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Estonian Folklore Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum

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Source: *The World of Music*, 2002, Vol. 44, No. 3, Traditional Music in Baltic Countries (2002), pp. 153-156

Published by: VWB - Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41699455>

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# Institutions

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## Institutions in the Field of Ethnomusicology Introduce Themselves (XXXIX)

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### Estonian Folklore Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum

**Janika Oras and Ergo-Hart Västriik**

The Estonian Folklore Archives (EFA) was founded in 1927 by the the Estonian National Museum as the central folklore archives and research institution in Estonia. In 1940, the Estonian National Museum Foundation was divided into two state museums: the Estonian Ethnography Museum and the Estonian Literary Museum. The EFA was renamed Folklore Department of the Estonian Literary Museum. From 1953 to 1990, the official name of the museum was F. R. Kreutzwald Literary Museum at the Estonian Academy of Sciences. On January 1, 1995, the historical name of the Estonian Folklore Archives was restored. Over the years the archives has been headed by Oskar Loorits (1927–1942), Herbert Tampere (1952–1966), Otilie Kõiva (1966–1977), and Ellen Liiv (1977–1988), Anu Korb (1991–1998); since 1999 the director of the archives has been Ergo-Hart Västriik.

The activities in the field of ethnomusicology at the EFA were led in 1928–1966 mainly by Tampere.

In 1969–1978 the section of folk music, initiated and led by Ingrid Rüütel, functioned within the EFA but was then reorganized to the section into a sound archive as part of the new section for folk music research, supervised anew by Rüütel, was founded at the Institute of the Language and Literature in Tallinn (since 1993 the Institute of the Estonian Language).

At the beginning of 2000, the Institute of the Estonian Language was reduced to a center for purely linguistic studies, and folklorists and ethnomusicologists working in it were transferred back to the Estonian Literary Museum. Two new departments, which are now independent subdivisions of the museum, were established: the Department of Folkloristics and the Department of Ethnomusicology. The latter includes the majority of Estonian ethnomusicologists and is the main center for folk music research and publication in Estonia at present.

The role of the EFA as the central folklore archives has been maintained to the present. After the deposition of the folklore collections of the Institute of the Estonian Language to the EFA, the collections outside the archives comprise no more than thousand notations and older sound recordings of folk music. (A considerable amount of contemporary folk music recordings are stored in the archives of the Estonian Radio.) By the beginning of the year 2000, the EFA contained 23 folklore collections in manuscript form (a total of 1,328,308 pages), a photo collection of 19,013 photographs, and a sound archive of 108,077 individual pieces, 264 video tapes and films.

The *manuscript* collections of the EFA include field recordings, but also transcriptions of earlier sound recordings (wax cylinders and reportage discs). The total number of tunes in the collection exceeds 26,000. An important part of it, over 11,000 recorded tunes, are dated from the beginning of the 20th century. Between 1904 and 1916, during the collecting campaign of the Estonian Students' Society (ESS) organized by the folklorist and public character Oskar

Kallas, mainly Estonian students from St. Petersburg conservatory recorded the folk tunes in musical notation all over Estonia. There are also about 2,500 tunes from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, received in reply to the first public call for collecting folk tunes made by K. A. Hermann, the composer and publisher of the first journal on music in Estonian; these were merged with the collection of the ESS.

Even later, notating during live performances remained the most convenient method of recording folk tunes—during the major collecting trips in 1950s and 1960s, for example, there was usually a person in the group who wrote the tunes, as often no sound recording equipment was available. The largest number of tunes (about 2,000) has been recorded by Tampere during the long period he worked for the Archives. The need for writing the tunes in musical notation during fieldwork disappeared when better sound recording equipment became available, and the growth of the manuscript collection has been minimal during the last two decades (about 400 occasional recordings).

