

# This Drum Is Not the Devil's Instrument: The Development and Performance of Drum Tunes in Norwegian Folk Music

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## Abstract

*Trommeslatter* (drum tunes) have played a vital role in Norwegian traditional music for several hundred years. This article examines the development and performance of drum tunes in Norway, with a special focus on the work of Johannes Sundvor in transcribing drum music. We present several examples and analyse tunes from Sundvor's collection. We also demonstrate how this Norwegian drum tradition is related to a tradition of European military drumming. The article concludes with a discussion of aspects of interpretation and an outline of the status of drum tunes today.

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## INTRODUCTION

Archaeological excavations reveal discoveries of drums dating back to the Stone Age (Olsson 1985:688). In Norway, the drum has been used by shamans in the pre-Christian religion of the Sami people for thousands of years (Graff 1993:388–91). This article examines a Norwegian drum tradition related to the performance of the cylindrical two-headed rope-tensioned drum, played with two drumsticks. Such a drum is most often made of wood or brass and has snares attached under the bottom head, which make a characteristic buzzing sound (see Figure 1). When we use the term “drum” in this article, this two-headed drum of military origin is what we refer to.

This drum tradition is documented in both civil and military Norwegian contexts dating back to the sixteenth century. The tradition has been continued by oral transmission. Written music describing drum signals did not exist in military sources before the eighteenth century. As a folk instrument, the drum was very much used at weddings. The Danish cultural historian, Troels Troels-Lund, has written about Norwegian wedding ceremonies in the sixteenth century, and we read (authors’ translation):

The music played at the head of the wedding procession. It could probably be done with just one flute player, but people on the west coast had both flutes and drums. The drum was the instrument that ordinary people liked best. In Norway there were therefore many places where they only used drums at weddings (Troels-Lund 1939: 400).

On the west coast of Norway, the custom of having a drummer to play at weddings was at its most popular around 1850–1880, in the middle of the Norwegian national romanticism, and the tradition lasted until around 1940. However, knowledge of how this drum tradition was performed might have been lost if not Johannes Sundvor (1871–1941) had gained interest in these performances. Sundvor learned his first drum tunes (in Norwegian: *Trommeslåtter*) in the early 1890s, and some decades thereafter he started collecting and writing down this old drum music. This resulted in a collection of written transcriptions of drum tunes dated from 1915 to 1937 that are available today. Some of these can be found in digitalized versions at the National Library of Norway.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in 1937 Sundvor cooperated with the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) to make a recording of several of the drum tunes and marches he had collected. Thereby the tradition was saved for future generations, and not the least, for the great pleasure of future drummers!

The most significant aspect of the drum tunes in Sundvor’s collection is that they imply a performance of an underlying double-stroke roll, as a *drone* (cf. the drone in Norwegian Hardanger fiddle music), with *rhythmic motifs* or *themes* played as single strokes on top of it. In this way, these drum tunes are challenging to play and show their marked difference from drum marches since most marches are performed *without* an underlying roll. A very important person for the continuation and knowledge of this drum tradition is

<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.nb.no/items/URN:NBN:no-nb\\_digimanus\\_384883](https://www.nb.no/items/URN:NBN:no-nb_digimanus_384883).



Figure 1. Drum from The Armory, Armed Forces Museum, Trondheim. This is a brass drum from the middle of the eighteenth century, with the Norwegian coat of arms (a lion on a halberd) hammered into the drum shell. Photo by author.

also the grandson of Johannes Sundvor, Eirik Sundvor. Through his father, Olav Sundvor, Eirik had inherited several of Johannes Sundvor's drums and drumsticks, he had access to Johannes' transcriptions, and he learned how to play this drum music. Eirik Sundvor made several performances in Norway where he played and talked about the drum tunes, and in 1975 Ola Kai Ledang at Norwegian Teacher College (NLHT) made a video interview with Eirik Sundvor (Ledang 1975). A few years later, in 1979, the Norwegian television, NRK, broadcasted a program called *Den siste tambur* (The last tambour), which portrayed Eirik and the old drum music.<sup>2</sup>

### LITERATURE ON DRUM TUNES

Several Norwegian musicians and researchers have written about this drum tradition. Johannes Sundvor, himself, and Arne Bjørndal, a pioneer in Norwegian folk music research, both wrote interesting articles with a historical focus on the drum tradition (Bjørndal 1917, 1924, 1960; Sundvor 1931). A picture of Sundvor and Bjørndal is shown in Figure 2.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://tv.nrk.no/program/FMUS00002378>.



Figure 2. Arne Bjørndal with Hardanger fiddle (hardingfele) and Johannes Sundvor with drum. Source: Olav Sundvor.

In 1991, Carl Haakon Waadeland published a textbook presenting twenty drum tunes from Johannes Sundvor's collection (Waadeland 1991). The book contains historical comments, musical notation and explanations of how the drum music should be performed, as well as some suggestions on how elements of the drum tunes might be applied to the drum set. In addition, Waadeland had made a recording of the drum tunes that followed the book on a tape cassette (in later editions, on a CD). This book was written from a modern drummer's perspective, and it contributed to a lot of Norwegian drummers learning to play the drum music Sundvor had transcribed. The old drum tradition thereby gained renewed interest.

One very relevant question that arose based on Sundvor's transcriptions, the performances of Johannes and Eirik Sundvor, and Waadeland's book, is how the transcriptions of Sundvor should be interpreted. This was discussed by Martinsen (1994), Seldal (2001, 2005), Kristensen (2018), and Utby (2019), and will be further commented later in this article. Samkopf and Waadeland (1995) emphasised that it is important that drummers renewing the old drum tradition meet and get in contact with the Norwegian folk music scene, to achieve a better understanding of the rhythmical

performative elements of the tunes. Moreover, they suggested to develop the Sundvor-tradition further by composing new drum tunes and playing the tunes together with other musicians and dancers. They also asked if anyone had more information about drum tunes, old drums, or pictures of former drummers. One answer to this was given by Kristensen (1998) who reported about a collection of drum tunes written by Nils Westerlund (1891–1980). However, it turned out that the drum tunes collected by Westerlund are all included in the larger collection of Johannes Sundvor. In 2001 Birger Misteregggen wrote a master's thesis about the Norwegian drum tradition from 1500 to 1940, based on the collections of Sundvor (Misteregggen 2001). This thesis also presents a survey of the historical development of the drum and the role of the military drummer, and points at connections between international military drumming and the Norwegian folk drum tradition. These findings are further presented and discussed in Misteregggen (2005), and Misteregggen (2006) gives a brief historical presentation of the Norwegian drum tradition. Rolf Seldal's master's thesis compares the performances of Johannes and Eirik Sundvor with the performances proceeding Waadeland's book and discusses a "new" and "old" school related to the performance of drum tunes (Seldal 2001). This will be further discussed in the following. Seldal, moreover, published a textbook with an oral approach to the tradition, where drum tunes are categorised as related to different dances in Norwegian folk music (Seldal 2005). A historical overview referring to many interesting pictures of drummers' participation at weddings was presented by Åsnes (2003), and the master's theses of Kvåle (2018) and Utby (2019) present ways to develop the drum tradition by performing elements of drum tunes on the drum set. Utby also reported on performances of drum tunes in musical interaction with a Norwegian folk musician playing the Hardanger fiddle.

