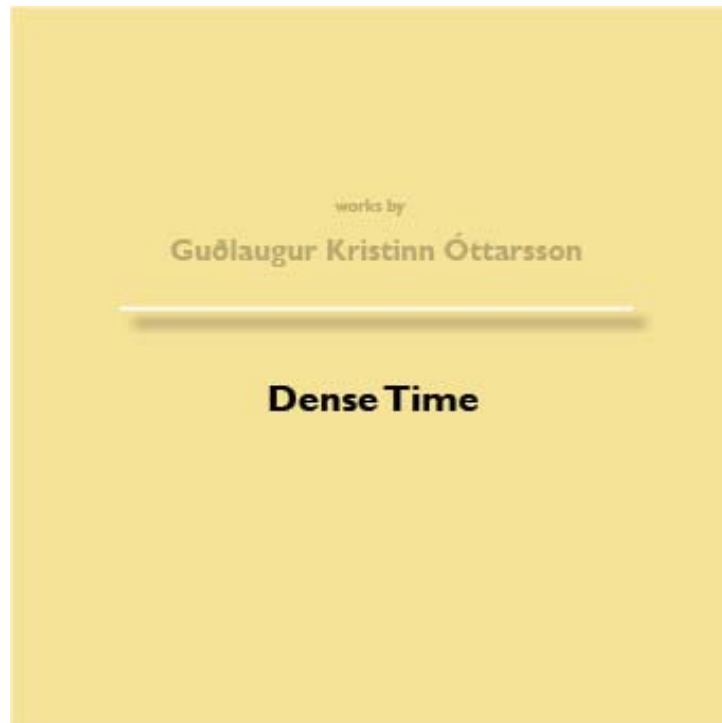


DENSE TIME - PRESS RELEASE



DENSE TIME contains compositions by Guðlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson from the last two decades, reflecting his research in music theory and his extensive collaborations with musicians and bands such as Þeyr, K.U.K.L., Björk, Psycick TV, Current 99 and Megas, to name but a few.

Himself a virtuoso guitarist and experienced studio producer, Óttarsson is joined on this album by various prominent Icelandic musicians and vocalists. The compositions range from jazz to post-punk with echoes of Bach and ambient music, the time signatures running to 5/4 and 7/8 alongside the more familiar 4/4 and 6/8.

1. *Zontal*..... 4:22
2. *Seventh Seal*... 5:12
3. *Sirius*..... 4:24
4. *Patre*..... 3:56
5. *Findings*..... 5:52
6. *Stefjahreimur*... 6:25
7. *Stígðu mig*..... 1:44
8. *Partir*..... 6:04
9. *Síðasta ég*..... 2:55
10. *Essence*..... 4:33
11. *Closure*..... 3:48

1. ZONTAL (septet)

Birgir Mogensen, bass
Davíð Þór Jónsson, piano, percussion
Einar Arnaldur Melax, DX7
Georg Bjarnason, double bass
Guðlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson, guitar, lyrics
Magnús Þór Jónsson, voice
Sigtryggur Baldursson, kalimba
Þór Eldon, lyrics

Zontal was written in 1985 when Björk and GKO operated a duo alongside K.U.K.L. The piece was performed in many concerts but Björk and GKO recorded it in a session which also included Patre, Stígðu mig and Síðasta ég. The engineer in these sessions, Mel Jefferson, thought the music sounded classical and called the duo “The Elgar Sisters”. The recordings have since come to be known as The Elgar Sisters Sessions. Compositionally, the piece is a sort of back-to-front blues with a diabolus. The work is horizontal in two ways: The text that Björk sang and is now read by Megas is a poem by Þór Eldon called Horizontal Position and the piece itself is written in a “horizontal” key, of which no more will be said. To Eldon’s text are added some words from a paper by GKO on sub-nuclear structures, Platonic solids and magic numbers.

Á nóttunni er ég föstur karfi,
 og syndi inni þér ég,
 leggst undir voldugar dælur, og hitna.
 Líkaminn er drasl – lárétt stelling hefur séð til þess.

Niðurstaða:

Menn eru án höfða,
 breiðstrætin liggja á hliðinni,
 og það er einhver, að dansa við mig.

