

Fine Tuned

The annual **Iceland Airwaves Music Festival** is descending upon Reykjavik on 17-21 October with all the sonic hoopla of gale force winds and tidal waves. But your loyal *Atlantica* music fans **Sara Blask** and **Jonas Moody** are braving the squall for the sake of the readers, tossing themselves into the eye of the cacophonous storm to bring you their picks for what is shaping up to be the rockest and rollest Airwaves to date.

Ultra Mega Technobandid Stefán

PHOTO BY ARNI TORFASON

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BLOC PARTY Couple bold, hedonistic guitar riffs and chop-changing rhythms with blazingly candid lyrics and you've tapped into the heart of London's favorite post-punk revivalists, Bloc Party, arguably one of the biggest bands in recent years to warp the airwaves, let alone make an appearance at Airwaves. Their latest album, *A Weekend in the City*, produced by Grammy Award winner Jackknife Lee of U2 fame, debuted at #12 on the Billboard 200 this February. Not to mention that the quarter's 2005 debut, *Silent Alarm*, appeared on the UK album charts for a staggering 69 weeks. We recommend lining up for the show now. blocparty.com

DEERHOOF What would an Airwaves festival be without a strong dose of experimental music? Enter San Francisco's veterans of irreverent noise rock: Deerhoof. Frontwoman Satomi Matsuzaki's childlike voice floats eerily above the messy melodies and volatile beats of band mates John Dietrich and Greg Saunier. Their 2007 album *Friend Opportunity* has won them praise from the temple of online indie, pitchfork.com: "The band crescendos and the singer, smooth as silk but loud as God, rams Buddha down the throat of a giant silver dragon." Don't miss their live show, a cathartic experience with improvisational tangents said to be of a transporting nature. deerhoof.killrockstars.com

LALI PUNA Like so much indie electropop, Munich-based Lali Puna was born of bare bones comprising vocalist Valerie Trebeljahr, a four-track recorder, and a lot of heart. The band was later fleshed out with guitarist Markus Acher (of the Notwist), a keyboardist and a drummer. Despite its current size, Lali Puna retains a sparse but sophisticated sound. The group's music is a deftly balanced concoction of gentle pop melodies carried forward by surging electronic rhythms, meticulously mixed with restraint and focus as only the Germans can. Trebeljahr, an Asian-German educated in Portugal, is a robust blend herself. Hybrid vigor never sounded so good. lalipuna.de

OUR ICELANDIC PICKS >

DÝRDIN Every nation needs their twee and Iceland is no exception. In the tradition of Talulah Gosh and Heavenly, Reykjavik brings you Dýrdin, literally "The Glory". Their spirited sets are a welcome compliment to the often prodigious mood elsewhere at Airwaves. Sugary sweet Hafðís Hreidaradóttir belts out ditties about cotton candy, frog princes, and alien abductions. Their 2006 self-titled album on US label Skipping Stones has drummed up attention from the indie crowd on the other side of the pond; however Dýrdin remains true to its roots with most songs in Icelandic. But let's be honest, no one's listening to twee for the profound lyrics, right? mmedia.is/dyrdin

HJALTALÍN Though they haven't produced an album yet, Hjaltalín continues to make a name for themselves as a big band with a big sound. Vaguely reminiscent of Australian indie pop darlings Architecture in Helsinki with their melodious, multi-instrumental approach, including a bassoon and a cello, the two-year-old band cites influences ranging from classical to 60s pop to modern indie rock. They may not have any chart-topping cred yet, but as the locals can tell you, the nine of them know how to make a crowd wanna bop their heads. Yes, all nine of them. myspace.com/hjaltalinband

MÚM Rolling Stone's David Fricke once described múm's sound as occupying a "a no-band's land between the ancient and imminent, the organic and electronic." You might have a beep here or a moog there, a whistle here or a trumpet there. Not even one of múm's seven members can describe their own sound. "It keeps changing like the bleedin' weather, like striped underwear, like a random summer, like a teenage boy's voice," one of them writes

on their Myspace page. Which couldn't be more true. They've been around since 1998 but if anything is certain, it's that their majestic, effervescent lo-fi sounds are just as great now as they were then. randomsummer.com

ÓLÖF ARNALDS Don't be fooled by this 27-year-old's gentle, almost-whisper of a voice because Arnalds is a master of all instruments stringed: violin, viola, guitar, koto harp, even the charanga, a South American folk guitar. Track by track, her debut album *Vid og vid* has taken indie and folk lovers by storm, the simple string arrangements and accompanying lyrics (sung in Icelandic) exuding the ambience of dignified calmness. Her demeanor is intimate and earnest, delivering a poignant set that leaves you with the warm glow of whiskey and all the nostalgia of a time when musicians were craftsmen and audiences were children. 12tonar.is/olof.php

ULTRA MEGA TECHNOBANDID STEFÁN Not since Einar Örn and the Sugarcubes have Icelanders stood up on stage with as much sputter and spunk as the boys in Ultra Mega Technobandid Stefán. After garnering attention at the 2006 Icelandic Battle of the Bands and an explosive performance at last year's Airwaves, these indefatigable 18-year-olds have been touring the festivals of northern Europe. Once frontman Siggi's shirt comes off prepare to be drenched in teenage sweat and frenzied beats. UMTBS taps into every last ounce of primal teen-energy to put on a dazzling show. Check your sensitive indie attitude at the door; these boys are out for blood. myspace.com/umtbs

For passes and further information see icelandairwaves.com.

OF MONTREAL From the fires of the folded Elephant 6 label rises the splendid phoenix of psychedelic pop: Of Montreal. The band's aural experiments have outshone and outlasted the Elephant's other offspring like Apples in Stereo and Neutral Milk Hotel. Of Montreal's onstage antics during their live performances has put them in even greater favor with audiences throughout twelve diverse albums. This year's show will undoubtedly draw one of the festival's larger turnouts, but don't worry if you can't make it: you can catch Of Montreal's latest work as the jingle for American chain Outback Steakhouse. Well done. ofmontreal.net

TRENTMOLLER Danish deejay Trentemoller (real name: Anders Trentemoller) has come a long way since making his debut with DJ Tom Von Rosen in 1997 when they formed Trigbag, the first live-house act in Denmark. His first full-length album, *The Last Resort*, released this year, won Album of the Year by German music magazine, *Groove* and French magazine *Trax*. His remixes have also received massive airplay from electronic deejay giants Danny Tegnaia and John Digweed, so if you're an electronic junkie you can expect his Airwaves set to be nothing short of total ambient intoxication. myspace.com/trentemoller



Bloc Party



Of Montreal



Lali Puna



MÚM



Deerhoof