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The Experience of Music-making in the Faroes
and Making Metal Faroese

by

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Abstract

Drawing on three months of ethnographic research and interviewing largely around the Faroese capital of Tórshavn, this thesis represents an investigation into the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroe Islands. Principally, the thesis seeks to answer the central question of how Faroese musicians and industry professionals are projecting a sense of place as well as creating, expressing, and marketing an emergent Faroese identity in the global market. Building on a discussion of the historic and contemporary significance of traditional music in the islands, the construction of Faroese musical identity is examined in the context of Faroese metal music and the constitution of meaning therein. The latter portions of the thesis rely heavily on quoted speech in order to evoke this constitution of meaning, as well as of the scene as a social group, as described by key figures within the realm of Faroese metal.

A Tiny Preface: Setting the Island Scene

Jón Jacobsen, singer for the band Grandma's Basement, is smoking a cigarette as we stand outside the restaurant. We are both looking around at the valley walls that rise steeply on either side of the Faroes' second largest town, the northern fishing village of Klaksvík. At 25, he is slight, sharp, and well-dressed. Although we've just met, Jón and I engage in easy conversation as we wait for his two other bandmates to arrive. Seemingly out of nowhere, between drags, Jón offers an observation on the differences between the experiences of visiting the islands and living on them: "When foreigners come here, they say they feel free", he explains, "but when we are here, we feel trapped."

On a different night, I'm sitting in the glass-walled outdoor section of Cafe Natur, a pub in downtown Tórshavn, the Faroese capital. I'm interviewing the members of The Apocryphal Order, one of the islands' newer metal bands. Although I'm not partaking this particular evening, the guys have ordered a tower of beer (it is precisely what it sounds like), and we've been talking a lot about their music and music in the Faroes, amidst jokes and smokes. At one point when the talk gets a little more serious, the guys start talking about the future of the band and how everyone is trying to make plans that will be conducive to continuing the band as they move abroad. Though all the members live in the Faroes now, they don't intend for that to always be the case. Johan Bjartur Kjaerbo, the group's bassist, explains that he hopes to study physics in Denmark while he continues playing with the band. Though he has just started a two-year job in the capital at the fishing net and trawl factory, Vónin ("hope"), the band's singer Torkil Thomsen says he will stay and work, but then he plans on going "down" to Denmark to join them. However they phrase their plans as a band, one thing is clear, as the band's guitarist Ken Johannesen says, "We are going abroad, I think that was one of the first things we talked about[…]this isn't really the place for us."

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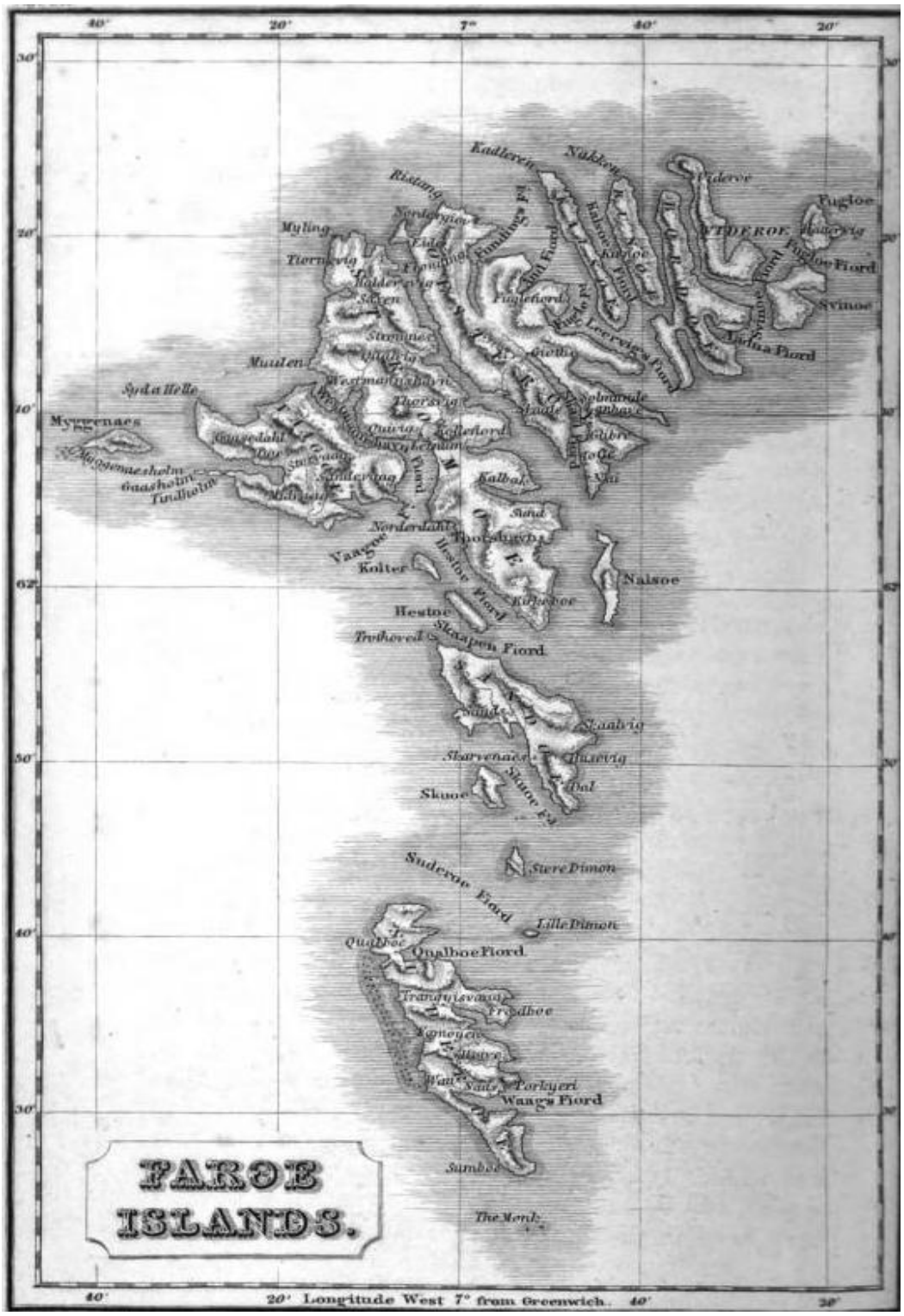

Figure 1. 1840 Map from James Nicol. From his *An Historical and Descriptive Account of Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands*.

Figure 2. View from Saksun, Streymoy, Faroe Islands. Image credit: Carina Damm.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Faroe Islands constitute a small semi-autonomous archipelago nation in the north Atlantic that is part of the Kingdom of Denmark. The inhabitants, descendants of Norse settlers, have lived there for over a thousand years and have developed their own distinct language and culture over this time. Despite this, until I was a high school senior, I, like many people in Canada, had never even heard of the Faroes. In fact, I only discovered the islands in the first place through their music.

Thanks to the rise of the internet and file-sharing applications like Napster that have been proliferating since 1999, sometime around 2003 or 2004 I had become an avid music pirate. Some fellow pirates from whom I downloaded music had

vast collections of obscure metal albums from all over the world, many of which were labeled with two or three-letter country codes denoting the band's country of origin (e.g., USA, CAN, IT, etcetera). While perusing one of these collections I came across a band, Týr, listed by the country code FO, which I had never seen before. After downloading their album *Eric the Red* (2003),[1] I became something of a fan of the band, and through their music I learned a bit about Faroese history and culture. The band, and an awareness of the distant islands from which they hailed, remained in the back of my mind until my first semester at university a few years later.

During my first year at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, I took an introductory anthropology course with Dr. Peter Toner in which he discussed world music and gave examples of bands who mixed elements of their local history, language, and culture with various musical styles. After class, I sent him an e-mail in which I asked whether or not he thought the sort of music I was listening to at the time qualified as "World Music" (and, if so, would it be worth studying?). The relevant section of that e-mail, despite its naiveté and sometimes mixed-up facts, is worth reproducing here as it provides insight into the origin of my interest in the Faroese music scene.

> The other nagging question was one about a certain type of music which I enjoy and its cultural meaning. A lot of the Scandinavian music I listen to (particularly those groups which label themselves 'folk metal' or 'viking metal') combine both elements of traditional Scandinavian music and modern music. Some use instruments like the violin, accordion. . . and often with strong Swedish/Norwegian/Finnish polska influences but are combined with distorted guitars and synthesizers. These bands almost always sing in their native tongues and of the few English songs they sing the subject matter is almost always something to do with their heritage. . . stories about Nordic mythology, stories about the (sometimes forceful) Christianization of Northern

[1]Please see Appendix A (page 273) for examples of where to find musical examples. Also, see Appendix B (page 274) for notes on conventions (transcription, Faroese names, patronymics, and acronyms).

> Europe, and more general topics like a Paganistic approach to nature and reverence of wilderness.
>
> My basic question is: do you think that this sort of music is at all comparable to the kinds of world music we listened to in class today? Even though these countries were first Christianized at least 900 years ago, do you think there is some sort of cultural significance to it today? It seems that a lot of the time these groups are really trying to preserve aspects of their culture that might otherwise be forgotten (considering that they are all modern, industrialized nations). . . Some good examples of these 'modern' folk bands are: Lumsk (Norway), Týr (from the tiny Danish island of Faroe who even perform at 'viking festivals', historical events which commemorate the battles between vikings and slavs and they sing about Eric the Red, too), Vintersorg (Sweden, sings about nature), and Falkenbach (Iceland/Germany, almost exclusively dealing with Icelandic/German folklore), there are many more, too. (April 3, 2006)

Dr. Toner confirmed that this sort of thing was exactly the kind of music which ethnomusicologists were interested in studying. That e-mail and my professor's promising response to it set me on a path upon which I would have the ultimate goal of trying to learn something about the intriguingly "other"-seeming Faroe Islands through their music.

When I subsequently commenced graduate school, I started out intending to address a central question: how are Faroese musicians and industry professionals projecting a sense of place as well as creating, expressing, and marketing an emergent Faroese identity in the global market? Over the course of the three months I spent in the Faroes, interviewing over 35 individuals (both music consumers and people involved in almost every aspect of the burgeoning Faroese music industry), I began to realize that if my thesis was going to be able to say anything substantial about the significance of music in contemporary Faroese society, I would have to widen my purview enough to be able to incorporate what people were actually telling me about living, working, and making music in the Faroes. In doing so, the shape and purpose of the thesis has shifted to include an

investigation of the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroe Islands.[2]

How Faroese musicians and industry professionals are projecting a sense of place as well as creating, expressing, and marketing an emergent Faroese identity in the global market became a central concern of the fifth chapter on the Faroese metal bands Týr and Hamferð, "Making Metal Faroese." This chapter also constitutes the crux of this thesis in other ways. Namely, much of the discussion of Faroese pre-history, history, and music history in the third chapter serves as an orienting framework for the material on Faroese metal, dealt with in the fifth chapter: as will be discussed, some Faroese metal artists are actively invoking, as well as attempting to evoke, elements of the Faroese mytho-historic and national past. Considering this, much of the discussion in the metal chapter directly speaks to the experience and meaning of music and music-making in the Faroes. I address a few other specific, focused questions that fall within the broad scope of attempting to understand the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroe Islands, each of which are described immediately below in the chapter outline.

The second chapter, "Theory and Methodology," outlines a number of the theoretical and methodological principles that guide and frame the discussions of the remaining chapters. The third chapter, "Faroese Music History," largely concerns the origins and development of various traditional Faroese musical practices and the role of oral literature (including traditional music forms) and the Faroese language have played in the formation and construction (or imagining) of the Faroese nation. In fourth chapter, "Traditional Music in Contemporary Society," I consider how traditional music is still made meaningful in a modern

[2] I originally began with a second question: What role do archival recordings have to play in the maintenance, development, and significance of long-standing Faroese singing practices, especially with regards to that music which fuses contemporary and traditional forms? Though this question is not addressed in this thesis, I intend to continue developing my Faroese language skills in hopes of investigating the massive Faroese music archive and its influence in my future doctoral research.

context. In the sub-section "*Dansifelagið:* Participation in the Village Dance Society Context," I address this question as it specifically relates to the modern context of village dance societies. In the sixth chapter, "Popular Music Within and Beyond the Islands," I attempt to answer a number of questions related to the relationship between music produced on the islands and music produced, circulating, and originating elsewhere. Specifically, in the sub-section "Aiming Beyond the Islands," I inquire as to why and how many Faroese musicians are striving to go abroad. In the same section, I seek to address the question of how Faroese musicians finance their recordings and tours, and to go some way towards answering what it feels like to be a Faroese musician (in particular, how some Faroese people conceptualize the relation between the Faroes and the rest of the world). In the sub-section on Faroese country and *dans* music, The Islands' Most Popular Genre?: Notes on the Origin Myth and Significance of Faroese country, I attempt to identify how the genres which some people have called the most popular types of music in the Faroes are experienced and made meaningful. Chapter Seven, "Sociality, Scene, Language, and Attitudes Towards Religion" explores how Faroese musicians (and Faroese people in general) associate and the social significance of music in two related sub-sections, "Notes on the Changing Nature of Faroese Sociality," and "Constitution of the Faroese Metal Scene." In the sub-section "Language Choices in Composition," I explore the question of why Faroese musicians choose specific languages in composition and how they rationalize these choices. And in the sub-section, "Some Attitudes Towards Religion," I consider why some Faroese musicians imagine religion to be opposed to their musical practices, and how some are responding to what they see as the (unjust) connection between religion and Faroese politics. And in Chapter Eight, "Conclusion and 'Why is there so much music in the Faroes?' ," I consider a number of the responses to the question of if and why there seems to be so much music going on in the islands. The diversity of answers is partly intended to reflect both the diversity of musical practice and the experience of being a

musician in the islands, as well as to illustrate the ways in which Faroese musicians imagine music-making to be a central element of life in the islands. All of these more specific questions fall within the broader scope of my discussion of the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroes.

Chapter 2: Theory and Methodology

Having only broached the key research questions in the introduction, it is necessary now to ask the question Why is it important or useful to study the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroe Islands in the first place? There is no short and concise answer to this question, and that is why, sadly, extended discussions of my research rationale could never appear within the narrow confines of a research or grant proposal. My own interest in these questions stems from a genuine desire to learn something about the experiences of other peoples who live in other places, and to translate and transmit what I learned of those experiences. My arguably naive belief is in the capacity of humanistic anthropology to play some small role in the betterment of humanity by fostering communication and understanding across cultures, and that such honest attempts at communicating with and attempting to better understand people of different backgrounds could result in increased sympathy, compassion, and identification with them as fellow human beings. Adequately responding to a question as ostensibly simple as why studying the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroes is important requires some discussion and reflection on why anthropology has been practiced in the first place.

Theory

Perhaps not surprisingly considering my indication of my belief in the positive capacities of humanistic anthropology, in my own work, I closely (though not exclusively) identify with Geertz's famous characterization of the project of anthropology as being "not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (1973:5).

Considering this, in answering the question of why it is important or useful to study the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroe Islands, these concerns could well be understood as specific and more narrowly focused expressions of my larger interpretive concern with a search for meaning.

Though I discuss in more detail later my rationale and purpose for doing ethnography in the first place, as part of the humanistic anthropological tradition, my chief concern is also with explication, in the sense of "construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical" (Geertz 1973:5), and analysis (1973:9). However, Geertz reminds us that the task of explication, undertaken in anthropology primarily via ethnography (as part of the search for meaning) is tricky for a number of reasons, not the least of which being because "what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (1973:9). In other words, as Geertz writes concerning doing ethnography (and anthropology more generally), "[r]ight down at the factual base, the hard rock, insofar as there is any, of the whole enterprise, we are already explicating: and worse, explicating explications" (1973:9). It is partly for this reason, then, that the other important factor in the search for meaning, analysis, is required. As Geertz writes, "analysis. . . is sorting out the structures of signification. . . and determining their social ground and import" (1973:10).

While Geertz's above summary of analysis (with its ominous mention of the sorting out of "structures of signification") might seem to place meaning and analysis disconcertingly and necessarily beyond the limits of what is knowable by virtue of its ostensible suggestion that we (anthropologists) need to get inside people's heads where these structures of signification might be thought to exist, I disagree with that assessment. Geertz was not saying that we are able to get inside people's heads, nor am I. That is, I believe that analysis (as the sorting out of these structures of signification and determining their social ground and import) is possible because I maintain, as Geertz has, that, "[c]ulture is public because meaning is" (Geertz 1973:12). Regarding that statement, Geertz clarifies,

> [y]ou can't wink (or burlesque one) without knowing what counts as winking or how, physically, to contract your eyelids. . . [t]he cognitivist fallacy—that culture consists (to quote another spokesman for the movement, Stephen Tyler) of "mental phenomena which can. . . be analyzed by formal methods similar

> to those of mathematics and logic"- is as destructive of an effective use of the concept as are the behaviorist and idealist fallacies to which it is a misdrawn correction. [Geertz 1973:12]

In short, I agree with Geertz's suggestion that neither culture or meaning are entirely mental (and thus necessarily unknowable) domains.

Of course, this isn't to suggest that all meaning is public: both public and private meanings exist. It is to suggest, however, as Geertz does, that we can sort out these structures of signification only from those that are public, and from the ways these meanings are partially shared. Further, I agree with Geertz that we can only discern and interpret meaning from the public expression of public acts that indeed have symbolic meanings (or the absence thereof, as in a mere blink).

Further, as a final piece of evidence from Geertz to support why I believe that culture (and so ultimately, some meaning) is public, and, thus amenable to explication and analysis, I would also agree that

> to say that culture consist of socially established structures of meaning in terms of which people do such things as signal conspiracies and join them or perceive insults and answer them, is no more to say that it is a psychological phenomenon, a characteristic of someone's mind, personality, or cognitive structure, or whatever, than to say that Tantrism, genetics, the progressive form of the verb, the classification of wines, the Common Law, or the notion of 'a conditional curse'. . . is. [Geertz 1973:12-13]

Finally, in support of Geertz's claim that public meaning exists and is discoverable, I would like to offer my own anecdote that suggests the veracity of Geertz's observation that what most often prevents us "from grasping what people are up to is not ignorance as to how cognition works. . . [so much] as a lack of familiarity with the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs" (Geertz 1973:13).

After I had been living in the Faroes for well over a month, I was beginning to feel comfortable speaking with people in interviews and informal social situations, despite the fact that I was so obviously a nosy (probably monolingual)

foreigner. My confidence in my own capacity to engage Faroese people in easy and rarely awkward conversation was likely a result of a fact that I had mostly been speaking and hanging out with young metal musicians. Most of these people were around my age, spoke perfect English, had similar musical and other tastes (and in some cases, upbringings) to my own. I became comfortable in my skin and with my surroundings. And, in some ways, I began to forget that I was in another country.

Some time after I had relaxed a bit, a Faroese friend picked me up one day in his car and took me on a driving tour to some of the smaller villages and more distant attractions that I hadn't had a chance to see yet. After a day of driving from museums to excavated Viking settlement ruins on narrow mountain and seaside village roads, my friend suggested that we make a stop in at his cousin's house for a coffee and chat. My friend's cousin and his family lived in a nice multi-story house on the outskirts of a small town not far outside the capital. Their home looked across the fjord at a small cluster of houses on the other side. We stayed for a while chatting about music, sailing, fowling and many other things while we drank coffee and tea and ate sweets (a typically Faroese way to entertain guests, as I would come to find out). Because we were guests in their house, I made every attempt to be especially polite and respectful. When my friend and I left, I departed thinking everything had gone off exceptionally smoothly.

Once we were back in the car and well down the road, however, my friend (a very modest and non-confrontational guy), explained to me kindly that I had committed something of a *faux pas* in conversation: namely, I had directly asked the man or his wife (or both) what they did for a living. As he explained to me, in the Faroes, that is not typically one of the first questions asked in conversation, and it is not usually something that one would ask outright. If one wants to find out what someone does for a living in conversation, one can either wait for the information to be offered up, or broach the subject in a more subtle way.

In my friend's opinion, one reason for this and why what I did was a *faux pas* is that some people are unemployed (which can be embarrassing to admit, of course), while others simply may not like being judged or evaluated on the basis of their occupation. My friend further explained to me that, even though even more roundabout questions formulations of questions regarding one's occupation could be considered rude, they still occur sometimes even between Faroese people: specifically, he told me that on a weekly Faroese call-in television show, the host sometimes asks the more innocuous formulation of the question "What do you do during the day?," to which callers (some of whom may be unemployed) may choose sometimes vague responses such as "oh, well, I do the laundry, and I clean the house, read books, etcetera," rather than saying outright that they are a "housewife" or unemployed.

To me, the question "what do you do?" was such a ubiquitous and innocuous part of most friendly initial conversations where I grew up, that I didn't take into account that it might not be such an innocuous thing to say in the context of another society and culture. Recalling Geertz's suggestion that "culture is public because meaning is" (Geertz 1973:12), following my brief exchange with my friend in the car after our visit with his family, I learned quite quickly how this is true. In that conversational context, what kept me from grasping what people were up to (i.e., how to engage in friendly and courteous conversation within culturally defined limits of acceptable and polite conversation) was a "lack of familiarity with the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs" (1973:12-13). In this case, my "act" of asking what someone does for an occupation was differently interpreted by me and my Faroese friend and hosts because I had a lack of familiarity with their imaginative universe in which such an act signified differently. I was operating with a knowledge of my act of asking about one's occupation as a sign in the context of the society and culture which I grew up in. Where I grew up, such an act-as-sign is usually interpreted, among other things, as more along the lines of a piece of safe/friendly/innocuous banter.

The preceding extended discussion was intended to highlight some of the reasons why I think it is important to study the meaning of the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroes, or, more broadly, why I think it is worth searching for meaning via anthropology and ethnography. Its length also serves as a testament to why answers to such questions are often absent from the confined spaces of research proposals (and are frequently replaced by more concrete and palatable answers about filling gaps and lacunae in existing research) (see Cohn 1987:21). However, considering it was first necessary to establish why I think it is tenable and important to search for meaning, I can now explain why I feel it is important to search for meaning specifically in relation to music. With regards to why it is important to study the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroe Islands, my rationale for explaining and discussing these three related complex issues stems from my approach, which follows Anthony Seeger's (2004) famous development of the concept of musical anthropology in his study of the Amazonian Suya people, *Why Suyá Sing*.

In its most basic characterization, the approach of musical anthropology is distinct from that of anthropology of music in that the former is "a study of society from the perspective of musical performance," whereas the latter is "the application of anthropological methods and concerns to music" (Seeger 2004:xiii). The notion of studying a society from the perspective of musical performance is analogous to the idea of studying a society through the "lens" of musical practice, which is how I envision my current study. To further clarify this methodology, I refer again to Seeger who writes, "[a]n anthropology of music looks at the way music is a part of culture and social life. . . by way of contrast a musical anthropology looks at the way musical performances create many aspects of culture and social life" (2004:xiii). Elaborating, Seeger continues by distinguishing the two approaches

> [r]ather than studying music *in* culture (as proposed by Alan Merriam 1960), a musical anthropology studies social life as a

> performance. Rather than assuming that there is a pre-existing and logically prior social and cultural matrix within which music is performed, it examines the way music is part of the very construction and interpretation of social and conceptual relationships and processes. [Seeger 2004:xiii]

However, it would be too easy to let Seeger (and myself) off the hook by not taking a moment to consider what a pleasant-sounding turn of phrase like the above description of musical anthropology actually means in more concrete terms. At first glance, it would appear that Seeger has discovered that the Suyá live within a society that is particularly amenable to an musical anthropology approach which looks at the way musical performances "create many aspects of culture and social life." To clarify, it is worth giving an example from Seeger of how performances create aspects of culture and social life (and, thus, an example of the "especially musical" nature of Suyá society): music is a central component of Suyá ceremony, and through ceremonial musical performances, relationships between humans and animals, as well as between humans and humans, are affirmed, enacted, and transformed (Seeger 2004:60).

More concretely, in the specific musical ceremonial context of the Mouse Ceremony, (among many other things) men are temporarily transformed into animals, and certain social relationships are expressed, reaffirmed, enacted, and created (Seeger 2004:2). In short, the Mouse Ceremony "focuses on the relationship between an adult man and the boy to whom he has transmitted his own names, and it highlights their relationships to other kinsmen" (2004:2). In this example then, one can see how Seeger, using a musical anthropology approach (examining how musical performances create aspects of culture and social life), helps us understand how aspects of social life are created (here, those aspects are the relationships between name-givers and name-receivers and their relationships to other kinsmen).

It might well be argued, then, that Seeger's study is something of a testament to the potential utility of musical anthropology. However, in case this wasn't already

made evident in the preceding passage about one of the roles of music in Suyá society, music in Suyá society and music in much of the western world seem to be quite different things. As Seeger has written regarding this, " Suyá song meant much more that what we call music today . . . it was far from being simply entertainment" (Seeger 2004:61). Though not explicitly stated by Seeger, it seems safe to assume that the "we" in his above phrase probably refers to readers of similar background to himself (i.e., members of non-aboriginal western societies). Despite the implications of his above statement which suggest otherwise, Seeger almost certainly does recognize that what many people call music today across much of the west is also far from being "simply entertainment." However, his point is still well taken about Suyá music being a very different thing from how music is commonly imagined in most of western society.

Turning to the Faroes (a western European society), what are we to make of those many contexts in the islands in which music seems to be much more than "simply entertainment"? In the islands, how and why is music more than “simply entertainment” when the performance of traditional music is regarded as being a required subject in public school, when hundreds or thousands join together to sing nationalistic songs and to dance and sing traditional music on the national holiday, when one fifth of a nation's population gathers together for a music festival, when traditional music is considered an archive of language and oral history, and when composers are inspired by and attempt to evoke the landscape itself? This is the question I intend to investigate by examining what music means for its practitioners in the Faroes.

Considering Seeger's entire book *Why Suya Sing* was dedicated to a musical anthropology of a single relatively tiny group of South American people (and, even more narrowly, to the detailed study of a few song forms - large portions of the book focused solely on the significance of music as part of a single context, the Mouse Ceremony), it would likely be impossible for any individual to carry out a similarly detailed musical anthropology of a vast, populous, and diverse

society like that which stretches across the whole of Canada, for instance. Musical anthropology of the sort described and practiced by Seeger may well be better suited to the study of smaller societies (or, more locally or communally based studies within larger societies like Canada). Similarly, even though the Faroes arguably constitute something of a "small society" (fewer than 50,000 people live on the islands), a truly comprehensive musical anthropology of the Faroes that considered all of the islands' variety of musical practice would likely be as untenable as a "total anthropology" of any nation. As such, I take particular interest in a few specific musical practices and contexts (including country and dance/*dans* music, heavy metal, and traditional music - in particular, how traditional music is variously framed and interpreted in contemporary Faroese society).

In describing and discussing the experience of being a musician in the Faroe Islands, Berger's notion of the "doubly constitutive nature of musical practice" (Berger 1999:1) is key. The double constitution to which Berger refers is "that musical activity constitutes both the meaning of the music in the participant's experience and the music scene as a social group" (1999:1). Berger's conception which takes as one of its main subjects the constitution of meaning through musical performance fits well with my own concern (following Geertz) with a search for meaning, and his concern with the constitution of scenes as social groups (via performance) also mirrors Seeger's aforementioned musical anthropology goal of attending to how aspects of social life are created through music (and also with some concepts from Turino's *Music As Social Life*, to be discussed later). However, how can the meaning of music (or any other aspect of its significance) be considered without first clarifying what one means by "music"?

Without entering into a protracted (and likely futile) discussion of what is and is not music, I will say that I agree with Berger's stance that highlights the importance of music as a subjective, interactional process of meaning-creation

(Berger 1999:9). This position is best explicated in Berger's simple claim that that music doesn't exist without a listening subject:

> without a spatiotemporally specific subject engaged with sound waves, there is no now, no before and no after, no loud or soft, no accent (just changes in amplitude), and no underlying pulse…it takes a subject - always an agent and always social - to hear a period of sound as linked together in a phrase, to hear a phrase as present or past, to stand close to or far from a found source, to constitute a pulse (Berger 1999:9).

And while this explanation is about as far from a scientific definition of music as is imaginable, I maintain that it is useful as an orienting notion in a study such as this, which takes the experience of music, broadly considered, as its subject.

Regarding experience and interpretation, I agree with Berger that the methodology and research rationale of any scholars interested in the meanings, uses, and significance of music in a society must be informed, primarily, by the meanings the music actually holds for individuals. In Berger's estimation, and my own, "[i]f our work is to explain the role of music in society, then our interpretations of music must be an attempt to understand the meaning of music for the people who participate in it" (Berger 1999:15). And this conceit is central to explaining and justifying my sincere attempt at privileging a diversity of Faroese voices in the latter half of this thesis. Though my own voice unquestionably still takes up the majority of space in this thesis, I quote my Faroese collaborators extensively wherever appropriate so that my interpretations of the meaning and role of music in Faroese society will constitute a legitimate attempt at understanding the meaning of music for the people who participate in it. To do otherwise, as Berger claims, would yield an interpretation that is only of use, sensible, or relevant to the writing scholar; one that would be inconsequential to larger society (1999:15). So, an interpretation of music "must be understood as an *attempt* to share the experiences of the music's participants" (1999:15, emphasis added), that is, "if we wish to understand how music operates in society, our interpretations must illuminate the ways in which musical meanings play out

in the lives of a society's actors" (1999:9). My own emphasis on Berger's choice of the word "attempt" in the interested scholar's aim to share experiences of music's participants is intended to acknowledge both the essential unknowability or precise one-to-one translation of the experiences of others, but also the very real potential for ethnography to overcome the challenges posed by cross-cultural communication. In ethnography, then, "we must conceptualize our study object as lived experience and interpretation as a partial sharing of meaning" (Berger 1999:16).

Just as Palmer has suggested of the Secwepemc people she worked with that they "do not need their culture reinterpreted for them" (Palmer 2005:7), neither do I make my aim to reinterpret Faroese culture or musical practices for a Faroese audience. In short, the highly skilled, motivated, and generous Faroese people with whom I spoke already know what they are doing, they are living it. However, I agree with Cohen's (1993) assertion that ethnographic research is especially useful for examining the social significance of music (e.g., "music as social practice and process") (Cohen 1993:123). Further, in this thesis, I share her aim to make ethnography not "the practice of reflecting, representing, or revealing culture, but of translating and writing it" (1993:133).

In the process of "writing" and "translating" culture via ethnography, I accept and intend to be mindful of the famous reflexive charge that "ethnography is always caught up in the invention, not the representation, of cultures" (Clifford 1986:2). But, simultaneously, I will endeavour to make sure that if the writing of this ethnography, like all ethnographic writing, is an art, that it will be a worthwhile art (in the eighteenth century sense of the word that Clifford makes reference to, "art as the skillful fashioning of useful artifacts") (1986:6). That being said, I concur with Clifford that an "acute political and epistemological self-consciousness need not lead to ethnographic self-absorption, or to the conclusion that it is impossible to know anything certain about other people" (1986:7).

On the subject of the potential use of such an ethnographic endeavour, Palmer has suggested that though some Aboriginal peoples whom anthropologists have written about may take interest "in seeing how others see them, and appreciate others' struggles toward a clearer perception of humanity" (Palmer 2005:7), in her experience, people often do find relevant "the detailed documentary evidence that anthropologists provide, rather than the anthropologists' interpretation of that information, which is appreciated as a record of their past" (2005:7). Further, in the same passage, she suggests that the anthropological analyses themselves are appreciated by "those anthropologists, cultural geographers, historians, and others who have not had the privilege of knowing of their [the Aboriginal people's] lives from first-hand experience" (Palmer 2005:7). Similarly, as a curious, monolingual foreigner in the Faroes, I freely admit that I consider myself to be engaged in what is, essentially, a project of attempted translation of certain aspects of Faroese culture and specific musical practices of the people of a small society about whom relatively little English-language scholarship exists. As such, while this work, and especially the analyses herein, are obviously intended for an academic, non-Faroese audience, I hope that, if not the analyses, then the "detailed documentary evidence" in the form of interviews and observations that trace out the shape of (and role of key figures in) the burgeoning Faroese music scene in late 2011 will also be of potential interest to academic and non-academic Faroese people.

With Berger's more general theoretical principles setting the course (e.g., by drawing attention to the doubly constitutive nature of music, music as a subjective and interactional process of meaning-creation, and the importance of studying music as lived experience and approaching interpretation as a partial sharing of meaning), I will now turn to some recent writing by Turino for some more pointed theoretical "tools" that I have found useful in organizing and understanding much of the music I encountered in the Faroes. Specifically, I will be describing and making use of what is essentially a flexible framework designed to help make

sense of the variety of types of musical expression around the world, described by Turino in his 2008 book, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation.*

Starting from the assumptions that many in the West recognize that there are certainly many different kinds of music (i.e., genres, from classical to metal), and that there are many different ways in which and reasons why people create music (from friendly jamming and concert performances, to the production of various types of recordings), Turino quickly moves to develop a theory to more accurately describe how and why these different varieties of music are performed. The first step in his theory is to dispense of the everyday understanding of music as being "subdivided into various style and status categories" (Turino 2008:25), and instead to "conceptualize music making in relation to different realms or fields of artistic practice" (2008:25). By "fields," Turino is drawing on Bourdieu's notion of a social field as a

> specific domain of activity defined by the purpose of goals of the activity as well as the values, power relations, and types of capital (e.g., money, academic degrees, a hit song, athletic prowess, the ability to play a guitar) determining the role relationships, social positioning, and status of actors and activities within the field [Turino 2008:26, but also see Bourdieu 1984:2-4 for Bourdieu's use of the term with reference to the field of artistic production]

And in order to make use of Turino's notion of music being comprised of different fields of artistic practice in describing the variety of Faroese music that I encountered, it is important to first briefly discuss and give examples of each of the four main fields that Turino describes.

"Briefly defined, participatory performance is a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role" Turino 2008:26). For example, performances by dance bands of all types, jam sessions, and Faroese chain-dancing (discussed in detail later with reference to the concept of fields) are

all good examples of types of musical activity which can be best described as types of participatory performance. "Presentational performance, in contrast, refers to situations where one group of people, the artists, prepare and provide music for another group, the audience, who do not participate in making the music or dancing" (2008:26). Considering this second definition, complete with its caveat that audiences in presentational performances do not participate even by dancing, one can see, then, how the aforementioned example of performances by dance bands, although much more closely aligned with the participatory field, also shares some features with the presentational field. For instance, though there are indeed marked distinctions between artists and audience members in terms of their roles in typical dance band performances (e.g., under normal circumstances, it would not be considered acceptable for audience members to leap onstage at a nightclub where a dance band is performing and to take over the band members' instruments), the context is still essentially participatory in that the people present offstage who are not playing instruments are invited to take up another role in the performance, that of dancers who are there to enjoy and make use of the music sound which is being provided "for dancing." In Turino's estimation, European classical music concerts "are perhaps the most pronounced form of presentational performance, where the audience sits still in silent contemplation while the music is being played, only to comment on it through applause after a piece has been completed" (Turino 2008:52). As such, they are a prime example of presentational music, which is "prepared by musicians for others to listen to" (2008:52).

While these first two fields are intended to characterize all types of real time musical performance (2008:26), the other two fields described by Turino are intended to describe the two main types of music recording. Firstly, "[h]igh fidelity refers to the making of recordings that are intended to index or be iconic of live performance" (2008:26). Clarifying, Turino adds that

> [w]hile high fidelity recordings are connected to live performance in a variety of ways, special recording techniques and practices are necessary to make this connection evident in the sound of the

> recording, and additional artistic roles - including the recordist, producers, and engineers - also help delineate high fidelity as a separate field of practice. [2008:26]

Among the obvious examples of high fidelity recordings given by Turino are recordings of actual live performances and ethnographic field recordings, and so are "studio recordings that are meant to represent what an ensemble actually does, or could ideally do, on stage or in a ceremony" (2008:67). Secondly,

> [s]tudio audio art involves the creation and manipulation of sounds in a studio or on a computer to create a recorded art object (a "sound sculpture") that is not intended to represent real-time performance. . . [w]hereas in high fidelity recordings studio techniques are masked or downplayed, in studio audio art processes of electronic sound generation and manipulation are often celebrated and are overtly represented in the ultimate recording or sound files (2008:27).

In the field of studio audio art, creators are able to achieve total control over the production and manipulation of sounds, and the primary goal is the production of a piece of recorded music (Turino 2008:78-79). While any heavily studio-manipulated, intensively produced compositions (e.g., many modern pop songs) could be considered examples of studio audio art, Turino puts forth the example of the first electronic musicians (usually academic composers) who employed various new sound manipulation tools (e.g., reverberation chambers) to create experimental avant-garde compositions (2008:78). More familiar, though, are the studio audio art compositions created by The Beatles in their later career in the form of increasingly experimental compositions like "Tomorrow Never Knows," "A Day in the Life," and, finally, "Revolution 9," which included such electronically manipulated and mediated sounds and techniques as "tape loops and recorded guitar lines played backwards…and electronically altered vocals" (2008:84).

Having briefly described these four fields, it is important to note that, as Turino explains, these fields are not mutually exclusive and are only points on a

continuum (Turino 2008:28). As such, any event, performance, or artist can shift between these at will (depending on artist intent, performance context, etcetera), and exist in multiple fields at one time (2008:28). Taking even the ostensibly narrow category of club dance music, for example, Turino shows how individual recordings or performances can exist in multiple fields simultaneously:

> [i]f the sounds produced on the computer for participatory dancing are intended to iconically represent what performers do live, then it is a mix of high fidelity + participatory; if the recording is not intended to represent 'live music sound', then it is a mix of studio audio art + participatory; if the recording combines a presentational style of singing with electronic sounds for participatory dancing, then it may be intended as a combination of high fidelity + studio audio art + participatory [Turino 2008:28]

and so on, ad infinitum.

The utility of Turino's categories, particularly as they are employed in this thesis, is that they are helpful in making sense of and discussing the daunting variety of musical activity that exists because they encourage the subdivision of music from one broad category of expression, into four more comprehensible and related fields of artistic practice, each with their own internally relevant goals, values, methods, and so on (Turino 2008:26). And in the Faroes, as in many other societies around the world, music-making throughout and between all four of these fields has been going on for some time. As such, an application of some of the flexible theoretical concepts employed by Turino is helpful in trying to understand and explain some of the ways in which music is made socially meaningful in the various performance contexts engaged in by Faroese musicians in the islands and abroad (i.e., from the most wholly participatory chain-dance, to jazz jams, to playing for dances and concert audiences, to the production of studio audio art in the Faroes' world-class recording studios).

Methodology

Regarding methodology, following receipt of a number of generous grants administered by the Canadian Circumpolar Institute (Circumpolar/Boreal Alberta Research and Northern Scientific Training Program grants) and by the federal government (the Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement - MSFSS), I left for the Faroe Islands from Calgary, Alberta, via Air Canada on July 27, 2011. The C/BAR (Circumpolar Boreal Alberta Research) and NSTP (Northern Scientific and Training Program) grants were meant to help cover costs associated with transportation and living in the circumpolar north, while the MSFSS was intended to help defray expenses associated with transportation, living, and studying in the Faroes. I flew via Copenhagen as the Faroese airline (Atlantic Airways) only flies to a few European destinations and, aside from the ferry route via northern Denmark or a more remote part of Iceland, the Faroese air carrier is the only option for reaching the islands.

In large part because I had been waiting for some time until shortly before my trip before I received ethics confirmation, I did not contact any potential interviewees in the Faroes before I left Canada. In fact, the only Faroese people I had communicated with before leaving were members of the faculty at the University of the Faroe Islands and a friend I had met via YouTube.

Upon arrival in the Faroese capital, I quickly realized that the hostel I had arranged to stay at was decidedly "outside" the capital, Tórshavn. Operated by the islands' foremost hotel, Hotel Føroyar, my hostel, Kerjalon, was perched high on a hill that overlooks the whole of the city, easily a 25-plus minute (sometimes steep) uphill hike from downtown Tórshavn. While this ensured I would get plenty of exercise, it also made my daily travels between Kerjalon and the capital something of a regular, minor ordeal. At least, it certainly didn't seem conducive initially to living "with" people or getting a sense of the capital community if I was forced to retreat to my isolated hilltop at the end of every day.

Regardless, I knew that my first three weeks in the islands would be chock-full of studying and school business, so I didn't leap into interviewing right away. I did begin quite quickly, if tentatively, by sending a few emails to a few people who were so obviously significant figures in Faroese popular music that I was able to discern their importance even before I'd left for the Faroes. I had begun this part of my research strategy well before I arrived and, as I discovered, the internet would prove to be an absolutely indispensable research and communication tool before, during, and after my time in the Faroes.

These "significant figures" I mentioned, for instance, I had learned about through various online sources. Early on during my time in the Faroes, I contacted via email a small number of people like Kristian Blak, who started the Faroese record label, Tutl, and Jón Tyril, who started the islands' first major music festival, G! Festival. I became aware of both of these individuals by following their musical careers (Tyril and Blak have both played in influential bands in the islands), publishing (Blak contributed to the book Traditional Music in the Faroese Islands), and various other means (all online sources).

In the earliest days, I began attempting to decide who to interview by constructing a sort of directory of Faroese musicians, producers, and key scene members intended to highlight individuals' roles and networks of professional associations. Poring over YouTube and MySpace (and elsewhere), I was attempting to get an idea of who worked with whom, what sort of activities they were involved in, their recordings, and who would be best to interview. Aside from those two social media websites already mentioned, partway through compiling my Faroese musical directory, I stumbled across the immensely helpful website musicfromthefaroeislands.com, which is maintained by the Faroese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Uttanríkistænastan). This English-language site has the self-professed aim of helping “visitors find out more about Faroese music and develop contacts and networks between various musical communities” (musicfromthefaroeislands.com 2011), and it features a long list of Faroese

musicians and their respective websites. Fortunately, someone had done a good deal of the groundwork in creating a Faroese music directory for me.

So, between the Foreign Affairs music website and my own fledgling directory, I began to identify potential interviewees. Before even beginning with musicians themselves, then, Blak and Tyril were obvious first contacts because I felt they could help me get some sense of recent Faroese music history and their own involvement in the development of popular music in the islands. The way in which I contacted them both was typical of the method I used with every person I interviewed thereafter: namely, I sent them a polite, detailed, somewhat lengthy e-mail explaining my project, why I wished to speak with them specifically, their rights (optional anonymity, to withdraw from the project up to a certain date, etcetera), and other relevant information. Essentially, I was just reproducing a number of personalized and more in-depth versions of the example "script" which I had written as part of my ethics application.

When people accepted (which every person I contacted did), we usually worked out a place and time to meet that would be most convenient for them. Because I felt that they were doing me a huge favour by agreeing to participate, I let them set the time and date whenever possible. For this reason, though we typically agreed on meeting in a local pub or café in the capital, sometimes it was more convenient for people if I met them in their hometowns, which I also did on occasion.

Though I did not set out initially to interview a specific number of individuals, I had in mind that I wanted to interview no fewer than 30 individuals because that would mean that (for the two months that I was there after the language and culture course which would took up almost all of my time in the first month), I would be interviewing no fewer than one person every other day every thirty days. This seemed like both a healthy and feasible number. The imagined minimum of thirty people was also influenced by my perception of the average amount of interviews typically carried out by MA anthropology students and by

my own conviction that, in attempting to at least get some idea of the great variety of musical practices in the Faroes, it would be better to interview "too many" than too few. In the end, I carried out recorded audio interviews with 38 individuals who were somehow involved in Faroese music.

Though I knew that many, many musicians and others with whom I wanted to speak lived and worked in or around the capital, I was also conscious of attending to (and guarding against) a sort of "capital bias" in my choice of interviewees. There was a practical basis for this attempted guarding against bias: a great number of the nation's most (domestically and internationally) successful musicians came from regions quite distant from the Faroes' "centre," including, notably, the members of the Faroes' best-known metal band, Týr, several of whom came from small villages on the island of Eysturoy. There was also a second, less concrete reason for my attempted inclusion of artists from outside the capital: I had suspected that there was a difference (or, more precisely, a local perception of difference) between people who were born and raised in the capital, and people who grew up in different parts of the islands. This was a suspicion that was largely confirmed in conversations with people like the musician John Áki Egholm, who, speaking of his first time going to the southern island of Suðuroy, told me:

> John Áki Egholm: I think that was the first time I ever went- because we're CAPITAL guys, you know, capitals guys usually don't go outside the capital very much unless they have family, and it was the first time that I actually went to the south island, yeah, I was 18 years old.
>
> Josh Green: Really? The first time you been there?
>
> JÁE: Exactly, it's weird because, you know, if you don't have business, you know, in the further regions, you just don't go there. Now, because, you know, I have a car and I'm curious what the rest of the country looks like, now I can do this, so it's like that.
>
> JG: Funny though.

> JÁE Yeah. . . you know I don't think there are a lot of capital people, you know, actively explored Faroe Islands.
>
> JG: You don't think there a lot of what people?
>
> JÁE: Like people from the capital actively explore the Faroe Islands, yeah they just think, you know, ah goddamn it all looks the same anyway, just fuckin' mountains and sea.

As John's observations suggest, at least some Faroese people imagine that "capital people" don't necessarily actively explore or interact with people from the "further regions" of the Faroes; this perception of a disconnect or difference between capital people and people from elsewhere was a theme that recurred with some frequency in conversation and interviews. So, it was partly in response to this that I wanted to make sure that I made a serious effort to speak with people from several different parts of the Faroes.

Interviews

In terms of the content of the interviews themselves, it evolved somewhat over time. My first few interviews were typical in form and content to many of my subsequent interviews, though the questions were often refined or worded differently based on my perception of their clarity. Similarly, just as I had tailored the aforementioned invitational e-mails slightly to each individual, I also added, modified, or removed certain questions from my shifting repertoire of between 20 to 25 standard questions which I asked everyone in order to address their particular experiences and areas of expertise.

Because I had been occupied with schoolwork from the Faroese summer institute every day for the first three weeks of my stay in the Faroes, my first actual interview didn't take place until the 21st of August when I met Kristian Blak and his wife, Sharon Weiss, in their home on Reynagøta, a narrow street in the heart of Tinganes, the capital's historic centre. The relatively loose structure of the interview (e.g., allowing even tangential conversations, if music-related, to

branch off naturally for some time before returning to scripted questions), as well as the domains of inquiry in the Blak/Weiss interview were typical of subsequent interviews (though the format was refined over time). I always began with open-ended questions designed to elicit brief musical/life histories (typically, "Could you tell me a bit about how you first became involved in music?, do you come from a musical family?").

In Blak's case, because I knew he had a long history of involvement with Faroese music and that he had started the Faroese record label, Tutl, I pursued questions in the domain of music history a bit further than I did typically in other interviews. For instance, I asked Blak early on about his involvement with music in the Faroes specifically, why he came to the islands, what the music scene was like in 1974 when he arrived, and so on. Despite this malleability of form in the interviews, the majority of questions fell within the following five domains, and were typically in this order: (1) musical/life histories; (2) experience of being a musician in the Faroes, including musical scenes in the islands, and perceptions of Faroese-world relations (e.g., questions like "What would you say is the most challenging thing about being a musician in the Faroes?," and, more specific questions related to the logistics of trying to work as a musician in the islands, such as "Where and how did you record?," "How did the band pay for the recording and production?," etcetera); (3) the experience of performing music, touring, etcetera (e.g., "Can you describe the experience of performing metal live?," "What can you tell me about your experience of your first international tour/what was it like?"); (4) perceptions of and experiences with Faroese traditional music and, especially, the re-framing of traditional music in contemporary music (e.g., "What do you think of artists like Týr and Eivør who use Faroese traditional music?," "What did you learn about *kvæði* in school?," "Where can you find Faroese traditional music being performed today, or, who is interested in it?"); (5) the role of the Faroese media and government in Faroese music (e.g., "Do you think the Faroese radio stations play much Faroese

music/could it be better?"; "Do you think the Faroese government does much to support Faroese musicians?").

Though not exhaustive by any measure, these five (not mutually exclusive) domains were intended to address broad questions about Faroese music history, individuals' involvement in Faroese music (e.g., scenes), the role and perception of Faroese traditional music in contemporary society, and the experience of music and music-making in the Faroes. Considered together, as well as addressing specific questions I had imagined before embarking on my research trip (e.g., "How and why are Faroese musicians shaping and expressing a Faroese musical identity and marketing it internationally?"), the various domains were really intended to help me make sense of the variety of Faroese musical practice which I encountered.

In terms of transportation and other logistical concerns, within the capital where many of my interviews took place, I simply walked or took the free city buses to meet people in their homes. More frequently, we met in public locations like (most commonly) the pub, Cafe Natur, or the cafe, Kaffihúsið (both in easy to reach downtown locations). I typically offered to buy interviewees a coffee or beer, and they usually accepted (excepting a few occasions where people who were quite a bit older than I was either paid for themselves, or insisted on buying my drink as well).

People who lived outside of the capital offered to receive me at their homes. Others, like the members of the bands Grandma's Basement (based in the northerly major centre of Klaksvik) or Konqueror (based in easterly Runavik), decided to meet me at bus stations in or near their towns, and then kindly shuttled me a minute or two in their cars to either a restaurant or their practice spaces where we held the interviews.

The Faroes' convenient and sophisticated infrastructure and transit system was an essential boon for me. Daily buses, which make use of extensive systems of undersea and mountain tunnels, and ferries connect the capital to all but the

furthest and most sparsely populated places in the islands, and I made extensive use of this transit system to get around outside of the capital.

Participant Observation

In terms of other aspects of my methodology not yet discussed, I made a conscious and sustained effort to involve myself in multiple forms of participant observation whenever possible. Just as Facebook and other social media and music-sharing websites were essential tools from the outset, so too was Facebook (in particular) for establishing and maintaining connections with people. For instance, if I couldn't find a person's email, I would look them up through Facebook and send them my initial invitational and explanatory script via a private message. I became "Facebook friends" with a huge number of the people I met in the islands. I found that nearly everyone I spoke with in the Faroes uses Facebook frequently, and the social network seems to enjoy tremendous popularity there. I used (and continue to use) Facebook to chat casually with contacts in the islands, send links and music back and forth, and so on. When I was in the Faroes, it was also useful in keeping me abreast of musical happenings there. People often advertised upcoming gigs or musical events and news, for instance.

My use of Facebook in the islands was also only one facet of my strategy of engaging in the quintessentially ethnographic activity of what Renato Rosaldo calls "deep hanging out" (Clifford 1997:56). Almost in equal measures in order to stave off boredom, loneliness, and a sense of isolation (on the one hand), and to embody or enact the principles of the ethnographic method (on the other), I made an attempt to insert myself into the social world of the Faroes in a number of ways, including attending as many different types of musical performances as possible, hanging out with musicians (around my age) at their homes, and meeting up with them in bars some evenings. Though I wouldn't claim that I became friends with most of the people whom I interviewed, it is true that I've maintained

some sort of at least some contact with all of them (e.g., via occasional Facebook communication).

Conversely, there are a few other people, most of whom I did interview, with whom I definitely feel that I became quite good friends with while I was in the Faroes. Some guys, for instance, were often as bored some weekdays and weeknights as I sometimes was, so we got together to watch movies or, sometimes, play board games. Significantly, and perhaps not surprisingly, as well as being fun and rewarding on a personal level (and alleviating occasional bouts of boredom), such hanging out sometimes had some research benefits. For instance, after a lengthy interview with Remi Kofoed Johannesen, with whom I had occasionally spent time in other social situations, I thanked him repeatedly for the informative and lengthy interview and he explained to me how it was no problem at all, his pleasure because it was just like a "normal conversation" because we already knew each other and had been hanging out. When he told me that, I made a quick mental note about the validity of all that old anthropological rhetoric about the benefit of trying to live and work "with" people, instead of just looking "at" them and jotting down notes on the peculiar and quaint native customs.

Focus on Metal Music

My keen interest in and central focus on Faroese metal was equal parts intentional and a consequence of my attempted involvement in Faroese social networks. My considerable focus on metal in the Faroes was something I envisioned before visiting the islands because I knew that one of the foremost re-interpreters of Faroese traditional music (and some of the most internationally famous Faroese people, generally) were the members of the Faroese metal band, Týr. Therefore, I knew any conversations about the relationship between Faroese traditional and popular music and the role of traditional music in contemporary society would inevitably circle back to discussions of Týr. Further, and along more practical

methodological lines, the members of the Faroese metal scene were people with whom I anticipated I would have a better chance of connecting and communicating. Metal music, as some scholars have observed, is a form that, since its inception, has been markedly global and transnational (see Weinstein 2011; Wallach et al. 2011). What this meant for me as a 25-year-old music researcher and lifelong metal fan in the Faroes was that, despite coming from places with vastly different histories, I shared a similar personal history of experience with metal music with many of the metal scene members with whom I interacted. We communicated and got along relatively easily with one another because we spoke the same "languages": English as well as the "language" of the global sub-culture of metal.

Many people I interviewed, like myself, grew up as the first in a generation of music downloaders whose lives and musical tastes, in particular, were strongly influenced by the sorts of (metal) music which they listened to in their teenage years which could be accessed for the first time through their computers. Many of the people with whom I spoke, also like myself, shared similar stories of first "encountering" metal as a young teenager, forming basement and garage metal bands shortly afterwards, and developing a deep and abiding familiarity with the global metal sub-culture, largely via music they accessed through the internet. We spoke the same "language" in the latter sense because when they told me they grew up listening to the seminal American metal bands Pantera and Metallica, but that they later became more interested in the Swedish metal bands In Flames and Meshuggah, I knew precisely whom and to what they referred. Unlike other music genres which I have less familiarity with, because we had similar histories of experience with metal as a transnational, globally circulating genre, we could connect and communicate about music (and thus, potentially form friendly relationships) with relative ease.

