



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **HARPA REYKJAVIK CONCERT HALL AND CONFERENCE CENTRE OFFICIAL OPENING ON 4 MAY 2011**

**DESIGN BY HENNING LARSEN ARCHITECTS, ARTEC CONSULTANTS INC AND  
OLAFUR ELIASSON**

### **BUILDING NEARING COMPLETION**

29 June 2010, Reykjavík, Iceland: **Pétur J. Eiríksson**, Chairman of **Portus**, announced today that the official opening and opening concert by the **Iceland Symphony Orchestra** at **Harpa, Reykjavík's new Concert Hall and Conference Centre**, would take place on 4 May 2011. The opening concert will be conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy. On 14 May 2011, Harpa will stage a grand opening program featuring a diverse range of music events and many of Iceland's most prominent musicians. This program will be broadcast live on Icelandic National television.

Designed by **Henning Larsen Architects** with acoustics by **Artec Consultants Inc** and a façade by **Olafur Eliasson** in collaboration with the architects, Harpa is to become home to the **Iceland Symphony Orchestra** and the **Icelandic Opera**, and thus a major addition to the Icelandic and European cultural scene. It will also serve as a tourism and business hub, providing flexible facilities for programs and international events. The façade was designed by **Olafur Eliasson** in collaboration with Henning Larsen Architects. With acoustics conceived by **Artec Consultants Inc**, one of the most reputable experts in the field, and equipped with the most technologically advanced sound, staging and presentation systems also designed by Artec, the 28,000 square-meter (301,000 square-feet) complex will be a striking landmark in the redevelopment of the historic harbour and waterfront area, and a symbol of the country's renewed dynamism. Henning Larsen Architects also consulted with **Batterið Architects** to conceive the building. The main contractor is ÍAV.

"It is with great anticipation that we have seen the building and its magnificent façade emerge on the skyline," remarked Eiríksson. "Now that it is nearing completion, we can feel the energy it will bring to the city and how it will strengthen Reykjavík as one of the most attractive capitals in Europe."



Harpa is expected to become a hub in the city's vibrant music scene and to attract an audience of culture, architecture, and art enthusiasts as well as major international business and trade events. Based on a cooperative model, it will allow for a mix of large conventions, receptions, concerts, exhibitions and public programs that can all happen simultaneously. It will also be home to restaurants with direct views across the harbour.

The opening artistic program will be announced in the autumn of 2010 and will offer a diverse range of performances, from classical to contemporary. It is being developed under the guidance of artistic adviser **Vladimir Ashkenazy** and international consultant **Jasper Parrott**. Harpa is run by Portus and **Ago**, administrative structures which respectively own and operate the building and its programs. Pétur J. Eiríksson is the Chairman of Portus and **Thorunn Sigurdardottir**, the former Director of the **Reykjavík Arts Festival**, is the Chairman of Ago. Managing Director for both companies is Hoskuldur Asgeirsson. Portus and Ago are owned by the Icelandic state and the City of Reykjavik through holding company East Harbour.

**Harpa's name** comes both from the name of the string instrument and the ancient Icelandic name of a month in the old Nordic calendar, which marks the beginning of summer, a period of particular importance in Iceland.

**Harpa's logo** was designed by **The Icelandic Ad Agency** and consists of a ring of outstretched tuning forks. It finds its roots in a classic and universal symbol of music arranged in a way that also resembles the sun or a snowflake. The circular arrangement calls to mind people coming together and represent the 12 months of the year, while the forks' colours symbolize the colours of the different halls.

#### **The Building:**

Located on the harbour between the city centre and the North Atlantic Ocean, Harpa will become one of the city's defining landmarks. According to Henning Larsen Architects, "the inner structure of the building shapes its key functions. Seen from the foyer, the halls form a massif with the Main Concert Hall as its red-glowing centre. This inner massif contrasts the expressive and open façades, thereby generating a dialogue that defines Harpa's public space, continued in the square in front of the building. This will be realised in dark shades to juxtapose the crystalline exterior. The surroundings are thus incorporated into the architectural concept. As Harpa takes its beginning long before visitors step into the foyer, the activities of this cultural institution are merged with city life."

#### **The Façade:**

The multi-faceted glass façade by artist Olafur Eliasson in collaboration with the architects is based on a geometric principle, realised in two and three dimensions. Reminiscent of the crystallised basalt columns commonly found in Iceland, the southern façade create kaleidoscopic reflections of the city and the striking surrounding landscape. Natural light is a key element, dramatically altering the transparency, reflectivity, and colours of the facades as the

weather and seasons change. The quasi bricks of the south facades contain LED lights in different hues that make Harpa glow long after the sun has set. The brightness and colour of each module can be controlled and adjusted as needed. The assemblage of the façade is already under way and will be completed in late summer 2010.

#### **The Facilities:**

Throughout the design process, emphasis has been placed on giving Harpa enough versatility to host large and intimate events simultaneously and without interference with one another. Harpa's facilities, which offer some of the most technologically advanced equipment available, are thus capable of accommodating everything from large conventions, concerts, and exhibitions to smaller banquets and meetings.

With acoustics design and technical facility planning provided by the world renowned Artec Consultants Inc, designers of the **Jazz at Lincoln Center** space, the **Bartók Béla National Concert Hall** in Budapest, **Sala São Paulo** and the **Culture and Congress Center** in Lucerne, Switzerland, Harpa will join the ranks of the most prestigious international concert halls in the world, as a prominent member of Artec's family of halls. In addition to hosting an array of international music events, Harpa will also become home to the esteemed Iceland Symphony Orchestra and Icelandic Opera, both known for their professional artistic programs. Reykjavik has been waiting for decades for this new hall and its addition to the city's energetic musical life.

The main concert hall, the largest of four in the Centre, is capable of accommodating up to 1,800 people. A spacious entrance hall is located on both the first and second levels and is the ideal space for exhibitions, large banquets, and receptions. There are two meeting halls on the first level as well as various smaller meeting rooms. Additional amenities include boutiques, a viewing balcony, a bar and restaurant with direct views across the harbour, a ground-floor bistro, catering, and underground parking options.

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#### **Further information:**

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