However, even though there are many writings about drum tunes and this old drum tradition, all the publications mentioned above are written in Norwegian, except the brief historical outline by Misteregggen (2006). Several other presentations of Norwegian traditional music written in English have, indeed, been published throughout the years, but none of these publications mention, or comment on a Norwegian folk *drum* tradition. It is interesting to note that in an article about Norwegian folk music and its connection with the dance, Ole M. Sandvik, a leading Norwegian researcher and collector of folk music, writes: "The national instruments are the lure, the goat's horn, the willowpipe, the *langleik* (a sort of monochord), the *hardingfele* (Norwegian peasant-fiddle) and the common European violin" (Sandvik 1935:92). Among the Norwegian folk instruments missing in Sandvik's presentation, is the drum.

## COMMUNICATING THE NORWEGIAN DRUM TRADITION TO AN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE

An important objective for the present article is to give a comprehensive presentation of this Norwegian drum tradition in English, thereby making knowledge about it available

for the international reader. To accomplish this, we will report about the transmission from military drumming to the drum as an instrument used at weddings, present the work of Johannes Sundvor in collecting and writing down the drum tunes, explain typical characteristics of the folk drum tradition, and point at how this tradition is related to an international tradition of military drumming. Moreover, we will discuss aspects of interpretation and the “old” and “new” school in drum tune performance, before we end by outlining the status and application of the drum tunes today. All this will be accompanied by examples of transcriptions, recordings of drum tunes and videos.

We end this introductory section by pointing at an interesting remark written by Bjørndal (1924), authors’ translation:

The drum is an old instrument which is used quite a lot in Hordaland. For instance, a wedding was not considered to be decent if there was not a drummer present together with a fiddler. ... The drum did not meet religious counter-perceptions like the fiddle. On the contrary, they wanted to have the best drummer to play at their party.

The statement about religious counter-perceptions towards the fiddle should be seen in relation to the religious revival movement in the nineteenth century, which had dramatic consequences for folk music. Fiddle playing and dancing were, often unfairly, associated with sinful lifestyles, and there is a tale describing the Devil as an extremely good fiddler performing *Fanitullen* (The Devil’s Tune), a famous tune within Norwegian folk music. Therefore, the fiddle was at some time, among some people banned and considered the instrument of the Devil. On the other hand, the drummer’s connection to the military and thereby the upper echelon of society led to acceptance of the drum here focused. *This* drum is *not* the Devil’s instrument, and it was even in some parts of Norway the most popular folk instrument. Gjellebøl (1800:45) writes about Setesdal, and we read (authors’ translation):

...a drummer, who on every occasion in every party pleased them with his music..., because partly they seldom had any other music, and partly there is no music that pleases them so much as the music of the drum.

To place the Norwegian folk drum tradition within the context of a European tradition of military drumming, we start by giving a short survey of the development from European military drum signals to the use of the drum in civic happenings and folk music.

## FROM MILITARY DRUM SIGNALS TO FOLK MUSIC

During the crusades, European armies drew influence from the oriental way of organising the military forces. Arendrup (1963) writes that the European military application of fifes and drums, as well as timpani and trumpets, originated from the crusades. The Swiss,

together with the French and Scots, have been among the foremost exponents of the use and spread of the military drum in Europe (Olsson 1985). Grieder (1968) refers to a report on the battle of Sempach in 1386 as the earliest document where the fife and drum were used by the Swiss army, and the drum and the “Swiss fife” became very important in communicating military signals within the Swiss infantry during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Olsson (1985:702) states that the Swiss mercenaries (lance-knights) had a crucial influence on both the development of the shape of the drum and the drum technique, and he argues that drummers from the *Basler Trommler-Gilden*, an association of drummers in Basel, Switzerland, should be given a major credit for the technical military drumming that is today called *rudimental drumming*. Typical of this technique is the application of double-stroke drum rolls and various alterations of single and double strokes, compare the American *National Association of Rudimental Drummers* (N.A.R.D.).<sup>3</sup> During the fifteenth century, the Swiss mercenaries could be found at numerous princely houses throughout Europe, and they shared their drumming experiences and skills with the local drummers. The Swiss drumming technique and drum signals were thus spread in large parts of Europe and eventually also became part of the Scandinavian military drum vocabulary. The various drum signals could vary between the different armies, but Olsson (1985:526) states that *The Reveille* (the wake-up call) is almost identical in most European countries and is probably developed by Basler Trommler-Gilden. More information about military drumming and the military drum signals can be found in the first known written documentation of *The Reveille* published in a German instruction book for military drumming by an anonymous writer (Anonymous 1777), a publication of Danish drum signals from the 1820s (Lincke n.d.), Bruce and Emmett (1862–1865), Berger (1972), Misteregggen (2001), Kristensen (2003), and Hessler (2017).

While the drum spread across Europe and gained a central place as a military instrument, a civilian tradition of drumming developed in parallel. Grieder (1968) reports that there is written documentation from 1529 which states that in Basel the drum was used at weddings and even in the churches. Eventually, drums and fifes became dominant at *Fasnacht*, a carnival tradition in Basel which also today is highly alive. The music played at this occasion was traded orally until Fritz Berger developed a notation form and published a book explaining the drum performances. Berger’s book was first published in 1928 (see Berger 1972), interesting enough, at the same time that Johannes Sundvor was collecting drum tunes in Norway.

Based on the above we ask: How is this development of the European military drum tradition and the transformation from military to civilian drumming reflected in the tradition of Norwegian drumming? Norway was governed by Denmark from 1537 to 1814 and was in union with Sweden from 1814 to 1905, whereafter Norway became an independent country. The military regulations and rules were therefore, at that time, to a

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<sup>3</sup> <http://nard.us.com/Home.html>.



large extent the same in Norway, Denmark and Sweden. In 1628, the Danish king, Christian IV, wrote a *Krigs-Ordinats* for Norway which implied the establishment of a Norwegian military army. In this document, the king, moreover, ordered that every military company should have its own drummer, see Aksdal (1982:109) and Kristensen (2003:15). During the following decades, the cylindrical two-headed drum with rope-tension was established as an important instrument both in the infantry and the cavalry in Norway. Many men/boys (no women) were given training to play military signals and marches according to the European tradition of military drumming communicated by the Swiss mercenaries. However, the drummers only had to attend camp for a few weeks, or during wars, and the rest of the year they stayed at home. There they started to show their musical skills and earned money by playing at various social gatherings and weddings, incorporating the military drumming technique in their performance. In an interview with Johannes Sundvor in the paper “Gula Tidend” from 1 September 1937, we read (authors’ translation):

The drum was used a lot, but as I understand it, it had its peak of performance from 1850–80. At that time, it was a privilege to be a drummer and to be able to perform properly as one, and the art of drumming was driven to a high level. And it was really created music, often based on military drumming technique (Sundvor 1937).

As an example of a drummer’s participation in a social/political happening, we point to [Figure 3](#) which shows a picture from Balestrand, Norway, on August 13, 1905. At the head of the procession, we see the drummer, Ole Vestrheim, playing the drum. The picture was taken in connection with the referendum when the Norwegian people were to say yes or no to further union with Sweden.

