

Cultural Empathy Through Music in Iceland:
An Examination of Icelandic Art Songs by Nationalist Composer Jón Leifs

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgments.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii-iv
List of Tables	v
List of Songs and Musical Examples.....	vi
Notes Regarding Research	vii
Chapter	
1. Why Sing and Study Icelandic music?	1-2
2: History of Icelandic Music	3-9
3: Jón Leifs, Jóhann Jónsson and Hallgrímur Pétursson Biographical Research	10-20
4: Song Translations and IPA with Diction notes	21-34
Bibliography	35-36

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Abstract

This doctoral project is a resource for voice students, teachers, and coaches who are seeking to explore Icelandic vocal music. It will predominantly focus on works by Icelandic composer Jón Leifs. With the objective of making Icelandic Art songs more accessible to singers, my project will present a historical background of Icelandic music as well as song cycles by Jón Leifs set to poems by Jóhann Jónsson and Hallgrímur Pétursson. The two song cycles, *Kirkjulög* Op. 12a and *Tvö sönglög* Op. 14a, are presented with word-for-word and vernacular translations, as well as phonetic transcriptions and diction notes.

Soon after people began settling in Iceland in the 9th century music making and storytelling became an integral part of the lives of Icelanders. In 1380 Iceland and Norway became governed by Denmark and this began a time of repression and tragedy for Icelanders. After gaining independence from Denmark in 1944 CE Icelanders began to find their national identity, which coincides with the nationalism movement of the late 19th century and the early 20th century. The project examines this movement in Iceland as a way of discovering what cultural elements were important enough to be maintained during the development of the now independent nation. In Iceland, two forms of musical traditions *Rímur* and *Tvísöngur*, that date back to the 14th century, were updated and incorporated in the national musical identity of Iceland during this time.

We, as musicians, must develop cultural empathy for the music in Iceland in order to expand interest in Icelandic music and culture. This is done by studying the history and culture of the country and the potential motivations for musical compositions. Many singers shy away from the idea of performing Icelandic music because of a lack of accessible music or the knowledge about where to look, and the daunting task of learning the language. However, Icelandic vocal repertoire has a unique sound

and timbre and would offer a compelling contrast to more typical repertoire on recitals. This project offers singers guidance as they learn and perform the music of Jón Leifs and other Icelandic composers.

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Icelandic Monophthongs IPA Chart	23
2. Icelandic Diphthongs IPA Chart.....	24
3. Icelandic Consonants IPA Chart	27-28

LIST OF SONGS AND MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Song	Page
<i>Ísland, farsalda frón</i>	7
<i>Máninn líður</i> Op. 14a No. 1.....	12, 33
<i>Vögguvísa</i> Op. 14a No. 2.....	12, 34
<i>Vertu, guð faðir, faðir minn</i> Op. 12a No. 1	17, 29
<i>Allt eins og blómstrið eina</i> Op. 12a No. 2.....	19, 30-31
<i>Upp, upp mín sál og allt mitt geð</i> Op. 12a No. 3.....	19, 32

Notes Regarding Research

1. There are limited sources in English regarding Icelandic music and history. The primary resources for this project are limited to those currently translated or written specifically for an English reading audience. I hope that more becomes available in the coming years.
2. In Iceland, people are named using the patronymic system. This means that a person's last name is a combination of their father's first name plus "-son" or "-dóttir". As a result, people's last names are not as identifying as their first names. Following the Icelandic tradition all Icelanders in this project are referred to by their first name or their first and last name, but never exclusively by their last name. In the bibliography, Icelanders are listed by their first name alphabetically and the standard of surname first is applied to all other names.
3. The music for this project was purchased online via the Icelandic Music Information Centre.

Chapter 1: Why Sing and Study Icelandic Music?

There is so much good music in the world and singers have a vast number of options when it comes to repertoire to study and perform. So why learn Icelandic music? The Icelandic language is unique and challenges the singer to expand their language skills and the music offers a variety of challenges for singers at different stages of development. Chapter four of this project highlights some of the more difficult Icelandic sounds and offers some guidance on mastering them. Pedagogically the diphthongs in the Icelandic language and short consonants help to teach resonance and a sung legato, respectively. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, the Icelandic diphthongs are pronounced with more time on the second vowel than German or English diphthongs and the second vowel is always a more closed vowel than the first. Some singers find it helpful to use closed vowels like [i] and [u] to find resonance and by having the diphthong close to these vowels can help a singer lean the first vowel towards a more closed position, and potentially find better efficiency. There are also many mixed vowels that once the shape is mastered, may provide the singer with a different sensation of resonance. Finally, there are generally less consonants that require a stop in the sound and doubled consonants are aspirate which will help a singer work towards a legato line. Once a singer overcomes the language barrier, these songs are just as approachable as traditional western art songs and create a different musical landscape that would complement any musical performance. In addition, learning music from other cultures builds cultural empathy and helps us understand people who come from a different background.

Some of the traits of the Icelandic language, such as the unvoiced consonants, aspirated consonants, and mixed vowel diphthongs create a quite specific aural landscape for song. Icelanders are very proud of their language and have even organized committees of people responsible for

safeguarding the language traditions. Their language is heavily tied to who they are as a people and the Icelandic language was an important part of their nationalism movement of the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition to highlighting aspects of the nation's language, many countries, including Iceland, used music and art to highlight important qualities of their country and community during this time. This period of nation building, and patriotism were particularly important to Iceland as they had just gained independence from Denmark in 1944 and national music is developed as a way of creating a national identity through language, traditions, and rituals. If we can agree that music is capable of reflecting the intrinsic values, lifestyle, and history of a country, then by studying music we can have a better understanding of the country itself. The development of a nation's music gives us clues to what was important during the growth of the nation and what remains important today.

Iceland is seen by many as a socially and economically progressive country. It was the first country to elect an openly homosexual prime minister and its use of thermal energy has inspired many countries to develop renewable energy sources. Jón Leifs represents this progressiveness in his music by being one of the first composers to compose music with the intention of using old musical traditions in a new way to represent Iceland in the 20th century. By fully engaging with the musical history of Iceland, which has inspired the song sets discussed in this project, we can begin to develop a better understanding of what is important to Icelanders including how we are different and what we have in common. This can be used to embody the performance of Icelandic music as well as open our minds politically and socially.

Chapter 2: History of Icelandic Music

Iceland began to find its voice in music after gaining independence from Denmark in 1944. Although many Icelanders speak English, Icelandic is the national language of Iceland. The language is unique and contrasts with other Scandinavian countries in that the syntax and pronunciation of Icelandic have been maintained since the settlement period beginning in the 9th century even after being governed by a Danish speaking country. This has produced a sense of “authenticity” for the language. Pride in language and traditions is a cornerstone of music from the nationalist period. Discussing the importance of language in nationalism, Richard Taruskin says, “the concept of authenticity – faithfulness to one’s nature was born. It became an explicit goal of the arts, not just an inherent property, to express the specific truth of the ‘imagined community’ they served and assist in its self-definition.”¹ Taruskin maintains that language is the best tool to express a nation’s culture, and Icelandic, being retained from the settlement years, brings Icelanders much pride in their history and culture. Along with the language, two forms of Icelandic music, Rímur (Rhyme-Song) and Tvísöngur (Two-Part Song), were preserved since the early settlement period around 870 CE when Icelanders developed their own strong music traditions. These secular styles were affected by Christianity being adopted in the year 1000 CE which added a sacred layer to texts that had been exclusively secular until then. In the 12th century when art began to be documented we find evidence of both the original secular tradition and the overlay of Christianity in the poetry of these song styles primarily passed on through the oral tradition.²

¹ Richard Taruskin, “Nationalism,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed 8 December, 2018. <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>.

² Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019) 9.

Due to their strong connections to the days before Danish rule, Rímur and Tvísöngur, would eventually be great candidates for composers to use to represent the shared history and culture of the people of Iceland. However, some Icelanders had perceived the original styles as primitive and as a representation of an oppressed society. During the nationalism movement, composers would borrow qualities of these styles to represent Iceland in music. While Rímur is not widely heard today, the unique tonal elements of Tvísöngur can be heard in Icelandic contemporary popular music by artists like Björk. This shows that Iceland continues to maintain nationalist ideologies in music today.

Modern Rímur (Rhyme song) is based on the 14th century artistic form that combines poetry with song. Consisting of folklore, epics, and historical sagas, Rímur would be performed in households as a form of entertainment, and it was the performer's job to make these recognized stories compelling. In this style a performer can use the same melody with different poems that share the same meter, so once you knew the melody you could change the song by changing the poem. One of the inherent musical traits of Rímur is the use of mixed meter because it accommodates the poetic structure.³ To allow for better storytelling, the poems would be sung in a chant style and would traditionally be sung with a guttural, swallowed sound. However, singing with a guttural sound is no longer common in modern Rímur.⁴ In 1929 the Iðunn Society of Intoners and Versifiers was founded in Reykjavik and they were charged with the task of preserving and safeguarding the tradition. Immediately taking ownership of the style, the group began to police the practice of the musical form by restricting transcriptions of songs and requiring that members of the society obtain permission to perform Rímur outside of the societies meetings, which inadvertently transformed the creative, improvisational practice into a more

³ Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 47.

⁴ Pandora Hopkins, "Iceland." *Grove Music Online*, accessed October 17, 2018. <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>.

rigid style.⁶ However, the emphasis on preserving the text and melody allowed for many composers to use aspects of this style in the later 19th and 20th centuries as a national music style was being established. Even though the society did not allow the modification or notating of the melodies, it did allow a few amateur recordings to be made in the 1930's.⁷ Moreover, the emphasis on the story telling was preserved by the government even holding competitions for poets to write new verses for the ríma (singular for Rímur). Inspired by Rímur, composers of the 19th and 20th century continued to write pieces with an emphasis being on the language and storytelling. Jón Leifs (1899-1968) is one of the composers who took a special interest in incorporating the qualities of Rímur in his 19th century compositions. Two of his sets of songs discussed in Chapter 3 show a modern interpretation of the Rímur style.

Another style of music that would eventually be revived during the 19th-20th centuries is Tvísöngur (Two-part songs). These songs are similar to the European counterpoint tradition of polyphonic plainsong, which is often comprised of a melody with a descant. In Iceland these descants were all performed in parallel fourths and fifths to the melody, which would later be seen by Icelanders as an outdated practice that represented a period of oppression and hardship.⁸ However, Icelanders would later reengage with Tvísöngur as a tradition that represents the nation's identity. Author Árni H. Ingólfsson, a native Icelandic who has written extensively about the musical traditions in Iceland, points out that when two Latin schools responsible for teaching Tvísöngur in Iceland closed in the late 18th century, the Tvísöngur tradition reverted to its folk song origins and again began to be passed down orally.⁹ Árni also notes that anything resembling folk music during the 19th century was seen as primitive

⁶ Ragnheiður Ólafsdóttir, "'Pride and Prejudice': The Preservation of the Icelandic *Rímur* Tradition," *Year for Traditional Music* 40, (2008): 106, accessed March 9, 2020, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/docview/235107482?accountid=465>.

⁷ Ragnheiður Ólafsdóttir, "Pride and Prejudice," *Year for Traditional Music* 40, (2008): 106.

⁸ Árni H. Ingólfsson, "These are the Things You Never Forget", (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2003), 252.

⁹ Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 49.

by native Icelanders and would need to be revised before being incorporated into the nationalist music of the 19th and 20th century. The tradition of Tvísöngur was essentially lost until the early 20th century when Bjarni Þorsteinsson, a priest and part time composer, collected and distributed the anthology *Íslensk Þjóðlög (Icelandic Folksongs)* consisting of folk songs that included some examples of Tvísöngur.¹⁰ Although there is not an English translation of this book, it is still available in print in Icelandic. This book would later influence Jón Liefs as he began composing and inspired him to begin using traditional Icelandic styles.¹¹ Once Tvísöngur was revived, the connections among storytelling, folklore, and language were drawn between Tvísöngur and nationalist music.

Due to its long-standing history in Iceland, Tvísöngur was clearly the strongest candidate to be adopted as a national music, but it needed to be modernized in order for the Icelanders to be proud of the living tradition. The tradition of parallel fourths and fifths between the melody and the descant was modified to include passing tones and octaves during the 19th century so that it would sound less primitive, and thus acceptable, to modern Icelanders. Although the musical compositions were updated, the themes in the poetry remained relatively unchanged. All the songs discussed in Chapter 3 have strong Tvísöngur roots, and Jón even included an optional second voice in the song *Allt eins og blómstrið eina (Just like a flower)* from Op. 12a.

Oftentimes these songs discussed Iceland's concept of mother nature being a woman and provider for the country, and also included folklore and sacred texts. These are themes that became key elements of many nationalistic songs in Iceland even after Tvísöngur was left to Icelandic choirs and nationalist choirs to perform for tourists.¹² *Ísland, farsalda frón (Iceland, fortunate isle)* is one of the

¹⁰ Göran Bergendal, *New Music in Iceland*, trans. Peter Lyne (Reykjavik: Iceland Music Information Centre, 1991), 11.

¹¹ Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 45.

¹² Árni, "These are the Things You Never Forget", 256.

songs composed during the 19th century that represents all of the ideals of nationalistic text. Below is an example of this melody set by an unknown composer with a descant in the top voice in addition to the text translation. You can see the consistent parallel fifths in addition to some use of unison singing and some voice crossing, that are essential elements of *Tvísöngur*. A partial translation of the text is also below; the song goes on to talk about the distinctive features of Icelandic landscape discussing the snow-top glaciers, the expansive blue skies, and oceans.

6. Ísland! farsælda frón

13

Text translation: Iceland, fortunate isle! Our beautiful, bountiful mother! Where are your fortune and fame, freedom and virtue of old?¹⁴

Properties of *Tvísöngur* are even heard in popular music in subsequent centuries. Björk, Iceland's best-known entertainer on the international stage today, highlights Icelandic nature and nationalist themes in her music. Characteristic elements in the song *Ísland, farsalda frón* inspired her 1997 hit song *Jóga (Yoga)*, in which she uses parallel fifths in addition to computer generated volcanic

¹³ Árni, "These are the Things You Never Forget", 294.

