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jazz ensemble úngút
SONGS OF ICELAND

songs of iceland

This is the sound of Iceland: rough and intimate, mysterious and hauntingly exciting. These are “songs about animals and criminals as well as being about love and tragic fate,” says Rósa Kristín Baldursdóttir, the voice of Salzburg based jazz ensemble úngút.

„úngút“ is an Icelandic expression which means „to brood, to hatch (out); hence a new life“. Ensemble úngút opens musical paths with the traditions of authentic Icelandic folk music. The archaic and powerful sound of the music is directly inspired by the eruptive Icelandic landscape. The songs are driven by the tension between a life with nature and the desire for shelter, warmth, and a feeling of security.

Pianist and composer Peter Arnesen was a successful London studio musician, recording and touring with well known jazz, rock and pop bands as well as being a founding member of The Rubettes. In ensemble úngút he presents a sensitive approach to Icelandic music, transforming them into lucid jazz pieces.

Rosa Baldursdóttir is a well known Icelandic singer having completed studies in classical singing and pedagogy in Iceland, London and Salzburg. She is a successful solo artist for Icelandic folk music, musicals and classical repertoire. In 1990 she founded TJARNARKVARTETTINN. This vocal quartet established a reputation for unique interpretations of traditional Icelandic folk music.

As the core of jazz ensemble úngút, Rosa Baldursdóttir together with Peter Arnesen continue to enchant international audiences with their Songs of Iceland.

traditional · Viðar

Guðmundsson · Gíslason

Guðmundsdóttir · trad. · Ásgeirsson

traditional

traditional · Rauter

Laxness · Ásgeirsson

Stefánsson · Ísólfsson

Ólafsson · Ísólfsson

Nordal · Laxness

12. September

Árnason · Árnason

traditional

Erlingsson · Ísólfsson

Sigurjónsson · traditional

Björnsson · Viðar

traditional · Rauter

1	Barnagælur Children's Rhymes	3:52	
2	Ég leitaði blárra blóma I Searched For Blue Flowers	4:48	
3	Vísur Vatnsenda-Rósu My Eyes And Your Eyes	3:52	
4	Krummi The Raven	4:47	
5	Kvöldá tekur Evening Arrives	3:10	
6	Hjá lygnri móðu Calm River	3:55	
7	Litla kvæðið um litlu hjónin Little Poem About a Little Couple	2:07	
8	Jarpur Jarpur	3:47	
9	Hvert Örstutt Spor Each Tiny Step	3:48	
10	Litli Tónlistarmaðurinn The Little Musician	4:12	
11	Það sem ekki má What Is Not Allowed	3:56	
12	Kindur jarma í kofunum The Sheep-Song	2:48	
13	Snati og Óli Snati and Oli	5:19	jazz ensemble úngút
14	Sofðu unga ástin mín Sleep Now Softly, Little Love	5:20	Rósa Kristín Baldursdóttir · vocals Einar Sigurðsson · bass
15	Kall sat undir kletti An Old Man Sat Under a Rock	3:53	Peter Arnesen · piano
16	Sof þú blíðust barnkind mín Sleep, My Gentle Little One	4:19	
	total time	63:55	All tracks arranged by Peter Arnesen and published by P.Art1

Ég leitaði blárra blóma

I Searched For Blue Flowers

I searched for blue flowers
to bind you a garland.

But the pale, frosty night arrived
and destroyed the most beautiful petals.

And I did not succeed
catching the harmonies that surrounded me
because they were wordless dreams
of love, spring and you.

And soon the summer leaves the south
and sings for you all the poems
that I would have wanted to sing for you
about the sunny and calm evenings.

It strews your path with roses
and stays awake by your bed
and humbly lays at your breast
its whitest blossom.

I know I am envious of the spring
that wakes you every morning,
that sings to you its poem
and kisses you goodbye at sunset.

Still, every ray of sunlight that brightens your way
brings me happiness and joy,
and I wish that song, love and roses
will always be your story.

Kall sat undir kletti

An Old Man Sat Under a Rock

An old man sat under a rock
and played his strings
He had a strange beard
and teeth, and laughed.

The elfen maid inside the rock
heard a gentle sound.
She sneaked out of the rock
and listened.

