'une telle beauté que j'en perds le souffle ! » Les revenus de Leifs en Allemagne dépendaient cependant en totalité de son travail de journaliste indépendant et la composition fut remise à plus tard. Entre 1930 et 1935, Leifs ne composa que des œuvres de petite dimension : des mélodies originales avec piano, des arrangements de chansons folkloriques, des préludes de choral et des arrangements d'hymnes traditionnels islandais, un peu comme s'il avait eu besoin de se « réchauffer » avant l'énorme tâche créatrice qui l'attendait. Il prenait grand soin de ne pas entamer d'œuvres de grande dimension qui auraient pu retarder encore davantage son oratorio.

L'œuvre de Leifs appelle la comparaison évidente avec l'autre immense tétralogie basée sur des mythes éddiques de la création et de la destruction, l'*Anneau des Nibelung* de Richard Wagner. Leifs connaissait bien la partition de Wagner l'ayant étudiée alors qu'il était étudiant. Leifs trouvait cependant l'approche de Wagner trop romantique et sentimentale et il prétendit plus tard que plusieurs de ses propres œuvres, incluant l'oratorio *Edda* et la *Symphonie Saga* avaient été créés « en réaction contre Wagner qui se méprit si grossièrement sur le caractère nordique et l'héritage artistique du Nord. »

Jón Leifs attendit trois ans avant de commencer à travailler sur la musique. On lui offrit en février 1935 le poste de directeur musical de la radio d'état islandaise et il revint en Islande alors que sa femme, Annie, resta à Rehbrücke près de Berlin avec leurs deux filles. Leifs accepta ce poste avec l'assurance qu'il pourrait diviser son temps entre le travail de bureau et la composition et il consacra une grande partie de son temps à travailler sur son

oratorio *Edda* à Viðey, une petite île non loin du port de Reykjavík. Le conseil d'administration de la radio d'état fut outré par ce qu'il considérait comme un bris de contrat flagrant de la part de Leifs et ses absences fréquentes lui coûtèrent son poste. De plus, son mariage avec Annie battait de l'aile, en raison notamment de sa liaison avec la harpiste allemande Ursula Lendtrodt à Wiesbaden en 1934.

Après avoir complété la partition en janvier 1939, Leifs entreprit la quête désespérée d'un éditeur et d'un interprète. La guerre était proche et les orchestres allemands étaient peu enclins à accepter une œuvre exigeante d'un compositeur dont l'aryanité était devenue sujette à caution en raison des origines juives de sa femme. Le seul qui montra de l'intérêt fut Rudolf Schulz-Dornburg, directeur musical de la radio de Cologne mais il fut appelé à joindre l'aviation allemande alors que les plans étaient sur le point de se réaliser. Des éditeurs comme Peters et Eulenburg déclinèrent poliment. L'éditeur habituel de Leifs, Kistner & Siegel, accepta finalement d'inclure *Edda I* dans sa collection mais le scandale suite à la présentation de son *Concerto pour orgue* à Berlin en 1941 alors que la majeure partie du public quitta la salle en guise de protestation contre l'œuvre « moderniste » de Leifs, mena à l'annulation complète du projet de publication.

Plus de dix ans s'écoulèrent avant que des extraits d'*Edda I* ne soient créés à l'occasion des Journées musicales nordiques de Copenhague en mai 1952 sous la direction de Launy Grøndahl. Deux des treize mouvements que compte l'œuvre (les septième et huitième) furent choisis par le comité organisateur et Leifs, qui traversait une pé-

riode d'aridité créatrice, fut à nouveau rempli d'optimisme. Il se mit à la composition d'*Edda II* en décembre 1951 après une interruption de près de treize ans et la composition du premier mouvement (une description musicale d'Óðinn) allait bon train quand le malheur frappa : l'accueil au concert de Copenhague fut hostile et causa une expérience des plus humiliantes pour Leifs. La génération plus jeune en particulier, davantage intéressée par le sérialisme, se moqua de l'harmonie reposant sur des accords parfaits et de la percussion primitive. Jón Nordal, un autre compositeur islandais dont une œuvre avait également été jouée dans le cadre de ce festival raconta comment Jón Leifs, défait, courut dans le foyer pendant les maigres applaudissements et refusa de revenir dans la salle. Ajoutant l'insulte à l'injure, la Radio islandaise perdit l'enregistrement des deux mouvements peu après le concert. La réaction de Leifs était à prévoir : il remisa le projet d'*Edda* et n'y retourna qu'une dizaine d'années plus tard. Il compléta finalement *Edda II* en mai 1966 et se mit immédiatement à la composition de la partie suivante. Jón Leifs s'éteignit en juin 1968 et laissa la partition d'*Edda III* inachevée.

Trente ans après la création partielle de Copenhague, le public islandais fut finalement en mesure d'entendre des parties d'*Edda I* interprétées par le Chœur Polyphonique sous la direction d'Ingólfur Guðbrandsson. Bien qu'à l'origine le chœur devait interpréter l'œuvre au complet, trois mouvements (les premier, cinquième et sixième) furent interprétés à Háskólabíó et présentés à l'occasion d'une tournée en Espagne. Le public espagnol fut captivé et l'un des spectateurs fit remarquer : « C'est comme

si l'histoire entière de l'Islande se retrouvait dans la musique d'*Edda I* et dans l'interprétation sentie. »

Edda I se compose de treize mouvements et chacun d'entre eux décrit un aspect de la création selon la mythologie nordique. Ýmir, le premier géant, est présenté dans le second mouvement et Audhumla, la vache qui nourrit Ýmir avec quatre rivières de lait, dans le troisième en compagnie d'Óðinn et ses frères. Askur et Embla, les équivalents nordiques d'Adam et Eve, apparaissent également un peu plus tard. Comme les titres des mouvements le suggèrent (*Mer, Terre, Ciel, Soleil, Jour, Nuit, Matin...*), Leifs se soucie principalement de représenter la nature avec des gestes descriptifs appropriés.

