



ICELAND SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA



EUROPEAN TOUR ANNOUNCEMENT

PRESS RELEASE | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra, conductor Eva Ollikainen, cellist Kian Soltani and composer Anna Thorvaldsdottir will tour Switzerland and Germany in March 2026.

The **Iceland Symphony Orchestra (ISO)** will embark on an exciting European concert tour from **March 20 to 26, 2026** performing at five of the continent's most prestigious concert venues. Under the direction of its Chief Conductor **Eva Ollikainen**, superstar cellist and ISO's Artist in Residence **Kian Soltani** will join the orchestra to perform **Elgar** and **Lutosławski's** cello concertos. Kicking off with ISO's debut concert in Switzerland at the **Victoria Hall in Geneva (March 20)**, the tour continues with concerts at **Casino Bern's Grosser Saal (March 21)**, **Tonhalle Zürich (March 22)**, and the **Stadthalle at Heidelberger Frühling (March 24)**. The tour concludes at **Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie (March 26)**, where the ISO will symbolically mark exactly 100 years since the Hamburg Philharmonic's 1926 visit to Reykjavík - the historic event when Icelanders got their first taste of a live symphony orchestra.

The ISO will perform **Jean Sibelius' *Symphony No. 2 in D Major*** in Geneva, Bern, Zurich and Heidelberg, and **Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird Suite (1919)*** in Hamburg. Audiences in Geneva, Bern, Zurich and Heidelberg will hear Kian Soltani shine in **Edward Elgar's *Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85***, while the audience in Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie will be treated to **Witold Lutosławski's *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra***.

Each concert will feature **ARCHORA**, a striking work by celebrated Icelandic composer and ISO's Artist in Association **Anna Thorvaldsdottir**, who will join the tour to offer pre-concert discussions before each performance.



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Renowned for its expressive power and adventurous programming, the **Iceland Symphony Orchestra** continues to champion new Icelandic music while honoring the great symphonic tradition. Its recent tours have included performances in the United Kingdom, Japan, and Germany to enthusiastic acclaim. **Barbara Hannigan** will assume the position of the ISO's Chief Conductor and Artistic Director in September 2026.

Finnish conductor **Eva Ollikainen**'s distinguished six-year tenure as Chief Conductor of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra will reach its pinnacle with a performance of Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* at Reykjavík's Harpa Hall in May 2026. About the upcoming March 2026 concerts in Switzerland and Germany with Kian Soltani and Anna Thorvaldsdottir, Ollikainen comments:



"We are thrilled to bring the Iceland Symphony Orchestra's distinctive sound and spirit to European audiences. Performing Anna Thorvaldsdottir's ARCHORA - a piece that reflects the depth and landscape of Icelandic music - alongside timeless symphonic works is an artistic journey we are proud to share." About Kian Soltani, Eva Ollikainen comments that *"Kian is such a sincere musician. Everything comes directly from his heart. We have performed Elgar together many times, and returning to it with him is always a joy. Performing Lutosławski with Kian is truly a dream come true. I remember hearing him play it years ago and being completely blown away."*

Hailed by *The Times* as a "remarkable cellist" and described by *Gramophone* as "sheer perfection", **Kian Soltani**'s playing is characterized by a depth of expression, sense of individuality and technical mastery, alongside a charismatic stage presence and ability to create an immediate emotional connection with his audience. Kian Soltani is no longer just a rising star, but one of the most talked about cellists today.

"I'm very excited to be going on tour with the Iceland Symphony, particularly as these are some of my favorite halls in two countries that I call my home. To bring these two master works for cello with us will be very rewarding!"



Anna Thorvaldsdottir is an award-winning Icelandic composer. Her music is widely performed internationally and has been commissioned by many of the world's leading orchestras, ensembles, and arts organizations, including the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, Ensemble Intercontemporain, BBC Proms, and Carnegie Hall. Anna was Composer in Residence with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra from 2018-2023 and is currently an Artist in Association.



