



Víkingur & Contemporaries

Víkingur Ólafsson takes centre stage as Iceland Symphony Orchestra's Artist in Residence across 2021-22 season

Multi-award-winning Icelandic artist performs piano concertos conducted by their composers, Thomas Adès, Daníel Bjarnason and John Adams

Anyone seeking good news about classical music should look to Iceland. The Nordic island nation's commitment to music education continues to produce composers and performers with international reach and an enthusiastic audience for their work. The Iceland Symphony Orchestra is set to celebrate the artistry and creative enterprise of one of Iceland's best-known musicians, Víkingur Ólafsson, at Harpa in their home city of Reykjavík. The critically acclaimed pianist's run as Artist in Residence, part of the orchestra's compelling 2021-22 season, reflects his vision of classical music as a vibrant, living artform.

Ólafsson will perform piano concertos by Thomas Adès, John Adams and Daníel Bjarnason, each conducted by its composer, and explore music from *Mozart & Contemporaries*, his latest album for Deutsche Grammophon. The residency begins on 18 November 2021 with Thomas Adès's *In Seven Days* (2008), a profound contemplation of the biblical story of the Creation for piano and large orchestra. It continues on 19, 20 & 21 November when Ólafsson presents a selection of works from *Mozart & Contemporaries*, showing how Mozart, Haydn, C.P.E. Bach and others transformed keyboard music.

Daníel Bjarnason's Piano Concerto No.3 reaches Iceland on 2 March 2022, just days after Ólafsson gives its world premiere in Los Angeles. The programme includes Adams's *Lollapalooza* and a new orchestral version of *Clockworking* (2020) by María Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir. Bjarnason, who studied piano with Ólafsson's mother, directs the concert as the Iceland Symphony Orchestra's Artist in Collaboration. John Adams joins Ólafsson and the orchestra on 5 May for an all-Adams programme. Conducting his own music in Iceland for the first time, he has programmed his piano concerto *Must the Devil Have All the Good Tunes?* (2019) between the iconic *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* (1986) and *Harmonielehre* (1985).

"When the Iceland Symphony Orchestra approached me about becoming an Artist in Residence, I wanted to attempt to do something unusual," says Víkingur Ólafsson. "I suggested performing three new piano concertos by some of my favourite contemporary composers, and that they themselves would hold the baton. I have a longstanding friendship and partnership with Daníel Bjarnason and I also recently got to know and perform with John Adams and Thomas Adès. Of course they are very sought after, but somehow it all worked out. I must applaud the Iceland Symphony Orchestra for welcoming this idea."

In addition to Ólafsson's residency, the Iceland Symphony Orchestra's 2021-22 season includes dates with Björk, multi-instrumentalist, vocalist and composer Högni Egilsson, two concert performances of *Die Walküre* conducted by the ISO's Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, Eva Ollikainen, and two concerts conducted by Barbara Hannigan.

"The relationship between Víkingur and the orchestra is very special," observes Lára Sóley Jóhannsdóttir, Managing Director of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. "We have such a brilliant season, with *Die Walküre* in February and some wonderful guest artists, but this residency is a true highlight for us. After the past eighteen months of the pandemic, it feels like a miracle to bring these three wonderful composers to Iceland to direct Víkingur and our musicians in their concertos. Although this was Víkingur's idea, I don't think even he thought it would be possible. We're delighted that all of the pieces of the jigsaw have fallen into place and that our audiences will be able to experience this unique series of concerts."

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Thursday 18 November 2021, 7.30pm

Harpa Hall, Reykjavík

Thomas Adès conductor | **Víkingur Ólafsson** piano | **Iceland Symphony Orchestra**

Sibelius *Rakastava (The Lover)*

Sibelius *The Tempest*, suite No.2

Thomas Adès *Dawn*

Thomas Adès *In Seven Days*, Piano Concerto

Friday 19, Saturday 20 & Sunday 21 November 2021, 8pm

Harpa Hall, Reykjavík

Víkingur Ólafsson piano

Works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his contemporaries.

Wednesday 2 March 2022, 8pm

Harpa Hall, Reykjavík

Daníel Bjarnason conductor | **Víkingur Ólafsson** piano | **Iceland Symphony Orchestra**

John Adams *Lollapalooza*

María Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir *Clockworking*

Daníel Bjarnason Piano Concerto No.3

Thursday 5 May 2022, 7.30pm

Harpa Hall, Reykjavík

John Adams conductor | **Víkingur Ólafsson** piano | **Iceland Symphony Orchestra**

John Adams *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*

John Adams *Must the Devil Have All the Good Tunes?*

John Adams *Harmonielehre*