La musique présente toutes les caractéristiques du style tardif de Leifs : quintes parallèles, métrique irrégulière et accords parfaits majeurs en position fondamentale. Cependant, la musique offre un aspect bien plus varié que dans les autres œuvres tardives de Leifs, notamment en raison de passages polyphoniques mis en valeur. Une écriture fuguée élaborée apparaît dans trois mouvements d'*Edda I*, les second, troisième et septième, et ce dernier contient également le thème présenté en inversion. Leifs avait bien entendu écrit des fugues auparavant, comme par exemple dans ses *Études pour violon* op.3 et sa *Cantate islandaise* op.13, mais dans *Edda I*, ce fut la dernière fois que ce type d'écriture jouait un rôle si important dans sa musique.

Leifs utilise un *leitmotiv* fait de deux accords, mi bémol majeur et si majeur, pour relier les différents mouvements de son œuvre. Dans sa forme primaire, ce *leitmotiv* est joué par les trompettes,

les cors et les trombones et joue un rôle particulièrement important dans les sept premiers mouvements de l'œuvre. Mi constitue un centre tonal important et reprend de larges sections de l'œuvre en tant que pédale tonique. L'orchestre requis par Leifs est le plus grand qu'il avait utilisé à ce jour et présente le premier recours à ce qui allait devenir sa signature: les *lurs* nordiques ainsi qu'une grande section de percussions, incluant des pierres. L'écriture est parmi les plus colorées et inspirées de Leifs. Parmi les passages mémorables de l'œuvre, mentionnons l'entrée majestueuse de l'orgue dans le cinquième mouvement alors que les fils de Bor poignardent le géant, Ýmir, créant le monde de manière frappante, les harmonies mineures et sombres du huitième mouvement nocturne, une écriture chorale avec un unisson de trois octaves sur un accord de do majeur statique dans le neuvième mouvement et l'évocation de l'hiver au moyen de doubles-croches glaçantes dans le douzième mouvement.

La difficulté de l'écriture vocale de Leifs est sans aucun doute la raison pour laquelle l'oratorio *Edda* dut attendre près de soixante-dix ans avant de voir sa création. Le chœur est le protagoniste principal de l'œuvre : on l'entend dans chaque mouvement et Leifs est sans pitié avec son recours à des tessitures extrêmes. Les sopranos doivent chanter d'innombrables do suraigus alors que les basses doivent à l'occasion atteindre le do grave. Leifs souhaitait ne faire aucun compromis dans le but de rendre son œuvre plus facile à interpréter même si cela eut comme résultat qu'il ne put l'entendre.

La création complète d'*Edda I* de Jón Leifs liée à cet enregistrement, constitue une étape impor-

tante dans l'histoire musicale d'Islande. Au moment de sa complétion en 1939, la partition comptant 254 pages constituait de loin l'œuvre musicale islandaise la plus longue, la plus ambitieuse et la plus exigeante jamais composée. Le portrait puissant et audacieux du mythe de la création nordique constitue un autre exemple de la magie à laquelle Jón Leifs parvient à partir du monde austère et fascinant des chansons folkloriques islandaises.

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Le ténor **Gunnar Guðbjörnsson** étudie le chant en Islande ainsi qu'à Berlin avant de prendre des leçons auprès de Nicolai Gedda et de se joindre au National Opera Studio de Londres. Après ses débuts en 1988 à l'Opéra d'Islande, sa réputation s'étend rapidement et il est invité en 1999 par Daniel Barenboim à faire partie de l'ensemble du Staatsoper de Berlin en tant que premier ténor lyrique. Il se produit dans les meilleures maisons d'opéra d'Europe ainsi qu'aux États-Unis et au Japon en tant que concertiste. À l'automne 2007, Guðbjörnsson chante son premier rôle dans le répertoire héroïque : Walther von Stolzing dans les *Maîtres chanteurs de Nuremberg* de Wagner à l'Opéra de Halle.

La basse **Bjarni Thor Kristinsson** est l'un des chanteurs islandais les plus connus de la jeune génération. Après des leçons de chant dans son pays natal, il étudie à l'Université de musique et d'art dramatique de Vienne avec Helene Carusso et Curt Malm. En 1997, il se joint à l'ensemble du Volksoper de Vienne où il tient les premiers rôles de basse. Depuis, sa carrière internationale s'est déve-

loppée et il se produit dans des maisons d'opéra à travers toute l'Europe, notamment à Berlin, Munich, Dresde, Hambourg, Paris, Barcelone, Lisbonne, Rome, Florence et Reykjavík. Son répertoire à l'opéra s'étend de Mozart à Richard Strauss, incluant Wagner.

Hörður Áskelsson, cantor d'Hallgrímskirkja, fonde la **Schola cantorum Reykjavicensis** en 1996. Le répertoire de ce chœur se compose principalement d'un côté de la musique de la Renaissance et de l'époque baroque et, de l'autre côté, de la musique contemporaine avec un intérêt particulier pour les compositeurs islandais. Schola cantorum est l'un des ensembles musicaux d'Islande les plus réputés et a été nommée Ensemble musical officiel de la ville de Reykjavík en 2006. En 2007, l'ensemble vocal avait été mis en candidature pour le prix du Conseil musical nordique. Le chœur qui compte habituellement quatorze chanteurs professionnels a été augmenté à trente-huit participants pour l'oratorio *Edda I* de Jón Leifs.

