

# ÓLAVUR JAKOBSEN

Awake, my Soul,  
and Sound your Strings

GUITAR MUSIC FROM  
THE FAROE ISLANDS



## WILLIAM HEINESEN

- 1. Awake, my Soul, and Sound your Strings (1955) (7:51)**  
*10 Variations on a Faroese melody*  
Originally for solo viola  
Arr. for guitar by Ólavur Jakobsen (2011)

## JÓGVAN WAAGSTEIN

- 2. Paraphrase (1947) (5:31)**  
*Based on the old hymn "Ljómur"*  
Originally for organ solo.  
Arr. for guitar by Ólavur Jakobsen (2008)

## KÁRI BÆK

### **Pictures (2008/9)**

- 3. I Intro (0:59)**
- 4. II Nólsoy (Torbjørn Olsen) (1:49)**
- 5. III Promenade 1 (0:46)**
- 6. IV Self Portrait (Frimod Joensen) (2:12)**
- 7. V Promenade 2 (0:40)**
- 8. VI Red Rain (Ingálvur av Reyni) (3:14)**
- 9. VII Promenade 3 (0:58)**
- 10. VIII Mykines Woman (S.J.-Mikines) (2:50)**
- 11. IX Postlude (2:05)**

## SUNLEIF RASMUSSEN

- 12. Caccia (1998) (9:26)**  
*With Alvi Joensen, guitar*

## SUNLEIF RASMUSSEN

### **Suite for guitar (2007)**

- 13. I Prelude (3:56)**
- 14. II Allemande (3:01)**
- 15. III Courante (1:45)**
- 16. IV Sarabande (4:56)**
- 17. V Gigue (3:01)**

## KRISTIAN BLAK

- 18. 40 Mile Ground (2005) (9:14)**



T  
V  
c  
u  
b  
t  
e

T  
i  
v  
t  
a  
h  
a  
h  
v  
n  
F  
a  
C  
n  
S  
e

**F**  
p  
v  
c  
t  
h  
c

The guitar is an instrument with a rich palette of sounds. The strings can sing, whisper and resonate - and the timbres are exceptionally varied, depending on where one plays on the instrument. Even the body or soundboard can be used as percussion. The music on this album exploits this variety and explores a broad musical territory, with regard to both time and genre. It is also rooted in the Faroes: not only music written by Faroese composers, but music with subtle extra-musical connections to the culture and history of the islands.

The title of this album, **AWAKE, MY SOUL, AND SOUND YOUR STRINGS** is taken from an old hymn, *Vaag op og slæ paa dine Streng*e, by Danish hymn writer, Thomas Kingo, published in 1674. The tune belongs to a uniquely Faroese tradition of religious singing. This tradition is characterised by songs without accompaniment, consisting of melodies, which are usually paraphrases of Nordic hymn tunes, pre-Reformation hymn tunes or old folk melodies. Even though this a capella tradition is not practised in the Faroes today (most Faroese churches have organs), it has been preserved by musicians and musicologists, and has provided a fertile source for choral arrangers, composers and even rock and jazz musicians. Many of these tunes - with organ accompaniment - are also used in the Faroese church today. This cultural inheritance is very strongly present in nearly all new music from the Faroes.

One such tune has been used by the well-known Faroese author - and amateur musician - William Heinesen (1900-91). We hear the original theme undergoing many variations, and the harmonic potential of the old melody is exploited to the full.

**PARAPHRASE** is also invoked in the next work on this disc - a paraphrase of the Faroese melody for the Icelandic hymn, *Ljómurnar*, which the Faroese organist and artist, Jógvan Waagstein (1879-1949) composed more than half a century ago. The music is based on the traditional tune, and we hear in Ólavur Jakobsen's arrangement how the registration and many voices of the original for organ are distilled down to the six strings of the guitar.

**PICTURES.** New art often makes use of established forms. The piece on this disc by Kári Bæk (b. 1950) is framed within the traditional structure of a suite. We, as listeners, are at the exhibition. As in the well-known piece by Mussorgsky, music relating to each picture is interspersed with promenades. Freely imaginative music contrasts with more goal-orientated music with regular meters.

The darkly lit painting, *Nólsoy* (1991) by Torbjørn Olsen, is reflected in the musical structure: the sections mirror the visual aspects of the painting - areas of single colour as well as sketched lines.

The music for the picture *Self Portrait* (1969) by Frímod Joensen begins impressionistically, and later takes on a scherzo-like character, with strong waltz rhythms.

The picture by Ingálvur av Reyni, *Red Rain* (1976) inspires music of a more modernistic character, reflecting the abstract nature of the painting. The redness of the original is mirrored in a similarly obsessive use of single repeated chords - strongly dissonant, but becoming more consonant towards the end.

*Mykines Woman* (1934) by S.J.-Mikines is an acknowledged masterpiece of Faroese art. The music here brings us nearer to the intimate melancholy of this painting. We hear a veiled sarabande and the guitar becomes the perfect vehicle for conveying the depth of personal feeling embedded in the picture.

This work by Bæk is an excellent example of how music can be either influenced by extra-musical sources, or refer to nothing beyond itself - as in the promenade music, though even here we hear echoes of music by earlier composers.