Faroese Language Competence

Speaking of languages, it is important to mention the degree to which my experience at the Faroese summer institute (the Faroese language and culture course, which occupied most of my first three weeks in the islands) influenced my methodology. In short, it barely did at all. In part because I knew I would be purchasing the language learning materials (two complimentary texts and an audio CD) when I arrived in the Faroes, I had not attempted to learn the language in any systematic way before I came to the islands. While I was there, I had language instruction for several hours nearly every day for three weeks and made an attempt to study and practice my language textbooks as often as possible during that period. However, partly because of my lack of experience with other Scandinavian languages, I was placed (and chose to stay in) the least advanced class of three levels of language instruction. Despite competent instruction and textbook materials and an earnest attempt to learn as much Faroese as possible in the space of those first three weeks, my level of competence in Faroese remained quite low at the end of the course. This meant that, despite considerable advances in my reading comprehension in Faroese, my aural and oral skills were insufficient to carry on any sort of comfortable conversation in the language. I do intend to continue studying the language in hopes of greatly increasing my Faroese language competence in all respects, especially during the course of my eventual PhD studies. This also meant that, in interviewing and social contexts, I communicated exclusively in English. This was possible because almost every single person (regardless of their age) with whom I communicated was able to speak English with a high degree of competence.

The fact that my experience with the language and culture course did not result in significant practical application of the language in everyday use (i.e., that it did not greatly influence my methodology) does not mean to suggest that the course was at all useless. On the contrary, even as a relatively poor language student, I was able to grasp a number of important basic linguistic concepts,

including many of the principles of Faroese pronunciation and verb conjugation, that unquestionably helped me communicate (in English) about Faroese topics with Faroese people. In a very basic way, for instance, I was able to learn to pronounce names (of bands, places, people) with enough proficiency that I could almost always make myself easily understood. Further, the non-linguistic components of the course were also extremely helpful. Multiple lectures on the history of Faroese traditional and popular music forms by, for instance, did greatly supplement my understanding of Faroese music history (and thus influenced aspects of my methodology, including refining lines of questioning, for instance).

With these theoretical and methodological principles having been discussed, we are now able to begin a discussion of Faroese musical practice. However, it is impossible to discuss or begin to understand the significance of contemporary Faroese music without first being aware of the tremendous role music has played historically in Faroese society. So, before ultimately examining the variety of music I encountered in the Faroes, it is necessary to begin with a discussion of the islands' history, with a particular focus on Faroese music history. And since, for the vast majority of Faroese history, a cappella singing and chain-dancing comprised the whole of known musical activity endemic to the islands, the following chapter begins with those participatory forms, and continues in the fourth chapter with a detailed discussion of the Faroese chain-dance in contemporary Faroese society, and with my own experience of participation in chain-dancing sessions.

Chapter 3: Faroese Music History

Much of the following discussion of Faroese pre-history and musical history is designed to provide readers with a basic framework with which most people who grew up in the Faroes would already be at least somewhat familiar (e.g., by virtue, in part, of their schooling). Faroese people's familiarity with something of the history and significance of the older Faroese music forms discussed in this history chapter is described in the sub-section, "The Role of Oral Literature in the Development of the Faroese Nation and Written Language," and the subsequent chapter, "Traditional Music in Contemporary Society." The following historical discussion also informs the fifth chapter's discussion of bands like Týr which draw extensively on themes from Faroese pre-history and on traditional Faroese song forms in their contemporary compositions. This history chapter is intended to furnish enough of a background to allow readers to better interpret metal as a form of contemporary Faroese musical practice, discussed later, which references and evokes historical Faroese song forms, as well as key elements of Faroese history and mythology.

Early Faroese History

There is an unfortunate lack of pre-Reformation documentary material in which the Faroes are mentioned, due largely to a number of fires: in sixteenth century Nidaros (modern day Trondheim), seventeenth century Tinganes (a part of modern day, Tórshavn, the Faroese capital), and eighteenth century Copenhagen (Young 1979:1). The impact of these disasters, which burned many of the oldest records of Faroese activity, was further compounded by the disappearance of a number of crates of additional records during transport in Denmark in the sixteenth century (1979:1). As such, the *Saga of the Faroe Islanders* (*Føroyingasøga*), which was compiled from the Icelandic sagas of the medieval manuscript, *Flateyjarbók,* is perhaps the most significant extant

source on early Faroese history, but, as Young explains, it "only covers the period from about 970 to 1035 and cannot be treated as a true historical work" (1979:1). It is generally accepted that the first written source which refers to the Faroes was written by the Irish monk, Dicuil, in what Kerins refers to as his "geography manuscript, *De mensura orbus terrae (the Book of the Measurement of the Earth)* written in 825." (Kerins 2010:31; cf. Young and Clewer 1973:1; Young 1979:1; and Wylie 1987:7). Of these first pre-Norse settlers, all that is known is that they "were Irish monks, who were thought to have arrived, along with their sheep, in the 8th century from Eire (Ireland) or from the north of Scotland" (Debes 1989, cited in Kerins 2010:31). Of those first inhabitants and their fate, Dicuil wrote only that

> in these [islands] for nearly a hundred years hermits sailing from our own country, Ireland, have lived. . . but just as they were always deserted from the beginning of the world, so now because of the Northman pirates, they are emptied of anchorites[3] and filled with countless sheep and very many diverse kinds of sea-birds. [Dicuil, quoted in Wylie 1987:7]

Though various accounts disagree on precisely how long it was after the "emptying" of the islands of anchorites by the "Northman pirates" that permanent Faroese settlement took place, Kerins notes that

> [a]rchaeological evidence also establishes the date of Norse settlement of the Faroes at approximately the 9th century" (Kerins 2010:32, citing Arge and Hartman 1989), and that, "[s]cattered archaeological and linguistic evidence suggests the first Norse settlers came to the Faroes mostly from western Norway, but to some extent also by way of Shetland and the Orkneys which were already under Norse control. [Kerins 2010:32, citing Wylie 1987]

Faroese oral tradition, including *Føroyingasøga,* holds that the Faroes' first settler, Grímur Kamban, made his home on the island of Eysturoy during the time of Norwegian Harald Fairhair's (King Harald I of Norway) tyranny, placing initial

[3]Religious hermits

settlement between 885 and 890 AD (Young 1979:2). Although these dates are now generally considered too late for an initial Norse settlement period, Young suggests the author of *Føroyingasøga* may have been confusing Kamban's settlement with a later settlement wave (1979:1). Significantly, then, the settlement dates derived from Faroese traditional sources (i.e., 885-890 AD) have yet to have been proven to have been off by more than 60 or so years by the latest archaeological research. So, it appears Norse settlement in the Faroes did indeed take place at least in the same century as was suggested by tradition.

The most recent archaeological research continues to refine the estimated initial settlement date. The appearance of cultivated crops in the Faroes was suggested to have been as early as the sixth century (Hannon and Bradshaw 2000), but a later (2009) work, co-authored by Hannon and Bradshaw with a number of other scholars, suggested the earliest crop cultivation took place by the mid-700s (Hannon et al. 2009). Neither scenario at all disproves Dicuil's 825 claim that Irish hermits inhabited the lands for roughly a century before being driven out. In any case, the initial Norse settlement is still generally agreed to have been in the ninth century (Hannon et al. 2009:295), and, whenever a specific date is cited, the first wave of settlement is generally said to have been 825 (cf. Young 1979:2; Hannon, Arge, et. Al 2009:295; and Numminen 2010:41). The initial Norse settlement is said to have been followed by a second wave of immigrants "who migrated from Norway in the 900s, seeking freedom from the oppression of the Norse king" (Numminen 2010:41, citing Patursson 1918:5; Bruun 1919:72; Williamson 1948/1970:20; and Nauerby 1996:29).

Aside from the settlement itself, the only other element of this earliest period of Faroese history that bears mentioning here is the introduction of Christianity to the islands. According to Faroese tradition (*Føroyingasøga,* ballads like CCF 22, and elsewhere), the Faroes were initially pagan for some time until they were Christianized circa 1000 AD by Sigmundur Brestisson, at the behest of Ólaf Tryggvason (King Olaf I of Norway) (Young and Clewer 1973:31).

Without entering into an unnecessarily detailed recounting of the traditional tale of the Christianization of the Faroes, it should suffice here to say that Sigmundur encountered some resistance in his Christianizing task in the Faroes from a powerful pagan chief, Tróndur Í Gøtu (Anglicised as Thrand), but he eventually succeeded by forcibly converting Tróndur under threat of death. See Young and Clewer 1973 for a very readable free translation of *Føroyingasøga*.

For the most part, perhaps largely due to a lack of evidence to the contrary, academic descriptions of the Christianization of the islands have long tended to more or less agree, in general, with this traditional narrative, while acknowledging, of course, that it cannot be considered a reliable historical source (see West 1972:6 and Young 1979:35). Wylie, for instance, suggests that there is no reason to doubt that *Føroyingasøga's* central episode (i.e., the Christianization of the Faroes circa 1000 AD and their prompt falling under Norwegian influence) "is true enough, in a general sort of way" (Wylie 1987:9). More specifically, after summarizing the traditional version of the tale, Wylie then claims that, although the story includes some less reliable details (like the success ascribed to Tryggvason in the Faroes' Christianization) (1987:10), he concludes that "[w]hatever happened in detail, there is no reason to doubt that the early eleventh century saw the Faroese become both Christian and tributary to Norway" (1987:10).

This long-standing general agreement between academic and traditional sources on the supposedly homogeneously pagan nature of pre-1000 Faroese society may yet be disproven. In a recent (2005) presentation, Steffen Stummann Hansen discussed the results of his study of a Faroese Viking age farm at Toftanes on the island of Eysturoy (dated between 860-970) at which two wooden crosses were discovered (Stummann Hansen 2010, Hansen's research was presented in 2005 and published in 2010). As palaeoecologists Buckland and Panagiotakopulu have noted of Stummann Hansen's work, "recent finds of wooden devotional crosses, perhaps based on Irish or Scottish prototypes . . . has

highlighted the presence of Christians amongst the early settlers" (2008:31). And while these crosses alone do not, of course, single-handedly stand on their own as proof that all of the earliest Norse settlers were Christian, their discovery does have the potential to shatter the commonly held conception that early Faroese society was entirely pagan. In other words, the crosses pose a potential challenge to both traditional and historical knowledge about the time of Christianity's arrival in the islands, and to the folkloric beliefs about the origin of Faroese Christianity (cf. Stummann Hansen 2010).

Why Pre-history is Significant

While it may seem that I have spent an inordinate amount of time describing this ancient and tangled period at the beginning of Faroese history, it has not been without good reason. As I will discuss in more detail later, the belief in the pagan nature of early Faroese society, as well as even some of the specific details of the Christianization period (principally as they are related in *Føroyingasøga,* old ballads, and other Faroese lore), continue to inform present practice (musical and otherwise) for many Faroese people. Whether in everyday talk, online discussion, or interviews (see Jenus Í Trøðini 2011 and 2012 on page 119, and Jóhan Bjartur Kjærbo 2011 on page 122), the paganism of the early Faroes and the Christianization narrative are not uncommon subjects. Aside from talk, though, this earliest period of Faroese history is also implicated and brought to the fore in a great number of other ways in contemporary Faroese society, which is arguably permeated with references to and representations of the Faroes' pre-Christian, pagan history. For instance, more commonplace (or banal and latent) examples can be found in the form of the representations of Thor's hammer which adorn all of Tórshavn's manhole covers, as well as in those place names which are derived from aspects of Norse mythology (as in the towns of Tórshavn and Hósvík, both derived from Thor). In other cases, paganism and the Christianization narrative

have directly informed practices as diverse as musical choices (see, especially, the metal band, Týr, in chapter five), to tattooing. In these and a variety of other ways in the Faroes, elements of even the extremely dim and distant past are often brought to bear in the present via what could be called the "symbolic constitution of the past in the present" (Jolly 1992:59).

This point is probably better understood when one considers that it was during this mytho-historical horizon, a misty and still largely unknowable era hovering on the cusp of pre-history, in which many of the heroes and villains, about whom Faroese people would continue write and perform songs and stories for the following thousand years, supposedly lived. Stories from this initial period and thereabouts were written down by Icelandic monks two centuries later (Young 1979:35), re-worked, sung and danced to repeatedly for centuries in the Faroese ballads and accompanying chain-dances, and, during the late-19th century period of Faroese nationalism (to be discussed later in more detail), came to be selected and held up as exemplars of Faroese cultural distinctiveness in a process of what Nauerby has called "nationalization of culture" (Nauerby 1996:144). In short, I feel that the amount of attention I have paid to the dawn of Faroese history is justified given its "presence" and relevance to contemporary Faroese society and practice.

Further, my brief discussion of the somewhat conflicting academic and traditional narratives of the Faroes' earliest settlement highlights an interesting interplay (or tensions) between scholarship and oral history and traditional sources. For instance, whether or not Christianity played a significant role in Faroese society before the time of the Christianization of the islands described in the Faroese saga cannot yet be determined. And, independent of the (perhaps someday discoverable) truth of the events of this earliest period, what is important to this discussion is that, as Numminen has observed, despite disagreements between scholars about the presence of hermits in the early days of the Faroes, "[t]he general public seems to be quite certain of the early presence of hermits on

the islands" (2010:40). In other words, Faroese people continue to operate with their own understandings of early Faroese history that may be only partially constructed on the basis of the academic interpretations of the period. So, what is of more concern to this thesis is what understandings people actually use to make sense of that time today. That is, because some musicians and their fans employ and refer back to the traditional Christianization narrative (something discussed in more detail in the later case study of the band Týr), it is the "truth" or significance of that narrative to them which influences their practice, not necessarily the independently constructed and contested truths argued about within academia.

Moving past this discussion of the earliest period and on to only a few of the most significant events and aspects more directly related to music in order to present a (necessarily) extremely condensed version of Faroese history, it is worth noting that, in contrast to the uncertainty of the settlement and Christianization periods, a much more definite chronology of events has been traced out for the era following the end of the eleventh century.

Around the year 1100, a bishopric was established in the Faroes (West 1972:6), and the Faroes were essentially governed as a Norwegian province until the union of the Danish and Norwegian crowns in 1380, after which time "Iceland and the Faroe Islands came to be governed more and more not as Norwegian, but as Danish provinces" (1972:8). In the period between 1535 and 1557, it could be said that the Reformation had spread to the Faroe Islands, and that one of the principal outcomes of this shift was that the considerable lands held by the church at that time, perhaps as high as 40% of the Faroes by the time of the Reformation (1972:6), were transferred to the crown (Wylie 1987:23). Thus began the long centuries of Protestantism in the Faroes, a religious tradition that continues to this day with 82.5% of the population listed as members of the national (Lutheran) church in 2010 (Hagstova Føroya 2011:23).

More pertinent to this thesis, however, is the significance that the Reformation and Protestantism would have in introducing and shaping new musical practices

in the islands, as well the role certain prominent clergymen would have in observing and documenting early Faroese society. Before discussing the influence of the Reformation on Faroese musical practices, though, I will first consider what information can be gleaned from contemporary and historical sources on Faroese music as it had been developing up to that point.

Traditional Heroic Ballad and Religious Singing: *Kvæði* and Kingo

Determining the origin of that oldest and most famous Faroese song form, the long, stanzaic, heroic ballads known as *kvæði*, has proven challenging. The probable parentage of the most basic forms of the Faroese chain (or ring) dance itself, which, as far back as written sources can tell us, accompanied the singing of *kvæði*, is less complicated: in short, "the two main forms of the Faroese songdances most probably derive from the medieval French ballad dances *carole* and *espringdale*" (Nolsøe 1972:87). This isn't to suggest, however, that the actual song texts and their sung performances do not predate the arrival of these specific dance forms from continental Europe which were adopted by Faroese people (and combined with their *kvæði*). Rather, it is just to suggest that ballad studies scholars have had better success (working within diffusionist models of dance forms) with determining the suspected age and genealogy of the Faroese dance than they have with the Faroese songs (*kvæði)* themselves. While no consensus has been achieved on the exact date or geography of the *kvæði's* origin, the considerable literary and historic research carried out by ballad studies scholars has yielded some interesting information regarding the origin of this most characteristically Faroese song form.

Writing in 1972, noted Faroese scholar Mortan Nolsøe summarized the then-prevailing thinking on the Nordic heroic ballad, of which the *kvæði* is the Faroese example, writing

> (1) the heroic ballad is of West Nordic origin and was first composed in Norway or the Faroes which together form its dominant tradition area, (2) its thematic connection with Old Norse [i.e., Icelandic] literature is explained as a direct or indirect dependence on this source, i.e., mainly on late saga categories. . . (3) the heroic ballad is a late medieval ballad category, dating back to the beginning of the 14th-century, and (4) the East Nordic heroic ballad is a result of later dissemination from the West Nordic area. [Nolsøe 1972:87-88]

However, as Nolsøe, also notes, disagreement persisted on the original centre of the heroic ballad, with some scholars arguing for an original Norwegian centre, and others for a Faroese one (Nolsøe 1972:88). Following his own comparison of the Faroese heroic ballads and the Icelandic song form, *rímur***,** Nolsøe further concludes that an older origin date for the Faroese heroic ballad is needed (1972:91) and that, a supposed Middle English, probably 13th century, heroic ballad form may have influenced the development of the later Icelandic and Faroese heroic ballad forms (1972:92). In any case, what is certain is that the *kvæði* have been performed in the Faroes since at least the 14th century, and that there are strong links between the Faroese heroic ballads, the *kvæði,* and Iceland's venerable hoard of Old Norse literature and related song forms. The degree of connection between old Icelandic literature and songs is even attested to within some *kvæði* texts themselves, as in CCF 28, “Trollini í Hornalondum,” in which the first stanza begins "A *ríma* has come from Iceland / written in a big book" (1972:90). So, if one accepts Nolsøe's reasonable suggestion that the Faroese heroic ballad, the *kvæði,* has been performed in the islands since the 14th century, the implication, then, is that by the time that early scholars were producing the first detailed accounts of life in the Faroes in the later 17th century, even that one aspect of Faroese traditional music had been developing for as many as four hundred years.

Lucas Jacobsøn Debes, a Danish priest and scholar stationed in the Faroes, wrote what could be said to have been the first attempt at a descriptive account of the islands and its inhabitants, first published in 1673 in Danish, and shortly thereafter in English in 1676, under the amusingly archaic title, *Færoæ, et Færoa reserata : that is a description of the islands and inhabitants of Foeroe: being seventeen islands subject to the King of Denmark, lying under 62 deg. 10 min. of north latitude. Wherein several secrets of nature are brought to light, and some antiquities hitherto kept in darkness discovered.* Most pertinent to this thesis are those few sections of the text in which Debes describes in some detail aspects of Faroese oral tradition which he thought interesting. Notably, after describing some of the only two (according to Debes) significant figures of early Faroese history, "Magnus Heirson" and "Sigismund Bretteson/Bresteson" (i.e., the aforementioned legendary Sigmundur Brestisson, who christianized the Faroes), Debes notes that Brestisson is known to him from the writings of "Snore Sturleson" (Snorri Sturluson, the early 13th century Icelandic author of *The Prose Edda* and various sagas) and "Peter Clauson" (likely Peder Claussen Friis, the early 17th century Norwegian historian). Then, after recounting the tale of Brestisson's Christianizing mission in the islands and the challenge the viking chieftain Tróndur Í Gøtu posed, Debes observes that

> here is sung in Feroe an old Song of the actions of Sigismund, where it is said, that Sigismund found much difficulty, and was in great danger ere he could take Land in Feroe; for Trund of Gote [Tróndur Í Gøtu], by Sorcery and Witchcraft had raised great Storms against him. [Debes 1676:229-230].

This particular song, reckoned to be old even at the time of the learned priest's writing in the latter 17th century, is almost certainly CCF 22, “Sigmundar kvæði.” While mentioned only in passing in the above passage, this is likely the earliest written record of Faroese *kvæði* performance. Debes' book is also significant in that it provides insight into the oldest known Faroese music forms, and attests to supposed strength of oral tradition amongst the islanders at the time. In one of the

few other relevant sections, Debes remarks on the performance of the separate ballad and religious song traditions, writing "[t]hey are not inclined to any unprofitable pastimes, but delight themselves most in singing of Psalms on holy days, except in their Weddings, and at Christmas, that they recreate themselves with a plain Dance, holding one another by the hand, and singing some old Champions Ballad" (Debes 1676:273). The champions ballad and plain dance are, of course, the *kvæði* and accompanying ring-dance. Elsewhere, in the only other description of the *kvæði* and ring-dance found in Debes' book, he laments of the Faroese people (who, he complains, did not know some specific psalm) that

> almost all of them know the most part of the old Gyants Ballads; not only those that are Printed in the Danish Book of Ballads, but also many more of the Champion of Norway, that may be are forgotten elsewhere, here in fresh Memory, being usually Sung in their Dances. But they have so absolutely forgotten that gracious and useful Song of the true Champion of Israel Jesus Christ, that I could not, amongst many of them find one person that knew it wholly. [Debes 1676:337-338].

Here, as in other passages, Debes seems to have been frustrated with what he saw as the stubborn adherence to old traditions in the islands: referring to a method of corn-grinding, he complains of the Faroese, that "they are so minded in general, that they will not change their old customes no more in this then [sic] in many other things" (Debes 1676:256-257).

Despite being coloured as it is by Debes' proselytizing tone, his book remains a remarkable testament to the vitality of the *kvæði* song (and accompanying dancing) tradition, and to the richness of Faroese oral tradition, in general, at the time. Elsewhere, he repeatedly makes mention of the health of the oral psalm singing tradition in the Faroes. For instance, at one point Debes describes the holding of court sessions, at which "all the Clergy being there also, the Service of God is celebrated every day in the forenoon, with Preaching and Singing in the Church" (Debes 1676:281), and later observes proudly that the Faroese read religious books diligently and that "all their household sitting for the most part at

him in Winter, they exercise themselves continually in Singing of Psalms, so that they know more of them without Book, then can be here credibly related" (1676:339-340). Continuing, he notes that

> when the Congregation doth meet with the Priest in the Church to serve God, they have no need of a Reader to direct their singing; but the Priest beginneth, and all the hearers sing of themselves after him, how difficult soever the Psalm may be; for they not only sing without book, but almost all the men have their Psalm books with them, and antient hearers, being so well informed, teach also their children. [Debes 1676:340]

Kvøldsetur: A Traditional Music Context

As well as attesting to the vitality of the oral religious and ballad song traditions, Debes also makes mention of the winter sitting sessions in which (he claims) psalms were practiced. Perhaps without realizing it at the time, he was referring to one of the most celebrated and discussed Faroese cultural institutions, the *kvøldsetur* (singular, *kvoldseta*).

The word, *kvøldsetur,* refers to those long winter evenings spent indoors in the old days in the Faroes which, though ostensibly intended to have been work sessions for the carding, spinning, and knitting of wool (Conroy 1980:47), have become best remembered as having been essential sites of the performance and transmission of aspects of Faroese oral tradition, including the "recounting of folktales and legends and for reciting the old ballads" (Wylie 1987:41). Conroy, in her 1974 thesis and 1980 article *Oral Composition in Faroese Ballads*, has suggested that the *kvøldsetur* were occasions for the solo performance of well-known ballads to a seated, knowledgeable audience who, she claims, would be sure to correct the singer if they departed from a known text (Conroy 1980:47). At the same time, Conroy asserts, the *kvøldsetur* were the primary contexts in which older, experienced singers taught ballads to younger singers before they made their debut in the village dance (1980:47). These *kvøldseta* ballads, Conroy says, "were sufficiently stable to be learned as fixed texts" (1980:47).

In Wylie's estimation, the *kvøldsetur* were "a primary institution of remembrance" (Wylie 1987:41) which "remained an established feature of Faroese life until the late 19th century, when economic change rendered them obsolete" (1987:41). Indeed, in Faroese cultural life, including especially the realm of oral literature of which the *kvæði* are a key part, the role of the *kvøldsetur* can not be overstated. As the famed Faroese linguist Jakob Jakobsen wrote, "it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that Faroese popular culture [*almues kultur*] and spiritual life. . . were chiefly conditioned and borne up by these gatherings on winter evenings" (Jakobsen 1898-1901:xxxiv, quoted in Wylie 1987:42). Ballads, as well as stories that dealt with the mytho-historical past, were repeated during the *kvøldsetur*, and Wylie has summed up the *kvøldseta's* significance by writing that "the institutionalized telling of tales insured the survival of Faroese as a literary language and, since much of Faroese oral literature deal with the past, *kvøldsetur* lent a ritual importance to its recollection" (Wylie 1987:42). The significance of oral literature for Faroese as a literary language will be dealt with a bit later, however, as it is more important to return now to the discussion of the earliest Faroese music practices, having established the importance of the cultural institution of the *kvøldsetur* which helped sustain them.

While it is clear even from the few brief passages in which Debes mentions religious singing in the Faroes that in the period from 1651-1673 (i.e., from when he first arrived in the Faroes to when his book was first published in Danish) (Rørdam 1887-1905:222), that the Faroes likely drew upon a rich psalm book tradition (often largely committed to memory), precisely which psalms and which books were being sung is mostly unknown. However, in the period just after Debes' death, alongside the *kvæði* and ring-dances, Faroese people continued to sing religious songs, and the most popular type of these soon became the so-called Kingo songs.

Following the publication of Thomas Kingo's Danish hymnal in 1699, the singing of Kingo songs became quite popular in the Faroes. A Kingo song,

broadly defined, is "usually a text - with its accompanying Faroese folk melody - from Kingo's hymnal, whether written by Kingo himself or one of the other, anonymous authors in the book" (Clausen 2006:200). However, "Kingo songs" as a category is not even restricted to only those psalms appearing in the 1699 hymnal. As Clausen notes, "[a]lso considered to be "Kingo-songs" were songs from other collections of hymns and spiritual songs of the period, which were not used in church, but were familiar in the daily life of the villages" (2006:200), including Christian Cassube's 1661 hymnal book and its later editions wherein the "the number of hymns and songs reached more than 1,000, and the book was often called 'Tusintalsalmebogen' (The Thousand-hymn book)" (2006:200).

Of course, other spiritual songs were known in the Faroes in the centuries following the introduction of Kingo songs there, most notable among them being the songs of Norwegian Peter Dass from the early 18th century. These songs, often "sung to cheerful and usually uncomplicated melodies…were intended for the instruction of children" (Clausen 2006:203), and Clausen has remarked that among some singers, songs from his 1711 book were remembered well into the 20th century when she met "older people from the Faroes who sang almost the entire book by heart" (2006:203).

Kingo songs in particular, however, are significant in that they represent a parallel musical tradition to the older still *kvæði* tradition, one which developed and mutated into a distinctively Faroese form. While, as Clausen writes, many of these old hymns were originally printed with melodies (either in Kingo's own hymn book, his *Gradual*, other 16th and 17th century sources, or even in pre-Reformation books), notation and instruments in church music were more or less unknown in the islands until the addition of organs in some churches in the later 19th century or beyond (Clausen 2006:204). Resultantly, in many places like the tiny northern village of Tjørnuvík (considered something of a centre of a particular, unique style of Kingo singing), melodies learned from clergymen at some point have been passed down and worked out between family and

congregation members so that "[a] melody that in a way has lived its own life for 2-300 years will have undergone considerable changes, [and] may even be unrecognizable, as is the case with Kingo-singing in Tjørnuvík and other places, especially on the northern islands" (2006:205). And while, as Clausen notes, "folk-singing in the Faroes is theoretically unisonous" (2006:206), and indeed it is more or less unisonous in practice in the case of *kvæði* singing, some Kingo singing has developed differently so that, like at Tjørnuvík, it "impresses a listening stranger as fairly chaotic though the melodic pattern is certainly a common trait. . . but every singer fills out the pattern more or less differently" (2006:206). So, while not all Kingo singing is as varied and ostensibly "disorganized" as Tjørnuvík singing is, when considering this most long-standing and characteristically Faroese form of religious singing, it is also worth mentioning those more divergent strands.

Returning to the discussion of the historical development of the *kvæði* tradition, it should suffice to say that over the following centuries the old ballads continued to be performed, and new ones were written in the old style. Just as Debes had in the late 17th century, various foreigners who spent time in the Faroes in later years were sure to note the peculiar style of Faroese dancing and *kvæði* singing. Another Danish priest, Jørgen Landt, in 1800 wrote *A Description of Feroe* (translated in 1810) in which he commented on a circular dance performed at weddings wherein people joined hands (Landt 1810:405). Landt also observed of the Faroese people, interestingly, considering he was writing in the early 19th century, that "with instrumental music they are entirely unacquainted, and their dances are always accompanied with singing" (1810:398).

Early Faroese Instrumental Music

At the beginning of the next century, in Scottish scientist and anthropologist Nelson Annandale's 1905 book, *The Faroes and Iceland: Studies in Island Life* (almost certainly the first anthropological text written on the Faroes),

Annandale also describes a number of Faroese musical practices. A colleague of E.B. Tylor, Annandale also noted the lack of instrumental music in the Faroes, writing of the winter season when there was much time for leisure, "[t]here is no instrumental music, however, and people dance to the sound of their own voices" (Annandale 1905:62). But the apparent complete absence of instrumental music in the Faroes implied by Landt and others is not exactly accurate. While, admittedly, the Faroes can not be said to have had an indigenous instrumental tradition, the existence of some instrumental music in earlier times in the Faroes has often been ignored or downplayed in the face of such obvious and rich a cappella traditions which scholars have tended to focus on. Even some of the old ballads make mention of instruments (including "Harpu Ríma," or, "Harp ballad") (Blak et al. 1996:12). Further, during Landt's time, for instance, there lived one of the most famous Faroese scholars and linguists, J.C. Svabo (1746-1824), who was a noted violinist. His songbook, discovered long after his death, now resides in the Faroese national museum. Svabo himself also noted that, circa 1781, "at fashionable weddings and on other festive occasions, particularly in Tórshavn, the Faroese dance is going out of fashion, and is being replaced by minuets, Polish, English, Scottish reels and figure dances" (Svabo, quoted in Blak et al. 1996:12). While we cannot know for certain whether or not such fashionable dances were accompanied by violin or other instruments, it seems probable given the long history of instrumental dance traditions like the Scottish reel. However, as West has noted, "[t]he present musical tradition in Faroe stems, however, from a remarkable man who came to Torshavn soon after the abolition of the Monopoly. This was [Dane] Georg Caspar Hansen (1844-1924)" (West 1972:231). In the latter portion of the 19th century, Hansen, though baker by trade, came to the Faroes from Denmark and began teaching students various instruments (1972:231). Hansen's contribution to the establishment of organized instrumental music in the Faroes was memorialized with the founding of the still extant Faroese symphonic concert band, GHM (*Georg Hansen minni*).

And even Annandale admitted to the presence of some instruments in the islands by the early 20th century, writing that "nowadays concertinas or accordions are occasionally used, but their employment with the old fashioned dances is not considered at all correct" (Annandale 1905:62). And, even setting aside the earliest church organs that would have arrived in the islands perhaps still earlier, it is obvious that by the beginning of the 20th century, instrumental music of all sorts had begun to gain popularity in the islands, as evidenced in part by the founding in 1903 of the still-extant Tórshavn horn orchestra, Havnar Hornorkestur which claims to be one of the oldest musical organizations in the Faroes (Havnarhorn 2011).

Annandale also gives a detailed description of *kvæði* singing and accompanying chain dancing, and mentions even the subjects of a few ballads: one about "Kaisar Karl Magnus" (Annandale 1905:62), i.e., Charlemagne (about whom there are several ballads from Faroese tradition); and another about Ólaf Tryggvason and Sigmundur Brestisson, which is likely the aforementioned CCF 22, *Sigmundar kvæði.*

While even these few scattered descriptions of the *kvæði* and chaindance from sources written centuries or more apart illustrate how the tradition was recreated and carried forth into the well-documented modern era of the 20th century, before discussing something of the significance of these ballads and their reshaping in contemporary Faroese society, it is first necessary to mention briefly the two other categories of traditional Faroese songs which developed alongside (and, sometimes, as part of the *kvæði* tradition).

Skjaldur and *Tættir: Children's Songs and Satirical Songs*

By way of easily distinguishing the three main Faroese song forms, their basic differences can be compared as such: the already-discussed *kvæði* (long, stanzaic, heroic ballads, only sometimes of known provenance), the *skjaldur* (children's songs, including rhyming and nonsense songs, lullabies, etcetera),

and the *tættir* (shorter, locally-composed, satirical songs about villagers, politics, etcetera).

Unlike the other Faroese music discussed so far, the *skjaldur* are the only type of songs that have been commonly said to have had a specific "use." Faroese musician and traditional music enthusiast Kári Sverrisson described the *skjaldur* in the liner notes to a collection of the songs he organized as "Faroese ethnic songs, rhymes and counting games traditionally used either for or by children and young people" (Sverrisson 2000:8). Commenting on their qualities, value, and age, Sverrisson continues, writing "[a] part of our oldest song tradition, these skjaldur, evoking images that may be humorous, comforting or mystical and fantastic, continue to entertain and enthrall Faroese people in the twenty-first century" (2000:8). Speaking further to the utility of the *skjaldur* in everyday life, Sverrisson also reproduces a portion of a 1985 interview with Wilhelmina Larsen of Skálavík on the southerly island of Sandoy, then aged 50, in which she discusses how various *skjaldur* were used by her parents to comfort or entertain children, to put them to sleep (as lullabies), and how they compared to the ballads which he father used to sing, saying, "the voice was gentle and friendly, when the skjaldur were sung. . . [t]he ballads were more narrative while the skjaldur were for soothing" (Larsen 1985, quoted in Sverrisson 2000:10). Stephen Pax Leonard of Cambridge, following some recent (2009) fieldwork in the Faroes in which he studied *skjaldur* specifically, considered the songs to be "an endangered oral tradition" (Leonard 2010:3) and suggests that the less well-documented oral traditions of the Faroes like the *skjaldur* are "now being replaced by a variety of modern media and entertainment channels such as film, television, computer games and the internet - all of which are transmitted in Danish and English" (Leonard 2010:4). While not entirely accurate (the Faroes have their own television station with some Faroese language programming, three of their own radio stations, and plenty of old and newly composed Faroese language music), his point is well taken when he states that "[a]s the practice of telling rhymes to

children rapidly recedes throughout the Faroe Islands, we stand to lose an indigenous oral tradition that has characterised and been fundamental to the maintenance of a distinct Faroese identity" (2010:4).

While *skjaldur*, being children's songs, are often discussed as being entirely separate from the serious narrative realm of the *kvæði,* the *tættir* (singular: *táttur),* which usually take their melodies from known *kvæði* and are sung in danced to in much the same fashion, are sometimes considered to be a sub-genre of *kvæði* (Galvin 1991:78). Writing from his experience of Faroese music in the 1980s, Seán Galvin has described the *tættir* as "unique in that they are produced locally and practically always anonymously, deal almost exclusively with Faroese topics, feature identifiably Faroese people and place names, and portray traditional Faroese customs" (1991:78). The key defining feature of the *tættir,* however, is that they are satirical. And, while these traditional Faroese satirical songs have arguably played a similar role in the Faroes as they have elsewhere (criticizing or ridiculing specific "misbehaving" individuals, and especially unfair government as in Poul Poulsen's infamous anti-Danish monopoly song, “Fuglakvæði”), some authors have written of the *tættir* in almost structural functionalist terms, emphasizing its "function" as a primary method of "social control" (see Gaffin 1996:194). Galvin's suggestion that, over the centuries, *tættir* have helped "shape societal norms in the Faroes on an informal level" (Galvin 1991:78) arguably casts the *tættir* in too much of a structural functionalist frame. However, the basic thrust of one of Galvin's main claims about *tættir* is probably true: that is, that they fulfill "an ethical and practical societal function - that of acting as an informal guide to the carrying out of everyday aspects of the life and life cycle of Faroese people" (1991:78).

Despite the overtly functionalist language in which *tættir* have been frequently framed, it is almost universally true that satire (whether it be musical, literary, or some other form) is a potentially useful tool for bringing attention to undesirable or unjust behaviour and the transgression of societal norms, be they religious,

ethical, moral, political, etcetera. The power of satirical songs like *tættir* came from their public performance in which, by bringing attention to behaviour or events perceived as somehow inappropriate or unjust, "violators" and their "transgressions" would be essentially shamed and reprimanded publicly (analogous though much less cruel than the archaic English public humiliation practices of ducking stools, or of the practice of making rough music, both of which were primarily intended to humiliate people who violated religious and social norms). As Faroese anthropologist Firouz Gaini commented, "it has often been noted that forcing a *táttur's* subject to dance to it was a means of controlling deviance" (Gaini 2011:41). Part of the appeal and potential efficacy of the *tættir* also comes from the comedic juxtaposition of the *kvæði* style with a *táttur's* relatively banal and mundane content:

> the *kvæðir* are composed about men and events far away in time and, in general, far away in the world, the *tættir* take their subject-matter from the present and from Faroese village life. They often concern silly feats, incompetence and misadventures. They are in the solemn style of *kvæðir*, and awaken laughter from the mismatch between *kvæðir's* heroes and their feats on the one hand, and on the other hand the unfortunate fellow the *táttur* is about and his conduct in everyday Faroese life, ashore or at sea. [Matras 1935:24-25, cited in Gaini 2011:28]

Much of the preceding brief description of *tættir* is framed explicitly within the past tense precisely because, although they continue to be performed to some extent as part of the repertoires of modern village dance societies, the use of *tættir* as a form of local social humiliation (and the accompanying motivation of hoping to influence or change "inappropriate" behaviour) has almost certainly fallen entirely out of practice in contemporary Faroese society. The poignant satirical power of the *tættir* is probably best memorialized today through the occasional performance (and fond remembrance) of songs like “Fuglakvæði” which highlight the sometimes unjust nature of historic relations between Danes and Faroese (specifically, the Danish monopoly which was abolished in the mid-19th century). “Fuglakvæði” is still performed, for instance, in contemporary dance society

contexts, some of whom have performed it as recently as 2010 (fotatradk.com 2010).

As Faroese scholar Malan Marnersdóttir has described the song:

> "Fuglakvæði" [The Bird Ballad] by Poul Poulsen (also known as Nolsoyar-Pall, 1766-1809) . . . is an allegoric ballad describing as birds of prey the Danish public servants who managed the trade monopoly and all the import-export business. On the other hand, the ordinary Faroese who wanted to trade and have ships are depicted as small birds like oyster catchers. [Marnersdóttir 2007:156]

Spoken, Written, and Sung Languages

Because the Faroe Islands have had such a long history and have "changed hands" a number of times (from Norway, to a united Danish-Norwegian crown, to Denmark, and finally to a form of Danish-associated home rule), the language situation in the islands has also shifted several times. For this reason, it is worth taking a moment to outline very briefly the history of spoken and written languages in the Faroes in order to better understand something of the role of languages in Faroes history, as well as the significance of choices of language use in contemporary Faroes music (explored in detail in the later sub-section "Language Choices in Music Composition").

While past spoken language forms like Old Norse have experienced an evolution since settlement times into a distinctive modern Faroese spoken language, other language forms have come and gone from the islands altogether. As Adams and Petersen have noted, the islands are home to a few twelfth and thirteenth century runic inscriptions and "some documents from the Middle Ages, which show that written Faroese is almost indistinguishable from the written Norwegian of the period" (Adams and Petersen 2009:vi). However, "the collapse of a written form of Norwegian around the end of the fourteenth century together with the many centuries of rule from Copenhagen [which followed], resulted in a number of changes in Faroese as well as massive influence from Danish on the

Faroese language" (Adams and Petersen 2009:vi). The result has been that, at least for the entire latter half of Faroese history, the Faroese were, in a sense, a bilingual (Danish/Faroese) society.

Putting aside Latin as an early liturgical language at the time of Christianity's introduction (Nauerby 1996:30), and what Nauerby has called the possible framework for an independent Faroese written tradition at the pre-Reformation episcopal school in the town of Kirkjubøur (1996:30), what is more significant in terms language history in the Faroes is that the Kirkjubøur school "was replaced by a Latin school in Torshavn in connection with the Reformation, after which the clergy received their education in Denmark" (1996:30). This meant that "Danish had now established itself as the language of the church as well as the dominant written language of the islands" (1996:30). And, as Adams and Petersen have noted of this momentous shift, the consequence was that "for much of the islands' history, Danish was the *only* language permitted in church, schools and administration, although Faroese always remained the spoken language and mother-tongue of the islanders" (Adams and Petersen 2009:vi, emphasis added).

Not surprisingly, these changes also resulted in the use of both the Danish and Faroese languages in Faroese musical traditions in the centuries following the Reformation. Danish, as a sung language, was primarily used in the various hymns, including, especially, the aforementioned Kingo songs. Because Danish had long been the church language in the Faroes, many popular spiritual songbooks came from Denmark. Danish as a singing language did not stay within the confines of the church walls, however, and it soon spread to and intermingled with the Faroese ballad and ring-dancing tradition. As Kristian Blak notes, when the term *vísur* (singular *vísa*) is used in connection with the Faroese dance, it can refer to one of three things: "1. Danish folk ballads (mediaeval ballads), or 2. Faroese ballads that in subject and style differ from '*kvæði'* (heroic ballads) or 3. More recent Danish or Faroese ballads which are completely different from the *kvæði* and ballads" (Blak et al. 1996:32). While this seems a bit confusing,

initially, a bit of elaboration on Blak's part clarifies the meaning of *vísur* and the use of Danish in songs used for ring-dancing.

The Types of *Vísur*

When referring to the Danish folk ballads, *vísur* (in the first sense) is meant to be those "Danish folk ballads [which] came to the Faroe Islands by way of Danish printed publications, and they were adopted into the dance repertoire on an equal footing with the Faroese ballads" (Blak et al. 1996:32), many of which came to the Faroes in the 17th century and often persisted in written (sometimes handwritten) forms which were kept by families (1996:32). In such cases, Blak notes, the ballads are sung in Danish, but with Faroese pronunciation, and they differ from most *kvæði* in subject (most have themes of chivalry and love, especially love leading to fighting), and to some extent, musically, as well (1996:32). Despite this, as Blak notes, "[t]he Faroese have apparently always regarded the Danish ballads as belonging to them and have cherished them" (1996:32). This shows how Danish language and culture has been an inextricable part of Faroese culture and society for a long time. Additionally, such acts of appropriating, integrating, and claiming ostensibly "foreign" music are reminiscent of similar situations in other parts of the world (i.e., Eastern Canada, wherein many "east coast" songs technically originated in Ireland, Scotland, England, France, and elsewhere).

Vísur in the second sense (Faroese ballads that in subject and style differ from *kvæði*) often simply refers to other Faroese rhymed poems, usually about lighter subjects and shorter than the *kvæði*, which were used less frequently in the dance (Blak et al. 1996:34). Usually regarded as less old than the *kvæði*, and, confusingly, sometimes simply called *rímur* (singular, *ríma*, "rhymed poem"), these *vísur* sound very similar to the *kvæði*, but may, for instance, exhibit rhythmic differences from most *kvæði* (1996:34).

Vísur in the third and final sense (more recent Danish and Faroese ballads, different from *kvæði*), as Blak explains, are newer songs that have also been

adapted into the dance repertoire (Blak et al. 1996:34). These include popular Faroese songs (e.g., “Í Gøtu ein dag”), Danish and Norwegian broadside ballads, and popular Danish songbook ballads (1996:34). Musically, these melodies and rhythms "are usually correspondingly modern in musical idiom, and they are also usually regular in the rhythm" (1996:34). As such, it could be said that the newer *vísur* referred to in this third sense are "simpler, [and] in every way more symmetric in structure than the older ballads" (1996:36).

It can be seen, then how the use of the Danish language in Faroese music practice itself has a rather long and varied history. It is worth noting, also, that due to various factors like the insularity of the Faroese and long co-existence of spoken Danish alongside spoken Faroese, there have been different "varieties" of Danish spoken in the Faroes, from the Faroese idiom *gøtudanskt* (meaning either "street Danish" or derived from the Faroese town of Gøta) which "differs from 'real' Danish with regard to vocabulary and grammar" (Nauerby 1996:185), to the strongly accented pronunciation of Danish which Nauerby claims is often mistakenly referred to as *gøtudanskt* (1996:131). Such forms differ markedly from the standard variety ("correct") Danish which was first taught in Faroese schools around 1970 (Nauerby 1996:13, and see all of Nauerby 1996 for an extended discussion of the complex historical and contemporary language situation and relationship between Danish and Faroese in the islands). In any case, spoken Danish in some form or another undeniably has a lengthy history as a sung language in the Faroes as well (e.g., Clausen [2006] notes that the spiritual songs she discusses were sung in *gøtudanskt*).

As a final note and aside regarding language in the Faroes, it should be noted that this condensed language history necessarily ignores the more complex and ephemeral elements of the apparent artifacts of ancient Faroese-Celtic language contact, especially evident in place names (e.g., "Mykines may be from the Celtic *muc-innis* meaning 'pig island', and perhaps dates from before the Norse

population arrived, as also does the element Dímun (meaning 'two hills'), in [the island names] Lítla and Stóra Dímun") (Adams and Petersen 2009:126).

The Role of Oral Literature in the Development of the Faroese Nation and Written Language

The preceding discussion of the role of languages in the history and music of the Faroes brings me to the final important section before the latter portion on contemporary Faroese musical practice, that is, an examination of the role of oral literature (including the music forms discussed so thus far) and the Faroese language in the formation and construction (or imagining) of the Faroese nation during the nationalist period.

Scandinavia has a long history of collecting, studying, and publishing the remnants of their ancient oral literature, and the Faroes were no exception. Without entering into an extended discussion of the minutiae of Faroese oral literature collection (there were many significant individual manuscripts and texts), it is important to note that well before the beginning of the Faroese nationalist period (circa the end of the 19th century), various Scandinavian (including Faroese) scholars began to recognize the Faroes as a treasure trove of old oral literature. While *tættir* and *skjaldur* have been collected and recorded, too, the *kvæði* were probably of special interest to Scandinavian scholars because of their apparent age and connection to Old Norse literature and lore. Significantly, West notes that these ballads began to draw scholarly attention from Denmark as early as the 17th century, and that by the later 18th century collection of *kvæði* texts began in earnest (West 1972:106-107). Faroese and Danish collection efforts increased in the 19th century, and these were combined by Danish scholars Jorgen Bloch and Svend Grundtvig, as West describes, by 1905 in the 18 volume manuscript of 234 songs, *Corpus Carminum Faeroensium* (CCF) (1972:108-109), finally published in full by 1972.

Along with one of the earliest Faroese dictionaries, according to Tom Nauerby, the CCF was one of

> [t]he two works [that] appeared on the threshold of the nationalist movement and were rightly viewed as being two monumental tributes to Faroese 'literature' and language. . . [t]hey were to have a great symbolical importance as national monuments within the movement. [Nauerby 1996:38]

Because the CCF was compiled during the height of early Faroese nationalism (at the turn of the 19th century), that volume and the old song forms like the *kvæði* which it collects were soon held up as examples of a distinctively Faroese national folk culture. In this sense, the CCF in the Faroes played a similar role to that other famed Nordic tome, Finland's *Kalevala*, in legitimating and qualifying an emergent national culture. Such processes of classification and reification in the Faroes were key in the formation of a category of "national" music there. And while an extended discussion of the origins of Faroese nationalism is not necessary, it is worth mentioning some details from the nationalist period in order to illustrate the transformation of the Faroese language and Faroese oral literature (like the *kvæði* and other songs) into the national symbols which they have become today.

Anthropologists Nauerby and Dennis Gaffin have independently commented on the centrality of the *kvæði*, and specifically the chain-dance (which is most often accompanied by *kvæði* singing) to Faroese national identity (Gaffin 1996:191; Nauerby 1996:144). Nauerby in particular has written extensively about what he calls the processes of the "nationalization of culture" in the Faroes through which a "national inventory" was constructed:

> while the Faroese language was undeniably the most important element in the process of Faroese nationalization, it was far from being the only one. From the days of the nationalist revival onwards, numerous elements of everyday life as well as various festive occasions were turned into Faroese folklore. Later these were given pride of place in the national culture. As with the language preservation's revival of old Faroese linguistic material, one could also speak of a considerably broadening of meaning in this field. . . Whether considering the pilot whale hunt, traditional

> costume, the *Faroese ballad dance* or some other feature, the characteristic feature of this nationalization of culture is that partial elements are selected and refined, finally to appear as symbols of a glorious past. They are, so to say, loosened from their metonymic anchoring within a former way of life, to serve as metaphors for the national culture as a whole. [Nauerby 1996:144, emphasis added]

Wylie (1987), and especially Nauerby (1996), have written at great length about the origins of Faroese nationalism and about the period of high nationalist sentiment around the end of the 19th century, though it should suffice to say here in summary that the combination of a few key factors which coalesced over the course of the 19th century, and the separation of the Faroes from Nazi-occupied Denmark during the second world war, eventually had the end result of the Faroes achieving home rule in 1948. Since that time, as Nauerby has written, the islands have been legally defined as a "self-governing national community within the kingdom of Denmark" (Nauerby 1996:61).

In the century leading up to home rule, however, the status and value of the Faroese language had become a hot topic (and one that would be at the centre of later nationalist claims), both at home in the Faroes, and abroad, amongst both Faroese academics studying in Copenhagen and sympathetic Danes (Nauerby 1996:42). In short, in 1846 there arose a popular resistance in the Faroes to a new Danish provision that would have introduced a new educational system of schools in the Faroes in which the language of instruction would have been Danish (1996:42). Specifically, an 1845 ruling that made public education compulsory in the Faroes was strongly resisted and was subsequently retracted in 1854 (Wylie and Margolin 1981:81).

The opposition from Faroese people to the Danish compulsory education law of 1845 can be best understood as a strong statement of a defense of Faroeseness as what they were really resisting was Danish interference in local affairs and as evidence of the fact that, as the Faroese perceived it, teaching Danish “for everyday purposes at home was a radical threat” (Wylie and Margolin 1981:82).

Despite the Faroes having been at this time entirely under Danish control as a province of Denmark (1981:82), the attempted transfer of education from the realms of the home and the church and Denmark's intended wresting of control of the language of education in the islanders' hands appears to have struck a chord. In other words, even long before the surge of resistance to Danish political control in the Faroes at the end of the 19th century and at points throughout the 20th century, the notion appears to have been well established that the Faroese language was central to Faroese identity (and therefore worthy of being "defended" against Danish).

Around the same time that arguments for and against the existence of Faroese as a distinct and separate (i.e., "legitimate") Nordic language began to be espoused (see Nauerby 1996:42), in 1854, the Danish priest V.U. Hammershaimb published *Færøisk Sproglære* ("Faroese Grammar"), which "laid the foundations for a written form" (Adams and Petersen 2009:vi). Hammershaimb's orthography encountered some resistance, but remains essentially unmodified as the official form of the written Faroese language that is still in use today (2009:vi-vii). This was immensely significant in the development of the Faroese nation because a single "national" language became an essential element in the nation-building formula of European nationalism (see Nauerby 1996:9), and a standardised orthography allowed for the further development of Faroese literature. It had been the lack of written language and (written) literature that had excluded Faroese "from the ranks of independent Nordic languages, since at that time the general assumption was that a literature was what distinguished culture languages (Da. *kultursprog*) from language-variants (Dan. *mundarter,* sing. *mundart*)" (Nauerby 1996:42).

As it has already been suggested, despite their long periods of relative isolation from mainland Europe (in large part due to the centuries of restrictive Danish monopoly in the islands), the Faroes were in no way impermeable or immune to nineteenth century European currents of intellectual thought, including notions of

nationalism. Nationalism, as a driving political force, came to the Faroes via Iceland and, more directly, from Denmark. Nauerby traces the roots of Faroese nationalism to the 1881 formation of Føroyingafelag ("Association of Faroese") by Faroese students in Copenhagen who were influenced by Norwegian and Icelandic nationalism (Nauerby 1996:49). He also discusses a parallel arena for early nationalist sentiment in the islands which arose with the creation of the first public forums for written discussion in the Faroes (in the form of the first national newspaper, *Dimmalætting* in 1878, and in 1890, Føringatíðindi, the first Faroese language paper): in these papers, early nationalists began to fervently advocate for the defense of Faroese language in culture in the face of Danish encroachment (Danicization, or, "cultural decline") (1996:49-53).

The “Copenhagen-Faroese” of Føroyingafelag, as Nauerby observes, lived “in the ideal alien, metropolitan context necessary for the perception of their own nation’s characteristics. In addition, they acquired a suitable ideology by which to articulate them. In other words, both the international and transnational fundaments of national identity were present in ample supply” (Nauerby 1996:49). The transnational intellectual currents (like National Romanticism) to which the Copenhagen-Faroese were exposed provided these overseas Faroese students the language and terminology they needed to re-frame, re-shape, and re-interpret their formerly provincial (or, local) “difference” as national differences.

It did not take long for these overseas Faroese intellectual currents, in turn, to reach back to and foment upon Faroese soil. By Christmas of 1888, “[a]s a consequence of the newspaper debate [on the 'decline' of Faroese language and customs in the face of perceived Danicization], a public meeting was called in Torshavn’s parliament building (Tinghus) on 26 December 1888. . . to discuss ways to ‘defend the Faroes’ language and the Faroes’ customs’ “ (Nauerby 1996:51). This meeting resulted in the 1889 newspaper publication of a sort of Faroese nationalist manifesto, as well as the formation of another Faroese association, actually in the Faroes (Føringafelag) (1996:52). In this brief period

between 1878 and 1889, then, the notion of the Faroes as a nation and Faroese nationalism as an ideology that motivated political discussion and action were becoming operative and embedded in public life in the islands.

Though this is admittedly only a brief summary of a few of the most key elements of the initial period of Faroese nationalism, my intent had been to briefly suggest how this ostensibly disconnected overseas Danish province quickly became influenced by and engaged with European intellectual currents that would drive some Faroese to re-imagine their land as a nation. Simply put, these events, along with the orthography, essentially signaled the birth of Faroese nationalism. The efforts of the Faroese associations eventually came to fruition following the 1948 Home Rule Act. This act legally made Faroese and Danish equal in official contexts (thereby reinforcing the 1938 acceptance of their equality in the school system) (Wylie and Margolin 1981:91). Further, this time can be seen as a period of transition of language roles in the Faroes wherein Faroese became solidified as the sole "internal" language variety while Danish, despite its lengthy presence in the Faroes, became redefined as a foreign language (1981:91).