The majority of tunes found in the manuscript collection are available in the Archives' folk music card catalogues. The cards are doubled and arranged in three systems—by content/genres, by location in the original collection, and in topographical order. The tunes of *regilaul* (runo songs, representing the Baltic-Finnic older song tradition in Kalevala metre) have been classified by Tampere according to functional song groups and, within the groups, by their musical characteristics (ambit, musical form, rhythm and tonal system). The tunes of later, end-rhymed folk songs with more extensive form and major-minor modal system, are arranged according to thematic groups and, within these groups, by the texts. Instrumental music is first divided into dance music (tunes classified by dances) and other pieces of music (ritual pieces and other compositions, the latter classified by instruments).

Rüütel and Koit Haugas (Department of Ethnomusicology) have compiled a computer database of runo tunes mainly from manuscript collections (all in all about 3000 records), containing coded melodies, with a large amount of contextual information. Computer programs designed for this particular database enable analysis and present significant musical features of the melodies. This database has been the basis for the typology of older runo tunes, as well as for the typologies of different song-genres and song-regions.

The *sound archive* of the EFA contains both folk music and spoken word, the latter being almost absent in earlier collections, although its share increases in later collections.

The earliest audio collection is the collection of wax cylinders (1912-1948, 575 items, 2151 individual recordings, the majority of which have been re-recorded onto open-reel tape between 1966 and 1968). The first recordings on wax cylinders were made between 1912 and 1914 by Finnish folklorist A. O. Väisänen in Setumaa and on the Estonian northern coast, and by Estonians C. Kreek and J. Muda during the ESS collection campaign in West-Estonia, including settlements of Estonian Swedish population. Systematic phonographing continued after the EFA was founded. In fact, the phonograph was used up to the year 1956, but as new wax cylinders were not available, the recordings were transcribed and overwritten again and again.

Impressive in terms of both performance and high sound quality is the collection of reportage discs (also referred to as shellac discs; recorded in 1936-1938, 131 items, 746 individual recordings, ca 12 hours, the collection was re-recorded onto open-reel tape in 1978-1979). The recording sessions were performed in the studio of Estonian Broadcasting Corporation and were organized by Tampere and A. Pulst (Theatre and Music Museum in Tallinn). Here are recorded Estonia's best runo-singers and performers of instrumental music of the time, as well as the folk music of the smaller Baltic-Finnic peoples, the Livonians and Izhorians.

About 75 per cent of the recordings from the earlier collections have been transcribed, partly by the collectors themselves.

The collection of analogue recordings is the largest in the sound archive (5,066 units, 83,209 individual recordings). This is divided between open-reel tape recordings, starting from the year 1953 (the folklorists of the former Institute of Language and Literature used tape recorders since 1949), and cassette recordings made since 1970s. The number of stereophonic recordings in the analogue collection amounts for 22,149 individual recordings (476 units). Copy-tapes and cassettes to be used by the researchers have been made of all original recordings.

From the year 1992 on, Jaan Tamm, a sound engineer at the EFA and the Department of Ethnomusicology, has worked on preserving the earlier tape recordings in digital form. By now, 1,359 units (7,457 individual pieces) have been copied onto DAT-cassettes. In future, all the material will be preserved in WAV-files recorded on the storage medium chosen according to the possibilities of the Archives (at present WAV-files are stored on CD-Roms). At the same time, the WAV-files are converted into MP3-files and stored in the Intranet server (at present, 2,622 pieces are available in this form).

Material collected particularly in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (on wax cylinders or reporthage discs) and to a lesser degree in the 1960s, 1970s and later, constitutes a majority of recordings (ca 6000) of the runo song tradition. This style was either receding or had already receded from living tradition when it was recorded (apart from some peripheral regions in which the archaic polyphonic singing tradition of the Setus—Orthodox Estonians—has been recorded until the present day, also using digital technology). Older collections contain recordings of instrumental music performed on older-type instruments and also on those made by local masters. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the most-recorded items were the rhymed folksongs of newer style, the singing tradition both of the old generation and youth. Between 1991 and 1999 a large amount of material concerning folk songs and singing traditions has been recorded from the Estonian settlements in Russia (Siberia). In the field of instrumental music, the authentic Estonian accordion (*Harmonika*) music has been recorded, as well as traditional folk music ensembles from villages.

