folk music of... NORWAY

hallings 
polsdans

springer

gangar

draumkvedet

love songs

lullabies

ballads

ann maines

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SONGS AND DANCES OF NORWAY
Notes by O. M. Sandvik

SIDE I, Band 1. DANCE SONG -- Kjeringji Mae Stav'en (The Old Woman With the Staff). This dance song dates from the time when instruments were not used to accompany dancing. From Telemark. Sung by Talleiv Røysland.

Kjeringji mae stav'en
høgt upp i Hakadalen:
"Atte potter rjome,
fire merk'er smør,
so kjinna Kari,
Olav hadde før."
Kjeringji mae stav'en.

The old woman with her stick, high up in the Haka:dale, tells about Olav's old wife Kari who has churned two pounds of butter from eight quarts of cream.


The Halling is an acrobatic solo dance for men in 2/3 -- a dance which demands great strength and agility. The climax of the halling comes when one of the girls at a country dance stands on a chair or table holding a hat on the end of a stick which the solo dancer must then kick off with a turning leap in perfect rhythm.

The seljefløyte or willow flute is the most typical wind instrument found in Norwegian folklore, being fashioned from a willow branch about two feet long and having a single sound hole only.

SIDE I, Band 2(b): LULLABY. From Telemark. Played on willow flute by Eivind Groven.

SIDE I, Band 3: SPRINGLEIK (dance). From Gudbrandsdal. Played on violin by Hans Brimi. The Springleik (also known as Springdans, Springar or Pols) is a 3/4 dance for couples related in some respects to the Polish mazurka and its variant, the Swedish polska. In its several variants the Springer can be found with equal stress on the three beats, with the stress on the second beat, or with the stress on the third beat.

SIDE I, Band 4: POLSADANS. From Røros. Played on violin by Sven Nyhus.


Sand-vass-bylgjun dei rullar hoglegt,
dei tykkjer live'e e berre löglegt.
D'e som dei ropar: "Kom her ut på,
ska eg lindre sut'i du baer'e på!"
The waves in sandy water roll smoothly. They think life is beautiful and they seem to say: Get out in the water and we'll ease all your sorrows.


I Valle stima dei same lei'i,
Og niv'en sit'e so laust i skje'e;
mae granne-fisl i eit baer-lag,
ja so vaknar villmannen mae eitt slag.

Up in Valle the knives are loose in their sheathes and when neighbors quarrel they all turn savage.

SIDE I, Band 5(c): MAE LJOS-BLÅ AUGO (With Light Blue Eyes) -- Younger Stanza. From Setesdal. Sung by Sigrid Faremo.

Mae ljos-blå augo og dokk i høka,
so er han laga, den eg hev lova.
Han e so greileg fra topp te tå;
der e alli lyti på han å sjå.
The one to whom I am betrothed has light blue eyes and a dimple in his chin. There is no blemish on him from top to toe.

SIDE I, Band 5(d): DEI SAT SO SAELSE (So Happily They Sat) -- Younger Stanza. From Setesdal. Sung by Sigrid Faremo.

Dei sat so saele i bjørke-lit;
da e i fagrstade sumar-til.
Før sol'i seig bak den høge hei,
ha dei båe svore sin truskaps-ei.

They sit among the birches in beautiful midsummer and before the sun sets they have sworn to be faithful to each other.

SIDE I, Band 6 (a): EG KAN 'KJE GLØYME (I Can't Forget) -- Younger Stanza. From Setesdal. Sung by Olav Harstad.

Eg kan 'kje gløyme den Setesdalen,
der nord i gjennom mae prestegarden;
dei Vike-vollan, den Rikes-li,
dei koma alli or hugje mi.

Sin barne-heim, den vil minne gjeste;
der e dei finaste strengjer feste.
Dei glae år'i hjå far og mor
e sol-umkransa på denne jord.
Som søte angår frå alde-hagar
ja, so e minni frå barndoms-dagar.
Dei minni huggar meg dag'en lang,
som blå og blomar meg drys i fang.

I cannot forget the Setes-dale, the rich pastures and the green hills. The memory goes back to the childhood home. There is a halo around the happy years spent with father and mother. The childhood days are like the sundrenched sweetness of the orchard and I never tire of the memories.


(Han :)
Dei husmanns-døttan e alli rike;
men du, å du, dei e grei' og fine!
Dei rynner upp som ein haale-stav;
 dei blømer liksom eit lilje-bla.

(Ho :)
Lause kara va alli vanda;
hav' dei 'kji garda, so hav' dei anna.
Hav' dei 'kji pening, hav' dei 'kji jord,
so hav' dei greileik i overflod.

Ein rik og ljøte kom inn og fria;
ein laus og vêne sto ute, bia.
Den rik' og ljøte eg alli lei;
men den laus' og vêne, å ei ei ei!

The daughters of the crofters are never wealthy, but they are nice and pretty. They are straight like a stem of a hazel tree and they are pretty like a lily. (The girl sings): The sons of the crofters have never been ignored. If they don't have land they have other assets. If they don't have money or farms, they are nice and lively. A rich and ugly one came in and asked for my hand. A handsome and poor one waited outside. I never could like the wealthy and ugly, but the poor and handsome one - my oh my!