### THE DRUM AS A WEDDING INSTRUMENT IN NORWEGIAN FOLK MUSIC

In the literature dealing with Norwegian folk music, we find a significant amount of source material that mentions drumming for everyday use and at parties. In particular, accounts of wedding celebrations are rich in information about the drummer’s participation and duties. We find documentation of drumming at weddings from the sixteenth century (Troels-Lund 1939; Aksdal 1982), and throughout the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries drummers played at weddings in several parts of the country: Hedmark and Gudbrandsdalen (Gulowsen 1900), Telemark (Schneider 1914), Setesdal (Gjellebøl 1800), Østerdalen (Bull 1919), and on the west coast (Bjørndal 1917, 1924, 1960; Sundvor 1931). Most of the sources we come across that describe drumming in connection with weddings mention drumming used to and from church. Not only a drum, but also, at different times and different places, a flute, clarinet, or fiddle participated in the wedding procession. The musicians thereby contributed to give the bridal party a solemn and joyful atmosphere. However, what gave the procession its most distinctive and special characteristic, was often related to a function outside the pure musical. An important task





Figure 3. Drummer Ole Vestrheim leading a folk procession, 13 August 1905. Source: Fylkesarkivet i Vestland.

for the musicians was also to make loud noise to scare away invisible enemies and protect the bride and groom against evil spirits. However, the musicians were to stop making loud noises when the wedding procession reached the church, and there is a provision from Bergen, 1584, that states that “no drummer should accompany the groom into the churchyard” (Troels-Lund 1939:413, authors’ translation).

In addition to the drummer leading the bridal procession, we also find written documentation of the drum used for dancing. In Aksdal (1982:111) we read (authors’ translation): “Already in 1621, the drum is mentioned as a wedding instrument in Stod. Bishop Arrebo, who participated in the wedding of a priest, borrowed a drum from the drummer and started to play the drum for dance.” Moreover, we find that the drum has played a significant role related to dance in people’s daily social gatherings. An anonymous

writing from Telemark on the occasion of the king's birthday in 1722 reports (authors' translation): "...And the drum started to rattle. The young boys went willing with the girls. We danced if the drum would rumble" (Schneider 1914:128). We also have source material documenting that the drum has been played for dancing together with the fiddle. Bakka et.al. writes about Norwegian dance traditions from Vest-Agder, and with reference to the life in Farsund in the 1830s and a fiddle player called Kobi Spillemand, we read (authors' translation): "..., and where Kobi wasn't playing the violin, together with the drum and the triangle, it was not half the fun" (Bakka et al. 1990:137).

Bjørndal has written extensively about drumming and wedding ceremonies on the west coast of Norway in the nineteenth century (1917, 1924, 1960), and he claims that the drummer was a very important and vital part of the entire wedding ceremony. Figure 4 shows a picture from a peasant wedding in Haalandsdalen, in 1892. Here we see a drummer (with a horn) and a fiddler participating in the wedding.

According to Bjørndal, in many parts of Western Norway the drum was what first welcomed the guests to the wedding party (1960:99). On a suitable elevation not far from the place where the party was to happen, the drummer performed a *Velkommeslått* (a welcome tune). This could be heard far away and guided the guests so they could find the place where the wedding was to be celebrated. On the day of the wedding, when the whole party went to church, the fiddler and drummer took turns playing, and the drummer played various *bryllupsslåtter* (wedding tunes). When the party was sitting around tables waiting for something to eat, the drummer often played a *Grautaslått* (a porridge tune). Moreover, wedding parties in the old days often lasted for three days,



Figure 4. *Bondebryllup i Haalandsdalen 1892*. Photo: Thorvald Selmer. University of Bergen Library.

and the drum might be used to wake up the wedding guests in the morning. According to Bjørndal (1960:101) the drummer would then often play *Sjuspringaren* (also called *Sjuspringen*). Sjuspringen is a very special drum tune, and a more comprehensive presentation of this tune is given in a following section of this article. Finally, at the end of the wedding party, the drummer played *Jageslåtten* (the chase away tune). This was played when the host of the wedding celebration wanted to end the party, but the guests kept on staying.

As mentioned above, written documentation shows that the drum has been used to accompany dancing at weddings and other social gatherings. Based on this it is surprising that Bjørndal (1960:99) writes that as far as he knows, in the wedding ceremonies from the nineteenth century that he describes, the drum has never been used for dancing. In an interview published in the paper *Gula Tidend* Johannes Sundvor also says that the drum music he collected has never accompanied dance (1937). This should be seen in relation to accepting the drum in social gatherings: As previously mentioned, a consequence of the religious revival in Norway in the nineteenth century was that fiddle playing and dancing among many became associated with sinful lifestyles, whereas the drum, with its military back cover, was accepted. Sundvor says: "Therefore, there was no opposition to the drum on religious grounds; when the fiddle was not allowed, they could enjoy a drum tune" (1937, authors' translation). Even though both Bjørndal and Sundvor claim that in the wedding customs that they document the drum was not used for dancing, we find in Sundvor's collection a drum tune called *Reinlendaren*, and "Reinlender" is the name of a Norwegian folk dance of German origin. Moreover, Sundvor has composed a drum tune entitled *Polka Mazurka* (a dance), and his collection includes Sjuspringen which also is the name of a dance. Thus, there are many associations and comments related to dance in Sundvor's writings. These could of course be viewed as phrasing instructions, but they might also indicate that people indeed did dance to some of these drum tunes. At this point it is interesting to know that in the television program portraying Eirik Sundvor mentioned in the introduction, there is an interview with an old man (Jørgen Risøen) who had participated in a wedding where drum tunes were played, and he states that people were dancing to the drummer playing *halling* and *gangar* (two old Norwegian folk dances).<sup>4</sup>

For various reasons, the number of military drummers decreased during the nineteenth century, and consequently, the number of drummers that played at weddings also decreased in large parts of Norway during this period. Western Norway, however, retained these customs for longer, and as previously mentioned, Johannes Sundvor claimed that heyday of the drum was between 1850 and 1880. In the rest of this article, we will focus on Johannes Sundvor and his collection of drum tunes. Even though the drum as a wedding instrument is well documented from back to the sixteenth century and we have written information about which functions and duties a drummer had in various

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://tv.nrk.no/program/FMUS00002378>, time: 03.06-05.10. The interview is in Norwegian.

parts of the wedding ceremonies, the literature does *not* tell us exactly *what* the drummer played at these different occasions. Knowledge about this changed with the groundbreaking work of Johannes Sundvor. Thanks to Sundvor's transcription of the drum music, his many presentations of the tradition and his recording of drum tunes, combined with the continued performances and presentations of the drum music by his grandson, Eirik Sundvor, we have now a very good overview and understanding of how the drum tunes that Johannes Sundvor came across were, and are, to be played. Thereby, many of us today are able to play them according to, and as a prolongation of, the old tradition.

### THE DRUM TUNES COLLECTED BY JOHANNES SUNDVOR

We now present Johannes Sundvor and his work in collecting the drum tunes. A picture of Johannes Sundvor is given in Figure 5. All the drum tunes in Sundvor's collections are



Figure 5. Johannes Sundvor, outside the depot barracks, Bergen, around 1918. Photographer unknown. Picture and information received from Olav Sundvor.

named *wedding tunes* (in Norwegian: *Bryllupslåtter*), and the terms “wedding tune” and “drum tune” are often used interchangeably. We start by giving a biographical presentation of Sundvor, and an overview of the drum music in his collection. In the next sections, we present characteristics of the drum tunes and point at how this Norwegian folk drum tradition is related to international traditions within military drumming. In addition, we take a closer look at typical features of different categories of drum tunes by presenting examples of transcriptions, recordings of drum tunes and videos.

