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# WRITING LILJA: A GLANCE AT ICELANDIC MUSIC AND SPIRIT

*J. Casey Rule*



My contribution to this journal is rather out of the ordinary: instead of writing a traditional article, I was asked to compose a piece of music. As an aspiring composer, this was an opportunity I could not turn down; however, it presented some immediate challenges. Probably the most important and certainly the most vexing of these was deciding how I could approach this project in a way that was appropriate for this particular publication. While I certainly believe in the expressive power of music, I do not pretend that there is no difference between an orchestral piece and an academic article. My goal, therefore, was to create a composition that was richly informed by my study of the Icelandic musical tradition.

My initial instinct was to compose a piece that was illustrative of Icelandic music, using traditional Icelandic techniques and conventions to demonstrate a distilled representation of “Icelandic style.” It did not take long for me to realize that this was a senseless aim. To attempt to write in the style of Icelandic music would require a vast over-simplification of an

aesthetic that is in no way singularly or simply defined. More importantly, the product would be inescapably inauthentic. Taking this approach would be like standing in a forest and explaining to someone what a tree is by drawing a picture of it. Naturally, the pieces that are most informative of Icelandic music are actual pieces of Icelandic music. Trying to summarize a country’s musical tradition in a 15-minute composition would be artistically meaningless.

As I spent more and more time studying this tradition and writing this orchestra piece, my direction changed considerably. Initially, I saw this project primarily as a challenge to produce a composition that was as informative about my study of Icelandic music as if I were writing an article. In the end, however, I realized that I had been given the opportunity to express what I cannot necessarily say in words. As such, this composition is not intended to be a survey of Icelandic music nor is it intended to be a representation of Icelandic style. It is, simply, one student’s reaction to one short

year of learning about this largely unknown and underappreciated tradition.

## **Iceland's Musical Tradition**

My first goal for this piece was to express something about Icelandic music itself; however, I did not want to simply mimic the music I heard. Instead, I strove to identify what makes Icelandic music “Icelandic” and find a new way to harness these aesthetics in my own piece. For me, the quality that most identifies Icelandic music and, in many ways, Icelandic culture on the whole, is the combination of seemingly incongruent and often anachronistic traditions. Of course, this is not unique to Iceland; the history of every culture includes not only the gradual evolution of practices but also the synthesis at the interfaces of distinct customs. However, this phenomenon is particularly pronounced in Icelandic music.

The reason for this is largely geographical. Iceland is an island hundreds of miles from mainland Europe and was, for most of its history, relatively poor, sparsely inhabited, and comparatively free from outside influence. For most of the last millennium, it was not immersed in European culture to the extent the countries of mainland Europe were but, instead, was exposed to discrete cross-sections of the cultural development occurring in Europe. Because of this, Iceland saw the interaction of musical styles that were separated by centuries in mainland Europe.

### **A Brief History**

When the Norse people arrived in Iceland in the ninth century, they brought with them slaves, mainly of Celtic origin. While few sources exist regarding this first music of Iceland, it seems likely that this early music had both Celtic and Scandinavian influences.

In 1000 A.D., Althingi, Iceland's parliament, officially adopted Christianity as the national religion. With Christianity came the tradition of Gregorian chant. In addition, *organum*, an early form of polyphony that developed out of Gregorian chant, was introduced to Iceland no more than a century after it appeared in mainland Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries.

After the Reformation in the sixteenth century, Iceland was converted from Catholicism to Lutheranism. This ushered in a new musical style: the German protestant hymn. At first, the hymns sung in Iceland were simply translated German hymns, but the style was later developed by Icelanders who gave it a uniquely Icelandic sound, often implementing the Lydian mode and unusual voicing in parallel fifths and augmented fourths. (Cronshaw, p. 168) Hallgrímur Pétursson, a seventeenth-century minister after whom the iconic Reykjavík chapel Hallgrímskirkja is named, is probably the most well known contributor to the Icelandic hymnody.

In the late nineteenth century, Iceland began to experience a new style of music: European Romanticism. At this time, Iceland was also starting to produce its first professional composers, many of whom studied composition abroad and brought the styles and techniques they learned back to their native country. Sveinbjörn Sveinbjörnsson was the first Icelander to seek an international career as a composer. (White, p. 303) While studying divinity, he was persuaded by the Norwegian composer-violinist Johan Svendsen to study music in Copenhagen and later in Leipzig with Carl Reinecke. Sveinbjörn went on to compose *Lofsöngur*, Iceland's national anthem, and was the first composer to be given a pension for composition by the Icelandic parliament.

