



SCHOLA CANTORUM

REYKJAVICENSIS



About the Choir

Schola Cantorum is a chamber choir of 12-18 professional singers, founded in 1996 by the conductor Hörður Áskelsson, Music Director of Hallgrímskirkja in Reykjavík. Schola Cantorum has from the very start played an important role on the Icelandic music scene, especially in Hallgrímskirkja where the choir participates in the annual program of the Hallgrímskirkja Friends of the Arts Society with several concerts a year. The repertoire of Schola Cantorum consists mainly of renaissance, baroque and contemporary music including numerous premiere performances of works by Icelandic contemporary composers.



In recognition of their achievements Schola Cantorum was appointed "City of Reykjavík Official Music Group" for the year of 2006 and also nominated for the Nordic Music Prize in 2007. The choir was nominated for the *Icelandic music prize 2013* for its outstanding performance of works by Arvo Pärt at a concert in the Festival of Sacred Arts in August 2013.

Schola cantorum appears regularly in the Festival of Sacred Arts at Hallgrímskirkja, held bi-annually in Iceland. In this festival the choir, in collaboration with The Hague International Baroque Orchestra, has premiered "Joshua" and "Israel in Egypt" by G. F. Händel on the Icelandic music scene. The choir has also collaborated in performances of the *Weihnachts Oratorium* by J.S. Bach and Händel's *Messiah* on his 250th anniversary 2009. In the last five years Schola Cantorum has held very popular Wednesday concerts during June, July and August, introducing Icelandic music to foreign visitors in Hallgrímskirkja in connection with the International Organ Summer at Hallgrímskirkja and have added weekly concerts in December to their concert program, singing festive music, in the last two years.

Schola Cantorum has held concerts and represented Iceland at festivals in Paris and Noyon in France, Cologne Cathedral in Germany, Italy, Northern-Spain, Osaka in Japan, St. Olav Festival in Thronheim Norway and at the Nordic Church Music Festival in Helsinki, Finland, and won prizes in international competitions in Picardy, France in

1998 and Gorizia, Italy in 2002. The choir has also performed several times with alternative band Sigur Rós and Björk, both domestically and abroad, and with the Swedish experimental band Wildbirds & Peacedrums in Iceland. Recently Schola Cantorum sang in the theatre production, *Der Klang der Offenbarung des Göttlichen*, music by Kjartan Sveinsson at the Icelandic Artfest 2014.

Schola Cantorum released its first CD, *Principium* with choral music from the 16th and 17th century by composers such as Tallis, Byrd, Schein and Gesualdo. On its second CD, *Audi creator coeli*, Schola Cantorum sings Icelandic contemporary music, most of which was premiered by the choir. *Hallgrímsspassía* (The Passion of Christ) by Sigurður Sævarsson on passion hymns by Hallgímur Pétursson was premiered 2009 and released on CD 2010. The choir's CD, *Foldarskart* (Earths bright gems) 2012, contains many of Iceland's most beloved songs, including arrangements of old folk songs. The premiere of *Flétta* by Haukur Tómasson in the Reykjavík Arts Festival 2011 together with The Hallgrímskirkja Motet Choir and Reykjavík Chamber Orchestra was released on CD and DVD 2012. Hafliði Hallgrímsson's *Choral works* with Schola Cantorum, consisting solely of world premiere recordings, was published by Resonus Classics 2013 in England.

Other recordings in the choir's repertoire include the choral-orchestral compositions of Jón Leifs in collaboration with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, including the epic *Oratorio Edda I* for which the choir received excellent reviews. These recordings were released by the Swedish label BIS. The choir has also recorded with the esteemed Björk on her album *Medulla*, which was recorded almost entirely with vocals. The choir also performed with Björk in concerts in Reykjavík, London and Paris.

It is safe to say that Schola Cantorum has proven its worth in the Icelandic cultural life as well as abroad with its ambitious work.



About the Conductor



Hörður Áskelsson was born in Akureyri in the north of Iceland in 1953. He studied music in Akureyri and Reykjavík, before moving to Düsseldorf, Germany, in 1976 to study at the Robert Schumann Hochschule. He graduated as organist and choir conductor in 1981 with *summa cum laude*. After a year as Music Director in the Neanderkirche in Düsseldorf Áskelsson was appointed Music Director of Hallgrímskirkja in 1982.

In the same year he founded the Motet Choir of Hallgrímskirkja and was instigator of the founding of the Friends of the Arts Society of Hallgrímskirkja, which are twin cornerstones to the artistic activities in the church. In 1987 he established the Festival of Sacred Arts, since then a biannual event on the cultural scene in Iceland. In 1993 he founded the concert series "The Hallgrímskirkja International Organ Summer" and in 1996 Áskelsson founded the chamber choir Schola cantorum, which has become one of Iceland's most respected choirs.

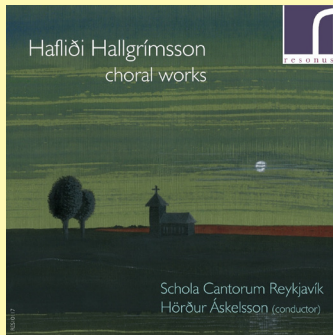
Hörður Áskelsson has received much recognition, and with his choirs he has participated in various music festivals and international competitions, winning prizes in Cork, Ireland 1996, Noyon, France 1998, Gorizia, Italy 2002 and Catalonia Spain 2014 (four gold awards and Grand Prix). He has conducted many oratorios, often with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, and premiered a number of Icelandic compositions. His performances have been recorded for radio and television and issued on numerous CDs. A recording of the oratorio *Passía* by Hafliði Hallgrímsson conducted by Áskelsson and released by the internationally renowned record company Ondine has received outstanding reviews in BBC Music Magazine, Gramophone, International Record Review and other media.