Une prospérité croissante et les débuts de l'indépendance au tournant du 20^e siècle ont donné l'impulsion vers la formation d'un orchestre professionnel. En 1930, le service de radiodiffusion national islandais et le Collège de musique de Reykjavík ont été fondés, ouvrant la voie à la fondation de l'**Orchestre symphonique d'Islande** qui a été officiellement inauguré le 9 mars 1950. L'orchestre donne aujourd'hui autour de soixante concerts par saison, incluant les concerts-abonnements à Reykjavík et effectue des tournées, tant à travers l'Islande qu'à l'extérieur du pays, incluant, ces dernières

années, des visites aux Îles Féroé, au Groenland, dans les pays scandinaves, en Allemagne, en Autriche, en France et en Amérique du Nord. La collaboration avec de nombreux artistes renommés au cours des années a contribué au savoir-faire musical de l'orchestre ; parmi ceux-ci mentionnons Vladimir Ashkenazy, Yehudi Menuhin, Wilhelm Kempff, André Previn, Daniel Barenboim, Luciano Pavarotti, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Mstislav Rostropovich et Joshua Bell.

Le poste de chef principal a été occupé par plusieurs chefs importants qui ont grandement influencé le développement de l'orchestre. Parmi ceux-ci, notons les Norvégiens Olav Kielland et Karsten Andersen, le Polonais Bohdan Wodiczko, le Français Jean-Pierre Jacquillat, les Finlandais Petri Sakari et Osma Vänskä et l'Américain Rico Saccani. Le Britannique Rumon Gamba est le chef principal et le directeur artistique de l'orchestre depuis 2002 alors que cette même année, Vladimir Ashkenazy a accepté le poste de chef lauréat. L'Orchestre symphonique d'Islande a réalisé de nombreux enregistrements pour BIS, incluant une série saluée par la critique consacrée au compositeur Jón Leifs et trois enregistrements consacrés à des œuvres pour orchestre de Nikos Skalkottas.

La grande réputation de **Hermann Bäumer** ne tient pas qu'à la solidité mais également à l'extrême créativité de son travail en tant que chef musical de la ville d'Osnabrück et reflète non seulement sa popularité auprès du public et les louanges de la presse mais également la multitude de son activité de chef invité tant en Allemagne qu'à l'extérieur, notamment avec l'Orchestre de la NDR,

l'Orchestre symphonique d'Islande ainsi que le Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester de Berlin.

Né à Bielefeld, Hermann Bäumer commence l'étude du piano à six ans. Plus tard, il apprend également le violoncelle et le trombone et étudie la direction à Detmold et à Leipzig. De 1992 à 2003, il est tromboniste à l'Orchestre philharmonique de Berlin et est lié pendant de nombreuses années à son ensemble de cuivres. Hermann Bäumer se produit par la suite à la tête de la Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie de Bremen, de l'Orchestre symphonique de la radio d'Oslo ainsi que de l'Orchestre symphonique de Bamberg et est invité à des festivals comme ceux de Rheingau et du Heidelberger Frühling. Hermann Bäumer est également apprécié pour son travail auprès des jeunes qui le mène à la tête de nombreux orchestres de jeunes.

Hermann Bäumer possède une affinité particulière pour le répertoire dramatique inhabituel. Durant la saison 2005-6, il crée *Bestmannoper* d'Alexander Nowitz à Osnabrück salué tant par le public que par la presse. En 2004-5, il retient également l'attention avec *Wundertheater* de Hans-Werner Henze.

1. Ár var alda

Ár var alda,
þar er ekki var.
Hljóðs bið ek allar
helgar kindir,
meir ok minni
mögu Heimdallar!
Viltu,
at ek valföðr
vel fyr telja
forn spjöll fira
þau er fremst of man.

Völuspá, 1

Ár var alda,
þar er ekki var;
vara sandr né sær,
né svalar unnir;
jörð fannsk æva
né upphiminn,
gap var ginnunga,
en gras hvergi.

Völuspá, 3

Fyrst var sá heimir er Múspell heitir.
Hann er ljóss ok heitr. Sú átt er
logandi ok brennandi ok ófærr þeim,
er þar eru útlendir.

Sá er Surtr nefndr er þar sitr á
landsenda til landvarnar, hann hefr
loganda sverð ok í enda veraldar mun
hann fara ok herja ok sigra öll goðin
ok brenna allan heim.

Gylfaginning, 4

2. Ýmir

Fyrir var þat mörgum öldum en jörð
var of sköpuð, at Niflheimr var görr. Í
honum mjöðjum ligr brunnr sá, er
Hvergelmir heitir. Þaðan falla ár.

Gylfaginning, 4

Élivágar!
Ór Élivágum
stukku eitrdropar.

Vafþrúðnismál, 31

Langt frá uppsprettu varð þat íss. Svá
sem kalt stóð af Niflheimi. Svá var alt
þat, er vissi námunda Múspellsheimi
heitt ok ljóst, en Ginnungagap var svá
hlætt sem loft vindlaust.

Ór Élivágum
stukku eitrdropar.

Þá er mætti hríminu blær hitans, ok
draup. Þá varð manns líkami ok er sá
nefndr Ymir.

Gylfaginning, 5.

Ór Élivágum
stukku eitrdropar
svá óx unz varð jötunn;
þar órar ættir
kómu allar saman;
því er þat æ alt til atalt.

Vafþrúðnismál, 31

Býr fyrir austan
Élivága
hundvíss Hymir
at himins enda.

Hymiskviða, 5

Ár var alda,
þat er Ymir byggði;
vara sandr né sær,
né svalar unnir;
jörð fannsk æva
né upphiminn,
gap var ginnunga,
en gras hvergi.

Völuspá, 3

3. Þursa þjóðar sjöt

Útan garða
hann sá upp of koma
þursa þjóðar sjöt.

Fjölsvinnsmál, 1

Und hendi vaxa
kváðu hrímþursi
mey ok mög saman;
fótr við fæti
gat ens fróða jötuns
sexhöfðaðan son.

Vafþrúðnismál, 33

Ek mun jötna inna heiti:
Ymir, Gangr ok Mímir,
Iði ok Þjazi.

