



## PRESS RELEASE

Embargo: 7am GMT on Monday 15th February

### ICELANDIC MUSIC INDUSTRY COMMITS TO EQUALITY

- **14** Icelandic organisations sign the Keychange gender pledge this week; FTT, FÍH, Gaukurinn, Harpa, KÍTÓN, Icelandic Opera, Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, INNI Music, Nordic House, Nordic Music Days, Reykjavik Music City, STEF, ÚTÓN / Iceland Music and Þjóðleikhúsið.
- Eliza Reid, First Lady of Iceland and composer Anna Thorvaldsdóttir announced as Icelandic Ambassadors
- Iceland Airwaves and STEF lead Keychange movement in Iceland

Keychange along with partners **Iceland Airwaves**, sponsors **STEF**, and collaborators **Iceland Music** are proud to announce an expansion of the Keychange movement in Iceland.

**16** Icelandic organisations in total have now signed the Keychange gender pledge; **Iceland Airwaves, LungA Arts Festival, FTT, FÍH, Gaukurinn, Harpa, KÍTÓN, Icelandic Opera, Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, Reykjavik Music City, ÚTÓN (Iceland Music), Nordic Music Days, Nordic House, Þjóðleikhúsið, INNI Music.** Sponsors **STEF** have also extended their commitment to the Keychange movement with a new pledge. All organisations have signed the Keychange gender equality pledge towards achieving 50% representation of women and under-represented genders - [find the full list of Icelandic signatories here](#).

Furthermore, **Eliza Reid**, the First Lady of Iceland has joined the movement as an Ambassador alongside Nordic Council Music Prize winner **Anna Thorvaldsdóttir**.

**Will Larnach-Jones**, Director of **Iceland Airwaves**, said *"It's incredibly encouraging to see more local organisations join the Keychange Pledge. The Pledge is gathering momentum, bringing real change to the world's musical and cultural landscape. Iceland ranks highly globally for gender equality in society, it makes sense for its cultural institutions to stand up and be counted as part of this very important movement."*

New Keychange Ambassador and **First Lady of Iceland, Eliza Reid** said, *"Music and culture are windows into the soul; they ought to reflect the diversity of the human experience. I applaud Keychange for encouraging those working in the music industry to maintain gender equality and*

*diversity as a guiding principle, and I encourage all consumers of music to demand it. Equality does not happen of its own accord, with some social media likes or shares, or with well-intentioned phrases. It takes concerted and sustained effort, a commitment to fight complacency. To quote some of Iceland's leading equity fighters of the last century: "We dare, we can, we will."*

Her first book, 'Secrets of the Sprakkar: How the extraordinary women of Iceland are bringing gender equality within reach' will be published in spring 2022.

New Keychange Ambassador, composer **Anna Thorvaldsdóttir** said, *"It is a pleasure to be a part of Keychange as an Ambassador, and to take part in this important aim for positive and necessary improvements in the various genres of the music industry. In the year 2021 it is frankly surprising that there is still a reason to ask questions on 'what it is like to be a woman composer' and the like, whereas composing music knows no gender or other generalising non-music-related labels. Fully embracing diversity organically and without gender or other labels — and to recognise the non-difference therein — is in my belief the ultimate aim and the way forward."*

Keychange participant **Cell7 (Ragna Kjartansdóttir)** said, *"Striving for gender equality is important to me because it's a means of rectifying the imbalance of our current situation. It's fairness and justice of benefits, power, resources, and responsibilities between women and men. Gender equity strategies should be important to us all because the end goal is to eventually attain equality."*

While striving for gender equality for many years, Iceland Airwaves formally reached the 50% representation of women and gender minorities in 2018, 4 years ahead of the 2022 Pledge Target, and discussed their positive action in a [recent IQ Magazine feature](#). In this Icelandic focus week **STEF** have extended their commitment with the Keychange pledge and also reveal new stats showing the gender make-up of their membership. In 2012 only 17.6% of their membership said they were women, which has grown to 19.8% in 2020. Additionally, STEF have launched a mentoring programme for women and gender minorities and have also supported an online songwriting camp, connecting Icelandic women writers to industry creatives in Los Angeles.