The early twentieth century in Iceland saw an increasing number of Icelandic composers, such as Þórarinn Jónsson and Páll Ísólffsson, the first rector of the Reykjavík Conservatory of Music, founded in 1930. Probably the best-known and arguably the first internationally significant Icelandic composer is Jon Leifs, who in 1928 helped found the Union of Icelandic Artists and founded the Icelandic Composers Union in 1945. He is known for incorporating folk music and elements of other early Icelandic music into his compositions.

Throughout the beginning of the twentieth century, as Iceland became less and less culturally isolated, the music of Iceland began to conform more and more to external aesthetics. When the radio arrived in 1930, the influence of outside music was no longer inhibited. With the radio came access to pop and rock, styles that fused with indigenous music to

evolve into the vibrant Icelandic music scene of today.

### Preservation of Folk Tradition

Icelandic culture is known for its preservation of tradition, in contrast to the relative dynamism of mainland European culture. One of the most cited examples of this is the development of the Icelandic language. This language is of particular interest to linguists in that it has undergone remarkably little change in hundreds of years; it is, in fact, the closest spoken language to the Old Norse of the Vikings. (Bernharðsson) In the same way, Iceland has preserved many of the musical traditions that have influenced the country throughout its history. As a result, Icelandic music now has clearly traceable qualities of musical traditions that span a millennium in their origin.

Probably the best example of the preservation of Icelandic musical technique is *rímur* (rhymes)—Iceland's traditional epic poetry that was musically chanted and one of the most well-known and most iconic musical forms of Iceland. *Rímur* is unique in that it had gone relatively unchanged and unchallenged as the dominant musical form in Iceland from as early as the fourteenth century through the nineteenth century, when poets such as Jónas Hallgrímsson introduced foreign meters to Icelandic poetry, ushering in a new style of Icelandic Romanticism. Even so, many of the most popular nineteenth- and twentieth-century Icelandic poets continued to compose and perform *rímur*. While the tradition has a modest origin, having evolved from the strophic setting of epic chants to short, well-known melodies, *rímur* developed into a very specific and complex form. As a result, *rímnakveðskapur*, the composition of *rímur*, is an intricate and esoteric tradition, making it even more remarkable that the form has been so well preserved for centuries. ("Iceland")

The tradition has its roots in the impoverished agrarian Iceland of centuries ago. At informal family gatherings, called *kvöldvaka* (evening-awakening), *rímur* would be performed at length by a *kvaeðamaður* (chant-master). Although its predominance has faded since the nineteenth century with the adoption of foreign musical forms, *rímur* remains the iconic indigenous Icelandic musical art form.

Recently, *rímur* has found its way into the mainstream Icelandic music scene as well. Steindór Andersen, a fishing boat captain, has become one of the most well-known performers of *rímur*. In 2001, he collaborated with popular Icelandic post-rock band Sigur Rós in an album called *Rímur*, which features Steindór Andersen singing these traditional chants.<sup>1</sup>

Another intriguing example of a preserved Icelandic form is *tvísöngur*, which translates as "twin-song." *Tvísöngur* is a derivative of medieval organum, the first step in Western music from unison to polyphony to, eventually, the harmony that modern ears now hear as intrinsic to all tonal music. Today, this medieval polyphony lives on in Icelandic *tvísöngur*, which continues to be taught in contemporary classrooms. As a result, present-day Icelanders are still familiar with this medieval aesthetic, which the rest of Western music has since assigned to antiquity. For this reason, *tvísöngur* is of particular interest to musicologists studying the development of early organum. (White, p. 297)

### Expressing History in Music

After examining Iceland's musical history, there were two aspects of Icelandic music that I felt were necessary to represent in my piece: the initial stasis and later persistence of early Icelandic musical forms and the fusion of various musical traditions throughout Iceland's history.

The first of these concepts is expressed in multiple ways. For one, it is portrayed explicitly in the first section of the piece, in the constant recurrence of melodic and motivic material and the general harmonic stasis of the passage. It is also shown on a larger level over the course of the entire piece in the repetition of the main theme, a medieval Icelandic chant tune.

The second of these concepts proved to be more of a challenge. To illustrate how Icelandic music and culture is the product of the interaction and preservation of different traditions throughout time, I decided to draw from several distinct styles that have played an impor-

<sup>1</sup>While only 1000 copies of the album were ever printed, a live performance of "Hugann seiða svalli frá" with Steindór later appeared on the band's 2007 DVD release *Heima*, with the title, "Á Ferð Til Breiðafjarðar Vorið 1922."

tant role in Icelandic music history, including Scandinavian chant, Catholic organum, Lutheran hymnody, nineteenth-century Romanticism, and twentieth-century techniques such as minimalism and serialism.