¹⁴ Dick Ringer, "Iceland (Ísland)," Digital Collections University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries, accessed December 17, 2018, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/Jonas/Island/Island.html>.

bursts as the beat.¹⁵ In the opening of this song we hear two string instruments starting on a perfect fifth, the lower instrument on G-sharp and the higher instrument on D-sharp. A third instrument introduces the melody on top of the drone created by the lower two voices and often introduces the third of the chord and ends in octaves with the lowest instrument. Occasionally the lower two drone voices move to major thirds or octaves, which is a modern interpretation of *Tvísöngur*. A few bars later the two string instruments maintain parallel fifths with each other throughout each chord change to accompany Björk's melody. Finally, at measure 21 we hear high string instruments in perfect fourths with the aforementioned low strings maintaining their perfect fifths. The text of Björk's song *Jóga* does not specifically have "Icelandic" features given that she's not singing in Icelandic or singing about any particular nationalist theme, but the sound of bursting volcanoes as a predominant percussive feature centers the listener in Iceland. In her music video there are more visual connections between music and the Icelandic environment, further representing how national identity is an important aspect of Icelandic culture and music.¹⁶ Understanding the influence of historical Icelandic compositional styles on contemporary music can help generate more investment in and cultural empathy for the unique qualities of Icelandic music.

Icelandic vocal music has a rich history that deserves to be studied, performed, and taught alongside western music. The traditions of *Rímur* and *Tvísöngur*, and their place in nationalist music, speak to what is important to the Icelandic culture. When a performer has information and context on composers, poets, and their life experiences, it is possible to make sense of and give a personally authentic performance of the music. This cultural empathy makes Icelandic music more accessible and understood while also acknowledging its inherent value.

¹⁵ Ární, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 340.

¹⁶ Ární, "'These are the Things You Never Forget'", 254-256.

So, why should we care about Icelandic music? Why should we perform it? The hardships and repression experienced by the Icelanders and the growing desire to feel connected to their traditions and environment form the cornerstones of Icelandic music and are things to which every person can relate. In the end, performers and listeners want to experience music that they care about or find valuable. Examining the historical and cultural traditions in nationalistic Icelandic music can teach us a lot about what it means to be an Icelandic, reveals intrinsic value, and creates accessibility to the music.

Chapter 3: Jón Leifs, Jóhann Jónsson and Hallgrímur Pétursson Biographical Research

Jón Leifs (1899-1968) was an Icelandic composer who collected 14th century musical elements to be used as a nationalist expression in the 20th century. Jón was born at Sólheimar farm in northwestern Iceland but his family later moved outside Reykjavik in 1900.¹⁷ His formative years were spent in Iceland and many of his compositions include elements that reflect the extreme weather and landscape in Iceland, vernacular singing styles such as Rímur and Tvísöngur, and Scandinavian mythology. Some of his compositions were also inspired by important life events such as the birth and death of family members. He seems to have found comfort in turning to composing to celebrate or mourn these life events. We know this because Jón kept regular journals, and left a valuable account of his life and his feelings regarding his own composition and why he was so eager to develop a national style of music for Iceland. These journal entries discuss his feelings of failure as a composer when he could not depict in music what he saw or heard, and this frustration could be one of the reasons why there are some big gaps in his composing life.

It's important to know that Jón spent much of his composing years outside of Iceland and he composed largely for foreign audiences.¹⁸ After leaving Iceland, Jón studied at The Royal Conservatory of Music in Leipzig but had a lot of health troubles that his doctors were unable to diagnose, so his studies were often interrupted with debilitating illnesses that kept him bedridden for days or weeks at a time. In Leipzig Jón met Annie Riethof, who he would later marry. Annie and Jón would eventually have two daughters named Snót and Líf and they would remain in Germany during the Second World War.

¹⁷ Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 9.

¹⁸ Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 4.

During his years in Germany, Jón came into contact with composers and music dedicated to German nationalism, an experience that inspired him to create music expressing in a similar fashion the distinctive character of his native Iceland. A further impetus for this endeavor came from Bjarni Þorsteinsson's *Íslensk Þjóðlög* (*Icelandic Folksongs*, 1906–09)¹⁹, a massive compendium of Icelandic music that includes among its diverse contents more than 500 folk songs transcribed by Þorsteinsson and others.²⁰ It was from these folk songs, as well as melodies and remnants of Rímur and Tvísöngur that he collected during his own travels throughout the country, that Jón formulated his conception of Icelandic music. In an article published in *Skínir* in 1922, he summarized its essential elements: “irregular rhythms, parallel fifths, modal melodies (most frequently Dorian and Lydian) with ‘missing’ notes, narrow ambitus, and recurring motivic patterns.”²¹ These elements are evident in both of the song sets discussed and analyzed in this project.

Tvö sönglög Op. 14a for voice and piano, was composed by Jón Leifs between 1929 and 1930 and consists of two songs titled *Máninn líður* (*Moon Song*) and *Vögguvísa* (*Lullaby*). In June of 1929 Jón, Annie, and their daughter Snót moved to Travemünde, which is near the Baltic Sea. It was here, only five weeks after their second daughter Líf was born, that Jón composed *Vögguvísa*. Jóhann Jónsson, a friend of Jón's family, wrote the poem to celebrate the birth, and suggested the new father set it to music.²² Both poems from Op. 14a were written by Jóhann Jónsson and are included below. More information about the poems, including transcriptions using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), and vernacular and word-for-word translations can be found in Chapter 4.

¹⁹ Bjarni Þorsteinsson, *Íslensk þjóðlög* 1906.

²⁰ Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 45, 51.

²¹ Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 49.

²² Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 93.

Máninn líður Op 14a No. 1

Máninn líður.
 Dauðinn ríður.
 Skuggar gráir hljótt yfir hjarnið sveima.
 Gaman er um gæfu horfna að dreyma.
 Máninn líður.
 - Jóhann Jónsson

Moon passes by

Moon passes by.
 Death rides.
 Gray shadows wander silently over snow-cruled earth.
 It is pleasant to dream about vanished fortune.
 Moon passes by.
 - Translation by Hayden Godfrey

Vögguvísa Op. 14a No. 2

Þei, þei og ró.
 Þögn breiðist yfir allt.
 Hnigin er sól í sjó.
 Sof þú í bliðri ró.
 Við höfum vakað nóg.
 Værðar þú njóta skalt.
 Þei, þei og ró.
 Þögn breiðist yfir allt.
 - Jóhann Jónsson

Lullaby

Be silent and come to peace.
 Silence spreads over everything.
 Bowed is the sun into the sea.
 Sleep thou in blithe peace.
 We have been awake enough.
 You shall enjoy safety.
 Be silent and come to peace.
 Silence spreads over everything
 - Translation by Hayden Godfrey

Poet and writer Jóhann Jónsson, was born in 1896 in Iceland and at the age of 24 he moved to Leipzig where he would die in 1932 from tuberculosis. Unfortunately, more information about Jóhann is not available due to his untimely death and the lack of published material. Jón Leifs was deeply affected by the death of his friend Jóhann and he would become obsessed with the idea that he would die before he was able to accomplish his task of creating a national Icelandic sound. Árni H. Ingólfsson has translated many of Jón Leifs letters in his book *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland* and one of the letters Jón wrote to his sister a year after the death of his friend Jóhann discusses his obsession with death. A year after Jóhann's death Jón writes, "My main concern is that I will not live to complete the works I must finish, and that no one else can accomplish. Everything else seems to be trivial in

comparison.”²³ It was during this year, 1933, that Jón began working on one of his biggest works titled *Edda I* which would regrettably not be completed before he died in 1969.