Hörður Áskelsson has also been a teacher of the organ and choir conducting at the Iceland National Church's Music School and in 1985-95 he was lecturer on liturgy at the University of Iceland Faculty of Theology. In the year 2000 Áskelsson was musical director of the events held to celebrate the Millennium of Christianity in Iceland. In 2002 he received both the Icelandic Music Prize and the Culture Prize of the newspaper DV for his outstanding activities in the year 2001. He was appointed Municipal Artist of Reykjavík in 2002, received the Knight's Cross of the Icelandic Order of the Falcon in 2004 and the Icelandic Optimism Prize in 2006. From 2005 to 2011, Hörður served as Director of Music for the National Icelandic Church.

From Our Repertoire

- Allegri:** Misere
- Bach:** Christmas Oratorio and various cantatas and motets
- Brahms:** Warum ist das Licht gegeben
- Britten:** Rejoice the Lamb
- Campra:** Requiem and De Profundis
- Fauré:** Requiem
- Guerrero:** Rorate caeli
- Gesualdo:** Responsoria and more
- Hafliði Hallgrímsson:** Sónhenda, Rura, rura barni, Endurkoma, Your Image, Myrtuskógur, Five Christmas carols. (All premiered 2011-13)
- Händel:** Orietur Stella, Duo Seraphim
- Händel:** Messiah, Israel In Egypt, Joshua
- Hassler:** Ad Dominum
- Haukur Tómasson:** Flétta (premiered 2011 with Hallgrímskirkja Motet Choir and Reykjavík Chamber Orchestra)
- Hreiðar Ingi Þorsteinsson:** Hallgrím's Oratorio, Nunc Dimittis
- Jón Leifs:** Choral orchestral works, Edda I (premiered 2006), Baldr, Hafís, Vorvísá (Spring Song)
- Kentish, Oliver:** Turn Thee Unto Me, (premiered 1999)
- Kjartan Sveinsson:** Der Klang der Offenbarung des Göttlichen
- Lassus:** Domine, Dominus Noster
- Macmillan:** Strathclyde Motets and other works
- Nystedt:** O Crux, Stabat mater
- Palestrina:** Missa Papae Marcelli, Alma redemptoris and more
- Pärt:** Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi secundum Joannem, Adam's Lament, The Beatitudes, Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis, Salve Regina and more
- Poulenc:** 4 Christmas Motets
- Purcell:** Hear My Prayer
- Schütz:** Geistliche konzerte, Deutsches Magnificat and other works
- Scarlatti:** Exultate Deo
- Sigurður Sævarsson:** Hallgrím's Passion, Christmas Oratorio, O Crux (Premiered 2008-2014)
- Speight, John A.:** Sam's Mass, Unto Us - A Christmas Oratorio (Premiered by Sc 1999 and 2001)
- Tomkins:** When David heard
- Viadana:** Exultate justi
- Victoria:** Requiem a 4 voces
- Vivaldi:** Gloria
- Weelkes:** When David heard
- Whitacre:** When David heard, Lux Aurumque
- Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson:** Ég hef augu mín til fjallanna, Claricitas (choir and organ), Kvöldbætur and many more...

Discography



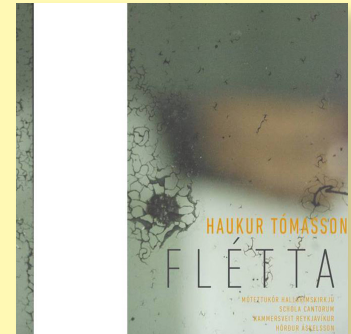
Choral works

Hafliði Hallgrímsson - 2013



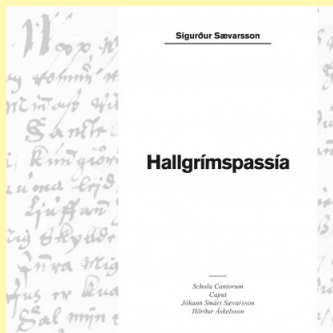
Foldarskart - *Earths bright gems*

Iceland's most beloved songs - 2012



Flétta

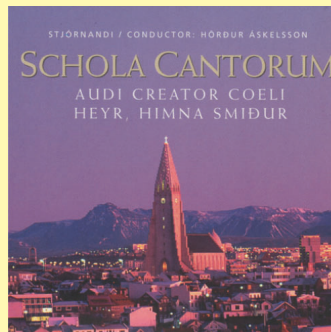
Haukur Tómasson - 2012



Hallgrímsspásía

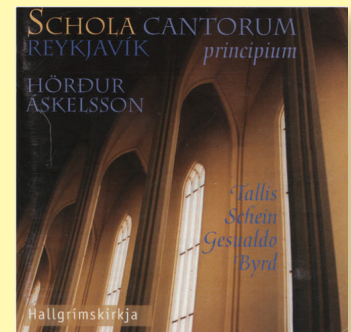
Hallgrímsspásía - *The Passion of Christ*

Sigurður Sævarsson - 2010



Heyr himna smíður - *Audi creator coeli*

Icelandic contemporary music - 2001



Principium

Music from the 16th and 17th century - 1999