Hrungnir, Hrímnir,
Hrauðnir, Grímnir,
Hveðrungur, Hafli,
Hrípstoðr, Gymir,
Eldr, Aurgeimir,
Ægir, Rangbeinn,
Vindr, Víðblindi,
Vingnir, Leifi.

Beinvíðr, Björgólfr
ok Brandingi
Dumbr, Bergelmir,

Dofri ok Miðjungur,
Nati, Sökmímír.
Nú er upp talið
ámáttliga
jötna heiti.

Snorra-Edda, Nafnaþulur 6, 10-11

4. Auðhumla, Óðinn ok hans bræðr

Næst var þat þá er hrimit draup, at varð af kýr sú er Auðhumla hét, en fjórar mjólkár runnu ór spenum hennar ok fæddi hon Ymi. Hon sleikði hrímsteinana, er saltir váru, ok enn fyrsta dag kom ór steinum at kveldi manns hár, annan dag manns höfuð; þriðja dag var þar allr maðr. Hann var fagr álitum, mikill ok máttugr. Borr fekk þeirar konu er Bestla hét, dóttir Bölþorns jötuns ok fengu þau þrjá sonu. Hét einn Óðinn, ok er þat mín trúa, at sá Óðinn ok hans bræðr munu vera stýrandi himins ok jarðar.

Gylfaginning, 6

5. Sær

Synir Bors drápu Ymi jötun, en er hann fell, þá hljóp svá mikitt blóð ór sárum hans, at með því drekkðu þeir allri ætt hrímþursa, nema einn komst undan með sínu hyski.

Gylfaginning, 7

Örófi vetra

áðr væri jörð of sköpuð,
þá var Bergelmir borinn;
þat ek fyrst of man,

er sá hinn fróði jötunn
á var of lúðr of lagiðr.
Vafþrúðnismál, 35

Sær, sílægia,
salt, ægir, haf,
lögr, sumr, lægir,
lagastafr ok vágr;
gjallr, gnaf, geimi,
gnarr, svífr ok marr,
súgr, sog, sami,
svelgr, röst ok fjörðr.

Snorra-Edda, Nafnaþula 61

Sær heitir með mönnum,
en sílægia með goðum,
kalla vog vanir,
álheim jötnar,
álfar lagastaf,
kalla dverggar djúpan mar.
Alvissmál, 24

6. Jörð

Bors synir tóku Ymi ok fluttu í mitt
Ginnungagap ok gerðu af honum
jörðina.

Gylfaginning, 8

Ór Ymis holdi
var jörð of sköpuð,
en ór sveita sær,
björg ór beinum,
baðmr ór hári,
en ór hausi himinn.
Gylfaginning, 8

Jörð, fjörn, rofa,
eskja ok hlöðyn,
gyma, síf, fjörgyn,
grund, hauðr ok rönd,

fold, vangr ok fíf,
frón, hjarl ok barmr,
land, bjöð, þríma,
láð ok merski.

Snorra-Edda, Nafnaþula 87

Holt, háls ok fjöll,
hlíð ok leiti,
hóll, heiðr ok hvílt,
hváll ok brekka,
hró, dalr ok völlr,
hvammr ok tunga,
mold, flag, rími,
laur, láut ok sandr.

Snorra-Edda, Nafnaþula 88

Jörð heitir með mönnum,
en með ásum fold,
kalla vega vanir,
ígræn jötnar,
álfar gróanda,
kalla aur uppregin.
Alvissmál, 10

7. Himinn, sól, dagr

Himinn ör hausi
ens hrímkalda
jötuns.

Himinn heitir með mönnum,
en hlýrnir með goðum,
kalla vindófnir vanir,
uppheim jötnar,
álfar fagaræfr,
dverggar drjúpansal.

Alvissmál, 12

En ór hans heila
vóru þau en harðmóðgu
ský öll af sköpuð.
Gylfaginning, 8

Ský heitir með mönnum,
en skúrván með goðum,
kalla vindflot vanir,
úrván jötnar,
álfar veðmegin,
kalla í helju hjálm huliðs.
Alvíssmál, 18

Svalinn heitir,
hann stendr sólu fyrir,
skjöldur, skínanda guði;
björg ok brim
ek veit at brenna skulu
ef hann fellr í frá.
Grímnismál, 38

Sól varp sunnan,
sinni mána,
hendi inni hægri
um himinjöður.
Völuspá, 5

Sól skein sunnan,
á salar steina,
þá var grund gróin
grænum lauki.
Völuspá, 4

Sól ok sunna,
sýn, fagrahvéll,
leiftr, hljóðr, leika,
líknskin, röðull,
leiftr, ifröðull
ok ljósfari,
drífandi, álfröðull
ok Dvalins leika.
Snorra-Edda, Nafnaþul, 101

Sól heitir með mönnum,
en sunna með goðum,
kalla dvergar Dvalins leika,
eygló jötnar,

álfar fagrahvéll,
alskír ása synir.
Alvíssmál, 16

Skinfaxi heitir,
er inn skíra dregur
dag um dróttmögu.
Hesta beztir þykir hann
með Hreiðgotum;
æ lýsir mön af mari.
Vafþrúðnismál, 12

Dagur átti Þóru
dregja móður.
Ólusk í ætt þar
æztir kappar.
Hyndluljóð, 18

Dellingr heitir,
hann er Dags faðir.
Vafþrúðnismál, 25

Heill Dagur!
Heilir Dags synir!
Síгурdrífumál, 3

8. Nótt, morgunn

En Nótt var Nörvi borin.
Vafþrúðnismál, 25

Njörvi hét jötunn,
Dellingr átti Nótt
ok var hann ása ættar.
Gylfaginning, 10

Heil Nótt ok Nipt!
Hrímfaxi heitir,
er hverja dregur
nótt of nýt regin.
Vafþrúðnismál, 14