"The Iceland Symphony has carried so much of my music over the years that they know instinctively how to navigate this world," says Anna Thorvaldsdottir. *"We have a long-standing collaboration, and it is a relationship we all treasure deeply. ARCHORA centres around the notion of a primordial energy and the idea of an omnipresence – a world both familiar and unknown, static and transforming. But as with all my works the inspiration is not something I am trying to describe through the music – it is a way to intuitively work with the core energy, structure, atmosphere and material of the piece. It is fundamentally all about the music itself that then stands on its own for each listener to experience. It is such a joy to join the Iceland Symphony on this tour."*



PREVIOUS ISO TOURS

The Iceland Symphony Orchestra has appeared widely throughout Europe and beyond, including performances at the BBC Proms, the Wiener Musikverein, and the Kennedy Center. In 2018, the ISO embarked on a successful three-week tour of Japan with its Conductor Laureate Vladimir Ashkenazy and pianist Nobuyuki Tsujii. In 2019, the orchestra toured Germany and Austria with conductor Daníel Bjarnason and pianist Víkingur Ólafsson. The ISO has appeared twice in New York's Carnegie Hall. In *The New York Times*, Alex Ross described the orchestra's performance under Osmo Vänskä as *"sensational... one of the finest Sibelius performances I have encountered."*

In February 2020 and April 2023, the ISO toured the United Kingdom. In *The Guardian*, Andrew Mellor wrote that *"No country on Earth has reinvented the language of the symphony orchestra on such distinctive and locally relevant terms as Iceland has. (...) You'll certainly experience a place in which music exists as rather more than the product of a music 'industry'."*

A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ISO AND HAMBURG

From: 'Anything is possible': why Iceland has become a classical music powerhouse, 5 April, 2023)
by Andrew Mellor for The Guardian

On 31 May 1926, a ship carrying the entire Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra docked in Reykjavík. The musicians stayed in Iceland for 17 days, giving 14 concerts of music by Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert at venues including a tuberculosis sanatorium. Local critic Árni Thorsteinson described the visit as "the greatest event in the history of the arts in this country." While the rest of Europe was falling for cinema, Icelanders were getting their first taste of a full-size live symphony orchestra.

Organised instrumental music making came late to Iceland, hardly surprising in a country that still has to import everything except electricity and fish. Today, the nation's musical life has to be seen – and preferably heard – to be believed. Increasingly, Iceland's genre-blind musicians channel the challenges of living on a forbidding chunk of volcanic rock into the creation of progressive music that gives the impression of having resounded forever.

Read the full article [here](#).



TOUR SCHEDULE & PROGRAMMES

March 20, 2026 – Geneva, Victoria Hall - [more information](#)

ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR: ARCHORA for Orchestra

EDWARD ELGAR: Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85

JEAN SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43

March 21, 2026 – Bern, Casino - [more information](#)

ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR: ARCHORA for Orchestra

EDWARD ELGAR: Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85

JEAN SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43

March 22, 2026 – Zurich, Tonhalle - [more information](#)

ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR: ARCHORA for Orchestra

EDWARD ELGAR: Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85

JEAN SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43

March 24, 2026 – Heidelberg, Stadthalle (Heidelberger Frühling) - [more information](#)

ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR: ARCHORA for Orchestra

EDWARD ELGAR: Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85

JEAN SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43

March 26, 2026 – Hamburg, Elbphilharmonie - [more information](#)

JEAN SIBELIUS: Pohjola's Daughter / Symphonic Fantasy, Op. 49

WITOLD LUTOSLAWSKI: Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra

ANNA THORVALDSDOTTIR: ARCHORA for Orchestra

IGOR STRAVINSKY: L'oiseau de feu (The Firebird): Suite (1919 version)

ABOUT 'ARCHORA' AND THORVALDSDOTTIR'S MUSIC

ARCHORA (2022) was commissioned by the BBC Proms and co-commissioned by the LA Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, Klangspuren Schwaz and the Iceland Symphony Orchestra.



After its premiere at the BBC Proms in 2022, the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and Eva Ollikainen released the work on the album [Anna Thorvaldsdottir: ARCHORA / AIÓN](#) for the Sono Luminus label in 2023.

'20 Best Classical Music Albums of 2023' in [The New York Times](#).