Tragedy and death were ever present in Jón’s life, so his continuous concerns with death were not unfounded. There were several occasions in Jón’s life where he turned to composing songs in response to a death in his family. It was the death of Jón’s father in 1929, the same year that his second daughter was born, that motivated the setting of *Kirkjulög Op. 12a (Three Hymns)*, which includes three songs for voice and piano, *Vertu, Guð faðir, faðir minn (Be thou God my Father)*, *Allt eins og blómstrið eina*²⁴ (*Just like a Flower*), and *Upp, upp mín sál og allt mitt geð (Up, up my soul and all my spirit)*. All are set to poetry by Hallgrímur Pétursson. There are many spellings of the title of Op. 12a depending on the source such as *Three Hymns (Þrjú íslensk kirkjulög)* as Árni Ingólfsson spells it²⁵ and *3 íslensk sálmalög* [3 Icelandic Hymns] as it is spelled on Oxford Music Online by the same author.²⁶ However, in this project this author has decided to use the spelling *Kirkjulög Op. 12a* because this is the way it appears on the score purchased from the Iceland Music Information Centre.²⁷

²³ Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 207.

²⁴ Depending on which edition you look at the first word in this title, “Allt” (*all*), will be spelled as either “Allt” or “Alt”. This is because the spelling of Icelandic words has evolved over time and this word evolved to be spelled as “Allt” around the 20th century. The author communicated via email on April 15th, 2020 with author Árni Ingólfsson who explained that, “‘Alt’ is a spelling that is now fully obsolete (except for when referencing a voice type).” He also explains that Hallgrímur Pétursson used the, “‘Allt’ spelling in his autograph manuscript” but that, “Jóhann Jónsson might have used ‘alt’ in his poem.” Jón Leifs would have been familiar with both spellings and depending on the printed edition one will encounter either spelling. The editions of both *Kirkjulög Op. 12a* and *Tvö sönglög Op. 14a*, that the author purchased from the Icelandic Music Information Centre, includes both spellings of this word throughout the poetry. When studying this score, one should be familiar with both spellings, however, it should be noted that the pronunciation and meaning has remained the same regardless of the spelling.

²⁵ Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 346.

²⁶ Árni Heimir Ingólfsson, *Leifs [Thorleifsson], Jón*, Grove Music Online, accessed on April 22, 2020, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.16341>.

²⁷ The author has also communicated with Árni Ingólfsson via email on April 15th, 2020 regarding this spelling and he says he, “believe(s) the title page of op. 12 refers to it as *Kirkjulög* in Icelandic.”

Additionally, the scores purchased from the Iceland Music Information Centre include only the first verse for all the songs in this set. The author has decided to include an additional verse for each of the songs in the set. The verses chosen to include for *Vertu*, *Guð faðir, faðir minn* and *Upp, upp mín sál og allt mitt geð* are the ones recorded by Icelandic tenor Finnur Bjarnason on his CD recording of the complete songs of Jón Leifs, so that is what has been included in this project.²⁸ However, the verses included for *Allt eins og blómstrið eina* have cultural significance in Iceland that is discussed later in this chapter.

Hallgrímur Pétursson was an Icelandic poet who lived between 1614 and 1674 and is known for his religious poetry.²⁹ Before becoming a poet Hallgrímur had been a laborer who abandoned his education twice for other adventures. He eventually married Guðríður Símonardóttir in Iceland. However, the newlywed couple lived in poverty after having to pay a hefty fine for their marriage since Guðríður had already been married.³⁰ After years of working as a laborer Hallgrímur approached the Bishop at Skálholt to inquire about becoming a parson. The Bishop decided to ordain Hallgrímur in 1644 and this elevated his position in society and gave him the means to no longer live in poverty. However, his new position was not immediately accepted by the community and congregation. After enduring many years of humiliation by the congregation he moved to Saurbæ where he served as a parson from 1651-1669. At this point in his life he was known as one of the greatest Christian scholars and poets of his time.

During his time in Saurbæ he took it upon himself to help the illiterate congregation memorize scriptures by setting them to poetry, which would later become hymns, and he started with the first

²⁸ Finnur Bjarnason (tenor) and Örn Magnússon (piano), *Jón Leifs Complete Songs*, recorded February 2016, BIS-2170, 2016, compact disc.

²⁹ "Hallgrímur Pétursson," Encyclopedia Britannica, Accessed October 2, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hallgrimur-Petursson>.

³⁰ Skuli Johnson, ed. *Iceland's Thousand Years a Series of Popular Lectures on the History of Literature of Iceland* (Winnipeg: Pub. under the auspices of the Icelandic Canadian Club and the Icelandic National League, 1945), 114.

book of Samuel. Hallgrímur became the first Icelander to write “original hymns based on the Scriptures or on other prose writings.”³¹ Around the age of fifty, Hallgrímur developed leprosy and it was during this time that he wrote fifty poems that would be compiled into a book called *Passion Hymns*. The poems in this book are different than his other poems because they fit together to tell the story of Christ’s last conflict in the Upper Room to the death and resurrection. Author and translator Charles Venn Pilcher, who has translated many of the *Passion Hymns* into English, says, “The hymns were written to be sung, generally speaking, to German chorales of the sixteenth century.”³² According to Ingibjörg Eyþórsdóttir from the Icelandic Music Information Centre, “Hallgrímur Pétursson always indicates to which melody his hymns should be sung, that is, he gives the Icelandic names of the hymns”, but the *Passion Hymns*, “have not been published with their melodies.” After its completion in the year 1659 the entire set of hymns was revised and published in 1666. Although the poetry for Op. 12a no. 2, a beloved funeral hymn, does not come from the *Passion Hymns*, it was printed in the 52nd edition in 1943.³³ The number of times this work has been republished and translated speaks to the continued importance of the poems to many generations of people around the world.

Skuli quotes Dr. Jón Helgason, a late Bishop of Iceland, as he speaks to the importance of Hallgrímur’s *Passion Hymns* saying, “With his *Passion Hymns* Hallgrímur has not only earned for himself a seat of honor among the great poets of the world. It is not an overstatement to say that his religious poems can be regarded as the most precious pearls of evangelical hymnody, and it is not easy to find another hymnwriter who has been held in such esteem by his countrymen.”³⁴

³¹ Skuli Johnson, 117.

³² Charles Venn Pilcher, *The Passion-Hymns of Iceland*, (London: R.Scott, 1913), 9, <https://archive.org/details/thepassionhymns00pilcuoft/page/8/mode/2up>.

³³ Skuli Johnson, 121.

³⁴ Skuli Johnson, 123.

According to Oliver Kentish at the Iceland Music Information Centre, “[the hymns] are still very much a part of the fabric of Icelanders' lives.”³⁵ During the Lent season it is tradition that one of the hymns be read on the radio and in the home of many Icelanders. The first and the third poems from Jón Leifs *Kirkjulög Op. 12a* come from the *Passion Hymns* and the second poem is a Lutheran inspired poem written by Hallgrímur.

The first song in the set, *Vertu, Guð faðir, faðir minn (Be thou God my father)*, comes from a common Icelandic children's prayer and is the 44th psalm in the *Passion Hymns*. It is also psalm 373 in the Icelandic Hymnal. This is an original setting of a well-known hymn that Jón learned as a child and had even begun teaching his daughter Snót before composing this setting after the death of his father.³⁶ Jón notes in the score that this song is, “best suited to a boy soprano”, but the tessitura and the demands of the music make it appropriate for a singer at many different stages in development.

