

MONITOR PRESENTS

SCANDINAVIAN FOLK SONGS

MUSIC
OF

SWEDEN NORWAY FINLAND

SAGA SJÖBERG

SOPRANO

ARNE DØRUMSGAARD

BARITONE

ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTED BY

ROBERT CORNMAN

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RETURN TO ARCHIVE

CENTER FOR FOLKLIFE PROGRAMS
AND CULTURAL STUDIES
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION BY ARNE DØRUMSGAARD

THESE SCANDINAVIAN SONGS take us back to a time when music was a living force in everyday life: the time when flutes were carved from young birch branches; the time when, at sunset, the shepherds collected their flocks with deep calls which echoed across the blue valleys.

We know little about primitive Scandinavian music as no example has come down to us. But we know that music existed already in the time of the Vikings. The Sagas tell how, at the command of the Norwegian king, the Skalds — Norse minstrels — recited their long poems accompanied by the harp.

The most ancient folk songs we have go back to the Skalds. The long medieval ballads, which related the legends and the myths common to all Scandinavia in the Middle Ages, were interspersed with their captivating refrains. Knights, entrancingly beautiful fairies, rude peasants, and terrifying trolls, gods and demons come to life in these colorful pages.

The folk music of that time does not lend itself easily to modern interpretation. The ballads were intended to be acted out as well as sung. Often there were more than fifty couplets, and hours of execution were necessary to display all the epic splendor. That is why the folk songs presented here come from a relatively recent historical period. They date from the first years of the 16th Century to the middle of the 19th. After about 1850 there is no more Scandinavian folk creation. The urbanization of modern life seems to have dried up the peasant sources. But all the Nordic people know, love and perpetuate the rich repertory which represents their folk tradition.

Most of these songs are danced and sung at the same time. The dancers take the refrain after the caller has sung the couplet. Often the refrains have no relationship to the words of the couplets.

Sometimes the folk songs began a new life when poets wrote new words for ancient melodies whose original words had long been forgotten or altered to the point of unintelligibility. Thus Riis, a 19th century poet, rewrote the words for Anne Knutsdotter. In a like manner, the famous Norwegian poet, Overland, wrote a poem of exceptional beauty and sensitivity for the melody of Om Kuelden whose original words had only an obscure meaning.

Each of the three Scandinavian courts has its own history, its own character, its specific musical expression. We have tried to define them in the choices we have made. Here are the rude refrains of the gay Norwegian peasant, the expression of strong and stubborn mountaineers; here are the somber and nostalgic airs of the Finnish woods with their grave and melancholy beauty; and here are the love songs of Sweden with their moving lyricism.

Outside of Scandinavia, Arne Dørumsgaard is especially known for his contribution to the literature of folk music. A number of his "Ancient Songs" have already been printed, and large extracts of his monumental anthology "Canzone Scordate" have been interpreted and recorded by such international artists as Kirsten Flagstad and Gerard Souzay.

Mr. Dørumsgaard is also considered a leading Norwegian composer. He composed his first works at the age of 12. He is at present in his early 30s, and his activities are as diverse as they are numerous: he is a poet and singer as well as a composer.

SIDE ONE

- MEST UTAV ALLT** *We Are The Poor* (Sweden)
To toil is our lot in life in this world below. We are the poor. But when I seek the hand of my friend my heart beats with happiness. To toil is our lot in life.
- GLADJENS BLOMSTER** *Flowers of Happiness* (Sweden)
Flowers of happiness never grow in the soil. Only love itself can destroy the peace of a solitary heart. But way above human hopes bloom the flowers of eternity. Listen to the spirits tell the heart their tender story.
- KARJALAN KUNNAILLA** *On The Karjalan Mountains* (Finland)
The leaves grow green on the Karjalan mountains. The cuckoo sings. Here is the spring. I shiver from languor.