The Platonic Solids explain the “break” in the Magic Number sequence, where spherical packing takes over.

The first three Magic Numbers yield to the Platonic Solids – while the remaining respect spherical packing.

2. SEVENTH SEAL (decet)

Áki Ásgeirsson, trumpets, horn
Birgir Baldursson, drums
Brynjólfur Snorrason, voice
Georg Bjarnason, bass
Guðlaugur K. Óttarsson, vibraphone, arranger
Hafþór Ólafsson, voice
Hörður Áskelsson, church bells
Ingi Garðar Erlendsson, trombone
Magnús Guðmundsson, voice
Magnús Jensson, trombone

GKO wrote the **Seventh Seal** based on his reflections on the Book of Revelation, initially when his band Þeyr broke up in the spring of 1983. K.U.K.L. started up that summer and GKO arranged the Seventh Seal for the band. GKO has played this work in concerts ever since and it has changed a lot through the years, especially since 1998. The time signature is seven-eighths in the verses but changes to 9/8 and to 13/8 towards the end. The healer Brynjólfur Snorrason reads the New Testament text in the first verse.

Og ég sá,
 er lambið lauk upp
 einu af innsigliunum sjö,
 og ég heyrði
 eina af verunum fjórum
 segja eins og með þrumuraust:
 Kom!

Þegar lambið lauk upp
 sjöunda innsiglinu,
 varð þögn á himni
 hér um bil hálfra stund.
 Og ég sá englana sjö,
 sem stóðu frammi fyrir Guði,
 og þeim voru fengnar
 sjö básúnur.

Og sjöundi engillinn básúnaði.
 Þá heyrðust raddir miklar
 á himni er sögðu:
 Drottinn og Kristur hans
 hafa fengið vald yfir heiminum
 og hann mun ríkja
 um aldir alda.

3. SIRIUS (quintet)

Guðlaugur K. Óttarsson, guitar, vibraphone
Guðmundur Jónsson, voice
Guðmundur Pétursson, steel guitar
Einar Benediktsson skáld, lyric
Haraldur Þorsteinsson, bass
Hákon Leifsson, horn

Sirius describes the journey of a beam of light or a photon. According to Einstein’s theory of relativity, distances grow shorter with speed. At the speed of light, one would then think, all distances will contract into nothing and one could travel to the end of the world in an instant. GKO takes us on such a journey from Earth to Sirius B and beyond in search of the almighty. The signature is six-eighths and the drone is in A.

The text is that of the well-known poem Stefjahreimur by Einar Benediktsson, one of Iceland’s beloved poets of the early 1900s, read by the operatic singer Guðmundur Jónsson, who is also known to every Icelander and now 85 years of age.

4. PATRE (septet)

Arnar Guðjónsson, drums
Davíð Þór Jónsson, piano
Guðlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson, guitar, lyrics
Guðmundur Pétursson, guitar
Magnús Þór Jónsson, voice
Tómas Magnús Tómasson, bass
Þorsteinn Magnússon, guitar
Þór Eldon, lyrics

Patre is based on the Icelandic national anthem. Written in 1984, it adheres to every stricture of copyright and the statutes applying to the national anthem. It is GKO's ode to his country and countrymen. The piece was originally recorded in the Elgar Sisters Sessions with Björk in 1986. The text is taken from a poem by Þór Eldon, read by Megas, again supplemented by GKO's comments on magic numbers and Platonic polyhedra.

Það flýgur enginn í nótt,
 það deyr – enginn,
 og ekkert verður sagt.
 Hundar öskra auðu hafi.
 Ég er einn, ég er tveir ...
 Nóttin er gömul – en henni vaxa þrútin horn.

The Icosahedron is dual to the Dodecahedron
 and the Octahedron is dual to the Cube
 – and both pairs reveal
 Magic Numbers in faces or vertexes.

To complete,

the Vector Equilibrium
 is dual to the Rhombic Dodecahedron,
 the Tetrahedron is its own dual
 and the Triangle is semi-dual to the Segment.