### **Panel Event Exploring Gender in Iceland**

On Thursday 18th February at 12:30pm GMT / 1:30pm CET, a panel titled 'Gender, Language and Inclusion' will be broadcast on the Keychange Facebook page [here](#).

The panel will focus on language as not only a pillar of communication but also a foundation of artistic expression, creative thinking and mental freedom. This conversation will explore how language can be inherently gendered, how it can affect not only how we communicate to one

another, but also to ourselves. In a testing time of parallel truths and alternative facts, how do we strive for authenticity and represent all genders in our language moving forward?

**Moderator:** Andie Fontaine (News Editor, The Reykjavík Grapevine)

**Panelists:** Eliza Reid (First Lady of Iceland), Andri Snær Magnason (Author), Ragna Kjartansdóttir (Musician, Cell 7), and Sóley Tómasdóttir (Consultant, Gender and Diversity)

Tune in via the Keychange Facebook page [here](#).

## Keychange in 2021

As campaigners for gender equality in music, Keychange invests in emerging talent with a yearly participation programme, whilst continuing to encourage festivals, conferences and a growing range of music organisations and institutions to sign a pledge to include at least 50% women and under-represented genders in their programming, staffing and beyond. The current list spans 40 countries and over 400 organisations. See the full list [here](#). Icelandic partners Iceland Airwaves have achieved 50% representation of women and gender minorities on their line-ups for many years.

In addition to the ongoing Keychange Pledge, 74 participants – a roster made up of emerging artists and innovators within the music industry – are selected each year from across Europe and Canada to take part in international festivals, showcase events, collaborations and a programme of creative labs. Exceptionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Keychange 2020 participants will see their involvement extended until December 2021, in order to allow for travel and development to take place in 2021 with online mentoring, panels, and workshops run by Capacity Building Lead, **Chimes** in 2020. Partners across Europe and Canada have hosted discussions around the national gender equality climate during 2020 and 2021.

### Iceland's Keychange participants for 2020/21 are:

[Hafdis Huld](#) is an Icelandic acoustic folk/pop artist. She has over 17 million Spotify streams and her songs have topped the charts in her home country. Sharply observed lyrics and deceptively simple arrangements reveal dark and twisted undercurrents to the stories at the heart of her music. Aged 16, she toured the world with Icelandic electro-collective Gus Gus, before collaborating with FC Kahuna. Other collaborations include Tricky and Lisbon Kid.

As a veteran of the Icelandic rap scene, [Cell7](#) is constantly cited as an inspiration for established artists and women breaking into the genre. Cell7's second solo album, *Is Anybody Listening?* exudes the confidence of an established artist but also exhibits the vitality of a growing one, with real soul, strength and insight, steeped in infectious grooves, melodies and a full frontal arsenal of rhymes.

In 2016 Guðrún Ýr began writing her own music and adopted the stage name [GDRN](#). Following the release of her first single, 'Ein', her first concert was broadcast live on Icelandic national television. She subsequently signed a record deal to record her first album, *Hvað ef*, released in August 2018. The album was named album of the year at the Reykjavík Grapevine Music Awards; and was nominated for the Nordic Music Awards. In 2019 GDRN was honoured with four awards at the Icelandic Music Awards, and her sophomore eponymous album was released in 2020.

[Valdís Þorkelsdóttir](#) graduated with a BA in classical trumpet from the DIT School of Music in Dublin in 2013 and then with a Masters in Cultural Management from the City University of London in 2014. She has completed world tours with Florence + The Machine and Björk, taken posts as General Manager of the Dark Music Days Festival, General Manager of the Reykjavík edition of the Nordic Music Festival, overseen concerts at Icelandic museum Gljúfrasteinn, and was Label Manager of Les Frères Stefson/101derland. Valdís currently holds the role of Events & Project Manager for the Iceland Symphony Orchestra.

[Soffía Kristin](#) is an Artist Manager, Concert Producer and Music Rights Activist from Iceland. In 2012 she received a Bachelor's degree in Music Business from Full Sail University, graduating as Valedictorian with an Advanced Achievement Award. In 2014 she founded talent management company Iceland Sync alongside Camilla Stones, with current talent including Auður, Ragga, SunCity, Bríet, Krassasig, Klara Elias and Siggy.