Nótt heitir með mönnum,
en njól með goðum,
kalla grímu ginnregin,
óljós jötnar,
álfar svefgaman,
kalla dvergar draumjörun.
Alvíssmál, 30

Stjörnur þat né vissu
hvar þær staði áttu.
Völuspá, 5

Óðinn ok hans bræðr tóku síur ok
gneista, er kastat hafði ór
Múspellsheimi ok settu at lýsa himin
ok jörð.
Gylfaginning, 8

Máni þat né vissi
hvat hann megins átti.
Völuspá, 5

Mundilfari heitir,
hann er Mána faðir.
Vafþrúðnismál, 23

Máni heitir með mönnum,
en mylinn með goðum,
kalla hverfanda hvél helju í,
skyndi jötnar,
en skin dvergar,
kalla álfar ártala.
Alvíssmál, 14

Hrímfaxi heitir,
er hverja dregur
nótt of nýt regin;
mældropa fellir hann
morgin hverjan;
þaðan kemur döggr um dala.
Vafþrúðnismál, 14

Mundilfari heitir,
hann er Mána faðir
ok svá Sólur it sama;
himin hverfa
þau skulu hverjan dag.
Vafþrúðnismál, 23

Sól þat né vissi,
hvar hon sali átti.
Alföðr tók Nótt ok Dag ok gaf þeim
tvo hesta ok sendi þau upp á himin.
Gylfaginning, 10

Ný ok nið
skópu nýt regin,
öldum at ártali.
Vafþrúðnismál, 25

Þá gengu regin öll
á rökstóla,
ginnheilög goð
ok um þat gættusk:
nótt ok niðjum
nöfn of gáfu,
morgin hétu
ok miðjan dag,
undorn ok aptan,
árum at telja.
Völuspá, 6

9. Ásgarðr, Askr ok Embla, Miðgarðr

Þar næst gerðu þeir sér borg í miðjum
heimi, er kölluð er Ásgarðr.
Þá er þeir gengu með sævarströndu,
Bors synir.
Gylfaginning, 9

Unz þrír kvámu
ór því liði

öflgir ok ástkir
Æsir að húsi.
Völuspá, 17

Fundu þeir tré tvau ok tóku upp tréin
ok sköpuðu af menn.
Gylfaginning, 9

Fundu á landi
lítt megandi
Ask og Emblu
örloglausa.
Völuspá, 17

Önd þau né áttu,
óð þau né höfðu,
lá né læti,
né litu góða;
önd gaf Óðinn,
óð gaf Hæmir,
lá gaf Lóðurr
ok litu góða.
Völuspá, 18

Hét karlaðrinn Askr, en konan
Embla.
Gylfaginning, 9

Himinn ór hausi
ens hrímkalda jötuns,
en ór hans bráum
gerðu blíð regin
Miðgarð manna sonum.
Gylfaginning, 8

10. Scherzo. Allir menn urðut jafnspakir

Lítilla sanda,
lítilla sæva,
lítill eru geð guma;

allir menn urðut jafnspakir;
hálf er öld hvar.
Hávamál, 53

Sá er einn staðr, er kallaðr er
Álfheimur. Þar byggir fólk þat er
ljósálfar heita, en dökkálfar, búa niðri
í jörðu. Ljósálfar eru fegri en sól
sýnum, en dökkálfar eru svartari en
bik.

Gylfaginning, 17

Þá gengu regin öll
á rökstóla,
ginnheilög goð
ok um þat gættusk
hverr skyldi dverga
dróttir skepja
ór Brimis blóði
ok ór Bláins leggjum.
Völuspá, 9

Nýi ok Niði,
Norðri, Suðri,
Austri, Vestri,
Alþjófr, Dvalinn,
Bifurr, Böfurr,
Bömburr, Nóri,
Ánn ok Ánarr,
Ái, Mjödvitnir.
Völuspá, 11

Þar var Mótsognir
mæstr um orðinn
dverga allra,
en Durinn annarr;
þeir mannlíkun
mörg of gerðu,
dverga ór jörðu,
sem Durinn sagði.
Völuspá, 10

Ffli, Kíli,
Fundinn, Náli,
Hepti, Víli,
Hanarr, Svíurr,
Frár, Hornbori,
Frægr ok Lóni,
Aurvangr, Jari,
Eikinskjalði.

Völuspá, 13

Veigr ok Gandálfr,
Vindálfr, Práinn,
Pekkr ok Þorinn,
Þrótr, Vittr ok Littr,
Nár ok Nýraðr,
Reginn ok Ráðsviðr,
nú hefkr dverga
rétt ok talda.

Völuspá, 12

Lítilla sanda,
lítilla sæva,
lítill eru geð guma;
allir menn urðut jafnspakir;
hálf er öld hvar.

Hávamál, 53

Í Vanaheimi var Njörðr upp fæddr.
Gylfaginning, 13

Nörfi hét jötunn, er byggði í
Jötunheimum.
Gylfaginning, 10

11. Viðr, sumar, logn

Ór Ymis holdi
var jörð of sköpuð,
björg ór beinum,
baðmr ór hári.
Gylfaginning, 19

Ask veit eg standa,
heittir Yggdrasil,
hárf baðmr ausinn
hvíta auri;
þaðan koma döggar
þærs í dala falla;
stendr æ yfir, grænn,
Urðarbrunn.