And while Faroese as a language of instruction continues to face similar challenges to any small language (e.g., lack of upper-level textbooks, see Nauerby 1996:128), it is important to note that, in the Faroes at least in 1981, "the fact that the language of instruction is everywhere Faroese. . . appears to be the relevant factor; with the role of Faroese secure, Danish no longer poses a direct threat" (Wylie and Margolin 1981:92). Some have also argued that Faroese might be able to maintain its position of privilege in schooling vis-à-vis Danish thanks to the fact that Danish has become but one (albeit still particularly important) "foreign" language among several used in Faroese schools, with English and German becoming increasingly common by 1981 (1981:92). Almost all Faroese people I encountered in 2011 spoke at least competent, if not superb English.

Moving away from language in and of itself and returning to the question of the role of oral literature and songs, in particular, in this nationalist period, as

Faroese literary scholar Malan Marnersdóttir has noted, in the Faroes, "nation building started with the student's patriotic song in the 1870s, and that poetic genre has maintained an important position in Faroese literature" (Marnersdóttir 2007:154). Indeed, the role of these early patriotic songs in fomenting and inspiring early nationalist sentiment should not be underestimated. It was during the nationalist period that Friðrikur Petersen wrote his “Eg Oyggjar Veit” ("I know islands"), which would become the Faroes' first national anthem, followed later by their current anthem, “Tú alfagra land mítt” ("Thou fairest land of mine"), composed in 1906 by Símun av Skarði. The first national songbook was also published by the Føroyingafelag in 1892 (Nauerby 1996:49).

Indeed much has been made of the role of poets and musicians in not only extolling the virtues of their homeland, but also in the re-imagining of the islands and its people as constituting a distinct nation during the nationalist period. Faroese scholar J.P. Joensen has argued that "the Faroese poets at the end of the nineteenth century are not only among those who were the sources of nationalistic feelings, but they also gave them form and content, making it possible for people to understand and perceive the country differently than they had done before" (Joensen 2009:202, citing Rasmussen 1987:108). Continuing, Joensen explains how a national consciousness was shaped and influenced by these poems and songs:

> a new way of thinking saw the light of day. Of course, the Faroese were still the infield, outfield, bird-cliff and sea that gave people sustenance; but now they also become another concept, which came to be shared by the people as a whole. *The Songbók Føroya Fólks* (The Songbook of the Faroese People), which appeared in 1913, acquired particular significance as a tool in this connection. People took it with them to "folk-meetings" and other gatherings. Now everyone could sing in the Faroese language about nature, the country and the people, the mother tongue, ideas like freedom and progress, love, the seasons, and much more besides. The concept of Faroeseness had become more concrete; it became something suitable to discuss. [Joensen 2009:202]

Despite Joensen's perhaps overly enthusiastic characterization of these early nationalistic songs (i.e., his implication that with the printing of the first song book people were singing for the first time about nature, freedom, etcetera), his basic point is well taken. As Joensen stated in a roundabout way, *Songbók Føroya Fólks* and other similar endeavours represented new ways in which music was being expressly tied to ideas of nationalism and the nation. Even the act of naming a collection "songbook of the Faroese people" immediately implies and calls attention to the existence (or supposed preexistence) of the Faroese as "a people" (i.e., a group that share a common history, language, culture - something that was a required, if intensely constructed, asset during the successive waves of 19th century European nationalism).

Aside from those newly created concrete markers of Faroeseness (the poems, songbooks, and national symbols and icons like banners, flags, and a national bird which were selected and invented in the nationalist period) (Nauerby 1996:55), the old oral literature (including songs) was also reframed during this period and became of considerable significance to the development of the Faroese written language and the nation itself (as Nauerby noted in his aforementioned reference to the significance of that great *kvæði* collection, the CCF). Stephen Pax Leonard, for instance, has argued that even the *skjaldur,* the traditional Faroese children's songs mentioned above, played a significant role in the development and survival of the Faroese language (Leonard 2010:15). Specifically, as Leonard argues, Faroese "survived for centuries as the 'Low' variety in a bilingual, diglossic community in which Danish was the language of the Church and of administration, and the use of Faroese was more or less restricted to the home" (Leonard 2010:15, see also Wylie 1987:148). And it was in this private, Faroese realm of the home that

> the language was left to flourish in its limited capacity of the language and vehicle of Faroese oral heritage. . . [and so] [t]he existence of a rich oral tradition of reciting *skjaldur* in the one context in which Faroese was not threatened, i.e., at home, must in part explain why Faroese is still spoken today, whereas Norn, the

> dialect of Norse spoken on Shetland, died out some centuries ago. [Leonard 2010:15]

In Leonard's estimation, then, the language's long history of existence without a spoken/written distinction meant also that "the Faroese language and its associated oral tradition enjoyed a special bond" (Leonard 2010:15).

I suggest that Leonard's argument for the role of *skjaldur* in the survival of the Faroese language easily extends to the other two most notable Faroese language song forms already discussed, the *kvæði* and the *tættir,* both of which also largely existed in the markedly Faroese domain of the home. In both the familial home context of the *kvøldsetur* and village chain-dance performance contexts, the ring-dances, for much of Faroese history, also took place in people's homes (see, for example, West 1972:42). Leonard, however, has also pointed out a special role for the *skjaldur*, in particular, writing "while the *skjaldur* were just one element in this oral tradition, they were an important component on account of being sung almost exclusively to young children, i.e., the language acquirers . . . their content was invariably specific to the Faroe Islands, and thus such rhymes were usually only of relevance to a Faroese listener" (Leonard 2010:15). As such, he argues that *skjaldur* have been "a vehicle for the transmission of quite a large body of cultural and ethnographic knowledge, and that the language employed in these rhymes reflects this culture and identity" (Leonard 2010:15).

In addition to Nauerby's assessment of the impressive work of collection and collation of *kvæði ,* the CCF (as one of "two monumental tributes to Faroese 'literature' and language . . . [which would] have a great symbolical importance as national monuments within the movement") (Nauerby 1996:38), the Faroese ballads and chain-dance became increasingly associated with Faroeseness, that is, symbols of a Faroese national culture and, indeed, of the Faroese nation itself, in other ways during the nationalist period (an idea that would be continually reinforced throughout the 20th and 21st centuries). And so, if it is true that, as Gaffin suggests, "Faroese history is a congeries of experiences, the relating of

those experiences by word of mouth, and, recently, by [more recent] art forms" (Gaffin 1996:188), it is no wonder that "some scholars have argued that the preservation of Faeroese culture and national identity-and the islands' ultimate political strength culminating in home rule in 1948-derived from a conscious preservation of language and oral tradition" (1996:188).

More specifically, though, as Wylie and Margolin have noted of the nationalist period, it was witness to a great transformation of Faroese society and culture as a result of the 1856 establishment of free trade in the islands and the expansion of deepwater commercial fishery after 1880 (and, I would add, the processes of nationalization of aspects of culture which began thereafter) (Wylie and Margolin 1981:48). This transformative period, Wylie and Margolin argue, saw a shift

> from a culture whose bearers could understand their world in, for example, story and song, to one in which this function of folk literature was taken over by newspapers and by such self-consciously cultural performances as a reading of "some of the tales he has written" [referring to oral literature collected by Faroese scholar Jakob Jakobsen at the time], given by Jakobsen in Tórshavn in November 1898. [Wylie and Margolin 1981:48)]

And, while I have argued that such cultural performances have probably never been "unselfconscious" (Green 2009), Wylie and Margolin's point about the reframing of Faroese traditional culture during this period is well taken. As those two authors have noted with regards to the changing significance of the *kvæði ,* "with the development of an internally defined, distinctly Faroese culture, to whose definition their collection contributed greatly, they continue to function as symbols of generalized Faroese solidarity, as well as of membership in the wider Scandinavian world" (Wylie and Margolin 1981:69).

Wylie has also noted later how another symbol of Faroese nationality, the national holiday, *Ólavsøka,* has medieval origins, but "acquired its modern form in the 1880s and 1890s" (Wylie 1987:165). Writing of what he calls the "institutionalization" of aspects of Faroese culture during the nationalist period,

Wylie explains how, as late as 1884, *Ólavsøka* celebrations saw people dancing two different dances in adjacent rooms, with the Danes, foreign-educated Faroese, and others dancing the modern, international form in one room, and others dancing the traditional Faroese dance in the other (1987:165). By 1902, however, as Wylie observes, "the sociology of *Ólavsøka* dancing had changed" (1987:165). Specifically, "in the parliament building itself, the governor was now participating in a ballad dance" (1987:165), and so were a coterie of other prominent Faroese whom Wylie identifies, including the intensely political Faroese patriot, Jóannes Patursson, all of whom "had studied abroad in the 1870s and 1880s" (1987:166). In other words, by 1902, the chain-dance and ballads had become strongly associated with the national celebration, *Ólavsøka,* and their public performance by important officials on this (by then) expressly nationalistic day clearly marks the *kvæði* and chain-dance as salient symbols of Faroese culture and, arguably, of Faroese nationality itself.

Chapter 4: Traditional Music in Contemporary Faroese Society

While it would be both impossible and unnecessary to trace out the minutiae of the continued performance and development of traditional Faroese music and dance in the modern times (the period since the nationalist times, following the 1948 establishment of Faroese of home rule, and up until the present), it is worth noting that when visiting the Faroes today, there is considerable evidence to suggest that some of the cultural elements selected and reframed during the nationalist period, and especially the chain dance and their accompanying ballads, have retained a great deal of their significance as national symbols. As Wylie and Margolin astutely observed, Faroese people still "find tokens of their collective distinctiveness in the traditional past" (Wylie and Margolin 1981:71), and "the ballads are one such token" (1981:71). The *kvæði,* then, "have thus become symbols of Faroese culture as well as expressions of it, self-conscious articulations of what it is that makes Faroese culture distinctive and respectable, timeless and enduring, in still-changing times" (1981:71).

There are evidently myriad ways in which the significance of the ballads and dance as national symbols are foregrounded and embodied. Perhaps the most significant among these efforts, at least in terms of a conscious attempt to instill people with a sense of the cultural value (or national significance) of the ballads and dance, occurs within Faroese school classrooms. Although this was something I had not given a lot of thought to before I left for the Faroes, the subject came up in the very first interview I did with Kristian Blak, founder of the Faroese record label, Tutl, and his wife, Sharon Weiss, who is herself a teacher.

As Weiss explained, studying selected ballad texts has long been a part of the Faroese education system, but following a major revamping of the curriculum in 1979, the actual performance of Faroese ballads (including the ring dance) has also since become a required subject in Faroese public schools. Elaborating, Weiss explained that the performing the ballads in schools is, in her estimation, at a minimum done during the period corresponding to the Faroes' traditional

dancing season: singing and dancing the ballads "was part of school, yeah, something MOST schools do is that they dance between Christmas and the beginning of Lent, because that's the big dance season, most schools do it like that, some schools like our school dance all year, except for during Lent." Quite enthusiastic about explaining the significance in the shift in Faroese education from merely studying the ballads in textual form, Weiss continued, saying "now Faroese dancing as dancing, and y'know, the ballads, not just sitting and singing the ballads, ya gotta get up and move, is a required subject, not all year but it has to be there in all the schools."

While teachers like Weiss may have been more enthusiastic about the notion of teaching about ballads in schools, younger interviewees who had been through the Faroese school system were sometimes less enthusiastic. As bassist and guitarist, Ísak Petersen, recalled in an interview

> Ísak Petersen: Yeah well we have often there's periods where we have chain-dance in the halls and I don't really remember it that much but I remember studying some of the ballads.
>
> Josh Green: So you learned something about it at least when you were a kid?
>
> ÍP: Yeah and the problem is that it was while being in, what's it called? The first grade to ninth grade.
>
> JG: We call it elementary school or something.
>
> ÍP: I think that's the problem 'cuz people from— like kids just want to get the fuck out of there (laughs).

Guitarist and sound engineer Theodor Kapnas had a less negative but similarly vague recollection of learning about ballads sometimes in school. Responding to my question about whether or not much about Faroese traditional music was taught in schools, Kapnas responded, "yeah a little bit in school, we had to memorize one in sixth, eighth grade, maybe. short one. so it's part of the

education, it's not very visible anymore I think, you see less and less, it's more exclusive crowds now."

Despite the differences in levels of enthusiasm about teaching and learning the ballads in Faroese public schools that are apparent in the comments by Weiss, Petersen, and Kapnas, what is important here is that the study of *kvæði* (for a longer time as texts, and for over 30 years as embodied performance) has served to reinforce the notion that the ballads are of a special, national significance. *Kvæði,* by virtue of their inclusion as a mandatory part of the national curriculum, are thus tacitly acknowledged as being both symbols and expressions of a Faroese national culture (Wylie and Margolin 1981:71). Teaching selected elements taken from oral literature in schools is arguably a continuation of the project of nationalization of culture that had its origins in the nationalist period. While the ballads are certainly performed in a variety of other contexts (some of which are detailed below), in a sense, then, centuries of solely oral efforts to perform and reproduce the songs, eventually supplemented by a few centuries of written collection and collation ("preservation"), have led to an official attempt to impart upon students a sense of the significance of the ballads as icons of Faroeseness.

Another especially important institution through which the ballads and ring-dance have been reenforced as salient national symbols has been the annual performance of *kvæði* and ring-dances at the July 28-29 celebrations of *Ólavsøka,* the aforementioned national holiday. In short, there is nothing to suggest that the practice of people gathering from all over the Faroes in Tórshavn to celebrate, sing, and dance during *Ólavsøka* has died out or even changed considerably since at least 1902 when it became an institutionalized part of the national day of celebration (i.e., when it was "endorsed" by nationalists and important officials in the parliament house). In recent years, people from all over the islands have continued to gather in thousands downtown and in the old part of the capital, many sporting their national clothing (*føroysk klæðir,* or "Faroese clothes," "a standardized version of peasant garb that became fashionable around

the turn of the [19th] century, particularly in separatist circles") (Wylie 1987:166). The singing of *kvæði* and the accompanying ring dance remain an important part of the celebrations, and with hundreds (or maybe thousands) of people participating many rings may form, and the massive rings might repeatedly turn inwards on themselves as a huge chorus of voices join together.

In an interview, Torkil Thomsen, singer of the Faroese thrash metal band, The Apocryphal Order, explained to me a bit about how he felt about the ring-dance, mixing traditional and contemporary music, and specifically, singing and dancing to traditional ballads at *Ólavsøka:*

> I mean if you're going to think about what's it called, our national dance, it doesn't, you don't see people blend it in anywhere because it's something that you do when you sing those songs, they just have to be there. Those songs that are sung at that time, those are the ones that [the Faroese metal band] Týr you know use in their music, and they're so atmospheric. And when you are at these dances in the summer, it's, it is atmospheric, you like to be there even though you just hold hands walking two steps and one backward, you LIKE to be there. You WANT to be there, because it's a happy time. It, you can't, if you blend it with something, like, Týr have done, put it in a like metal, it sounds great, the atmosphere is there, no one can deny it. Even. you know. outsiders like it, some like it better than some people in the Faroe Islands.

While such traditional singing and dancing at *Ólavsøka is* perhaps the most striking testament to the importance of the ballads and ring dance in Faroese society, it is worth noting that other types of music are also otherwise tightly woven into this national celebration. Specifically, the ring-dancing festivities are also preceded by an evening of public singing called *Miðnáttarsangur* ("Midnight singing"), during which, as Faroese photographer Eileen Sandá has written, "the municipality of Tórshavn gives for free a booklet with around 20 songs (in 2011 it was 19 songs), Faroese songs which people then sing…[and] after the singing people can dance the traditional Faroese chain dance. It is difficult to coordinate the dance because there are thousands of people" (Sandá 2011).

For some people I spoke to in the Faroes, the collective singing of such nationalistic songs stands as evidence of the special significance (or centrality) of music in Faroese society and for Faroese identity. Over the mountain from the capital, in the tiny village of Velbastað, I had the pleasure of interviewing the musician Teitur Lassen (usually known simply as "Teitur"), who, thanks to his talent and a former record deal with the American music giant, Universal, is perhaps the most famous Faroese person internationally. At the tail-end of a lengthy discussion spent overlooking his spectacular view of the small islands of Koltur and Hestur (a stunning sight even in a country where impressive vistas are in no short supply), Lassen spoke briefly about *Ólavsøka* singing:

> Just before you got here I wanted to show you this thing about the heritage thing about the thing of people singing and I found a YouTube clip. . . like this midnight singing, maybe just one song, but this is how it is, but ask yourself where this is coming from, you know, like and it's really interesting. Like how come people do this? And that's something that I think is different than from many other countries you know you take your Yugoslavia or Canada or here in the Faroe Islands, people get together, all of them, and sing shitloads of songs they all know, it's very special. Yeah. There. [plays the clip]. And this is a song that a guy in [the village of] Vestmanna wrote.

Shortly afterwards, Lassen commented on the significance of such singing further, adding, "and NO accompaniment, you know, that's what to me is maybe like the very soul music, truly is natural Faroese music."

In addition to the *Ólavsøka* singing and the eventual association of ring-dancing with the national holiday (discussed at the end of the previous section), other developments have served to re-cast music (and Faroese traditional music in particular) in a new light in contemporary Faroese society. Over the course of the twentieth century, a new type of context (as well as, arguably, a new rationale) for the performance and continuation of Faroese traditional singing and ring-dancing arose in the form of the *dansifelagið* (village-based dance societies or clubs). Seán

Galvin, in his 1989 thesis that focused largely on the activities of these dance societies, characterised them as a post-World War II revival phenomenon (Galvin 1989). Blak et al. have presented a useful, simplified history of the founding of the *dansifelagið* and their rationale. Beginning with some remarks about the "competition" posed to the traditional dance by mass media and other types of social gatherings, the authors continue, writing,

> [t]he young in particular often show a lack of interest. This is why it was difficult in the first 10-20 years after the Second World War to organize public Faroese dancing. Competition from modern dancing grew, and young people preferred modern dancing to Faroese dancing. To combat this, people with a special interest in ballads and the ballad dance formed dance societies. The first dance society was formed in Tórshavn in 1952; today there are dance societies all over the country. [Blak et al. 1996:15]

Years later, speaking to me in a 2011 interview, Blak reiterated the "conservationist" role of the dance societies and suggested why he thought they had their origin in Tórshavn saying,

> *Havnar Dansifelag* was the first society. 1952. Until then it was kind of the tradition to learn just by hearing, of course you were always teaching in the what was called the *kvøldsetur*, the night seatings. But formally, formal societies with the purpose of conserving dancing was made, of course here [in Tórshavn], because people came from many places and it was more bubbling place yeah Sumba [the southernmost village of the Faroes, on Suðuroy] never thought of doing that until later.

Despite its almost cold, analytical tone, a final description and assessment of the dance societies, from Galvin's thesis, is also worth including here as it addresses the crux of the notion of the dance society: that they were modern and fundamentally different contexts for *kvæði* singing and ring-dancing. In Galvin's estimation,

> By creating formal, dues-paying societies exclusively devoted to the dance medium and its concomitant preservation of the ancient kvaeði, the dansifeløg have tacitly agreed to be the guardians of a traditional form of communal expression. In their efforts to maintain the tradition "as they remember it," or "as it was told to them by their parents," dansifeløg members are necessarily conservative. They tend to eschew any changes which would not be in keeping with the "old ways," such as doing away with strict ownership of ballads so that more young people may join in as leaders of the dances. This high minded act of nostalgic preservation and revival of tradition is a replication of the genuine, and might be termed folklorism-or the secondary use of folklore materials. In spite of their continuity with the past, the formation of dance societies was not in keeping with the contemporary folkloric processes which relied more on the journalistic and (later) electronically disseminated media. Much of their energy is directed towards recreating conditions similar to the old roykstova ["smoke room," a traditional Faroese home's living room] environment, even if for an evening. [Galvin 1989:156]

Firstly, it is important to establish that I disagree entirely with Galvin's assessment of the dance society activities as "a replication of the genuine," a phrase that contains a value or authenticity judgment on Galvin's part, suggesting that whatever enterprise the contemporary dance societies are engaged in, it is not "genuinely traditional." However, his point about the fundamental shift of meaning inherent in the dance societies as a performance context (that they are primarily concerned with preservation) is well taken. Further, while it may be true that the dance societies have "tacitly agreed to be the guardians of a traditional form of communal expression" (Galvin 1989:156) given Galvin and Blak's above comments, it is not necessary for their purpose to remain tacit. The dance societies and their members can speak for themselves about their role.

One of Tórshavn's relatively more recently formed dance societies, the aforementioned Tøkum Lætt, state plainly (in English) on their website that their "purpose is to preserve and increase the interest in the Faroese Dance" (toekum-laett.fo 2012). The society's description also explains that they "dance every other sunday [sic] night and sing the good old songs and ballads. . . moreover the

purpose is to learn other songs and ballads which are not so well known" (toekum-laett.fo 2012). Lastly, Tøkum Lætt also highlights their occasional role in presenting the dance to foreigners and interested groups (like my Faroese institute class), writing that "in the summertime we usually show our national dance in arrangements for tourists and other parties, visiting the The Faroe Island for various reasons" (toekum-laett.fo 2012). In short, then, dance societies like Tøkum Lætt often have a clear mandate which foregrounds their aims of preservation and promotion, but also highlights other roles the club has taken up.

Towards fulfilling their primary aim of preserving and promoting interest in the dance, some *dansifelagið,* including Tórshavn-based ones, take an extremely proactive approach to conscious "tradition-passing," even to the extent of working within the educational system to encourage young people to take up traditional dancing. As Weiss explained to me, the dance societies offer a service that sends a capable ring-dance leader (*skipari*) out to public schools in cases where a teacher does not feel confident enough (or feels otherwise ill-equipped) to lead their students in the dancing sessions. Beyond this work that supplements and supports the officially mandated teaching of the ballads and dance in schools, according to Weiss, almost all of the dance societies (including Havnar Dansifelag and Tøkum *Lætt*, the two most active Tórshavn-based groups) also host weekly children's dance events throughout the dancing season. The calendar of these weekly children's events, which intersperse ballad dancing with storytelling and sweet treats to keep children entertained, is punctuated once a year by the hosting of a single *barnadansistevnan* ("children's dance meeting"). Held annually at different places around the Faroes, the *barnadansistevnan* can draw hundreds of children and their families from all over the islands, and the prominently displayed photos of this year's dance meeting on the national umbrella organization of dance societies' site, www.sr.fo, arguably stand as testaments to the societies' success in fostering young peoples' increased engagement and familiarity with the traditional ballads and ring-dance.

Clearly, the Faroese ballad and dance tradition is still considered to be an important aspect of the Faroese national identity, at least by the islands' government and the *dansifelagið*, who put significant concerted effort in to perpetuating the practice (to say nothing of the work of the scholars involved in the preservation and digitization of the approximately 2600 hours of recorded archival material at the Faroese university's language and literature department). The annual mass public performance of Faroese songs (including the *kvæði* and ring dancing) during *Ólavsøka* also certainly speaks volumes to the cultural significance of those practices as key aspects of the Faroes' national inventory.

Well-documented and with their cultural importance solidified early on in Faroese national life, the *kvæði* continue to be sung and danced to today in village dance societies and many villages throughout the Faroes. Even those villages of rather modest size, like Kollafjørður of approximately 800 inhabitant, have their own dance societies which meet regularly throughout the dance season (usually beginning in October and runs until Lent).

In much of the preceding discussion it can be seen, then, how *kvæði* and their accompanying ring-dance have acquired an air of national significance and Faroese cultural distinctiveness (symbols and expressions of Faroeseness). However, even from the brief discussion of the *Ólavsøka* practice of *Miðnáttarsangur,* it also seems apparent that other types of public collective music performance, at least for some people, marks the Faroes as a society in which music plays an especially important role.

Having examined in considerable detail Faroese history and the development of Faroese traditional music, the discussion has now entirely been brought back up to the present with these brief excerpts from conversations I had with Faroese musicians, through which one can begin to understand something of this study's key questions about what sort of role music plays in contemporary Faroese society, how music is experienced in the islands, and what the experience of being a musician in the Faroes is like. All of these issues, as has hopefully already been

made eviden, can only be addressed by heeding Berger's claim that "if our work is to explain the role of music in society, then our interpretations of music must be an attempt to understand the meaning of the music for the people who participate in it" (Berger 1999:15). In other words, an approach based on elicited discourse (and supplemented by observed practice) is essential. As such, in the following sections, I turn more fully to a historically-informed discussion of contemporary Faroese musical practice and talk (interviews and conversations) about such practice which I personally experienced and discussed during my time in the Faroes.

Dansifelagið: Participation in the Village Dance Society Context

On August 1st, 2012, following a departure from Copenhagen and the most pleasant flight I've ever experienced (with the Faroese airline Atlantic Airways), I arrived in clear weather at the Faroes' only airport, built by the British during their occupation of the Faroes in World War II, on the western island, Vágar. Considering I couldn't help but begin filming and snapping pictures of the islands, even before I had landed, it was no wonder that I stood out so obviously as a first-time tourist, hopelessly distracted by the islands' landscape. Easily spotted in the midst of my self-conscious photo snapping on the bus from Vágar through the undersea tunnel, Vágatunnilin (which connects to the two largest islands, Streymoy and Eysturoy), one of the other fellow visitors, a friendly American, struck up a conversation with me. Save for the ship-bound tourists making a brief stopover in the Faroes on their way between Iceland and Denmark, the Faroes aren't really the sort of place that people just pass through. As such, it came as little surprise that my new American friend and I had come to the islands for the same reason, to attend Fróðskaparsetur Føroya's (the Faroese university's) month-long language and culture program, the Faroese Summer Institute.

The annual course, which admits around 30 students a year (35 are planned for 2012), bills itself almost as an introductory course to Faroese society and culture,

with language teaching at its core. While we had language instruction almost every day throughout the month of the course, lectures ranged in topics from Faroese literature and film, to history and even geology. However, while I did acquire a rudimentary level of Faroese reading comprehension (and a basic understanding of rules of pronunciation, verb conjugation, etcetera), I certainly wasn't able to become proficient enough in the language in that short time to carry out a conversation. The difficulty in learning to speak and comprehend spoken Faroese was also compounded by the fact that everyone I met tended to speak only English to me (because they usually spoke perfect English).

Perhaps not surprisingly considering the preceding discussion of the important of oral literature and music in Faroese history, a number of the lectures and activities focused on Faroese traditional music. Turið Sigurðardóttir of the Faculty of Faroese Language and Literature at Fróðskaparsetur gave several lectures on old Faroese ballads and *kvæði*. She also introduced the class to ballad singing and ring-dancing, which we took part in several times over the duration of the course. Towards the end of the course, the class was joined one evening by members of one of Tórshavn's dance societies (*dansifelagið*), Tøkum Lætt. Thus, my first real experience with Faroese music in the islands was a memorable, albeit typically touristic one.

Before continuing on to an in-depth discussion of the experience of music-making and the double constitutive nature of musical practice in the later sections (which draw extensively on interviews), it is important to first discuss here in some detail the only form of participation in music in which I personally was involved in the Faroes. In this sub-section I describe my own experience with Faroese ring-dancing in the context of two separate dance evening events that were organized by village dance societies. Unlike the involvement I had with other Faroese musicians (in the form of interviews, attending performances, etcetera) which is discussed in the later chapters on popular music forms, during

my participation in the ring-dance events with dance society members on the two occasions discussed below, I felt somewhat out of place.

Because I was not acquainted with the participants, and, as I discuss, because everyone else involved was much older and almost certainly knew one another, my self-consciousness about being an "outsider" at these events coloured my experiences there. Further, although I made a few attempts at setting up interviews with dance society members to discuss their participation in ring-dancing, it just never happened (partially because I was so preoccupied with setting up interviews with people involved in contemporary music). Because of this, in contrast to the later chapters and sub-sections in which I have made a serious and conscious effort to present the voices of Faroese people so that they may speak for themselves regarding their own experiences with music and meaning, such voices are necessarily absent here.

Of course, I spoke to people at various times informally about their involvement in dance societies, but never in a formal interview or in any significant detail. However, I feel that my own experience with dance society events is worth relating here as it, in combination with what others have written about the meaning of such dance events in the past, provides some small insight into the meaning of traditional music in contemporary Faroese society. Although I'm not Faroese, I feel that an examination of my own experience (supplemented by Galvin's observations of similar events in the 1980s) with reference to Turino's notion of participatory contexts as a field of musical practice, may offer some insights into why dance society members find the regular performance of unaccompanied traditional ballads throughout the dancing season both meaningful and worthwhile.

The central question I seek to address in this sub-section is how and why music is made socially meaningful in the context of the *dansifelagið* ring dances. Recalling Turino's notion of fields of musical practice, I argue that in these participatory contexts, music becomes primarily a vehicle for, as well as a product

of, social interaction and social cohesion. Such a context constitutes a special kind of arena of interaction with its own internal goals and values which prioritize the social significance of the performance over all other possible concerns (Turino 2008:25). However, although I address this in fuller detail following my analysis and reflection on my participation in the dance event, it is also important to note immediately that the following sub-section is also intended to act as a sort of test of the possible utility of Turino's framework (if one were to employ it in isolation). That is, throughout the following discussion, there is an intentionally conspicuous absence of Faroese voices from the proceedings and analysis, which is in stark contrast to my early discussion of Berger and my purported adherence to his suggestion that we need to attempt to discover how music is experienced (and what it means) for the people who actually practice it themselves. At this point, it is worth simply keeping in mind that the reason for these absences and shortcomings will be discussed immediately following my examination of this dance context.

Though I first participated in ring dances as part of the summer institute's curriculum, I was later informed by some professors at the university that the regular dancing season was about to begin for the *dansifelagið* and that if I were to show up at a specific place downtown in the capital on the evening of the first Saturday of October, that I could meet up with some *dansifelag* people who would probably take me along with them for the first dance evening of the season. I showed up at a parking lot that evening and so did a number of others who were waiting there. Eventually a large van showed up and we all piled aboard in relative silence. I recognized a number of the faces from the dances that were organized through the summer course with members of the *dansifelag, Tøkum Lætt*. Other than confirming whether or not I was coming along for the dance, conversation was minimal, but everyone seemed perfectly happy to have me along for the evening.

As it turns out, the van was headed up to Hotel Føroyar which sits high on a mountain road overlooking the whole of the capital region. We disembarked at the Hotel to take part in a massive ring-dancing session that was already well underway. From what I was able to glean, the dancing was part of some sort of seniors' celebration that was going on that evening, and there were seemingly hundreds of people taking part. Following the performance of a few ballads in a large conference room that was crammed full of dancers, I learned from a fellow dancer that *Tøkum Lætt* would be traveling over to the small nearby village of Kollafjørður to join some dancers there in a hall to begin the dancing season proper.

Wandering around the hotel, a friendly *Tøkum Lætt* member asked whether or not I was coming along to Kollafjørður for the dance and then showed me quickly to the large tour bus, which was then about to take off. Surveying the scene aboard the bus, I recognized a few of the (mostly older) faces, but also spotted a younger woman (perhaps mid-20s) whom I thought it might be less strange to introduce myself to, and shortly we began talking on the way to Kollafjørður. On the way, a cheerful looking older member of the society who wore a Thor's hammer pendant around his neck came down the aisle and insisted in a friendly manner that I have a shot of *akvavit* (an infamous strong herbal spirit that has a long history as an essential element of Scandinavian drinking culture). I obliged and downed the fiery stuff, recalling the many descriptions I'd read previously about the tradition of the "cup-bearer" at Faroese dance events. A person will assume the position as a sort of "host" and keep the occasional shots of *akvavit* coming while others continue to dance unabated.

Though I was obviously the odd man out, speaking English exclusively and being the only male under 30 present the whole evening (save for one or two young children), nobody seemed to mind at all that I was tagging along. Other than one possibly flippant comment I received from a man who I had already pegged as something of a strange fellow, I was just easily permitted to ride along

as a guest of their usual crew for an evening. The comment in question, by the way, went something like this:

Man: (in Faroese) "Where are you from?"
Me: (in broken Faroese) "I'm from Canada"
Man: (turning away, still in Faroese): "Canada? America!"

Perhaps he was implying that I was practically American and, thus, not worth speaking to.

Fortunately, as it turned out upon arrival at the hall in the small town of Kollafjørður, I was not to be the only anomaly at that dance event: two men from what appeared to have been some sort of (perhaps Danish) TV crew were also there most of night operating massive audiovisual equipment and bobbing conspicuously amongst the dancers.

After paying a small entrance fee (which entitled participants to food and Faroese beer), I joined the dancers in most of the performances that took place throughout the rest of the night and well into the small hours of the next morning. Though punctuated by brief breaks for food and drink to keep energy and spirits up, dancing never really ceased altogether at any point. Dancers, myself included, left and joined the ring at will as interest dictated. This went on for at least three or more hours until, eventually, the visiting society people and I were coaxed back on to the bus and dropped off in the capital sometime in the morning hours of the next day.

In short, the two evening dance events which I attended had proceeded in much the same way as those described by Sean Galvin in his 1989 PhD dissertation on Faroese ballads, the fieldwork for which was carried out in the 1980s.

The most common form of the ring dance, and the version which was employed for every ballad dance in which I participated, was performed by

joining hands in a large circle (which may necessarily fold inward on itself if many dancers are present) and simply stepping two steps left and one step right, continuing in this way until the chosen ballad has finished. Though often specific ballads are chosen beforehand to be lead by certain *skipari* (song leaders), evening dance events often proceed quite organically and democratically with any given attendee attempting to start up a ballad of their choosing and either succeeding to attract a ring of dancers, or, as the case may be, having their own fledgling ring subsumed (or temporarily delayed) by another more popular ring that had started simultaneously.

Galvin's detailed account of dance society sessions reflects my own experience almost perfectly and is thus worth quoting at some length here:

> [as the] ring grows, the participants fold themselves in towards the centre to form whorls. The motion of their linked arms swinging in time to the stamping of their feet, along with the recurring eye contact which occurs as the participants pass by each other in this endless chain, tends to heighten the intensity of the dance event and to strengthen the sense of camaraderie of participants . . . When the leaders step forward to begin chanting, they are committed to chanting that kvaeði (táttur, or vísur) to its end. Some participants know both the story and the refrain of the ballad well enough to join in with the skipari; others dance quietly until they have "picked up" the refrain. Others may choose not to sing at all, and that is perfectly all right too.
>
> Once having finished that particular ballad, however, the skipari reverts to being one of the many dancers, and someone else steps forward to lead the next ballad. Only rarely does someone chant two long ballads in one evening, not only because of an unspoken sense of fairness about sharing the spotlight, but also because chanting ballads that can be as long as several hundred stanzas, each interspersed with a refrain, requires tremendous physical exertion . . . Participants remain in the ring for as long as they like, sometimes for several hours, or through several ballads. Others stay in or drop out as their mood, interest, or energy determines. Participation is completely voluntary, it is considered socially appropriate to leave or join the ring at will. The choice of which ballads would be chanted this evening was largely decided democratically, earlier in the year, usually at the first meeting of all the dues-paying members of the society. [Galvin 1989:11-12]

Blak (et al.) have also written a description of the dance that reflects my own experience and Galvin's description, and dovetails nicely with an analysis of the dance context from within a Turino-based framework, that is, the dance as a principally participatory form of musical practice. As Blak (et al.) suggest,

> The Faroese dance is made up of several elements; the text, the melody, the rhythm of the melody and "stevid" - the rhythm made by the feet of the dancers. These are the foundations on which the stage is built, where the events in the ballads can unfold. There is too the movement of the ring: the same faces meeting again and again, and with the repeated, suggestive rhythm, with the constantly recurring melody, an intense feeling of fellowship is created around the ballad and the events it relates. The dancers are transported from their ordinary lives into the arena that they have created in the ring. The Faroese dance is folk art - but created by the dancers for themselves. Thought is seldom given to an audience. [Blak et al. 1996:14-15][4]

After first building on a few theoretical concepts not discussed in my previous summary of Turino's development of the notion of fields of musical practice, I will then consider the significance of dance society events as participatory events.

Though sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) and anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972) are often credited with the development of the concept of frame, Turino adapts the concept somewhat differently. Specifically, Turino defines frame as "a mental framework for interpreting a particular slice of experience" (Turino 2008:14), and he offers clarification by explaining that "different realms of social life are also framed in different ways so that we know how to interpret the signs operating" (Turino 2008:14).

[4]Discussions of gender, sexuality, and courtship are frequently conspicuously absent from descriptions of the often supposedly somehow utopian/asexual ring-dance. However, like the satirical *taettir*, it is also true that *kvaeði* and the accompanying ring dance are frequently practiced regularly today in vastly different contexts (and largely by different cohorts) than they would have been in the previous centuries. That is, whereas ring dances were once likely a primary context for social interaction between young, eligible singles within villages, this no longer appears to be the case.

The relevance of the concept of frame to Turino's (and my own) discussion of the *dansifelagið* dance events is that, therein, music can be regarded as a sort of special aspect of social life which is "framed to predispose us toward nonsymbolic interpretation and experience" (Turino 2008:15). In other words, music has a unique capacity to be interpreted directly at an emotional level. In providing two examples of how music may be differently framed, Turino contrasts the framing of genres like glam rock and opera in which artists are "interpreted as playing a part" (2008:15), with the "singer-songwriter genre [which] is generally framed such that the signs in performance (the songs, body language, stage patter, etcetera) are to be interpreted as dicent indices [i.e., as "really" representative and a product] of the performer's actual self and experiences" (2008:15). Again, what is critical to this discussion is that the concept of frame helps call attention to the often unselfconscious interpretive frameworks through which we make sense of music, as well as to emphasize music's inherently emotive and emotional nature.

However, while the concept of frame as discussed here does highlight music's emotive potential, it is less instructive regarding the other ways music may engage us and, in doing so, achieve a different kind of social significance. Addressing the multitude of ways people react to and experience music, Turino explains that, through music, "sensual perception, feeling, physical reaction, and symbolic thought may all eventually occur, thus involving and integrating different parts of the self which are sometimes conventionally referred to as 'emotional', 'physical', and 'rational' " (Turino 2008:15). In order to account for some of these other ways music engages people, an additional concept is required in our theoretical toolbox: psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's notion of flow. In Csikszentmihalyi's own words, flow refers to a state of "being completely involved in an activity for its own sake" (Csikszentmihalyi quoted in Geirland 1996), wherein "the ego falls away . . . time flies . . . every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz" (Geirland 1996). Turino elaborates upon

this description, writing that "flow refers to a state of heightened concentration, when one is so intent on the activity at hand that all other thoughts, concerns, and distractions disappear and the actor is fully in the present" (2008:4).

Even based on these truncated descriptions, it should become apparent to most people that they have experienced flow states at many points in their lives, likely while involved in a variety of activities. In common parlance phrases such as being "in the zone" are often used to describe personal experiences of flow. Any musicians learning about the concept for the first time would probably also be able to identify times when they have experienced a state of flow during performance (as I did).

Turino suggests that certain kinds of activities, especially games and music, "seem specially designed to contain all the necessary conditions for reaching flow" (Turino 2008:5). The necessary conditions for flow mentioned by Turino will also likely seem to musicians to be inherent in private and social forms of music making. Specifically, Turino explains that these five flow conditions an activity must have are: "the proper balance between inherent challenges and the skill level of the actor. . . a continually expanding ceiling for potential challenges. . . the potential for immediate feedback on how one is doing. . . [being] clearly bounded by time and place. . . [and having] clear, well established goals" (Turino 2008:5).

Further, considering Turino's assertion that people are likely to pursue and continue activities that produce flow states as they are experiences as inherently pleasurable, as well as his suggestion that flow "enhances concentration and that sense of being at one with the activity and perhaps the other people involved" (Turino 2008:4), it is now possible to move forward to the discussion of the *dansifelagið* performances with the notions of frame and flow in mind.

Recalling that the central argument of Turino's book *Music as Social Life* is that music can be organized roughly into (or between) four types or fields along a continuum (with participatory and presentational performance at one end, and

high fidelity and studio audio art at the other end) (2008:26), in his own summary of the participatory field, Turino describes it as "a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role" (2008:26).

In some ways, my experience of the *dansifelagið* dance events (and Galvin and Blak's descriptions of them) reflect, par excellence, Turino's description of musical practice within the participatory field. Firstly, aside from the fact that these sessions were originally conceived of as opportunities for collective performance, there were many other overt and subtle indicators of the participatory and socially oriented ethos of the sessions. For instance, in accordance with Turino's description of the participatory field, at the dance, there certainly seemed to be "a subtle and sometimes not so subtle pressure to participate" (Turino 2008:29). While people were, as noted, welcome to join and leave the circle as they pleased, and to partially or entirely sit out of performances (e.g., to rest, eat, or drink), the event, and even the room itself, were obviously focused on the actual performance of the dance. As noted above, the dance never ceased entirely and, as soon as one ballad ended, another *skipari* (or two competing *skipari*) would begin another. When someone began singing, others were expected to join because it just wouldn't be "right" (i.e., hospitable or conducive to the ethos of communal performance which drew people together there in the first place) if someone were left to sing and dance alone, for whatever reason.

Similarly, as Turino notes, within the participatory frame, "while not everyone has to be playing or dancing all the time, a general sense is created that people who do not participate at all are somehow shirking their social responsibility by not being sociable" (Turino 2008:29-30). Elaborating, he compares this musical situation with another familiar social situation in which the emphasis is also on the social aspect of the activity, not necessarily the activity itself, in order to better

illustrate what he means: "[i]magine attending a small party among close friends where everyone is playing charades with the exception of one friend who refuses to play and sits alone in the corner" (Turino 2008:29-30). As he explains,

> [a] similar range of reactions to such a person might be experienced in a participatory music setting- everything from direct invitations to join in, to teasing and cajoling, to ignoring him, to worrying that something might be wrong. Typically people do not want to stand out in this way and so might join in, even if with token gestures, even when they don't really feel like taking part. As with any party, people attend participatory music occasions for a variety of reasons, and in a variety of moods, and engage with what is going on as suits them. [Turino 2008:29-30]

This general atmosphere (or ethos) in which broad participation and sociality are prioritized above the production of a maximally aesthetically appealing (or "perfect") musical sound became immediately evident to me, especially when I was dancing along in the ring (as I was most of the time). People who had all range of musical talent and variety of vocal timbres (from middle-aged and elderly men and women, to a few accompanied young children) took part in singing as much of each ballad that they could. When one approaches an already formed, closed ring, people on either side quickly open their linked arms and offer their hands so that one can hop right into the midst of an ongoing performance without disturbance. In this nonchalant and fluid way, members join and depart seamlessly. These welcoming hands and opening rings speak further to the participatory frame that characterizes the *dansifelag* events I took part in.

The ring-dance is not some sort of impossibly utopian participatory ideal, however. As mentioned above with reference to the "competition" of simultaneous *skipari* who begin singing their ballads at the same time, there is an element of professionalism and a sort of non-hostile competition to the proceedings. Though anyone who knows and is capable of singing a ballad in full is technically welcome to start up the next ballad (therefore taking on the participant role of the *skipari*), over the course of evenings like the ones I took part in, because the songs to be performed are not always decided beforehand, it

may just happen that two people who were hoping to sing the next ballad begin at the same time. The resultant "competition" which I observed wasn't actually framed as such (i.e., the two men did not try to shout over one another or do anything otherwise confrontational). What normally happens, and what happened when I was present, is simply that one ring typically attracts more dancers than the other (either due to the popularity of that *skipari's* ballad or for other reasons). When this happens, the smaller ring's *skipari* stops singing his ballad and joins the larger ring, saving his or her own song for a later attempt (or, perhaps, for another dancing session). In terms of professionalism (or a degree or required skill to take on the participant role of *skipari*), while it was the case in the old days (and indeed, it still is today) that some people become known as particularly skillful or knowledgeable *skiparis* by virtue of their fine voices or large repertoire, even relative "amateurs" (who may only know one or two songs in full) are welcome to join. And, in fact, I witnessed one young lady lead a ballad that she knew well; afterwards she was soundly congratulated for her efforts (and her father, who was present, was particularly proud and pleased).

The primarily social interactional nature (i.e., participatory frame) of these ring-dances is also expressed by the actual physical organization and positions that were consistently taken up by the dancers. Specifically, in all of the events I attended, dancers organized themselves in fairly tight, roughly circular formation, facing one another, and thereby facilitating comfortable musical interaction and eye contact.

In this sense, then, indicators of the participatory framing of this context were also visibly evident. Similarly, the act of holding hands (without concern for age or gender differences) and moving together to the music for long periods of time also creates a sense of closeness and shared performance that foregrounds the social and essentially participatory ethos of the dance. In Galvin's description, quoted above, he describes "the motion of their linked arms swinging in time to the stamping of their feet, along with the recurring eye contact which occurs as the

participants pass by each other in this endless chain, [which] tends to heighten the intensity of the dance event and to strengthen the sense of camaraderie of participants" (Galvin 1989:11-12). Similarly, Blak (et al.) also emphasize the movement and physicality of the dance ("the movement of the ring: the same faces meeting again and again, and with the repeated, suggestive rhythm, with the constantly recurring melody, an intense feeling of fellowship is created around the ballad and the events it relates") (Blak et al. 1996:14-15). This heightening of intensity and strengthening of a "sense of camaraderie of participants" Galvin writes of, and the "intense feeling of fellowship" that is created (described by Blak et al.) is discussed in significant detail by Turino with reference to the affective capacity (and the potential for flow experiences) that he argues are inherent to participatory music making:

> It is in participatory settings. . . that focal attention to synchrony becomes the most pronounced and important. . . participants have to pay special attention to the sounds and motions of others on a moment-to-moment basis. . . [and this] special attention to what is going on in the moment. . . enhances the potential for flow and a special awareness of other participants as realized through their sounds and motions. This need to pay attention results in a kind of heightened, immediate social intercourse; when the performance is going well, differences among participants melt away as attention is focused on the seamlessness of sound and motion. At such moments, moving together and sounding together in a group creates a direct sense of *being* together and of deeply felt similarity, and hence identity, among participants. [Turino 2008:43]

Another aspect of the physicality and embodiment of the dance performance which enhances the need to pay attention and arguably increases one's experience of engagement with the group activity of moving and sounding together is the increased volume (and sometimes pitch) and forcefulness of the stomping which often accompanies periods of particular excitement or significance in the story of the ballad. That is, when everyone is paying close attention to (and participating

in) the performance, the more thrilling passages of ballads are often rendered with more enthusiasm. As an obvious sign of one's degree of engagement with the group's performance, such activities further speak to the sense of being together that lengthy ballad performances can foster.

Returning to the aforementioned concept of flow experiences, a consideration of the ring-dance sessions that incorporates flow also helps reveal some of the ways music is made personally and socially meaningful in that context, as well as further illustrates the point that, as Turino claims of all participatory music making contexts, they "are more about the doing and social interaction than about creating an artistic product or commodity" (Turino 2008:25). Recalling the key idea that flow states like those achieved through concentration on musical performance are inherently pleasurable, it should be self-evident that the group of musicians who continue to gather, week after week, throughout the dancing season with the express purpose of singing and dancing together must find the experience generally enjoyable. Further, since the sessions arguably incorporate all of the aforementioned necessary conditions for flow states, it is also reasonable to assume that many dancers principally derive their pleasure through flow states. Though chain dance sessions may not initially appear to have the same built-in continuous upward challenge aspect built in as, say, jazz or Irish instrumental jams, there remains the challenge of becoming a better or more knowledgable *skipari* (forming a more diverse repertoire, perfecting performances, mastering extremely long songs, and even attracting others to one's fledgling ring).

Despite the ostensibly personal and individual nature of the experience of flow, Turino offers a link between flow states and the social dimension of participatory music making. Regarding the requisite balance of challenges versus skill level necessary to flow states, Turino asserts that "when the balance is just right, it enhances concentration and a sense of being 'in the groove', at one with the activity and the other people involved" (Turino 2008:31). In short, then, flow can also be a sort of force of social cohesion in participatory performance contexts,

and the forms of attentive musical interaction inherent to many participatory performance contexts can also increase the potential for flow.

Many participatory music and dance contexts entail "new formulaic or improvised melodies or dance movements" (Turino 2008:43), and, therefore, "special attention to what's going on in the moment is required. . . this enhances the potential for flow and a special awareness of other participants as realized through their sounds and motions" (2008:43). And, even though improvisation is not a feature of the ring-dance events, a similar attentiveness and type of interaction is required, for instance, in keeping the dance steps in order, joining in on refrains or other known parts, attending to ring openings and closings, following the song's story closely to add necessary and improvised emphasis, as well as attending to when a song is about to end. This interactive, attentive process arguably lies at the core of the social significance of participatory performance, as Turino suggests.

As a final piece of evidence that illustrates the central significance of these dances as essentially social, it is interesting to note that there are a number of indicators that reinforce the fact that the sessions were characterized primarily by their participatory frame. In agreement with Turino's suggestion that a key feature of participatory performance is that "its values are distinctive in that the success of a performance is more importantly judged by the degree and intensity of participation" (Turino 2008:35).

While this, of course, does not mean that if everybody is performing, even if they are playing poorly and the music is distractingly sloppy or out of sync, that dancers will still consider the evening a complete success based solely on maximal participation. As Turino explains of other participatory performance contexts, people are always making qualitative judgments internally (or later in private conversation) about the sounds produced (Turino 2008:34). However, in accordance with the internal system of goals and values of the participatory frame, "a priority is placed on encouraging people to join in regardless of the quality of

their contributions. . . [and], the etiquette and quality of sociality is granted priority over the quality of sound per se" (2008:35). For instance, I was encouraged or at the very least, readily welcomed to join in and drink along, even though it was quite obvious to most that I barely knew any Faroese, spoke only English, and was so obviously a bumbling foreigner (an "American," as the fellow on the bus seemed to suggest).

What can be said of participatory contexts like these dance sessions, then, is that "success" may well be gauged by the participants on both the amount and intensity of participation, balanced against a minimum level of sonic synchrony and quality (i.e., a competent, decent-sounding performance). In practice what this meant is that, for instance, following an especially "tight" or spirited performance, there is often a burst of excited and joyful talk and, very often, laughter (i.e., on some recordings I have of informal participatory Irish music sessions, following a good set performance, out of this kind of typical happy outburst, one can pick out phrases such as "awesome!" and, especially, "that was a good one!"). I take such phrases, laughter, and outbursts to both to signal positive qualitative assessments of the success of the session (or, at least, that part of the session), as well as being confirmations of the essential sociality of this participatory performance context. In the case of the ring-dances I took part in, I just remember smiles and a joyful atmosphere following the performances, and, after the performance of the ballad by the young woman (mentioned earlier) whose father was present, an obviously proud and approving hug.

Part of my rationale for analyzing the *dansifelagið* dance context with reference to Turino's notions of musical fields (and his development of Csikszentmihalyi's notion of flow) was to provide a case study that examines the potential significance (and constitution of meaning through music) of one unique variety of musical practice that I encountered in the Faroes. Turino's ready-made framework seemed perfectly designed to address the social significance of musical practice like the *dansifelagið* dance evenings. However, another reason

that I decided to discuss the dance events in this way was to call attention to the Kuhnian notion of the problem of necessarily proscribed answers that will be found when one adheres too closely to a single theoretical framework.

Philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn famously developed a theory of scientific paradigms which suggested that paradigms (and in this case, theoretical models, even those as ostensibly sound as Turino's) not only attempt to explain phenomena that occur "out there," but they also largely define and specify their objects and methods of inquiry; they essentially outline what questions and, thus, what answers are possible (Kuhn 1962). Stepping back from all of this seemingly neat and tidy analysis based on Turino's framework, then, what is important to remember is that, not unlike scientific paradigms, theoretical frameworks (if relied on exclusively), are necessarily prescriptive, rather than necessarily descriptive or explanatory. While the preceding analysis (via Turino's concepts) was genuinely intended to discuss what I perceive to be important ways in which music is experienced socially and made socially significant in the Faroes, it was also conspicuously one-sided and devoid of Faroese voices. Even though I was not able, due to my own shortcomings, to interview any *dansifelag* members during my time in the islands, I still felt that it would be worthwhile to include an analysis that reflected on my own experience (supplemented by descriptions from Galvin and Blak et al.) as a participant in that context as a means of gaining some insight into the possible significance of and constitution of meaning through that ancient and participatory Faroese musical practice, the ring-dance.

Though, by my own admission, I did not have any other voices that I could have inserted into this analysis section to have made it multivocal, my own over-reliance of Turino allowed for, though didn't necessarily prescribe, a dearth of other voices. Turino's framework alone also does nothing to suggest anything of the variety of other ways in much different types of musical practice can become socially meaningful. For instance, only a few of the above details from the description of the experience of participating in the *dansifelag* dance context

could have switched out in place details of, for instance, informal Irish music jam sessions in which I have participated, and the end result (which purports to account for much of the significance of the social music-making) would have been much the same. While this isn't to suggest that the sorts of conclusions that can be drawn from an analysis of participatory music contexts based on Turino's development of the concept of flow and his framework for understanding the processes of the social experience of music are somehow false or misleading, considered alone they are, of course, insufficient. That is, though many of the same processes may be happening in the participatory contexts of improvisational jazz jams or square dances as are no doubt taking place in the *dansifelag* dance context (including attentiveness to others as part of the experience of moving and sounding together in synchrony, potential for flow experiences, feeling of closeness and identity with other participants via the collective endeavour of social music-making, etcetera), none of this close examination of the actual experience of the performance tells us anything about some of the other important (non-performance) means and processes by which the specific music being performed in the *dansifelagið* dance context is made socially meaningful. This isn't because of some failing on Turino's part, of course. In his discussion of participatory contexts he is primarily concerned with musical meaning as it is created and experienced specifically in performance.

Regarding some of these other processes (not related to performance) that are involved in the constitution of musical meaning in the *dansifelagið* context, many Faroese people, because of their upbringing and schooling (i.e., socialization), as well as anyone who has read the preceding sub-section on the historical development of Faroese traditional music, will likely have at least some idea, for instance, of the national significance of such old Faroese songs and of the dance form itself. So, even if my experience of the actual physical performance mirrored in some significant ways the experiences of my fellow performers, I wasn't involved in the selection and embodiment of aspects of my own (or my

nation's own) oral literature and culture. Though I understand something of such music's importance (because I have some knowledge of it's historical development), unlike me, the Faroese participants have complex personal histories of involvement with and understanding of a music that they identify as their own. It follows that the performance of markedly Faroese music by Faroese people must hold a different meaning for them than it does for an interested "outsider" like myself.

