



Hilmar Thórdarson

<https://www.hilmarthordarson.com>

+47 94860017 | hilmar@hilmarthordarson.com | Magnus Blindes veg 8a, 7052 Trondheim, Norway.

Biography

In pursuit of an openness of musical thought and vision –

Composer Hilmar Thórdarson's knowledge of traditional performance practices in combination with his explorations of new computer technology has profoundly influenced his musical voice. Indeed, he continues to push the boundaries of interactivity in music, in pursuit of creating a new kind of art form, where the boundaries between through-composed composition and the sonic arts are blurred, where there is a melding of the known and the unknown.

As a composer, researcher and educator, Thórdarson's oeuvre bears witness to this ongoing quest, as he creates soundscapes that further point the way to new unexplored possibilities. His openness to radical ideas are reflected in his compositions, whether that might be an interactive piece for a solo instrument or a full symphonic orchestral work.

It was in this spirit that Thórdarson created his interactive Conducting Digital System, or ConDiS, facilitated in part by a Norwegian Artistic Research Program. Requiring the wearing of a custom-built glove, called a ConGlove, the conductor is able to shape electronic expressions by controlling the overall balance, volume, tempo, and synchronisations of the accompanying electronic sounds, all while also conducting the performers.

His research culminated in his Kuki no Sukima (Between the Air), for nine instruments and sonic landscape, with the conductor using the ConGlove. The work was premiered at the Virtuoso Listener Festival in November 2017 by the Trondheim Sinfonietta, with Halldis Rønning conducting. A Nordic tour followed, with performances in Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Denmark. Its final performance took place in Rockheim, Trondheim in November 2018, as part of Thordarson's closing artistic research concert.

The ConDiS system has much promise for further possibilities, as there is still much to be discovered and explored. For example, how might the respective roles of a conductor, performer and improviser be redefined by this invention? Even farther afield, what if the conductor could fulfill the roll of a video jockey (better known as a VJ) and control live images on screen while controlling other components of a sonic world?

Thórdarson is eager to further pursue these possibilities and beyond hence his next project Hrafninn/Black Obsidian a multimedia performance work scheduled for premiere at the Reykjavik Art Festival in 2022.

Selected Compositions

| | |
|--|---|
| Sort Glimmer (2020) 25' | A work in progress of a visual and theatrical multimedia work for various numbers of instruments, interactive conductor wearing digital glove for live control of electronic sounds. 1 st workshop held in Bergen, Norway, June 13, 2020. 2 nd workshop scheduled in Reykjavik in the fall of 2021. World premiere scheduled for Reykjavik Art Festival June/July 2022. |
| Kuuki no Sukima (2017) 21'30" | For nine instruments and interactive conductor wearing digital conducting glove (ConGlove) for live control of electronic sounds. World premiere by the Trondheim Sinfonietta at the Virtuoso Listener Festival in Trondheim, November 2017. Other performances in Iceland, Faroe Islands and Denmark January-February and Trondheim November 2018. |
| Hljóðs bið ek (2014) 42'20" | For 5 instruments, interactive electronic sounds and video. Performed by AJO Ensemble at the Ráflofst Festival in Reykjavik, Iceland, Bodø Culture House and Capitol in Stockholm, May 2014. |
| Silence I Ask (2013) 15'00" | For voices and electronics. Performed by the Choir of Kjartan in Rockheim 2013. Revised 2018 and performed at Rockheim with interactive conductor using ConDiS – Conducting Digital System for live control of the electronic sounds. |
| Lupus Chorea (2006-12) 19'10" | For Symphony Orchestra. Premier performance by the Iceland Symphony Orchestra at the Dark Music Days Festival in Harpa Concert Hall, Reykjavik January 2015. |
| Arctic Circles (2013) 21'00" | Concert for Percussion and Orchestra. Premier performance by Bodø Sinfonietta and percussionist Jennifer Torrance at the Ilios Festival, Harstad, January 2014. |
| Cycles I 2010 8'10" | Trio for interactive flute, clarinet, cello and real time sound processing computer sounds. Performed by the Finnish Ensemble Defun at the Sláturtíð Festival in Reykjavik, October 2010 and Nordic Music Festival, Helsinki, October 2013. |
| Stray Bird (2009-10) 53'00" | Chamber Opera with live computer processing sounds. Performed by Strengjaleikhúsið at the Dark Music Days Festival in Reykjavik, January 2010. |
| Sononymus pieces for solo instruments and electronics. (2000-2010) | An sequence (12 in all) of works for various solo instruments and electronics using interactive technology. Three of the Sononymus pieces can be found on various CD's, Sononymus for Flute performed by Martial Nardau, Sononymus for Recorders, performed by Camilla Søderberg and Sononymus for Piano, performed by Tinna Thorsteinsdottir. |
| Goblins from the Land of Ice (1993-95) 90'00" | Interactive multimedia work for the Japan/American Harupin Ha Butoh Dance Theatre. Live interactive sound and video. Performed in various theatres among them Theatre Artaud in San Francisco, Theatre Merlan in Marseille and Theatre Chateaubriant in Toulon, France. |

