

# Harpa (concert hall)

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**Harpa** is a concert hall and conference centre in Reykjavík, Iceland. The opening concert was held on May 4, 2011. The building features a distinctive colored glass facade inspired by the basalt landscape of Iceland.<sup>[2]</sup>

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## History

Harpa was designed by the Danish firm Henning Larsen Architects in co-operation with Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson. The structure consists of a steel framework clad with geometric shaped glass panels of different colours.<sup>[3]</sup><sup>[4]</sup> The building was originally part of a redevelopment of the Austurhöfn area dubbed World Trade Center Reykjavík, which was partially abandoned when the financial crisis took hold. The development was intended to include a 400-room hotel, luxury apartments, retail units, restaurants, a car park and the new headquarters of Icelandic bank Landsbanki.

Construction started in 2007 but was halted with the start of the 2008 Icelandic financial crisis.<sup>[2]</sup> The completion of the structure was uncertain until the government decided in 2008 to fully fund the rest of the construction costs for the half-built concert hall. For several years it was the only construction project in existence in Iceland.<sup>[2]</sup> The building was given its name on the Day of Icelandic Music on 11 December 2009, prior to which it was called The Reykjavík Concert Hall and Conference Centre (Icelandic: *Tónlistar- og ráðstefnuhúsið í Reykjavík*). The building is the first purpose-built concert hall in Reykjavík and it was developed in consultation with artistic advisor Vladimir Ashkenazy and international consultant Jasper Parrott of HarrisonParrott.<sup>[5]</sup> It houses the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and the offices of The Icelandic Opera.

In the opening concert on 4 May 2011, Iceland Symphony Orchestra performed under the baton of Vladimir Ashkenazy with the Icelandic pianist Víkingur Ólafsson as soloist.<sup>[6]</sup> The concert was broadcast live on RÚV, the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service.<sup>[7]</sup>

Harpa is operated by *Portus*, a company owned by the Icelandic government and the City of Reykjavík.

In 2013, the building won the European Union’s Mies van der Rohe award for contemporary architecture.<sup>[2]</sup>

The current director of Harpa is Halldór Guðmundsson.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Harpa gallery

## Appearances in popular culture

In its unfinished state, Harpa (under the earlier name *Tónlistarhús*) appears in *Gæska: Skáldsaga* by Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl, where it is temporarily turned into a mosque with the addition of a minaret.

It was the setting of an episode of the Netflix series *Sense8*.

## References

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- "Press Release: Harpa Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre Official Opening on 4 May 2011" (http://www.mbl.is/media/90/2190.pdf) (PDF). Morgunblaðið. Retrieved 11 November 2016.
- "Harpa Official Website - Staff" (https://en.harpa.is/harpa/company/staff/). *www.harpa.is*. Retrieved 11 November 2016.

## External links

- Official website (http://harpa.is) (in Icelandic)
- Official website (http://en.harpa.is/) (in English)
- Harpa Concert Hall in arkitekturbilleder.dk (http://www.arkitekturbilleder.dk/bygning-Harpa-908)
- Picture Gallery from islandsmyndir.is (http://www.islandsmyndir.is/html\_skjol/sudvesturland/reykjavik/Harpa-2011/index.html)
- Rowan Moore, "Harpa Concert Hall - in pictures: A stunning new concert Hall in Reykjavik is the result of a collaboration between Henning Larsen Architects and the artist Olafur Eliasson" (https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2011/aug/28/harpa-concert-hall-in-pictures?picture=378319819#/?picture=378319819&index=4), *The Guardian* 28 August 2011.

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Categories: Buildings and structures in Reykjavík | Music venues completed in 2011 | 2011 establishments in Iceland | Tourist attractions in Reykjavík | Music venues in Iceland

Harpa Music Hall and Conference Centre	
<span></span> <div>Harpa Concert Hall</div>	
General information	
Type	Concert hall & conference centre
Location	Reykjavík, Iceland
Address	Austurbakki 2
Town or city	Reykjavík
Country	Iceland
Coordinates	<span><span><span><span><span>64°9′1″N</span> <span>21°55′57″W</span></span></span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>﻿</span></span><span><span></span><span><span>﻿</span> / <span>﻿</span></span></span></span></span>
Current tenants	Iceland Symphony Orchestra <div> <div><div>The Icelandic Opera</div></div> </div>
Construction started	January 12, 2007
Completed	2011
Opened	May 13, 2011
Cost	€164 million <sup>[1]</sup>
Owner	Portus
Height	43 metres (141 <span> </span> ft)
Technical details	
Floor area	28,000 square metres (300,000 <span> </span> sq <span> </span> ft)
Design and construction	
Architecture firm	Henning Larsen Architects <div> <div><div><i>Batterið</i></div></div> </div>
Other designers	Ólafur Eliasson, facade design <div> <div><div><i>Artec Consultants</i>, acoustics design</div></div> </div>
Main contractor	ÍAV
Other information	
Seating capacity	1,600–1,800 (Eldborg, main hall) <div> <div><div>450 (Norðurljós)</div></div> <div><div>750 (Silfurberg)</div></div> <div><div>195 (Kaldalón)</div></div> </div>
Website	
Venue website (http://en.harpa.is/)	



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