The author, in collaboration with Hayden Godfrey and Michael Knudson, has offered a translation of the texts from the *Passion Hymns* included in this project even though it has been translated to English by many other scholars, in an effort to have a translation that is close to the word-for-word translation. Singers are encouraged to know the word-for-word translation when learning these songs so that important words in the poem can be highlighted in the performance of these songs. Many other translations by English scholars today are intended to be used to sing Hallgrímur's hymns in English. The translations in this project are not intended for this purpose. Instead, a singer may use these vernacular translations to accompany the word-for-word translations offered at the end of the project. If singers are interested in the sung translations, they are encouraged to read Charles Venn Pilcher's *Icelandic*

³⁵ Oliver Kentish from the Icelandic Music Information Centre, email message to Cayla Rosché, January 27, 2020.

³⁶ Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 92.

*Meditations on the Passion.*³⁷

Vertu, guð faðir, faðir minn Op 12a No. 1

Be thou God my Father

Vertu, guð faðir, faðir minn,
í frelsarans Jesú nafni,
hönd þín leiði mig út og inn,
svo allri synd ég hafni.

Be thou God my father,
In the savior Jesus' name,
May your hand lead me around,
As I reject all sin.

Höndin þín, drottinn, hlífi mér,
þá heims ég aðstoð missi,
en nær sem þú mig hirtir hér,
hönd þína' eg glaður kyssi.
- Hallgrímur Pétursson

May thy hand, Lord, protect me,
When the world is against me,
And when as thou herdest me to heaven,
I may gladly kiss thy hand.
- Translations by Hayden Godfrey and Michael Knudson

Knowing the circumstances that motivated Jón to compose this song gives a personal subtext to this Lutheran hymn. Traditionally this song's significance is as a prayer to the God in Heaven but the fact that Jón's father taught him this song and that he composed it as a eulogy after his father died gives the text even more depth. Jón had a good relationship with his parents, which can be seen through the many letters that they exchanged and the amount of financial support his parents gave him as a struggling composer and conductor. One reading of this poem could be as a classic plea for the Lord to guide the surviving family members as they move through the world after their loss. Another reading is a plea to Jón's father to be with them as he claims his new place in heaven. Of course there are many other ways to interpret this poem, and any poem, but knowing about Jón's life and his history of composing in response to major events in his life, the singer can decide whether or not to use this background to inspire their performance.

³⁷ Charles Venn Pilcher, *Icelandic Meditations on the Passion* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923), entire work. In this translation Pilcher offers a historical background of this profound text including a short bibliography on Halgímur Pétursson. The translator has provided these English translations to follow the same meter and rhyme-scheme as the poems in Icelandic, which allows them to be sung to the original Icelandic hymn melody. Singing translations do not always represent the word-for-word meaning of the text but are instead meant to be poetic and fit the poetic structure of the piece in the original language. This is not a complete translation of all 50 hymns from the original *Passion Hymns*, but his work is the most widely recognized translation of these poems.

The second piece in this set, *Allt eins og blómstrið eina* (*Just like a flower*) is the only piece in this project that has an optional second voice part, and thus resembles the Tvísöngur tradition even in the voice part. This funeral chorale is well known in Iceland and consists of 13 verses, but traditionally only the first and last verses are sung at Lutheran funerals. For this reason, only the first and last verses are included in this project. Oliver Kentish also explains that the two verses are separated by the “moldun” where the pastor places three small amounts of earth on the coffin, with the words, ‘From the earth you have come, to the earth you shall return and from the earth shall you rise up.’”³⁸ As discussed previously, the poetry for this song was not part of the *Passion Hymns*, so after its composition in 1671 it was published in a collection titled *Hallgrímskver* (*Hallgrímur’s Volume*) in 1755.³⁹ It has also been published as hymn number 273 in the Icelandic Hymnal. Since then this popular hymn has been published in many other editions and collections of poetry. In this hymn Hallgrímur Pétursson discusses the fragility of life and the strength that is received through Jesus as one faces death. This is also the only song in the set that comes from a transcription of a field recording that Jón made in 1926 and is “an ornamented version of this beloved funeral chorale”.⁴⁰

³⁸ Kentish, email message to Rosché, January 27, 2020.

³⁹ Ingibjörg Eyþórsdóttir from the Icelandic Music Information Centre, email message to Cayla Rosché, April 20, 2020.

⁴⁰ Árni, *Jón Leifs and the Musical Invention of Iceland*, 92.

Allt eins og blómstrið eina Op. 12a No. 2

Allt eins og blómstrið eina
 upp vex á sléttri grund,
 fagurt með frjóvgun hreina
 fyrst um dags morgunstund,
 á snöggu augabragði
 af skorið verður fljótt,
 lit og blöð niður lagði,
 líf mannlegt endar skjótt.

Ég lifi' í Jesú nafni,
 í Jesú nafni' eg dey,
 þó heilsa' og líf mér hafni,
 hræðist ég dauðann ei.
 Dauði, ég óttast eigi
 afl þitt né valdið gilt,
 í Kristí krafti' eg segi:
 Kom þú sæll, þá þú vilt.
 - Hallgrímur Pétursson

Just like a flower

Just like a flower
 It grows up on flat ground,
 Beautifully with pure fertilizer,
 First in the day's morning hours,
 In a quick instant
 It will soon be shorn off,
 Its color and leaves decaying,
 Human life passes quickly.

I live in Jesus' name,
 In Jesus' name I die,
 Although health and life reject me,
 I am not frightened by death.
 Death, I fear not
 Neither your strength nor power is valid,
 By the power of Christ I say:
 You're welcome to come when you want.
 - Translations by Hayden Godfrey and Michael Knudson

The final song in this set, *Upp, upp, mín sál og allt mitt geð* (*Up, up my soul and all my spirit*), is the first psalm in the *Passion Hymns*. It is lively and bright, which is very different from the other two in this set. There are 27 verses in this psalm, and the score from the Iceland Music Information Centre shows only one Icelandic verse, but verses 1 and 8 are included in this project.

Upp, upp mín sál og allt mitt geð Op 12a No. 3 Up, up my soul and all my spirit

Upp, upp mín sál og allt mitt geð,
 Upp mitt hjarta og rómur með,
 Hugur og tunga hjálpi til,
 Herrans þínu ég minnast vil.

Ó, Jesú, gef þinn anda mér.
 Allt svo verði til dýrðar þér.
 Uppþeiknað, sungið, sagt og téð.
 Síðan þess aðrir njóti með.
 - Hallgrímur Pétursson

Up, up my soul and all my spirit.
 Up my heart and voice as well.
 May the mind and tongue help.
 As I will remember the Lord's passion.

Oh, Jesus give your spirit to me.
 All might be to your glory
 Drawn up, sung, said, and expressed.
 So that others might also enjoy it.
 - Translations by Hayden Godfrey and Michael Knudson

The five songs included in this project all have a folksong quality and primitive sound with the piano accompaniment reinforcing the soundscape through its homorhythmic and repetitive tonal structure. This makes them feel hymn-like and akin to the amateur performance practice of singing songs at home for personal entertainment or religious reasons. In his lifetime Jón Leifs wrote only 32 pieces for voice and piano, but he wrote several pieces for choir alone and choir with orchestra.⁴¹ Jón demonstrates many different compositional techniques within the other 27 voice pieces that are not analyzed in this project and they vary in level of difficulty for both the pianist and singer. It is also important to note that Jón Leifs wrote many instrumental works that called for a bigger instrumentation than many ensembles had readily available and would require a large amount of rehearsal time. It is for this reason that many of his works were never performed in Iceland before his death.