Experience

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 2012 - | Founder and Artistic Director of CAVE production, Bodø, Norway |
| 2012 - | Conductor of the Icelandic Choir of Kjartan in Trondheim, Norway |
| 2001 - 2007 | Director of Computer Music, New Media, Iceland Academy of the Arts. Faculty of Iceland Academy of the Arts: Computer music composition and live interactive performance. |
| 1995 - 2012 | Director of Kopavogur Computer Music Centre (KCMC), department of Kopavogur School of Music. Faculty of Kopavogur School of Music: Computer music composition and live interactive performance. |
| 1995 – 2001 | Faculty of Reykjavik College of Music; Composition, Counterpoint and Tonal Harmony. |

Education

| | |
|-----------|---|
| June 2019 | PKUm - Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Doctoral Artistic Research Program |
| Mai 1991 | MA – Yale University School of Music. |
| Mai 1989 | MFA – California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). |
| Mai 1989 | BA – Reykjavik College of Music. |

Social Activities

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 2007-2011 | Co-founder and board member of Raflistafélag Íslands (Iceland Electronic Art Society). |
| 2007 | Founder of RAFlost an annual Festival of Electronic Arts. |
| 2002 - 2006 | Chairman of the Iceland Music Information Centre (MIC). |
| 2000 - 2012 | Board member, The Iceland Composers Society. |
| 1997 - 2001 | Program Committee of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. |
| 2000 | Director and founder of ART2000 international computer music festival |

Grants and Commissions

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 2020 | Music of Hilmar Thordarson. Art Council Norway, Portrett CD. Release late 2020 or early 2021 |
| 2019 | Hilmar Thordarson og Haldis Rønning – Sort Glimmer/Hrafninn. Art Council Norway (Kulturráðet) |
| 2019 – 2022 | Artistic Work Grant. Arts Council Norway (Kulturráðet). |
| 2019 | Norwegian-Icelandic cultural cooperation (Norsk – Íslandsk kulturfond). |
| 2016 | Trondheim Sinfonietta, Art Council of Norway commission. Kuuki No Sukima, for ensemble and interactive conductor wearing digital conducting glove. |
| 2014 | Norwegian Artistic Research Program. Independent artistic research developing Conducting Digital System (ConDiS). Allowing conductors to conduct electronic sounds as well as acoustic sounds. |
| 2014 | Scandinavia - Japan Sasakawa Foundation |
| 2013 | AJO Ensemble, commission for multimedia work, Arts Council Norway. |
| 2013 | Arctic Philharmonic Orchestra, Lyden av Norge, 200 years of constitution. |
| 2013 | Digidi – pilot project, Arts Council Norway, Kunst og Ny Media. |