Johannes Sundvor was born in Strandvik, a short distance south of Bergen, on 27 April 1871, and died on 28 July 1941 (Teigland 1951). In his teenage years, he got a summer job at a fishing farm close to Strandvik. There he met two fishermen both of whom had served as drummers in the military, and from them, he received his first drum training. Teigland writes (authors’ translation): “When they did not catch any fish, it could happen that the drum was brought out, and Johannes received from these fishermen his first training in swinging the drumsticks, and he did it with such a steady beat and so well that the men were amazed” (1951:115). From 1892 Sundvor was a horn player in the battalion in Bergen, and during the winters of 1894–95 and 1896–97, he attended the military music school where he learned to read and write music. He graduated as a drummer and horn player in 1897, with top grades in both theory and practice (Bjørndal 1917). In 1901, Sundvor got a job as a police constable in Bergen, and when he retired as a police officer in 1931, he received the King’s Medal of Merit for his excellent work as a police officer, genealogist and collector. Already as a boy, he started collecting books, and when he grew up, he spent much of his free time collecting historical information about family relationships and local village history, and eventually, he became well-known and gained great respect as a genealogist and village historian. Moreover, Sundvor was strongly interested in politics, and for about 20 years he was a board member for the Liberal Party in Bergen (Teigland 1951).

Based on his skills as a drummer, combined with his ability to write music and his great interest in collecting and preserving knowledge of historical tradition, Johannes Sundvor started to collect and transcribe drum tunes during his many tours along the west coast of Norway. He learned the first drum tunes in the early 1890s, whereas his written transcriptions of the drum music are dated from 1915 to 1937. All the drum tunes in Sundvor’s collection are from the geographical region between Nordfjord in the north and Hardangerfjord in the south. The fact that Sundvor’s transcriptions of drum tunes are dated from 1915 onwards, whereas he learned the first tunes in the early 1890s, might be a consequence of a great fire in Bergen that happened on 15 January 1916. In this fire, the Sundvor family lost most of what they owned, including Johannes Sundvor’s books and the many valuable collections he had made. On 1 and 2 September 1937, Sundvor recorded 32 pieces of drum music on gramophone in cooperation with the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, NRK. In connection with this recording, a portrait of him and his work was made in the newspaper *Gula Tidend* (Sundvor 1937).

Johannes Sundvor’s written material of drum music consists of a total of eleven notebooks and a collection of loose sheets. This amounts to more than 300 pages of

handwritten material and contains around 400 transcriptions consisting of drum tunes, drum marches, military signals, etudes, and what might be categorised as sketches. Many of the drum tunes and marches are transcribed several times, often in slightly different ways, so the number of different drum tunes and marches is far less than the number of transcriptions. Sundvor's collection also includes copies of various newspaper articles and, interesting enough, references to the Swiss Basel drum tradition. Moreover, his collection contains a list of sizes (dimensions) of different drums, various handwritten reflections related to drumming, and a manuscript that appears to be the draft of an article.

The drum tunes can be divided into different categories based on rhythmic feel, thematic material, and technical performance. The main categories are:

1. *Reksolinks tunes*, from German: Rechts und Links (right and left). These drum tunes are derived from the military reveille, played in *major* (Norwegian: *dur*), according to Sundvor's use of this concept. These are all notated in 6/8-time signature.
2. *Drum tunes in soft* (Norwegian: *njuk*) performance. Some of these are also referred to as drum tunes in *minor* (Norwegian: *moll*) performance. Drum tunes in this category are most often notated in 2/4- or 6/8-time signature.
3. *Drum tunes with a 3-time feel*. These are notated in 6/8 or 3/4 signature, and sometimes also in 5/8 or 16/32 (!).
4. *Alla breve drum tunes*. Most of these are notated in 2/4.
5. *Drum tunes with combined time signatures*, such as a combination of 8/8, 9/8, and 18/8.

In the following, we will demonstrate how Sundvor transcribed and performed the drum tunes and point at typical features that illustrate how this drum music is related to a tradition of European military drumming.

### CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE DIFFERENT DRUM TUNES

As mentioned in the Introduction, a significant aspect of the drum tunes in Sundvor's collection is that they imply a performance of an underlying double-stroke roll, as a *drone*, with *rhythmic motifs* or *themes* played as single strokes on top of it. In this way, these drum tunes show their marked difference from drum marches since most marches are performed *without* an underlying roll. The performance of rolls and motifs in the drum tunes involves an alteration of accented single strokes and unaccented double strokes, that is, a performance of different *rudiments*, and thereby the Norwegian drum tunes show an intimate relationship to the old European military drum tradition originating in the Basler Trommler-Gilden (cf. the section "From military drum signals to folk music" in the previous). We will now take a closer look at the different types of drum tunes and, not the least, listen to how they were performed by Johannes and Eirik Sundvor. Doing so, we start with drum tunes derived from the military reveille.



**THE MILITARY REVEILLE AND REKSOLINKS TUNES**

Figure 6 illustrates the military reveille in two different versions. The upper line shows the motif as we recognise it from the first known written documentation of this signal (Anonymous 1777). The second line demonstrates how to play the signal in moll. “Moll” (minor) is derived from the Latin *mollis*, which means “soft.” The third line in Figure 6 shows the reveille signal in dur (major), which comes from Latin *durus*, meaning “hard.”

Sundvor writes in his comments that the designations “moll” and “dur” are related to the tempo of the performance (moll being slower, dur faster), and that the performance in moll is the “old reveille,” whereas the performance in dur is the “new reveille” applied in the military from around 1850. However, the performance in dur is in accordance with the notation of the reveille found in the documentation from 1777 (1937), and this is a representation of the performance of the reveille likely developed by Basler Trommler-Gilden in the seventeenth century (Olsson 1985:526). This performance is also found in French military drumming under the name *Le coup de la Diane* (Goute 1993). Note that in moll the right hand is leading in the performance of the motif, whereas in dur the hands alternate. Many drum tunes in Sundvor’s collection build on the reveille performed in dur, and since right and left hands alternate in this performance these tunes are called *Reksolinks* tunes (*Rechts und links* = Right and left). Figure 7 shows Sundvor’s notation of *Reksolinks fraa Fusa*. In another transcription of this tune, Sundvor writes that he learned the tune from Torkell Foer, 26 August 1918. Moreover, he comments that Torkell Foer was a tambour in the battalion in Bergen 1883–1910, which