⁴¹ In February of 2016, tenor Finnur Bjarnson and pianist Örn Magnússon released a CD of all 32 songs for voice and piano by Jón Leifs. This would be a good reference for singers to become familiar with Jón's music for voice and piano.

Chapter 4: Song Translations and IPA with Diction notes

There are few resources to help nonnative Icelandic speakers learn the basic rules for colloquial pronunciation. One of the challenges for singers is to find these resources, sift through all the rules and exceptions for spoken Icelandic and then apply that to sung Icelandic. The purpose of this part of the project is to give singers the resources to learn the singing diction for five Icelandic songs by Jón Leifs. This is certainly not intended to be a comprehensive diction guide for all Icelandic song but will give singers a foundation from which to explore Icelandic song. Singers are encouraged to browse the resources cited here and in the bibliography for further research. As always, singing diction is somewhat subjective and the IPA provided as a resource is meant to be as objective as possible. Some sounds will need to be isolated and broken down before they can be mastered. Special instructions for these sounds are also included. Even with all these instructions and IPA, singers are encouraged to listen to native Icelandic speakers sing or speak in order to get the sound of the language in their ear.

Word Stress

In colloquial Icelandic, the stress is always on the first syllable of the word no matter how many syllables there are or if there are accents on vowels. Accents on vowels change the pronunciation of the vowel rather than notate the length or stress of the vowel.

Vowels

There are eleven vowels and six diphthongs in the Icelandic language and their standard pronunciation is given in Table 1: Icelandic Vowels and Table 2: Icelandic Diphthongs below. For a further study of the rules and exceptions please refer to Daisy Neijmann's book *Colloquial Icelandic: The*

Complete Course for Beginners.⁴² There is also an article by Judith Gans in the *Journal of Singing* that attempts to break down the rules for Icelandic singing diction, but I found this chart to be difficult to use.⁴³ However, singers are encouraged to read this article by Gans because she provides great resources for acquiring Icelandic repertoire and further research on Icelandic art song tradition. Most of the examples below are based on charts in the out-of-print book *The Pronunciation of Modern Icelandic* by Ari Páll Kristinsson.⁴⁴ The vowels below are the eleven Icelandic vowels and six diphthongs with the phoneme combinations that change the pronunciation of the vowel or diphthong. Notice that there are no exceptions to the pronunciation of diphthongs. Vowels are typically shorter when followed by more than one consonant. This is notated using a colon following the vowel. Use this chart to become familiar with the phonemes and their typical pronunciation.

Diphthongs

There are six diphthongs in the Icelandic language, and they are pronounced a little bit differently than German or English diphthongs. The singer will need to be sure to vocalize the second vowel and not think of it like a glide into the next syllable, but they are not of equal value to the primary vowel in the syllable. Generally accented “o” and “a” will be a combination of the first vowel with a slide towards [u]. I have chosen to write the diphthongs as [o:u] and [a:u] rather than [o:ʷ] and [a:ʷ] because having the auditory target of the [u] in the second part of the diphthong helps keep the first vowel round and allows there to be a slide between the two vowels. The symbol [:] denotes length of the

⁴² Daisy Neijmann, *Colloquial Icelandic: The Complete Course for Beginners (Colloquial Series)*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015).

⁴³ Judith Gans, “Language and Diction – Music from the Land of the Vikings: Singing in Icelandic,” *Journal of Singing – The Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing* 62, no 4 (March 2006): 437-451.

⁴⁴ Ari Páll Kristinsson, *The Pronunciation of Modern Icelandic*, 3rd ed. (Reykjavik: Málvisindastofnun Háskóla Íslands, 1988), 8-9. The author has been given permission by Ari to reproduce the charts from this book and make appropriate alterations.

vowel that it follows. This is not a controversial idea but is a distinction that will change the approach to the pronunciation of these vowels. The other four diphthongs are pronounced with the tongue moving towards the second vowel without fully making it to the true position of the second vowel. For example, in the Icelandic word “læra” (learn) the “æ” is the diphthong [a:i], but the singer will move their tongue somewhere between an [i] and [ɪ] for the second vowel. I have chosen to transcribe these using a closed vowel as the second vowel so that singers do not shy away from moving towards the position of the more closed vowel.

Table 1: Icelandic Monophthongs IPA Chart

Monophthongs	IPA	Exceptions (with phoneme combinations)	Icelandic Example with IPA
í	[i]		“tíma” [ti:ma]
ý	[i]		“sýndu” [sintu]
i	[ɪ]	[i] in: ing, ink, igi At end of words	“finnst” [fɪnst]
y	[ɪ]	[i] in: yng, ynk, ygi At end of words sound	“synd” [sɪnt]
e	[ɛ]	[ɛ:i] in: eng, enk, egi, egj	“drekka” [drɛk:ka]
é	[jɛ]		“ég” [jɛ]
u	[ø]	[u] in: ung, unk	“upp” [øp:p]
ö	[œ]	[œ:y] in: öng, önk, ögi	“höndin” [hœntɪn]
ú	[u]		“þú” [θu]
o	[ɔ]	[ɔ:i] in: ogi	“og” [ɔ]
a	[a]	[a:u] in: ang, ank [a:i] in: agi	“nafni” [napni]

Table 2: Icelandic Diphthong IPA Chart

Diphthongs	IPA	Icelandic Example with IPA
ei	[ɛ:i]	“leiði” [lɛ:iði]
ey	[ɛ:i]	“dey” [dɛ:i]
au	[œ:y]	“auga” [œ:yga]
ó	[o:u]	“ró” [ro:u]
æ	[a:i]	“nær” [na:ɪr]
á	[a:u]	“ást” [a:ust]

Consonants

In Icelandic, consonants can be pronounced many ways depending on their position in the word, what other consonants are around them, and if they are doubled. The following chart attempts to account for all the possible variations of consonant pronunciation. There are a few rules that will be challenging for English speakers and will require some practice. This list of rules and subsequent consonant charts are not intended to cover all exceptions. Singers should seek out Neijmann’s book and Gans’ article on diction for more information.

Rule 1: All stops in Icelandic are unvoiced, so phonemes, “b, d, and g” will be pronounced like their unvoiced counterparts.

- b → [p]
- d → [t]
- g → [k] or [kj]
 - The phoneme “g” followed by “a,o,u” will produce the velar consonant [k] as in [ku].
 - The phoneme “g” followed by “i, í, y, ý” will produce the palatal consonant plus a glide [kj] as in [kji].

- Note: The phoneme “k” followed by “i, í, y, ý” will produce a slightly different sound: [kj^h] in the initial position. See rule 4.
- Practice saying [kji] and [ku] and notice where the tongue moves to produce the consonant depending on the vowel.⁴⁵

Rule 2: Double “ll” has a special pronunciation in Icelandic that needs to be practiced.

- The double “ll” is transcribed [tl] pronounced as one sound with a stop of the tongue on the alveolar ridge (like a “t”), but then a breath release without moving the tip of the tongue. When pronouncing this sound one should feel a release of air out the side of the tongue and hear an almost /t/ like sound.
- For Example: The Icelandic word “kalla” (shout) will be pronounced [kat:tl̥a]. Practice isolating the sound [t:tl̥] before applying it to the full word and remember that the tongue does not move from the position of the [t] when the air releases for the [l̥]. One should think of this as one sound.
 - Exceptions:
 - When a double “ll” is followed by a “t” it will be pronounced as a single “l” like in the word “allt” (all) [alt̥].