Considering the obvious problems with an approach that purports to explain and account for the significance of the social experience of music for others while simultaneously eschewing their voices (typified by the above examination of the *dansifelag* context), the following chapters and sub-sections on other types of musical practice in contemporary Faroese society make a serious attempt to infuse the discussion with as many Faroese voices as possible.

Though I have organized and framed their words around specific themes and topics, the intention in all of the following chapters and sub-sections is to provide a platform for the many Faroese people who generously shared their stories with me. To do anything less than to let their words speak for themselves would be doing them a serious disservice. Further, in an attempt to combine Turino's insightful perspectives on performance and musical meaning with other theoretical perspectives that highlight other aspects of the music's significance, I draw especially on David Samuels in order to better explore (amongst other issues) how the constitution of musical meaning can be shaped by its long-term mediation and repetition, which can result in deep feelings of connection to these songs in a community.

I'm referring specifically here to the recent work of David Samuels who has investigated the ways in which old country and rock classics, through decades of radio repetition and performance by local cover bands, can become "Apache music" on a reservation in San Carlos, Arizona. Samuels' (2004) perspectives are especially well-suited to a discussion of the history and significance of country

and *dans* (dance) music in the Faroes, both of which are explored in some detail in the later sub-section, “The Islands' Most Popular Genre?: Notes on the Origin Myth and Significance of Faroese Country.”

Chapter 5: Making Metal Faroese

The Metal Genre: Some Key Terms and Sonic and Affective Characteristics

Like most genres and sub-genres of popular music, heavy metal (or simply, metal) is a type of music that is largely defined by its timbral qualities. Though they may often have instrumentation and other aspects in common, perhaps the most significant sonic features that distinguish metal from its parent genres of rock and blues are distortion and what some scholars have called the "growl-like timbre" (e.g., Tsai et. al 2010). Distortion, and the heavily distorted or over-driven sound of the electric guitar in particular, has been essential to the development of the metal sound (see Walser 1993; Wallach et al. 2011).

While there are a variety of ways to produce guitar distortion, speaking somewhat technically, the distorted sound is "obtained through various forms of electric clipping, i.e., truncation of the part of an input signal exceeding certain voltage limits. . . [which] changes the sound of a signal by additional high-frequency harmonics or combination tones at the various sums and differences of the frequency components of the input signal" (Tsai et al. 2010:211-212). In somewhat simpler terms, "[t]he most common technique for producing distortion is to send a very powerful signal through the pre-amp or power amp stage of a guitar's amplifier. . . [u]nable to reproduce the sound accurately, the circuitry adds a *noise* component to the signal that we call distortion" (Wallach et al. 2011:11, emphasis added). The very name of the effect, "distortion," implies the production of a distorted, broken, or otherwise modified sound, and the inclusion of the essential word "noise" in the previous description give some idea of what distortion sounds like. And though the tangled origins of guitar distortion and the methods of its production have been the subject of much discussion and debate (see Dunn 2011), what is significant here is that guitar distortion is an essential element in all contemporary metal music, including Faroese metal, and that distortion, once an undesirable "interference," has, at least since the 1960s, become a deliberately produced, desirable sound (Wallach et al. 2011:11).

Fortunately, in the metal idiom (i.e., in the language of and discussion between metal fans, performers - "metalheads"), people tend to speak in much more intuitive, descriptive, and non-technical terms about timbral features like those of guitar distortion. Whether discussing the timbre of vocals or of electric guitars, metalheads often qualify timbres as entirely within or between two opposed points on a continuum, from "clean" on one end, to "dirty," "distorted," "heavy" ("growling," describing vocals), and so forth, on the other. And, while this is a term that has also been technically defined by scientists who study acoustics, in common parlance, it makes sense to say that guitar distortion and growl-like vocal timbres are characterised largely by their "roughness."

The timbral qualities which can be intuitively described as "roughness" or "hoarseness" have been described in terms of their being functions of their harmonics-to-noise (H/N) ratios (Yumoto et al. 1982; Tsai et al. 2010). That is, low H/N values indicate "roughness," and such rough, growl-like timbres (e.g., in singing) are said to be "noise-rich" (Tsai et al. 2010:210) and are thus "characterized by the presence of inharmonic components that are distributed among adjacent harmonics in a spectrum" (2010:210). In other words, the addition of noisy and inharmonic components (via specific techniques and technologies) to an electric guitar's signal produces distortion, and another method of adding similarly noisy and inharmonic elements to the voice using only the human body and vocal chords can be employed to produce a growl-like vocal timbre.

As a brief side-note, it is important to clarify that while distorted guitar is an arguably indispensable feature of the majority of metal music, partially "distorted" or growl-like vocals are just once choice among many typical vocal performance styles. In short, contemporary metal singing styles range from extremely polished, operatic, clean vocals (e.g., the female-fronted Nightwish or male-fronted Dragonforce), to extremely noisy, inharmonic growling vocals (e.g., the female-fronted Arch Enemy or male-fronted Cryptopsy), as well as every point in between. Though bands may make use of one of the styles exclusively (only clean

or only growled vocals), or incorporate both styles, the more harsh, growling vocals are still more frequently associated with the more extreme sub-genres of metal (including, notably, death and black metal).

The preceding brief discussion of distortion and and the growl-like timbre are particularly relevant to a discussion of the meanings people ascribe to metal and the experience of its performance because such distorted timbres hold special significance for metalheads. As Robert Walser has noted of distorted vocal timbres in his seminal metal studies book, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music,* "screams and shouts are usually accompanied by vocal distortion, as the capacities of the vocal chords are exceeded. . . thus, distortion functions as a sign of extreme power and intense expression by overflowing its channels and materializing the exception effort that produces it" (Walser 1993:42). Similarly, he has suggested of the distorted guitar timbres of metal that, following the beginning of the intentional production of guitar distortion, it is "only at a particular historical moment that distortion begins to be perceived in terms of power rather than failure, intentional transgression rather than accidental overload - as music rather than noise" (1993:42). And while distorted vocal and guitar timbres unarguably do function as signs and expressions of power and intensity (see Berger 1999; Dunn 2005 et al.; Dunn and McFayden 2011; and Tsai et al. 2010, among many others), metalheads tend to frame their discussions of this power in terms of the concept of "heaviness" (Berger 1999:58), a term that is today increasingly used almost interchangeably with "brutality."

As Berger has observed, "metal history is most often summed up by metalheads as a progressive quest for ever-heavier music. . . [a] rich and complex concept differentially interpreted across scenes, "heavy" [read also: "brutal"] refers to a variety of textural, structural, and affective aspects of musical sound and is crucial for any understanding of metal" (Berger 1999:58). Though Berger's perhaps overly simplistic characterization of metal history as a quest for heavier sounds has been challenged (Hagen 2011), “heaviness” still remains and

important and operative concept within metal discourse. In brief, among metalheads, the music-describing adjective heavy (or brutal) acts as a shorthand for the music's quality or desirability. Berger details how the concept of heaviness in metal can be used to describe anything from the perceived power, volume, and "size" of distorted guitar timbres and bass timbres, to compositions and performances themselves (if they evoke "morose or aggressive emotions") (Berger 1999:58). In terms of heavy performances and compositions, as Berger notes, both extremely slow and extremely fast songs can be considered heavy, as long as they are performed well (1999:59), and, essentially, "any element of the musical sound can be heavy if it evokes power or any of the grimmer emotions" (1999:59). This malleability of the concept of heaviness within the metal idiom does not at all rob it of its descriptive or affective power, however, and the precise meaning of the term is almost always clear from its use in context (e.g., when referring to timbre, "that down-tuned, distorted bass guitar is the heaviest thing ever").

Because a startling array of sub-genres have developed within the broader genre category of metal, a discussion of the differentiating features of each of them is beyond the scope of this thesis (see Dunn and McFayden 2011 and Weinstein 2011 for an idea of the metal's fractured complexity). However, it is worth mentioning two significantly stable and well-established genres briefly here as they are referred to occasionally throughout the following sub-sections: namely, thrash and death metal. Thrash metal is a sub-genre that emerged in the early 1980s and combined speedy tempos, gruffer vocals, and a penchant for multiple time signature changes within its songs. Some famous exemplars of early thrash metal are Metallica, Slayer, and Megadeth. Death metal, by comparison, developed more in the late 1980s, and American death metal band Death's debut album, *Scream Bloody Gore,* has been held up as the prototypical death metal album (Weinstein 2011:42). Perhaps the single most obvious feature that separates death from thrash is death metal's tendency towards completely

inharmonic, unpitched (growled) vocals, as opposed to thrash's simply typically gruff or yelling vocal timbre. Aside from the growling vocal timbre, compared with thrash, death metal also frequently features more down-tuned guitars and bass and a preoccupation with death itself as a lyrical theme.

Moving away from sonic characteristics and towards what metal has been said to "mean," while it has been suggested that metal music is a reaction to broad social processes as varied as the frustrations arising from the conditions of deindustrialization in America (Berger 1999), to those arguably similar difficulties arising from industrialization in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore (Wallach 2011), a near-constant claim since the beginning of the academic study of metal as an expressive form has been the suggestion that metal is often linked to (typically youthful) rebellion, for instance, against societal and parental norms, pressures, and values (e.g., Walser 1993:133; Weinstein 2000:43; Wallach et al. 2011:23). The idea of metal as a type of rebellion or at least social critique does have some currency in the Faroes. This is especially evident in the anti-Christian lyrics and imagery of the band, Týr, and in the more metaphorical lyrics of The Apocryphal Order (TAO) who are concerned, in part, with those more extreme sects of Christianity that have taken root in the islands. As one TAO member commented, "because we live in a very small country, it is often the most extreme, most depraved, people who have the loudest voice. . . so, a lot of the things that we are pissed off, isn't just normal Christianity, but it's the extremist form that you can find in the Faroe Islands, which is actually, really hateful to be honest." However, rather than rebellion, much of Faroese metal is more reflective of the characterization of metal as "a *constructive* force, providing alternative cultural identities to those offered or projected by the cultural traditions, nationalisms, and religious movements that are influential in the locales where the music takes route" (Wallach et al. 2011:23). The music of Hamferð, and much of Týr's as well, has little to do with rebellion and more with formulating new and alternative constructions of Faroese identity that combine aspects of Faroese history and

forms of traditional cultural expression in powerful, affective compositions and performances. Both bands are discussed in detail in the following sub-section.

Having briefly described a few of the essential sonic characteristics and key terms associated with metal, it is now possible to discuss the meaning and experience of performing metal described to me by Faroese metalheads. In the ensuing discussion, it is important to keep in mind Turino's notions of musical fields, each containing its own internal goals and values (Turino 2008:67). This discussion will also examine how, in the Faroes (just as it is elsewhere), "metal is embedded in local cultures and histories and is experienced as part of a complex and historically specific encounter with the forces of modernity" (Wallach et al. 2011:4).

Of the seven Faroese metal bands that I was most involved with in the islands, all of them either were, or have since become, seriously committed to performing metal in the studio (as studio audio art), and on the stage (as a participatory context). Therefore, in order to examine the complexities of music-making within and between both of those fields in the Faroes, it will be instructive to consider some of the responses they offered to my questions about their experiences and perceived meanings of metal and metal performance in the islands.

The Constitution of Meaning in Faroese Metal: Týr's Viking Metal

Perhaps not surprisingly considering I was asking people questions about Faroese music, metal, and the role of traditional music in the Faroes today, Týr quickly became one of the most commonly discussed topics in my interviews. In the first of two in-depth case studies in Faroese metal, drawing several of the publicly-available interviews with band members, I discuss some aspects of the career and creative output of Týr in order to examine some of the ways in which the band members (as some of the best-known international "ambassadors" of Faroese music and the Faroes, more generally) construct and market a sense of

Faroeseness in their music. Further, drawing on interviews I carried out with musicians and others involved in the music industry in the Faroes, I highlight the significance of Týr's music (i.e., examine the constitution of meaning in Týr's music for some of the Faroese people who discussed the band with me) and of their success. Lastly, I also discuss Týr's role as the principal reinterpreters and popularizers of traditional Faroese music.

Considering that Týr draws heavily on Faroese history and oral literature in both their imagery and music (as will be explained), it is instructive to begin this discussion of the band by excerpting portions of their official biography as it appears on their website, tyr.fo. Below a runic-style rendering of the band's logo and a pair of bannerhead publicity photos of the group's four members (two of whom are visibly sporting Mjölnir pendants, stylized icons of the Norse god Thor's hammer), the biography begins:

> Profession of the Christian Faith or Decapitation: This was the choice given by Sigmundur to his Faroese Viking compatriot Tróndur í Gøtu. And so it was that in 999 A.D., the Christianization of the small "Faeroe Islands" began, casting a veil of oblivion over the ancient Scandinavian gods and only leaving the relics of forgotten heathenry buried deep within the Christian ritual. Or so it was believed. . . Exactly 999 years later, a small group fondly remembering the archaic gods and rites came together to form the Faroese Viking metal band, TÝR. The one-armed God of War —the bravest of all— became the eponym of the Nordic quartet. Yet TÝR mastermind Heri Joensen is no war monger in disguise and points out that TÝR (also known as the God of Justice) is also revered for first seeking the avenues of diplomacy—an attribute that does not take away from this god of war's drive. . . A distinctive trademark that sets TÝR apart from most other bands of the Viking metal genre is the authenticity of their music: "Traditional music dating back to the Vikings, that is not preserved anywhere else in the world, not even in Iceland, is passed on in an oral tradition here and it is still alive and well. That is what we build our music on and draw great inspiration from" explains Joensen. . . Almost every song is based on Faroese or Norwegian lore, and is riveted in the garb of the folk metal genre.

> Its approach unmistakably creates very true Viking metal. [tyr.fo biography 2011]

Even before one begins reading their biography, site visitors are bombarded by images and iconography that suggest the band's connection with (or evocation of) Scandinavia's pagan past. The band's logo (which they have employed on all of their album releases and most of their merchandise) appears at the top of the page and is an approximation of modern Latin alphabet characters that make up the word "Týr" in the form of three characters drawn from different iterations of the runic alphabets used mostly throughout the Nordic countries between the second and fifteenth centuries (and thus also throughout the Viking era) (see Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages 2011).[5] Runes have a history of being employed in metal imagery as well. On the cover of the 1990 Black Sabbath album *Tyr*, the word is rendered in an almost identical runic fashion as Týr's (the band) logo, and Týr's frontman Heri Joensen has said that his own choice of the band's name was influenced by that Black Sabbath album title and his desire from the start to choose a name from Norse mythology (Joensen 2005 metaltemple).

[5]Runic alphabets were used outside the Nordic countries as well. Notably, futhorc in Britain.

Figure 3. Terji Skibenæs (left), Heri Joensen (right), and Gunnar Thomsen (far right) of Týr on Dead Tyrants Tour November 8th 2011 at Markthalle/Marx in Hamburg. Note Heri's Mjölnir. Image credit: Carina Damm.

Similarly, the icon of the stylized Mjölnir that two of the band members are seen wearing on the biography page evokes both a connection to a pre-Christian, Viking past, and it also has a history of appearing in metal imagery. As one scholar has explained of the Mjölnir pendants, "miniature Thor's hammers were widely used as religious amulets during the Viking era. . . [and] these charms were normally between two and three centimeters in length, and typically made from silver (Ashliman 1996). More recently, Mjölnir has also become a symbol commonly associated with neo-pagan movements (Magliocco 2004:63), of which Norse-mythology-inspired sects like Ásatrú are a part. In terms of the use of Mjölnir in metal imagery, although it may well have a much longer history of use, the icon has featured prominently on album covers and elsewhere since at least as early as 1994 when a massive Mjölnir appeared on the cover of the influential album by Finnish metal band, Amorphis, *Tales from the Thousand Lakes*.

The biography itself, of which only the initial portion has been excerpted so far, is full of explicit and evocative appeals to the band's connection to a pagan past, and much of its language is clearly intended to foreground the band's "Nordicness" (and sometimes more specifically, their Faroeseness). Significantly, the biography opens with a reference to the events of the aforementioned *Føroyingasøga* ("saga of the Faroe Islanders," the events and characters of which also appear in Faroese traditional songs like CCF 22, "Sigmundar kvæði"), and draws an immediate connecting line between the supposed pre-Christian history of the Faroes and the band's formation. This opening sentence serves both to highlight the band's Faroeseness, set up their opposition to Christianity, and to evoke their Viking heritage. Further, the opening of the band's biography also contrasts the original traditional tellings of the Christianization of the Faroes like that in *Føroyingasøga* in an interesting way. Traditionally, (i.e., as in *Føroyingasøga*), Tróndur is arguably cast as the villain and Sigmundur as the hero (as a result of it having been written down originally by Christian monks who wrote with an obvious bias against the pagan Tróndur in favour of Sigmundur) (Young 1979:35). However, Týr's biography, which clearly glorifies Nordic mythology and old Norse paganism, implicitly casts Tróndur as the protagonist.

Even in initial portion of the biography that is reproduced above, there is also an obvious concern with authenticity as well as with Vikings. "Viking metal" is repeatedly referred to. Not necessarily referring to specific sonic characteristics, the term "Viking metal" has come into common use in the last decade, often to describe those metal bands whose lyrics (or imagery) evoke the Viking era or European history; the Swedish band, Amon Amarth, is perhaps the best-known example of a band that is referred to as "Viking metal" (see amonamarth.com and Seward 2001 in The Village Voice). Viking metal is not so much a distinct genre as it is a descriptive label for those metal bands that are inspired by Viking history, iconography, and mythology. Týr themselves have come to fully embrace the Viking label by employing iconography typically associated with a sort of

pan-Scandinavian Viking era, in part by employing runes and longships in their imagery, occasionally sporting medieval weapons and armour onstage and in promotional photos, and in other ways. In what is likely the band's most obvious use of Viking imagery, the band's 2009 album, *By the Light of the Northern Star,* shipped with a cover that depicted an armoured Viking standing against a snowy fjord landscape (reminiscent of the Faroes), complete with longship, yelling and looking skyward as he towers over a splintered wooden cross that has evidently been hacked down by his sword. As if the cover weren't striking enough already, the CD version also featured a sticker that declared "Viking metal from the Faroe Islands!"

Figure 4. Cover of Týr's 2009 album *By the Light of the Northern Star.* Image credit Týr/Napalm Records.

In terms of a more useful genre label, however, by virtue of their use of traditional melodies and lyrics (discussed in more detail below), Týr might well be classified as a type of "folk metal" (a term that is also used in the above biography excerpt), itself a not particularly well-defined term which can be used to refer to any of those metal bands which incorporate elements of folk music into their compositions (cf. Kahn-Harris 2011:217); the Swiss band, Eluveitie (who use a

great variety of "folk" instruments in their music, including flutes, violins, hurdy gurdies, etcetera), and the Finnish group, Korpiklaani, are among some of the better-known folk metal bands to achieve some international success. Folk metal, and the often interchangeable term "pagan metal," have also begun to receive scholarly attention recently (see Weston 2011 and Weinstein 2012, in press).

Such incorporations of local or traditional elements into metal have been said to represent "new ways in which metal's affective power is given distinctively local meanings" (Wallach et al. 2011:19), and these "glocalized" metal forms are being investigated by a growing number of scholars (e.g., Avelar 2011, Greene 2011, Hagen 2011, and Wong 2011). However, before continuing this discussion of Týr and their compositions, it is important to note that such combinations of metal and local musical elements aren't always so simple or one-dimensional as merely inserting a "folk" instrument in an otherwise metal song. In some cases, like in that of Týr for instance, the "local elements" that are being incorporated into metal songs (e.g., traditional melodies, traditional lyrics in a native tongue, place names, and nationalist imagery or themes) are central and essential to a band's compositional style. Wong, for example, has examined how the traditional Chinese masculine values of *wen* (cultural refinement) and *wu* (martial ability) are combined in the compositions and performances of one of the PRC's first metal bands, Tang Dynasty, who in the 1990s were involved in "redefining local cultural ideals of Chinese masculinity and in forging new modes of sociality among male PRC heavy metal fans" (Wong 2011:64).

In Týr's music, their incorporation of a variety of local (Faroese) elements into their music is often interpreted as a marker of their "authenticity." The theme of the music's authenticity is a perennial concern for musicians and music promoters in most genres. It also crops up several times in the band's biography, wherein Týr's compositions are referred to twice as "true Viking metal" and twice as "authentic" (tyr.fo 2011). Significantly, the band's stated authenticity is said to derive largely from their incorporation of traditional elements: the use of

“traditional music dating back to the Vikings, that is not preserved anywhere else in the world" (Joensen in tyr.fo 2011). This traditional music, Joensen explains, "is what we build our music on and draw great inspiration from” (Joensen in tyr.fo 2011). And the fact that "almost every song is based on Faroese or Norwegian lore" (tyr.fo 2011) is put forth as evidence that the band's "approach unmistakably creates very true Viking metal" (tyr.fo 2011).[6] Clearly, then, if the band's official website is intended to be the public "face" of the group, Týr's own origin narrative on their site is meant to stress, among other aspects, the group's Nordicness (and Faroeseness), their links to Faroese history and mythology, as well as their authenticity. Aside from being a hub for fans to receive news about the band and to purchase their music and merchandise, Týr's site is also a multivalent text that portrays the band and their music as explicitly Faroese.

In term's of the band's own history, Týr began to come together in 1998 when guitarist and current singer, Heri Joensen, then living in Denmark and studying guitar and music theory, bumped into a former bandmate from his now defunct rock band, Wolfgang, (drummer) Kári Streymoy at a party in Copenhagen. The two were joined in their eventual Copenhagen jam sessions by another mutual former bandmate, (bassist) Gunnar Thomsen (again, of Wolfgang and its predecessor, Cruiser). In 2000, Týr released their first recording, a demo limited to fewer than 100 copies, which did little for the band's popularity (Joensen later recalled "I remember it doing absolutely no good whatsoever, save costing us a

[6]Many reviewers have also commented on Týr's authenticity and the fact that their incorporation of traditional Faroese and other Nordic elements in their music makes them authentic: "Tyr are a band that do so much more than dabble in the cultural milieu they’re engaging with. They have fully committed to their aesthetic; they do bloody research; and they want depth, knowledge and authenticity. I have a profound respect for their dedication to Viking metal and culture.*(www.angrymetalguy.com/t**yr**-the-lay-of-thrym/*). "Týr’s use of traditional arrangements ensure that they remain the most authentic and original-sounding of the Viking Metal bands" (http://www.metalteamuk.net/june11reviews/cdreviews-tyr.htm).

"Some may argue that the lack of extremity (death or black metal styles) here may take away the merit of the way Viking metal should be played, but I believe that this band is full of everything that the genre was meant to represent, traditional and authentic" (http://www.metalobsession.net/2009/10/25/tyr-by-the-light-of-the-northern-star/

(relative) fortune and getting to try out a mediocre studio. . . we didn't get one review, not even a bad one") (Joensen Deadtide n.d.). Despite this, even on that early demo (which contained four songs, all of which reappeared in different forms on their later releases), Týr managed to record one song, "Ormurin Langi" ("the long serpent"), which captured the distinctive melding of traditional and metal music that would become a defining characteristic of their music. Changing members a few times, the band released their first full-length album, *How Far to Asgaard*, in 2002 with now ex-singer Pól Arni Holm, followed quickly in the same year by a two-song single "Ólavur Riddararós" (literally, "Ólavur knight"), with another ex-singer, Allan Streymoy. Though most of the songs on *How Far to Asgaard* were written in English (albeit about Faroese and Scandinavian historic and mythological themes), "Ormurin Langi," which also appeared on *How Far to Asgaard*, would prove to be one of the most important songs for the band.

In these earliest days, Týr first gained some recognition and fans in the Faroes by performing at the (now defunct) Faroese music competition, Prix Føroyar, in 2001; their performance of "Ormurin Langi" there, recorded for the Faroese national television station, has recently been made available on YouTube (where one can see the audience members singing along to Týr's performance). One of the most widely-known traditional songs in the Faroes, "Ormurin Langi" is a *kvæði* that was written in the old style by farmer-poet, J.C. Djurhuus (1773-1853), the song recounts the trials of Norwegian King Ólaf Tryggvason aboard his ship (which was called Ormurin Langi) (Tjatsi 2008). Týr's 2002 album rendition of the song (which maintains the traditional melody and refrain, and excerpts several verses from the original much longer *kvæði)* began to receive radio play in the Faroes and Iceland almost immediately (Týr.net: defunct site). By 2002, at home and in Iceland, Týr, thanks to their live performances and album, *How Far to Asgaard (*and the song "Ormurin Langi," in particular) began to receive considerable recognition: as Joensen recalled, "Ormurin Langi was playing all day on Icelandic radio at that time. . . We gathered a huge crowd in front of us and

the gigs were sold out. It was a very hectic time for us and a taste of some stardom. We couldn't walk the streets of Reykjavik in peace" (Joensen Deadtide n.d.).

Considering the popularity Týr was beginning to enjoy (in part, as a result of their metal renditions of traditional Faroese songs like “Ormurin Langi”), it is reasonable to assume that some more conservative-minded Faroese people might have objected to the band's use of traditional Faroese music in metal songs. Conversely, as Kristian Blak explained to me, he remembers bumping into an experienced Faroese *skipari* (a *kvæði*/ring-dance leader) in Iceland after Týr's rendition of “Ormurin Langi” had begun to gain popularity there who more than approved of what Týr was doing ("modernizing" and making traditional Faroese songs popular abroad). However, Týr wasn't the first Faroese group to attempt to modernize Faroese traditional music. In the early 1970s, Faroese singer Annika Hoydal (along with her then-husband, the Scottish folk musician, Ian McCalman) recorded a number of Faroese traditional songs, including *kvæði,* in a folky style with her band, Harkaliðið, on their eponymous LP. Since then, others (including the folk band Enekk) have also reinterpreted Faroese traditional songs, although none enjoyed the success or wide recognition that Týr has. Despite this, the reception of Týr's reinterpretations in the Faroes hasn't been exclusively positive, however.

Specifically, the success of Týr's renditions of traditional songs in the Faroes may have even led to changes in the way some of the songs are performed in the context of the ring-dance, which some see as a problem. In the traditional unaccompanied performance of “Ormurin Langi,” for instance, the *skipari* ends the last word of the song's refrain with a rising note so that he can continue singing seamlessly right into the beginning of the next verse. However, while everyone participating in the dance usually joins in to sing the refrain, in this song it is normally only the *skipari* whose pitch rises on the last word of the refrain: in this case, the word *hildarting* ("battle"). Similarly, in Týr's rendition, the lead

singer essentially takes on the role of the *skipari* and thus also raises the pitch on the final part of the refrain. At least one dancer explained to me that the popularity of Týr's reinterpretations of Faroese traditional songs has meant that many young people, being more familiar with Týr's metal versions than with the older unaccompanied versions, tend to mimic Týr's style, and thus sometimes sing notes only intended for the *skipari*. Indeed, as one writer who has interviewed Joensen noted, "Týr has been accused of "ruining" the national ballad, "Ormurin Langi" (Heri claims young people are now more familiar with Týr's modernized version)" (Reiswig 2007). Regardless, as evidenced by "Ormurin Langi's" popularity, Týr's renditions of Faroese traditional songs have largely been received positively by people in the Faroes and abroad.

Following Týr's initial success at home and Iceland, the band continued touring and, in 2003, released what would become their breakout album, *Eric the Red*. Continuing their trend from 2002's *How Far to Asgaard*, their 2003 album contained three metal renditions of traditional Faroese songs (including the *kvæði,* "Regin Smiður," or, "Regin blacksmith"), a reinterpretation of a Danish traditional song ("Ramund Hin Unge," or, "Ramund the young man"), and a number of English-language songs, many of which again touched on Faroese and Scandinavian history, mythology, and even a critique of the world's negative opinion of the practice of traditional Faroese whaling (in "Rainbow Warrior").[7]

Along with the album's release, in 2003 and beyond, the band continued touring more and more widely (Russia, Germany, Finland, U.K., and many other

[7]Regarding the meaning of Týr's 2003 song, *Rainbow Warrior*, Joensen once said "We have had some organizations pestering us about our whaling. Nothing pisses us off more than self-righteous save-the-naturalists. . . and that song is adressed [sic] to one very specific member of such a group″ (Joensen Deadtide). *Rainbow Warrior* was the name of a Greenpeace ship, and the "very specific member" of the group to which Joensen referred is probably Paul Watson, former Greenpeace member and leader of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. Watson has a history of attempting to stop (sometimes by "direct action") Faroese whaling and his 2011 campaign in the Faroes is the subject of a Discovery Channel TV series, *Whale Wars: Viking Shores*. Joensen even engaged in a live streaming debate with Watson (courtesy of Discovery Channel), but the exchange was severely hampered by poor audio and video quality.

countries) and, by 2006, were playing more than 50 shows a year. In 2006, Týr passed a major milestone in their career as a band when they signed a record deal with the Austrian global metal distribution label, Napalm Records. As a result, in 2006 Napalm re-released *Eric the Red*, as well as a new record, *Ragnarok* (something of a concept album based on the Norse apocalypse, which also featured a number reinterpretations of Faroese traditional songs alongside English-language originals). The band has since gone on to have considerable international success with shows further afield around the world, including multiple North American tours, shows in Brazil, and a 2012 show in Mexico. In addition to a re-release of their debut album, *How Far to Asgaard* in 2008, they also released three more albums on Napalm: 2008's *Land*, 2009's *By the Light of the Northern Star*, and 2011's *The Lay of Thrym*.

What is perhaps the quintessential Týr composition, however, appears on *Ragnarok*: *"*Grímur á Miðalnesi/Wings of Time" (though separate tracks, the songs flow seamlessly into one another). "Grímur á Miðalnesi" begins first with a bit of an archival field recording of two brothers, Albert and Martin Djurhuus, singing a verse and refrain of the traditional song, "Grímur á Miðalnesi" (CCF 55), one of the many songs collected in the CCF. The clearly audible rhythmic accompaniment to the brothers' singing is produced by the stamping of feet on the wooden floor, an ever-present sound during the ring-dance. On *Ragnarok*, this song appears courtesy of the Djurhuus family, according to the liner notes, and it is immediately followed by Týr's metal reinterpretation of the song ("Wings of Time"), which maintains the same melody and lyrics on the refrain.

The direct continuation of the unaccompanied archival performance of "Grímur á Miðalnesi" by the Djurhuus brothers into the pounding metal reinterpretation of the refrain by Týr's members on "Wings of Time" exemplifies Týr's effort to draw a direct line of continuation between their music and the Faroes' ancient oral traditions. This seamless flow of the old into the new in "Grímur á Miðalnesi/Wings of Time" also sends a clear message to listeners

about Týr's traditional inspirations and, also by virtue of the language in which the songs are sung, their explicit Faroeseness. Joensen spoke to the significance of the band's re-shaping of traditional music when, in a 2005 interview in response to a question about how to label their style, he acknowledged their metal sound, but continued saying, "we have long given up trying to label our style. . . I like to think that we are part of the evolution and continuation of Faeroese and Scandinavian traditional music" (Joensen 2005).

While the English-language lyrics of the verses of "Wings of Time" come across as a meditation on impermanence ("places I've seen in decay, things that I've done fade away"), the passage of time, and the Norse apocalypse, the Faroese-language refrain, taken from CCF 55 "Grímur á Miðalnesi," relates a portion of the events from that *kvæði* (in particular, about riding on horseback and discovering treasure). Drawing as it does from that monumental work of collected Faroese oral literature, the CCF, considered together, "Grímur á Miðalnesi/Wings of Time," stands as a clear expression of Faroese identity through music. Performed in a style (metal) that sonically signifies and is only made possible by the technological advances and conditions of modernity, Týr's compositions also simultaneously evoke a sense of history and national cultural identity (in large part via their incorporation of elements of Faroese oral literature, traditional melodies, and the Faroese language itself).

The Faroese language (which is present on every Týr album), as well as the numerous reinterpretations of Faroese traditional songs (at least one of which appears on each of their albums), are clear markers and expressions of Faroeseness. The band's Faroese identity is also foregrounded in a number of other ways. Notably, some of their merchandise has featured the Faroese flags (t-shirts, a special edition version of an album came with a packed-in flag banner), as well as t-shirts with phrases like "*Føroyskir vÍkingar"* ("Faroese vikings"). Further, the band often features Faroese landscape photography (and traditional Faroese sod-roofed houses) in their album booklets or in band publicity photos.

Further, they also recorded an instrumental rendition of the Faroese national anthem, *Tú Alfagra Land Mítt,* on their 2009 album.

Figure 5. Týr band photo (from left to right) Kári Streymoy, Gunnar H. Thomsen, Heri Joensen, and Terji Skibenæs Image credit: Týr/Napalm Records

Much of Týr's music not only constructs and expresses a sense of Faroeseness, but also comments on the significance of oral literature and tradition in contemporary Faroese society. As travel writer Amy Reiswig has pointed out, some of their songs "point to the social importance of history. . . their song “Hail to the Hammer” asks: “What will keep us warm in the winter? Tales of those who died, sword in hand in times gone by” (Reiswig 2007). Despite the more positive message of “Hail to the Hammer,” other Týr songs seem to lament a sort of cultural decline in the Faroes and recast oral literature as mere remnants of an imagined better age, as in *The Rune*: "here in pain, here in darkness, here in decadence, lies my land like a rune that's written by gods upon the ocean

deep…now that millennium has gone and the sad and weary tales of the subsequent events are what's left of greater times."

Of course, some of these "sad and weary tales" like the *kvæði* continue to exist as important symbols and expressions of Faroese culture in various contexts (as was discussed in the previous sub-sections on dance societies, *kvæði* in the education system, and Ólavsøka). And the capacity of the performance and embodiment of some of these tales in the ring-dance to create "an intense feeling of fellowship. . . around the ballad and the events it relates" (Blak 1996 et al.:15) is evidently still relevant and important for many Faroese people. In other songs, Týr's lyrics even speak to the potential for oral literature to open up imaginative spaces through which listeners or participants can experience a feelingful engagement with an imagined past (cf. Samuels 2007:54), as in the song from the *Eric the Red* album "Dreams," which is worth quoting at some length:

I've learned all the lore,
I've been told all the tales,
Ancient legends of war,
Are the wind in my sails.

The deeds of the brave,
Come alive in the rhyme,
And the myth is my ship,
On the ocean of time.
. . .
Somewhere in time,
Deeds of the day
Became the rhymes,
We sing today.

In a way we have turned through the pages of,
time in a rhyme, gone back as far as we may,
In a day we are part of the tales of the brave,
As they pave way for descendants in dreams.

The sentiment behind Týr's lyrical exploration of the capacity of myth and oral literature to "transport" listeners to an imagined past (i.e., to collapse the distance between the present and the past) in their song “Dreams” is echoed in many of their other compositions. In particular, their renditions of Faroese traditional songs, and songs like “The Edge,” wherein lyrics are written in the first person about a historic or mythological event (in this case, part of the story of the *Floksmenn*, a group of Faroese rebels, is related largely from a first-person standpoint by a protagonist who regrets his causing the accidental death of a child).

In his book on experiencing and engaging the past through music on an Apache reservation, Samuels, describing what he calls "the recoverability of the past" (2004:39), has observed that "the backward look, through space and time, is an important and desired effect" (2004:39) and that "all sorts of expressive endeavors are judged to be particularly successful if this transcendence of the bounds of the present and transportation to the past occur" (2004:39). Similarly, much of Týr's music, while sometimes only comprehensible to knowledgable Faroese audiences (e.g., the *Floksmenn* tale of “The Edge” is probably too obscure for most non-Faroese listeners to discern), is obviously intended to evoke the past, and sometimes, specific mytho-historical events from the Faroese past. As such, both by virtue of their appeals to and evocation of the distant Faroese past and due to their trailblazing success as the Faroes' first metal band to go global, Týr's music often holds considerable significance for Faroese people

today. And, aside from the occasional Faroese traditional song rendered by Eivør, Týr remain the best-known popularizers of Faroese traditional music.

As mentioned much earlier, the most distant period of Faroese history and the mytho-historical events associated with that time continue to be regularly brought to the fore in contemporary Faroese society in a variety of ways. including via experiences of and responses to Týr's music. One Faroese musician's reaction to Týr's musical rendition of the old poem, "Gandkvaedi Tróndar," on their 2008 album *Land* is a particularly instructive case which provides some insight into the meaning Týr's music holds for some people in the islands.

In their own website's biography, "Gandkvaedi Tróndar" *("*Tróndur's magical chanting"), is listed as an example of the "traditional Faroese lyrics" (tyr.fo 2011) which appear in many of Týr's songs. Týr's biography describes the song as a poem by J.H.O. Djurhuus "about the Faroese chieftain Tróndur, who fought against the dying of the old beliefs and for the independence of the Faeroes" (tyr.fo 2011). Djurhuus was one of a small cadre of Faroese nationalist writers of the later 19th century and early 20th century and, as Faroese literary scholar Malan Marnersdóttir has noted, he "proved that Faroese was a modern cultural language through his scholarly, classical and symbolist poetry" (Marnersdóttir n.d.). As the poem's title suggests, the lyrics portray a dramatized account of pagan chieftain Tróndur í Gøtu's pronouncement of a curse upon Sigmundur Brestisson (then on his way from Norway to christianize the Faroes). The lyrics quote from Tróndur's curse, which essentially calls upon storms and waves to disrupt Sigmundur's journey, and seem to paint Tróndur clearly as a defender of paganism in the Faroes ("Sigmund shall suffer, Trond the sorcerer sang. . . Sigmund shall never succeed to impose the East-landers faith").

Considering his role as an important early Faroese writer (who emerged during the period of the height of Faroese nationalism), it is interesting that Djurhuus chose to put to verse this particular mytho-historical event. Arguably, Tróndur's curse upon Sigmundur (at least as it is framed in Djurhuus's poem) could be

interpreted as the quintessential and primordial example of local (Faroese) resistance to the imposition of foreign ideologies and control (later exemplified by centuries of Norwegian and Danish rule and centuries of Danish monopoly).

Týr's 2008 rendition of "Gandkvaedi Tróndar" is striking and complex. It is also an example par excellence of studio audio art, upon which producers and musicians worked together to carefully craft and manipulate a variety of sounds into a sonically "perfect" audio object.[8] The song begins with the low drone of the cello that continues throughout, and before long this backing track is supplemented by a more distantly audible *kvæði* being performed by a number of voices in unison. The melody of the background *kvæði* is mirrored and performed by strings (including the viola) and shortly, the focal point of the song, a clean and clear central male voice appears. The principal vocals on the track (essentially, the character of Tróndur) are provided by one of the Faroes' most idiosyncratic and instantly recognizable voices, that of the folk singer Hanus G. Johansen. In a deep and booming baritone, Johansen begins sternly and slowly speaking the words of Tróndur's curse, but his pace, volume, and intensity build throughout the song, mirroring the growing volume of the string section, until the point where he is convincingly thundering the text of the curse around the song's mid-point. After this climactic height, the music is reduced to nil, leaving only Johansen's ("Tróndur's") voice, decreasing in volume, though maintaining an intensity that brings the enunciation of the words almost to a breaking point in the song's final line, "*høgt kvøður heiðin ørn*" ("the heathen eagle fares high"). After this moment of nearly total silence, Týr's instrumental metal rendition of the *kvæði* melody kicks in and finishes out the rest of the song.

In a 2011 response to this song in the form of a YouTube comment on a copy of "Gandkvaedi Tróndar" which someone uploaded, Faroese metal musician and politician, Jenus í Trøðini, stated, "Tróndur í Gøtu was the greatest protector of

[8]Recall Turino's development of the concept of the field of studio audio art, in which creators are able to achieve total control over the production and manipulation of sounds, and the primary goal is the production of a piece of recorded music (Turino 2008:78-79).

the nordic gods in Faroe Islands at the time when Sigmundur Brestisson christianized the Faroes by the sword. I'm happy that tey [sic] (Týr featuring Hanus G. Johansen) made such a good song about the curse, that Tróndur called upon Sigmund and his peers" (í Trøðini 2011). Jenus's statement has since become the video's highest-ranking comment (it has received 16 positive votes from viewers) and, because of this, it now appears directly below the song on its YouTube page.

YouTube video comment sections are set up in such a way that allows people to respond directly to one another comments so that, often, public discussions may take place below videos. In this case, some time in February 2012, a user named HreggvidurThorgeirso (whose profile describes him as a 20-year-old American) responded to í Trøðini's statement, saying,

> Tróndur í Gøtu was not the greatest protector of the norse gods. If he were as strong in belief and a great protector as you say he is, when Brestisson offered him the choice of being beheaded or converting, he would not have chosen the beheading. So either he was too afraid and too small of a man to stand up for what he believed in or he genuinely believed in christ (which obviously mr. cursey didnt) [sic]. Thats [sic] all that could've happened. [HreggvidurThorgeirso 2012]

In his response, HreggvidurThorgeirso reveals his ignorance of the events of the *Føroyingasøga* on which the song and í Trøðini's comment are based: it was Brestisson himself, the christianizer, who was eventually slain for his gold jewelry while he lay exhausted from his swim to Suðuroy, while Tróndur lived on. Jenus í Trøðini was quick to respond to HreggvidurThorgeirso's comment:

> I'm sad to say it, but your argument doesn't make sense. Tróndur wasn't beheaded. I didn't say Tróndur was the greatest protector of the norse gods (in general); I simply said he was the greatest in FAROE ISLANDS. There's quite a difference there. . . And to your last accuzation about being afraid, small of a man and whatnot; I think he was smart. He swallowed his pride on that day of conversion, mainly to live and being able to fight another day. And he did fight on, driving Sigmund into the ocean, later to be killed. . . by a farmer in Suðuroy. [í Trøðini 2012]

From even this brief online exchange in response to Týr's rendition of *Gandkvaedi Tróndar,* it should be evident that for some Faroese people, the events of even the most distant era of Faroese history, and Týr's compositions that evoke and make reference to that era, remain relevant and meaningful to some Faroese people. And the story of Tróndur, in particular, is not only repeated in Faroese music and sculpture, but also in elements of Faroese society as banal as the country's postal service: the events of "Gandkvaedi Tróndar" were depicted on a 2004 postage stamp by Faroese artist Anker Eli Petersen. The capacity of Týr's music to make salient the recoverability of the mytho-historical Faroese past and to transcend the boundaries of the present (Samuels 2004:39) is exemplified by the positive reaction of Faroese people (like Jenus í Trøðini) to their songs like "Gandkvaedi Tróndar."

Faroese metal and classical musician, Pól Nolsøe Jespersen, played the viola on that song, and in an interview with me he recalled his experience of making the recording:

> Pól Nolsøe Jespersen: Yeah my father-in-law he's the voice.
>
> Josh Green: Awesome voiceover.
>
> PNJ: Oh yeah he has epic voice that's actually a very epic intro.
>
> JG: It's the most epic intro.
>
> PNJ: I remember sitting here playing it like "what the hell is this" (laughs).
>
> . . .
>
> PNJ: Yeah I'm playing (backing part) it's the same thing as Heri plays and when I recorded it it was only the cello and double bass [miming the drag of bow across strings] **BRR** it's this like "how the hell can this be good?" but when I heard the full picture it was very, very good, very well put together.

Even Pól, who approaches Týr's rendition of *Gandkvaedi Tróndar* from something of an insider's perspective, was quick to express his opinion of the Johansen's voice and the whole song in general as "epic." Týr's song, which does in fact draw on and evoke the original Faroese epic, *Føroyingasøga*, apparently also had the desired effect on Pól. The sort of contemporary engagement with events and characters of the distant Faroese past, just discussed in the example of Jenus í Trøðini's approval of and commentary on Týr's rendition of *Gandkvaedi Tróndar,* is common in other aspects of Faroese life as well.

In his study of Faroese village life, Gaffin (1996:225, et passim) discusses the ways in which local history and legend are evoked in conversation, naming, storytelling, and via placenames, often without reference to specific dates or time frames. Whether due to the intensely local nature of life in the Faroes for most of the islands' history, the importance of tracing lineage in a land tenure system that historically passed on or subdivided farmland amongst male heirs, or to a variety of other features endemic to this small society, the distant past remains "present" and salient in contemporary discourse and ancestors are often reckoned back many centuries. For instance, when the 18th century Faroese hero Nólsoyar Páll somehow came up in casual conversation one day, a young Faroese friend of mine was quick to point out that he and his family do not care for Nólsoyar Páll as his ancestors apparently once had some sort of quarrel with him. In the Faroes, evidently, family grudges can easily be held for a few centuries and brought up in contemporary conversation as if the offending incident had occurred the other day.

Even more revealingly, towards the end of my interview with The Apocryphal Order, we began talking about traditions and heritage, and the band's bassist, Jóhan Bjartur Kjærbo, began explaining how it is important to keep a level head about pride in one's ancestors and taking to heart too much events from the distant past:

> On a personal note, you said to talk about heritage, umm I think you should be really careful about being too respectful about your heritage because nationalism, you know, you are proud of you are born here in the Faroe Islands and it can very easily lead to like 'I am from the Faroe Islands, therefore I am better than you, because I am proud that my family did this and this and forefathers and everything' it gets it can really easily lead to racism, it's a very mild example, to think about Nazi Germany it was all about the forefathers and what they accomplished and therefore they were better than everyone else and I think you should be really, really, really careful with nationalistic expressions, even though I really love Týr and everything else, but, I really don't think that I get any merit from what my forefathers did. Just because I— (laughs) have you heard the story about Sigmund?. . . yeah. . . one of the reasons I started thinking like I do, I am actually descended from Sigmundur Brestisson, I am descended from Sigmundur Brestisson, descended, I really hate that guy because he didn't— he was really. . . I really think that I was really ashamed of being descended from him for a while, then I thought, well, "I didn't do it, so I can't be blamed for it," just like, if my forefathers did anything good, I can't take credit for it.

In Kjærbo's thoughtful assessment, he recalls how he once struggled to come to terms with the fact that he was descended from Brestisson, a man who has since (thanks to Týr and others) been re-cast by some as the original betrayer of the Faroese people. Even though, as Kjærbo explained, he has since taken a more relaxed and relative approach to understanding his own relationship to his heritage and events from the distant mytho-historical past, his story helps give some idea of the extent to which Faroese myth and history (which are both strongly evoked by Týr's music) are still implicated and brought to the fore in contemporary Faroese society.

As well as inspiring reflection on national myths, nearly everyone I spoke to in the Faroes about Týr also complimented the band's music or their role as popularizers of Faroese traditional music (or even, as ambassadors of the Faroes). When I asked Ísak Petersen about his initial impressions of the mixing of contemporary and traditional styles in Týr's music, he explained " I thought it was really cool, because before I heard their stuff I wasn't really interested in the

Faroese folk stuff. And so when they did it, it became kind of cool to know the stuff, know the lyrics and all that. So, I found that they made that cool again." Musician and occasional metal tour manager Teitur Fossaberg expressed a similar sentiment regarding the mixing of Faroese traditional and contemporary music by Týr and others, saying,

> I think it's really cool, I think it's really cool. Because the traditional music will eventually die out if no one, you know, does anything to keep them kind of in the surface. And the old traditional stuff is really heavy and it's dry and it doesn't really happen, nothing happens, and it's just stuff that you would sing while doing the chain dance and for them to take it and do something new with it, something interesting, something fresh, I think it's really cool because you HAVE to learn these traditional stuff in school and it's really boring, but, I think it's, when you hear those two melodies and stuff and you can relate to it, it's easier for you to listen because you already know something, but there's still a lot of new stuff going on. So it's cool.

Studio owner, producer, and musician Kristoffer Mørkøre, who produced one of Týr's albums, also explained to me his opinion of the impact of Týr's using traditional Faroese music in their compositions:

> Týr they started, you know, using *kvæði* in the metal music, yeah. . . that actually created a little bit more interest in *kvæði*, I think, when Týr did that. . . yeah. Ok, now everybody knows, for example, "Ormurin Langi," yeah it's mainly because of Týr , I think. The youth people, the young people, yeah. Back in 1997 I think they did that, 6 or 7. . . yeah it was played a lot in the radio here and you know there was a big discussion about if it was right or the wrong thing to do to use *kvæði* in metal music, you know, ah? So, you know, created interest here.

The above comments by Mørkøre and others about Týr's role in creating renewed interest in the *kvæði* draws attention to some of the pitfalls of focusing solely on relatively small traditionalist groups like the *dansifelagið (*which tend to appeal more to the older segment of the Faroese population) when trying to illustrate something of the significance of Faroese traditional music in contemporary

society. A narrower focus on such traditionalist performance, teaching, and advocacy groups ignores the myriad ways in which the significance of the ballads and dance as national symbols are foregrounded and embodied in other performance contexts and fields of musical practice (including in Týr's shows and on their albums).

Seán Galvin has written frankly of the limitations of such a study in his doctoral thesis examination of traditional Faroese dancing in the 1980s:

> although the ballads are "taught" through the formal educational system as well as in the home environment, there are a great number of Faroese people who do not care to think about *kvæði* outside of those festive and calendar occasions [e.g., Ólavsøka]. This is indeed a *selective tradition*. The thirteen dance groups throughout the Faroes do not represent all people; they are "special interest groups." The majority of Faroese people do not have to rely on the formal dance performance for their primary source of entertainment as they did in the past. They have access to the ballads in a number of informal ways: though the print medium, or in the student cabarets, for example. On the other hand, however, few Faroese totally ignore the dance and the ballads which form its core for the tradition has strong patriotic significance. . . Beyond the simple enactment of the dance, however, lies a recurring motif. The people who engage in this form of expressive behaviour view it as more than entertainment for entertainment's sake. [Galvin 1989:157-158, my emphasis]

Galvin's honest characterization of the Faroese dance societies as "special interest groups" which really do not represent mainstream interests is probably familiar to many scholars interested in traditional music performance in contemporary society. His notion of *kvæði* dancing in the traditional unaccompanied participatory contexts as a "selective tradition " is also both apt and familiar.

When I read it, for instance, I immediately recalled my undergraduate fieldwork in the Miramichi wherein I found that in that community today, even disregarding the arguable primacy of pop (i.e., "radio") music in there, in terms of public visibility and the average resident's level of familiarity and engagement

with Miramichi folk songs, the traditional music still occupies a relatively marginal position in the region (vis-a-vis, for instance, country music which a considerable proportion of Miramichi's aged population is actively involved with). However, just as in the Faroes (as Galvin suggests), for those who care to engage with the tradition, their old songs also retain great symbolic significance, as evidenced by their continued performance at modern festivals and their appearance on the occasional albums released by Miramichi singers.

Engaging with and holding personal meanings for a musical tradition, however, does not at all necessarily require an encyclopedic knowledge of the ballads nor participation in *dansifelagið* events. As Galvin noted, "few Faroese totally ignore the dance and the ballads which form its core for the tradition has strong patriotic significance" (Galvin 1989:157). That is to say, for most people, some knowledge of the ballads' significance and performing them perhaps once a year (during Ólavsøka), coupled perhaps with listening to Týr's reinterpretations of them, arguably forms a sort of base level of awareness of and appreciation for Faroese traditional music for that majority of people "who do not care to think about *kvæði* outside of those festive and calendar occasions" (1989:157).

For instance, in response to a question about whether or not there is much interest in traditional music in the Faroes today, studio owner and music producer, Kristoffer Mørkøre explained:

> I think that, yeah, everybody knows what *kvæði* is in Faroe Islands, but I don't think that the young people, or my age, for example, you know, are very into *kvæði*, yeah. There are some people who, not the majority, you know, who are that kind of thing [i.e., likely *dansifelagið* people], you know, but when it's Ólavsøka, everybody always joins in the ring of dancing that kind of dance, but the lyrics, I don't think the youth or the young people know the lyrics, because it's like 200 verses something like that, ah?

Similarly, when I asked the same question of singer-songwriter Guðrið Hansdóttir, (whether or not there is much interest in Faroese traditional music today), she responded:

> Guðrið Hansdóttir: Mmm yeah, I don't think so. No. No, it's not like, it's not really popular, I think.
>
> Josh Green: a small group—?
>
> GH: Yeah small group of people that really are into it. Not like the, like the mainstream people, they don't, no, they don't care.

Regarding interest in Faroese traditional music today and, more specifically, Týr's influence on the meaning and perception of Faroese traditional music in the islands, it is worth quoting from a brief exchange with the popular Klaksvík-based pop-rock band, Grandma's Basement in which the group's singer, Jón Jacobsen, along with drummer Thorvald Danielsen, and guitarist Hans Andrias Jacobsen, expressed his opinion of the moribund nature of Faroese traditional music. Despite his grim predictions, Jacobsen immediately tempered his assessment of traditional music by explaining to me that the re-shaping of old Faroese music is a brilliant and admirable way to promote Faroese music internationally:

> Josh Green: You talked about learning music in school, when you are kids, you learn about *kvæði,* etc, so do you think there's much interest in traditional music here or where can you find it?
>
> Jón Jacobsen: A *kvæði*. . . what you're talking about traditional Faroese music, I think it's going to die out in a couple years because nobody is interested in that, because, yeah, actually it's quite boring, and it's about tales from the 1700s or earlier than that, and who gives a shit about it? And the, what do you call it, the verses are some 10 to 200 verses, so nobody wants to learn it. They say it comes in age, but
>
> Thorvald Danielsen: Yeah I think so, it will come in age.
>
> JJ: Maybe will come later, I dunno.
>
> JG: You mean when you're older?
>
> JJ/TD/Hans Andrias Jacobsen: Yeah.

JJ: My uncle is one of those kind who sings every time he starts, he knows a tonne of those [likely a *skipari*, dance leader].

JG: Well some still are interested.

JJ: Yeah and he's over 50, 56 or so.

JG: That's the impression I have, I met some *dansifelagið* people.

JJ/TD/HAJ: In Tórshavn yeah.

JG: But it's older people.

TD: The young people there are very few, ah?

JJ: You can see that from the very small villages.

TD: Yeah.

JJ: For example, if you are in Summarfestival, you see somebody going in the circle [ring-dance], it's usually guys from a small village showing how **BURR** very strong they are.

JG: Ok by doing the chain dance. So what do you think of Týr and Eivør who mix popular and traditional music?

JJ: I think it's brilliant to promote the Faroe Islands because there are a lot of talented musicians who deserve a chance more than many other people you hear in the radio from wherever [i.e., international pop stars], so, I— yeah it's really good.

