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Sono Luminus Releases
Concurrence
Iceland Symphony Orchestra



Worldwide Release Date: November 15, 2019

Conducted by Daníel Bjarnason

with Víkingur Ólafsson, piano and Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir, cello

Music by Icelandic composers Anna Thorvaldsdóttir, Haukur Tómasson, Maria Huld Markan

Sigfúsdóttir, and Páll Ragnar Pálsson

en.sinfonia.is | www.sonoluminus.com

Listen to Maria Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir's *Oceans*, available now from Apple Music:

<http://bit.ly/AppleConcurrence>

Stream the Album (press only, not for publication): <http://bit.ly/StreamConcurrence>

Review CDs and downloads available upon request.

Sono Luminus announces the November 15, 2019 worldwide release of *Concurrence*, a new recording from the Iceland Symphony Orchestra (ISO). Conducted by the ISO's Principal Guest Conductor Daníel Bjarnason and recorded at Harpa in Reykjavík, Iceland this past February and March, *Concurrence* features music by Icelandic composers Anna Thorvaldsdóttir (*Metacosmos*), Haukur Tómasson (Piano Concerto No. 2), Maria Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir (*Oceans*), and Páll Ragnar Pálsson (*Quake*) plus soloists Víkingur Ólafsson, piano and Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir, cello. Sono Luminus' album package for *Concurrence* includes both CD and Pure Audio Blu-ray with

9.1 Auro-3D, Dolby Atmos 7.1.4, and 5.1 DTS-MA versions, as well as the mShuttle application containing FLAC and MP3 audio files. *Concurrence* follows the 2017 release of *Recurrence*, the first of this trilogy of albums from Sono Luminus and the Iceland Symphony Orchestra.

"I am both very proud and excited to bring out the second volume of this recording project dedicated to bringing the orchestral sound world of Icelandic composers to the ears of the world, says Daniel Bjarnason, whose work *Emergence* was included in the first volume of this series, and who conducts the ISO on both recordings. "This album also represents the ongoing wonderful collaboration between the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and Sono Luminus. These recordings, with the orchestra sat in a circle and me conducting in the middle, have been an unusual adventure for us all; challenging and exciting at the same time. The whole team at Sono Luminus have been extremely dedicated and ambitious throughout, working hard to bring this music to recording in the best and most immersive way possible today."

Of the music on *Concurrence*, Steve Smith writes in the liner notes for the album, "Hearing Anna Thorvaldsdóttir's *Metacosmos* and María Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir's *Oceans* in close proximity, it's hard not to consider once more the natural features of Iceland. But before you decide to approach these disparate works as paintings in sound, listen again for aspects that distinctly evoke more human dimensions. . . In Tómasson's Piano Concerto No. 2, the soloist is first among equals, a frolicsome force in continual conversation with lively choruses of counterparts, never overshadowed but also rarely isolated. The solo cello is more prominent, perhaps, in Pálsson's *Quake*, but not in the sense of a single orator foregrounded against a complementary background. Rather, amid the work's deliberate, effective tectonic judders and jolts, the soloist might well be... well, us, responding with panic and adroitness to keep pace with the rumbling, mysterious tumult all around."

Concurrence features two of today's most impressive up-and-coming Icelandic soloists. Pianist Víkingur Ólafsson has made an unforgettable impact in recent years with the release of his two landmark albums, *Philip Glass Piano Works* and *Johann Sebastian Bach* on Deutsche Grammophon. *Gramophone* praised his, "Rare combination of sheer technical brilliance, expressive control and interpretative depth." Icelandic-American cellist Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir has appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Iceland Symphony, among others, and her recital and chamber music performances have taken her across the US, Europe, and Asia. She made her debut last season with the BBC and Seattle Symphonies performing *Quake*. This past spring, she released her solo album *Vernacular* on Sono Luminus.

Daniel Bjarnason is one of Iceland's foremost musical voices today. Principal Guest Conductor with Iceland Symphony Orchestra and Composer in Residence with Musiekgebouw Eindhoven, he keeps busy conducting and composing schedules. As a guest conductor, he has been invited by orchestras such as Los Angeles Philharmonic, Gothenburg Symphony, Toronto Symphony and Tokyo Symphony orchestras; and recent commissions include works for Los Angeles Philharmonic, Musiekgebouw Eindhoven, The Holland Festival and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. His Violin Concerto, written for Pekka Kuusisto, has become one of his most popular works since its premiere in 2017

at the Hollywood Bowl. It has since been performed by Kuusisto with numerous renowned orchestras around the world and continues to be regularly scheduled in future seasons. www.danielbjarnason.net