5. FINDINGS (septet)

Brynjólfur Snorrason, voice
Georg Bjarnason, double bass
Guðlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson, piano, guitar
Hafþór Ólafsson, voice
Hákon Leifsson, horn
Magnús Guðmundsson, voice
Óttar Sæmundsen, double bass

Findings is based on the Song of the Sibyl from the ancient poetic Edda, an account of the defeat of the gods in the cataclysmic battle of Ragnarök when the Earth sinks into the sea, the Sun turns black and the stars are cast down from heaven. The verses we hear here, however, tell of the gods' eventual return when "they shall live in delight forever". The piece was composed at Easter 1999 and expresses GKO's grief at the loss of his father and sister who had both, relatively, recently died.

Þar munu eftir
 undursamlegar
 gullnar töflur í grasi finnast,
 þær er í árdaga áttar höfðu.
 Munu ósánir
 akrar vaxa,
 böls mun alls batna,
 Baldur mun koma.
 Búa þeir Hörður og Baldur
 Hrofts sigtófir
 vel, valttívar.
 Vituð ér enn, eða hvað?

Sal sér hún standa
 sólu fegra,
 gulli þaktan,
 á Gimlé.
 Þar skulu dyggvar
 dróttir byggja
 og um aldurdaga
 yndis njóta.

Þá kemur inn ríki
 að regindómi
 öflugur ofan,
 sá er öllu ræður.

6. STEFJAHREIMUR (quartet)

Agnar Wilhelm Agnarsson, voice, translation
Arnar Guðjónsson, drums, church bells
Guðlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson, guitar, bass
Guðmundur Pétursson, steel guitar
Einar Benediktsson skáld, lyrics

Stefjahreimur came into being in 1993 when GKO had just completed difficult repairs in Studio Hjóðhamar. To test the equipment he decided to invite Agnar Wilhelm Agnarsson to join him in a session. They based the work on the poem by Einar Benediktsson. Agnar translated ex tempore and sang. In the beginning, we can hear how the music starts out live in the studio and then, after some exploration, the work is brought forth complete. An extreme creativity.

7. STÍGÐU MIG (duo)

Björk Guðmundsdóttir, voice, her melody
Guðlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson, guitar
Þór Eldon, lyrics

This piece was recorded in the Elgar Sisters Sessions in 1985 and has been previously released in 1993 on Björk's Debut.

8. PARTIR (quintet)

Davíð Þór Jónsson, percussion
Georg Bjarnason, bass
Guðlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson, piano, xylophone
Magnús Þór Jónsson, voice, prose
Ragnhildur Gísladóttir, voice

Partir was composed soon after Sirius was recorded in 1999 but is both simpler in structure and more worldly. The text is by Megás and read by himself. Called Plasir d'amore it is part of a larger cycle written in the 1970s, never published in full but legendary in Icelandic literary circles.

9. SÍÐASTA ÉG (duo)

Björk Guðmundsdóttir, voice, cembal, her melody
Guðlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson, guitars
Þór Eldon, lyrics

Another composition from the Elgar Sisters Sessions, Síðasta ég was released 1995 on Björk's Post

10. ESSENCE (quintet)

Davíð Þór Jónsson, percussion, moog, sonar
Guðlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson, guitar, sonar
Guðmundur Pétursson, modulator
Hilmar Örn Hilmarsson, synthesizer
Tómas Magnús Tómasson, bass

Essence is an attempt to get to the heart of things as directly as possible. The piece is composed in 5/8 and one tone runs through the entire work: A. It could be sung to the dial tone, back when telephones had them. It turns monotony into a variegated composition.

11. CLOSURE (sextet)

Áki Ásgeirsson, trumpets
Arnar Guðjónsson, drums
Guðlaugur Kristinn Óttarsson, guitars, voice
Hera Þöll Guðlaugsdóttir, voices
Katla Rós Völudóttir, voices
Tómas Magnús Tómasson, bass

Closure emerged from improvisation experiments in January of 2005 where GKO sought to find three almost perfectly dissonant chords. After five weeks of work these dissonant chords were starting to sound so good it seemed like perfect harmony, a strange and charming world of music. This perhaps proves after all that all chords are beautiful when expressed with a melody that ties them together. Closure is a very emotional work, despite this theoretical description. To finish the piece GKO used a section from an unpublished piece written in 1998 after the sudden death of his close friend Tómas Gröndal.



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