In addition to bringing *kvæði* into public discussion, making the traditional music "cool again" (for some people), promoting the Faroe Islands, as Ísak Petersen later explained to me, when traveling internationally, Týr is also often one of the only Faroese "things" that foreigners know about: "when we've been at [German metal festival] Wacken and people say 'where you from?' and we say 'we are from faroe islands', 'oh Týr!' — they often say that 'cuz that's the only thing they can relate to with our country 'cuz it's a small country, and that's it."

Although it is difficult to measure something as relatively abstract as the "popularity" or "fame" of a band without access to their album sales figures, the general consensus in interviews was that, outside of the Faroes, Týr are the most famous Faroese musicians (along with Eivør and Teitur). (Týr's YouTube view count figures may give some concrete indication, however: their most popular video "Hold the Heathen Hammer High" had well over 1.5 million views as of March 26, 2012, and their second most popular, "Sinklars Visa," had over 1.2 million views as of the same date.) Considering this, as indicated by Petersen's Wacken comment, Týr's music may often be the only thing that foreigners know about the Faroes and, therefore, the internationally touring band arguably plays a role as de facto Faroese ambassadors. This fact that is also evident in the countless interviews in which Heri Joensen, the band's leader, is asked questions about life and music in the Faroes, about which many outsiders know relatively little (e.g., "What's it like living on the Faroe Islands?" in Metaleater 2008).

Týr's international recognition and their role as ambassadors of Faroese music is also sometimes a source of pride for Faroese people, as Ken Johannesen of TAO explained to me in a conversation about Týr's renown:

> I was at Wacken 2008 I think when Týr played and I was standing beside some Germans, I didn't know they were Germans, and then they were singing what was it some Týr song in Faroese. . . but they were singing like Faroese people, and they pronounced it EXACTLY like Heri Joensen does, it's like, and I asked— I went, you know, in Faroese "oh you are from Faroe Islands!?" [Ken attempts some mock German response] "What the fuck!? Are you from Faroe Islands?," "No, I'm from Germany!," "Really?." And they were pronouncing exactly the same! I was amazed, so that's— it's that word like you said, it's heritage, when Germans sing your native tongue, *kvæði*, like you said, what more can you ask for? We are a so little population and Germans are singing our, you know, I can only "woah amazing, good work, Týr." That's the best work any Faroese person has ever done! It's the best work any Faroese have ever done to the world, when Germans sing Faroese native songs, you can't expect more.

Even in the earliest days of their international success, as Týr's Joensen noted in a 2006 interview, there was "always someone in the front row who sings along to every word, even the Faeroese texts. . . that's funny cause they don't get it right. . . but they're welcome because I love, I really love to see them try" (Joensen 2006 Tartarean Desire).

Some people also explained to me that Týr's success represented a major turning point in the Faroes in terms of the development of a metal scene in the islands as they became a great inspiration for many young people in the islands. As Fossaberg explained to me, "they paved the way for a lot of the metal bands that are here now because they were the first real Faroese metal band that went outside of the Faroe Islands to play." In paving the way for the next generation of Faroese metal bands, however, Týr have arguably also inadvertently cast something of broad shadow across the Faroese metal scene. That is, because the Faroes are so small and Týr have unquestionably become the islands' best-known metal band, a number of people explained to me that newer bands must be especially careful not to sound too much like Týr, lest they be dismissed as mere imitators. Kristian Blak of the Faroese label, Tutl, for instance, explained to me that once someone had asked him why more bands don't play like Týr, and he responded that "that would be ridiculous because they are so unique that if one other Faroese band played like Týr, then they are doomed." Others, like John Áki Egholm of the Faroese metal band, Hamferð, explained to me that his band was very self-conscious about not sounding too much like Týr:

> John Áki Egholm: We were actually a little bit afraid that you know because of our approach to the source material that we would be deemed to be clones of some sort.
>
> Josh Green: That was a concern?
>
> JÁE: That was a concern yeah exactly exactly.
>
> JG: Because it's such a small place.

> JÁE: Exactly it is a small place and you start thinking about things like that and we constantly really you know try to say you know we're not gonna sound like Týr, we're not gonna sound like that, there might have been times when we were jamming and somebody comes with a riff, or a lead or a harmony lead, things like that, but not thats not dadadada like Týr."

Mirroring Johannesen's earlier comments above about Germans singing Faroese traditional songs (in Faroese) because of Týr's music being "the best work any Faroese person has ever done," musician Theodor Kapnas explained to me, in no uncertain terms, that Týr has made a tremendous contribution to Faroese music: speaking of the band's 2006 album, their first to be released on Napalm Records, Kapnas declared that "*Ragnarok* is the best ever Faroese album, period, by a country mile." Later, he continued, saying "*Ragnarok* is a masterpiece, [2003's] *Eric the Red* is also a very, very, very good album. . . yeah. . . those two albums are probably, not probably, they are the best albums that have been released here."

Despite such high praise from Kapnas, I also encountered a good deal of criticism about Týr's music from people in the Faroes. In particular, some people cited as a point of contention the increasing simplification and standardization of Týr's compositions which is part of a general trend towards a less "progressive" style, clearly evident in the band's more recent releases (2009's *By the Light of the Northern Star* and 2011's *The Lay of Thrym*), both of which eschew the longer and relatively more complex songs of their older releases. This trend of simplification of compositional style in Týr's music even led one person I spoke with to classify some of the band's later material as "Viking pop songs." However, several people with whom I spoke also seemed to sympathize with Týr's change of direction because they speculated that it perhaps resulted from pressure from the band's label, Napalm Records, who wanted to ensure that they continue to write catchy Viking metal songs with broad appeal so that their records would sell well. Regardless of whether or not there actually was any push from the label that influenced Týr's stylistic simplification, it is true that Týr had signed a multi-

album contract with the Napalm Records, and labels (particularly those with global distribution networks, like Napalm) are, of course, in the business of making money.

Further, in interviews, Joensen of Týr has been quite open about the band's increasingly simple style and has even discussed his understanding of the relationship between simpler songs and better sales. Commenting on the band's stylistic change, in a 2011 interview Joensen explained,

> since [2006's] "Ragnarok" probably we've tried to steer away from the progression and go more for melodies and big choruses, and simple song structures. It's really a challenge to keep it catchy, simple, and original at the same time. And that's what we've been aiming for now, with the last 3 albums including this one [2011's *The Lay of Thrym*]. I mean, let's not kid ourselves, we're trying to make a good living…or at least a decent living from our music careers. And while you write the music you have to keep in mind that someone has to listen to it and someone has to like it, or it's not going to work. So doing that while keeping your musical and national integrity is a challenge, and that's what we've been aiming at lately. To hit a global audience, but keep the bands [sic] sound and trademark…only without the progressive stuff. That uh, that had to go. [Joensen 2011 mindovermetal]

And despite not having access to precise sales figures, the fact that *By the Light of the Northern Star* holds the number one position on the Napalm Records top sellers website as of March 26, 2012 is a good indication of the popularity of the band's less progressive style.

As I have attempted to illustrate, Týr's role as popularizers of Faroese traditional music, as ambassadors of the Faroes, and as the islands' metal trailblazers cannot be overstated. Due in equal parts to their international success and the marked Faroeseness of their compositions (which evokes and, for Faroese listeners, encourages engagement with aspects of ancient Faroese history and culture), Týr remains a tremendously important band within the Faroese music scene and all of the Faroes, more generally.

Having discussed in detail the historical development and some aspects of the significance of traditional Faroese music in contemporary society in previous chapters, it is also worth considering what role Týr has played in influencing people's conceptions of Faroese traditional music today. As already noted, the various Faroese traditional song forms, and especially *kvæði,* retain considerable significance in modern Faroese society as expressions and symbols of Faroeseness: they are part of the national school curriculum, they are regularly enacted by members of a nation-wide network of dance societies, they are self-consciously "passed on" to younger generations by village dance societies, they are performed and embodied in dance en masse at the national holiday (Ólavsøka), and they are even depicted in Faroese visual art (e.g., Janus Kamban's 1939 sculpture of the ring-dance) and form part of other national artistic endeavours (as in composer Sunleif Rasmussen's 2009 *Ólavsøka Cantata,* which combined various elements of Faroese music history, performed by a massive group of musicians at that year's Ólavsøka celebration). Further, as was also discussed earlier, the *kvæði* and other traditional song forms came to achieve such national significance in the 20th and 21st centuries largely because of a number of historical processes which saw them constructed as evidence of a legitimate national folk culture (i.e., veritable archives of Faroese language and oral literature, proof of this "natural nation's" distinctiveness) during the Faroese nationalist period: they were passed down orally for many generations (and have some links to the oldest Scandinavian literature, the Icelandic sagas), they were collected across centuries and finally collated in the CCF (which became a monument to Faroese literature) (Nauerby 1996:38), and they were drawn upon as source material by early nationalist writers (e.g., J.H.O. Djurhuus in his *Gandkvæði Tróndar*).

In terms of the continually shifting significance of traditional music in Faroese society, Týr's (i.e., Heri Joensen's) own assessment of their music as "part of the evolution and continuation of Faeroese and Scandinavian traditional music"

(Joensen deadtide) may well have some currency. As discussed above, at home, Týr has arguably been responsible for creating a renewed interest in and discussion of the *kvæði* and for making such traditional music "cool again." Though some people (evidently the sort who view any sort of change in musical tradition as inherently negative) have complained that Týr's influence has sometimes changed traditional singing practices, others have speculated that the only reason young people know as much of some of the old ballads like "Ormurin Langi" as they do nowadays is because of the band's popularizing influence.

Further, and perhaps more significantly, though Týr were not the first to render Faroese traditional songs in a modern style, due to their considerable international and local popularity, the band could be said to have been the first to truly push traditional music far beyond the exclusively local, participatory field of musical practice (recreational village ring-dancing) and the related familial presentational field of the *kvøldsetur* (the "evening sitting" sessions of former days wherein old song texts were taught by older generations to the younger ones). In re-casting traditional music (in a metal style) firmly within the field of studio audio art on their albums, Týr encouraged Faroese people to conceive of their musical traditions entirely differently: as musical resources, full of affective potential, to be shaped, modified, and manipulated in the studio to specific desired effects. The case of the band's rendition of "Gandkvæði Tróndar," discussed in detail earlier, indicates something of the significance of the shift of Faroese traditional music into the field of studio audio art. "Gandkvæði Tróndar," with its multiple overlapping voice and instrumental tracks, shifting volume, and other effects relies on the electronic manipulation by studio technologies to create a completely controlled sonic object (or sculpture) (Turino 2008:78-79) designed to evoke specific elements of the mytho-historic Faroese past. The transportative experience of the communal ring-dance (Blak et al. 1996:14-15) is arguably recreated by the band in some of their recordings.

And, as metal studio audio art, the band creates compositions which can hold considerable personal and emotional significance for Faroese metalheads. Metal drummer Kim Joensen, for instance, explained to me once his own experience of the affective power that comes from listening to metal (in general) and Týr (in particular):

> I think if you really listen to it [metal], it gets you in this adrenaline kick, sort of, because when I'm in a really good mood, you know, not always in the mood to listen to music. . . when I'm driving I was like "ah I really want to hear some metal RIGHT now" and turn on the stereo and, I dunno, just listen to the new Týr album or something and, you know, just totally digging it and looking down "OH I'm driving WAY too fast," you know, just something really good about it, makes you wanna push things to the edge.

Aside from studio audio art, Týr has also re-cast Faroese traditional music in other types of participatory contexts (their live performances) that share common features with the traditional ring-dances and with other metal performances in general. However, perhaps largely because Týr been performing increasingly for international audiences in recent years (and, therefore, more infrequently in the Faroes for Faroese audiences), most discussions about Týr I had with people tended to focus more on the band's recordings than their live shows. Considering this, I discuss the constitution of meaning in live metal performances and the significance of metal performances as participatory contexts for Faroese people in more detail in the following section on Hamferð (who have played a number of times in the Faroes recently). Regarding Týr's live shows that they have played in the past in the Faroes, it is worth mentioning that these performances would have represented a special type of participatory context in which attendees would have had the opportunity to take up participant roles similar to those of other traditional music performance contexts (i.e., the ring-dance and Ólavsøka singing). That is, by virtue of the opportunity to take part in Týr's performances by singing along, for instance, (and other participatory means like headbanging and moshing typical of many metal performances, discussed in more detail below in the Hamferð

section), concertgoers would have been able to participate in a form of collective musical activity, one that was likely particularly conducive to the flow states discussed by Turino and Csikszentmihalyi.

Just as I have attempted to explain some of the ways in which musical meaning is constituted by and for Faroese people in Týr's compositions, as well as having begun to touch on Týr's influence on and role in the constitution of a Faroese metal scene, so too will these two related areas be explored in the following section on the Faroese metal band, Hamferð.

The Constitution of Meaning in Faroese Metal: Hamferð's Doom Metal

Hamferð is one of the Faroes' more recently formed metal bands, and they are also arguably one of only two Faroese metal bands (along with Týr) who make a very conscious effort to imbue their music with a sense of Faroeseness. Conceived by one of the band's guitarists, John Áki Egholm in 2008 shortly after he left the still extant band, Synarchy, Hamferð is also the Faroes' only doom metal band (doom is a sub-genre most easily distinguishable by its relatively slow tempos, which may even dip down into dirge-like paces). The mood, atmosphere, and lyrical content of doom metal also differs perceptibly from most other metal sub-genres, in that, as opposed to more common themes of aggression, and especially the expression of masculine individualism through themes of "the cultivation of inner strength and the consequent conquering of perceived foes" (Rafalovich 2006:19), doom often explores themes of despair, loss, and remorse.

In my interview with him, Egholm explained his motivations for wanting to start a doom metal band and why they create such explicitly Faroese music (all of their lyrics, excepting half of their first demo song, are written in Faroese):

> I quit [still-extant Faroese melodic death metal band, Synarchy] in 2008 and I wanted to continue but I wanted to do something different, I didn't want to play fast melodic death metal because, even though I enjoyed this type of music, I thought, you know, ok if I'm going to start a good band, it has to be something that is not present in the local scene. And at the time I was really getting in to doom metal, you know, started listening to bands like My Dying Bride and everything and I thought, you know, thematically, this could work, because, you know, we could use our heritage, you know, in our music, in this way. And it has something to do with

> the landscape, the isolation, the weather, you know, makes for a very particular mindset. . . and I started to talk about this with some friends of mine, and I said, you know, “do you want to create something original, something that's never been done in the Faroe Islands? I want to use our heritage to strengthen ourselves and, you know, to become something unique in the Faroese scene.” And they thought it was a cool idea. And we started talking about it and, you know, we eventually decided that, you know, it should be completely Faroese because it makes it more unique, and like, bands from around the world sing English no matter what their nationality is, and it wouldn't be right for us to do this, sing about our heritage in English.

Driven by the desire to create a type of metal that was both new to the Faroese scene and strongly inspired by the often oppressive and dreary weather and geography of the islands themselves, Egholm also determined early on that in order for Hamferð to be "completely Faroese," in his opinion, it would have to not only make use of Faroese heritage in some way, but also be immediately identifiable as Faroese by virtue of the exclusive use of the Faroese language in compositions and performances (again, excepting the English half of their first unreleased demo). When I asked Egholm about his stated commitment to making use of the Faroese language and heritage, he explained that

> speaking of the concept [of Faroeseness, Faroese content], the concept is so integral to the band, so integral to our sound, that we could not, we could not continue to make music without it. If we did, we would have to call it something else. . . yeah it's so very integral, it's about, it's about the FUCKING roots you know (laughs).

In a separate interview, Hamferð guitarist Theodor Kapnas echoed Egholm's sentiments about the essential "Faroeseness" of the band, saying,

> it's that we're a Faroese band, we draw a lot of inspiration from Faroese history, sagas, from the Faroese environment, you know, it's a pretty special place with a pretty special atmosphere, as you probably experienced, especially, you know, when the weather is bad in the winter, stuff like that, it can be pretty chilly and pretty doom metal. So I think that's one of the reasons that we started the band, is that there's no band that really embraces that atmosphere

> and describes that atmosphere, and tries to do it through the music, and it's only natural that we do it in Faroese.

And, expanding on his point about the importance of Hamferð's use of the Faroese language in their compositions, Kapnas explained

> I also have this strong opinion that you sing best in your native tongue, every person is best at expressing himself in a language that you speak everyday and that you've spoken every day since you were a baby. I mean you can sing in English, but if you've been speaking Faroese for the last 20 years and not as proficient in English, the vocal performance won't be as strong, you won't be able to put the same emotion and the same nuances into the vocal performance.

Figure 6. A view of the Faroes' second-largest town, Klaksvík, from the small Faroese village of Norðoyri, and typical Faroese weather. An example of the sort of "special atmosphere" of the Faroes that inspires Hamferð, which the band also attempts to evoke through their music. Norðoyri is the hometown of the band's singer, Jón Hansen. Image credit: Carina Damm.

All of the major creative decisions regarding the band's sound and image were made, as Egholm explained, to cultivate this very particular atmosphere which implicated Faroeseness, history, and the dark (gloomy, sombre) atmosphere that is associated with the doom metal sub-genre. Egholm's explanation of the rationale and story behind the band's name illustrates something of this rationale:

> we started discussing what would be cool, what is— what has history, what has, you know, like weight, what is good for our concept, we discussed things like, I remember I came up with one idea it was just actually bullshit, you know, but it kind of fit the criteria. It was *sóknarongul* which is this huge hook that you use to dig into the pilot whale and drag it into the beach and fucking kill it (laughs) and I thought that was pretty brutal, it is a brutal name, but it didn't really fit our concept. But then we started speaking about— we did some research and we found this word, *hamferð*, which is old Faroese, it doesn't get used very often now, it's from the olden days, and *hamferð* means, *hamferð* means to see someone who is at the verge of death. To see an apparition of someone who is on the verge of death. 'Cuz in the old days there are loads like ghost-type stories where someone would be very, very ill and a person would see this person, even though he knew he was bed-ridden, he would see him up on a mountain, or somewhere. It's like astral projection, if you will. Things like that. . . There are actually a lot of stories about *hamferð* in this manner, it's very strange phenomenon. Yeah and we decided, you know, that these are the stories that people have told, you know, in this time when death was so intense, and it has to do with death, because, you know, to see someone who's like on the verge, and you know it fit with our theme and it was a Faroese word and it had an interesting meaning, so that's why we chose it.

When I asked singer Jón Hansen to elaborate a bit on the meaning of the word *hamferð*, I asked first if the apparitions were meant to warn people of a loved ones' impending death, he suggested that

> actually the warning, pretty futile I think, it was just the spirit coming to say, you know, "tomorrow you will find out," you know, or something like that, "that your husband or your son's dead" or something like that. So it's kind of unclear. I think that's a bit of an official meaning, but it varies somewhat. *Hamferð* can also be the appearance of people after they've died, to notify or

> something, you know, or you can see people many years after they've died, you know. But it is the sort of you see the appearance the apparition a dead person, which is yeah it was very often for women back home who saw these people. Some did more than others of course.

When I asked him to break down the word into its constituent parts, if possible, Hansen suggested that the word essentially could be interpreted as something like "skin" + "journey," though it does not make use of the usual Faroese word for skin, and it implies something more akin to shedding the entirety of your body's skin: "yeah, if you were to shed it all like a snake, you know, so you're just kind of, you can see people traveling, only in their skin, you know, maybe they were kind of transparent or something."

Finally, and perhaps most significantly in terms of the word's connection to and implication of Faroese history and mythology, when I asked Hansen about how he came to learn about the concept of *hamferð,* he told me that most Faroese people are familiar with the concept and that a very famous instance of *hamferð* actually occurs in *Føroyingasøga* ("the saga of the Faroe Islanders"). In short, Hansen summarized the story of the murder of the one of the saga's principal protagonists, Sigmundur Brestisson, and explained how, after an impossibly long swim (fleeing from his enemies), he arrived on the shore of the southern island, Suðuroy. There, Hansen recounted, he

> just fainted on the beach when he came there and some guys that hated him came up and chopped his head off, so later that night he appeared again with his head under his arm, dripping wet, in *hamferð,* you know. In front of the mother of these guys who didn't want them to kill Sigmund I think something like this so that kind of revealed them. Sigmund came back kind of as a ghost to say "these two guys, they killed me" and then they were hanged.

Figure 7. Hamferð EP cover featuring silhouette reminiscent of a person (spirit) "in *hamferð*." Image credit: Hamferð (Tutl).

For those who know its meaning, then, even the band's name alone, Hamferð, immediately evokes notions of Faroeseness, Faroese history, and death. Death as a lyrical theme in metal is, of course, quite common. However, Hamferð takes the evocation and exploration of death to another level in that part of the band's aim in their recorded, as well as live, performances is to elicit a funereal atmosphere. For instance, ever since the band's very first public performance, they have decided to wear black and white suits onstage, and to remain entirely serious ("in character"). As drummer, Remi Kofoed Johannesen explained, he was never supposed to smile on stage, and, when I asked if he meant that the band "plans" to be serious on stage, he responded, saying "yeah we have this like rule where we're supposed to be totally— like the theme is a funeral, we always wear suits, or she, of course

[former bassist] Tinna's wearing this dress thing, but then it's like serious like the whole thing it had to reflect the music."

The suits, atypical of metal wherein more usual on-stage "costumes" consist either simply of jeans and band t-shirts, highly stylized make-up (e.g., in the black metal sub-genre), or fantasy-themed outfits, are an essential part of the band's funereal image. As Johannesen explained, the suits are an attempt to match the band's visual image to their dark, serious sound: "we try to…to be visually the same as the aural thing." In his estimation, even though "matching" a band's on-stage image with their sound is challenging ("how do you look like a sound? heh heh it's kind of difficult"), Remi maintains that the band's funereal image and demeanor onstage are essential elements to the performance: "the thing is like it's very beneficial for the band to visually be the same as they are in the sound."

In their own publicity material (their Facebook page and their artist page on the label's website), the band states their musical aims plainly: "Hamferð was formed in 2008 with one goal: To bring slow, crushing and atmospheric music to the Faroe Islands, the home to a bleak and depressive atmosphere that can only be properly communicated through the funeral march of Doom Metal" (Hamferð 2011). In a more recent description, the band elaborates upon their sound and inspiration, writing

> The music of Hamferð is intended to encompass the sadness, the melancholia and the anger bound to the Faroese soul. The weathered islands, both beautiful and treacherous, are home to a strong people, united in love, yet also tremendous pain and grief. Throughout the centuries, storms, famine, disease and death have been ever present, striking hard on the small Faroese communities. The processes of mourning and consolation have carved themselves deep into the identity of the islanders, and so Hamferð seeks to communicate this dark essence through their unique style of doom metal. [Hamferð Tutl 2012]

Obviously then, Hamferð's preoccupation with death and funerals goes beyond mere exploitation of a classic and attention-grabbing theme. In Egholm's estimation, for most of their history, the Faroes has been a society in which the

proximity and possibility of tragic and accidental death weighed upon people daily. As Egholm explains,

> the funeral aspect [of the band's music and imagery] comes from the history, as well, actually, because you know back in the old days, it was a struggle to stay alive every day and, you know, you probably seen some of the old houses, they are made of stone and you know winter was not very nice, especially 100 years ago, we didn't have heat, and slept in the *fucking* dirt, you know, it's like, you know, times were tough, and, you know, you went out to the storming seas with your boat, tried to catch some fish, and, you know, it was not guaranteed that you would come back, so death was a very real and very in-your-face part of being alive as a Faroese person back then. And this history was researched and we'd find it and we can use it, this is really part of us. Because there are no bands here that actively use this for inspiration.

When I asked John if he meant that not many Faroese bands used "the old days" as inspiration for their music, he continued, enthusiastically,

> yeah, yeah it's strange because it's such a big part of us, it really is and people just know— do not choose to focus on these aspects, especially not in music. So, that's where it came from, and that being a funeral thing, when the guys would go out fishing, you know, when they would go out, you know, families would get together down at the docks and they would sing, they would sing psalms, funeral psalms, basically, because you know, there would be fearful goodbyes because, you know, the coming back was not guaranteed— they hoped, they hoped and they prayed, but it was not guaranteed. Yeah, exactly so. So, we decided, because of this, we decided to use it and also because doom metal in and of itself, has a very dark atmosphere.

Speaking as the lyric writer, Hansen also expanded on Egholm's point about the close interconnection of historical life in the Faroes and death, and commented on the difficulties and advantages of writing in "real" (i.e., pure) Faroese:

> you know, I love to write in English and it's actually easier somehow to write in English for me, because there are a lot more freedoms in English I think. And Faroese is such a limited language in the way that if you want to write real Faroese, you have mostly, you know, you have to dig up some old word or something, it's very how can you say, Dane-ified. It's a lot of

Danish words and more maybe Norwegian words that don't really fit the actually feel of the Faroese language, so it's actually hard to write a neutral type of Faroese which is both poetic and tries to exclude more modern, you know, conversational words. So, but then again I thought, this just fits, I mean, Faroese with this actual music and I was writing about Faroese issues, writing from a Faroese perspective and sort of digging in to the historical soul of the Faroese people, kind of, you know, it, the darker side of it. I don't know, you may have seen some descriptions of our music in some different places where I think it comes from something I have said about it, you know, which is this thing that I like to see the more serious and dark aspect which people try to avoid, actually, Faroese people really do try to avoid it, but I find that it's very present, even in people now, the struggle that these islands have had throughout the many centuries that we've existed. So, it's very interesting. There's a lot of hardships and a lot of small towns and villages who have lost a lot of men at the same time, you know, with a boat that's been, you know, crushed by the waves somewhere. And so there's a lot of sorrow, there's actually a lot of funereal sort of atmosphere, or yeah, kind of a soul to the Faroese people, so…[9]

[9]By this point in the conversation with Hansen I had already been thinking of the ways in which death, mourning, and remembrance were brought to the fore in Faroese village life in former times. This led us to a discussion of the various memorial stones that dot the Faroese countryside. In the first half of the twentieth century (and especially during the second world war, due to the occasional sinking of Faroese ships), many Faroese were lost at sea. Hansen's comments about the "sorrow" and "funereal" atmosphere that the band draws from Faroese history and are a component of what he calls the "soul" of the Faroese people are, in a sense, supported by the way in which many villages across the Faroes have chosen to inscribe these losses into the village landscape (by erecting memorial stones which list the names of the deceased sailors). Hansen explained that many such stones exist, not only ones memorializing shipwrecks, but also in remembrance of a particularly disastrous (and for several men, fatal) whale drive in Suðuroy in the early 20th century, and another between Hansen's hometown, the small northern village of Norðoyri and the larger northern centre, Klaksvík, commemorating a much more historically distant avalanche which destroyed a homestead. In short, such memorials, especially in the relatively treeless and unobstructed terrain of the Faroes, are perhaps one of the most visible ways in which the more morose aspects of Faroese history, which Hamferð draws on and tries to evoke, are inscribed onto the landscape.

The other most notable way in which history has been written into Faroese village landscapes is through sculpture. Throughout the Faroes, striking bronze and granite sculptures, often commemorating aspects of Faroese national history or mythology, adorn village squares and main thoroughfares. In the centre of downtown Tórshavn, Faroese national hero Nólsoyar Páll (born Poul Poulsen Nolsøe, of the island of Nólsoy), the late 18th century champion of the Faroese people who opposed the Danish monopoly in the islands, stands and looks out over the harbour. (Nólsoyar Páll is particularly well-remembered for his satirical song, the *táttur* (plural, *tættir*) "Fuglakvæði" ("the ballad of the birds"), which criticized Danish officials and is still known and sometimes performed today in the islands). Further north of Tórshavn is the small village

Having established the rationale behind Hamferð's founding and some sources of the band's inspiration (e.g., the desire to make unique, markedly Faroese music that draws on Faroese history and makes use of "real" Faroese as its language, evoking the historic Faroes' "funereal" atmosphere), in order to better understand the meaning this music holds for the musicians who create it, it is instructive to turn now to a discussion of the experience of Hamferð's live performances as related to me by some of the band members. In so doing, I hope also to show how the intent and affective capacity of Hamferð's performances differ from typical metal performances.

Recalling some of the ideas outlined in my earlier discussion of Turino, it could well be argued that the majority of metal performances, though mostly taking place within contexts that are ostensibly presentational, are, in fact, chiefly participatory. That is, while there are obvious artist-audience distinctions (characteristic of the presentational field in which artists prepare music for a non-participating audience) (Turino 2008:26), in the majority of metal shows, there are only "participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role" (2008:26). Reminiscent of Turino's assertion that different fields of musical practice have their own internally relevant goals and values (2008:67), in Berger's examinations of what he calls the organization of musical experience and the organization of attention he compares the different "goals" of live jazz and metal performances by contrasting the desired nature of audience-artist interactions in each (Berger 1999:166). In his estimation, while many jazz performers aim to focus on creating music that invites audience attention, metal performers aimed to compel their audience's attention and interaction (1999:166).

Norðragøta on Eysturoy, famed home of the Faroe Islanders' saga (*Føroyingasøga)* antagonist, the pagan chieftain Tróndur í Gøtu. In the centre Norðragøta a statue of Tróndur stands astride a stone map of the Faroes, facing and overlooking the village church from a small knoll, its position an almost certainly deliberate commentary on Tróndur's role as the principal resister to the Christianizing of the Faroes. Such public art, along with the aforementioned memorial stones, serve to foreground aspects of even the most distant past in the Faroes.

In most types of metal, performers' highest ambition is often to compel the audience's attention, and the best indication that they have succeeded in doing so can be seen when audience members take on the role of participants by engaging in special types of "dancing" that are specific to metal: specifically, moshing and head-banging. Though these forms of dance have many variations, defined extremely simply, moshing is "a dance involving intentional collisions with other dancers" (Wallach et al. 2011:3) and head-banging is an activity involving "rhythmic up-and-down movements of the head and neck" (2011:3). Recalling the metal performers' aim to compel audience attention, then, as Berger's interviewees explained, "moshing was seen as the ultimate expression of this compulsion" (Berger 1999:166).

Moshing and head-banging, as expressions of one's engagement with (or participation in) metal performances, are thus meaningful to performing musicians for two key reasons: they are an indication that the audience's attention has been successfully compelled and those dancing activities serve as part of a "feedback loop" (Berger 1999:156) between audiences and performers who are said to "feed" off (become inspired by) one another's energy. Regarding the first point about moshing as a sign of compulsion of the audience's attention, as Berger notes, when he asked John, a metal musician, "if he felt that a crowd that moshed wasn't really listening, he [John] said that just the opposite was true: a moshing crowd was one spurred to near riot by the music" (1999:166). Further, regarding the notion of the feedback loop, when Berger discussed moshing with Lou, another metal musician, "Lou explained that there was no rush like the one of playing to a crowd of people and inciting them to the controlled riot of the crazed mosh pit" (1999:166).

Though he uses different language, when Berger talks about audience-performer feedback as a key element of an individual music scene's "sociology of attention" ("a culturally specific set of practices through which audience members and performers constitute experience in the event") (Berger 1999:156), he is

essentially speaking about Turino's concept of musical fields which have their own goals, values, etcetera So, having established above (thanks to some evidence drawn from Berger) that most metal performances could be best classified as belonging within the participatory field, how do the musicians of Hamferð see their own performances which largely eschew the upbeat tempos (common to most of metal) which compel audience attention and participation?

Remi Johannesen, the drummer, explained to me that he often becomes extremely invested in the performances. In his words, "when I play with Hamferð, it's very emotional for me, and I started crying once when playing." To clarify, though he plays other types of music occasionally, too, Johannesen explained "it's only been Hamferð where I dedicate myself emotionally in that way. I would just get worn out if i did it all the time." Describing the intensity of emotion he experiences during performance and the subjective meaning the performance holds for him (which he attempts to convey through the music), Johannesen explains,

> I feel like the music in Hamferð is very emotional, and in order for me to play it very well, I need to, like, go somewhere in my mind where I'm like in this certain state where each hit is like, it like means something, I'm expressing something. No one can fucking get it but me because it's like [vocalized drum sound] "donk" which sounds the same as "dun" but no it doesn't.

Metal music, and, specifically, playing drums, became important emotional and creative outlets for Johannesen, in part, as he explained earlier in the interview, because he noticed a correlation between a difficult emotional time in his life and his growing appreciation for music. As a child, he moved back and forth between the Faroes so often that he felt he had no real childhood friends, and that he had only his mother and father as constants in his life. After they divorced, Johannesen said, he felt he had nothing left, and so he then began to really appreciate and become involved in music, and the music he enjoyed subsequently became heavier and heavier. Music, and later the act of drumming itself, became a

means for Johannesen to "rage out," in his words; drumming as cathartic release from whatever is bothering him.

In Hamferð performances, Johannesen explains, he tries to channel negative emotions into the positive outlet of a well-executed performance. As he said,

> it's just like how I'm— I try to really mean it and think about lots of stuff that makes me sad, or whatever, that I've been through or whatever, you know, and I think that helps a lot because it shows, of course, in the performance, and I also believe that it helps with, you know, with the music. Because I always feel, and this is a problem especially with metal drummers especially, that they often play without soul, I think.

Despite all of the talk about emotional performance and playing with soul, Johannesen and I didn't speak much about his understanding of his on-stage relationship with audiences (or about the intention or affective capacity of his performances). This is perhaps not surprising considering the relatively limited capacity for audience-musician interaction often experienced by metal drummers who are usually positioned at the back of the stage, necessarily seated with lights bearing down on them, and their drum kits obscuring their views (see Berger 1999:165). However, Johannesen was quick to mention how he couldn't help but break his serious character onstage in one 2011 performance when he noticed the audience being influenced by and participating in their performance:

"I remember when we played at [one of the Faroes' two biggest music events] G! Festival this year, it was so fucking weird that umm there was a big turn up, and I saw people singing along to the lyrics. . . (laughs) and that was totally weird and awesome."

Other band members spoke in more definite terms about the experience of performing live and the intention and affective capacity of their live performances. Having explained my understanding of different idioms of live music performance (e.g., in jazz where most of the interaction onstage is between improvising musicians and in metal wherein musicians often perform carefully rehearsed compositions with the intention of interacting with and "feeding off" the

energy provided by a crowd, or compelling their attention and encouraging moshing), I asked Kapnas about his experience and understanding of Hamferð performances and how (if at all) they are similar to jazz and metal performance contexts I was already familiar with. He responded, saying

> I think it's a combination, we don't improvise live but or we don't really improvise live, but we're not a band that could play to a click track [i.e., metronome] I don't think, we groove our tempo changes up and down a bit depending on which mood we're in, it's totally part of the music and we groove together, some parts get a little bit faster, slower, and instead of controlling which notes we play, we control the dynamics and tempo, which can differ pretty much from show to show actually, maybe a bit too much but it's all a part of. . . [a Hamferð] show I think. That's one part and another part is we don't go up like full of energy "ah we want a moshpit!," we go up to create an atmosphere and when we manage to, we all go into character, so that it's I dunno, I enjoy that atmosphere a lot. I'm somebody totally else when I'm onstage than when I'm standing offstage before and at the beginning, I think we all are. We're expressing different sides of ourselves.

In his response, Kapnas emphasizes a variety of different (not necessarily sonic) aspects of Hamferð's performances and speaks directly to the band's performance "goals." Referring to Bauman (1989), Berger has suggested of performance that "while all public behavior is enacted with an awareness that others are present, performance, in folklorist Richard Bauman's sense of the term, occurs when we self-consciously try to present our behavior to others, drawing special attention to our aesthetic competence" (Berger 1999:38, see also Goffman 1959). A principle concern for the musicians of Hamferð is to cultivate or evoke a certain "dark" atmosphere through their music (reminiscent of and inspired by the "funereal" or "special" atmosphere of the Faroes). Hamferð's suits and sombre on-stage demeanor (as Kapnas says, to "go into character") are two key visual aspects of their performances that help to create this atmosphere. The act of being or becoming "totally somebody else" which Kapnas describes is, in fact, another layer of performance, separate from but complementary to the aural aspects of the show, which contributes to the evocation of this atmosphere.

Significantly, just before explaining that the band's goal was to "create an atmosphere" during their live performances, Kapnas was careful to distinguish between the intention and affective capacity of Hamferð's performances and that of other metal bands. Unlike the more typical upbeat metal performances discussed by Berger (best defined by their alignment with the participatory field) which hold compulsion of audience attention and audience engagement (especially via moshing and head-banging), Hamferð do not hope or expect to influence audiences in such a way. Arguably more in line with the presentational field than most other metal performances, Hamferð's goal of creating an atmosphere suggests that the band is aiming to evoke more personal, emotional, and internal experiences in listeners rather than the more physical, external, collective, and embodied participatory roles taken up by audience members at typical metal shows. In a more basic sense, too, the slow tempo and sombre nature of the band's compositions are neither meant for (or conducive to) moshing.

While Hamferð are definitely a metal band (they have played concerts with many other more typical metal groups and they employ extremely heavy guitar and vocal timbres, including a mixture of clean and growling vocals), their emphasis on the creation of atmosphere in live performances has even led them to play shows alongside non-metal Faroese singer-songwriters like Lyon Hansen and Petur Pólson. Both of these artists explore darker or more mysterious sounds (reminiscent of performers like Leonard Cohen or Tom Waits), and, as Kapnas explained, they were asked to perform with Hamferð on a few occasions in order to pursue the band's idea to create music events that emphasized the "darker, atmospheric" sounds shared between Hamferð and these singers, even though they play entirely different genres.

Speaking further to Hamferð's desire to evoke a funereal atmosphere inspired in part by Faroes history and weather, at other times in our discussion, Kapnas even gauged his assessment of individual Hamferð gigs based largely on their setting and what the weather was doing at the time. Recalling fondly a gig at

Tórshavn's playhouse, Sjónleikarahúsið, Kapnas explained of the performance that "it just felt good, the atmosphere was perfect, it was snowing outside in the middle of the winter in this awesome place." Similarly, Kapnas also recalled how the band's 1:30 a.m. performance immediately following a now infamous storm which threatened to destroy the outdoor stages at G! Festival a few years ago, although it wasn't technically perfect peformance-wise (in his opinion), the audience loved the gig and the dark and misty outdoor environment at the time was "the perfect setting for doom metal."

Speaking more directly to his opinion of the affective capacity of Hamferð's live performances and typical audience engagement with the music, Kapnas explained first of all that he had "never ever seen a mosh pit or anything like that," but that audience reactions at Hamferð shows reminded him of those he had seen at Opeth shows (a Swedish metal band who incorporate a lot of progressive and often more mellow elements into their music). Describing audiences, Kapnas said "people just stand, it's a very personal experience, [they] just stand there and listen. Some people head-bang, but basically there's not a lot of physical action going on, there's a lot about feeling atmosphere." Hansen expressed a similar impression of audience reactions, saying, "usually we have people sort of just standing and really listening and paying attention, you know, and not really like doing this and talking and that kind of thing, that's the feeling I get at most of our shows, that yeah they're sort of, they're very present, very engulfed, kind of."

When I asked Hansen about people chugging beer or obviously ignoring the performance (and such signs of ostensible disengagement with the performance), he responded by explaining that

> chugging a beer at that, it wouldn't really fit into the actual, you know, the atmosphere I think, but the people are kind of, some people are actually just closing their eyes and just enjoying the songs throughout and when we're like done, it's also, it's kind of cool to note that our songs kind of end with a bang and the guitars and bass kind of slowly fades out and people are just waiting for the last sound to actually just and then you know they're cheering and clapping. . . it's cool it's like they're into it. . . [and] it's a

> different emotion you know, it's not like we're a kick in the face emotion like "yeah fuck yeah" fist pumping and that kind of thing, you know, it can be— I think some segments of our music are kind of badass in a certain way, you know, they're very heavy and very punchy, you know, but and then, you know, and people are banging their heads like really slowly or something like that which is cool but it's still like the compositions are very complex and they encompass a lot of things which just yeah I think people really like to just take it all in instead of just doing this you know.

Similarly, Egholm explained that, though their music is markedly different from most upbeat metal, and so, too, are their audience's reactions,

> we are looking for the same type of thing [as faster metal bands who encourage moshing], we are looking for the same type of reaction from the crowd, of course we might, we won't ask them to head-bang or do circle pits or anything like that, but you know, we want the people there to get an emotional reaction. And you see the people if they head-bang or if they just listen or, you know, things that will happen a lot is that they close their eyes, which I think is really cool, which means that they're like really listening, singing along.

And, even though, as I suggested, you probably would never see people closing their eyes as part of their experiencing music at a more typical metal concert, Egholm agreed, but explained, of his band's performances that

> it's funny because it's still metal. It's still aggressive in that aspect, you know, but, you know, the emotional response would be something like if you heard a really dark ballad or something like that. And this is what I think is really cool because it doesn't happen at any other type of show, I haven't seen any band basically, I haven't seen any crowd behave in such a way that they do when they come to our shows, so that's cool.

As Egholm, Hansen, and Kapnas all explained in separate interviews, they are hoping for and seeing a type of emotional, imaginative engagement (in their opinions, evident from some observable physical audience reactions like silent attentiveness, closed eyes, slow head-banging, etcetera) as result of their performances.

At one point Kapnas summarized the various aspects of Hamferð's performances and their intended collective effect on audiences, saying

> we dress up in suits, we don't smile, we don't talk between songs. . . it's a show, I mean, we go into character, we don't go waving to people and singing along. . . and stuff like that, it's not that kind of band. . . it's supposed to be a dark and atmospheric experience. . . and we always do it the same, even if it's five o'clock in the afternoon and the sun is shining, "but of course it helps when it's, when everything around you [e.g., the weather] just reinforces that atmosphere.

Figure 8. Hamferð performing at Nordatlantens Brygge (North Atlantic House) on 24 February 2012 in Copenhagen. Left to right: Theodor Kapnas, Jenus Í Trøðini, Jón Hansen, Esmar Joensen, John Áki Egholm. Image credit: Carina Damm

In the midst of all of this discussion of being "in character," evoking atmosphere, and the affective capacity of Hamferð's music, it is useful to recall at this time Turino's development of Bateson's notion of the concept of frames. Specifically,

in discussion of how music may be differently framed depending on the genre, Turino contrasts the framing of music genres like glam rock and opera in which artists are "interpreted as playing a part" (Turino 2008:15), with the "singer-songwriter genre [which] is generally framed such that the signs in performance (the songs, body language, stage patter, etcetera) are to be interpreted as dicent indices [i.e., as "really" representative and a product] of the performer's actual self and experiences" (2008:15). By their own admission, the musicians of Hamferð are "playing a part." However, it is important to note that, because (as in all metal) musicians engage in some form of stylized performance on stage (e.g., Berger 1999:70), "playing a part" has nothing to do with inauthenticity or insincerity on behalf of the performers or the experience of their live shows. Turino's explanation that some music genres (in this case doom metal) are framed in such a way that listeners interpret performers as "playing a part" helps call attention to the significance of the various non-aural aspects of the performance described by Hamferð's members: they aren't "faking" or "affecting" anything onstage, rather, in addition to performing (i.e., actually playing) music, they are also engaged in the simultaneous complementary performance (after Bauman) of roles and stylized behaviours that are meant to help evoke a specific atmosphere that the audience might engage (or become compelled to engage) with.

For those people who can understand Hamferð's Faroese lyrics, their content, which draws on themes from Faroese history, also serves to create a dark, funereal atmosphere. Three of the four songs which appear on Hamferð's only official release, the EP *Vilst Er Síðsta Fet* ("lost is the last footstep") have lyrics set in the first person which, as lyricist Hansen explained, deal with the death of a man at sea. In Hansen's words,

> the first song, “Vráin” ["the recess" or "the alcove"], is as the title suggests, is this man who is sort of backed into a corner by a great deal of things. . . if you're Faroese you can read the lyrics and kind of extract what you can, but mostly it's both society but it's also his own sort of self-destructive nature, and the yeah a lot of like kind of personal things so I don't want to delve too much into you know

> the meaning of it. But it's basically this guy who's who feels like there's no real way out because he's blocking himself and he's self-destructive and he's bringing himself a lot of pain through all the things he sees and doesn't like, things are changing around him and other things are just not working for him. So, that kind of deals with that. And the second song [“Aldan revsar eitt vargahjarta,” "the wave smites a wolf's heart"] is the physical death of this man, being that he wants to return to the sea in a way, he lets the ocean take him and destroy him. And the third song [“At Enda,” "to an end"] is the maybe metaphysical death of this person.

This three-song tale about a man's struggles, downfall, and death at sea is introduced on the EP by the band's doom metal rendition of a Faroese psalm, “Harra Guð, títt dýra navn og æra” ("lord God, thy precious name and glory"), itself a Faroese translation of a centuries-old Norwegian hymn by Norwegian priest Petter Dass. This sombre psalm, which focuses on the impermanence and insignificance of human life and earthy endeavour ("God is God, if all the land was desolate. . . God is God, if all mankind died") (Zachariassen 2010), not only evokes a funereal tone with its dreary melody and lyrical content, but, as Hansen explained, it is also sometimes sung during funeral processions. The psalm compliments and sets the tone for the rest of the album, Hansen explained, because it fits with the rest of the lyrics, "not the actual message of the psalm, but the general feel of the psalm and then, and it's an old psalm, it also harkens back from a hundred years ago you know, it was, I think it was, yeah, a bit less than 100 years ago when it was made into a melody in Faroese."

Like the two songs Hansen wrote for the band before the EP which haven't been released officially, the language of the EP is meant to evoke a sense of a former era in Faroese history. As Hansen explained of the two pre-EP songs, they are "kind of set in the olden Faroese times where. . . you know thinking hundred years ago where fishing was, you know, important, THE most important thing in the Faroese community." Even aside from the lyrical content, though, Hansen's choice of words, specifically, is meant to appear markedly different (and

reminiscent of older times) from everyday "speech language." In his words, Hansen uses

> a lot of neutral language. I try to keep most. . . wordings and actual words neutral and not too. . . modern, at all actually yeah. . . I'm not investigating, you know, how the language was 100 years ago, but I am using sort of a combination thing, which is something you could imagine, you know, it would be kind of weird talking like, you know, just having, speech language or something like that. . . imagine a poetic serious style. . . even though the first two songs are a bit more, yeah, they're not complicated or anything, they are poetically worded and so it's, yeah, I keep that style constantly I think it's very fitting for Hamferð.

Considering the details of their music's affective intent discussed by Hamferð's members (e.g., the desire to create an atmosphere at live shows and to draw on or evoke Faroese history via lyrical themes and language choices), is it possible to ask what it is that Hamferð performances "do"? That is, is this even a valid or worthwhile question? I suggest that it may be if one were to consider performance (particularly with reference to their affect or affective potential).

I don't mean to suggest in a Turnerian sense that it would be possible to discover the "function" (i.e., in relation to the "social structure") of Faroese performances like Hamferð's. However, musical performances can be (as perhaps most famously shown in Tony Seeger's *Why Suyá Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*) special contexts in which social relationships (e.g.,, as among the *Suyá*, along age group, gender, moiety, or other lines) may be publicly re-affirmed or established for the first time (Seeger 2004:78). Other scholars have argued eloquently about other things that music can "do." For example, Louise Meintjes, in *Sound of Africa: Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio*, has detailed how ethnic identities are shaped and marketed in music (e.g., via the careful insertion of markedly Zulu aesthetic elements into compositions) (Meintjes 2003:113 et passim). Considering even these few examples, it may well be worth thinking of music recording and performance in the Faroes in terms of what they may "do."

Chapter 6: Popular Music Within and Beyond the Islands

"We Are Going Abroad . . . This Isn't Really The Place For Us": Aiming Beyond The Islands

In the history of anthropology, not to mention other western scholarly traditions and in discourse surrounding island musics, islands have long been a source of fascination, but also of essentialization and exoticization (cf. Leach 1961 responding to Malinowski 1922, as Dawe 2004 notes). In contrast to some earlier and less critical approaches to studying islands which could lead to the conclusion "that islanders (their behaviour and customs) are completely conditioned by their island environment" (Dawe 2004:8), part of my aim in studying the Faroes as an island community is to attempt to understand "how individuals respond to life as members of a society living on 'the island'" (2004:8). In so doing, I follow Dawe's development of the concept of the island as "both a physical and social construction, [with] islanders and their land forming a symbolic community (after Cohen 1989), and that symbolic community providing for the needs of islanders living off-island" (2004:8).

Especially relevant to the ensuing discussion of the experience of being a musician in the island community of the Faroes is Dawe's assertion that islands "are not isolated bio-geographically, nor in terms of their societies and cultures, even if they make tempting and convenient units for study. . . one can, after all, draw a neat line around them on a map. . . but this line will be continuously breached, eroded and even washed away" (Dawe 2004:8). Island cultures and island musics are thus not so easily circumscribed or delineated as their clear demarcation and ostensible isolation on maps might suggest. Island communities, the Faroes included, have been (and continue to be) intensely interwoven with essential networks of off-island interactions that define island life just as the islands' internal physical, social, and cultural features do.

Dawe, in his introduction to the edited collection *Island Musics*, suggests that, out of the ten island case studies discussed therein, "a positive ethos of self-sufficiency is displayed among most of the communities featured" (Dawe 2004:1). However, out of many of the conversations I had with Faroese musicians there arose a contrasting ethos, which emphasized the supposed difficulty (if not, impossibility) of living off of music exclusively within the Faroes, and stressed the necessity of forging and engaging with international networks and partnerships in order to make music as a source of livelihood even potentially viable. During a group interview with Konqueror, for instance, one of the Faroes' newest and youngest metal bands, in response to a question about whether the band would ideally like to work as full-time musicians someday, guitarist Heini Djurhuus quickly responded, "of course, but it's pretty hard to pull that off in the Faroe Islands." Fellow guitarist Erland Joensen promptly followed, saying, "that's why we're gonna go, wanna go global, ah?." Despite their relative youth (Djurhuus was only nineteen at the time), the members of Konqueror seemed acutely aware of both the challenges they would face if they intended to become career musicians, and of the inevitability of leaving the Faroes behind.

As I did more interviews, the two related recurring themes of the desirability or perceived necessity of moving away from the Faroes, and of the importance of reaching out internationally from the islands became increasingly glaring. Though I will address both of these themes below, I first begin with a discussion of the various responses to questions about moving away from the Faroes and musicians' differing rationales for wanting to do so, in hopes of highlighting some perceptions of the challenges aspiring musicians face as a result of their insularity and position in the north Atlantic.

Responding to my questions about the challenges of being a musician in the Faroes and whether or not he planned to move, Kim Joensen, drummer for the melodic death/thrash metal band, Synarchy, gave a familiar answer, saying, "Yeah

definitely, yeah really, I'm really hoping to move away from here because thats the challenging thing about being a musician to, you know, play abroad it's very expensive because of the flight tickets." When I added that I knew all too well that the Faroes' only airline, Atlantic Airways, was quite expensive, Joensen continued to explain that flight costs were so prohibitively expensive, they have directly affected his band's capacity to progress and, by implication, compete with mainland European bands. In his words, Atlantic Airways is

> extremely expensive, and, you know, there are festivals that have shown interest in [my band, Synarchy], you know, "come play here," but then they're, "ok it's too expensive, we can't afford you guys, because we have to pay for your ticket, AND we have to pay for you to play," and really if we lived in Denmark, it'd probably [be] no problem or Germany or maybe Sweden or something. So, [guitarist] John Ivar, he already lives in Denmark, [singer] Leon lives in Denmark, only for, you know, five months, but I'm planning on moving, [bassist] Ísak is planning on moving, I also think [guitarist] Pól is planning to move. If you really wanna, you know, something with your music, you should definitely move away from here, because it's in the middle of nowhere and too expensive to, you know, fly.

As I found out in a prior interview, Ísak Petersen, does, in fact, plan on leaving the Faroes in the near future to pursue his dream of working full-time as a musician, starting first by applying to conservatories in either Sweden or Denmark. In the meantime, though, he is involving himself in music in the Faroes in every way possible. An extremely talented bassist, Petersen frequently plays jazz, sometimes for pay in an up-scale cafe in the capital's downtown area, and sometimes for the fun of engaging in wholly participatory music-making, in regular informal improvisational jazz jams at various places.

Ísak is probably best known in his home country for his metal performances with Synarchy (for which he also composes) and with Týr frontman Heri Joensen's side-project Heljareyga. He is likely second best-known as a talented

jazz bassist (e.g., with the quartet A Blue Journey, for which he also composes). Ísak also plays bass in the dance cover band, Ego, to earn some extra cash.

He is also an avid and skillful composer, both in jazz and various metal sub-genres; most of the time when I visited Ísak at his house, I would find him in his room playing and composing using a combination of his electric guitar and bass and the music notation and composition software, Guitar Pro.[10] According to Ísak, music is the only thing he's ever been interested enough in to consider pursuing as a serious career. He had already started teaching music by the time I left the Faroes:

> ÍP: so, end of next month I'll start teaching [at *Kvøldskúli*, the evening school in the capital]. And that's basically all I do. I have had some other jobs, but nothing that really makes me want to—except music.
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> . . .
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> ÍP: Music is basically everything. Everything I'm…everything I love to do, and one of the few things that I'm really good at, so. . .

After discussing his potential future move for the purpose of studying at a foreign conservatory, Petersen also offered a number of insights into the challenges of trying to work as a musician in the Faroe Islands, including, primarily, the lack of audiences (due to the small population), the lack of suitable venues, and (mirroring Kim Joensen's earlier concerns) the islands' distance from and cost of getting to mainland Europe:

> ÍP: There are a couple of things that are really challenging. I think that one of the biggest issues is the lack of audience basically 'cuz

[10]Several of the metal bands I spoke to frequently used Guitar Pro for composing as its files' small size and easy transportability allow for easy collaboration via the internet, something that is especially useful for Faroese bands who have some members living in Denmark or elsewhere abroad.

there are so few people here that you play one show in Tórshavn, which can be really fun because a lot of people may show up, but then you can't play every day concerts because, after a few shows, people are like "oh yeah I've heard them now," so that's why we always have to play a show, and then one month later minimum we can play another show unless we're REALLY popular, which we are not.

. . .

ÍP: No, twelve times year in the same city is actually a lot.

. . .

ÍP: Yeah, well there are not really good concert halls here, well we have one major one, is Nordic House [the Nordic Council-funded Norðurlandahúsið], but to fill that up you have to have like 300 people or 400 maybe I dunno. So, for like a small band that's way too much to— but they have all the equipment and they have like a huge hall, and it's great, everything's great there, but it's mostly just the symphony orchestra and sometimes some big major bands rent it, bigger bands.

