



**SLÅTTER VOL. 1 - FRA MELDAL OG ORKDAL
PÅ FELE OG HARDINGFELE -
STURLA EIDE**

BIOGRAPHIES, BY **BJØRN AKSDAL**
(ENGLISH SUMMARY BY **MARY BARTHELEMY**)

Peder Wessel (1850-1906)

In the Norwegian Music Collection, at the National Library in Oslo, there is a music manuscript (Ms.308/36) entitled "Norsk nationale Springdandse fra Thronhjems Stift, samlede og udsatte for Pianoforte Aar 1877" [Norwegian National Springdances from Trondhjem Province, collected and arranged for piano in 1877]. This collection of tunes provides significant information about the repertoire of musicians in small communities between Kristiansund and Trondheim in the 1800s.

Peder Christian Wessel, who created the collection, was born in Kristiansund on September 14, 1850 into an industrious farming, shipping and trading family. The family had connections in the ports of Trondheim and Kristiansund, as well as the rural community of Hemne. Peder lived on his family's farm in Vinje in Hemne until 1875, at which time much of the property was sold to recover debts. Peder gradually assumed responsibility for what was left of the farm at Gammeløra and lived there, unmarried, until his death in 1906.

Historical references indicate that Peder was a well-educated and dexterous man, but tell nothing of him as a musician. The Wessel family was very wealthy during the 1850s and 1860s, and it is likely that piano lessons and musical notation were part of his early education. Just how and why he became interested in folk music and acquainted with traditional fiddlers remains a mystery for us.

His manuscript has two parts: The first section contains 40 older so-called "springdance" [springdans/springleik/polskdans/pols] tunes. These are ascribed to various

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fiddlers of the larger region, some of them contemporaries of Wessel. Others were born in the late 1700s and early 1800s and were of Wessel's parent's and grandparent's generation. The second section contains 14 popular dance tunes entitled Gallop, Reinländer Polka, Engels Dands, Polka Masurca, Wals and Polket. Peder Wessel has transcribed the tunes and arranged them for piano. Most of the arrangements are simple and traditional, but several show a taste for more exciting harmonies. He accompanies the notation with musical terms such as "Pastorale," "Minor," "Violin Pizicatto", "Arco", "Andante," "Allegro," "Dolce" and "Volta", an indication that he must have had a some schooling in music theory.

Elling Holstad (1772-1830)

Wessel names Elling Holstad, of Meldal, as the source for 16 of the springdance tunes in the collection. Elling Jonsen Holstad was the oldest son in his family, and would have inherited the farm had it not been for an unfortunate dog-bite in his childhood that left him somewhat crippled and in need of crutches. He was interested in music and his father, out of pity and the desire to help the unfortunate boy, provided him with a fiddle. Elling became an eager fiddler, exhibited extraordinary musical talent and was soon engaged to play for dances and for weddings far and wide. He is now remembered in Meldal and the Orkladal valley as a legendary talent and cultural personality.

5 of the 16 tunes attributed to Holstad in Wessel's manuscript are familiar to many today, but 11 of them are little known. The springdance tunes reflect the typical style of the 1800s. They contain many triplets, and are written in G major, D flat major and F-major. Two involve playing in 3rd position, an indication that Holstad must have been well versed in fiddle technique. Several have a rather unusual structure and melody, and are transcribed using an open key signature and sharps and flats within the notation.

Ragnvald Bolme (1927-2000)

Ragnvald Bolme was born in Stangvik in Nordmøre in 1927. His father, shoemaker Pedersson Ole Bolme (1875-1952) was from Rindal,

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and his mother Ellen Edwardsdatter Fættén (f.1896) came from Tustna. In 1930, when Ragnvald was three years old, his parents bought the Holum farm in Meldal and settled there. In 1957 Ragnvald took over the farm.

When young Ragnvald Bolme began playing the fiddle, his father and an uncle were his teachers. Later he learned from other fiddlers in the neighborhood, such as Knut (1881-1954) and Arnt Volløyhaug (1875-1969), Sivert Mikkelsen (1885-1955) and Olav Budeng (1905-1968). Bolme eventually played a significant role in establishing the Meldal Spellmannslag in 1956 and he led the group, along with Lars Volløyhaug (1919-1987), until it was discontinued in 1970. In 1988, when the spellemannslag was reestablished, Bolme continued as its musical director. Over the years, he also played for dances in a trio, with John Gulla (b. 1927), accordion, and Gulla's wife, guitar.

The Hardanger fiddle became extremely popular in parts of both Nordmøre and Orkladal in Ragnvald Bolme's youth. A main reason for this was that Hallvard Ørsal, a proficient fiddler in Nordmøre, adopted it as his primary instrument. Several violinmakers in the region began to build Hardanger fiddles. Fiddlers of the region were attracted to popular Hardanger fiddle repertoire from Telemark, Hardanger etc. Several of Ragnvald Bolme's compositions reflect this trend. Later in life, Ragnvald Bolme took up playing on a so-called "Meldalsfele" [Meldal fiddle], a blend of Hardanger fiddle and traditional violin developed by a local violinmaker named Michal Hagetø.

Sturla Eide (b. 1975)

Sturla Eide was born in Orkdal. He began playing fiddle at the age of 6-7 and quickly came under the supervision of Ragnvald Bolme. Bolme's young fiddle students were often invited to play at local events. Eide attended - and performed at - his first "kappleik" [folk music competition] in Vågå in 1983.

In 1986 he began taking lessons in Trondheim from Arild

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Hoksnes (f.1956). At the same time, he studied violin technique with Olav Ratkje. Hoksnes introduced Eide to fiddle traditions of Nordmøre and other parts of Norway, and the two of them often performed together. This provided motivation for the young musician. It was during this period that Eide first learned of Peder Wessel's manuscript, which is the basis for much of the repertoire on this album.

Eide continued participating in competitions using the normal fiddle, and attained the rank of Class-A fiddler. From around the year 2000, he began to seek out other music venues and to study music at the university in Trondheim. Sturla Eide masters both normal fiddle and Hardanger fiddle and is today among Norway's foremost performers on these instruments. He is primarily grounded in traditional music of the Trøndelag region, particularly the area of Orkladal. However, he has also accumulated a large, varied folk music repertoire that reflects impulses from many parts of Norway and the rest of the world. He has composed a number of melodies and arranged traditional tunes for various types of ensembles. His dance tune called Dimmisjonspol (1996) has become part of the standard repertoire for young fiddlers today. Eide has solid experience as a dance musician from Sturla Eide's Kvintet and Strengfolket. He and fiddler Åsmund Svenkerud released the album Åsmund & Sturla in 1997. In 1999, the group Gorrlaus (now renamed Flukt) was established. In 2002, Eide collaborated with guitarist Andreas Aase in the duo sturla|andreas. Their first album Glimmer (2003) was nominated for a Spellemannpris [Norwegian Grammy]. Eide's first solo album Murru (2007) followed by Triller (2010).

Sturla Eide has taught at the Orkdal community music school since 1994 and is now employed there as instructor and organizer of cultural events. In addition, he tours both alone and with other musicians.

In 2006, Eide was awarded a Norwegian artist scholarship consisting of a one-year work grant, and in 2009 he was appointed County Artist in South Trøndelag.

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