- OCH JUNGFRUN GICK AT KILLAN** *The Girl Who Goes To The Fountain* (Sweden)
The girl who goes to the fountain to seek a vessel of water finds the little bush there, so very, very slender. "Oh tell me little bush, how are you so slender? By drinking water, eating the soil, would I become like you? Oh tell me little bush, and do not forget my words; my two brothers serve the king; they will come soon to prune you." "Let them prune me in the winter. Each summer I become green again. But if you lose your beauty it will not grow back again."
- KUKU KAKOSENI** *The Cuckoo* (Finland)
Sing, sing, my cuckoo, fly toward the one I love. Go tell her for me that I miss her. Is that not her voice which rises from the spring?
- PER SPELMAN** *Peter The Fiddler* (Norway)
Peter the fiddler had only one old cow which he traded for a violin that he saw. Oh my dear, my old violin . . . Peter the fiddler played his violin and the boys danced, and the girls wept. Even if I become as old as the stones in the wall, I would never trade my violin for a cow.
- OM DAGEN VID MITT ARBETE** *The Whole Day Long At My Work* (Sweden)
The whole day long, at my work, you fill all my thoughts. The whole night long, in my sleep, you fill all my dreams. But in the morning on awakening, whom will I sigh for? For my love, who is so far away.
- TUOLL' ON MUN KULTANI** *Far Away Is My Love* (Finland)
Far away is my love in the fine gold palace of the king. Oh my love, my little bird, when will you come back, when will you come back? The birds can sing all of their sweet songs. The voice of my love is sweeter to my ear. Oh my love, my little bird, when will you come back? When will you come back?
- EG HEITER ANNE KNUTSDOTTER** *My Name Is Anne Knutsdotter* (Norway)
My name is Anne Knutsdotter. Kari is my mother's name. Truls is the name of my little brother. Our house is a hovel where no one would think that anyone could live. And it is called the tottering castle, leaning tower, open to the sky. We die of hunger. In the summer we have fun, in shells and bowls gathering berries in the woods. On the grass-covered roof two spindly birch trees grow which our thin goat nibbles each day. And we call her darling, ugly thing, curly top. And the little hen is Tip-Top! My father is a peddler. He looks like no one, goes to the devil. My mother keeps house and turns her spinning wheel. But Truls does nothing. And it is called the tottering castle.
- KJAERRINGA MED STAVEN** *The Old Woman With Her Stick* (Norway)
The old woman with her stick walks over the mountains. Eight little pots of cream, two pounds of butter — Kari churns this time. Ola did it before. The old woman with her stick!
- KUN ENSI KERRAN** *When For The First Time* (Finland)
When for the first time I saw your eyes I thought I saw the sunshine. When for the first time I heard your voice I thought I heard the birds sing.
- UTI VAR HAGE** *In Our Garden* (Sweden)
In our garden grow myrtles. Come, joys of my heart. There, if you wish, we shall meet again. Come violet and lilies, come tulips and roses. Come joys of heart, pretty little flowers. There you will dance. Come joys of heart! There if you wish I shall weave you a crown. Then I shall fasten the crown to your brow. Come joys of my heart, even at sunset hope can rise.
- OCH JUNGFRUN HON GAAR I DANSEN** *The Beautiful Girl Goes Dancing* (Sweden)
The beautiful girl who goes dancing carries a red ribbon to her love. She ties it to his arm. Oh my beauty, do not tie it so tight, for never do I wish to escape. The beautiful girl who goes dancing loses her red ribbon. The lover steals away and

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flees into the woods. With fifteen guns the lover is pursued. If you want me you must know where to find me. Today I am married. As a wife I took the most beautiful girl to be found in the world.