[Björt Sigfinnsdóttir](#) has studied music for her whole life and has a degree in project management and creative businesses from the Kaospilot school in Aarhus, Denmark. At 15 years of age Björt co-founded the LungA art festival. Now 20 years later Björt is the director of this very same international art festival + the LungA art school, which she co-founded together with a friend back in 2014. Björt has also pursued an artistic career, with focus on music and installation performing under the name FURA.

**Iceland Airwaves** is the Keychange partner coordinating and supporting activities in Iceland, alongside sponsors **STEF**. **Iceland Airwaves** is also the festival partner for Keychange in Iceland so will host 6 international Keychange participants, as well as the Icelandic participants in 2021.

Listen to the Icelandic Keychange artists on Spotify [here](#) and on SoundCloud [here](#).

For media enquiries, please contact:

Keychange: [info@keychange.eu](mailto:info@keychange.eu)

### About Eliza Reid

Eliza Jean Reid, the First Lady of Iceland, was born in 1976 in Ottawa, Canada. She moved to Iceland in 2003. Madame Reid holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in international

relations from Trinity College, University of Toronto, where she held the position of Head of College in her final year. She holds a Master of Studies degree in modern history from St. Antony's College, Oxford University. She speaks French and Icelandic.

Madame Reid is Co-Founder of the acclaimed Iceland Writers Retreat, an annual event that combines small-group writing workshops with cultural tours to introduce visitors to Iceland's unique literary heritage. In this capacity, she has been active in helping to promote Icelandic writers and literary heritage abroad, especially in North America. She also served on the jury of the 2018 BC National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction, one of Canada's largest literary prizes.

She was previously editor for Icelandair's in-flight magazine, a staff writer at Iceland Review, and has been published in Monocle, The Globe and Mail, and several other newspapers and magazines. Prior to becoming First Lady, Madame Reid was also a frequent commentator on Icelandic current affairs for foreign media.

Eliza has been active in volunteerism in Canada, the UK, and Iceland. She was a hospital volunteer from her teenage years, and in 1998 ran Canada's largest summer student volunteer program at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. During her time in the UK, she volunteered for several years at a local hospice. In Iceland, she volunteered for the Red Cross (at Landspítali Hospital) and served on the parents' council of her children's pre-school (until summer 2015). She was also Chair of the English-Speaking Union of Iceland (2009-2013), a branch of an international charity designed to promote international peace and prosperity; the launch of ESU Iceland was the second largest formal launch of the organization's history to that date.

She is patron of several organizations in Iceland, including the United Nations Association Iceland and is also a Goodwill Ambassador for SOS Children's Villages Iceland. In September 2017, Madame Reid visited the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan at the invitation of UN Women and she is active in promoting the issue of gender equality.

Madame Reid loves to travel and has made solo trips to many countries. She is a United Nations Special Ambassador for Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals. She is a member of the Association of Women Business Leaders in Iceland (FKA) and until becoming First Lady was a member of the Canadian branch of the Society of American Travel Writers. She received a choral scholarship while a student at the University of Toronto and sang with the Hallgrímskirkja Motet Choir in the mid-2000s.

Eliza Reid and President Guðni Th. Jóhannesson have four children together (Duncan Tindur b. 2007), Donald Gunnar (b. 2009), Sæpór Peter (b. 2011) and Edda Margrét (b. 2013).

### **About Anna Thorvaldsdóttir**

Anna Thorvaldsdóttir is a composer whose "seemingly boundless textural imagination" (NY Times) and "striking" (Guardian) sound world has made her "one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary music" (NPR). Her music is composed as much by sounds and nuances as by

harmonies and lyrical material, and tends to evoke “a sense of place and personality” (NY Times) through a distinctive “combination of power and intimacy” (Gramophone). “Never less than fascinating”, according to Gramophone Magazine, it is written as an ecosystem of sounds, where materials continuously grow in and out of each other, often inspired in an important way by nature and its many qualities, in particular structural ones, like proportion and flow. Anna’s works have been nominated and awarded on many occasions - most notably, her “confident and distinctive handling of the orchestra” (Gramophone) has garnered her the prestigious Nordic Council Music Prize, the New York Philharmonic’s Kravis Emerging Composer Award, and Lincoln Center’s Emerging Artist Award and Martin E. Segal Award.