Völuspá, 19

Sú dökk, er þaðan fellr á jörðina, þat
kalla menn hunangsfall.
Gylfaginning, 16

Askinn er allra trjá mestr ok beztr.
Limar hans dreifask um heim allan ok
standa yfir himni.
Gylfaginning, 15

Þríarr rætr
standa á þríra vegu
undan Aski Yggdrasils;
hel býr und einni,
annarr hrímþursar,
þriðju mennskir menn.
Grímnismál, 31

En undir þeirri rót, er til hrímþursa
horfir, þar er Mímisbrunnr, er spekt ok
mannvit er í fólgit.
Gylfaginning, 15

Þaðan koma meyjar,
margs vitandi.
Völuspá, 20

Baðmur ór hári
ens hrímkalda jötuns!
Viðr heitir með mönnum,
en vallar vax með goðum,
kalla hlífþang halir,
eldi jötnar,

álfar fagrlima,
kalla vönd vanir.
Alvíssmál, 28

Svásuðr heitir sá, er faðir Sumars er
ok er hann sælliftr, svá at af hans heiti
er þat kallat sváslegt,
er blítt er.
Gylfaginning, 19

Logn heitir með mönnum,
en lægi með goðum,
kalla vindslot vanir,
ofhlý jötnar,
álfar dagsefa,
kalla dvergar dags veru.
Alvíssmál, 22

12. Vetr ok vindr

Vindsvalr heitir,
hann er Vetrar faðir.
Vafþrúðnismál, 27

Vindljóni eða Vindsvalr! Hann er
Vasaðar son; vóru þeir áttungar
grimmir ok svalbrjóstaðir ok hefr Vetr
þeirra skaplyndi.
Gylfaginning, 19

Hræsvelgr heitir,
er sitr á himins enda
jötunn í arnar ham,
af hans vængjum
kveða vind koma
alla menn yfir.
Vafþrúðnismál, 37

Vindr heitir með mönnum,
en váfuðr með goðum,
kalla gneggjuð ginnregin,
æpi jötnar,

álfar dýnfara,
kalla í helju hviðuð.
Alvíssmál, 20

13. Finale. Ífing, níu heimar

Ífing heitir á,
er deilir með jötna sonum
grund ok með goðum;
opin rinna
hon skal of aldrdaga;
veðrat íss á á.
Vafþrúðnismál, 16

Svá er sagt, at annarr himinn sé suðr
ok
upp frá þessum.
Gylfaginning, 17

Níu man ek heima,
níu íviði.
Völuspá, 2

Heitir sá Andlangr.
Gylfaginning, 17

Níu eru himnar
á hæð taldir,
veit ek enn neðsta,
sá er Vindbláinn;
sá er Heiðþýrnir;
ok Hreggmímir;
annar heitir
Andlangr himinn;
þat máttu skilja;
þriðji Viðbláinn.
Snorra-Edda, Nafnaþula 100

Á þeim himni hyggjum vér þann stað
vera, er Surtarlogi brennr.
Gylfaginning, 17

Viðfeðmi kveð ek
vera enn fjórða;Hróðr ok Hlýrni
hygg ek enn setta;
Gímir, Vetmímir;
get ek nú vera
átta himna
upp of talda;
Skattýrnir stendr
skýjum efri
hann er útan
alla heima.

Snorra-Edda, Nafnaþula 100

EDDA I – THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

1. Young Were the Years

Young were the years when Ymir made his settlement.

Attention I ask from all the sacred people, greater and lesser, the offspring of Heimdall; Father of the Slain, you wished that I should declare the ancient histories of men and gods, those which I remember from the first.

Seeress's Prophecy, 1

Young were the years when Ymir made his settlement, there was no sand nor sea nor cool waves; earth was nowhere nor the sky above, chaos yawned, grass was there nowhere.

Seeress's Prophecy, 3

First there was that world which is called Muspell. It is bright and hot. That region flames and burns and is impassable for foreigners. Surt [Black One] is the name of he who waits there at the land's edge to defend it. He has a flaming sword, and when the end of the world comes, he will set off to battle and defeat all the gods, burning the whole world with fire.

Gylfaginning, 4

2. Ymir

Niflheim [Dark World] was made many ages before the earth was created. At its centre is the spring called Hvergelmir [Roaring Kettle].

From there flow rivers.

Gylfaginning, 4

Elivagar!

Out of Elivagar sprang poison-drops.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 31

When those rivers came far from their source, they became ice.

Just as coldness and all things grim came from Niflheim, the regions bordering on Muspell were warm and bright, and Ginnungagap was as mild as a windless sky.

From Elivagar poisonous drops spewed out.

When the icy rime and the warm winds met, the likeness of a man appeared and he was named Ymir.

Gylfaginning, 5

Out of Elivagar sprang poison-drops, so they grew until a giant came of them; from there our clan all came, thus they are all terrifying.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 31

To the east of Elivagar lives Hymir the very wise, at the end of heaven.

Hymir's Poem, 5

Young were the years when Ymir made his settlement, there was no sand nor sea nor cool waves; earth was nowhere nor the sky above, chaos yawned, grass was there nowhere.

Seeress's Prophecy, 3

3. The Giants' Palace

From outside the courtyards he saw rise up the palace of the giant-people.

Fjölsvinnsmál, 1

They said that under the frost-giant's arms a girl and boy grew together; one foot with the other, of the wise giant, begot a six-headed son.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 33

I shall tell the names of giants. Ymir, Gang and Mimir, Idi and Thiassi, Hrungrnir, Hrimnir, Hraundnir, Grímnir, Hvedrung, Hafli, Hripstod, Gýmir.

Eld and Augelmir, Ægir, Rangbein, Vind, Vidblindi, Vingnir, Leifi.

Beinvid, Biorgolf and Brandingi, Dumb, Bergelmir, Dofri and Midiung, Nati, Sokmimir. Now there have been listed the names of very powerful giants.

Snorra-Edda, Skáldskaparmál

4. Audhumla, Odin and his brothers

When the icy rime and the warm winds met, there was a quickening in these flowing drops and the likeness of a man appeared and he was named Ymir.

Next it happened that as the icy rime dripped, the cow called Audhumla was formed. Four rivers of milk ran from her udders, and she nourished Ymir. She licked the blocks of ice, which were salty. As she licked these

stones of icy rime the first day, the hair of a man appeared in the blocks towards the evening. On the second day came the man's head, and on the third day, the whole man. He was beautiful, big and strong. Borr took as his wife the woman called Bestla. She was the daughter of Bolthorn the giant, and they had three sons. One was called Odin, and it is my belief that this Odin and his brothers are the rulers of heaven and earth.