CA  
tur  
Ras  
fac  
in p  
and  
me  
hy  
tur  
The  
hin  
The  
ou  
en  
we  
als  
No

W  
sou  
for  
mu  
ma  
ele  
co  
the  
pre  
far

Kri  
jaz  
the  
im  
als  
giv



**CACCIA** means “hunt”, as well as being an Italian musical form from the 14th century - a combination of voices in canon and free voices. This composition by Sunleif Rasmussen (1961) is not archaic or old-fashioned, however - quite the contrary in fact: we hear new formations of scales, in various combinations, weaving in and out in polyrhythmic patterns. This music puts great technical demands on the musicians, and at one point even requires the guitarists to whistle whilst playing. The fundamental musical material is derived from the old Faroese song tradition of Kingo hymns - in this case the melody, Sorrig og Glæde. It is not possible to recognise the tune, however, because the composer has encoded it within the musical material. The young Faroese guitarist Alvi Joensen, a former student of Ólavur Jakobsen, joins him in this technically demanding piece for two guitars. The reworking of earlier material is characteristic of this period in the composer's output. The material of *Caccia*, for example, is also to be found in the work for ensemble, *Trauer und Freude* (1998), and in the vocal work *Brotið* (1999). The same working method - employing hidden references to traditional Faroese music - was also used in *Symphony No 1, Oceanic Days* - the work that won Rasmussen the Nordic Music Prize in 2002.

With Rasmussen's **SUITE FOR GUITAR** (2007), we move further towards new sounds, but within the framework of the Baroque suite form. The traditional dance forms, with their emphasis on constant movement, give shape and character to this music. There are few points of rest: in both the *Prelude* and *Allemande*, the meter maintains a steady tread. In the dancing *Courante* we become aware of subtle electronic manipulation, and when we reach the slow *Sarabande*, the electronics come to the fore, and we hear changes of timbre and pitch. By the time we reach the *Gigue*, we have definitely arrived in another sound world. The work has been progressively taken over by the electronics, and by the end we are disorientated, far from the safe environment of the Baroque suite.

Kristian Blak is a composer who has written music in many genres, including folk, jazz and classical music, and he is also an energetic organiser of musical projects on the Faroe Islands. **40 MILE GROUND** (2005) is rich in fantasy, and plays with our imagination, as well as with our expectations about form and syntax. The work is also a tour de force of special playing techniques, which - in themselves - help to give form to the music.



Nólsoy (1991) by **TORBJØRN OLSEN** (b. 1956). The island to the east of Tórshavn appears as a regular subject for this artist - a colourist who paints in an expressionistic style, specialising in people, landscapes and townscapes.

Se  
im  
na





Self Portrait (1969) by **FRIMOD JOENSEN** (1915-1997), who, with his clever impressions of people and landscapes, is considered to be one the few Faroese naive artists.

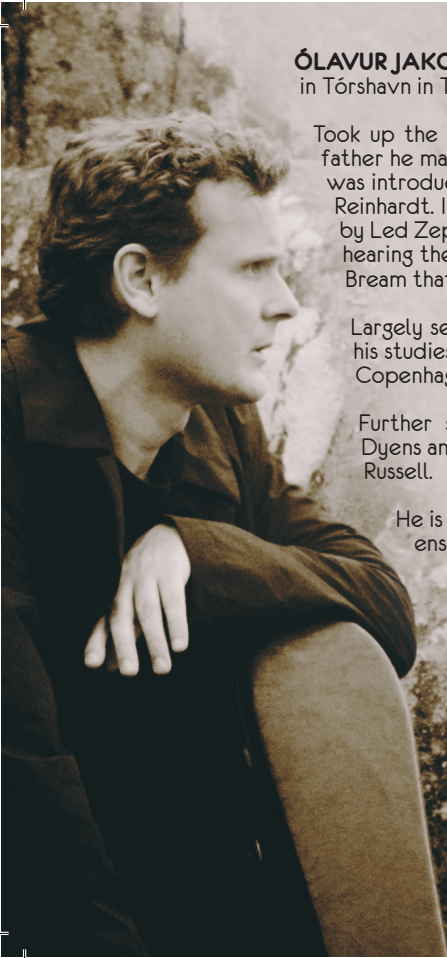


Red Rain (1976) by **INGÁLÞUR AV REYNI** (1920-2005) - expressionist painter, the first Faroese modernist artist, who has been a guiding light for the younger generation of Faroese artists.

M  
- f  
ex



Mykines Woman (1934) by **SÁMAL JOENSEN-MIKINES** (1906-1979)  
- founder of the Faroese art tradition, who was influenced by Nordic  
expressionism and symbolism.



**ÓLAVUR JAKOBSEN** was born 1964  
in Tórshavn in The Faroe Islands.

Took up the guitar as a child. Inspired by his guitar playing father he mainly played popular, country and rock music. He was introduced to Chet Atkins, Hank B. Marvin and Django Reinhardt. In the early years he was profoundly influenced by Led Zeppelin, The Beatles and Jimi Hendrix. It was after hearing the old master Andrés Segovia and later Sir Julian Bream that spurred him on to play classical guitar.

Largely self-taught as a classical guitarist he commenced his studies at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen in Denmark with guitarist Ingolf Olsen.

Further studies in Paris with French guitarist Roland Dyens and masterclasses with Sir Julian Bream and David Russell.

He is co-founder of the Faroese chamber ensemble Aldubáran.

He lives in The Faroe Islands and divides his time between teaching, performing, touring and promoting Faroese music.

Apart from the two arrangements of compositions based on traditional Faroese music, all the music on this disc has been written for and dedicated to Ólavur Jakobsen.