Rule 3: Double “nn” is “pronounced as [tn̥] after an accented vowel or diphthong”.⁴⁶

- This sound is produced by placing the tip of the tongue on the alveolar ridge [t] and releasing the [n̥] through the nose.
 - Keep in mind that this is a stop consonant and the [t] will not be aspirated and that the [n̥] is less voiced and more of a release of air.

⁴⁵ Ari, *The Pronunciation of Modern Icelandic*, 18.

⁴⁶ Daisy Neijmann, *Colloquial Icelandic: The Complete Course for Beginners (Colloquial Series)*, accessed via electronic book, quote located under section “Consonant Clusters”.

Rule 4a: Initial consonants “p, t, and k” will be aspirate. They will be transcribed [p^h], [t^h] and [k^h] respectively.

- The superscript [h] denotes a release of air before the vowel. When this is achieved correctly, this will result in the consonant being less plosive.
- In the medial position, these consonants will be less aspirate.

Rule 4b: Doubled “p, t, k, s” are aspirated and will be transcribed in a similar way to the consonants in rule 3, but with the aspiration before the consonant: [h^hp], [h^ht], [h^hk] and [h^hs].

- Make note that these doubled consonants do not change the length of the consonant, but rather add preaspiration to the consonant. All other doubled consonants, besides “ll” (described in Rule 2 and “nn” described in Rule 3) in “stressed syllables are twice as long as single consonants”.⁴⁷

Rule 4c: Just like the double consonants, the cluster consonants “pl, pn, tl, tn, kl, kn” will be preaspirated when they’re in between vowels: [h^hpl], [h^hpn], [h^htn], [h^hkl], and [h^hkn].

Note regarding Rules 4a-c:

- The [h] sound regardless of whether it’s pre or post aspirated is pronounced as a typical [h] not as a German ach-laut [x].⁴⁸

Rule 5: The consonant clusters “rl, rn, sl, sn” have a [t] inserted between the consonants becoming: [r^tl], [r^tn], [s^tl], and [s^tn] only when in the middle position of a word.

Rule 6: The voiced velar fricative [ɣ] is one that singers will want to practice. It is almost inaudible, which is what makes it complicated to master. Sometimes at the end of word the sound is basically dropped

⁴⁷ Daisy Neijmann, *Colloquial Icelandic: The Complete Course for Beginners (Colloquial Series)*, accessed via electronic book, quote located under section “Consonant Clusters”.

⁴⁸ Ari, *The Pronunciation of Modern Icelandic*, 54.

like in the words “og” (and) and “ég” (I). In the IPA for the Jón songs below the [ɣ] has been maintained at the end of words, but keep in mind that they are often nearly silent.

- Try voicing the glide [j] to master the sound [ɣ] or listen to examples online.⁴⁹
- This sound is somewhere between a [j] and [g].
 - o Try saying the word “dagur” (day) with a [g]:[dagʊr] and with a [j]:[dajʊr] back to back and find a middle ground for the voicing of the sound [ɣ] to pronounce the word with the correct pronunciation [dayʊr].

Rule 7: The consonants “n, m, l” are occasionally unvoiced and are transcribed as [ɲ], [ɱ] and [ɭ] respectively. Please see Table 3 for the instances when they will become unvoiced.

- This sound is just a tap at the place of the consonant rather than sustaining a resonant sound.

Table 3: Icelandic Consonants IPA Chart

Consonant	IPA	Icelandic Example with IPA
p	[p ^h]	penni [p ^h ɛn:n:i]
	[p]	tapa [t ^h a:pa]
	[f]	skipta [skjɪfta]
	[^h p]	upp [ø ^h p]
t	[t ^h]	taska [t ^h aska]
	[t]	láta [la:uta]
	[^h t]	drottinn [drø ^h tɪn]
k	[k ^h] (aspirated with [j] at beginning of word. See rule 1 and 4a)	kista [k ^h ɪsta]
	[k ^h]	kasta [k ^h asta]
	[kj]	poki [p ^h o:kji]
	[k]	taka [t ^h a:ka]
	[x]	rakt [raxt]
	[^h k]	fékk [fjɛ ^h k]
b	[p]	bær [pa:ir]
d	[t]	dalur [ta:lør]
g	[kj]	gítar [kji:tar]
	[k]	gat [ka:t]
	[x]	hægt [hæ:ixt]
	[ɣ] *after vowels and before “a,u,ð,r” and at end of words	saga [sa:ɣa]

⁴⁹ Ari, *The Pronunciation of Modern Icelandic*, 19.

	[j] *between vowels	lygi [li:ji]
v	[v]	vasi [va:sɪ]
f	[f]	fá [fa:u]
	[v]	lifa [lɪ:va]
	[p]	sofna [sɔpna]
	[m] in fn+d	hefnd [hɛmt]
	[m̥] in fn+t *unvoiced [m]	nefnt [nɛmt]
ð	[ð] (voiced)	úða [u:ða]
	[θ] *before “k” voiceless ⁵⁰	iðka [ɪpka]
þ	[θ] (unvoiced)	þurfa [þœrva]
s	[s]	sól [so:ul]
	[ʰs]	dreissar [drɛ:iʰsar]
j	[j]	já [ja:u]
h	[h]	hundur [hœntœr]
	[kʰ] in -hv combination	hvað [kʰvað]
	[j] in -hj combination	hjón [jo:un]
	[jɛ] in -hé combination	hér [jɛ: r]
	[r] in -hr combination *unvoiced [r]	hrópa [ro:upa]
	[l̥] in -hl combination *unvoiced [l]	hlusta [lœsta]
	[ŋ]	hnútur [nu:tœr]
x	[xs]	vaxa [vaxsa]
n	[n]	nú [nu]
	[ŋ]	vanta [vaŋta]
	[ɲ]	enginn [ɛ:ɲkɲɪn]
	[ŋ]	finger [fɪŋkœr]
m	[m]	mús [mus]
	[m̥]	lampi [lɑmpi]
l	[l]	lás [la:us]
	[l̥]	sulta [sœl̥ta]
	[tɫ]	kalla [kat:tɫa]
r	[r]	rós [ro:us]
	[ɾ]	orka [ɔrka]

The next section of this project includes the IPA, word-for-word, and vernacular translations for five songs by Jón Leifs. This is provided through collaboration with Michael Knudson and Hayden Godfrey.

⁵⁰ Stefán Einarsson, *Icelandic* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1979), 13.

Kirkjulög Op. 12a No. 1 **Vertu, Guð faðir, faðir minn**

Text by Hallgrímur Pétursson (1614-1674)

Set by Jón Leifs (1899-1968)

Vertu Guð faðir, faðir minn,
 [vɛr.tø kvøð fa.ðir fa.ðir min]
 Be God father, father mine,
 (Be thou God my father)

Í frelsarans Jesú nafni,
 [i frɛl.sar.ans jɛ.su nap.ni]
 In the savior Jesus' name,

hönd þín leiði mig út og inn,
 [hœnt θin lɛ:i.ði miɣ ut o in]
 Hand thy lead me out and in,
 (May your hand lead me around,)

svo allri synd ég hafni.
 [svø at:tl.ri sint jɛ hap.nɪ]
 As all sin I reject.
 (As I reject all sin.)