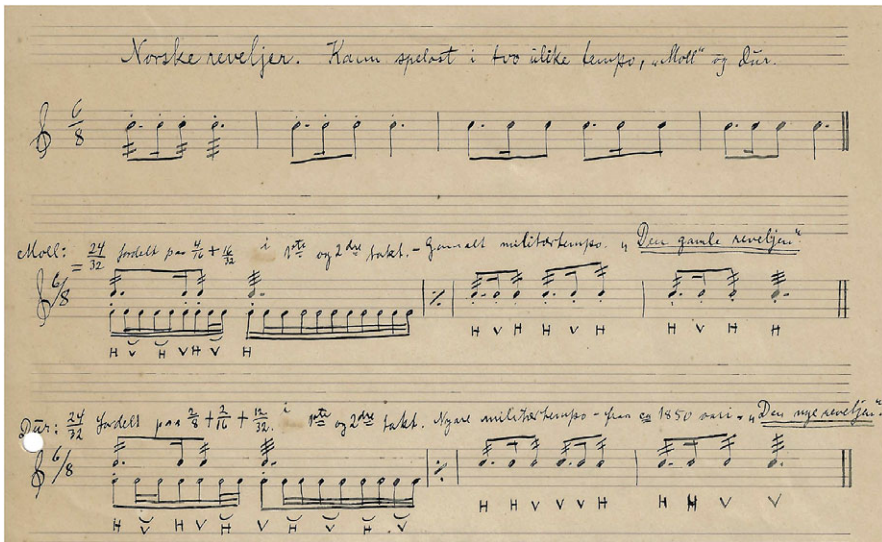


Figure 6. Johannes Sundvor’s notation of *Norske reveiljer* (Norwegian reveilles), with an explanation of how this signal should be performed in Moll (minor) and Dur (major). H = *Høyre* = Right hand, and V = *Venstre* = Left hand.



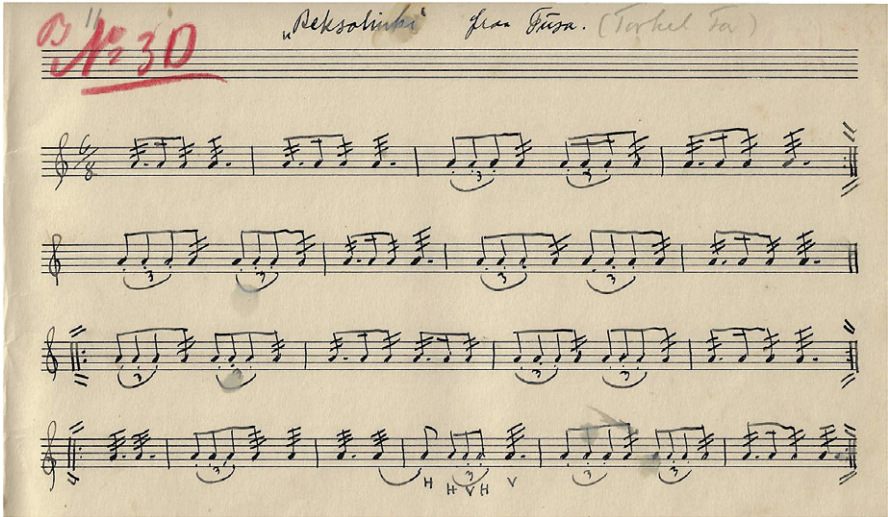


Figure 7. Sundvor's transcription of *Reksolinks fraa Fusa*.

means that Sundvor and Foer played together for some time in this battalion (cf. the section “Johannes Sundvor” in the previous).

### MUSIC EXAMPLE 1

This example is taken from Johannes Sundvor's recording from 1937 (see Supplementary material: “Mistereggen and Waadeland supplementary audio 1”). Sundvor plays the tune two times. The first time his performance is in accordance with his notation in Figure 7, whereas he makes some variation the second time he plays the tune. Observe how he finishes the tune. The different drummers often ended the military signals and drum tunes in various personal ways, and what we hear in this audio example is a typical “signature” of Johannes Sundvor.

### DRUM TUNES IN SOFT PERFORMANCE

The next category of drum tunes in Sundvor's collection is labelled “Drum tunes in soft performance.” Figure 8 shows an example of a drum tune in soft performance. A typical feature of drum tunes belonging to this category is that they consist of different variations of the motifs found in the tune in Figure 8, with a performance of sticking as described in the following. In Sundvor's handwritten comments to the tune (cf. Figure 8), we read (authors' translation): “I learned this drum tune in 1891 (it was one of the very first I learned) from tambour Stein Johannesson Sælsvoll. ...Stein had learned this tune from Johan Neshovda.”

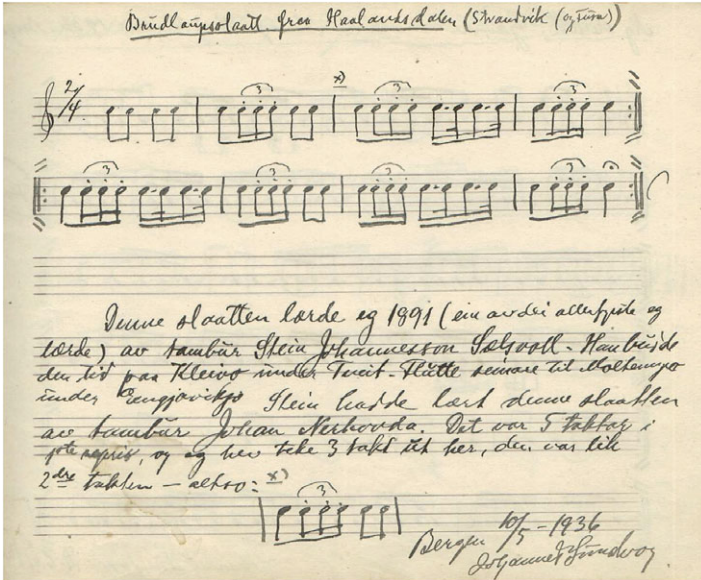


Figure 8. Johannes Sundvor’s notation of *Brudlaupsslaatt fraa Haalandsdalen (Strandvik [og Fusa])*.

As seen in Figures 7 and 8, Sundvor often notated only the rhythmic motifs in his transcriptions. Combining Johannes Sundvor’s explanations and a study of the drum performances by Eirik Sundvor, Waadeland (1991) found that the tune in Figure 8, *Brudlaupsslaatt fraa Haalandsdalen* (Wedding tune from Haalandsdalen), should be performed as illustrated in Figure 9. As before, H = right hand, and V = left hand. The upper staves show the rhythmic motifs, whereas the lower staves illustrate how the drum tune is to be performed. The single strokes (letters with boxes around them) should be accented (performing the motif), whereas the double strokes are performed unaccented, constituting *the drone*. Observe that Figure 9 shows the performance of the first four bars of the drum tune. However, since bar 5 = bar 7 = bar 3, bar 6 = bar 2, and bar 8 = bar 4, the performance of the last four bars is, thereby, also explained.

**Music EXAMPLE 2**

This music example is an excerpt from the video interview *Ledang* made with Eirik Sundvor (Ledang 1975), cf. Supplementary material: “Mistereggen and Waadeland supplementary movie 2”. It is interesting to know that in this video, we see Eirik performing *Brudlaupsslaatt fraa Haalandsdalen* on the drum he inherited from his grandfather (see the pictures in Figures 5 and 10). With reference to Figure 8, if we call the section consisting of the first four bars A, and the last four bars B, the performance of Eirik Sundvor follows the following structure: A–A–B–A–A–B–B.

Figure 9. Illustration of the performance of *Brudlaupsslaatt fraa Haalandsdalen*, adapted from Waadeland (1991:20).