. . .

ÍP: And like the third most difficult problem is, of course, being so far away from mainland Europe you have to, it's very difficult to get in contact with people, 'cuz you can only write or call. But if you want to get on a tour you actually have to have the contact so they know the person who's arriving and stuff like that. And then if you do get a tour, then the transport from the the Faroes to Denmark is just a fuckin' drag cuz it's, it's only one company, flying company [airline, Atlantic Airways] and they charge WAY too much. I think you know that.

Perhaps not surprisingly, in his response to a question about the challenges of being a musician in the Faroes, Ísak mirrors Kim's earlier comments about the financial difficulties posed by the Faroes' geographic position in the middle of the north Atlantic. It is also almost as prohibitively expensive for bands and musicians to travel by ship, as Ísak later explained. (Return flights on Atlantic Airways from the Faroes to Copenhagen range anywhere between $350 and $550 CAD, and the three-day ship journey to northern Denmark can rarely be found for less than $470 CAD, not including meals). However, perhaps equally problematic, Ísak asserts, are the problems the islands' relative isolation and geographic position pose to making those essential connections with mainland

Europe to set up shows and tours. While email and other means of internet communication have been a tremendous boon to Faroese musicians, as they have for musicians elsewhere, as Ísak suggests, negotiating a spot on a tour may well require Faroese musicians to actually show up in person to meet promoters or organizers beforehand, which can quickly become quite expensive.

Because of the travel costs, as Ísak also explained, unlike fledgling bands or musicians elsewhere who can make a relatively inexpensive road-trip to play the occasional show further afield, that just isn't an option in the Faroes: "it's like, it wouldn't have been a problem if it was cheap to go from Faroes every time 'cuz then we could play in Denmark, regularly. But we can't go to Denmark and play one show. We have to go to Denmark and play a lot of shows. Or, somewhere else. We HAVE to book a tour, we can't just book one show."

John Áki Egholm of Hamferð echoed Petersen's concern with the difficulty of actually making contact with people in the music business outside of the Faroes. His immediate response to my question about the challenges of being a musician in the Faroes was:

> JÁE: The most difficult thing I believe personally to me is one important factor is the isolation. Of course, you can use the internet to promote yourself and your music, but you know at some point you have to show up elsewhere, and you know interact—
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> JG: Be present.
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> JÁE: Exactly and interact personally with people, especially for bands it proves to be a problem because it's expensive to get off these islands, and it is expensive to come back, and this really sucks basically.

In a separate interview, John's bandmate, Theodor Kapnas, expressed similar views about the most pressing concerns Faroese musicians have. As Theodor said, the biggest problems for his band are:

> Playing the same places over and over again. We've just been active for a year, one and a half year, and it already feels like we've played most places. We need—our album has been out since December [2010], but it feels to get any further in the Faroe Islands we need to release a new album and it's like 8 or 9 months [ago]. So, that's why now we've expanded into Iceland [tours and shows, including the prestigious Icelandic showcase festival, Iceland Airwaves] and we're going out into Europe [on a late 2011 tour with Týr] . . . Europe, you can do Europe three years with the same album, no problem, get new places. But in the Faroe Islands, like I said, we've played all places which are here basically with the material we have now. And, yeah, that's one challenging thing. Another challenging this is if you're obviously you want to go abroad and tour, it's too expensive, the flights are ridiculous. We were talking with the musicians over in the studio and everybody's basically just laughing at it, "I spend 100,000 [DKK] a year on. . . Atlantic Airways," "I spend 80,000," it's just huge amount of money just for flight tickets, every single year.

Others, like G! Festival founder Jón Tyril, have stated the main challenge for Faroese musicians more plainly. In his estimation, "[i]t's difficult to make a living out of it, So, you have to, either you have to work on the side, or you have to get abroad and just throw yourself out to experiment to try to get gigs." Singer-songwriter Guðrið Hansdóttir stated her case in similarly unequivocal terms:

> the bad thing is that if you're gonna do it [music] for like a— if you really wanna do it and you live off music, then it's a really hard part, because it's [the Faroes] too small, you don't have much to do. So, you know, I could live—I'm working here [at a youth club part-time] also, yeah because I don't want to—if I only should play music, I have to sit like down in the bar, play, like, in front of drunk people, I don't want to do that. I choose to have like a normal job also, like a half-time job, and then just play the good shows. Yeah, and then there's way too small and way too, you know, there are so few venues, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it's really hard, mmm.

Significantly, Guðrið was just about to move when I interviewed her. As she said, "I'm gonna live in Iceland for a while. . . in Reykjavik, yeah. . . because I can't— I just think it's— I can't stay in this place. Mmm. It's too small and too expensive."

Despite the many concerns Faroese musicians expressed to me about the difficulty of trying work as a professional musician in the islands, there was one area where artists on the islands seemed to have a clear advantage: an established financial support network for arts patronage. Guðrið herself, for instance, explained to me that she has been the recipient of a Faroese government grant that allowed her to concentrate on working on her albums. Though quite a few musicians whom I spoke to suggested that they felt the Faroese government could do more to help musicians, as I soon discovered when I looked further into the matter, musicians regularly receive funding from a number of government sources for the purpose of producing recordings and going on tour abroad.

Aside from the grants, Guðrið told me she has been extremely pleased with the support she has received from the Faroese government:

> I had a lot of support because I've gotten a lot of money for, you know, travelling and records and yeah so I think that is, that's a big plus to come live here and be Faroese. 'Cuz, ok they don't review my albums, but they give me money. Yeah (laughs), so THAT'S a good thing. And I'm really, really, it's— that's amazing to have that opportunity. Because I'm gonna play in the Iceland Airwaves [festival] and I don't get paid or get, you know. . . I'm just gonna play there, but I'm bringing my band from the Faroes and I have to pay them, you know, pay them like the flight, and, you know, money and I have to pay for, I have to pay for everything. So, that's when I . . . get money from the state to do that.

The principal government funding body from which the majority of Faroese artists (including Guðrið) who release albums receive support is called *Mentanargrunnur Landsins* (Faroese cultural fund). *Mentanargrunnur* essentially operates as a granting agency which provides financial support to various cultural and artistic endeavours (including visual art, films, music, and translations).

Judging by the majority of artists whose albums I was able to look at, *Mentanargrunnur* is perhaps the main source of government funding that Faroese artists turn to for support to produce their albums. Their name appears very frequently in album liner notes' thank you sections. *Mentanargrunnur* provides support for all genres of music recordings. Aside from the production of recordings, they also occasionally provide travel funding to help support musicians who are playing shows or tours abroad, as Guðrið noted. Another extremely important source of travel funding for Faroese musicians comes from *Norðurlandahúsið* (the Nordic House). A cultural and artistic venue located in the Faroese capital, eight percent of *Norðurlandahúsið's* annual budget comes from the Faroese government, while the remaining 92 percent comes from the regional cooperative intergovernmental body, the Nordic Council of Ministers. Some musicians told me that *Norðurlandahúsið* funds helped tremendously to assist their band's travel abroad, even when it was their first tour outside of the Faroes (Kim Joensen pers. comm.).

Aside from Faroese government support from Mentanargrunnur and support from other Nordic governments (via Nordic Council of Ministers monies from *Norðurlandahúsið,* or through Nordic Council grants), Faroese musicians often frequently draw financial support from a huge array of other sources in the islands. Significantly, there appears to be a pronounced grass-roots tendency in many musicians' approach to getting funding for albums and tours. From metal bands to solo pianists, it seems to have been common practice in the Faroes at least over the last decade or so for aspiring musicians to travel around their communities asking local businesses for donations to help produce their albums. Any sponsors who agree are to finance fledgling bands are, of course, credited in album liner notes.

Some artists manage to draw album support from an impressive array of business and municipal and national government sources. To illustrate this point, it is worth considering the surprising number of sources that pianist and

singer Bárður Johannesen lists in his liner notes' "financial support" section: Mentanargrunnur Landsins (Faroese government cultural fund), FJÖLRIT (Faroese members of the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organizations), Gramex (Finnish copyright society), Felagið Føroysk Tónaskøld (the Association of Faroese Composers), KODA (Danish collective rights management society),Tórshavnar kommuna (the municipality of Tórshavn), Landsbyggifelagið (Faroese national construction association), Trygd (Faroese insurance company), Tryggingarfelagið Føroyar (another Faroese insurance company), Føroya Banki (Faroese bank), Hvonn Brasserie (Tórshavn cafe), Tórshavnar kvøld-, ungdóm-, listaskúli (Tórshavn night-, youth- and art schools), Nomatek (Faroese seafood processing equipment manufacturers). All of these appeared on a single album.

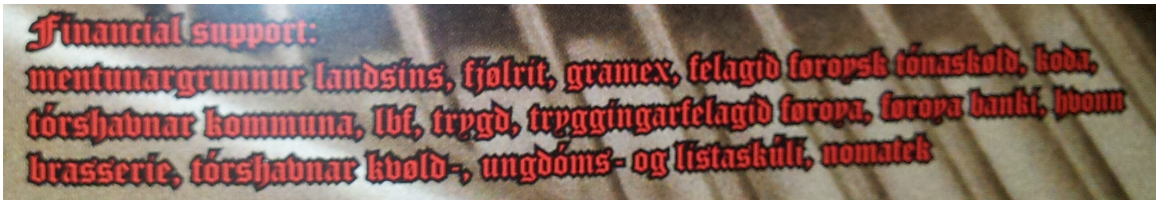

Figure 9. Cover and interior financial support section of Bárður Johannesen's 2010 album *Ancient Forgotten Stories*. Image credit: Bárður Johannesen and Tutl.

Before they achieved international success, Týr also looked to both government and local businesses to support their earliest albums. For instance, the Faroese brewery, Føroya Bjór, sponsored one of their first recordings. Though the specific businesses or municipalities change depending on what town or region the musicians are from, it is an unquestionably well-established practice within the Faroese music scene to seek local support for music recordings and travel funding support.

The Faroese record label, Tutl, also makes every effort to help musicians by whatever means they are able to. While support from Tutl can mean simply borrowing the company vehicle to travel to gigs outside the capital, Tutl often

also provides funding for the actual printing of albums for bands (intending to pay themselves back via album sales, otherwise the musicians eventually have to repay this "loan" to the label within a certain timeframe). Though Tutl is small, they have been working for some time to improve their capacity to support Faroese musicians. As the label's founder, Kristian Blak, explained to me:

> we've been working on a so-called business plan in Tutl for five years where we have asked for investments, because we know what has to be done. But that needs to have the money to go up to that level…we're that close to get enough money to hire music professionals, probably from other countries, until we have local — but that's how music is done everywhere. You work with the people across the world…over the last 4-5 years we've got a much better functioning local network, we sell our CDs better, we do promotion everyday [free] concerts in the summer, we do this and that, and that is a very good place to promote the music because many of the listeners are visitors [who wander into the shop, fresh off the ferry].

Though things are getting better for Tutl, as Kristian describes, he also explains that Tutl cannot do everything for Faroese artists on its own. As he told me, it is also essential for Faroese musicians to make international connections with foreign labels, which can lead to wider promotion and distribution, and success for one Faroese band that, in turn, can use their success to pull other similar Faroese bands along with them on tours. As he said,

> a band like Týr, they have a special type of music that they found a special label to promote, Napalm [Records in Austria], and that has been good for them, they have a worldwide audience and they'll travel more and more. And they can actually pull with them some of the other bands in the same vein. There's a couple of metal bands that can be support for them in concerts. . . that's a major exposure, it's 30 concerts, Hamferð can go with them in Europe so that's a way that they can get along. . . we cannot do everything. . . if you have a label like this [Napalm] that's in Austria that does nothing else but this Viking metal (laughs) then they have the whole world of Viking metal freaks and can make tours and have the credibility.

Interestingly, however, Kristian pointed out that such success ultimately necessarily pulls the bands away from the Faroes altogether. As he explained,

> we don't WANT the bands to leave, we don't send them away, but we have the very best connection with Napalm anyway. For Týr, we just by distributing in Faroe Islands and now we have an opportunity of Napalm taking Skalmold [an Icelandic metal band signed to Tutl] and maybe some other band and then we get the percentage that we are supposed to. And that's excellent for us, because we cannot replace their— we cannot do everything.

Kristian acknowledges both the huge benefits and the dilemmas that arise when bands like Týr sign to international labels. As he observes, success may well lead bands to leave the islands for good. Regardless, international success for Faroese musicians must necessarily lead them abroad. And, considering Kristian's opinion that physical distribution in shops is becoming less and less important in the face of digital distribution, it perhaps only makes sense that business is increasingly conducted through the internet for Faroese artists.

The few instances quoted above reflect some perennial concerns amongst most of the Faroese musicians I spoke with: it's difficult to play regularly (and thus, to make money) as a musician solely within the Faroes; it's prohibitively expensive to travel to and from the Faroes; and it's difficult to establish and maintain essential connections with music industry professionals outside of the islands. Despite these difficulties, some Faroese musicians have had considerable success internationally. Sometimes success is achieved via the low-cost strategy of repeatedly sending e-mails around the world to various bands that are planning European tours to see if one's own band might be able to come along as a supporting act.

Synarchy, for instance, were able to go on their first international tour around several countries in Europe because Petersen got in contact with the Brazilian band, Musica Diablo, via e-mail and found out they were planning a European

tour. Musica Diablo, though not a hugely famous band in the global metal scene, have a degree of renown and prestige thanks to their singer, Derrick Green, who also sings for the world-famous Brazilian metal band, Sepultura. Common practice (at least within the metal scene) is for smaller, less well-known bands, to attach themselves to more famous bands, who, the thinking goes, are intended to guarantee bigger audiences and more exposure for their smaller supporting acts. This arrangement is usually called a "buy-in" because smaller bands pay a (sometimes quite substantial) fee to accompany the larger bands and essentially piggyback on their renown. Ísak was able to negotiate a buy-in with Musica Diablo via the internet, and this led his band, Synarchy, on to their first multi-country international tour in 2010.

Indeed, despite Ísak Petersen and John Egholm's comments that you can only do so much organizing and communication via the internet, before you actually have to show up in person, many musicians spoke at length about the degree to which the internet has been a boon for Faroese musicians and the Faroes, more generally. For instance, rock musician Jens Marni explained to me how the internet has increased the degree and speed of connection between the Faroes and the rest of the world:

> JM: it's just that I think that the Faroese musicians in the last ten years have highered their standards really because the world is getting smaller, you know, we have the Youtube we have (phone?) [cellphones?] we have internet and that makes us much closer to all of the countries, you know. And we— right away, there's a new song, we're in it, you know, we can follow. . . 10, 20 years ago we had to wait maybe three months from the. . . releasing a song in United States until we get it in Faroe Islands, and it was a long time, you know, it was always late, you know. So, some places it was years from the song that was a hit in United States came to a small place in the Faroe Islands. . . you have the same possibility to be good musicians as all the other countries. . . yeah [the internet is] definitely good, definitely for the Faroes because you are there right away, that's the most important thing. And you can follow the music style, you can make the same music style [as other

countries]. . . if you didnt have that. . . you're old, if you didn't have the internet. But that's very great to have the internet.

JG: So it's really cool.

JM: Yeah yeah. Because we are little laying— we are here in the middle of the nowhere, you know, in the Faroe Islands, you know.

JG: Yeah.

JM: Away from England, away from United States, away from EVERYTHING, you know, when you have the internet, you're right there, so. . .

Other musicians I spoke to saw the arrival of the internet in the islands as a major factor which motivated the massive explosion of original Faroese music in 1990s. As bassist Mikael Blak explained to me his understanding of this 1990s creative boom in the Faroese music scene:

MB: Yeah there are a couple of things, one was the great depression in the early 90s, bank crash and no money, you know, that's a catalyst for good music anywhere, you know, people with not having to think for themselves. Right now people are, you know, driving around in their nice cars with no consequences. When things, you know, start, reality hits kind of, yeah I mean, you know, people think about more stuff and that's also why the national— the separatist party. . . had a great election in '98 and really, you know, a wave of young people wanted. . . stuff for ourselves, that plus the internet. People being aware of what's happening in the world. Before that, to get an album, you know, you have to kind of hear about a release being somewhere, go down to the music shop, get it ordered, and you would get it here (3 years after?) it was released

JG: A huge process. . . the rate of communication is so much different.

MB: Now and from the mid 90s, you could go online and find music and hear music and actually see shows being performed. . . get stuff that way, which enabled a youth revolution actually in the late 90s and early 2000.

Interestingly, Jens Marni's enthusiastic description of the benefits the internet has afforded the Faroes and Faroese musicians in particular also contains an interesting insight into how musicians in the Faroes conceptualize the islands and the experience of living there. That is, that the Faroes are just a "little" place, in the "middle of nowhere," and that they are "away from EVERYTHING" (i.e., the bigger musical and economic centres like the U.S. and England). Although the islands are, in a very tangible, geographic sense "away from everything" (being in the middle of the ocean), Marni's comments suggest a degree of self-conscious awareness or concern with the Faroes as an "isolated" place. His claim that the Faroes are "away from EVERYTHING" (preceded immediately by the specific naming of America and England) suggests that he perceives his nation as being "in the middle of nowhere" relative to other nations. More specifically, however, Marni's characterization of the Faroes' isolation frames the islands as being distant from some of the major Western centres of pop culture and, more significantly, of global economic and political power.

I understand Marni's assessment in one sense: the Faroes are not now, nor have they ever been, a key part of the global metropole. If one buys in to the logic of global capitalism which measures the "centrality" of countries largely on the basis of their GDP and the extent of their spheres of political, economic, and cultural influence, then the Faroes, as a small island archipelago nation (still technically part of larger nation-state) in the middle of the north Atlantic, are on the global "periphery." However, what is of particular interest is how many of the Faroese people I spoke with seemed to have internalized this rationale that frames the Faroes as "peripheral" and "away from everything." Many others seemed to imagine and frame their country's place in the world in this way.

From an early age Mikael Blak has traveled often. As the son of Kristian Blak and Sharon Weiss, musicians who toured widely in the 1980s, he got used to moving around a lot early on, and he has continued to do so as a touring musician

with well-known Faroese artists like Teitur and Eivør. As he explained to me, though he chooses to make the Faroes his home, he's glad that he doesn't have to stay there all the time:

> MB: Yeah we live here and doing touring is the only way that I can remain sane you know (laughs) not because of my family, but because of the Faroe Islands being a small island community and so shut off from the rest of the world, you know, I need to experience cities and other musical inputs and stuff, and if I hadn't been able to tour, I probably would have moved away from the Faroes. . . the idea was just to come back [to the Faroes] and finish school, and then go off somewhere else, but I started playing with all these bands and we started touring, and yeah, you know, I like living in the Faroes because it's tranquil, I can do great music here, and it's easy, I love this place, and I can still get to see the whole world.

Though he is happy making the Faroes his home, as Mikael also explained, he feels that he needs to see the rest of the world to "remain sane" because the Faroes are a "small island community and so shut off from the rest of the world." Speaking of his positive experiences at Wacken in Germany, one of the world's largest and most prestigious metal festivals, Ísak Petersen expressed a similar sense of frustration with the Faroes' isolation, saying, "I don't really remember the lineup, but it was just like amazing bands that I'd been wanting to see but I can't because I live in the fucking Faroes, no one comes here." Even more starkly, recalling the comment that singer Jón Jacobsen made to me as we stood outside a restaurant in his hometown of Klaksvík (poignantly, at a spot from which his childhood home was plainly visible off in the distance), in his opinion, when Faroese people are in the Faroes, they feel "trapped."

Other people I spoke to, however, acknowledged their perceptions of the Faroes' relative periphery and isolation, but were determined to try to change it. For instance, as the founder of the Faroes' first big music festival, G! Festival, Jón Tyril explained to me when describing the rationale behind the festival:

> JT: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It is a Faroese event. And the idea when we started, and the same idea is applicable still, was to get some of the best Faroese artists, showcase them, and give them a place where they can play. It was more difficult when we started [in 2002] than it is now, for bands just to have places to play. But now there's a lot of more things happening in cafes and in concert halls and so, yeah. One part of it is to have a stage for the best Faroese, and the best newcomers, and to showcase some of the best Faroese music. And the other part is to bring some new stuff in [international artists], that Faroese musicians can— and Faroese audiences can listen to and ya know get inspired by, whatever.
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> JG: Yeah get an opportunity to see them, y'know.
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> JT: Yes and interact and just to become a part of the music world, in some way.
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> JG: Yeah it gives them an opportunity they wouldn't otherwise have (chuckles).
>
> JT: Yeah, the Faroes hasn't been, in many ways the Faroes hasn't been a part of the world, and still isn't in many ways. It's not a part of the UN, but we have a football team that's playing against Italy and whatever, so in that sense we're part of the world. And in regards to fisheries we are part of the world somehow, but the music tradition is really strong and nobody knew about Faroese music until recently. And yeah, one part of the vision of G! is just to connect the Faroes, the musical scene in the Faroes to the world. And that means, first to our neighbours like Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, UK.

Jón Tyril's assertion that the Faroes haven't been (and still are not) "a part of the world. . . in many ways" echoes Jens Marni's sentiment about the Faroes being far away from everything. His description of part of his festival's mission being to help the Faroes "become a part of the music world" also speaks to the extent to which he imagines the Faroes to be somehow peripheral, and also to his own desire to exert a positive influence on this perceived periphery by encouraging musical development and inspiration within the Faroes (by giving Faroese

musicians a place to perform), and by enabling musical exchange and collaboration between Faroese artists and audiences and international musicians. Significantly, G! Festival also has developed a special relationship with the much larger Iceland Airwaves festival whereby each year the two festivals' organizers choose a few artists from their country to send to each other's festivals, thus facilitating a more literal and tangible type of musical exchange as part of G! Festival's aim to connect the Faroes and its musical scene to the world.

Many musicians' conceptualization of the Faroes as somehow peripheral and not part of the world is also reflected by the way that many of them spoke with conviction about the admittedly practical (especially for metal bands) need to go abroad to make a career for themselves as musicians. As Ken Johannesen of The Apocryphal Order (TAO) said to me of the band's future plans, "we are going abroad, I think that was one of the first things we talked about. . . this isn't really the place for us." Similarly, the members of Konqueror who, as mentioned at the beginning of this sub-section, dream of "going global," explained to me that, rather than release their album first on the Faroese label, Tutl, as they say everyone else does, they "want to try something new and if we get a label in Denmark or England or something, it might get more people to listen to us. All people here already know us, the metalheads at least, so we want to try something new to reach other people other than Faroese people" (Olsen pers. comm.).

As Tyril's above comments in particular reveal, many islanders' acute awareness of the Faroes' supposed periphery does not necessarily lead to a sense of hopelessness or irreparable isolation. Conversely, many musicians and other Faroese people decide to take matters into their own hands with their efforts to either bring the Faroes to the world, or to bring the world to the Faroes (i.e., be making regional and international connections). Others, like the Nordic art collective who call themselves The Provincialists (and held an exhibition under the same name), seek to reframe the meaning of peripheries by reclaiming and redefining words like "provincialism" and "vernacularism." In so doing, they also

seek to change the prevailing mode of thinking which casts places like the Faroes as somehow peripheral and "less than modern," simply by virtue of their small populations and physical distance from the world's more populous "centres."

The four Nordic artists of the Provincialists (two from Norway, one from Sweden, one from Iceland, and one from the Faroes) have created a website, complete with a manifesto, which features a number of essays by Faroese scholars on topics like the redefinition of centre-periphery relations. In their website's preface section, the Provincialists question the current global state of affairs which allows the creation of standards (in this case, of artistic taste) to be the sole domain of the world's supposed centres and metropolises:

> [d]espite the increased decentralization made possible by globalization, the great metropolises and biennials still set the standard for what is considered good or bad art. It goes without saying that most artists would rather have an exhibition in New York than on the Faroe Islands. At this point we want to reflect upon our role as provincial artists in this new global world perspective. [Provincialists 2007]

The website itself and many of the essays it features (including some by Faroese scholars) attack the notion that urbanity and modernity are necessarily inextricably linked, and thereby insist that alternative constructions and conceptions of modernity are necessary. Quoting from their manifesto, in their view,

> Provincialism has often been used to ridicule that or those it is applied to. The opposite of provincial is urban, and the term provincial is never used by those who do not see themselves as urban. In effect, the term says more about the one who uses it than about those it is meant to describe. This irony becomes even more striking when we recognise that by labelling something as provincial, the user hopes to highlight his or her own superior urban qualities and create a distance to his or her nearest neighbours who by implication lack these qualities.The cultural communities in the Nordic capitals are all too eager to label the Nordic countryside as provinces and its cultural and artist communities as provincial, mainly to secure their own spiritual

> bonding and trendy harmonic resonance with the great cultural metropolises like Berlin, New York, London and Milan. This may serve to justify the existence of the Nordic urban culture opinionator, but in reality any true cosmopolitan will find the comparison of actual world metropolises to small towns like Stockholm, Oslo and Reykjavik to be beyond ridiculous. The Nordic capitals are as "provincial" as the Nordic region itself. . . We have chosen to name the exhibition "The Provincialists" because we want to emphasise that we have in fact made a conscious decision to live and work in our countries Norway, the Faroe Islands and Iceland. We feel no need to distance ourselves from urbanity. Rather, we live in the province because it is here we are able to perfect our personal artistic language. [Provincialists 2007]

The senior Faroese scholar Eyðun Andreassen makes the case explicitly that the myth that some Western populous urban metropolises are at the world's supposed "centre" is merely an obfuscating euphemism for the fact that they are merely centres for the concentration of money and power. Andreassen's powerful assertion of why there is a need to re-conceptualize the notion of periphery helps cast more light on why many Faroese people, including Jens Marni (who said the Faroes are "away from everything") and Jón Tyril (who said the Faroes have not been part of the world in many ways), might continue to imagine the Faroes as peripheral. He writes,

> The idea that only the metropolitan art can capture and explain the modern world is a misconception that has originated in the metropolises themselves. It is created by its own proponents, based partly on the superficial idea that spatial distance equals distance in time, and partly on an effort to raise attention and publicity. The notion that time is reflected in physical distance is not only ridiculous, but is of course also misleading, and can have dangerous consequences. It implies that everything outside the big metropolises is outdated and therefore uninteresting, that the physical distance removes the province from the present, which exists only in the metropolis, and that the world is changing so fast that the present can only be understood by those who are in the centre of change, i.e., in the metropolis. . . Appointing oneself as

> the representative of the modern, when judging the contemporary, is a powerful tool of exclusion. This leads us to my second introductory claim, that this is a scheme to attract attention and money. One is left with the impression that the art debate and the artistic activity are all about business, and that the more or less unspoken assumption about the modernity of the metropolis is nothing but a clever paraphrase of the simple fact that this is where we find the big museums, the purchase accounts and the investment capital. This is a fleeting position, where quality ("modernity") is a euphemism for money value. . . The claim that something is trendy or modern involves an extensive conceptual transformation. It is all about power, or, more precisely, market dominance. Power to exclude others and establish oneself. [Andreassen 2007].

As Tyril's earlier comments about G! Festival trying to connect the Faroes to the rest of the world clearly show, the sentiment behind Andreassen's incensed argument is neither unfounded or unheeded elsewhere in the Faroes. Further, as will be discussed in the fifth chapter, "Making Metal Faroese," some Faroese musicians (including the musicians of Hamferð and Týr) are also intimately involved in projects that attempt to connect the Faroes to the world in other ways. While they attempt to make a living as professional musicians, artists like those of Týr and Hamferð are simultaneously concerned with creating intensely and intentionally Faroese music that also targets foreign audiences. As Ken Johannesen explained of his band's English-language lyrics, though, everyone may interpret the lyrics differently, they are "a lot about our way of living here [in the Faroes], right? So, in one small way, I like to think, you know, that we get our lives in the lyrics, I think, to show the world. . . for the outside world. . . that's the main reason we write in English, so we can connect."

Similarly, in their own way, the young musicians of Konqueror also seemed to be making a similar statement about their perception of how the Faroes relationship to the outside world could be reframed. Specifically, as they discussed with me the details of the rough sketch that would become their first album's cover, they told me that they explained to the artist in the town of

Vestmanna that they basically were just looking for three simple features: skulls, somebody conquering something, and the Faroe Islands.

Figure 10. Konqueror album cover. Image credit: Konqueror

The sketch that returned, which they all heartily approved of, featured a portion of a world map that depicted the Faroes as being in the centre and enlarged to a degree so that it was bigger than continental Europe (it also featured a human skull wearing the Faroese cap, part of the Faroese traditional clothing). As we

looked at the image, the band members made sure to point out to me that the Faroe Islands were "bigger than Europe," "in the middle" (as opposed to off to the side, top, or completely invisible as they are on many other maps). As Erland Joensen, the band's guitarist, said of the enlarged depiction of the Faroes on their cover "they're big and conquering the world." And what about that skull?: "it's a combination of metal and shows where we come from" (Jespur Jan Olsen pers. comm.).

The efforts of many in the Faroese music and scholarly communities to connect the Faroes to the world in their own ways and, for some, like the Faroese artists and essayists featured on the Provincialists' website, to re-configure notions like periphery which cast the Faroes as "away from everything" and "in the middle of nowhere," are arguably only the current manifestations of aims first expressed by Faroese nationalist artists over a hundred years ago. As Faroese poet Jóan Petur uppi í Trøð (1845-1901) wrote:

Hví skal alt ljósið í landsuðri liggja?
Heldur vit runt alla havsbrúnna hyggja;
harav birtist ljósið í Føroyum.

Why should all the light shine from the southeast lands?
Let us turn the horizon full circle;
and watch it light up the Faroes.

Internationally and Domestically Oriented Music in the Faroes

Although it was not a distinction I had given any thought to before I began my exploration of the Faroese music scene, after carrying out a number of interviews with musicians in different genres like metal, country, rock, and folk (or singer-songwriter), it quickly became apparent that musicians in the Faroes generally fall more or less into one of two categories: internationally-oriented or domestically-

oriented. While these categories are not entirely mutually exclusive (they should be understood more as two opposing poles on a continuum), they are useful in understanding something of the variety of music-making in the Faroes.

To be clear, internationally-oriented musicians are those groups or individuals who aspire (and actively endeavour) to spread their music beyond the Faroes and, ultimately, to make a career for themselves as full-time, international touring musicians. Established bands like Týr (and, perhaps, dedicated aspiring performers like the members of Hamferð and the singer, Guðrið Hansdóttir, who have begun to have some international success), and the also well-established solo performers Teitur (Teitur Lassen) and Eivør (Eivør Pálsdóttir) are exemplars of internationally-oriented Faroese musicians. Some exemplars of long-time, established domestically-oriented Faroese performers include the groups Páll Finnur Páll, Frændur, and solo artists like Hanus G. Johansen.

The notion of being internationally-oriented in the Faroes implies not only that these musicians hope and endeavour to be (and have had varying degrees of success in establishing themselves as) international touring musicians, but also that these artists often expressly target specific segments of the international music market by including specific elements in their music, or by shaping their image and compositions in such ways, that they feel will appeal to international audiences. In my in-depth discussions of the creative output and careers of the metal bands Týr and Hamferð further below, I describe some of the ways in which these bands have established, or are still attempting to establish, in Hamferð's case, themselves as internationally-oriented bands.[11]

Domestically-oriented musicians are those artists who generally are concerned with performing as part-time (or as full-time as is possible) musicians almost exclusively within the Faroes. Such artists perform, compose, print their publicity

[11]Other relevant aspects of the importance of international networks and the challenges and perceived necessity of leaving the Faroes to pursue a musical career are explored in the sub-section " 'We Are Going Abroad. . . This Isn't Really The Place For Us' ": Aiming Beyond The Islands."

materials, and so on, almost always exclusively in Faroese. Further, unlike internationally-oriented musicians who usually specifically mold their images and compositions in ways that they feel will appeal to international audiences, domestically-oriented performers tend to sing in Faroese about specifically Faroese topics and themes (as in Hanus G. Johansen's striking adaptations of the late beloved Faroese poet Poul F. Joensen's poems, and Páll Finnur Páll's song about the homeless people of Tórshavn).

The aforementioned band, Frændur, which has been around since the early 1980s, is also one of the most evidently domestically-oriented Faroese bands. Having released numerous albums and performed around the islands many times since their inception, Frændur's Faroese-language songs have become part of a corpus of widely-known Faroese sing-along songs which are often sung at parties. Faroese photographer Eileen Sandá has written an evocative description of a 2009 Frændur gig on the island of Suðuroy which took place on one of the many (often music-centric) festival celebrations that dot the Faroese summer calendar which emphasizes Frændur's popularity and position as an established domestically-oriented band:

> There were so many people in the marina of Tvøroyri at the Midsummer Festival, The Jóansøkufestival, and everybody knew the lyrics to all of the songs, it was so good to experience! The Faroese people love to sing, we sing Faroese songs to parties, and the songs of Frændur are always represented. The theme of the songs is mostly “love for our nation” and “love and peace” (Sandá 2009).

Sandá's sentiment about the centrality of Faroese sing-along songs like Frændur's to the Faroese party culture was repeated many times in interviews and conversations that I had with people. For instance, in my interview with the metal band, The Apocryphal Order (hereafter, TAO), in attempting to explain to me the quintessentially Faroese party, the *ball* (spelled the same as the English "ball," but having a different meaning and pronunciation), the band members said that a real *ball* must include a guitar and Faroese sing-along songs like Frændur's, one of the

bands they named specifically. One of the TAO members said that if they threw me a *ball*, that he would be sure to bring *grind* (the Faroese word for pilot whale meat from that animal which is still hunted in the islands). More often than not, including in the TAO interview, when people referred to a musical "tradition" in the islands when I had not explicitly asked them to talk about the ancient traditional music like the *kvæði*, they were referring to this *ball* or party guitar and sing-along tradition of such widely-known (often nationalistic) Faroese songs like Frændur's. Among many others, Teitur Lassen and Guðrið Hansdóttir, for instance, (the latter of whom called this *ball* guitar sing-along tradition the "Faroese way to party"), expressed common opinions about significance of *ball* singing tradition for an understanding of the centrality of music and musicality in Faroese society.

Other types of domestically-oriented artists include the countless country, pop, and rock cover bands who play at local dances and pubs (e.g., Roller Band). Most of these bands perform repertoires typical of cover bands in much of the English-speaking world (e.g., Creedence Clearwater Revival, The Beatles, and others). Groups which play a mixture of Faroese and English-language country (or, what some interviewees described as *dans*, "dance" music - a sort of Scandinavian variant of American country music which includes the use of horns) form a substantial portion of domestically-oriented bands in the Faroes. Newer groups like the first Faroese rappers, Swangah Dangah, as well as polished pop/rock party bands like Grandma's Basement are specifically targeting young, Faroese audiences.

Lastly, even though I believe the categories of "domestically-oriented" and "internationally-oriented" musicians are useful ways to conceptualize and better understand the variety of music in the Faroes, because, as I said, I consider these two domains to be opposing points on a continuum of musical activity (and not mutually exclusive), there are solo artists and groups which, even though they may more clearly lean in the direction of one pole or the other, seem to straddle

both domains to some extent. Immensely popular within the Faroes, the country artist Hallur Joensen, for instance, has perhaps sold more albums than any other Faroese artist on the islands (Mørkøre pers. comm. and Zachariassen pers. comm.), and he has most definitely targeted the Faroese audience specifically (in terms of his intensive Faroese distribution efforts and via his most recent 2011 album*, Enn stendur hurð mín opin,* which is entirely in Faroese). However, Joensen has also worked in Nashville and in the Faroes recording and performing with American musicians, and he has had some international success, both performing (in Denmark) and charting (in Italy and Belgium, with his English-language cover of the Ernest Tubb classic, "Walking the Floor Over You") (hallurjoensen.com 2012). Joensen and the perhaps unexpected case of the popularity of country music in the Faroes are dealt with in some detail in the sub-section, "The Islands' Most Popular Genre?: The Origin Myth and Significance of Faroese Country," which draws on David Samuels' discussion of the meaning of repeatedly performed American popular songs in an Apache community.

The Islands' Most Popular Genre?: Notes on the Origin Myth and Significance of Faroese Country

My interest in Faroese country music stems from an impression I had formed long before stepping foot on the islands: that country music in the Faroes, as in many places in the world, is a genre of music that is deeply important to a huge segment of the population. This impression was informed not only by my discovery of the many Faroese country artists before I left for the Faroes, but also by own previous experience with relative popularity of genres like country in communities like Miramichi. In Miramichi, after a lengthy and historically-informed study of a small community of performers of traditional a cappella music that the region is famous for, I realized that I had been ignoring a huge arena of "music as social practice" by having excluded the extremely active and long-standing country music scene in Miramichi. In Miramichi, as elsewhere in

rural New Brunswick, many people enjoy listening, performing, and dancing to country music at social events. In many cases a generations-long family tradition, country music in New Brunswick has become a meaningful and well-established form in its own right with its own relatively long, locally meaningful history of production and consumption.

Similarly, before I departed for the Faroes, via YouTube, MySpace, and various websites and interviews, I learned that country appeared to be quite common in the islands as well. So, while I left with some specific questions in mind (i.e., about the re-framing of Faroese traditional music and the changing role of traditional music in Faroese society), I wanted to also remain open to the possibility that all of my earlier expectations about the most meaningful and interesting forms of social music-making might well be overturned if I arrived in the Faroes and found that around half the population only really cared about participating in country music (and could care less about traditional Faroese music or its reinterpretation in modern styles). Though, as I explain in the preceding history chapter and in the sub-sections on traditional music in contemporary society (and especially the chapter on Faroese metal), traditional Faroese music and oral literature do retain considerable significance in the Faroes today, country music is also of considerable importance in the islands. Therefore, anyone with a professed interest in the social significance of music in Faroese society today would only do themselves a disservice if they ignored country entirely, and doing so would risk over-representing or over-estimating the supposed value or significance of one form of musical practice over another. For that reason, I was determined from the outset to ascertain some notion of country's place amongst the variety of extant musical practice in the Faroes.

I received a considerable variety of responses to my questions about what people though the most popular type of music was within the Faroes. Some people suggested that it was probably the sort of domestically-oriented, Faroese language music that often gets sung at a party (*ball*): "music you can sing along to

like Páll Finnur Páll, you know, crap music in Faroese. . . it's very entertaining and fun to listen to. . . fun to go to concert and sing along, but it's really nothing you'd sit down and listen to really, ah?" (K. Joensen pers. comm.), while others suggested that, like most places in the world, mainstream international pop was the most popular in the Faroes; it is played on the nation's two non-Christian radio stations a lot (Fossaberg pers. comm.). However, one of the most common responses was that the most popular music in the Faroes was that which was played for dancing, including local cover bands who played 1970s and 1980s international classic rock and other types of covers. Many people also tried to define the majority of this dance music more specifically, explaining that it was most either simply country or a sort of Scandinavian variant of American country music. As producer and studio owner, Kristoffer Mørkøre, explained to me in response to my question about the most broadly popular music within the Faroes:

> Kristoffer Mørkøre: In the Faroe Islands? Well, I think there's no doubt about that, I think it's country music, yeah. But, ok.
>
> Josh Green: No doubt, eh?
>
> KM: No doubt. I think, yeah. I don't know how to say "country" music, it's like dance— ah, not "dance," yeah we call it like dance music but it's not "dance" music it's not like hip hop dance [i.e., not electronic/techno club dance music]. . . it's like…country music with saxophones, or something like that I don't (laughs) I don't know, yeah, it's a Swedish type of music that's very popular.

Singer-songwriter Guðrið Hansdóttir also expressed a similar sentiment and tried to explain to me what she meant by her suggestion that "country music" was the most popular genre in the islands, other than with the young people, whom she said have very diverse tastes:

> GH: I think the, of course for adults like grown-up people, country, it's really big. Country music. Yeah. That's probably the biggest, I

think so. Yeah and like dance music, not "dance," but this that old people like to listen to.

JG: Like violin and stuff?

GH: Yeah no it's, uhm, yeah we call it *dans*, "*dansband*" it's called.

Guðrið's description of this widely popular music type as *dans* or *dansband* music (simply, music that is meant for dancing) matches what many other people told me. While not necessarily referring to a specific genre (i.e., exclusively rock), *dans* music does comprise a fairly standard repertoire of (mostly) cover songs from the genres of classic rock and, especially, country. The Faroese music information website tonleikur.fo (*tónleikur* is Faroese for "music") divides Faroese performers into a few categories, including notably, DJs, *konsertbólkar* ("concert bands"), *dansitónleikur* ("dance music," a.k.a. *dans*). While the *konsertbólkar* section lists musicians who perform a wide variety genres (everything from pop, blues, jazz, folk, country, metal, and beyond), many of the bands in this category play music that tends more towards the presentational field (music "for listening") than the participational field. For instance, unequivocally presentational music like that of the classical chamber music ensemble, Aldubáran, and the free-jazz/classical/improvisational band Yggdrasil are listed in the *konsertbólkar* section.

In the *dansitónleikur* section by contrast, there is a much narrower selection of genres on display, and, as Hansdóttir, Mørkøre, and others suggested, classic rock and country cover bands make up the majority of the *dansitónleikur* section. One thing is shared by all of the bands in this section: this is participatory music, meant for singing and dancing along to. Some groups, like Norrøna Dansband, even make their dance focus evident in their name. On the tonleikur.fo information page for the band dance band Punktum, one can find typical cross-section of the sort of music typically found at Faroese dances. The group is described has playing everything from rock and country to blues, and specifically

lists Johnny Cash, Willy Nelson, Kris Kristofferson, Credence Clearwater Revival [CCR], The Beatles, Status Quo, John Mogensen, Eric Clapton, Eagles, Jim Reeves, and Elvis Presley (tonleikur.fo).

Aside from slightly more obscure artists like John Mogensen (1970s Danish singer) and perhaps 1970s English rock band, Status Quo, the rest of the artists listed in Punktum's regular dance repertoire are likely all too familiar to anyone who has ever attended a dance featuring music by a local cover band in Canada or the US. As in many places across the world that have had access to English-language radio music (especially country and classic rock), the Faroes also have developed a strong tradition of dancing to locally-reproduced versions of internationally successful popular music hits.

As G! Festival founder, Jón Tyril, explained to me, in the time before G! Festival, and especially when he was growing up in the 1980s, there were only a few Faroese bands making original music, some of which one could hear at concerts around Ólavsøka, and aside from this handful of original bands, "it was mostly cover bands who were playing in the weekends in clubs and they were playing Creedence [CCR] and Beatles and stuff like that." Similarly, metal musician John Egholm explained to me that, in his opinion, especially outside of the capital in smaller villages, this sort of music was very popular: "out in the sticks they love Creedence [CCR] and Elvis and Johnny Cash and things like that." And, although I spent the majority of my time in the Faroes speaking with people who were involved in creating original music, this sort of highly participatory *dans* music is obviously tremendously popular in the Faroes, and it likely holds considerable significance for the huge proportion of Faroese people who regularly enjoy singing and dancing along to this music at local dances. Therefore, a brief consideration of one of the central arguments from David Samuels' 2004 book, *Putting a Song On Top of It: Expression and Identity on the San Carlos Apache Reservation* will help explain something of the significance of such popular *dans* music in the Faroese context.

In his radical reconfiguration of the idea of "local music," David Samuels, in a study of the affective power and meaning of music on an Apache reservation in Arizona, has argued eloquently for an understanding of classic rock and country songs as "Apache music" (Samuels 2004). Specifically, Samuels explores how "oldies" (classic popular music radio songs and LP recordings, including country and rock songs) become "encrusted with the kinds of histories and experiences that are easily brought to mind on rehearing them" (Samuels 2004:139). In Samuels' estimation, such songs derive their "transportative power" from the "feelingful responses the song evokes in a listener," and "[m]ediation plays an important role. . . in its capacity for repetition" (2004:139). Mediation, as "a technology of memory," refers to how "the recurrence of a song played on the radio or on the jukebox. . . on a boom box or by a band at a party, allows a building up and layering of experiences and feelings. . . [which are] recoverable by being linked to the repeatability of the mediated expression" (2004:139).

In Samuels' view, then, the countless repetitions and reproductions of technically "foreign," i.e., non-Apache songs (largely older American popular music) have the effect of allowing for the songs' accrual of multiple personal and local meanings. Further, as Samuels observed, "repetition brings these feelings-linked to past experiences, places, and people—back into the apprehension of the listener, so that what once was is again" (Samuels 2004:139). Further, as he writes "this layering of people, places, events, and music is the thickening of experience, the knowledge of what it means and how it feels to be from San Carlos. . . this thickening becomes historical consciousness, for more accurate than saying that music triggers memory is to say that music triggers the imagination through the evocation of mood" (2004:139). And it is this evocation of mood through locally repeated songs that results in "the feelingful layering of indexicality and iconicity [which] brings listeners to the sense that they share that feeling with the past" (2004:139). Such songs, in a sense, are thus "made local," imbued as they are with local, personal, and communal meanings.

While I cannot attest to whether or not the continual repetition and reproduction of *dans* music in the Faroes similarly evokes a feeling of "how it feels to be from the Faroes" upon rehearing such songs, Samuels' explanation of the sorts of processes by which "non-local" songs become "encrusted" with local histories and experiences that are "easily brought to mind on rehearing them" (Samuels 2004:139) almost certainly also applies in the Faroes with reference to *dans* music.[12]

Samuels' discussion of the local significance of oldies deriving from their repeated repetition which results in a layering of later recoverable experiences and feelings is likely especially applicable to country music in particular in the Faroes, where it makes up a large proportion of *dans* music. Though not as long as that of America and Canada, country music as a locally consumed and reproduced genre has had a surprisingly long history in the Faroes, and, as such, a long period throughout which international country hits have been regularly replayed and repeatedly performed. A number of country classics have even been translated into Faroese, including, perhaps most famously, Charley Pride's 1971 hit, “Kiss an Angel Good Mornin' ,” rendered into Faroese by Hallur Joensen as “Kyss ein eingil hvønn morgun,” which Hallur performed onstage alongside Pride in 2009, half in Faroese, half in English, when the country legend visited the islands for a concert there.

Though it is difficult and beyond the scope of the thesis to determine exactly when country music came to the Faroes, it certainly has a history that spans over fifty years in the islands. However, I did hear a rather interesting story about the arrival of country in the islands that was later backed up by a number of people whom I interviewed.

[12]Samuels' ideas about music's transportative power, the evocation of feelingful responses from listeners, and especially music's capacity to trigger a sort of historical imagination through the evocation of mood are also extremely relevant to the later chapter on the constitution of meaning in Faroese metal.

Early on during my time in the Faroes, I was clumsily poking around places in the capital where I thought I might be able to run into some music lovers (including the local practice space, the CD stores, and the instrument shop). In so doing, I began a series of occasional friendly conversations with one of the musical instrument shop employees who happened to be a huge country fan and knew many people involved in the surprisingly active Faroese country music scene. During a discussion one afternoon, this fellow explained to me that he had heard a story from one of Faroese country's elder statesmen that went something like this: country music came to the Faroes directly via Canada and the newly-confederated Newfoundland. More specifically, around the 1950s and early 60s, Faroese fishermen who were fishing off the coast of eastern Canada (and Newfoundland in particular) went ashore and became acquainted with American country music, bought country records, and brought them back with them to the Faroes.

Considering their long history as a seafaring people, it is little wonder that many Faroese sailors continued to travel widely throughout the 20th century working on ships in various capacities. One morning, while visiting a small village library which doubles as a tourist information office and informal cafe for some of the older townspeople, I met an elderly Faroese former sailor who told me that he had been to nearly every major port in the world over the course of his many years at sea. Similarly, one evening I had a chat with another older Faroese former sailor (who wore around his neck a Mjölnir pendant - a stylized Thor's hammer) who had tragically lost a few of his fingers while on a ship off the coast of Newfoundland. Because of the accident he told me he had to go ashore in Newfoundland where he spent some time in a hospital there.

Given the worldwide roving of Faroese sailors and fishermen throughout the 20th century, nothing about the story of the Newfoundland dissemination of country music to the Faroes seems particularly improbable. Further, when I asked other people involved in Faroese country whether they had heard this story and

whether or not they thought it was credible, they agreed that it seemed to have been the likely case. When asked about the story, the islands' best-known country producer, Jákup Zachariassen, said "yeah I have heard that story many times about fishermen from— especially the old artists like Charley Pride and Jim Reeves, and stuff like that. And, yeah, I believe that, I believe that, yeah. . . I think that's a good explanation."

Thinking I might have been able to get some idea of country's start in the Faroes by asking Zachariassen (who was then 45 years old) if he recalled whether or not country had also been played on Faroese radio for as long as he could remember, he explained, "Yeah I remember, there was country music always, country music on the radio, but I think that's. . . since the fishermen came from Newfoundland or Canada, probably late 50s or 60s, something like that." Speaking of this earliest period of country in the Faroes, country musician Hallur Joensen told me that, in his opinion, when sailors came back from Newfoundland with albums "that's the background for music in the Faroe Islands, you know, with guitars. And when Faroese made music in the 50s, it was really country music but only with the Faroese language, I think that's the story about the music in the Faroes, I think." Further, when I asked Joensen whether or not he thought there was much interest in country in the Faroes before the arrival of LPs via Newfoundland, he explained that he did not think because the radio stations people were able to receive and listen to in the Faroes in the 50s were from Norway, which, in his opinion would have been playing mostly a sort of harmonica music that was popular at that time (waltzes, etcetera) in Norway, and not country. As he said, continuing, there were lots of guitars in the Faroe Islands, but (in terms of country), "it's all about the 40s, 50s when they came to Newfoundland."

The arrival of radios in the Faroes was part of what Nauerby calls "the second phase in the opening of the Faroes to the outside world" (Nauerby 1996:99) which "began after the Second World War, with the developments in the use of

airborne electronic media and the increased travel activity. In many villages during the way there were only one or two radios. Within the next ten to fifteen years, their number increased dramatically and around 1960, all homes possessed one. The Faroese broadcasting service began in 1957, but before that time it had been possible to pick up radio programmes from Norway and Denmark; stations which still have a strong following, especially among elder listeners" (1996:99). As noted above, others have suggested that English broadcasts were also receivable in the Faroes in those earliest days (Sunleif Rasmussen pers. comm.).

Despite Zachariassen's above acknowledgment of the likely arrival of country to the Faroes via Newfoundland, he was also quick to point out that the Faroes' neighbours, many of whom have a long history of country themselves, also likely played some role in the genre's popularity in the Faroes:

> JZ: Yes but of course we have also the relationship to Scotland and Ireland, and that's a lot of, not so country music but it's folky music, yeah, so of course I think some influences from Ireland and Scotland, and Shetland. . . and of course Norway is also quite big for country music, they, Norway, actually Sweden and Denmark have a tradition for country music, ah we call it *"dans"*— dance music, it's another genre but it's really closely related to country
>
> JG: It is a different genre?
>
> JZ: Yeah they use steel guitar and in country songs they have saxophone and stuff like that so it's kind of a special genre (chuckles)
>
> JG: Some tried to explain it to me because they wouldn't say "country," they say dans but not "dance"
>
> JZ: Yeah not dance, no
>
> JG: Like country
>
> JZ: But it's not pure country, it's not traditional country, it's a Scandinavian kind of country

JG: Variation of country

JZ: Yeah they use saxophone, strange organs, and a lot of reverb on their— yeah, it's a kind of— you can hear it when they play on the radio, I had never heard of that genre in the States, never.

Zachariassen's above comments help to further clarify the history of country (and part of the reason for its popularity) in the Faroes, as well as to better elucidate the two separate usages of the Faroese word *dans* in reference to descriptions of popular music. Zachariassen suggests that the popularity of folk and country styles in Ireland and Scotland likely had some influence in the Faroes, but also perhaps more significantly, that the Scandinavian countries have their own northern European variant of country. This variant notably often includes instruments like saxophone and organs not typically found in American country, and is commonly referred to simply as *dans* music. Zachariassen's explanation makes clearer the distinction between American country and its Scandinavian variant, *dans,* which Mørkøre hinted at in an earlier comment. To be clear, then, a more narrowly descriptive usage of the term *"dans"* as a genre (a Scandinavian variety of country) can be understood as technically separate from the aformentioned terms *dansitónleikur* ("dance music") and *dansband* ("dance band"). However, in practice, any examination of *dansitónleikur* (the actual repertoire of *dansband* bands), would reveal that, along with covers of English-language classic rock songs, country music makes up a significant portion (in the form of its Scandinavian variant, *dans*).

Speaking as the founder of the main Faroese label, Tutl, who is regularly involved in the day to day affairs the label's music store in the capital's downtown, and as a man who has been involved in the commercial side of Faroese music for at least 35 years, Kristian Blak offered his own insights into the popularity of country and *dans* music in the Faroes:

> have Norwegian dance bands they come here sometimes to play, vocal dance bands, that's a little bit like that, like country and western. Ah, but it's not only country and western, it's also just older music. We see that in our sales, in what people come to for dances and entertainment, but that's that cannot be totally true because if you take the two festivals, the two open door festivals, they attract a lot of people, and then it's mainstream pop that attract the most audience, they don't have dance band music, of course, it's not concert music but what attract them could be groups like Europe [1980s Swedish rockers who became an international radio success with their hit *The Final Countdown*].

Speaking further to the popularity of country (and *dans* music, in general), Blak explained that, aside from the two big annual music festivals in the Faroes (G! Festival and Summarfestivalur), the most common and reliably well-attended music events in the Faroes are probably the dances of the sort which sometimes take place in large sports arenas like Tórshavn's Høllin á Hálsi: "you can have a dance party. . . in the sports thing and it'll be full in the week." Though they sell almost exclusively Faroese music nowadays, the Faroese affinity for country was also reflected in Tutl's shop sales: as Blak recalled "there's been great interest in old country, in the shop we had, when we sold international music, many crooners, they came to get big boxes of [1960s and 70s American country star] Bobby Bare (chuckles) and all those." Immediately following this comment, Blak's wife, Sharon Weiss, suggested a similar interest in late 1940s American country star, Hank Williams, and Blak concurred. And, as testament to the lasting popularity of these old American country performers in the Faroes, Bare himself (then over 70 years old) performed at the 2011 Summarfestivalur in the northern village of Klaksvík to a healthy and dedicated crowd who endured the characteristically brutal Faroese weather to attend his show.