Anna Thorvaldsdóttir's (b. 1977) "seemingly boundless textural imagination" (*The New York Times*) and "striking" (*The Guardian*) sound world has made her "one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary music" (*NPR*). "Never less than fascinating" (*Gramophone*), her music is composed as much by sounds and nuances as by harmonies and lyrical material. Her music is written as an ecosystem of sounds, where materials grow in and out of each other, often inspired by structural elements from nature, like proportion and flow. Thorvaldsdóttir's works have been awarded on many occasions – most notably, her "confident and distinctive handling of the orchestra" (*Gramophone*) has garnered her the prestigious Nordic Council Music Prize, the New York Philharmonic's Kravis Emerging Composer Award, Lincoln Center's Emerging Artist Award and Martin E. Segal Award. www.annathorvalds.com

Haukur Tómasson (b. 1960) was awarded the 2004 Nordic Council Music Prize, the greatest honor awarded to a Nordic composer. This award, which Tómasson received for his chamber opera *Guðrún's 4th Song*, firmly established his stature as one of Scandinavia's most outstanding composers. The music of Haukur Tómasson is vibrant and scintillating, characterized by intense rhythmic activity, bright, colorful timbres, and a keen ear for novel and effective instrumental combinations. Tómasson's music bustles with energy and is often quite complex, although the rapidly moving surface rhythm occasionally comes to a halt, giving way to slowly moving sonorities of imposing power and austere beauty. (Árni Heimir Ingólfsson) www.haukurtomasson.com

María Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir (b. 1980) is a composer and a violinist. She graduated as a violinist from the Reykjavik College of Music in 2000 and with a Bachelor's degree in composition from the Iceland Academy of the Arts in 2007. Sigfúsdóttir has been a member of the band *amiina* since 1999. *amiina* has released and recorded several albums and performed their music around the world as well as collaborated with various artists. She has composed music for orchestras, various sized ensembles, choir, choreography and films. In 2012 her piece, *Sleeping Pendulum*, for baroque violin and electronics received a prize at the IRC (International Rostrum of Composers). Her piece, *Loom*, was on *The New York Times* top 25 list of the best classical music tracks of 2018.

Páll Ragnar Pálsson is an Icelandic composer born in Reykjavík, 1977. He played in the indie rock band *Maus* for 12 years before venturing into the field of classical contemporary composition. Pálsson holds a doctoral degree from Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre where he studied with Helena Tulve. His sense for sound was refined throughout countless studio hours where music was perceived rather as masses of noise than melodic-harmonic patterns and processed in a physical and instinctive way, rather than intellectual and analytical manner. Though instrumentation has changed, impulses gathered in the world of rock indirectly still have an impact on his art today. He seeks inspiration from movements in nature and draws parallels to similar processes within the human psyche, compositions resulting as organic linear transformations with a spiritual undertone. www.pallragnarpalsson.com

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra gave its first concert in 1950. As Iceland's national orchestra, resident at Harpa Concert Hall in Reykjavík, it gives around a hundred concerts each season. It has worked with such renowned

musicians as Daniel Barenboim, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Joshua Bell, Hilary Hahn, Jonas Kaufmann, Isabelle Faust, and Evelyn Glennie. Currently Conductor Laureate, Vladimir Ashkenazy has conducted the Orchestra regularly since the early 1970s. In September 2020, the Finnish conductor Eva Ollikainen will assume the post of Chief Conductor and Artistic Director. The Iceland Symphony Orchestra's wide-ranging international discography includes the symphonies of Sibelius and orchestral works by Jón Leifs. The ISO has appeared widely throughout Europe, including performances at the BBC Proms and Wiener Musikverein, and in 2018 embarked on a highly successful three-week tour of Japan with Ashkenazy. It has also appeared twice at Carnegie Hall. Writing in *The New York Times*, the critic Alex Ross described its performance under Osmo Vänskä as "sensational... one of the finest Sibelius performances I have encountered." <https://en.sinfonia.is>

Concurrence | Sono Luminus | Release date: November 15, 2019

Iceland Symphony Orchestra | Daníel Bjarnason, conductor

1. *Metacosmos* by Anna Thorvaldsdóttir [13:13]
2. *Piano Concerto No. 2* by Haukur Tómasson [17:01]
3. *Oceans* by María Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir [9:34]
4. *Quake* by Páll Ragnar Pálsson [15:33]

Total time: 55:21