To illuminate how *Brudlaupsslaatt fraa Haalandsdalen* is related to an international military drum tradition we observe from Figure 9 that the performance of this drum tune consists of two distinct rudiments. These are shown in Figure 11.

It is interesting to note that the upper rudiment in Figure 11 is also the technical building block of the old American military reveille signal, *Three Camps* (Bruce and Emmett (1862–1865:28). Hessler (2017:30) states: “*The Three Camps* represented the first musical event in the daily routine of the U.S. Army; it was the first tune in the *Camp and Garrison Duty* and was played at sunrise.” In Basel drumming a parallel signal is the so-called *Tagwacht*, which contains both rudiments in Figure 11, as well as the rudiment characterising the military reveille and reksolinks tunes described in the previous (Berger 1972: Band1 Blatt38). Moreover, both rudiments in Figure 11 are performed in the traditional French signal *Le coup de Rigodon* (Goute 1993).



Figure 10. Eirik Sundvor with a drum he inherited from Johannes Sundvor. Photo: Rune Martinsen.

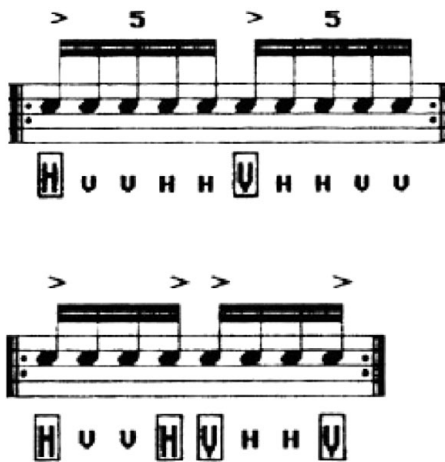


Figure 11. The two rudiments in *Brudlaupsslaatt fraa Haalandsdalen*. H = right hand, V = left hand (Waadeland 1991).

As we now have shown, the performance of reksolinks tunes and drum tunes in soft performance both rely on an application of a military drum technique. Moreover, it seems fair to claim that these two categories of drum tunes are characterised by a performance of various variations (and improvisations) *based on different military drum signals*. The next category, *Drum tunes with a 3-time feel*, represents an interesting opposition to this.

### DRUM TUNES WITH A 3-TIME FEEL: A Non-Military Feeling

A typical feature of military signals and marches is that they have a rhythmical 2-feel. However, listening to the performances of Johannes and Eirik Sundvor, we experience that some of the drum tunes have a prominent 3-feel. The performance of these drum tunes indeed applies a rudimental military technique, but the tunes are *performed with a non-military feeling*. Related to this, it is interesting to note that the performances of drum tunes with a 3-time feel are *not* governed by a unified sticking pattern, as is the case for reksolinks tunes and drum tunes in soft performance. Performing drum tunes from the two latter categories, the drummer could transform patterns of rudiments and sticking from a vocabulary and rhythmic language of military drumming. However, since ordinary military drumming does not contain signals in 3-part time, the drummer had to create *new patterns* of sticking and rudiments in the performance of drum tunes with a 3-time feel.

Another very intriguing aspect of drum tunes with a 3-feel is that these very strongly *“invite” to dance*, and it would be interesting to know whether drummers who composed and played tunes in 3 had a musical background that was closer to folk music than military music. Following this train of thought it is fun to know that Johannes Sundvor, with his background in military music combined with his great interest and devotion to tradition and folk music, composed some drum tunes entitled “Vals-revelje,” that is, “Waltz-reveille.”<sup>5</sup> This clearly shows that Sundvor himself was eager to develop the drum tradition further by combining different, and in this case contrasting, elements from folk music and military signals to create *new* drum tunes.

To give an example of a drum tune with a 3-time feel, we point to [Figure 12](#). Observe that Sundvor has written this in 6/8. Here, eighth notes are natural counting units, so each 6/8 measure equals two measures in 3/8 with a 3-feel. Note that in this drum tune, the motifs are developed very dynamically, all the way building towards the end. Observe also the comment on the top in the transcription: “2 tunes after Elias Høyland, freely written together. Some contributions from other tambours” (authors’ translation). This comment demonstrates Sundvor’s good sense of thematic/ motific structure and composition.

<sup>5</sup> See [https://www.nb.no/items/URN:NBN:no-nb\\_digimanus\\_384883](https://www.nb.no/items/URN:NBN:no-nb_digimanus_384883), page 94.



Figure 12. *Brudlaupsslått* (wedding tune). 2 tunes after Elias Høyland.

### MUSIC EXAMPLE 3

This example is also an excerpt from Ledang (1975), see Supplementary material: “Mistereggen and Waadeland movie 3”. The video shows Eirik Sundvor performing the tune in Figure 12. He plays all the themes and motifs of the tune, but at times changes the order of the themes compared to the transcription. Listen closely to the “swinging,” dancing feel in Eirik Sundvor’s performance of this tune.

### *SJUSPRINGEN*: A Drummer’s Master Test

One of the most special drum tunes in Sundvor’s collection is *Sjuspringen*. “*Sjuspringen*” is not only the name of a drum tune, but it also denotes a fiddle tune, and the name is derived from the German *Der Siebensprung* (English: “The Seven Jump”). This tune (and dance) is mentioned in several places in both German and English literature, see for example, Lawson (1959:111 and 123) and Vogt (1986:41–2). Vogt (1986:41) states: “*Der Siebensprung* ist einer der ältesten Tänze, die uns heute überliefert sind. Die erste schriftliche Erwähnung stammt wohl von 1612.” In both English and German literature, the Seven Jump is notated in 2/4 or 4/4 time, and Bjørndal (1960:100) states that these time signatures are also used for the various Norwegian *Sjuspringaren* fiddle tunes. Based

Handwritten musical score for "Sjuspringen" in 9/8 time. The title is "Sjuspringen" Gamall Brúdlauðsloantli þann Hordalands. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 9/8 time signature. It consists of three phrases labeled A, B, and C, and a section for "Markeringslag". The notes are accompanied by rhythmic markings: H (upstroke) and V (downstroke). Below the score, there is a handwritten note in Icelandic explaining the structure of the piece.

Sjuspringen skal tekst uppátt ítt 14 gongur. Öru fyrstu 7 gongur skulu ein sjuspringen uppá, dei öndru 7, með " - Fyrste gong markeras ein so som her, den andre gongu her ein markeringslag: 2 gongur ost. til 7. öskende gongur med markera med 7 slag (ungangur er bygga) 9 gongur med 6, 10 med 5 osv. til 14<sup>de</sup> gongur, das markerast med det same som til upp gongur -

Figure 13. One of Johannes Sundvor's transcriptions of *Sjuspringen*, notated in 9/8 time.

on this it is rather surprising that Johannes Sundvor does *not* notate the *drum tune*, *Sjuspringen*, in 2/4 or 4/4. In his collections, Sundvor has 5 different transcriptions of *Sjuspringen*, and these are all notated in either 9/8 time, or a combination of the time-signatures 8/8 and 9/8. Figure 13 shows a version that Sundvor has notated in 9/8. We have here inserted the letters A, B, and C in the transcription to make it easier to refer to and comment upon the three musical phrases that make up *Sjuspringen*.