While the Newfoundland country music origin anecdote serves as an interesting example of the often unexpected routes by which music is transmitted (or, if you like, one of the unlikelier processes or modes of a music's globalization), determining its truth in a strict historical sense is probably neither

possible or necessary. That is, whether or not the supposed initial arrival of country music in the Faroes via Newfoundland is the "sole source" for the genre's initial foothold and subsequent half-century of popularity in the islands, the Newfoundland story makes sense as part of a history of Faroese engagement with a regionally popular globalized music form (country). Influenced perhaps equally by the growing popularity and development of a regional country variant (*dans*) in their neighbouring Scandinavian countries, and by the possible arrival of country LPs in the old days with sailors traveling back from Newfoundland, country "came to the Faroes" in force at some time around the middle of the twentieth century and has since gained a great deal of popularity as a locally consumed and produced music in the islands.

Aside from country's relatively long history in the Faroes, a number of other factors, many outside the scope of this thesis and too diverse to enter into detailed discussion about here, likely help account for much of its popularity in the islands. However, it is worth mentioning just a few that came up in conversation. Even disregarding the fact that the most basic sonic characteristics of country make it comparatively easy to perform (i.e., in terms of necessary technology, an acoustic guitar and a voice are easy to come by), there are, of course, other relevant factors in explaining country's popularity. In particular, the working-class appeal of country (explored in detail with reference to American country music in Fox 2004) was also cited by Zachariassen as one reason for the genre's popularity:

> (laughs) yeah its probably the most famous genre in Faroe Islands [country] and I think it's for the working class kind of thing you know, it's— the lyrics are not so complicated, and it goes straight through to that kind of people who are more, I mean working class people, I think that that's the fisherman and all that kind of stories where people going away and you know.

Though "working class people" in rural Texas and the Faroes might have little else in common, in Zachariassen's estimation, the straight-forward, easily-

relatable nature of country music helps to explain some of the music's appeal in the islands. While working class people in the Faroes have been traditionally associated more with activities like fishing, fowling, whaling, sailing, and animal husbandry (namely, shepherding), as he suggested, the fact that Faroese people often have to (historically as well as today) "go away" to make a living perhaps resonates strongly with audiences when hearing stories about family and work portrayed in countless country songs.

Further, when I asked whether or not perhaps the strength of religion in the Faroes might have something to do with the genre's popularity there, Zachariassen replied, "yeah I think that— I think that that's right yeah because a lot of older people love country music and it's really gospel-related and a lot of country singers release gospel albums, Jim Reeves, even Elvis." On the theme of the connection between religion and country, he continued, discussing the popularity of the elderly American gospel singer, Bill Gaither, in the islands:

> Jakup Zachariassen: Yeah [Gaither] another big American artist, gospel artist, really a kind of southern gospel, Florida kind of thing, and it's really, really country also, but that's quite big here in Faroe Islands.
>
> Josh Green: Gospel mixed with country sort of thing.
>
> JZ: Yeah gospel, country southern gospel. . . and stuff like that.
>
> JG: Yeah where they mix country and gospel.
>
> JZ: Yeah I think religious people really like country music.

Zachariassen's observations, coming as they do from a man who has worked for over 20 years producing Faroese country music, offer invaluable bits of insight into the significance of country music for Faroese people. However, because I only spent a relatively small portion of my time in the Faroes discussing country music, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss Faroese country in detail.

Even a consideration of the social significance of country in the Faroes as necessarily brief as this one is would be woefully inadequate, though, if I did not make at least brief mention of two related stories that illustrate something of the importance of the genre in the Faroes: that of the concert (and subsequent DVD production) entitled *Nashville.fo,* and the second is the story of Hallur Joensen, *Countrykongurin í Føroyum* ("the Country King of the Faroes").

Jákup Zachariassen has played a tremendous role in the Faroese country music scene over the past few decades. Though I had heard something about a Faroese-Nashville connection before I came to the Faroes, Zachariassen's own re-telling of this interesting transatlantic relationship that he initiated was concise, so it is best to let him speak for himself about it. He began the Nashville story by stating, simply, "I've been in Nashville recording for many, many, many years. For 20 years, something like that. I've probably done 25 albums in Nashville. Recorded in Nashville yeah. I'm actually the one who started the kind of Nashville in the Faroe Islands, brought Faroese artists to Nashville." Continuing, he explained:

> [i]t started 20 years ago in '89, no actually it's 22 years ago, it started that a Faroese artist called Alex, he was a really big famous artist in the 80s, Alex Bærendsen . . . and he asked me to do an album, country album, and my first thought was, "Alex is going to do a country album, it has to be in Nashville." And as time went, I didn't have—I actually did [incomprehensible, sounds like "invited"] an American gospel called The Imperials to the Faroe Islands to sing, to perform, and their management was in Nashville. So, after the concert in Faroes, I contacted them and said I was interested in doing an album in Nashville and asked them to help me to find some connection. So me and my wife went over in '89, didn't know anybody, except the management for Imperials. And the management actually presented me for five or six different producers from Nashville and I met all of them. And one of the guys, a man called Edgar Struble, and he has been a musical director for Kenny Rogers for 15 years and he's actually the musical director on American Music Awards, he's a big name. . . after we met we really connected and we became really friends and actually the rest of the days in Nashville we lived at his house. Yeah, so we really connected as friends and ever since that

> started and we did first, second, third album. . . and ever since Edgar and me has been great, great friends. For six years ago he moved to LA to do some film work, of course, I know a lot of people in Nashville now. I met Edgar, he was a well-known producer, knew everyone in town, and after doing 20, 25 albums, Edgar has been in Faroe Islands many times and all the best musicians in Nashville has been here. That concert we had two years ago, David Hungate from [70s/80s American rock band] Toto— the bass player from Toto, Paul Leim, drummer, playing with Lionel Richie, Brent Mason, and Paul Franklin. . . [steel guitar] player with [70s/80s British rock band] Dire Straits, and all those guys came to Faroe Islands, because I brought them here.

By his own estimation, since the 1980s Zachariassen has been involved in playing on, mixing, or engineering many more than 100 albums between his previous work at his own former Tórshavn-based studio and his current work in his own studio in Hoyvík (a large village just north of the capital which has merged with Tórshavn) where he owns one of two studios in a two-studio complex in the basement of the home of fellow producer, Kristoffer Mørkøre. The above-mentioned concert of two years ago which he mentions above was an event he organized called Nashville.fo, a sort of textual play on words which acts as shorthand for "Nashville in the Faroes" ("fo" is the Faroese national internet address suffix, as ".ca" is to Canada). Through his connections in Nashville and elsewhere, Zachariassen brought together a number of legendary American country musicians (including those he mentioned above as well as John Hobbs, Bryan Sutton) to perform a concert in the Faroes in the summer of 2009. The American artists were joined by a number of Faroese singers, including well-established people like Eivør and Hallur Joensen, who sang a mixture of country standards and originals in both English and Faroese. The event was professionally filmed, recorded, and later distributed on DVD.

Zachariassen's brief summary of his twenty-plus year Nashville connection and friendship with Edgar Struble and the 2009 concert which was held in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Faroese-Nashville collaboration are testaments to

the significance of country music in the Faroes and of the lengths to which some dedicated Faroese musicians will go to take Faroese music abroad, and to bring international music to the islands.

Zacharissen's story is, perhaps not surprisingly, also linked to that of the Faroese country king, Hallur Joensen. Long before I met Joensen, I had heard many people speak highly of him and mention his best-selling album. As Zachariassen explained, "Hallur is probably the biggest country star in Faroe Islands, much the biggest, yeah." Though they haven't known each other very long, the two started working together in 2008 when Joensen returned from Denmark where he had been living since the early 1990s. Joensen had begun his country career in Denmark at the leader of the band Western Blues with whom he toured for years, making a name for himself around Scandinavia. Shortly after his arrival back in his home village of Klaksvík in 2008, Joensen sought out Zachariassen (who had become the go-to name for country music in the Faroes during his time living in Denmark), and the two traveled to Nashville to record Joensen's debut solo album, *Pickin' Time in Nashville* (where Joensen was joined by a number of famed Nashville musicians, including many of those who later appeared at the Nashville.fo concert).

Pickin' Time in Nashville, which contained fourteen English-language covers of classic American country songs (as well as Joensen's Faroese rendition of a Charley Pride number, mentioned earlier), quickly became one of the Faroes' best-selling albums. Depending on whom you ask, the album was either the best-selling Faroese album of the year (hallurjoensen.com), the best selling album within the Faroes of the last ten years (Zachariassen pers. comm.), or the islands' best-selling album of all time, with Jens Marni's rock album coming in second (Mørkøre pers. comm.).

In any case, Joensen's first album sold extremely well: 6,000 copies in the Faroe Islands alone (Zachariassen pers. comm.). His second album in 2009, *Smile*, saw the Nashville.fo musicians come to the Faroes to record with him there and

combined a few original songs (including some in Faroese, all written by Zachariassen), with a good deal more covers of country standards. Though it was released only one year later, *Smile* sold around 4,000 copies within the Faroes; Joensen sold approximately 10,000 albums in a country of fewer than 50,000 inhabitants over the span of two years. This fact alone speaks volumes both to his popularity, and to the huge appeal of home-grown country music in the Faroes. Though it had only been released shortly after my arrival in the Faroes, Joensen's most recent album, *Enn Stendur Hurð Mín Opin* ("still/once again my door stands open"), which is entirely in Faroese, was purportedly also selling quite well (the album is mostly originals along with a Faroese-translated cover of the American country song, "In a Town This Size").

Joensen's own long history of involvement with country music probably reflects the similar experiences and histories of a lot of his Faroese fans. As he explained to me when we met for an interview one night when I asked him about his musical background and whether or not he came from a "musical family":

> not actually a musical family, but we are singing a lot in the family in the early days, and I got three brothers and two of them was fishermen, and when they came back from Newfoundland they got LPs, uh, music with country and— so and they were trying to— one of the brothers played guitar and they played a lot. And I was just six, seven years old I was listening to this music. My father he was really happy about Hank Williams, really, REALLY big fan of Hank Williams. So, when I try to play guitar when I was nine years old, I try to make him happy with learning Hank Williams songs and I will tell you THAT'S my background for everything.

Born in 1967, Joensen's own musical history from the very beginning was connected with the flow of country music out of Newfoundland (via his older brothers), and that, along with his father's deep fondness for Hank Williams' music, Joensen feels, set him on a lifelong path of pursuing country music. In that interview, Joensen talked a bit about his personal connection and history with country, but also told me that he really tried to explain the story in detail in the

liner notes of his first album ("how it actually happened, why I like this kind of music"). The album notes, written by Faroese country music radio show host Petur Rouch, offer further interesting insight into the Faroes-Newfoundland connection, the music's early history in the islands, and Joensen's own connection to country:

> in [Joensen's home village] Klaksvík Hank Williams has a Godlike status as the country singer above all others. In the fifties and sixties fishing vessels from Klaksvík went all the way to New Foundland [sic] and they did not only bring back fish, but also loads of country music, that the crew had heard on American and Canadian radio stations. In Klaksvík the music often was copied to tape or cartridge amongst the fishermen and as Hallur's father, who was a taxi-driver, and knew everyone of the fishermen, Hallur grew up with Hank Williams' music in his home and in his dad's taxi. [Rouch 2008]

Regarding first and lasting impressions of Joensen and his music, again in the liner notes, Rouch also remarked of Joensen that "this guy has a vast knowledge about country music," and, of his album, that "it's great music, and Hallur is a first class singer. We are proud of him" (Rouch 2008).

Aside from Rouch's warm and illustrative comments and Joensen's few comments about his father already reproduced above, in my interview with him, Joensen elaborated further upon why he decided to make his first solo album after having lived and played country music in Denmark for sixteen years with a band. In short, it was because of his father, and for his children. Joensen explained to me that when he finally returned to the Faroes, he was speaking with sister about his father, who had passed away at the age of 54 in 1984, and she told him that she was gathering up photos of their dad and could find only about seven. This made Joensen reflect, "I got children of my own. I was thinking 'when I'm dead and buried, do they *only* have pictures of me?' And that's why I made the first CD, was because of I have to make a CD so my children can listen to me also." Recalling how his father inspired his first album, Joensen told me this: "the day

before he died, I was playing organ and he was playing the harmonica until one o'clock at night or something, and I tried to remember the song because I wake up, at 8 o'clock: he was dead, he had had a heart attack. Yeah, so I was really sensitive and I tried to remember, and that's the first CD."

Though he has had various jobs, Joensen has continued to play music as much as possible from at least the age of nine. From the time he was about 13 until about the age of 20 he played bass and sang in a rock band (playing covers of Status Quo and others). With that rock band he played countless weekends for seven years in Klaksvík and all of the islands. He also played bass in swing band and with a harmonica group. In '89 he won a songwriting competition, and by 1991 he had moved to Denmark where his children were born. Though he enjoyed his work and coaching sports, Joensen remained focused on playing music all of his sixteen years in Denmark with his country cover band (consisting of three other Faroese guys and a Danish guy). During that time, Joensen also frequently returned to Faroes to play music.

Rouch's brief liner-notes story of the arrival of country music in Klaksvík, the local repetition and copying of the music, and of Joensen's growing up in environments saturated with country music (his father's taxi and his home) could well be regarded as an exemplar of how what Samuels calls the power of mediation, as a "technology of memory" (Samuels 2004:139), is involved in the encrusting of "the kinds of histories and experiences that are easily brought to mind on rehearing them" (2004:139). Joensen's own recollections, supplemented by Rouch's reflections, offer insight into the active transformation of a "foreign" music into a deeply felt, local music.

Though I suggested earlier that I could not attest to whether or not the continual repetition and reproduction of *dans* music in the Faroes evokes for participants a feeling of "how it feels to be from the Faroes," Rouch's detailing of the mediated repetition of country recordings in Klaksvík and Joensen's brief re-telling of some of the ways in which country music has been intertwined with his

life and family certainly seem to make evident how "the recurrence of a song played on the radio or on the jukebox. . . on a boom box or by a band at a party, allows a building up and layering of experiences and feelings. . . [which are] recoverable by being linked to the repeatability of the mediated expression" (Samuels 2004:139). This repeatability, especially in cases like Joensen's wherein the music is being reproduced and embodied so regularly by a person over a lifetime, has certainly enabled these songs to accrue multiple personal, emotional, and historical meanings for Joensen.

As a lifelong lover and performer of country since an early age, Joensen's experiences with country are likely similar to those of many other Faroese country fans and performers, though differing in terms of the specific details of his history of engagement with the music. That is, many of the thousands of Faroese people who bought Joensen's CDs over the last few years and have attended his shows almost certainly have their own unique histories of involvement with the local production and consumption of country music, and they may also be similarly entangled in multi-generational family country traditions which give (especially the older, classic songs) an added layer of personal meaning.

Joensen's explanation of why he played covers of country classics for so many years would probably be familiar to a lot of other Faroese country fans: "I like the real old style country music, what we call really country music and that's— I don't know why, I think I told you before, it must be because of my dad and my family, but I'm still there, you know, even though music is change [changing], I don't think I'm changing so much."

Though I only spoke to a relatively small number of people interested in country music in the Faroes, I hope that even this brief sub-section will serve to offer some insight into the social significance of country music in the Faroes as it makes up a significant portion of the variety of musical practice in the islands. Before continuing on to an examination of Faroese metal and, especially, the evocation of the Faroese past and re-framing of traditional Faroese oral literature

through metal, it seems only apt to close this discussion of Faroese country with the dedication from Joensen's first album which takes its final quote from the Hank Williams song “Beyond the Sunset” (a song which mourns the passing of a loved one who has been taken too soon).

"In loving memory I dedicate this album to my dad Karl André Joensen (1930-1984) to whom I owe all my music interest. Without you I would never have taken any interest in Hank Williams and country music at all. Thank you for everything dad, gone away too early, but never forgotten. >>I'll live in mem'ry's garden dear with happy days we've known<<[13]

[13]These lines are excerpted by Hank Williams from the Albert Kennedy Roswell poem “Should you go first and I remain.”

Chapter 7: Sociality, Scene, Language, and Attitudes to Religion

Notes on the Changing Nature of Faroese Sociality

Referring back to Berger's notion of the doubly constitutive nature of musical practice (i.e., that musical practice "constitutes both the meaning of the music in the participant's experience and the music scene as a social group") (Berger 1999:1), though the preceding discussion of Hamferð's music and performances was meant to examine in some detail an example of the constitution of musical meaning in the Faroes, little attention has been paid so far to the constitution of music scenes in the Faroes as social groups. Turning to the constitution of scenes through music practice in the Faroes, it is first important to note that, unlike in the larger countries in the rest of the world, the concept of the nation as an "imagined community" must necessarily be differently conceived in light of the Faroes' small population and size. Before discussing the Faroese metal community as a music scene ("scenes" being social groups which are constituted through the musical activities and connections of sub-segments of whole societies), then, it is important to a few of the ways in which the Faroes are unique as an imagined national community.

In Anderson's famous description of nations as imagined communities, he explained that nations were necessarily imagined because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 2003:6). He further qualified these imagined communities by explaining that, "in fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined" (1983[2003]:6). While Anderson's conception undoubtedly still applies to the Faroes, I would argue that the nature of contemporary Faroese sociality constitutes something of a special case in these regards.

Firstly, while admittedly even a small population like that of the Faroes (around 49,000 people) (Hagstova Føroya 2011:4) are unlikely to ever truly know

or meet one another (i.e., come together simultaneously as a community of face-to-face interaction), the impressive turnouts at the islands' biggest musical and national celebrations, in terms of a percentage of the total population, speak to an important way in which the Faroese national community is characterized by a greater degree of familiarity and personal contact that could ever be possible in a vast and populous nation like Canada (in which the nation as a community is necessarily "more imagined"). The islands' first regular major music festival, G! Festival (held in the village of Gøta on Eysturoy), was established in 2002 and drew a crowd of around only 800 in its first year (Tyril pers. comm.). However, in the following years, attendance has been typically between 5,000 and 6,000, with the biggest year on record having seen a crowd of as many as 10,000 (that year, the festival sold 5,000 tickets but, because they didn't put up fences or any barriers, many more people flocked around and police estimates set the number at around 10,000) (Tyril pers. comm.). The Faroes' only other big annual music festival, Summar Festivalur ("Summer festival"), which takes place in the northern centre of Klaksvík (on the island of Borðoy), was established in 2004 and has drawn numbers ranging between 3,000 (Jacobsen pers. comm. and summarfestivalur.fo) and perhaps as many as 10,000 (Zachariassen pers. comm.).

The audiences at these two music festivals, as well as the thousands who come from all over the islands every year to the capital for the national celebration, Ólavsøka (which itself involves a lot of music), represent significant portions of the entire Faroese population. Though it is probably not possible to determine the percentage of foreigners who have attended G! Festival and Summarfestivalur, G! Festival's founder, Jón Tyril, suggested to me that it was his opinion that the audiences have been mostly Faroese (though international attendance has grown steadily). Summarfestivalur's attendees have also very likely been overwhelmingly Faroese (the festival's information and ticket-buying websites are exclusively in Faroese). As such, audiences of 10,000 people, for instance, at G! Festival and Summarfestival, could be said to represent one fifth of the entire

nation's population present at the same place, at the same time. And, interestingly, in a conversation with Tyril regarding G! Festival's management, he described how he felt that making the festival into a foundation (managed and organized by a committee, etcetera, as opposed to by a single person) "anchored" the festival more into a local community. What he meant by the "local community," however, wasn't just the small town that he lived in:

> Josh Green: Good, so you think the future looks bright [for G! Festival]?
>
> Jón Tyril: I think so yeah and we have, by making it into a foundation and including more people in the. . .
>
> JG: Management?
>
> JT: In the management, yeah, we have somehow anchored more in the local community.
>
> JG: They're all people from Gøta [the village where the festival is held]?
>
> JT: Yeah mostly, but the whole Faroes is a local community.

While I don't wish to overstate the significance of such numbers at these festivals, it is worth noting that such massive events and celebrations (relative to the total population) are indicative of the special situation of the Faroes as an imagined community. That is, one's experience and understanding of the nation as an entity, and one's belonging to such an imagined national community, must surely be different (and, arguably, somewhat more strongly felt) in a place like the Faroes where gatherings of a fifth of the nation are possible. Such gatherings certainly speak to Tyril's assertion that "the whole Faroes is a local community." It is also worth noting briefly that all of the increasing inter-island interconnections I discuss here stand in considerable contrast to the formerly intensely village-centric sociality that characterized Faroese life in the earlier days. As some have

observed, "Faroese used to belong more to their village than to the nation, which is also a sign of the incomplete production of the Faroese as a societal political entity" (Joensen, quoted by Baerenholdt 2005:8-9, cited in Pons 2011:108), and there was a time when "people from one village were reluctant to pay taxes to a municipality that also, or primarily, made investments in other villages" (2004:15, cited in Pons 2011:108). While I cannot claim the intense village-centric localism described in these quotations has entirely disappeared, there are a number of important factors which point to the unique interconnectedness of the islands today, a few of which I will outline below.

As elsewhere throughout the world, the advent of the internet (and especially of high-speed internet in more recent years) has had a tremendous effect on sociality and music in the Faroe Islands. In terms of measurable statistics of how internet-savvy Faroese people are, the most telling figure is probably the Faroes' Facebook penetration rate (i.e., the percentage of the total population who use Facebook) of 61%, making the Faroes the world's fifth most Facebook-saturated country in the world (Socialbakers 2012). Arguably part of a trend in the region (the Faroes' fellow insular Nordic neighbours, Iceland, have a Facebook penetration rate of 68%, third highest in the world) (Socialbakers 2012), the extreme popularity of the social media site in the Faroes suggests that, at least in terms of potential connectedness between more widely separated regions in the islands, Faroese people are better connected to one another than ever. This high penetration rate also speaks to the possibility of increased regular communication between Faroese people and foreigners. Within the islands, Facebook has also become an indispensable tool for organizing and advertising music events: G! Festival, for instance, has over 9,200 "likes" on Facebook, and Summarfestivalur has over 7,500. Faroese bands and bars make use of Facebook often to publicize gigs and get an estimate of how many people may show up. (Indeed, the internet has become an essential tool in metal's globalization the world over, cf. Weinstein 2011:52).

The greatly increased pace and scope of inter-island communication facilitated by high-speed internet (and Facebook in particular) is only the latest development in a trend of increasing interconnectedness which has characterised life in the latter half of the twentieth century in the Faroes. Another extremely significant development, also relevant to music performance and the constitution of musical scenes in the Faroes, has been the massive development of a sophisticated Faroese infrastructure. Since the early 1960s, the Faroese government has been busy constructing the 19 mountain and inter-island tunnels which honeycomb the islands, as well as a number of inter-island bridges. The continual construction of these tunnels and bridges has helped to make even some of the more remote villages accessible by car (and has, as a result, also made cars increasingly desirable to the post-1960s generations as Faroese anthropologist Firouz Gaini has asserted in his 2009 article, "Dreams of cars on an Island: Youth, cars and cultural values in the Faroe Islands").

One outcome of these massive infrastructure developments has been the considerable decline of the importance of boats (and, likely, much of the seafaring knowledge which accompanied their everyday use) in the Faroes. Using a car (in combination with the government-run system of car-transporting ferries), one could theoretically travel from the southernmost village on the islands, the village of Sumba on Suðuroy, to the most northerly village of Viðareiði on Viðoy. Even without ferries, it is possible to drive (via multiple mountain and under-sea tunnels and two inter-island bridges) from the westerly airport island of Vágar, across the largest islands of Streymoy and Eysturoy, north to Borðoy, and on to the smaller northern islands like Kunoy. Mountain tunnel networks that connect some of the tiniest and most remote villages have been built as recently as 2006 and 2007, including, for example, Gásadalstunnilin in 2006 which connected the previously relatively isolated village of Gásadalur (formerly accessible only via a steep mountain trek or by boat at the village's extremely poor landing site), in which there are around ten houses, with the rest of the communities on Vágar.

Unlike those imagined national communities which exist for their members very much solely in the realm of the imagination, the relatively small size and population on the islands, the aforementioned degree of Facebook saturation, and the development of a convenient inter-island infrastructure are all factors that likely contribute to a relatively more salient (and, perhaps, more communally felt) nation or sense of nationhood. In his insightful study of Faroese village life in Sumba, Gaffin has commented that in the tiny and open village environment there, everyone knows each other (Gaffin 1996:222 et passim). Similarly, even though I spent much of my time in Tórshavn, interviewing mostly people who had grown up in the capital, I found considerable evidence to suggest that many people are still of the opinion that, in the Faroes, "everybody knows everybody." For instance, Hamferð drummer Remi Johannesen explained to me once how ridiculous it seemed when a certain young Faroese pop group showed up to a benefit gig in a rented limo and wearing really fancy clothes. Their whole glamorous image didn't really work, Johannesen explained, because everyone knew each other (as Johannesen said, "oh, it's just her"). However, this familiarity is not always a negative thing, as singer-songwriter Guðrið Hansdóttir explained, "it's easy to get started because you get like, known, straight away and, you know, don't have to do that much 'cuz it's so small and everybody knows: 'oh'. Everybody knows who you are, and so it's a good thing."

Everybody knowing (or being related) to everyone else also worked out in my favour more often than not, as one interview would usually open up the possibility for several more. For instance, my first interview, with Kristian Blak and his wife Sharon Weiss, pointed me towards an interview their son, (bassist) Mikkal Blak, who had worked with Guðrið Hansdóttir, and G! Festival founder, Jón Tyril, who pointed me towards his cousin, the country expert, Jakup Zachariassen, who works with the studio owner, Kristoffer Mørkøre (and so on, ad infinitum), all of whom I eventually interviewed.

The sum meaning of all of this description of the changing and increasingly interconnected (across greater distances) nature of Faroese sociality is that, while the Faroes are, like any nation, necessarily an imagined community, they are a community in which members have the potential to actually converse, interact, and coalesce (as a large portion of their population) to a much greater capacity than larger and more populous nations. One significant consequence of this capacity is that small "national" musical scenes can be constituted, even despite the relatively small number of participants.

The Constitution of the Faroese Metal Scene

Regarding the constitution of music scenes, Berger, notes that, "as Ruth Finnegan so rightly emphasizes (1989:325-26), even the most stable scene is brought into being by the actions of its members" (Berger 1999:34). Considering this, this sub-section discusses some of the actions of the members of the contemporary Faroese metal scene in order to address one manifestation of that other aspect of the doubly constitutive nature of musical practice (the first being the constitution of meaning), the constitution of the scene as a social group.

Although metal as a genre that a few people have listened to in the Faroes, discovered and enjoyed via imported albums and foreign broadcasts for decades, probably has a history almost a long as that of metal itself, metal as a performed and recorded genre is a considerably more recent development in the Faroes (compared to the genre's lengthier history in metal's two principal originating countries, the U.S. and England). That is to say, metal in the Faroes likely followed a similar two-stage trajectory of development as it did elsewhere: the first being the diffusion of metal globally from its originating centres via various recordings and media forms, followed eventually by a second stage characterized by what metal scholar and sociologist Deena Weinstein has called "the indigenous production of the diffused style" (Weinstein 2011:52). Despite the Faroes' out-of-the-way position in the middle of the north Atlantic, as part of the Danish

kingdom (and Scandinavia, more broadly), the islands would have maintained a pace of technological and economic development comparable to that of much of western Europe during the initial spread of metal which would have allowed for the dissemination and potential reproduction of metal there almost as easily as the rest of western Europe (cf. Weinstein 2011:44; Wallach et al. 2011:26).

As Týr's Heri Joensen explained in a 2006 interview in response to a question about how he first got involved in metal in the Faroes: "there's plenty of metal on the Faeroes. When I was a teenager I used to watch "Headbanger's Ball" on MTV like everybody else in the Western world. I listened to Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Uriah Heep, Iron Maiden and then I started to play guitar when I was 14 [circa 1987]" (Joensen 2006 tartareandesire). However, coinciding with the mid-1990s period which a number of interviewees suggested to me saw a great profusion and proliferation of a larger than ever variety of musical genres being performed by original (i.e., non-cover) bands in the Faroes (K. Blak pers. comm., and M. Blak, pers. comm.), a few musicians started experimenting with somewhat louder and heavier styles of music than had been heard in the Faroes up until that time. Among these was the group that has since often been referred to as the Faroes' first metal band, the now-defunct Hatespeech, which formed in the first half of the 1990s, as well as the islands' first punk band, the fast and aggressive, 200. Along with other recently imported foreign genres like grunge that started being taken up and performed by original Faroese bands in the early to mid-1990s, Hatespeech's early performances and their few recordings (e.g., on the 1995 compilation *Rock* í *Føroyum,* "Rock in the Faroes") marked the beginning of metal's foothold in the islands.

Hatespeech's earliest performances also signaled the first signs of the formation of some sort of metal "scene" in the islands. As Hatespeech founding member Jákup Pauli ("J.P.") Gaard Olsen explained to me in an interview, his band developed something of a cult following, and its earliest performances were

always well-attended. Further, as Olsen also explained, Hatespeech performance attendees tended to really go wild and enjoy the music.

Following a procession of heavy bands that rose and fell from the mid- to late-1990s, including bands like Mind, Diatribes, and many others, Týr, though they had formed as early as 1998 in Copenhagen (where the band's leader, Heri Joensen, was studying at the time), really began to see some success in the Faroes following their televised participation in the now-defunct national music competition, Prix Føroyar in 2001 (Joensen 2004 metalobserver). As some of the Faroes' only artists to achieve considerable international recognition, and, at that time, the islands' sole metal band to do so, Týr undoubtedly paved the way for the subsequent relatively rapid growth of the Faroese metal scene.

Today, there are at least eleven currently active Faroese metal bands (SIC, Synarchy, Incurse, Konqueror, The Apocryphal Order, Týr, Hamferð, Heljareyga, Earth Divide, Sails of Deceit, and The Happening), six of which have released at least one studio album or EP (three with international distribution), and five of which have been on at least one international tour. Aside from these eleven (some of whom, like Konqueror, are currently recording their first album), many of the members of these and other bands have numerous ongoing metal projects (e.g., Hatursvart, Mjørkaborg, Beerserkers, and likely many others), which continue to record and compose metal music.

In an interview with the members of The Apocryphal Order, Ken Johannesen tried to find words to explain to me his impression of the Faroese metal scene, while Martin Rói Vilhelmsen joked around, and I suggested a suitable word:

> Ken Johannesen: The thing you need to know about metal in Faroe Islands, it's a very strong connection, it's a really, what do you call it—
>
> Josh Green: Community?

> KJ: Community! Everybody knows each—everybody likes each other and we have things in common, you know, I shouldn't tell—be telling you but, metal is
>
> Martin Rói Vilhelmsen: The law!
>
> KJ: A big thing. You have a connection, you know, when you like metal, you have stuff to talk about, you can get along and metal people are always nice.

Later, in the same interview, Johannesen and Jóhan Bjartur Kjærbo continued describing their perception of the vitality of the metal scene in the Faroes:

> Ken Johannesen: It's almost every metal fan in the Faroe Islands, they pick up an instrument and start to play metal…everybody wants to play metal that likes metal in the Faroe Islands, so that's an awesome thing.
>
> Jóhan Bjartur Kjærbo: Another thing about metal people in the Faroe Islands, if you go to America or something like that, they talk about cult movies, movies that have a very strong fan-base that are still kinda underground, it's JUST like the metal scene in the Faroe Islands. Every— it's like a cult movie, it's the same fan-base all around, it's the same people you see at gigs and concerts and everything, they show up almost every time anyways. So it's not really a huge amount of people, but they are always there, so it's cool anyways.

Similarly, Kristian Blak explained that, although genres like metal have a smaller following in the Faroes than massively popular ones like the genres encompassed within *dans* music, metalheads have a strong community in the Faroes and metal adds an element of excitement and appeal to the islands' big festival venues:

> at the bottom [in terms of popularity in the Faroes] there's strange enough it's metal and the jazz and the folk, very few that are interested in that at all. . . [but] when they have concerts, they're very, very keen concertgoers in the metal, but they have just a hundred [people], it's not 5000, and when they are part of festivals they have, it's so good energy that there's a lot of people listening.

> *Ju ju* ["yeah, yeah"], but it's not so strange. I think you can't expect a population to be, we'd like to, but you cant expect a population to be interested in what you call creative music or art music.

Contrary to the opinion once expressed by Týr's Heri Joensen that in the Faroes "there is no Metal scene. . . it's just a music scene with everything in it" (Joensen 2008 metaleater), in the opinion of TAO's members and people like Kristian Blak, then, the Faroese metal scene is definitely alive and, as Johannesen noted, it is growing. Theodor Kapnas of Hamferð, along with many others I spoke with, echoed TAO's belief, saying, in response to my final question about whether there was anything else we should have talked about,

> you didn't ask about the metal scene much and thats been the most growing scene here. . . few years ago there were like one or two bands, there were Týr and nobody else probably. . . but now there are loads of bands releasing albums all the time and going out on tours. The scene is growing, the quality is growing, because it's like it's our generation, most of the musicians are our age. So we're getting better and better.

To be fair to Joensen, who no longer lives in the Faroes and is interviewed very frequently, it is worth mentioning that he has expressed a variety of opinions on the existence of a Faroese metal scene: "Yes, there are some metal bands. I wouldn't say there is a metal scene as such. There are some metal bands play a few concerts every year. And some of them try to get international attention, like SIC for example." (Joensen 2009, trashandriot); (in response to a question in 2006 about whether there was a metal scene in the Faroes at that time) "No, you can't say that. But there's a great interest in metal by the young public" (Joensen 2006 tartareandesire). Considering Týr was the first metal band to make it big and leave the islands, it is easy to understand why Joensen may have suggested that there wasn't really a metal "scene" as such in the islands; it was only after his band had begun touring widely and releasing multiple albums through their global distributor, Napalm Records, that something that could be called a scene began to truly come into its own in the Faroes.

By way of addressing the constitution of the metal scene in the Faroes (i.e.,, recalling Finnegan, how a scene is brought into being by the actions of its members) (1989:325-26, cited in Berger 1999:34), it is most instructive to simply describe in some detail the only public metal performance I was able to attend while in the islands: a performance by Incurse as part of the metal evening ÜMLÄUT at Sirkus on October 21, 2011.

Perhaps not surprisingly considering the earlier discussion of the popularity of Facebook in the Faroes, I first found out the specific details of the upcoming show through an invitation I received on Facebook which explained (in Faroese) that the Suðoroy-based thrash metal band, Incurse, would be performing at Sirkus Föroyar, the alternative bar in downtown Tórshavn, followed by a lengthy set by metal DJ, Knút (aka *üBERNöRD*/dj knýtil), and a beer drinking competition (*ølkapping*) beginning at 2 a.m.

Aside from Facebook's central importance in the Faroese metal scene as a medium through which metal news, music, videos, and so on from around the world are shared, that social media service, in conjunction with video hosting websites like YouTube, has begun replacing the formerly more commonly used (but significantly more rigid) MySpace as the primary platform for dissemination of bands' own publicity materials (including performance and album advertisements, concert and publicity photos, as well as links to listen to or watch live or studio recordings).

While Facebook is an essential way for Faroese metalheads to stay in contact with one another (whether they are on different islands in the Faroes, in Denmark, or further abroad), the scene really coalesces at events like the October 21st Incurse concert. Though performances by Faroese metal bands at the islands' two biggest music events, G! Festival and Summarfestivalur, likely have regularly drawn bigger audiences than smaller bar shows like the one at Sirkus Föroyar, such smaller performances tend to draw more exclusively those more actively

involved members of the Faroese metal scene, the sort of people who will travel considerable distances to attend even a short one-night-only gig.

Of the 178 individuals invited to the the Incurse concert on the event's Facebook page, 39 indicated that they would be attending, and, judging by my own memory and photos of the evening, 39 seems like a reasonable approximation of the number of people who showed up at one point or another during the performance. And while this might seem like a relatively small number of participants in a scene which has been described as active and growing, some notion of the scene's vitality (or of the dedication of its members to creating and maintaining a scene) can be gleaned when one considers that, among the modest crowd that was present that evening, were attendees from at least four different islands (Streymoy, Eysturoy, Vágar, and Suðoroy). Thanks to Tórshavn's relatively central location in the Faroes, people traveled by land and sea from north, south, east, and west to attend the Incurse show.

The members of Incurse themselves, for instance, made the two hour journey from Faroes' most southerly island, Suðoroy, to perform (and, as they told me, most of them had to be on the first ferry back the next morning). At least one other attendee made the car trip from westerly Vágar, many came from Tórshavn and surrounds on Streymoy, and a group or two (including members of the metal band, Konqueror) made the lengthier trip from Runavík on southern Eysturoy, east of the capital.

Just as The Apocryphal Order (TAO) band members indicated to me, judging by the turnout at the Incurse show, the metal scene in the Faroes is both small and tightly-knit, and one is likely to see many of the same few faces again and again at each show. Further, speaking to the validity of TAO member Ken Johannesen's observation that nearly everyone who enjoys listening to metal in the Faroes also plays metal themselves, quite a few members from other metal bands showed up to support their fellow metalheads of Incurse. Aside from Incurse members, among the 39 or fewer attendees that night, there were members of Hamferð,

Synarchy, Heljareyga, Konqueror, The Apocryphal Order, (then non-extant band) Sails of Deceit, Earth Divide, and possibly even a few others. Admittedly, a number of these bands share (or have since swapped) members, but I maintain that the (at least partial) representation of no fewer than seven metal bands at the small Incurse bar show that night stands as a testament to the vitality and mutually supportive ethos (and relatively small size) of the Faroese metal scene.

Figure 11. Ken Johannesen of The Apocryphal Order headbangs at the Incurse show at Sirkus Föroyar, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands on 22 October 2011. Image credit: Josh Green.

Long before I had the chance to attend Incurse's performance, I had heard from various people in the scene that they were a great live band who could put on good show, and they did not disappoint with their flawless (albeit somewhat short) set of mostly original songs. Despite the crowded atmosphere in the bar's tiny performance area and the fact that the crowd pushed almost right up against the band members (which made moshing out of the question), some attendees were undaunted in their attempts to engage the music (i.e., to take on participatory roles): some head-banged fiercely in time or shouted along to the lyrics, others just stood listening or bobbing their heads contentedly. And though Incurse had no merchandise or albums to sell at their performance (they have only a few demo recordings), some attendees sported home-made Incurse shirts, literally wearing and displaying their support for the band, while others, especially those who had traveled considerable distances, showed their support just by being there.

As unspectacular as it may appear, an important aspect of the constitution of the Faroese metal scene (the actual gathering together of Faroese metalheads for the purpose of the communal experiencing of, and participating in, the metal music made by their peers) takes place in the musical practice at events like Incurse's Sirkus performance. Aside from the performance and experience of the music itself and the possible ensuing pleasurable experiences of flow which may have resulted from both (e.g., experiences of a "sense of being at one with the activity and perhaps the other people involved") (Turino 2008:4), events like this one provide an opportunity for members of the Faroese metal scene to experience their imagined community in a more concrete sense (i.e., through face-to-face interaction). Well before and after the actual performance, people congregated outside to drink and smoke while they socialized, and this went on long into the small hours of the next morning, fueled by the DJ's hours of metal tracks, the easy sociality which the right amount of alcohol can engender, and the congenial atmosphere that exists between old friends.

In this brief description of an Incurse show I attended, I have attempted to illustrate an example of that other aspect of the doubly constitutive nature of musical practice, the constitution of the scene as a social group, the constitution of meaning having been explored in some detail in the preceding chapter on Týr and Hamferð (as well as through much of the discussion of the historic and contemporary significance of the *kvæði* in Faroese society). In the words of some of the people I interviewed who described the Faroese metal scene, it is simultaneously a "very strong connection" (Johannesen pers. comm.) between people, a cult following (Kjaerbo pers. comm.), and a scene that is getting "bigger and bigger" (Kim Joensen pers. comm.).

Language Choices in Music Composition

In 2011, the Faroes' premiere arts and culture venue, the Norden-funded Norðurlandahúsið, hosted a conference called *Four or more languages for all: Language policy challenges of the future*. The title itself is indicative of the unique linguistic situation that exists throughout Scandinavia, a region well-known for its progressive social policies, including its governments' approaches to offering a variety of languages in their public education systems. Even though I was coming from Canada, a country whose federal and aboriginal governments have been wrestling with various often unsuccessful approaches to education in the nation's two official languages (not to mention the challenges faced by Canada's many smaller indigenous language groups), I had not given a lot of thought to the meaning of language choices and issues like code-switching before I left for the Faroes. However, over the course of my many conversations with Faroese musicians, I began to realize something of the complexity of the language situation in the Faroes, a nation in which nearly everyone whom I met spoke fluent Faroese, Danish, and English (not to mention the many people I met who spoke other European languages, like German, with varying degrees of competence).

Thanks to the Faroes' long history as a diglossic Faroese/Danish community, and to their more recent history over the last few decades in which English has become extremely prevalent, the choice of which language(s) to use in music composition as well as many other areas of life has become a central one. In this sub-section I draw from a number of conversations I had with Faroese music producers and consumers about language choices in music composition in order to explore some of the ways in which people conceptualize and feel about the different languages that they use to communicate and sing in. In so doing, I aim to discover something of the significance of language choices that Faroese people make, and how different languages are used to different ends.

As a preface to this sub-section, it is worth noting that the prevalence of three or more languages in common use in the Faroes (Faroese, Danish, and English) manifests itself in a variety of interesting ways. Communication on Facebook, for instance, frequently takes place in any variety of imaginable combinations of the islands' three principal languages. English slang and curse words, for instance, can be found scattered amongst otherwise Faroese sentences: e.g., "Some dude: Tú ert ein GUD!" ("some dude: you are a GOD!"), wherein one person reported speech from a second person whom they did not know in English and Faroese. Despite their being a healthy variety of (often blasphemous) curse words, English swears tend to pop up frequently in face-to-face, as well as Facebook conversation. In one example of Faroese mixed with English cursing, describing an upcoming concert: "tað ferð at verða eitt fucking intenst tiltak" ("it's going to be one fucking intense event"). Just as often on Facebook, though, sentences are written entirely in one language or another, including Danish (which, when written without too much slang, is now immediately translatable via a little button underneath the Danish phrase, a built-in service provided by Facebook). Public Facebook conversations may begin in Faroese, switch to Danish or English, and return to Faroese, depending on a variety of factors, including, of course, the linguistic proficiency of the participants involved. In short, there exists an interesting and

ostensibly free and fluid ethos behind linguistic choices and code-mixing in Facebook conversations in which comfortably tri-lingual people take part that could easily be the subject of study for a student who was so inclined.

In terms of language choices in music composition and performance, many people tended to espouse pretty firm positions about the suitability of particular languages for particular genres. Speaking globally, metal, as a form of music that has been transnational since its inception and rapid spread out of its original centres (in America and England), has a long history of being characterized by its use of the English language. Sociologist and metal scholar Deena Weinstein has written in no uncertain terms about the prevalence of English as "the language of metal," especially in the first decades of metal's globalization:

> Like transnational capitalism, with corporations located in the metropole but active in sites far afield, metal was always deterritorialized. It did not speak from any country of culture. Even in the 1970s the Scorpions from Hamburg, Germany, whose members spoke in highly accented and rather fractured English, sang in English; when asked why, the singer said that German was inadequate to express metal feelings and themes. During this period, English was the global language for metal. Most bands that were well-known in their country and all that were known internationally sang in English. [Weinstein 2011:45]

This situation has definitely changed somewhat in the last two decades, especially following with the rise of Norwegian language metal in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the subsequent popularization of metal sub-genres like folk metal that celebrate the incorporation of non-English languages and cultures into the metal style. However, in the Faroes, some people still expressed their opinion of a connection between the English language and metal, though they often articulated and described this connection differently.

For some people, the fact that most internationally famous metal bands have (and continue) to sing primarily in English was enough of a reason to maintain

that the metal songs they wrote should be in English. As Kim Joensen, drummer for the melodic death metal band, Synarchy, explained:

> Well I can't tell you what [vocalist] Leon's thinking, but I actually do have an opinion about that anyways, what I think why it's in English, it's because we want to, you know, become international and, you know, there are a few bands who can do it in their own language like [German band] Rammstein, and [Finnish band] Finntroll or something, you know, our influences are all in English, everything is in English, you know, it sounds better, it makes more sense, I think. Writing in Faroese, I think writing in Faroese is pretty cool as well but, I dunno, sounds more, you know, metal, normal. You hear it all the time, all the Swedish bands and Norwegian bands. . . everyone writes in English that's just how it is.

For Kim then, English seems like the "normal" language of metal because bands from many countries use it and all of his band's musical influences also use English. Further, right away, Joensen stated a concern for his band's commercial viability: in Kim's opinion, English as a widely spoken language, offers a better opportunity for his Synarchy to "become international," which is a key concern for any Faroese musician who want to make a living off of their music, excepting the very small group of a few performers, like Jens Marni, who attempt to play music as a means of making a living exclusively within the Faroes.

The perceived commercial viability of English is a commonly held belief for metal bands around the world. As Weinstein has explained, one of Iraq's few metal bands, Acrassicauda, their "songs are all in English, even though its fans don't speak that language. One reason for this is the band's commercial aspirations; in English its recordings would sell better abroad" (Weinstein 2011:35). However, there is also the consideration that, in many parts of the world, English has a degree of prestige as a language of education. As Weinstein notes, "another, more significant, motivation is the ideological significance of English. Muhammed, the band's drummer, says, "We want to sound educated. We

want to prove to the outside world that our band can write and create music they can understand" (from Ghazal 2004, quoted in Weinstein 2011:35).

A similar conception of English as the international language of metal was also expressed by a number of other Faroese artists. The young musicians of Konqueror, for instance, explained of their lyrics that their music is entirely English that despite there being maybe a few "Faroese shouts somewhere in some songs," "it's mainly English so it can go global" (Erland Joensen, pers. comm.). Thus, Erland Joensen of Konqueror's sentiment echoes Kim Joensen of Synarchy's above comments: to "go global" and "become international," they feel their bands need to write in English. Similarly, describing the possibility of hypothetical future tours for his band, Beerserkers, Teitur Fossaberg told me "we want to give the Faroese people some Faroese party music, drinking music, even though the lyrical content probably will be in English if we're gonna tour." Again, the idea that English is the most suitable language because it is more commercial viable internationally is reiterated.

For the members of The Apocryphal Order (TAO), the choice of English over Faroese lyrics was influenced both by their desire to give their music international appeal, to perhaps teach foreigners something about Faroese life and society, but also the band seems concerned with writing lyrics that are too sharply critical of Faroese society, because it is a relatively small community in which everyone knows one another:

> Ken Johannesen: [we write in English] because our music wasn't meant to the Faroese people, to be honest. Because we are a small population here, and like any serious band we want to get further than here. You know, Týr of course manages it with their native tongue, that's not who we're after. Not at all. And also, you know, like, I don't know if, every individual understands the lyrically [lyrics] differently, but it's a lot about our way of living here, right? So, in one small way, I like to think, you know, that we get our lives in the lyrics, I think, to show the world, if they care about the lyrics right. It's very honest lyrics, it's not just bullshit right. It's real feelings and—

Josh Green: It's real serious stuff, personal.

KJ: For the outside world— of course the metal fans in the Faroe Islands it's of course, also to them, but that's the main reason we write in English, so we can connect to—. . .

. . .

Martin Rói Vilhelmsen: And maybe if we do a Faroese song of rebellion stuff…

KJ: It could be misinterpreted.

Torkil Thomsen: We'd have to tread lightly.

JG: Tread lightly, yeah.

TT: It's like when you're walking on ice, because you'd have to tread lightly, because if you don't, then people won't take you seriously. And everyone in the Faroe Islands knows you, somehow, or has seen you. It's weird, but that's how it is.

Another extremely common reason artists gave for writing lyrics in English as opposed to Faroese was the perceived difficulty of writing in Faroese (and the perceived flexibility and ease of writing in English), even when Faroese was the composer's mother tongue. Considering Faroese as a standardized, written language has a history of just over one century, this should perhaps come as little surprise. In Kim Joensen's opinion, as he said, "I think it's probably easier to write in English, there are so many words in the English language, so many ways to express everything." The members of Konqueror expressed a similar notion:

Heini Djurhuus: Well, it's easier to write in English than in Faroese because Faroese is pretty much the hardest language on earth.

(everyone laughs)

Josh Green: For you guys to write in?

Erland Joensen: You can make it brutal if you want to, but then it would just be us that could understand it.

> Jafet Andrias Olsen: Metal is in English, that's just the way it is
>
> EJ: There are, I dunno how many Faroese people, global is maybe 100,000, but 50,000 in the Faroe Islands, ah? So it's not that—
>
> Jaspur Jan Olsen: Also there isn't as much words in the Faroese language as in the English.
>
> EJ: You can't say the same things in Faroese as in English.
>
> JJO: So in the Faroese, you could write a Faroese song, it's the same words as in all the other Faroese songs.
>
> EJ: It's all been done before, try to do something new.
>
> HD: And it doesn't fit into thrash, death, whatever metal.

Speaking of his band Synarchy's choice to write almost entirely in English, Ísak Petersen cited both the difficulty of writing and Faroese (compared to English) and the concern with sounding too much like the most famous metal band, Týr, who already sing in Faroese:

> on the new album there's one song in Faroese. But a couple of reasons why we dont want to sing in Faroese is, it's very hard to make it sound cool. I think Týr does an EXCELLENT job at that, and they are also like the band who has, the Faroese metal band who has, THAT thing. And i think if we do a Faroese lyric, then people will think that we're just copying them.

Petersen and Johansen's above points about Týr's use of the Faroese language bring up an interesting contradiction in the aforementioned rationale about English being the "normal" and "international" language choice for metal music: Týr is the islands' most famous band internationally and they often sing in Faroese, as do Hamferð, who are also beginning to have some international success. Though English admittedly also makes up a large portion of Týr's total catalogue, Faroese language songs appear on every one of their official albums. Some of their releases have even contained as much (or slightly more) Faroese than English: on their 2008 album *Land*, the album with the most Faroese content,

five of the album's ten total songs are entirely in Faroese, two are most English with some Faroese portions, two are entirely English, and one is in Norwegian.

When on considers the cases of Týr, who use Faroese often on their albums, and Hamferð, whose debut album is exclusively in Faroese, the various aforementioned arguments about the perceived international commercial viability of English seem to fall apart. The arguments for and against the use of English over Faroese in music composition are not so simplistic, however. Many people elaborated upon their language choice stances by explaining that it depends on the type of music (the genre, or in most cases, the metal sub-genre) that one plays to determine which language would be most suitable.

Kim Joensen makes the point quite clearly in his response to whether or not he thought there was an advantage for some musicians to sing in Faroese:

> Yeah, you know, [doom metal band] Hamferð have that really weird atmosphere and Faroese it sounds really good together, the same with Eivør, and Týr. Týr is like Viking metal and, you know, it couldn't be more Viking with the, you know, really raw and old-school Faroese language. You know, for bands like Synarchy [melodic thrash] and [thrash bands] The Apocryphal Order and SIC, which sounds more like the rest of the metal music in the world, English probably works best because probably most people who listen to our music is probably gonna think like “oh yeah I hear their influence there” you know 'they like [Swedish melodic death metal band] In Flames, I can hear that, [US-based metal band] All That Remains, and [Swedish melodic death metal band] Soilwork, and [Swedish death metal band] Meshuggah and, you know, and then they start listen to the lyrics “ok what are they singing about?” and you know ah? We sang in Faroese, it would probably be like “ok sounds good and the lyrics I can't understand and doesn't make any sense but it's pretty cool” but Týr is like a REALLY original band and that's why and because of the Viking, I think it's to their advantage to sing in Faroese.

Accepting the fact that Hamferð self-identifies as a doom metal band who, in their own words, attempt to create a sense of (funereal) "atmosphere" at their performances and to evoke the darker elements of a specifically Faroese past and

of the difficulties of historic life in the islands through their music, it is no wonder that they use the Faroese language in their music. As Joensen says, this "weird atmosphere" just seems to sound good with Faroese. Further, as noted in the above case study of Hamferð, the band's guitarist, Theodor Kapnas, explained how it was only "natural" for the band to sing in Faroese because they are a very Faroese band who are interested invoking the special atmosphere of the Faroes (and drawing inspiration from Faroese history and geography). As was also discussed in the Hamferð sub-section, singer and lyricist, Jón Hansen, explained that, even though it is difficult to write in Faroese, "this just fits, I mean, Faroese with this actual music and I was writing about Faroese issues, writing from a Faroese perspective and sort of digging in to the historical soul of the Faroese people, kind of, you know, it, the darker side of it."

Regarding the perception of the commercial viability of Faroese outside of the Faroes, Remi Kofoed Johannesen of Hamferð mentioned that although a bandmate of his "thought that there was a certain market outside of the Faroes for, like, Faroese language, or Norwegian language. . . just languages that aren't English," he suggested that English might be preferable because it would reach a wider audience (if more people could understand the lyrics). He was, however, quick to follow up his musings about possibly using English in his thus-far entirely Faroese-language band by pointing to the example of the world famous Icelandic band, Sigur Rós, who have become famous using a made-up nonsense language on some of their albums.

Regarding Týr's language choices, as Joensen also noted, Týr sell themselves as a Viking metal band and (in Joensen's opinion), nothing is "more viking" than the "really raw and old-school Faroese language." For many listeners around the world as well, then, the Faroese language (descended as it is from Old Norse), is likely as interpreted as being closely associated with Vikings and the Viking era. Týr's frequent use of the Faroese language thus forms part of a total package of Viking iconography, imagery, and lyrical themes. As Faroese singer-songwriter

Guðrið Hansdóttir speculated, this Týr's Viking esthetic may well add an "exotic" element to their music and imagery which appeals to people outside of the Faroes:

> Týr they've gotten a really, you know, they are really big, you know, everywhere. I think it's really interesting that a lot of other people like that kind of stuff, because I don't like it, I don't listen to it, but I can understand why other do it. . . and like this Viking— how people are REALLY into Viking stuff, I don't get it but, it is interesting, it is. But maybe when you're not from a place like this, then it's interesting.

