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Release Date	June 26, 2020	
Duration	48:57	
Genre	Classical	
Styles	Chamber Music	
Recording Date	June 10, 2019 - June 13, 2019	
Recording Location	Hamrar, Ísafjörður, Iceland	

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South of the Circle (2019)	Stara: The Music of Halldór Smárason (2020)	Gunnar Andreas Kristinnsson: Moonbow (2021)

[AllMusic Review](#)

Stara: The Music of Halldór Smárason Review by James Manheim

The music of composer [Halldór Smárason](#) includes liberal use of silences and held notes that are modulated in some way so as to give them an edge. It sounds a bit electronic even when it is not, and here on his debut album, as if to emphasize the point, [Smárason](#) includes a piece for guitar and electronics, *Skúlpturn 1*, that does not depart strongly from the sound of the other acoustic works on the album. (It does depart conceptually: there is supposed to be an "alarm" from the electronics if the guitarist does not jump through certain hoops.) One wonders what this is like in performance, but it does not happen here. The structure of each work is similar, but it takes on variation according to the instrumentation of each work, with the characteristic texture accomplished differently according to this variable. [Smárason](#) probably will not be to the taste of those with no interest in avant-garde music, but this music is clear and accessible. It is also substantially enhanced by the engineering of the audiophile Sono Luminus label, an ideal partner to [Smárason](#). The venue is a custom-built auditorium at the Ísafjörður Music School in [Smárason's](#) Icelandic hometown, and it brings out every detail of the sonic modulations the composer specifies. [Smárason](#) is quite young, and this sounds like the beginning of a brilliant career.

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