Gylfaginning, 6

5. Sea

The sons of Bor killed the giant Ymir. When he fell, so much blood gushed from his wounds that with it they drowned all the race of the frost giants except for one who escaped with his household.

Gylfaginning, 7

Uncountable winters before the world was made, then Bergelmir was born; that I remember first when the wise giant was first laid in his coffin.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 35

Sea, ever-lying, salt, ocean (Ægir), main, wetness, swim, flat one, dead calm and bay, resounding, overhang, emptiness, brawler, rocker and mere, sucker, suck, same, swallower, maelstrom and fiord.

Snorra-Edda, Skáldskaparmál

Sea it's called among men, and endless-lier by the gods, the Vanir call it rolling one, home of the eel the giants,

'lagastaf' the elves, the dwarfs the deep ocean.

All-wise's Sayings, 24

6. Earth

Bor's sons took Ymir and they moved him into the middle of Ginnungagap and made from him the world.

Gylfaginning, 8

From Ymir's flesh was the earth created, from the bloody sweat, the sea, cliffs from bones, trees from hair, and from the head, the heavens.

Gylfaginning, 8

Earth, landscape, glebe, marl and Hlodyn, humus, Sif, Fiorgyn, ground, surface and orb, field, meadow and Fife, country, loam and coast, land, soil, march, territory and marsh.

Holt, ridge and fells, hillside and rise, knoll, heath and hollow, hillock and slope, crust, dale and wold, coomb and tongue, mould, flag, hogback, moor, depression and sand.

Snorra-Edda, Skáldskaparmál

Earth it's called among men, and ground by the Æsir, the Vanir call it ways; the giants evergreen, the elves the growing one, the Powers above call it loam.

All-wise's Sayings, 10

7. Sky, Sun, Day

The heavens from the frost giants' head.

Sky it's called among men, home of

the planets by the gods, wind-weaver the Vanir call it, the giants call it the world above, the elves the lovely roof, the dwarfs the dripping hall.

All-wise's Sayings, 12

And from his brains all the oppressive clouds were formed.

Gylfaginning, 8

Clouds they're called by men, and hope-of-showers by the gods, the Vanir call them wind-floaters, hope-of-dew the giants call them, power-of-storms the elves, in hell the concealing helmet.

All-wise's Sayings, 18

Svalin is the name of a shield which stands before the sun, before the shining god; mountain and sea I know would burn up if it fell away from in front.

Grimnir's Sayings, 38

From the south, Sun, companion of the moon, threw her right hand round the edge of the heaven.

Seeress's Prophecy, 5

The sun shone from the south on the hall of stones, then the soil was grown over with green plants.

Seeress's Prophecy, 4

Sun and day-star, sight, fair-wheel, lightning, coverer, toy, grace-shine, disc, lightning, doubt-disc and light-bringer, sprinkler, elf-disc and Dvalin's toy.

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Sun it's called by men, and sunshine by the gods, for the dwarfs it's Dvalin's deluder, the giants call it everglow, the elves the lovely wheel, the sons of the Æsir all-shining.

All-wise's Sayings, 16

Shining-mane, the shining one is called who draws day to mankind; the best of horses he is held to be among the Hreid-Goths, always that horse's mane gleams.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 12

Dag married Thora, mother of champions; mighty fighters sprang from that lineage.

The Song of Hyndla, 18

Delling he is called, he is Day's father.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 25

Hail to the day! Hail to the sons of day!

Lay of Sigdrífa, 3

8. Night, Morning

Night was born of Norfi.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 25

Norfi was a giant. Night married Delling, who was from the family of the gods.

Gylfaginning, 10

Hail to night and her kin!

Lay of Sigdrífa, 3

Frost-mane he is called, who draws every night to the beneficent gods.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 14

Night it's called among men, and darkness by the gods, the masker by the mighty Powers, unlight by the giants, joy-of-sleep by the elves, the dwarfs call it dream-goddess.

All-wise's Sayings, 30

The stars did not know where their place might be.

Seeress's Prophecy, 5

Odin and his brothers took the embers and sparks shooting out from Muspellsheim, to light up heaven and earth.

Gylfaginning, 8

The moon did not know what power he had.

Seeress's Prophecy, 5

Mundilfæri he is called, the father of Moon.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 23

Moon it's called by men, and fiery one by the gods, in hell it's the whirling wheel, the giants call it the hastener, the dwarfs the shiner, elves call it counter of years.

All-wise's Sayings, 14

Frost-mane he is called, who draws every night to the beneficent gods; foam from his bit he lets fall every morning; from there dew comes to the valleys.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 14

Mundilfæri he is called, the father of Moon and likewise of Sun; they must pass through the sky, every day.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 23

Sun did not know where her hall might be.

Seeress's Prophecy, 5

Then All-Father took Night and her son Day, gave them two horses and placed them in the sky.

Gylfaginning, 10

New moon and dark of the moon the beneficent Powers made to count the years for men.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 25

Then all the Powers went to the thrones of fate, the sacrosanct gods, and considered this: to night and her children they gave names, morning they named and midday, afternoon and evening, to reckon up the years.

Seeress's Prophecy, 6

9. Asgard, Ash and Embla, Midgard

Next they made a stronghold for themselves in the middle of the world, and it was called Asgard.

Gylfaginning, 9

Until three gods, strong and loving, came from that company to the world.

Seeress's Prophecy, 17

The sons of Bor were once walking along the seashore and found two

trees. They lifted the logs and from them created people.

Gylfaginning, 9

They found on land Ash and Embla, capable of little, lacking in fate.