Anna's music is widely performed internationally and has been commissioned by many of the world's leading orchestras, ensembles, and arts organizations - such as the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, International Contemporary Ensemble, Ensemble Intercontemporain, and Carnegie Hall. Among the many other orchestras and ensembles that have performed her music include the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, London's Philharmonia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Bang on a Can All-Stars, The Crossing, the Bavarian Radio Choir, Münchener Kammerorchester, Los Angeles Percussion Quartet, Avanti Chamber Ensemble, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Yarn/Wire and Oslo Philharmonic.

In April 2018, Esa-Pekka Salonen led the New York Philharmonic in the premiere of Anna’s work METACOSMOS. The work received its European premiere with the Berlin Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert in January 2019, and its UK premiere at the BBC Proms 2019, conducted by Edward Gardner. Anna’s symphony-scale AION was premiered by the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra in May 2019, conducted by Anna-Maria Helsing. Her new orchestral work CATAMORPHOSIS was premiered by the Berlin Philharmonic and Kirill Petrenko in January 2021.

Portrait concerts with Anna's music have been featured at several major venues and music festivals, including Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival in NYC, the Composer Portraits Series at NYC's Miller Theatre, the Leading International Composers series at the Phillips Collection in Washington DC, Knoxville's Big Ears Festival, Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art, Brooklyn's National Sawdust, London's Spitalfields Music Festival, Münchener Kammerorchester's Nachtmusic der Moderne series, and Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra's Point Festival. Other venues include the BBC Proms, ISCM World Music Days, Nordic Music Days, Ultima Festival, Lucerne Summer Festival, Beijing Modern Music Festival, Reykjavik Arts Festival, Tectonics, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Helsinki's Musica Nova Festival, and the Kennedy Center in Washington DC.

Anna holds a PhD (2011) from the University of California in San Diego.

## About Keychange

Keychange is a pioneering international initiative which transforms the future of music by encouraging festivals and music organisations to achieve at least 50% women and under-represented genders in their programming, staffing and beyond. 74 emerging artists and innovators each year from across Europe and Canada will take part in international festivals, showcase events, collaborations and a programme of creative labs. Keychange aims to accelerate change and create a better, more inclusive music industry for present and future generations.

Keychange encourages all music organisations, festivals, venues, broadcasters, agencies and beyond to take the Keychange Pledge and to work towards a representative music industry. Join the Keychange Pledge at [keychange.eu](https://www.keychange.eu).

Keychange is led by **Reeperbahn Festival**, **PRS Foundation** and **Musikzentrum Öst**, supported by the **Creative Europe programme of the European Union**, in partnership with **Tallinn Music Week**, **Iceland Airwaves**, **BIME**, **Oslo World**, **Linecheck/Music Innovation Hub**, **Ireland Music Week**, **SACEM**, **Sound City**, **Way Out West**, **Spring Break**, **MaMA Festival**, **MUTEK** and **Breakout West**.

Keychange is sponsored by **FACTOR**, **Fundación SGAE**, **GEMA**, **Gorwelion Horizons**, **IMRO**, **the Musicians' Union**, **Norsk Tipping**, **Roskilde Festival**, **Smirnoff Equalising Music**, **SOCAN Foundation**, **Songtrust**, **SoundCloud**, **STEF**, **STIM**, and **Talent Norge**.

Keychange Ambassadors are **Shirley Manson**, **Imogen Heap**, **Tony Visconti**, **Alexa Feser**, **Dermot O'Leary**, **Hinds**, **Emily Eavis**, **Nadine Shah**, **Paulette Long OBE**, **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla**, **iskwē**, **Corinne Bailey Rae**, **Joy Denalane**, **Kate Nash**, **Sara Potente**, **Ave Tölpt**, **planningtorock**, **Jess Partridge**, **Carla Marie Williams**, **Claire Edwardes**, **Avtomat**, **Karolina Czarnecka**, **Darcy Proper and Tones and I**, **Tegan and Sara**, **Margherita Vicario**, **Claudia Pereira** and **Brisa Fenoy**.