SIDE I, Band 7(a): HALLING (acrobatic solo dance). From Valdres. Sung by Ola Brenno.

The langeleik (literally, "the long instrument") which is still played in the province of Valdres is a dulcimer-like instrument with an elongated case a little over two feet in length. There are eight strings in all, but only one of these plays the melody, a plectrum being used for this purpose. Customary tuning is in the chord of the 6th and the 4th, and the resulting scale differs considerably from the conventional European variety.


Bissam bissam bâne.'
Gryta heng'e i jâne, koka full tå rjome-graut åt dae vesle bân'e.
Far han sit'te og harpa kjønn; mor ho blaes'e i vakkert hønn; syste ho sit'te og spanne gull; broren går i skog'e jaga alle ville dyr.
E han kvit, so kjøyr 'en hit. E 'n han grå, so lat 'en gå. E 'n brun i bôg'e, so lat 'en gå i skog'e.

Sleep my Baby. The kettle is on the fire full of porridge for you. Father is sifting the corn, mother blows in the pretty horn, sister is spinning gold and your brother is hunting wild animals in the woods. If it's white, bring it home, if it's grey let it go, but if it's brown let it wander in the forest.

Most celebrated of all Norwegian folklore instruments is the hardingfele or hardanger fiddle which seems to have originated among the Norwegian country folk about the middle of the 17th century. It is somewhat smaller in size than the conventional European violin with a higher arch in the belly. In addition to the customary four strings found on the violin, the hardanger fiddle has also four thin metal sympathetic strings. As a result, the hardanger fiddle when played with real skill and musicianship produces an astonishing sonority thanks to the wealth of overtones. The four playing strings are usually tuned A D A E with the sympathetic strings tuned D E F# A. Other tunings are A E A E for the playing strings with the sympathetic strings C# E F# D. If the playing strings are tuned in customary violin fashion, then the sympathetic strings are tuned D E G A. The hardanger fiddle is found in most frequent use throughout Telemark and Western Norway, however, in the Eastern areas of Norway and in the North, the country fiddlers use the conventional violin.


The Gangar (literally, the "Going dance") is a 6/8 dance for couples which proceeds somewhat in the manner of a processional in circular pattern. This dance is of very ancient origin and was probably at one time a ceremonial dance of religious character. Only in a very few rural districts can it be found today.


SIDE II, Band 5: SPRINGAR (dance). From Telemark. Played on Hardanger Fiddle by Eivind Groven.


The cattle calls recorded here are apparently very old and are used in the Norwegian mountains. The characteristic melisma episodes are distinctly reminiscent of the Kyrie and Hallelujah melodies heard by the Norwegian folk during the five centuries that Norway had its religious affiliation to the Church of Rome prior to the Reformation in 1536.

SIDE II, Band 7: VERSES FROM THE DRAUMKVEDET (ancient heroic ballad). From Telemark. Sung by Gudrun Grave Norlund. A large number of the Kjempevise-melodies or ancient heroic ballads have been preserved in the Province of Telemark. The most famous of them all is the so-called Draumkvedet -- the Vision of Heaven and Hell -- which dates back to the 12th Century. It describes the legendary dream of a man who slept from Christmas Eve to Epiphany and the visions he witnessed of souls in purgatory. Most of these old ballads are in the nature of dance songs in which the leader of the group renders the narrative while others join in the refrain.

"If you'll listen I can tell you about a brave lad -- about Olav Aasteson who slept so long. He fell asleep Christmas Eve and didn't wake up until Epiphany when people went to church."

"Vil du meg lye, eg kvea full kan
um einkván nyttan drengjen,
um han Olav Aasteson,
som heve sovi so lengje.
Aa det var Olav Aasteson, som heve sovi so lengje.

Han la seg ned um joelatan
og sterkan svevnen fekk
vakna 'kje fyr um trettandagjen,
da folkji åt kyrkjunn gjekk.

"If you'll listen I can tell you about a brave lad -- about Olav Aasteson who slept so long. He fell asleep Christmas Eve and didn't wake up until Epiphany when people went to church."

SIDE II, Band 7: ROLAND OG MAGNUS KONGJEN (Roland and Charlemagne) -- Heroic Ballad. From Telemark. Sung by Gudrun Grave Norlund.

"Seks mine sveinar heime vera,
gjøyne dae gull'e balde;
dei are seks på hellings-londo
røyne dei jønn'i kaldet!"

Dei slogest ut på Rusar-vollen
i dagane twå og trja;
da fall heiningan for Rolands-svaere
som storr'en for goan ljå.

Roland sette lur'en for bløgga munne,
bles han i mae vreie;
da rivna mur og marmor-stein
i nie dr gr av leie."
Six of my lads stayed home to guard my gold, the other six would try their cold irons in heathen countries. For two and three days they fought in Roncevalles and the pagans fell for Roland's sword like grass for the sharp scythe. Roland put his horn to his bloody mouth and blew in great anger. Walls and marble burst and broke as far as nine days' travel.

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