For example, the modern, ambiguously tonal language of the opening against the medieval chant theme is one of many instances in this piece where two distinct traditions from very different times are made to interact. In addition, this modern language actually strengthens the medieval aesthetic, as the tonal ambiguity of this section allows the melody to be heard outside the context of traditional Western harmony, which did not exist at this melody's inception.

## The Continuing Tradition

Toward the end of the twentieth century, Iceland experienced a period of intense economic and cultural expansion, raising its profile significantly in the international music scene. During this time, Iceland produced famous performing artists, including Björk and Sigur Rós; started Iceland Airwaves, a now globally renowned annual music festival in Reykjavík; and founded the Iceland Music Export (IMX), a government-sponsored initiative to promote Icelandic music internationally. This period of Icelandic prosperity, however, soon came to a sudden end.

In October 2008, Iceland experienced a devastating banking system collapse. It is immediately clear when talking to Icelanders that this financial crisis has become an incredibly significant milestone in their history and their lives. The aftermath of major events in the history of a society can help illuminate the value of certain aspects of a culture. For this reason, I felt that a study of the Icelandic musical tradition would be incomplete without examining this newest chapter in Icelandic music history, when Icelanders were faced with a difficult question: is stimulating music and art worth the focus of a country that is already preoccupied with a severe financial crisis?

### Music in Crisis?

“Why can’t they get a job like everyone else?” This was the question asked by Independ-

ence Party Member of Parliament Ásbjörn Óttarsson during the discussion of Iceland’s 2011 budget bill. In his controversial comments to Parliament, Ásbjörn expressed his confusion as to why the Icelandic government was continuing to set aside funds to support Icelandic artists.

According to the *Reykjavík Grapevine*, a popular English-language Icelandic magazine based in the capital city, these comments incited a “virtual maelstrom” as artists from around the country expressed their dissent. (Nikolov) Many Icelandic artists found creative ways to respond to Ásbjörn’s inquiry. Icelandic alternative musician Úlfur Eldjárn published an open letter to *Vísir*, a Reykjavík newspaper, pointing out that Ásbjörn has received significantly higher wages from the state than what are estimated to be sufficient to support artists and asking why Ásbjörn cannot get a job like normal people. Guðmundur Kristinn Oddsson, an Icelandic playwright, composed an open letter to Ásbjörn on Facebook, claiming that he now realized he had wasted his life in the arts and asking Ásbjörn to help him find a real job. Baldvin Esra Einarsson, producer of Kimi Records, one of Iceland’s most active labels, jokingly proposed in an open letter to the Federation of Icelandic Artists (BÍL) that Icelandic artists participate in a one-day ban of all use of their work to remind people of the importance of art in Iceland.

I spoke with Baldvin about his and the rest of the country’s reaction to Ásbjörn Óttarsson’s comments to Parliament. Although his letter to BÍL was spurred by Ásbjörn’s comments, Baldvin says that the views of this single Member of Parliament were not the true reason for his letter. “The statement he made is understandable,” he pointed out. The reason that people were so bothered by this comment, he explained, was not because it was unreasonable but because the discussion of cutting down funding for the arts comes up every year. “Government support of arts is necessary to sustain a small society like ours,” he said. “We shouldn’t have to defend this every year.”

I spoke with Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir, managing director of IMX, about the public perception of the significance of music after the crisis. “The lack of research and economic facts has created the misunderstanding

that Ásbjörn represents,” she said. “I am a proud representative of those that don’t do normal jobs!” Anna explained that the economic significance of the cultural sector in Iceland is largely underestimated. “Mapping of the economic effect of culture and creative industries which is taking place now gives us an indication that this is the second biggest sector in Iceland,” she said.