Seeress's Prophecy, 17

Breath they had not, spirit they had not, character nor vital spark nor fresh complexions; breath gave Odin, spirit gave Hænir, vital spark gave Lodur, and fresh complexions.

Seeress's Prophecy, 18

The man was called Ask [Ash Tree] and the woman, Embla [Elm or Vine]

Gylfaginning, 9

From his head, the heavens; and from his eyelashes the gentle gods made Midgard for the sons of men.

Gylfaginning, 8

10. Scherzo. All Men Aren't Equally Wise

Of small sands, of small seas, small are the minds of men; for all men aren't equally wise, men everywhere are half wise, half not.

Sayings of the High One, 53

One place in the heavens is called Alfheim [Elf World]. The people called the light elves live there, but the dark elves live down below in the earth. The light elves are more beautiful than the sun, while the dark elves are blacker than pitch.

Gylfaginning, 17

Then all the Powers went to the thrones of fate, the sacrosanct gods, and considered this: who should form the lord of the dwarfs out of Brimir's blood and from Blain's limbs?

Seeress's Prophecy, 9

New-moon and Dark-of-moon, North and South, East and West, Master-thief, Delayer, Bivor, Bavor, Bombur, and Nori, An and Anar, Great-grandfather and Mead-wolf.

Seeress's Prophecy, 11

Then Motsognir became the greatest of all the dwarfs, and Durin another; Many manlike figures they made, dwarfs from the earth, as Durin encountered.

Seeress's Prophecy, 10

Fili and Kili, Foundling and Nali, Haft and Vili, Hanar and Sviur, Frar and Hornborer, Fræg and Sea-pool, Loamfield, Iari, Oakenshield.

Seeress's Prophecy, 13

Liquor and Staff-elf, Wind-elf and Thrain, Known and Thorin, Thror, Colour and Wise, Corpse and New-advice: now I have rightly – Regin and Counsel-sharp – reckoned up the dwarfs.

Seeress's Prophecy, 12

Of small sands, of small seas, small are the minds of men; for all men aren't equally wise, men everywhere are half wise, half not.

Sayings of the High One, 53

Njord was brought up in Vanaheim.

Gylfaginning, 23

A giant called Norfi lived in Giant Land.

Gylfaginning, 10

11. Wood, Summer, Calm

From Ymir's flesh was the earth created, cliffs from bones, trees from hair.

Gylfaginning, 8

I know that an ash-tree stands called Yggdrasill, a high tree, soaked with shining loam; from there come the dews which fall in the valley, ever green, it stands over the well of fate.

Seeress's Prophecy, 19

People call the dew, which falls to the earth, honey dew.

Gylfaginning, 16

The ash is the largest and the best of all trees. Its branches spread themselves over all the world, and it stands over the sky.

Gylfaginning, 15

Three roots there grow in three directions under the ash of Yggdrasill; Hel lives under one, under the second, the frost-giants, the third, humankind.

Grimnir's Sayings, 31

Under the root that goes to the frost giants is the Well of Mimir. Wisdom and intelligence are hidden there.

Gylfaginning, 15

From there come three girls, knowing
a great deal.

Seeress's Prophecy, 20

Trees from the hair of the rime-cold
giant! Wood it's called by men, and
mane of the valleys by the gods,
slope-seaweed by humankind, fuel by
the giants, lovely boughs by the elves,
wand the Vanir call it.

All-wise's Sayings, 28

Svasud is the name of the father of
Summer. He is a man so content that
from his name comes the expression
'it is svasligt', referring to what is
pleasant.

Gylfaginning, 19

Calm it's called by men, and lying
quiet by the gods, the Vanir call it
wind-end, the great lee the giants,
day-soother the elves, the dwarfs call
it essence of day.

All-wise's Sayings, 22

12. Winter and Wind

Wind-cool he is called, Winter's
father.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 27

Vindloni or Vindsval [Wind Chill]!
He is the son of Vasad [Damp Cold].
These are cruel and cold-hearted
kinsmen, and Winter takes its nature
from them.

Gylfaginning, 19

Corpse-swallower he is called, who
sits at the end of the world, a giant in

eagle's shape; from his wings, they
say, the wind blows over all men.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 37

Wind it's called by men, the waverer
by the gods, the mighty Powers say
neigher, whooper the giants, din-
journeyer the elves, in hell they call it
stormer.

All-wise's Sayings, 20

13. Finale. Ifing, Nine Worlds

Ifing the river is called, which divides
the earth between the sons of giants
and the gods; freely it will flow
through all time, ice never forms on
the river.

Vafþrúdnir's Sayings, 16

It is said that a second heaven lies to
the south and above this heaven.

Gylfaginning, 17

I remember nine worlds, I remember
nine giant women.

Seeress's Prophecy, 2

It is called Andlang [Long and Wide].
Gylfaginning, 17

There are nine heavens on high that
are listed. I know the nethermost, it is
Vindblain [wind-dark], it is
Heidthornir [clouded-brightness], and
Hregg-Mimir [storm-Mimir]. The
second heaven is Andlang [extended]
– this you can understand – the third
Vindblain [wide-dark].

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We believe that this region is where
Surt's fire burns.

Gylfaginning, 17

I declare that Vidfedmir [wide-
embracer] is the fourth. Hriod
[coverer], and Hlyrnir [twin-lit] I
think is the sixth; Gimir [fiery or
jewelled], Vet-Mimir [winter-Mimir].
I guess now that eight heavens have
been enumerated. Skatymir [rich-
wetter] stands higher than the clouds,
it is beyond all worlds.

Snorra-Edda, Skáldskaparmál

Translations:

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BIS recordings can be ordered from our distributors worldwide.

If we have no representation in your country, please contact:

BIS Records AB, Stationsvägen 20, SE-184 50 Åkersberga, Sweden

Tel.: 08 (Int.+46 8) 54 41 02 30 Fax: 08 (Int.+46 8) 54 41 02 40

info@bis.se www.bis.se

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