Section C contains what Sundvor calls *Markeringslag* (see Figure 13), which we translate to *marking strokes* in English. These marking strokes constitute a *counting motif*, and they are to be played an increasingly (and eventually decreasingly) number of times during the performance. In his comments to this tune, Sundvor writes (cf. Figure 13):

*Sjuspringen* should be repeated and played a total of 14 times. The first 7 times you play *Sjuspringen* "up", the other 7 times "down". The first time you play the marking strokes as notated here, the second time you play the marking strokes 2 times, and so on, up to 7. The eighth time is played with 7 marking strokes (the descending has started), 9th time with 6, 10th with 5, and so on, until the 14th time, when the marking strokes are played the same way as the first time (Authors' translation).

As a comment to another transcription of *Sjuspringen*, Sundvor writes (authors' translation): "What is the quintessence here is being able to keep going at the same



speed without making mistakes with repetitions and marking strokes. It's quite a master test to play Sjuspringen 'up' and 'down' without making a mistake in one way or another."

#### MUSIC EXAMPLE 4

This is the performance of Sjuspringen played by Johannes Sundvor on the gramophone recording from 1937 (Supplementary material: "Mistereggen and Waadeland audio 4"). This audio file is slightly processed in order to make the motifs clearer and to compensate for the lack of good quality of the recording from 1937. For some reason, the recording starts on the third eighth note in the first bar in letter A. The performance of Sundvor is close to the transcription given in Figure 13. On this recording, Sundvor plays Sjuspringen up to 3.

In Figure 14, we show a version of Sjuspringen that Sundvor has transcribed with a combination of 8/8 and 9/8 time-signatures. Note that section B in this version is notated in the same way as section B in the version in Figure 13. Moreover, observe that the marking strokes in section C are different from the marking strokes in the transcription in Figure 13. Sundvor writes in another transcription of Sjuspringen that the marking strokes in Figure 13 represent the oldest form.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for 'Sjuspringen' on aged paper. At the top left, it is titled 'Bridlaepsstutt. "Sjuspringen"' with the Roman numeral 'XIV' below it. The score is written in a single system with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three staves of music. The first staff is in 8/8 time and contains sections A and B. Section A is marked with a circled 'A' and section B with a circled 'B'. The second staff continues section B and then transitions to 9/8 time. The third staff contains section C, marked with a circled 'C', and ends with a double bar line. Below the music, there are three lines of handwritten text in Norwegian: 'Skal slaaast "upp" 7 ganger og "ned" 7 ganger.', 'siste takk "upp" (7<sup>me</sup>) er alro:', and 'siste takk:'. The first line is followed by a rhythmic notation with numbers 1 through 7. The second line is followed by a rhythmic notation with numbers 1 through 8. The third line is followed by a rhythmic notation with numbers 7 and 7. The word 'Fine.' is written at the bottom right.

Figure 14. A transcription of *Sjuspringen* in a combination of 8/8 and 9/8 time signatures.

### MUSIC EXAMPLE 5

This example shows Eirik Sundvor's performance of Sjuspringen in the television program *Den siste tambur* (The last tambour), broadcasted first time by NRK on 22 September 1979. The performance is close to the transcription given in Figure 14. Eirik Sundvor plays the tune two times (<https://tv.nrk.no/program/FMUS00002378>; time: 00.00–00.40).

Neither Johannes nor Eirik Sundvor plays Sjuspringen in exact accordance with the transcriptions. This should not be surprising, but it raises the question of the interpretation of Sundvor's transcriptions and the relationship between performance and notation of drum tunes.

### INTERPRETATION OF SUNDVOR'S TRANSCRIPTIONS

The fact that Johannes Sundvor presents five different notations of Sjuspringen, whereas Waadeland (1991:76–7) in his transcription of Sundvor's recording from 1937 suggests a sixth notation that involves a combination of 9/8, 7/8, 10/8, and 4/8, has generated a discussion about what is the most "correct" way to notate and perform (!) this drum tune (cf. Martinsen 1994; Kristensen 2018). Martinsen (1994) argues that most tunes in Norwegian folk music have either a 2-feel or a 3-feel. In addition, there are folk tunes that have a rhythmic feel that follows the pulse of the tune *without* grouping the beats in 2 or 3, but rather should be performed with the pulse as counting unit, like 1–1–1–1... In Norwegian this is called *udelt takt* (which might be translated to *undivided measure*), and these tunes may have motifs that develop over a varying number of pulse beats (Aksdal (1993:131). The term "udelt takt" is also used when the fiddler plays a tune in two-part time (2/4, 4/4), while the dancer dances a *Springar*, a Norwegian folk dance in three-part time (3/4). In this case, the pulse is the common meeting point (Bakka 1993:113). This additional group of folk tunes exists in the south-western region of Norway (Bakka 1993:113), and it is within this region Sundvor has collected drum tunes. Based on this Martinsen (1994) concludes that Sjuspringen most likely should be played in undivided measure. Kristensen (2018) agrees with Martinsen in this, and they both claim that the notations of Sundvor and Waadeland, involving a mixture of different measures, should be regarded as *a guide to the drummer* as to how the hands and drumsticks should alternate, that is, as a guide to sticking patterns. These notations do not convey the *rhythmic feel* of the performance of Sjuspringen.

A similar discussion has existed related to *Bryllupsslått fra Brekke (Roa) i Sogn* and *Dalaslått*. Sundvor has notated both these drum tunes in 5/8-time (Dalaslått with one measure in 6/8),<sup>6</sup> and Waadeland (1991:70–3) has done the same. However, in another older transcription Sundvor has notated *Bryllupsslått fra Brekke i Sogn* in 3/4, and on the recording from 1937 Sundvor performs this tune in 3-part time. Martinsen (1994) claims

<sup>6</sup> See [https://www.nb.no/items/URN:NBN:no-nb\\_digimanus\\_384883](https://www.nb.no/items/URN:NBN:no-nb_digimanus_384883), Dala-slaatt, page 19, and Brudlaups-slaatt fraa Sogn, page 25.

that Bryllupsslått fra Brekke should be performed with a 3-feel, and that Dalaslått probably should be played in undivided measure. Seldal (2005:35–6) classifies both these drum tunes as springar (3/4), and Utby (2019) agrees that Bryllupsslått fra Brekke is a springar. These considerations and discussions are very interesting. However, what must be remembered is that an important premise for these discussions is that the drum tunes are part of an oral tradition within Norwegian folk music, and that Johannes Sundvor's transcriptions of this music are a result of his skills as a drummer, his training in reading and writing music from military music education, and his great interest in documenting and describing historical traditions. Any relevant interpretation of these transcriptions is dependent on a knowledge of the tradition itself, combined with an intimate feeling and experience of the sounding performances the transcriptions are based upon. In this context "the truth" will always be the music, not the transcriptions. Johannes Sundvor has, *from his point of view*, given us both. The truth, if existing, is up to us to find.