'10 Best Classical Albums of 2023' in [The Boston Globe](#).

A download link of this album is available upon request.

"Anna Thorvaldsdottir's music is about mass and density, how different planes of sounds collide and combine, and how intricately detailed textures evolve over time. Those qualities make the orchestra the obvious medium for her work, and it has largely been through her sequence of strikingly effective orchestral scores that the Iceland-born composer has become recognised as one of the most distinctive voices in European music today." - The Guardian

WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA & MUSIC

WEBSITES

Iceland Symphony Orchestra: www.en/sinfonia.is

Eva Ollikainen: <https://www.intermusica.com/artist/Eva-Ollikainen>

Kian Soltani: <https://www.kiansoltani.com>

Anna Thorvaldsdottir: <https://www.annathorvalds.com>

INSTAGRAM

Iceland Symphony Orchestra: <https://www.instagram.com/icelandsymphony>

Kian Soltani: https://www.instagram.com/kian.soltani_cellist

Anna Thorvaldsdottir: <https://www.instagram.com/annathorvalds>

FACEBOOK

Iceland Symphony Orchestra: <https://www.facebook.com/IcelandSymphony>

Kian Soltani: <https://www.facebook.com/kiansoltanicellist>

Anna Thorvaldsdottir: <https://www.facebook.com/AnnaThorvaldsdottirMusic>

TIKTOK

Kian Soltani: <https://www.tiktok.com/@kiansoltanicellist>

YOUTUBE

Iceland Symphony Orchestra: <https://www.youtube.com/@icelandsymphony>

Eva Ollikainen: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_0F0KbBzLkC6LEumslm8Xg

Kian Soltani: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCapkfR2D9LGtXNLZCvOLaDA>

Anna Thorvaldsdottir: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpuDzCh2vzdzHesPqgd_jVg

SPOTIFY

Iceland Symphony Orchestra: <https://open.spotify.com/artist/3RPu1pwXXrPqamAp6OHZ8b?si=-GAbWnuYQDaWrycJXatMkQ&nd=1&dlsi=faf23463255e4134>

Eva Ollikainen: <https://open.spotify.com/artist/6ZwqLZC2sbaVB42auAKF6Q>

Kian Soltani: <https://open.spotify.com/artist/6TPa1gvlk1h4lv1zJ2WUYQ?si=hHqtlK0mSDS1XQ4jF7EOg&nd=1&dlsi=029c36aa92f44d41>

Anna Thorvaldsdottir: <https://open.spotify.com/artist/192k4NRVUM23h3D8oDDzEC?si=l6wLUBF4QRSizKvjAkm35Q&nd=1&dlsi=b623d7c72ef144e4>

APPLE MUSIC

Iceland Symphony Orchestra: <https://music.apple.com/us/artist/iceland-symphony-orchestra/19119537>

Eva Ollikainen: <https://music.apple.com/us/artist/eva-ollikainen/1226663719>

Kian Soltani: <https://open.spotify.com/artist/6TPa1gvlk1h4lv1zJ2WUYQ>

Anna Thorvaldsdottir: <https://music.apple.com/us/artist/anna-thorvaldsdottir/468418957>

NOTE FOR EDITORS

Publicity Photos: [here](#) (opens in Dropbox)

More Photos & Videos will become available shortly after Kian Soltani, the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and Eva Ollikainen perform two concerts featuring Lutoslawski ([March 12](#)) and Elgar ([March 13](#)) in Reykjavík, Iceland.

Concert Diaries

Iceland Symphony Orchestra: [here](#).

Eva Ollikainen: [here](#).

Kian Soltani: [here](#).

Anna Thorvaldsdottir's works are performed throughout the world. A comprehensive schedule of upcoming concerts featuring her music is available [here](#).

Eva Ollikainen, Kian Soltani, and Anna Thorvaldsdottir have confirmed their availability for interviews in relation to the March 2026 tour.

For more information or any requests, please contact:

Floor van der Holst

VAM Artists | PR

E: floorvanderholst@vamartists.com

T: +31648482884



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Tour management by Intermusica.