In addition to Estonian folk music, the sound archive contains the folk music of other peoples, above all the music of Finno-Ugric peoples. The Mordvin (2381 individual recordings, collected mainly by Mordvins M. Tšuvašov and V. Danilov) and Vepsic (3037 individual recordings, most of them made by Estonian folklorist K. Salve) folk music collections contain a particularly large amount of valuable original material. In addition to the Vepsians, all of the small Baltic-Finnic peoples are represented: Ingrian Finns, Votians (more than 700 individual recordings), Livonians (ca 400 recordings), Izhorians (ca 300 recordings) and Karelians. 1161 individual recordings are original recordings of the folklore of the Ob Ugrians—the Khanty and the Mansi. 329 individual recordings are of Udmurtian folklore, and roughly 200 pieces have been collected from the Maris and Hungarians living beyond the Carpathian Mountains. In regards of folklore of the non-Finno-Ugric peoples, the collection of Russian folklore (of the Russians inhabiting Estonia and its border regions) is the largest, comprising 1980 individual recordings. There are also recordings of the folk music of the Estonian Swedes (472 individual recordings), Nganasans and Latvians (more than 100 individual recordings).

The video collection of the EFA contains video recordings of music performances taken in both authentic performance situations (for example, traditional weddings) and in folk music festivals. In addition to widely documented Estonian material, the most valuable of them are

the recordings of various ritual performances of Finno-Ugric peoples (Khanties, Nganassans, Udmurts, etc.) and some other small ethnic groups living in Russia.

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**Department of Ethnomusicology at the Estonian Literary Museum**

**Ingrid Rüütel**

In 1978 the Folk Music Department was founded at the Institute of the Estonian Language and Literature. On Jan. 1, 2000 it joined the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu and became the Department of Ethnomusicology. Today, the staff consists of seven researchers (Kristin Kuutma, Triinu Ojamaa, Vaike Sarv, Taive Särg, Anu Vissel and Ingrid Rüütel—head of the department), a sound engineer (Jaan Tamm), a computer engineer (Koit Haugas) and two assistant workers (Edna Tuvi and Õie Sarv). Two researchers, Anne Allpere and Heikki Silvet, have left the department, having contributed significantly to its outcome. All researchers (except for Rüütel) started their career in ethnomusicology at this department, which was the first and still is the only institution specializing in folk music research in Estonia.

Research into the traditional music is based upon both the rich archival collections and new materials recorded during field works. We take great interest in both the history of traditional music as well as changes in its forms, roles and functions in the situation today. Next to the Estonian music, the traditional music of other Finno-Ugric and Samoyed peoples has also been an object of publishing and research.

*Ingrid Rüütel* started her career as folklorist in the 1960s in the Estonian Folklore Archives, then headed by Herbert Tampere. She followed Tampere's concept of folk song as a unity of text, melody and the way of performance, which should be researched as a whole. She studied the formation of the later Estonian folk song style in the 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century as a process. In her candidate thesis "The Development of the Later Estonian Folk Song" (1969) she analyzed the interrelations of different poetical and musical features in the wider cultural and social context that influenced that process. At that she was the first to use mathematical methods in Estonian folk song research. A part of her dissertation was supplemented and elaborated into a commented publication *Newer Estonian Song Games I-II*. Later she continued the historical studies while researching the formation of older layers of Estonian folk song. In her doctorate thesis "Estonian Folk Music Layers in the Context of Ethnic Relations" she differentiates between five tune-layers in the Estonian runosongs. Besides the runosongs and the newer song style she distinguishes between ancient vocal genres that do not contain music in the