Since then they have not
been seen around here again
The old one probably wasn't
as old as he pretended

Vísur Vatnsenda-Rósu

My Eyes And Your Eyes

My eyes and your eyes.

Oh, those lovely gems.

Mine is yours and yours is mine,
you know what I'm thinking.

It was long ago I saw him.

Truly handsome he was.

With all that may grace a man
he was endowed beyond all others.

I mourn for you more than all the others,
worn out by constant weeping.

Oh, that we had never met,
dearly beloved friend.

Rósa Guðmundsdóttir (1795–1855) was a poor common woman who never enjoyed formal education. Nevertheless she was a very good poet and possessed an exact command of the rhyme and meaning in her poems. In this song she describes her loss of her beloved one into the arms of another woman of a higher social status. She longs for the man she could never have and regrets her deep feelings for him.

Sofuðu unga ástin mín

Sleep Now Softly Little Love

Sleep now softly little love,

outside rain is falling

Mother guards your treasure trove,
hoard of bones and chest for stones.

We shall not stay awake through nights of
darkness.

Many secrets darkness keeps,
my mind is dark and heavy.

Many times I've black sand seen
scorch the grass of meadows green.

Deep in the ice the fissures groan in darkness.

Sleep now softly, sleep so long,
late is best to waken.

Troubles soon will teach you so,
while each day will quickly go,
that people will love, lose, cry and
mourn each other.

This song is taken from a play by Jóhann Sigurdjónsson (1880–1919), first performed in 1912. The subject is the outlaw Fjalla-Eyvindur, a legend in Icelandic folk tales. He lived in the 17th century, a period of famine and extreme poverty in Iceland, forcing people to steal for survival.



Sof þú blíðust barnkind mín
Sleep, My Gentle, Little one

Sleep, my gentle, little one
now, close your eyes.
The God of peace has set you free,
so sleep in sweet tranquillity.
Dream of our Lord in heaven high,
and hush-hush-a-by.

Hjá lygnri móðu
Calm River

An evening rare beyond compare
The river glistened;
And standing there a maiden fair,
Her dress at the top unfastened.
Let mine be thine, and live with me forever;
Mankind's sorrows all afflict thee never.
Her fresh young gaze and winsome ways
Charmed each meeting;
With kindly phrase to him she pays
A tender greeting.
Let mine be thine, and live with me forever;
Mankind's sorrows all afflict thee never.
Her shining eyes and fond replies
Will leave him never,
Until he dies and buried lies
Alone forever.
Let mine be thine, and live with me forever;
Mankind's sorrows all afflict thee never.

Translation: Magnús Magnússon

Barnagælur
Children's Rhymes

Let us endure
the long winter months,
until spring
when Grána will calve
In Denmark the dove
is ornamented with rings.
Her beak is laden with gold
right up to her eyes.
there is chirping and fluttering,
the swans render their songs.
I make as if I am asleep
even though I am wide awake.

Translation: Peter Arnesen

Litli Tónlistarmaðurinn
Little Musician

Mama – are you awake, my mama?
Mama – I want to come close to you
Oh mama, it would be fun to be grown
I would conduct an orchestra and a choir
Mama – You are so sweet, my mama
I'd like to come closer to you
Oh but mama, earlier I dreamt a dream of you
but fell out of bed, and it disturbed me.
You were a queen in a big palace
The band – elves, men and trolls –
Played for you and sang
You were so magnificent
The trolls pounded the drums,
Fairies played the flutes
The violins human beings
The mandolin I
Mama.





Litla kvæðið um litlu hjónin

Little Poem About a Little Couple

In a little bay, in a little town / is a little house.
In hiding inside a low wall / is a little mouse.
In the little rooms a tiny
and quiet little couple walks around
because Gunna and Jón are both tiny people.
They have a low and little table
and a little dish
and little spoon and a little knife / and little fish
and little coffee and little bread
and little rice,
because Gunna and Jón eat little
The both have light and little secrets,
and life gave them a little brain
and a little soul
They compare their whole life / to a small town
and a low sky, small earth / and a calm sea.
They had for a long time, a little hope
of little children,
that would play with little boats
at a little pond,
but finally the little hope betrayed
the little fools,
and little does little Gunna love
little Jón