In the wake of the crisis, many budget cuts inevitably had to be made for cities and towns across the country. In response to capital city Reykjavík’s proposal to cut back funding to music schools, including discontinuing all funding to students over the age of 16, hundreds of citizens gathered around City Hall in protest, waving signs and singing traditional Icelandic folk songs, such as “Hver á sér fegra föðurland” and “Ísland ögrum skorið.” (Andersen) So passionate was the atmosphere of the protest that when Mayor Jón Gnarr attempted to address the crowd, he was booed into silence. (Farrell)

### **Continued Dedication to the Arts**

Despite these controversial cutbacks, Reykjavík has by no means abandoned its investment in Icelandic culture. The city recently made one of its most substantial cultural investments in Harpa, the new concert hall and conference center and home to the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra and the Iceland Opera. Designed by Henning Larsen Architects, an international architecture firm based in Copenhagen, the building stands in the Reykjavík Harbor between the city center and the Atlantic Ocean and has become one of the city’s defining landmarks. Its elaborate, multifaceted glass façade was conceived by Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson<sup>2</sup> and features a system of LED lights that causes the building to glow in the evenings. The interior acoustics were designed by Artec Consultants Inc., a leading firm in the field, and the hall is furnished with state-of-the-art sound, staging, and other presentation equipment. (“Harpa...”)

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<sup>2</sup>Olafur Eliasson received the “Order of the Falcon” from Iceland’s president in 2008 for his contribution to his country’s culture. (Davis)

Needless to say, the building is a significant investment for the city of Reykjavík, and public opinion has been mixed. In his controversial comments to Parliament, Ásbjörn Óttarsson also expressed his disgust toward the building of Harpa, for which ISK 500 million (\$4.2 million) was allocated in the 2011 budget. (“Icelandic MP...”) Construction for Harpa began in January 2007, shortly before the 2008 financial crisis, after which construction of the building was indefinitely abandoned and the structure was left to stand for years unfinished. Ásbjörn believed that in addition to a waste of money, the building had become a monument to the confusion that had occurred after the crisis. (“Listamenn...”)

Many others, however, feel it is a powerful statement about Iceland’s indestructible appreciation for the country’s art and culture. The first summer of Harpa’s opening featured works by Icelandic composers and folk music, including rímur and tvísöngur. One of the featured series consisted of concerts performed by young Icelandic musicians designed to educate listeners on Iceland music; the programs included “A Journey Through Icelandic Music History,” “Pearls of Icelandic Music,” and “Women in Icelandic Music.”

I asked Harpa’s musical director, Steinunn Birna Ragnarsdóttir, about what this investment means for Iceland. “It is indeed quite remarkable that the Icelandic politicians...decided to continue with building Harpa despite the economical landscape that surrounded us at the time,” she said. “In my mind it was a very courageous decision that will hopefully set an example for other nations to invest in their culture and be aware of its value.”

According to Katrín Jakobsdóttir, the vice-chairman of the Left-Green Movement and Iceland’s Minister of Education, Science and Culture, Harpa has drawn great international attention to the music life in Iceland. “I think we have a great variety in Icelandic music—which is really remarkable in a country with only 330,000 inhabitants,” she observed, and continued, “Maybe that shows us that small nations can achieve great things in culture.” Katrín also told me that despite the decisions of cities and communities such as Reykjavík to make dramatic cuts to music education, the Icelandic government recently increased funding

to music education, so that now both secondary and university education in music are supported by the state. I asked Katrín if the 2008 crisis had had any significant effect on music in Iceland, expecting to hear about the difficulties of maintaining public interest in the arts. “Actually,” she said, “the music scene in Iceland has blossomed since the crisis...after the crisis, there was an increase in all sorts of concerts in Iceland and an increase in the Icelandic audience coming to concerts.”

Guðmundur Steinn Gunnarsson is an Icelandic composer and a founding member of S.L.Á.T.U.R., an experimental arts organization in Reykjavík. When I asked how he felt about the effects of the economic crisis on Icelandic music, his observations were similar. “People care more about art in general after the crisis,” he said. “It’s all opposite to what you would think.” As Guðmundur explained, for him and many others the value of money is arbitrary and artificial, but the value of art and culture is intrinsic. When an economic crisis of this scale occurs, it illuminates the impermanence of monetary wealth. In response, people’s focus shifts to more inalienable assets, such as musical tradition and other forms of cultural wealth. Culture, unlike currency, is a national asset that cannot be devalued by financial irresponsibility and corporate greed.

This echoes an observation that I actually heard in many different forms from the Icelanders who spoke to me about the effects of the economic crisis on music in their country: in the wake of the crisis, there seemed to be a renewed and strengthened interest in Icelandic music.

In the end, this became the most significant inspiration for *Lilja*. The piece is intended to be, among other things, a reflection of Icelandic spirit. While not strictly programmatic, it is, in a sense, the story of a song that could not be drowned out but rather grows and adapts, weathers storms, and invariably persists to return even stronger and more triumphant than before. It was this idea that drove the composition of the piece.