### “OLD” AND “NEW” SCHOOLS WITHIN THE DRUM TRADITION

Seldal (2001) compares various older and newer performances of drum tunes and suggests a distinction between “old” and “new” schools within the drum tune tradition. As he sees it, the old school is primarily represented by Johannes and Eirik Sundvor, whereas “the new school” denotes most performances proceeding Waadeland (1991). Among the differences that Seldal identifies between the old and new schools are (Seldal 2001:120):

- *The musical application of drum tunes is different.* Today drum tunes are performed within a broader musical and social context than in the earlier days. This will be further illustrated in the next section.
- *The drum technique is different.* Most drummers of today have a background from drum set performance or classical percussion, and they apply another technique of performance than the old drummers.
- *The instruments are different.* Obviously, a drum from the nineteenth century is different from a modern drum. However, as will be exemplified in the following, several new drums have been made that copy old drums from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- *The way of learning the drum tunes is different.* The old drummers learned drum tunes by ear, that is, by listening to each other, watching and imitating. Today we have a lot of musical notation of drum tunes, and many young drummers might learn drum tunes by reading transcriptions rather than listening to the performances. However, there need not be, of course, any conflict between reading and listening (as long as you don't forget to listen), and Waadeland (1991:14–9) several times underlines the importance of listening to performances of drum tunes when learning to play them properly. At this point, it should also be noted that if Johannes Sundvor had *not* applied musical notation and transcriptions describing the drum tunes, our knowledge of how to perform this drum music might have been lost.

All in all, Seldal concludes that even though there are differences between the two schools, the new school has preserved the most important performative technical aspect of the drum tunes: the themes/motifs and the sticking patterns (2001:122).

### THE PRESENT STATUS AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF DRUM TUNES

Today drum tunes have become firmly integrated in the repertoire of many Norwegian drummers. Learning to play drum tunes is part of the curriculum in music schools and Norwegian higher education in music, and drum tunes are performed in a large variety of musical and social settings and many new drum tunes have been made. There has also been released several recordings where drum tunes and performances on the rope-tensioned drum have been applied, both in traditional folk musical contexts and within a non-traditional musical environment.<sup>7</sup> Many perform on a copy of an old traditional drum made by the brothers Erik and Jan Olsen. The Olsen brothers have shown a particular interest and skill for this craftsmanship, and during the years 1995–2023, they have made more than 100 drums of different sizes in wood and brass.<sup>8</sup> Drum tunes have during the last three decades been played at several weddings, but also at other ceremonial occasions, such as public anniversaries, governmental visits, matriculation ceremonies and exhibition openings, and back in 1994 the drummers Yngve Gjøen, Birger Mistereggen and Kjell Samkopf for the first time in history performed drum tunes at *Landskappleiken*, an annual convention and competition in Norwegian traditional music and dance. Moreover, when Norway arranged the Winter Olympics in 1994, drum tunes were part of the music in the opening ceremony, and the following year the drummers of His Majesty the King's Guard had drum tunes as part of their repertoire on their international tour. As mentioned in the literature review, Samkopf and Waadeland (1995) emphasised the importance of drummers to get in contact with the Norwegian folk music scene to achieve a better understanding of the performative elements of the tunes, and several performances of drum tunes at different national and regional folk music competitions from 1994 onwards have contributed to this. A drummer's participation in such conventions has also been important for (re-)establishing the drum as an included an active instrument in Norwegian folk music. Another important contribution related to this is drum tunes and the drum in musical interplay with other folk instruments. Utby (2019) reports about drum tunes played in interaction with the Hardanger fiddle performer Siri Dyvik. Moreover, percussion player Kjell Tore Innervik is leading a very interesting artistic research project, "Craftmanship," at the Norwegian Academy of Music. This project investigates craftsman skills of the folk musician, and how these skills are

<sup>7</sup> Two examples within a context of traditional music are: Hans Olav Gorset and Ånon Egeland, *For borgere og bønder*, <https://open.spotify.com/album/4GTqVpnMIuqNuOQIANDfjo> where drummer Kjell Samkopf is performing together with Hardanger fiddle, track 17, and flute, track 23; and Trio Mediaeval, *Folk Songs*, <https://open.spotify.com/album/0WgcPnq9idtSmrlFoiOQek?autoplay=true> where Birger Mistereggen plays the rope-tensioned drum together with three female singers, for example, tracks 3 and 4.

<sup>8</sup> See "Trommebygging" (Drum building) by Henriette Kolset, <https://www.trommebygging.com/>.

transferred between musicians, and between musicians and dancers. Important and very exciting parts of the project are the many various musical interplays between Innervik on the rope-tensioned drum and Håkon Høgemo on the Hardanger fiddle.<sup>9</sup>

As mentioned in the literature review, Waadeland (1991) made some suggestions as to how drum tunes might be applied to the drum set. A basic idea was to orchestrate drum tunes by, for example, performing the motifs on different toms, while the drone was played on the snare drum. Later, in 2008, Waadeland released a CD, *Din råta tjuv* (You rotten thief) where Waadeland together with the drummers Henning Carlsen and Gard Nilssen applied the thematic, motific elements of drum tunes to create different grooves and improvisations, and this was supplemented by other musicians playing and singing on top of the grooves.<sup>10</sup> The thematic elements of the drum tunes invited to playfulness and improvisation, and an idea was to play the themes and motifs *without* the underlying drum roll, and to use modern drums and percussion, as well as brushes, mallets and hands instead of drum sticks in the performance. With reference to these ideas, Kvåle (2018) and Utby (2019) investigated applications of elements of drum tunes performed on the drum set in different musical contexts. It should be noted that in these above-mentioned projects, drum tunes in Sundvor's sense are *not* performed. However, a profound knowledge of the Sundvor tradition, combined with a well-developed skill in the performance of drum tunes is a prerequisite for creating these new musical expressions.

In 2011, *Noregs Tamburlaug* (The Norwegian Tambour Association) was founded in Bergen, with the aim of promoting the Norwegian drum tune tradition.<sup>11</sup> In 2021, this association celebrated its 10th year anniversary in Trondheim, and the programme included several lectures and demonstrations and a concert where drum tunes were played solo, in arrangements performed by drum ensembles, in musical interplay with the Hardanger fiddle and for dancing. Figure 15 shows a picture of the drummers that participated in this celebration.

An important objective of the present article has been to give a comprehensive presentation of the development and performance of drum tunes in Norwegian folk music for the international reader. Johannes Sundvor's crucial work documenting and transcribing the drum tunes has been highlighted, and we have included pictures, transcriptions, and sound and video recordings to contribute to a better understanding and experience of the drum music. Although we believe that we have presented the most important characteristics of this drum tradition and hopefully also generated excitement related to learning about drum tunes, there are certainly aspects of the tradition that need a closer look. For instance: What can we find out about the drummers that were performing drum tunes (Bjørndal 1960 named many of them)? Had all these drummers served in the

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://nmh.no/en/research/projects/craftmanship> and <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1059980/1523853>.

<sup>10</sup> *Din råta tjuv*: <https://open.spotify.com/album/7nCBqXLEryxVzXfcEiMcXR>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://tamburen.no/>.





Figure 15. Participants at the anniversary of *Noregs Tamburlaug*, 2021, in Trondheim. In front: Ben Nordby, one of the founders and a leader through many years. Photo: Mattis Daae.

military? If not, did a non-military background influence the composition and performance of drum tunes? These are only a few aspects that would be interesting to know more about. It is our hope that an enlarged insight into these, and other unanswered questions will be given in future research on the history and performance of Norwegian drum tunes.

**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL** To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <http://doi.org/10.1017/ytm.2024.10>.

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