SIDE TWO

- KULLAN YLISTYS** *Love Song* (Finland)
My girl friend is pretty, but she is hard as nails. Hei, luulia, illalla. Gentle and tender is her face, but somewhat crossed her beautiful eyes. Hei . . . Her red lips open with a smile which stretches from ear to ear. Hei . . . She does not frighten me at all although she is almost as large as a dragon. Hei . . .
- SPINN, SPINN** *Spin, Spin* (Sweden)
The beautiful girl seated at her spinning wheel is sad all day and all night. Far away the stream murmurs, the birds sing, the soft winds sigh. "Even the trees pull up their roots, but I never go away from here. Time flows by, the years pass, and no lover knocks at my door." "Spin, my daughter. Tomorrow at dawn a lover will come to you." The beautiful girl spins, her tears flow, but her lover will never come.
- STAFFANS VISA** *Stephen's Song* (Sweden)
Stephen was a stable lad, we pray you to remember. Horses five this rider had, and in that cold December, up at dawn to care for them, darkness round but stars in heaven above them. Finest colt, the dapple gray, we pray you to remember, is ridden by St. Steve himself. In all homes is joy and glee, we pray you to remember, candle-light and Christmas tree.
- HULDRELOKK** *Song Of The Little Elf* (Norway)
Go to sleep, little children. The kettle sings on the fire awaiting the new butter! Your mother weeps bitter tears. The flock pastures on the Suetpelid!
- ALA ITKE AITINI** *Don't Cry, My Darling* (Finland)
Don't cry, my darling, mother dear, don't cry. Father was buried several days ago — please forget sorrow and pain. Look, the sky is vast and clear! I shall fight for your needs; I shall calm the sorrow in your heart.
- ALLE MANN HADDE FOTA** *All Men Have Feet* (Norway)
All men have feet. My man does not. I took blocks of birch and made feet for him. My man, when he goes dancing, wears stockings like all other men. All men have eyes; my man has not. I took sheep's eyes and made eyes for him. My man, when he goes dancing, makes sheep's eyes like all the other men. All men have arms; my man does not. I took yards of tripe and made arms for him. My man, when he goes dancing, has weak arms like all the other men.
- ENGANG I BREDD MED MIG** *One Day, Kneeling Near Me* (Sweden)
One day, kneeling near me, the priest will ask you if you consent to be all mine. But if you must betray my faith, I shall do the same to you. I shall go seek someone else to marry. The priest opens the book to write our names there. He takes the golden ring and puts it on my finger. Since we are united, I promise to be your faithful husband.
- JEG LAGDE MIG SA SILDIG** *Sleep Came Late To Me* (Norway)
Sleep came late to me at night, without any sorrow that I know of. Then came a message from my love that I must go to her. No one was ever loved more. Running up to the garret, as so often I had before, I found her friends around her, dressing her for the tomb. No one was ever loved more.
- EG SER DER UTFOR GLUGGEN** *From My Window* (Norway)
From my window I see you, my gentle only love! I recognize you by your shadow but I cannot let you enter. This evening I can not open the door. Has my love lost his mind, that he has forgotten my father is home? Tired, tired lei. But tomorrow before the cock crows, my gentle, my only lover, father will go to the mill to grind his grain. Then I shall open my door to you.
- OLA GLOMSTULEN** (Norway)
Ola Glomstulen has a gray nanny goat. "Tell me, Kari, I hope the bacon is quite fat." Tomorrow is the wedding at Glomstulen! Ola Glomstulen had a half-pint of malt. "Tell me, Kari, did you put it all to ferment?" Tomorrow is the wedding at Glomstulen! Ola Glomstulen had so great a wedding that it took place in three valleys and lasted a full year. Tomorrow is the wedding at Glomstulen.
- KRISTALLEN DEN FINA** *Pure Crystal* (Sweden)
Crystal, crystal, pure and transparent, clear as the stars, sparkling in the sky. I know a beautiful girl, chaste and pure. A beautiful girl from here, my love, my love, my flower of love. Pray God that we may be united and that I am your only love, and you my love for always. My blooming rose, my golden temple.
- A JUL MED DIN GLEDE** *Oh, Christmas With Your Joys* (Norway)
Oh, Christmas, with your joys and innocent pleasures, we all cry to you; welcome! Our radiant voices repeat together a thousand times; welcome to you! Let us clap hands, sing and laugh. We are so happy. Let us dance around the tree; let us cheer and bow. In joy I offer my hand; come put your hand in mine. Let us fasten the pure ties of joy and mutual love.

Translated by Patricia Bennett

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