



Nordic Roots Dance Project: Stav, Runes and Dance by Kari Tauring (2011)

Project Overview

Nordic Stav and Songdans workshops and collaboration will explore the ancient roots of Nordic culture by integrating runes, stav and Old Norse with dance forms preserved by Nordic immigrants to Minnesota, culminating in inter-active community performances.

We will explore how the songs and dances preserved within Minnesota's Norse Immigrant community reflect and connect with their ancient roots and purpose in the community. This material is designed for all ages and all cultural heritages.

Kari Tauring is a fiscal year 2011 recipient of a Folk and Traditional Arts grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This activity is funded, in part, by the arts and cultural heritage fund as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the Legacy Amendment vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.

Presenters

The project is led by **Kari Tauring**, a Nordic Roots storyteller, singer, and teacher of the runes, stav (staff) rhythm and song in Minneapolis and abroad for almost 20 years. Her research stems from the first relics of Northern Europe, the cave art from 15,000 BCE, to the Scandinavian Bronze Age from 2,000 BCE to the early Iron Age of 50 ACE, into the Viking age of 700-1066 ACE and the Icelandic Middle Age of the Sagas, Eddas, and ballads up to 1400's ACE. She has published two books [The Runes: A Human Journey](#) (2007, also available as an iPhone app) and the [Völva Stav Manual](#) (2010). Tauring was also featured on the Norwegian television program "Alt For Norge" in 2010; a visiting völvu returning to her homeland for the first time. She will be teaching Völva Stav in Trondheim, Norway in September 2011.

Joining Kari on this journey is **Carol Sersland**, who started learning *telespringar* (Norwegian dance style) at the age of 9 from her father, Harold K. Sersland, a talented dancer who came from Hjartdal in Telemark. Her involvement keeps this new work grounded in authentic Immigrant Era traditions.

Program Components

The Nordic Roots Dance Project has 4 major program components:

- 1) **Masters Presentation** – designed to introduce the concepts and curriculum to teachers, performers, and leaders in the Nordic Roots Community.
- 2) **Curriculum Development and Delivery** – Four Winter workshops and Four Spring workshops with seasonally appropriate songs and dances.
- 3) Two **Nordic Roots Dance seasonal celebrations** that expose Minnesotans to highly professional, intermediate, and beginner-level song and dance expressions and gives all attendees the ability to participate. This cultural immersion is completed with decorative art and costumes as well as traditional, seasonal foods of Norse celebration.
- 4) Distribution of this curriculum on a dedicated **website** (nordicrootsdance.org).

I) Masters Presentation

Kari and her team gather honored guests to a special presentation of the Nordic Roots Dance Project. Guests will be treated to a high quality professional performance, a mid-level student performance, and participate in a community-building song and dance.

- In a short talk, Tauring will present an overview of her twenty years of research in rune shapes, body postures, and Norse cosmology and describe her process of connecting these with Immigrant Era dance songs and tunes.
- 26 min. integrative performance “The Transformation of Groa” with song and dance. Performers include Kari Tauring, Drew Miller, Carol Sersland, Stavers in the House, and recent workshop attendees.
- Demonstration of the first Winter Workshop with guests as participants. Each guest will learn the rune translation of their name, experience “Stretching with the World Tree” that begins each workshop, and learn “Komme Alle” a “calling song” or *lokkr*.

2) Curriculum Development and Delivery

See separate document for curriculum details.

The following events are scheduled at Tapestry Folkdance Center in Minneapolis:

- Winter Workshops: 4 Sundays from 1:00 - 3:30 pm
October 16, November 6, November 20 and December 4, 2011
- Spring Workshops: 4 Sundays from 1:00 - 3:30 pm
January 22, February 5, February 19 and March 4, 2012

3) Write, produce and host two seasonal Nordic Dance Celebrations

- Jultide! – Winter Solstice Celebration (Sunday, December 18, 2011)
- Ostara! – Spring Equinox Celebration (Sunday, March 18, 2012)

Dance parties are an ancient way for a community to express their relationships with one another. They have formal and formulaic rituals that bind the community together through gift-giving, food-sharing, making toasts, and singing and dancing together.

Jultide Basic Program:

- Each attendee receives a rune on a string jule gift at the door of the Hall.
(No outside shoes in the Hall.)
- Opening Toast and Special Program by Kari Tauring, Carol Sersland, Stavers in the House, and recent workshop attendees.
- Integrative Ring Dances
- Ritual “Vaes du Hael” (Old Norse for “To Your Health”): a three-part toast to the yard (outside the building/house), the doors of the house (Tapestry Folk Dance Center), and then finally the Hall (the doors of the large studio space).
- Grand Entrance – a longdansen that leads us back into the dance floor.
- Lighting the rune tree and calling with runes and stavs
- Children’s Circle Dances
- Community Circle Dance and Farewell Song

This specific program plan is for Jultide; the Ostara program will have different themes and songs as noted in the Curriculum. Repeat participants will build on their earlier learning and be able to draw parallels between the seasonal expressions of culture.

4) Web-based Curriculum Distribution

NordicRootsDance.org will make this entire program available for free distribution. Website resources will include:

- Downloadable PDF documents
- Streaming video of NRDP workshops and celebrations (via a YouTube channel)
- Downloadable recordings of all songs referenced in the project, including lyric sheets and translations
- Additional resources for students and teachers of Nordic Dance