Höndin þín, drottinn, hlífi mér,
 [hœn.tɪn θin drɔʰtɪn ɫi.vi mjɛr]
 Hand thy Lord, protect me,
 (May thy hand, Lord, protect me,)

þá heims ég aðstoð missi,
 [θa:u hɛ:i.ms jɛ að.stoð miʰsi]
 Then the world I support lose,
 (When the world is against me,)

en nær sem þú mig hirtir hér,
 [ɛn na:ir sɛm θu mi hɪr.tɪr hjɛr,]
 And when as thou me herdest here [to heaven],
 (And when you herdest me to heaven,)

hönd þína ég glaður kyssi.
 [hœnt θi.na jɛ kla.ðør kiʰsi]
 Hand thy I gladly kiss.
 (I may gladly kiss thy hand.)

Kirkjulög Op. 12a No. 2 **Allt eins og blómstrið eina**
 Text by Hallgrímur Pétursson (1614-1674)
 Set by Jón Leifs (1899-1968)

Allt eins og blómstrið eina
 [alt ɛ:inz ɔ blo:um.strið ɛ:ina]
 All like and flower a
 (Just like a flower)

upp vex á sléttri grund,
 [ʊp vɛks a:u sljeʰti krønt]
 Up grows on flat ground,
 (it grows up on flat ground,)

fagurt með frjóvgun hreina,
 [fay.ʊrt með frjo:uv.ɣøn hrɛ:i.na]
 Beautifully with pure fertilizer,

fyrst um dags morgunstund,
 [fɪrst ʊm daks mɔr.ɣøn.stønt]
 First in the day's morning hours,

Á snöggum augabragði
 [a:u snœ.g:gð œ:y.ɣa.bray.ði]
 In a quick instant

Af skorið verður fljótt,
 [af skɔr.ið ver.ðør fljo:uʰt]
 It will soon be shorn off,

Lit og blöð niður lagði,
 [lit ɔ blœð ni.ðør lay.ði]
 Its color and leaves decaying,

Líf mannlegt endar skjótt.
 [lif man:n.lɛxt ɛn.dar skjo:uʰt]
 Life human passes quickly.

Ég lifi' í Jesú nafni,
 [jɛ li.vi i jɛ.su nap.ni]
 I live in Jesus' name,

í Jesú nafni' eg dey,
 [i jɛ.su nap.ni jɛ dɛ:i]
 In Jesus' name I die,

þó heilsa' og lif mér hafni,
 [θo:u hɛ:il.sa ɔ lif mjɛr hap.ni]
 All though health and life me reject,
 "All though health and life reject me,"

hræðist ég dauðann ei.
 [hra:i.ðɪst jɛ dø:y.ðan ɛ:i]
 To frighten I death not.
 (I am not frightened by death.)

Dauði, ég óttast eigi,
 [døy.ði jɛ o:u^htast ɛ:iji]
 Death, I fear not
 Note: "eigi" is an older form of the contemporary word "ekki"

afl þitt né valdið gilt,
 [avl θɪt nɛ val.tɪð kɪlt]
 Strength your nor power valid,
 (Neither your strength nor power is has sway),

í Kristí krafti' ég segi:
 [i kɾɪ.sti kraf.ti jɛ sɛ:ji]
 In Christ power I say:
 (By the power of Christ, I say:)

Kom þú sæll, þá þú vilt.
 [kɔm θu sa:it:tl θa:u θu vɪlt]
 Come you happily, when you want.
 (You're welcome to come when you want.)

Kirkjulög Op. 12a No. 3 **Upp, upp mín sál og allt mitt geð**

Text by Hallgrímur Pétursson (1614-1674)

Set by Jón Leifs (1899-1968)

Upp, upp, mín sál og allt mitt geð.
 [øʰp, øʰp mɪn sa:ul ɔ alt mɪʰt kɛð]
 Up, up my soul and all my spirit.

Upp, mitt hjarta og rómur með.
 [øʰp, mɪt hja:ta ɔ ro:u.mør mɛð]
 Up, my heart and voice with.
 (Up my heart and voice as well.)

Hugur og tunga hjálpi til.
 [hø.γør ɔ tuŋa hja:ul.pi tɪl]
 Mind and tongue help to.
 (May the mind and tongue help.)

Herrans þínu ég minnst vil.
 [hɛ.r:ans þɪnø jɛγ mɪ.n:nast vɪl]
 The Lord's torment I remember will.
 (As I will remember the Lord's passion.)

Ó, Jesú, gef þinn anda mér,
 [o:u jɛ.su kɛv θɪn an.da mɛr]
 Oh, Jesus give your spirit to me,

allt svo verði til dýrðar þér
 [alt* svɔ vɛr.ði tɪl dɪr.ðar θjɛr]
 All might be to glory yours
 (All might be to your glory)

*the double "ll" here is pronounced as a single "l" due to the following "t" and the modern pronunciation of this word.

uppteiknað, sungið, sagt og téð,
 [øʰp.tɛ:ik.nað suŋ.ɪð saxt ɔ tjɛð]
 Drawn up sung, said, and expressed,

síðan þess aðrir njóti með.
 [si.ðan θɛs aðrɪr njo:u.tɪ mɛð]
 Since of that others benefit with.
 (So that others might also enjoy it.)

Tvö Sönglög Op. 14a No. 1 **Máninn líður.**

Text by Jóhann Jónsson (1896-1932)

Set by Jón Leifs (1899-1968)

Máninn líður.

[ma:u.nɪn:n li:ðʊr]

Moon passes-by.

Dauðinn ríður.

[dœ:yðɪn ri:ðʊr]

Death Rides.

Skuggar gráir hljótt yfir hjarnið sveima.

[skʊ.g:gar kra:u.ɪr ljo:ut ɪv.ɪr jɑr.d.nið sve:i.ma]

Shadows gray silently over snow wander.

(Gray shadows wander silently over snow-cruled earth.)

Gaman er um gæfu horfna að dreyma.

[ka:m.an ɛr øm ka:ivø hɔr.pna að drɛ:i.ma]

Pleasant it-is about luck vanished to dream.

(It is pleasant to dream about vanished fortune.)

Máninn líður.

[ma:u.nɪn:n li:ðʊr]

Moon passes-by.

Tvö Sönglög Op. 14a No. 2 **Vögguvísa**

Text by Jóhann Jónsson (1896-1932)

Set by Jón Leifs (1899-1968)

Þey, þey og ró.
 [θɛ:i, θɛ:i ɔ ro:u]
 Be silent, be silent and peace.

(Be silent and come to peace.)

Þögn breiðist yfir allt
 [θœkn brɛ:i.ðist iv.ɪr alt]
 Silence spreads over everything.

Hnigin er sól ísjó.
 [hni:.jin ɛr so:ul i.sjo:u]
 Bowed is the sun into the sea.

(The sun has bowed into the sea.)

Sof þú í blíðri ró.
 [sɔv ðu i bli.ði ro:u]
 Sleep thou in blithe peace.

Við höfum vakað nóg.
 [við hæ.vøm va:.kað no:u]
 We have been awake enough.

(We have been awake long enough.)

Værðar þú njóta skalt.
 [va:ir.ðar ðu: njo:u.ta skalt]
 safety thou enjoy shalt.

(You shall enjoy safety.)

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