G! Festival founder, Jón Tyril, offered similar insights, suggesting that, while Faroese may offer an added layer of mystique, appealing exclusivity, or authenticity for artists in some genres, in others (like singer-songwriter), broader comprehension of the lyrics is much more important and, therefore, English works better in such lyrics-centric genres:

> you know Bob Dylan wouldn't work if you didn't understand the words he's singing. So, it depends a bit on— I think with Týr it makes it more mystical and if you are interested in the Nordic sagas and all this, you're gonna study and you'll find out, and it adds some extra layer to the music that it is in Faroese. It's— it is possible to understand it, but you have to do some research. And it's, you know, the few anointed ones or whoever, can understand and explain to others or whatever. So, it becomes kind of a cult or a club, whatever. So, I think it adds, to their music it adds, some layer of mystique. With [singer-songwriter] Teitur for example, he's more like Bob Dylan, I think. It works well for him to sing in English because the lyrics are about love and daily things. He doesn't dig into the Norse mythology or anything like that. And [folk/world artist] Eivør is maybe a bit like Týr in that sense that it works for her to sing in Faroese. So, I dont think there's a simple answer to the question [of whether there is an advantage to singing in Faroese]. . . and people are very occupied by authenticity and roots and all that, so it works perfectly to sing Faroese songs.

Pól Nolsøe Jespersen, in response to a question I asked about his opinion of whether or not using the Faroese language was advantageous and whether being a Faroese musician may add some sort of "exotic" appeal to internationally-oriented

Faroese music, replied, "it's the same thing, this exotic thing. . . also to show the language because there's not a lot of people speaking this language and it's close to Old Norse language, which also turns out to be very good for Týr because they're a Viking metal band, folk metal band, it works very well yeah."

However, unlike sub-genres like folk and Viking metal of which Týr are a part, as Joensen suggests, Faroese bands like Synarchy, The Apocryphal Order, and SIC, which sound "more like the rest of the metal music in the world," seem better suited to sing in English. This is because, in his opinion, many of their influences (the international bands whom they sound like) also use English. The aforementioned quote from Konqueror member Heini Djurhuus, in which he said that Faroese "doesn't fit into thrash, death, whatever metal," echoes this sentiment.

In other words, the older and more well-established sub-genres like thrash and death (of which the largely English-language Faroese bands TAO, Synarchy, and SIC are a part) have a longer history as transnational, principally English forms. The most famous death and thrash bands, including the original death metal band (the American group, Death) and many of these sub-genres' most famous artists from Scandinavia (like In Flames, Entombed, Soilwork, and so on), all sang almost exclusively in English. This helps explain why a number of Faroese metalheads felt that certain sub-genres of metal, even when written by Faroese people, should be in English.

Regarding the use of Faroese or English in songs, producer Kristoffer Mørkøre said, plainly "I think it's depends on which music genre you're in." Konqueror's members even made more explicit this idea of Faroese and English being especially befitting to specific to specific genres and metal sub-genres. Regarding the appropriateness using the Faroese language, the band members said:

Erland Joensen: For Týr it works very well because it's traditional and they take the things they call *kvæði* and put it into the songs, it works, ah?

Heini Djurhuus: And it is more poetic than just thrash metal.

EJ Thrash metal is more like right on, straight away, ah?

Josh Green: Straight forward.

HD: Cheesy lyrics and—

EJ: The lyrics are cheesy but brutal.

. . .

HD: It's like, Hamferð pulls it off pretty nicely.

EJ: Týr also in folk metal.

Jafet Andrias Olsen: Things like folk metal, doom metal, and that's about it I think, and pop like that.

While Konqueror's members were at first speaking to the perceived suitability of the Faroese language for the internationally-oriented music of Hamferð and Týr (and their respective metal sub-genres, doom and folk/Viking metal), Jafet Andrias Olsen quickly also pointed out that pop music also was often in Faroese. Olsen was, in fact, referring to those many domestically-oriented artists in the Faroes who sing in Faroese, in part, as part of their strategy and aim of specifically targeting Faroese artists. Elaborating, Erland Joensen and Olsen continued, saying:

Erland Joensen: Pop, they make nice songs, Faroese pop songs, especially that one from the 80s, yeah it's all the same, but—

Jafet Andrias Olsen: Faroese drinking songs are ALWAYS in Faroese.

Similarly, Kristoffer Mørkøre suggested that, for artists primarily concerned with the small Faroese market (i.e., domestically-oriented musicians), their chosen language tends to be Faroese: "of course in the Faroe Islands, the Faroese singers

they only sing in Faroese because the album sells better in the Faroe Islands if they sing Faroese, yeah?." As many people explained, the *ball* singing tradition (playing guitar and sing-along songs at Faroese parties), and the music of those quintessential domestically-oriented Faroese artists like Frændur, Páll Finnur Páll, and others (whose music is often performed in the context of the *ball),* is largely Faroese.

When I asked Kristoffer about the domestically-oriented Faroese-language artists Páll Finnur Páll and (one of the most respected Faroese folk singers) Hanus G, Johansen, specifically whether or not the latter was known only within the Faroes, he responded: "it's only in the Faroes, yeah. That's because, you know, I think Páll Finnur Páll they are seen in like humouristic music for the Faroese, you know, they love it. So, and Hanus he's like, he's like a storyteller with these Faroese stories. . . so it only makes sense in Faroese, huh?." Further, when I asked metal musician Teitur Fossaberg his opinion of those artists like Frændur, Páll Finnur Páll, and Hanus G. who only use Faroese, he said "I think it's fine if they want to do that. If you want to play solely in the Faroe Islands, you might as well do the Faroese lyrics because there's no need to do English lyrics if you can figure out how to make them just as good in Faroese."

As a final note about the use of Faroese in the music of domestically-oriented Faroese artists, well-known country producer Jakup Zachariassen explained to me that certain music, like that by Hanus G. is Faroese music meant for Faroese people, and that many nations probably have similar artists who sing in their national language and only "work" within their own nation:

> Jakup Zachariassen: Hanus yeah, I mean he's a really Faroese kind of singer (laughs) and his music is for Faroese music— for Faroese people. And we can take, for example, like a Danish HUGE artist, I don't know if you heard about him, but he's the huge, most big name in Denmark. He's the biggest one. And he sings in Danish and he tried to sing in English, but it didn't work"
>
> Josh Green: It didn't work outside of Denmark or?

JZ Without Denmark, yes. I think every country has their own kind of special Danish artist or special Norwegian artist.

JG They have an artist who can be so famous within their country.

JZ Yeah.

JG But they can only go to a certain point.

JZ Yeah. Of course Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Faroe Islands, are kind of the same language, so we kind of understand each other, but it would never get bigger than that.

JG It won't go over into North America or something.

JZ No, I don't believe it.

Even from the few samples of conversations excerpted above, it should be evident that even within the relatively narrow realm of music composition in the Faroes, languages and language choices have multiple complex associations: with perceptions of the international commercial viability of English and Faroese; with perceptions of the suitability of certain languages for specific genres or metal sub-genres; with perceptions of the simultaneous "naturalness" and difficulty of composing in one's mother tongue (Faroese) as opposed to the "easier" and more flexible English; and with the idea that there are some domestically-oriented performers whose use of Faroese is part of their general aim of making "Faroese music for Faroese people." In a small society like the Faroes, then, in which the majority of (especially) the younger portion of the population is at least trilingual, and for whom the pace and depth of engagement with the wider world is continuing to increase (thanks largely to the prevalence of high-speed communications technology like the internet), the significance of language choices, code-mixing, and code-switching in music composition remains complex and multivalent.

Some Attitudes Towards Religion

Aside from all of the aforementioned difficulties Faroese musicians claimed they faced (as result of their nation's geographic position, small population, etcetera), there was another concern that repeatedly came up: the issue of religious opposition to certain types of (especially heavier) music. And while I could have easily written a detailed sub-section on any given aspect of the Faroes' rich contemporary and traditional religious music forms and on the ways in which religion has fostered music in the islands, I feel that it is worth including a few quotes that speak to some musicians' frustration with organized religion and with what some see as the unjust application of political power on religious grounds. Though the following sub-section is short and by no means comprehensive, given the long history of association between metal music and satanism in the media, it seems appropriate to include a few pertinent comments below.[14]

There can be little doubt that the Faroes are an exceptionally religious society still in some ways. For instance, as one metalhead put it, "we are in a very Christian land. . . it's really dominated by Christianity in the Faroe Islands." As evidence of this, Johannesen offered the fact that on two of the island's three national radio stations, there is at least one religious program every day that incorporates prayer and readings from or about the bible, and the other station is an explicitly Christian station. Johannesen, continuing his explanation, suggested that, if you look closely, you'll see Jesus fish on the backs of many cars and that, even when the non-Christian stations have request programs, one out of every

[14]Even since the formation of the band that is generally acknowledged to have been one of the first metal bands (Black Sabbath in 1969), metal as a genre has seemingly been obsessed with occult, religious, and satanic lyrics, imagery, and iconography. Though the (sometimes superficial or imagined) connections between metal and satanism have resurfaced occasionally in the media in previous decades, this supposed connection was really brought to the fore in the early 1990s in Norway when a few metal musicians (of the "black metal" sub-genre) and their associates burned churches, committed murders, and sometimes espoused far-right and Nazi rhetoric. Satanism, paganism, and Norwegian black metal have been explored in detail in Moynihan and Søderlind 1998, Hagen 2011, and in documentary films like 2009's *Until the Light Takes Us*. Over the last decade, especially, the theme of opposition to organized religion (chiefly Christianity) has seen a resurgence in metal, thanks largely to pagan/folk metal bands that glorify images of pre-Christian, pagan pasts.

three of four songs requested is a Christian song. And, as Johannesen says, "that's normal here, right, and that's really annoying."

In some senses, religion has a relatively long history of attempting to suppress or condemn certain even more innocuous or traditional forms of music in the Faroes. As Kristian Blak explained, around 1900, at the same time that people interested in performing and preserving traditional Faroese dancing were arguing that fans of popular dance (and dance music) styles were harming their dance, religious people were exerting pressure on both of them;

> Kristian Blak: There was a strong religious pushing against both of them to should stop everything.
>
> JG: Oh yeah (laughs) yeah religion can be dangerous for musicians sometimes.
>
> KB: Yeah, especially in the wakening period they are calling it when missionaries from Scotland and Norway and Denmark came and spoke of damnation
>
> JG: The evils of the dancing and things.
>
> KB: Yeah, they destroy so much around the world. Maybe they do something equally vital. . . but for folk culture, or culture at all, it was putting the lid on it.

Further, speaking of the 1979 revamping of the Faroese school curriculum, which saw a move from the studying of Faroese ballads as texts to actually singing and dancing (i.e., performing and embodying) them, Blak, and his wife, Sharon Weiss, a schoolteacher, explained:

> KB: But that was kind of revolution, because many schools had been what is it called by—
>
> SW: They were consecrated or they were— by the church.
>
> KB: So, they were not allowed to be used for dancing [ring-dancing], which is silly but still.

> SW: No, but this is a real big then— and then some teachers would not dance and some children would not dance because they were forbidden to dance by their church, it was considered sinful.

Regarding religion as anathema to metal in particular, I heard stories about friends and family members who have, because of their religious convictions, decided to completely condemn either listening to, or playing metal. In some cases, one-time metal fans, having turned religious, decided to discard all of their metal albums. Others explained to me how performing metal music has sometimes put them at odds with their religious parents. In one case, one musician explained that although one of his parents may have shown up to a few of the metal gigs they performed at, the other more disapproving parent never has.

After explaining that he comes from a religious family, bassist and guitarist, Ísak Petersen, told me in brief about his parents' reaction to his playing with the band Heljareyga and association with that band's founder, Heri Joensen, who also fronts Týr: "when I joined Heljareyga, because Heri at the time was writing a lot in the newspapers about it's God. . . atheism or something like that, and they did NOT like it." Joensen is indeed a vocal atheist and, aside from stating this in interviews, his brazenly anti-Christian stance is also made extremely evident through Týr's lyrics and imagery, including an album cover featuring a cross being cut down by a Viking, and in their music video for "Hold the Heathen Hammer High," the band members take turns hacking down a wooden cross and then setting it on fire.

Other musicians' parents expressed similar concern about their children's interest in metal music. As Remi Kofoed Johannesen explained, when he was younger his older brother was interested in music from Australian rock band, Silverchair, and American metal stars, Metallica, and Remi himself started enjoying the music when he was a young teen and he began playing guitar. However, as he continued, "my mother was pretty much against it because she thought it was satanic music, she's sort of religious."

Sometimes, just being in a metal band can lead to infamy and even types of exclusion in small communities, as the members of Konqueror, who are based out of some smaller villages within the larger municipality of Runavík on Eysturoy, explained to me:

> Heini Djurhuus: We're demonized.
>
> Erland Joensen: Very demonized.
>
> Jafet Andrias Olsen: We're "satanic" because we wear black and we sing about dark things.
>
> EJ: Not really hated, but, you know, Christianity looks down on it because—
>
> [someone says]: More like feared.
>
> EJ: I just went into a bar with that Motley Crue hoodie there and it has that pentagram on it, and I got told I wasn't welcome there.
>
> Josh Green: Oh really?
>
> EJ: Because that was the sign of diablo and blahblah.
>
> [someone says]: It was worse a couple of years ago
>
> EJ: It's been more, the other people are more starting to accept it a bit, but, yeah this one guy called us satanic and we're going straight to hell and told us hell does exist and that stuff.

For some musicians, the problem isn't the islands' sometimes overbearing religiosity so much as it is the fact that religion (in terms of religious ethical and moral concerns) deeply influences Faroese politics. Though liquor brewing laws were in the midst of relaxing when I left the Faroes, a great many Faroese people (musicians included) regularly lamented the fact that religious elements in the government were responsible for laws which prohibited the brewing of strong spirits in the islands. Many people were quick to point out how ridiculous the

situation had become by 2011 when Faroese liquor producers like the Vodka company, Eldvatn, were forced to export ingredients and water from the Faroes to other countries so that it could be brewed abroad and then "exported" back to the Faroes. The most disconcerting thing for some people is not so much that they were upset at the perceived injustice of not being able to brew their own alcohol as a nation. Rather, it is the fact that they feel that the brewing policy is a manifestation of religious power and religion-based moral and ethical values, expressed and enacted via political means.[15]

Bassist and founding member of the Faroese pro-independence political punk band, 200, Mikael Blak explained to me how his band had been discussed several time in the Faroese parliament thanks to their controversial and sometimes inflammatory lyrics which criticise Faroese politicians' religious conservatism. Blak explained to me further how his band's political lyrics, and one of their songs in particular which actually samples a recording of a Faroese politician making anti-gay (homophobic) remarks in the parliament, have also made them the target of attempted government suppression:

[15]While I could only offer anecdotal evidence of what I perceived to be a surprising level of alcohol consumption among the younger segment of the population (e.g., especially regarding *morgunballs*, or "morning parties" when people occasionally continute drinking all night), the policy of the government alcohol monopoly, *Rúsdrekkasøla Landsins*, makes a clear statement. Their mandate is to control and reduce the use of alcohol in the Faroe Islands (Uttanríkistænastan 2012). Similar to some other Nordic governments' approaches to limiting alcohol consumption (e.g., Finland, see IceNews 2008), the Faroese government taxes alcohol heavily in comparison to much of continental Europe. They also regulate the price of alcohol according to its alcohol content. The higher the percentage of alcohol, the higher the price (Uttanríkistænastan 2012). On the alcohol legislation section of the website of the Faroese government department, *Uttanríkistænastan* ("Foreign Service"), an introductory statement proclaims plainly, "The Faroe Islands have a troubled relationship with alcohol" (Uttanríkistænastan 2012). As the government website explains "Early in the 1900's alcohol was outlawed due to widespread alcohol and gambling problems. The ban was gradually reduced over the century and in 1992 the national monopoly opened its doors. . . Prior to 1992 alcohol was only allowed in special membership clubs, but after 1992 restaurants, bars and clubs are permitted to sell alcohol. There are two kinds of licences, half licence that only permits vine [sic] and beer and full licence that permits the sale of all legal alcoholic substances. Beer over 6,0 % vol. are not legal in the Faroe Islands and the spirits must not be of a higher percentage than 60% vol." (MFA.fo 2011)

Mikael Blak: [Regarding 200's album, *Viva la Republica*] yeah it was weird, we got like a number one hit in the Faroes, can't really talk about number one hits but, yeah it was the most played in the radios and everything, yeah it was a song that was very controversial, called "Muscleman-blad," it was implying that the people who are homophobic are gay themselves, yeah and it was I mean we three times been the centre of discussion in the parliament here.

Josh Green: The band has been?

MB: The band 200, you know, which is great, you know, for a political punk band that's like "mission accomplished."

JG: And you won't find that elsewhere in the world.

MB: No, yeah and actually you know the Minister of Culture at one time. . . he called the head of the national what's it called, national radio, and told him to not play 200.

JG: Really, do you remember the year?

MB: This was not long ago. This was a few years ago and, you know, he admitted it, which is crazy.

JG: So, he's like "yeah, I did call and told 'em not to play—"

MB: Yeah yeah! Abuse of power and everything, anywhere else he would have lost his job and never been able to— but that's, you know, that's Faroese politics for you, you know, the non-consequential politics which we are very much against. Which is you know our main focus is about this wanting to have sovereign— independence. And the main drive for having independence is this, you know, that we must have that things have consequences. That we don't just say "ah that's ok you know whatever and whatever happens. . . or whatever" and the other thing is the right-wing Christian crazy parties up here that are actual minority but control way too much of our politics and everything else.

JG: [i.e., because of the political system which usually yield multi-party coalitions] They still have elected representatives, your

> system is different from Canada because in yours the smallest parties have got a chance—
>
> MB: Yeah yeah but it's I'm fine with that they have some you know representatives because there are people who have those views and those should be there but it should not be that these few people can you know put a veto down that we're not allowed to have music after 3 o'clock on easter or something like that you know it doesn't make any sense that a small minority is making these decisions for people. . . finally now next April [2012] we're allowed to make strong beer and brew our own alcohol, you know, it's probably the only country in the world, at least western free country that can't brew their own alcohol, you know.

As has been shown in this sub-section, many Faroese musicians feel that religion is often at odds with music and that, to them, more disconcertingly, religious power in the Faroes is often seen to be inextricably linked to and exercised via political means. While some (for instance, in the metal scene) have chosen either to ignore religion's condemnation of their musical practices or to actively attack religion itself as Týr has, others, like the punk band, 200, have chosen to directly criticize politicians who express their religion-based moral beliefs in the political arena.

Chapter 8: Conclusion and "Why is there so much music in the Faroes?"

Some of the classic exemplars of the study of the role of music in small societies like Seeger and Feld have set the bar fairly high. Via similar methods, both approached the study of a society and sociality via music. That is, they wrote eloquently and insightfully about two very different small societies through the "lens" of music, with an eye to discussing and describing social processes in each. This was opposed to older formal, textual, and notation-centric studies that were more exclusively concerned with the music sound itself. While asking a question as broad (and perhaps naively over-ambitious) as "what can a society's music practices teach us about a small society" (or, more narrowly, social processes and sociality within that society) seems particularly untenable within the necessarily limited scope of an MA thesis, this over-arching question was always in the back of my mind, guiding my lines and methods of observation, participation, and inquiry during my time in the Faroes.

One notion that struck me repeatedly was that the Faroes seem to be an especially musical society or, rather, that the islands seem to be a society in which music plays a larger role than it does in the rural New Brunswick context in which I grew up. Considering the annual mass public singing of traditional and more recently composed nationalistic songs at Olavsoka (and the yearly printing of a national songbook of the year's songs to be sung there), the many small village festivals that mark the Faroese calendar (most of which feature music), the study of local traditional music as part of the official school curriculum (from my own schooldays I recall little more than the occasional singing of Wade Hemsworth's *The Logdriver's Waltz*), the fact that the Faroese label's founder claimed that an album is released at about the pace of one every two weeks there, the active national network of dance societies who performed for themselves and as part of a strategy to teach young children, the considerable international success and recognition enjoyed by a growing number of musicians from this nation of fewer than 50,000 inhabitants (some who have millions of hits on Youtube, and current

or past deals with major worldwide labels like Universal and Napalm Records), the sale of as many as 10,000 albums by a Faroese singer within the islands over the span of only two years, and, finally, the fact that as much as one fifth of the population has shown up for music festivals in the islands, it seems fairly safe to say that music, in a great diversity of forms, is somehow central to Faroese society. And all of that disregards even any discussion of the tremendous role music has played over the course of Faroese history (as a means of language preservation, as the principal form and vehicle of the continuation of sometimes ancient oral literature, as key symbols and expressions of nationalism and proof of their nation's distinctiveness, etcetera).

Reflecting on my time in the Faroes, I am constantly reminded of Turino's descriptions of communities of musicians he has worked with in places like Zimbabwe where, unlike in much of contemporary north America, communal musicmaking with at least a basic level of competency is considered a normal requisite for smooth social interaction (Turino 2008:97-98). While I wouldn't necessarily argue that music is as intrinsic to Faroese sociality as it may be in some of the communities discussed by Turino, I am certain that the significance of music in the Faroes can scarcely be overstated.

Being from America, and having experience working with people from societies around the world amongst whom music and musicality and conceptualized very differently than they are in America, Turino contrasts some South American and African peoples with North Americans. He writes,

> Some societies do not even have the concept of innate musical talent; the Aymara of Peru and the Venda of South Africa generally think of musical and dance ability as being available to anyone who has the interest and who puts in time and effort. From firsthand experience, I have found that in societies where participatory music making and dance are a regular part of frequent valued social activities, the general level of musical competence, especially as regards to relative pitch production (rendering intervals accurately) and having a good sense of time and rhythm,

> is generally high…[similarly] [i]n Shona communities in Zimbabwe…[g]ood performance is enjoyed and praised, even if only with smiling eyes, for people of all ages at such events. Practice rarely makes perfect, but if everyone in a social group does a particular activity repeatedly from early childhood as a normal part of valued social occasions, and if doing the activity well elicits praise, it is likely that there will be a generally high level of competence. [Turino 2008:97-98]

Speaking specifically of much of the United States, Turino suggests, conversely, that:

> [c]ompetence in performance will be lower among the general population in places where music and dance are assumed to be specialist activities not regularly practiced by everyone, and especially in places where the habit of connecting musical ability with the idea of inborn talent prevails. In spite of school music programs in the United States which involve many children, music is considered a specialist activity by the society at large. Ethnomusicologist Melinda Russell has shown that participation in school music programs falls off as students progress to higher grades and as the pressure to reach a specialist standard becomes more pronounced (personal communication). School music programs at all levels are geared toward presentational performances and do not involve collective music making among all ages as a normal part of valued social occasions - a normal part of being social. With the exception of singing in church, many middle-class North Americans stop making music altogether as they approach adulthood, and it is common to hear people in the United States say, "I don't know anything about music," or "I am not musical." Such statements would be surprising to people in societies where participatory music is common. These attitudes among North Americans are partially self-fulfilling descriptions, since they hinder musical participation and the continuous musical learning that results. [Turino 2008:98]

Turino's above characterizations of common patterns of music-making and notions of musicality as innate certainly ring true for my own upbringing and experiences. Though my own undergraduate honours and independent research indicates that participatory music was a much more common and normal part of

valued social occasions only two or three generations ago in much of rural New Brunswick, as Turino discusses with respect to America, this no longer seems to be the case. Turino's assertions that music is most often considered a specialist activity in the U.S., and that musical ability ("talent") is still commonly referred to as innate or inborn, also closely reflect my own experience in New Brunswick. With regard to the Faroes, judging from my own experience of what I would argue is the centrality of music to Faroese society, I suspect that Faroese experiences and perceptions of music and musicality lay somewhere in between the two extremes of North America and the various South American and African communities described by Turino. That is, music seems to be considerably more commonplace as an essential part of many types of social occasions in the Faroes than it is in North America (or at least, in the small corner of North America where I grew up). However, not having visited the Aymara, Venda, or Shona myself, I cannot necessarily say how similar the Faroese situation is to those societies discussed by Turino in which participatory music is a regular social activity.

If one were to accept the fact that music plays an especially important (or more central) role in Faroese society, compared with, say, most places in north America, an entire thesis could probably be written on why the Faroes is such a musical society (i.e., why there is so much music in the Faroes). While I won't attempt such a discussion at the end of a thesis, it is worth reflecting briefly on why there seems to be so much music in the Faroes.

Early on during my stay in the islands I started to wonder why it seemed that there was so much music happening in the Faroes for a place with such a relatively small population. While in conversation with someone who, while not Faroese, had been living in the islands for quite some time, I mused about this aloud. The non-Faroese resident responding by highlighting the fact that the Faroes may be small, but they have their own language. The Faroes' insularity and possession of their own distinct language and culture may well have

something to do with the seemingly disproportionately large amount of music that goes on there. For instance, if one were to compare another more easily measurable type of creative output between the insular Nordic nations (Faroes and Iceland) and the mainland ones (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland), one would find that, in the realm of total books published per capita, for instance, the Faroes and Iceland show a statistically significant advantage over the mainland Nordic nations: over the period from 2000-2009, Iceland ranks first at .0048 books published per person, the Faroes second at .0033, and then Denmark (.0025), Finland (.0024), Sweden (.0019), and Norway (.0015) (Nordic Statistical Yearbook 2011).

Of course, it is not possible to similarly quantify the amount of music-making that goes in these countries (even if one compared the number of albums professionally released in each country, this indicates nothing of the amount of informal music-making that goes on). However, the marked discrepancy between the higher number of books published in the insular Nordic nations of Iceland and the Faroes (both of which of course have their own small languages) perhaps suggests that these nations might also, for whatever reason, similarly outdo their mainland Nordic counterparts in terms of the amount of musical activity going on within each.

However, this can only ever be conjecture. What is significant is that in my own experience of the richness of musical life in the Faroes, I was struck by the amount, variety, and quality of music goes on in the islands. Compared to similar contexts that I was familiar with, like Fredericton, New Brunswick, where I lived for five years (a town with over double the Faroes' total population), people in the islands seemed to be devoting a considerable amount of time making music. No matter how it is rationalized, one album released every two weeks for a population of 50, 000 is quite impressive. Of course, there are some obvious important factors, including the ready availability of music education in and outside of schools, and the considerable financial support network provided by

Tutl, the Faroese government, and local businesses who all sponsor albums, that play a clear role in fostering an environment ripe for encouraging musicians to perform and record regularly.

But what I found more interesting than trying to determine why there was so much music going on in the Faroes, was to simply put the question to Faroese people themselves. Most of them readily agreed that the Faroes produce a conspicuous amount of musicians for such a small place. When I asked people the arguably unanswerable question of "Why is there so much music in the Faroes?," I received a wide variety of interesting responses which shed light on islanders' perceptions of themselves as an inherently (or especially) musical nation. The various responses to this question yielded a number of answers with common themes, from explanations based on Faroese weather and geography (e.g., the country's "isolation," small size, and the boredom that stems from this, and, interestingly, the fact that the Faroes are a nation, but also a nation in "microcosm"), to those which made reference to the Faroese history and music traditions (traditional a cappella music, and the party or *ball* tradition of guitar and singalong songs).

As John Áki Egholm suggested:

> my opinion on this would be because I have thought about it as well and you know it's weird, because you know, here we are like 48,000 people in the Faroe Islands and, you know, there are so many people who choose. . . to dedicate themselves to the arts, and I think it's because, you know, there is something in like, you know, Faroese way of being that, you know, you HAVE to express yourself, you know, because there's just something that is inside of people, I believe that they have to get it out. And you know, it becomes art. . . probably has something to do with the isolation as well, and, you know, you're just out there on this rock and you have to figure out something to do. And because of the culture and, you know, because of the past, the Faroese people, you know, music has been a very important part of it, I believe. And something that continues on with the generation today. And I think it's cool that there is a true, a very true creative spirit. . . yeah I

> think that most great artists create great art do partially because they choose to, but mostly because they feel they have to communicate, you know, something. . . there's something inside me, I KNOW it's good.

Mirroring Turino's suggestion that in some societies, musical performance and competence are regarded as regular aspects of social interaction, Theodor Kapnas similarly made explicit reference to the influence of Faroese traditional music, and suggested that the tranquility of the islands (in contrast to noisy cities) may also play an inspirational factor:

> Yeah well I think it has a lot to do with the Faroese tradition. Have you— you've probably heard about the Faroese traditional dance? Yeah, the chain-dance. I mean thats one of the oldest Faroese traditions, it's one of the oldest and people have done it always, which means that everybody, basically, maybe not anymore, but as far as 10-20 years ago, all children knew how to sing. Which means it's normal part of the day, normal part of life. And I think that the singing culture is so strong, has helped music culture. People get interested in music and want to become musicians, it's kind of when you live in the big city and all you hear is "VWOOM" noise outside and stress, I mean obviously you're not gonna have the same inspiration and the same background to be able to start playing music and to be inspired by music.

Similarly, Kristoffer Mørkøre was convinced that Faroese weather and musical traditions have served to encourage music-making in the islands and to make music and essential part of the Faroese people:

> I think it has something to do with the weather. Faroe Islands, it's mainly rain and it's dark, and there's lots of mountains, it's a wild nature. People are almost forced to sit inside, yeah? And that maybe provokes some creative things out of the Faroese people. I think we have a strong song tradition, yeah? So, I think it lies somewhere, you know, deep within our roots somewhere.

Though taking a less idyllic view, Kim Joensen was convinced that the Faroes' isolation and boredom played key roles in the creative process (and that when

these two factors are compounded, as in the smaller and more remote regions of the Faroes, people's creativity and inspiration only increases proportionately). As Joensen explained, frankly:

> Kim Joensen: It's so fucking boring to be here, there's really nothing to do, you know, you know small islands, you can't do that much, you know, you don't have those main opportunities, you could go catch a movie sometime, you could go ball or see a football game, Faroese shitty football game, or you could sit home and practice music, and, you know, hang out with friends, drink, whatever. So, I think that— well, actually I really don't know, it's just, instead of sending your kids to like soccer practice and stuff, parents probably: "what about music?," maybe a lot of parents thought about that and everybody just became a musician and there's always someone who knows a musician and someone's like saw "he plays guitar and I want to play something too" and you know ah? I dunno.
>
> Josh Green: No that's good, some good points, I always get different answers.
>
> KJ: Then you will have, you know, THE answer. But I think the real reason why there is so many Faroese musician is it's because of the— and there are not many opportunities here, and music is an opportunity wherever you are, ah? And umm maybe Torshavn there are more activities than everywhere else, if you go to the small villages there is nothing there. And but there's always music, so I think that's probably why people start playing music because the— you know, it's interesting, and you have the internet, you listen to a lot of music and was like, to do something with your time you just start playing music. And I mean a lot of the bands are not from Torshavn, they're from you know everywhere else, small villages, you know the best guitar players in Faroe Islands they're from, you know, REALLY small villages and towns. From Týr, Heri and Terji, they are from somewhere, you know, far away—
>
> JG: Terji is from Skipanes.
>
> KJ: Skipanes, have you been there? It's REALLY tiny.
>
> JG: Takes about one second to drive through—

KJ: When you're driving slow and there's a lot of traffic.

JG: (laughs)

KJ: And Heri he is from, I THINK he is from Runavik, but he lived in Lamba, which is also a really tiny place, middle of nowhere, no one wants to drive there, I've actually never been there.

JG: No, me either.

KJ: (chuckles) and they are kick-ass guitar players, you know probably, you know, because they're from somewhere where they're really bored and just play music.

Like Theodor and Kristoffer, Guðrið Hansdóttir similarly invoked Faroese musical traditions, but she was more interested in the role that she imagined the Faroese party singalong tradition (*ball* tradition) played in the history of contemporary Faroese music:

Yeah I mean, I've been asking that question myself a lot of times, but umm maybe it's just the tradition to have like people when they get together they sing and stuff, I think it might be that. And, you know, like this, somebody, you know, playing guitar and everybody singing, that's like, if you have a party, that's the Faroese way to party. To sing and to play the guitar, and, you know, I don't, I don't think they do that anywhere else, or I haven't— I haven't experienced it anywhere else. So, it's like the tradition, I think, of singing. Like, having music when there is something, yeah, and I also think that it's— we don't have that much to do here. Nothing happens, and then that's when people get like "let's do something," you know, let's just make our own music, or, you know, it might be that, also.

Jakup Zachariassen similarly invoked various historical and contemporary Faroese singing practices, but was also convinced that the country's small size (which enables musicians to literally travel around the whole nation if they want

to) and ease of access to the means of music dissemination (thanks to the national radio) play important roles in explaining the amount of music in the islands:

> Jakup Zachariassen: Yeah uh I think there's two part of the answer. . . but we have a really singing tradition way back I mean dancing thing, and people telling stories for the kids and singing, and churches and schools, and all that kind of—
>
> Josh Green: Before radio.
>
> JZ: Yeah long before radio and it's really tradition to sing and play and but that's more the main thing, what have been happening in every house, you know, around, but when you're talking about CDs and stuff like that, that's another thing, 'cuz it's so easy to record an album and it's so easy to marketing the album in the Faroe Islands. It's so easy to come around, you know, ah?
>
> JG: Yeah the whole country (chuckles).
>
> JZ: Yeah there's no label, so artists are just doing an album, copying some CDs, then they sell it. So, you can probably compare it to a small town somewhere else, a local band somewhere, who did their album and selling around in pubs. . . and it's really easy to go to country radio [nation-wide radio], it's really easy to play concerts. . .

Invoking Faroese history and oral traditions more explicitly, the members of Konqueror explained that, in their opinion, because music has played such a large role in preserving Faroese oral literature and the language for such a long time, song and dance have just become essential and preponderant elements of Faroese culture and society:

> Heini Djurhuus: I actually have a theory about that. Like, it wasn't allowed to speak Faroese in Faroe Islands, in old times. So, all the stories, like, about everything, Sigmund Brestisson and stuff like that—
>
> Erland Joensen: The old vikings—

HD: They're all like transferred through music, *kvæði* and stuff, and there's always been, I'm not religious or anything like that, but churches and stuff like that. They also sing in churches, and the majority of people on the Faroe Islands always go to church.

Dávid Reinert Petersen(?): You had to sing in Danish, also.

EJ: At the start yeah—
. . .
EJ: So, when freedom comes, a lot of people want to sing in Faroese, 'cuz they weren't allowed before.

Jaspur Jan Olsen: The Faroese history is, was, yeah it traveled through mouth to mouth.
. . .
HD: . . . singing, because then you remember it, you know, and it's not just a boring story.

EJ: Parents and grandparents that teach their kids and it just went on and on and it's the same with the myths in the Faroe Islands, it's just mouth transferred, ah?

JJO: Through the traditional Faroese folk dance, it traveled through singing there. So, singing is— it's a huge part of the Faroese people—

EJ: It's in the culture.

HD: Some of the best singers I have ever heard come from the Faroe Islands, I'm not saying that because I'm Faroese, but Eivør she's definitely the most amazing female singer I've ever heard, because it's really different, you know, you can listen to, I dunno, Celine Dion or whatever, she does sing good, but it's like there are hundreds of other women who sing just like her, she doesn't have an exact style, but Eivør does, ah? so. . .

One of the most strikingly detailed responses came from Teitur Lassen. As the only Faroese musician I know of to have been signed to one of the so-called "big four" (the world's four largest record companies), Teitur has almost certainly spent a lot of time reflecting on music in the Faroes and elsewhere. He's almost constantly involved in some form of musical activity: when not touring, he's

sitting in his house (surrounded by blank, half-finished, and completed sheet music papers), composing daily. Having also traveled widely as a touring musician, he offered the perspective of someone who has been away from the Faroes for long periods, and then returned, having decided to make his home there. In his response, Teitur combined some of the above concerns with his keen observation that the Faroes, though they are a nation, are more like a small, tightly knit community which one strongly feels themselves to be a part of; a nation in "microcosm," which has all of the trappings and infrastructure of larger nations, without their comparatively massive size or population. Interestingly, he also mused that this small size and sense of nation-wide sense of a community that you can feel made living in the Faroes an especially emotional experience because everyone empathizes with and is tied up in one another's lives so wholly. Regarding the abundance of music in the Faroes, Teitur explained:

> Well, I think it's because people have a lot of time. That's one of the reasons. People have a lot of spare time, a lot of time. And also because it's, unlike [other] places that have a lot of time, like to say a far-off remote village in Canada, this is a country, a society, that has got the same— it's like a microcosm of a country, even though it is a country, it's absolutely suburban in every way, but it's still a country and it has got all these, as much as I was saying earlier that it doesn't exist, the music business, it still has got all those elements, you know, you can put on shows, there's radio, you know rehearsals, that whole thing still exists even though it only exists on an ideological level. Like it's not a business or nothing like that, but it exists and that's why it's much more approachable then if you were in a Canadian village. You can, people literally, you know, drive a taxi and make a record and then sell shitloads of records, you know. And that's not really possible in suburbia Canada, I think that's one of the reasons that it's it's very easy, there's no censorship, there's no one telling you you can't do this and people are just very brash about it and people just go ahead and do it. . . it's also that people just really really love it and like I said, it's not hard to play music, it isn't.
>
> And maybe in your small Canadian city you think it is because you see Michael Bolton on TV and go "oh he's a— that's how you're supposed to do it" you know, but it's not, you know, it's not

> what it's about. And people I guess figured it out or instinctively it's easier here in some way. But you would also, there's also more football and sports here than in any other town, absolutely, and there's more of a lot of things here, you know there's a hospital, there is a, there's libraries, restaurants, university, you know there's everything here like I said the size, it's still a country, it still has all those things, and I think that always effects people, they feel part of something and that must be why, there must be music in society.
>
> Music in ANY society from beginnings of urbanization or Neanderthal village there's always, there will be music when people get together. And here, you know, life it's very dynamic, it's very dramatic and people affect each other's lives, people are know about everyone, about— someone dies in the hospital, you can, you know, you can FEEL it. . . it's very— I think you go through a lot of emotions here, it's very intense living here. And I think that's also where part of our music is coming from, you know? It's the will to share, the will to express, I think it's a lot is being put into that hole in people's lives all the time. So, I think that's why people are creative. 'Cuz there's a lot coming in, yeah from nature, from weather, from everything, you know, there's a lot coming in.

Each of these insightful answers helps us better understand the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroes in significant ways. Like the previous chapters and sub-sections of this thesis, considered individually, these answers represent only the view from a single window. These answers work best in conjunction and juxtaposition to one another, as do the portions of the thesis which, though each addressing its own more specific questions (as outlined in the introduction), are intended to be taken together as attempts to explicate and find meaning in the variety of musical practices I have discussed throughout.

As I suggested in the second chapter with reference to Geertz (1973:5), my aim throughout this thesis has been to engage in ethnography as an interpretive endeavour in search of meaning. In my attempts at explication I have not intended to create a document that would have the "final say" on the significance of the Faroese musical practices discussed herein, rather, the attempted inclusion of a variety of Faroese voices and the multiple paths of inquiry I have followed were intended to be an open-ended elaboration upon the multivalent and variable

meanings of the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroe Islands.

The chapters of this thesis and their various sub-sections have been constructed as successive building blocks (or puzzle pieces, to use a more common analogy), which, when put together, are intended to create a fuller and more coherent picture of the significance of music in contemporary Faroese society. But this picture is also necessarily rudimentary and incomplete. In taking seriously Seeger's charge that musical anthropology should be "a study of society from the perspective of musical performance" (Seeger 2004:xiii), I have found that it has been necessary to exclude whole areas of musical practice in order to focus more specifically on a smaller range of music.

In looking "at the way musical performances create many aspects of culture and social life" (Seeger 2004:xiii) and examining "the way music is part of the very construction and interpretation of social and conceptual relationships and processes" (2004:xiii), I had to narrow my focus to a historically-informed discussion of of a limited sub-set of contemporary Faroese musical practices: namely, country and metal music. However, while I believe the country sub-section provided valuable insight into the sometimes unexpected roots and routes of western popular music forms, it is a genre that is much less connected to the rest of Faroese oral history and mythology than I argue Faroese metal is.

Just as Seeger went through a lot of effort to provide the context and historical depth necessary to understand the single ceremonial/music performance context of the Mouse Ceremony, similarly, the majority of the sub-sections in this thesis were intended to set up the eventual discussion of metal as an emergent and expressly Faroese music form. The history chapter and the sub-sections on the significance of traditional music in Faroese society today were conceived of as parts of an orienting framework to help readers get a sense of what it means when Faroese metal bands draw on and attempt to evoke "Faroese history," including their reinterpretation of traditional musical materials like hymns and *kvæði*. The

casual gloss of merely mentioning that bands like Týr and Hamferð make use of "local/folk elements" in their music could do the music and musicians a disservice by refusing to seriously engage the history and development of music and specific musical forms in the islands.

Metal is a modern musical genre that has been transnational since its inception (Wallach, Berger, et. al 2011). In the Faroes, however, the islands' metal musicians are referencing and re-framing elements of their nation's traditional music. Therefore, any discussion of the significance of such traditional music in a contemporary Faroese context must necessarily take into account not only the music's connections to Faroese myth, pre-history, and the nationalist movement, but also these new configurations of old music being created by young Faroese metalheads. This ostensibly modern music must be framed historically in order to avoid superficiality and a-historicity. In short, the perhaps surprising complexity and significance of such understudied musical genres (like metal) in such relatively understudied regions (like the Faroes) is belied by their under-representation in scholarly literature. As I hope I have been able to show, the Faroe Islands have a rich and nuanced history of music which neither begins nor ends with the collection and collation of an impressive corpus of a nation's songs in a tome like the CCF; Faroese music continues to evolve and change while contemporary musicians make use of selected elements of the local past to attempt to shape their own (perhaps global) futures.

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Appendix A: Where to Find Musical Examples

Many of the musicians and specific songs discussed in this thesis are available via mail order and/or iTunes:

1."Gandkvaedi Tróndar" on Týr's 2008 album, *Land* (Napalm Records–NPR 247)

2."Grímur á Miðalnesi/Wings of Time" on Týr's 2006 album, *Ragnarok* (NPR 199)

3. Examples of various archival recordings of *kvaedi, vísur*, *rímur,* and other old songs on *Flúgvandi Biðil* (Tutl-SHD 25), including "Grímur á Miðalnesi" and "Torsteins Kvæði" (traditional songs which also appear on Týr albums)

4. Examples of various archival recordings of *skjaldur* on *Nina, nina, nái* (Tutl-SHD 43)

5. All of Hamferð's official songs on the 2010 album *Vilst Er Síðsta Fet* (including their version of the old hymn, "Harra Guð, títt dýra navn og æra")

6. Examples of *kingosangur* (Kingo songs) on 1996 album, *Kingosangur* (Tutl-SHD 21)

7. Examples of the variety of popular music styles that blossomed in the early to mid-1990s (including Hatespeech, who some call the Faroes' first metal band) on *Rock í Føroyum* (Tutl-HJF 34)

8. Danish rocker Per Chr. Frost samples the famous *táttur* (plural: *tættir),* "Fuglakvæðið," on 2003 album *Popp List 2* (Tutl - CD02030)

9. Hallur Joensen's debut 2008 album, *Pickin' Time in Nashville* (features his Faroese-language version of Charley Pride's "Kiss an Angel Good Morning") available at www.hallurjoensen.com

10. Political punk band 200 and their controversial song, "Muscleman-Blað" (criticising religious/political homophobia in the Faroes) appears on 2005 album *Viva La Republica* (Tutl HJF-121)

The video sharing website, YouTube, is also full of examples of most of these songs, including many videos of Faroese ring-dancing (searches for "Faroese dance" or "chain dance" or "*kvaedi"* typically yield many relevant results).

Appendix B: Notes on Conventions: Transcription, Faroese Names, Patronymics, and Acronyms

In the latter portions of this thesis especially, I frequently quote people with whom I spoke in the Faroes. Though I am concerned with reproducing with integrity a sufficiently accurate textual representation of the speech I am quoting, I have inserted various forms of punctuation in the textual representations for the sake of simplicity (i.e., making longer phrases easier to read and understand when rendered into the more rigid form of written text). Therefore, it is important to point out that (other than exclamation points and question marks in typical usage) most punctuation reproduced as part of the following textualized representations of speech does not have any "value" (in terms of pauses, stops, emphasis, etcetera), they serve only to enable an easier flow of the text. Specifically, the use of commas does not reflect any sort of pause or change of pace in a person's speech.

The occasional use of ellipses in mid-sentence is generally used (as it is often used in quoting textual sources) to excise or elide portions of sentences which are either brief and tangential, or are otherwise too confusing and incomplete (e.g., "uhhh mmm I well you know umm," longer strings of interjections, pensive noises, and false starts which people sometimes make when trying to find the right words, especially when speaking a language that is not their own mother tongue). Following the written convention, I use ellipses enclosed in square brackets to indicate that words have been excised (e.g., “the thing about my house is. . . that it is great”). The use of ellipses at the end of sentences signals that a speaker has trailed off, usually ending with a conjunction or affirmation ("That's what I believe, so. . . ," or, "It's true, yeah. . . "). For false starts and brief, relevant asides to a central idea being expressed, I employ the em-dash. For instance, at the beginning of a sentence, a false-start, would be rendered like this: "We think—no, I mean, I think that. . . ." Similarly, mid-sentence em-dashes representing quick interruptions of brief asides would be rendered like this: "I think that the Faroese comm- the Faroese musical community- is growing fast." Em-dashes are also used for interruptions between speakers or when speakers finish each other's sentences (Man: "We don't think that—" Woman: "It's such a good idea"). In terms of increased emphasis, this is marked in two ways: via the use of exclamation marks following words that are spoken excitedly and more quickly ("Yeah! Agreed!"), and also by capitalising individual words which speakers spoke with increased volume, exaggerated slowness, or added zeal for emphasis ("that was REALLY, REALLY stupid"). It is also worth mentioning briefly the Faroese speech convention of adding “ah?” to the end of sentences: it is used frequently, and in essentially the same manner, as a questioning assertion that encourage listeners’ sympathy or response, as the words like “huh” or “eh” often are (“that’s a pretty big house, huh?”).

Aside from transcription, deciding upon which names I would use to refer to individuals also posed something of a challenge. Faroese naming practices are

somewhat more complex than what most North Americans are probably used to, so it is worth mentioning something of the variety of Faroese naming practices so that readers might better attend to the special significance of Faroese people's names as they are used throughout this thesis.

There is a general assumption that, having been descended from Old Norse-speaking settlers, through much of Faroese history, Faroese people would have employed the patronymic naming system that has long been in use in places like Iceland. In this system, children are given their father's first name as a surname (so that, for instance, a man named John Sigurdson who wanted to name his own son Isak would name him Isak Johnson). This old form of patronymic naming was discontinued (legally and officially), however, with the passage of the 1828 Danish Name Act which required Faroese at the time of the law's implementation to make Danish style (i.e., ending in –sen) "permanent," inheritable surnames of their fathers' first names. Up until that time, Faroese people had mostly used the older ("Icelandic") patronymic system whenever their names were recorded in an official capacity. However, even though the Icelandic patronymic style system has a longer history in the islands than the Danish (i.e., western) one, neither of them reflect the indigenous place-based naming system, which one could call simply "place names," used in everyday practice by the Faroese themselves. That is, Faroese people (especially villagers) have maintained multiple informal naming practices for both people and places that emphasize the interconnectedness of people with landscape and history.

Some scholars have noted that a common way Faroese refer to one another is by attaching proper place names (for homesteads, houses, named village areas, etcetera) to one's Christian name, for instance, Jógvan við Stein (literally, Jógvan "at the Stone") (Nauerby 1996:122). The strength and resilience of the village practice of referring to one another principally by these geographical informal names is attested to in large part by the fact that it has survived into the present despite having existed parallel to at least two different officially enforced name laws (Nauerby 1996:122).

Even in historical records dating prior to the 1828 Name Act, it is possible to find some evidence that people's place names were used, albeit very rarely, in official contexts. In one instance from the early 18th century, a local sheriff, Augustinus Mortensen Højvig evidently employed both the patronymic system as well as incorporating his place name; his father's name having been Morten Augustinussen Højvig, he took his father's Christian name Morten in the patronymic style as well as the name Højvig, an apparent Danicization (or archaic form) of the village of Hoyvík (West 1972:56). The Faroese naming system eventually gained more official recognition with the 1904 relaxation of the Danish Name Act which allowed people to pay to have their surname changed, as some, particularly nationalist-minded, people did (Nauerby 1996:122). Thus one can see from around this time various (especially artistic or politically involved) Faroese people referred to themselves in print by their place-names as in the example of the early Faroese poet, J.P. Gregoriussen who became better known by his place-

name Jóan Petur uppi í Trøð. This also meant that many people who were born with fixed "Danish-style" surnames later made the decision to legally change their names to a place name, or to a patronymic version, either of which some consider to be "more Faroese" than the Danish-style fixed surnames. Indeed, I met some older Faroese people who were born and lived much of their life with such an inherited surname, but later changed to a patronymic name or a place name.

Even a cursory glance at a list of contemporary Faroese names reveals, however, that many people have retained their Danish surnames. Despite this, place-names remain most commonly used as evidenced by one author's assertion that "[t]he surname has never really been accepted as a way of referring to people. . . if you wanted to know somebody's surname, this meant that in terms of language you had to ask how the person concerned was 'written' " (Rasmussen 1987:58 trans. in Nauerby 1996:123).

The system of place-names just described is also sometimes further augmented by frequent use of other types of what Gaffin calls "locational nicknames" which refer to people's proximity to other types of structures or geographical features, the nicknames Leif 'Post Office' (Posthús) and Egil 'Under the Bluff' being two examples of this (Gaffin 1996:98).

In 1992, a new Faroese naming act was passed that allowed for parents to give their children either their own inherited surname or "the christian name of the father or mother in the genitive case" (Nauerby 1996:124). Naming laws like the 1992 one have a history of having been worked on by the Department of Faroese Language (at the University of the Faroe Islands) and the bills have sometimes drawn criticism as being "too Icelandic" (Nauerby 1996:122). Since 1992, further legal changes have been made in attempt to enshrine in law more "Faroese" naming practices, and, as a result, Faroese naming practices are now rather strictly regulated. Today, the Faroese language committee (Føroysku málnevndina), based at the Faroese university (but not entirely made up of professors) is involved in Faroese language preservation, the invention or official endorsement of neologisms, and naming laws in a number of important ways. Specifically, the committee is responsible for the creation and maintenance of the Føroyska Fólkanavnalistin ("the Faroese people's name list").

By Faroese naming practices being rather strictly regulated, I mean children's names must pass specific sets of government criteria before they will be legally approved. For instance, the Føroyska Fólkanavnalistin is the official, approved list of acceptable names (763 for women, 866 for men) and their spellings. If parents wish to name their children a name not on the list (or to use alternate spellings), they are required to make an appeal to the government to do so. As the Faroese immigration office's website explains,

> "[i]f parents want to give their child a name that is not on the name list, they should first contact the Board on Names [Navnanevndin] that decides whether the chosen name can be given or not. If approved by the board parents can register the child´s name directly with the parish register without

> involving other authorities. If the Board refuses, the case can be referred on appeal to the Immigration Office." [Útstovan.fo 2012].

Even parents who are not from the Faroes ("parents of foreign origin") who wish to "give their child a foreign name or a name according to traditions in their country of origin" are required to send an application to the Immigration Office (Útlendingastovan.fo 2012). As for surnames,

> "[c]hildren can have the surname of either parent, or a surname that either parent has recently used legally (the latter does not include married names) . . . [i]nstead of using the parents´ surname the child can have its father's or mother´s name ending with -son or -dóttir according to the sex of the child. . . [w]hen using names ending with -son or -dóttir, double names are not allowed." [Útlendingastovan.fo 2012].

I have set out only a portion of the regulations that govern Faroese naming practices.

In sum, Faroese names and the various informal and legal systems that govern them are rather complex. During my time in the islands I encountered nearly every expression and variation of the above naming practices imaginable: for instance, I met men who inherited their fathers' surnames (but whose fathers derived their names from geographic features, like a mountain they lived at the base of, like Jón Tyril), to women who bore the genitive version of their mother's first name as their surname (e.g., Milja Tótudóttir, whose mother's first name is Tóta), and everything in between. To further complicate matters, some Faroese people with whom I spoke also had what one might call "English names." That is, they had either completely different names (or Anglicised versions of their Faroese first names) that they used in conversation with non-Faroese speakers with whom they were conversing in English. Some examples of Anglicised versions of Faroese names which I encountered were "Isaac" for "Ísak," "Jacob" for "Jakup," and Martin or Marty for Martin Rói. The last case, Martin or Marty for Martin Rói is especially striking because of the way the letter "r" is pronounced in Faroese when it follows a vowel and precedes a consonant like "t": a crude approximation of the Faroese pronunciation of Martin Rói would be something like "marsh-ten ro-wa," quite different from the English pronunciation of Martin! In other cases, some individuals chose to eschew their Faroese first names altogether in favour of easier to pronounce (for non-Faroese speakers) names. One musician named Jafet Andrias whom I met, for instance, chose to go by the name Joey.

For my part, even though it would have been easier to just pronounce Anglicized versions of people's names, I usually tried to pronounce them in the Faroese fashion. Because everyone whom I met tended to refer to one another only by their first names, and because I feel that I became good friends with a

number of people whom I met and interviewed in the Faroes, I also tended to refer to people only by their first names (unless I was trying to distinguish between two people with the same first name). In order to reflect the informal tone of conversation and nature of the relationships I had with many of the Faroese people whom I interviewed, hung out and chatted with, within this thesis (after introducing them with their full names), I have also chosen to refer to people most often only by their Faroese first name(s), except in instances where it would have been confusing to do so.

Regarding acronyms, it is typical within much of ballad studies and musicological research to refer to specific songs found within some of the greatest ballad collections by their catalogue numbers: for example, Laws B1 (referring to the song *Streets of Laredo* in G. Malcolm Laws' *American Balladry from British Broadsides*) or Child 200 (*The Gypsy Laddie* in Francis James Child's T*he English and Scottish Popular Ballads*). The only such large ballad collection referred to similarly herein is the massive collection of Faroese ballad texts, *Føroya Kvæði: Corpus Carminum Færoensium* compiled by the Danish scholars Svend Grundtvig, Jørgen Bloch, and others. According to practice, this collection is referred to here as CCF, and specific ballads therein are referred to by their CCF catalogue number (e.g., CCF 78).