## Thematic Inspiration

I knew from the beginning that I wanted to feature a traditional Icelandic folk tune in this piece; I have always believed that folk music is particularly powerful in its ability to communicate. I quickly discovered, however, that finding authentic Icelandic folk music as a non-Icelandic speaker was much more difficult than I had anticipated. Luckily, I had help from Dr. Guðrún Ingimundardóttir, or Rúna, as she prefers to be called, an Icelandic composer and ethnomusicologist who works for the Icelandic Folk Music Center in Siglufjörður. Rúna was not surprised to find that I had been having trouble finding authentic pieces of folk music. “It’s not easy, if you don’t speak Icelandic, to find information on Icelandic folk music,” she explained. According to Rúna, the study of Icelandic folk music has been seriously neglected since the beginning of the twentieth century. She describes her country’s traditional music as “a national wealth that has yet to be harvested and recognized for its sustainability.” (Sturman, p. 7)

However, Rúna also notes that there seems to have been a renewed interest in traditional Icelandic music in recent years. “More [Icelanders] have come to visit the folk music center this summer than ever before,”<sup>3</sup> she said. “Nowadays you can hear the old chanting on the radio that you couldn’t hear before.”

I eventually chose as the thematic material for the piece two Icelandic folk tunes that Rúna introduced to me.<sup>4</sup> The first and most prominently featured of these is from one of the best-known and most intriguing chants of medieval Iceland. The chant is a setting of *Lilja*, a poem by fourteenth-century Icelandic monk Eysteinn Ásgrímsson. Writing in a variation of the pagan tradition, Eysteinn employed an unusually sophisticated structure and metrical technique in his 100-stanza poem, which summarizes the story of Christianity from

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<sup>3</sup>I spoke to Rúna in November of 2010, so she is referring to the summer of 2010.

<sup>4</sup>The *Lilja* chant is not really a “folk song” in the strictest sense of the term but rather a setting of a religious poem. However, given the tune’s ubiquity among Icelanders, the unknown origin of the melody, and the oral tradition through which it has survived, I think it is justifiable to call this melody a “folk tune.”

Creation to the Final Judgment, ending with a prayer to the Virgin Mary. *Lilja* was almost immediately recognized as a masterpiece of religious poetry and remains one of the most well-known pieces of Icelandic literature. This work had a significant influence on subsequent skaldic poetry, so much so that the hrynhent meter that Eysteinn used was later often referred to as *Liljulag* or “Lilja’s measure.” (Ólason and Tømásson, p. 51)

The chant tune (Figure 1) to which this poem was later set is of unknown origin; however, it is believed to be one of the oldest indigenous Icelandic chants, passed down by oral tradition. (“Eysteinn Ásgrímsson”)

One of the most fascinating qualities about this chant is its tonal ambiguity. As Rúna explained when she showed me this chant, “This song is very curious because... it doesn’t seem to be any recognizable mode or any tonality that we recognize at all.” This mysterious quality was one of the things that attracted me most to this melody for use in my orchestra piece.

The second folk song used in this piece is a popular dance tune called *Ólafur Liljurós*. This fourteenth-century ballad tells the story of

a man who is on his way to visit his mother when he meets four elven women. When he refuses to stay with them and abandon his Christian faith for their pagan life, one of the elf-maidens asks him for a kiss and, when he approaches, thrusts a sword under his shoulder blade and into his heart. Fatally wounded, Ólafur manages to ride to his mother’s house before he dies in her care. (Ólason, p. 112) This text is particularly interesting as it represents the seemingly contradictory juxtaposition of Christianity and pre-Christian tradition, which is still a significant part of the Icelandic culture today.

### Use of the Thematic Material in *Lilja*

One of my primary challenges in composing this piece was to create a work that was academically and artistically stimulating without shedding the musical accessibility of the original folk songs. In other words, while I naturally strove to maintain a high level of compositional integrity, my hope is that most listeners will be too busy enjoying the music to care about the academic intricacies. To write a

Figure 1

### *Lilja*: One of the Oldest Indigenous Icelandic Chants

The image shows a musical score for the Icelandic chant *Lilja*. It consists of four staves of music, each with a corresponding line of lyrics in Icelandic. The lyrics are: "Fyrri menn at fræðin kunno Forn ok klok a-heidnum Bokum", "fango miukt af finum kongum fangit Lof a danska-tan-gu", "ok i þólli-ko Modr malt meir Skyldumz ee en nokkr þeira Hærdan", and "diæt af aftar ördum Allsvaldanda Kongi at Gjalda." The music is written in a simple, traditional style with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat.

Source: A transcription of "*Lilja*" from La Borde (p. 406).

Notes: The transcription of the melody was published in 1780 in Paris by Jean Benjamin de La Borde, a former student of Baroque composer and music theorist Jean-Phillipe Rameau. La Borde printed this along with four other songs from Denmark, Norway, and Iceland, which had been printed earlier by Johann Ernst in Copenhagen. Ernst had transcribed them himself from an Icelander named Jón Ólafsson. (White, p. 300)

piece that is more enjoyable to analyze than to hear would be to go against the spirit of the folk songs themselves.

That said, I wanted to be sure that I treated the thematic material in a unique and meaningful way. One of the most important compositional devices of this piece is the transformation of the *Lilja* chant melody. My intention was to take this melody, which for many listeners will sound strange and unfamiliar, and continue to find new ways to present it until, by the end of the piece, the melody should no longer sound so strange and unfamiliar. This transformation from foreign to familiar is meant to represent, among other things, my own experience in learning about this country and its culture.

The piece is organized into four short, continuous movements. In my mind, these movements came to be called “The Thawing Ice,” “The Dance,” “The Storm,” and “The Hymn”; however, in the score they are simply numbered I through IV. The first movement is based on the *Lilja* chant and reinforces the mysterious quality of the melody. The musical vocabulary of this movement is distinctly twentieth-century inspired, in contrast to its medieval thematic material. The first time it is presented, the theme is tonally and temporally ambiguous. The only unifying component of the texture is a sustained A harmonic in the strings, a note that does not double any tone in the melody as it is played. With each iteration, the music becomes more complex and dissonant, overlaying harmonies and rhythms to throw off any inferred tonal center for the melody. The stark, icy texture of the opening thaws and unravels over the course of the movement, until the tension breaks, and the dance begins.

In contrast to the tonally ambiguous language of the opening, the second movement is set as a traditional theme and variations on the folk song, *Ólafur Liljurós*, using more acces-

Figure 2

Brass in Measure 213 of *Lilja*



sible and straightforward tonality. This dichotomy is established to reinforce the mysterious and unfamiliar nature of the *Lilja* chant melody.

The third movement takes the *Lilja* chant melody, pulls it apart, and puts it back together in a stormy, Romantic setting. For example, the first brass fanfare in the beginning of the third movement (Figure 2) is a variation on the first two notes of the main theme, an ascending whole step, while the following melody in the violins (Figure 3) is an augmentation of the third and fourth notes of this theme, the descending half step.

The next passage re-establishes a background texture similar to the opening, but this time, the cellos and basses play the theme in inversion (Figure 4). After this, the inverted theme is featured again, this time heavily obfuscated by the instrumentation and rhythm (Figure 5).

The final movement begins with a flute presenting an abbreviated and initially unaccompanied version of the tune. Gradually, the texture thickens and the melody returns in full and is harmonized, unexpectedly, in C major, as a chorale (Figure 6). As more motives from the first two movements are brought back, the texture builds into a final climax, after which the piece ends with a brief recapitulation of the opening material.

Figure 3

Violin I in Measure 216 of *Lilja*



Figure 4

Cello in Measure 225 of *Lilja*

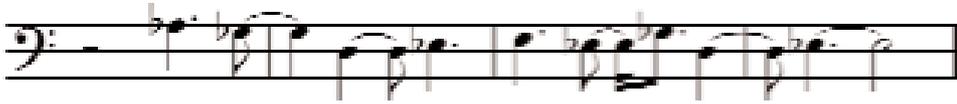


Figure 5

Harmonization of the Inverted Theme in Measure 230 of *Lilja*



This piece is intended to simultaneously represent several layers of ideas; for me, the piece is an observation of Icelandic aesthetics, an outline of Iceland's musical history, and a reflection of the Icelandic spirit. However, while I used this piece as a vehicle for expressing specific concepts about Icelandic music, the subject and inspiration of the piece is largely personal. *Lilja* is meant to represent my own

experience seeing Iceland and learning about the musical tradition and Icelandic people. I hope listeners will hear the ice, wind, waterfalls, oceans, cliffs, mountains, geysers, volcanoes, and other exceptional sites I had the privilege of experiencing. But more importantly, I hope listeners can feel my excitement of discovering the beauty in what was previously strange and foreign.

Figure 6

Main Theme as Revisited in the Chorale, Measures 317-24



Note: Reduction of full orchestral score.

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