

KARI TAURING: Volva Songs EP

This six song EP was released May 28, 2008. Recorded at Dubnemo by Drew Miller and Scott Nieman who also accompany Kari on dulcimer, bass and bouzouki.



Track One - Morsja Vihlemine – from Veljo Tormis' "Forgotten Peoples" (2000) Disk One, Track 6 - arranged as a call and response runo by Kari Tauring 2007. English translation from the Tormis notes.

Sung in Votic, a Finno-Ugric language close to extinction, this song describes the ritual whisking of the bride before her sauna and the gifts each type of water used brings to her.

The words tculipi meaning whisk and vehsi meaning water, are onomatopoeias enhanced in the performance.

Whisk, whisk little sister
With three birch twigs
With five thin switches

Water from the brook is for luck
Water from the river is for strength
Water from the sea is for wisdom
Water from the spring is for success

Track Two - Voluspa KariOla - lyrics from selected verses of the 13th Century Icelandic poem Völuspá (Prophecy of the Staff Carrying Woman). The tune plus additional lyrics and arrangement by Tauring, 2007.

Of the 60 verses, numbers 1, 2, 19, 20, 21 and 22 tell a bout the antiquity of the völvu and brief portion of Odin's öorlog. The additional verse/chorus declares the lineage of staff carrying women as Heidi, Gullveig, Freyja and Nerthus.

Quiet now I bid you , all you sacred folk
Highest and lowest Heimdal's kin
If you wish Choice father* I will tell you
Ancient songs and stories of the very first men

I remember the giants birthed me
They gave me life in the ancient of days
Nine world homes and nine giant women
The mighty Wishtree** in the earth beneath

Ash tree I know, her name Yggdrasil
Mighty tree sprinkled with the snow white clay
From her falls the dew down the valley
Standing ever green above Urdur's well

From there come the maidens wise in all things
Three of them living under the tree
Urd*** is one the other Verthandi
Scoring the runes and Skuld makes three.

They set down the laws, they choose the lives
Of all who are born, their öorlog weave****

The very first war, remember it well
Gullveig pierced on the points of spears
Gullveig pierced on the points of spears

In the great hall of Har, there they burned her
Gullveig pierced on the points of spears

Three times burned, three times born
Three times burned, three times born
Three times burned, three times born
Over and over and yet she lives!

Heidi they call her come into their homes
Wisewoman spae wife, witty magic wand
Seidthring, all knowing, seidthring out the meaning
Always beloved of ill women she is greeting

Heidi Heidi Heidi, from Gullveig you come
Bringing out your power by Freya Nerthus stav!
Spell caster, magic worker, wise speaker, mind shaper

*Valfar - a kenning of Odin

**miötvið - the first name of the world tree, when Odin "rides" it to achieve knowledge of the runes it gains the kenning Yggdrasil (terrible one's steed).

***Urd, Verthandi, and Skuld are the three wise women called Norns collectively. Their names mean Is, Becoming, and Should. They keep track of the historical time lines of humanity and gods alike. Should is listed as first Valkyrie or choice maiden. They are compelled to attend at birth and death. In post-Christian interpretations they determine the fates of all. In the Old Norse mindset, without a future tense, the prophesy tells Odin what he has done in the nine worlds, what actions he has paid for and what actions determine that "which by necessity aught to happen."

****öorlog literally means primal law and is the record of an individuals lineage of life times. Odin's actions as High, More High, and Most High (stages of his evolution) are his öorlog.

Old Norse verses -

Hljóðs bið ek allar helgar kindir,
meiri ok minni mögu Heimdallar.
Viltu at ek, Valföðr, vel fyr telja
forn spjöll fira, þau er fremst um man

2.

Ec man iötna ár um borna,
þá er forðom mic fædda höfðo;
nío man ec heima, nío íviði,
miötvið mæran fyr mold neðan

19.

Ask veit ek standa, heitir Yggdrasil,
hár batmr, ausinn hvíta auri;
þaðan koma döggar - þærs í dala falla,
stendur æ yfir grænn - Urðarbrunni.

20.

Þaðan koma meyjar - margs vitandi
þrjár ór þeim sæ, - er und þolli stendr;
Urð hétu eina, - aðra Verðandi,
- skáru á skíði, -Skuld ina þriðju.

Þær lög lögðu,- þær líf kuru
alda börnum, - örlög seggja.

21.

Þat man hon fólkvíg fyrst í heimi,
er Gullveigu geirum studdu
er Gullveigu geirum studdu

ok í höll Hárs hana brenndu,
er Gullveigu geirum studdu

þrisvar brenndu, þrisvar borna,
þrisvar brenndu, þrisvar borna,
þrisvar brenndu, þrisvar borna,
oft, ósjaldan; þó hon enn lifir, þó hon enn lifir, þó hon enn lifir

22.

Heiði hana héto, hvars er til húsa kom,
völo velspá,vitti hon ganda;
seið hon, hvars hon kunni, seið hon hug leikinn,
æ var hón angan illrar brúðar.

Ch.Heidthri, Heidthri, Heidthri, Gullveig utti fram
Utvinner krafti av VanFreya Nerthus Stav!

Track Three - Oppi Li, traditional kveding tune from Telemark, Norway learned from Maria Høgtveit Berg, in 2007.

Oppi Li, Oppi Li, sto ai liti taege
Up the hill, up the hill, stood a little birch root basket

Átte dagar fyri Jol, dansa jomfru Haega
Eight days before (Yule, Winter Solstice, Christmas), danced the maiden Haega

Sto ai liti kanne (mug) dansa jomfru Anne

Sto ai liti krásse (cross) dansa jomfru Ása

Sto ai liti staven (the staff) dansa jomfru Karin (this is the verse I added!)

Track Four - Hulda's Spinning Songs (Drømte mig) – This original composition by Kari Tauring (2006) is based on the oldest known secular tune written down in Scandinavia. The verse and tune were written in runes on the last page of the Codex Runicus around 1300 CE. In her composition, a woman spins and remembers a dream of her beloved's ship blown off course. Using runes and the spindle's energy, she casts a thread to steady the ship and bring it back on course.

Drømte mig en drøm i nat, um silki ok ærlik pæl
(I dreamt a dream last night, of silk and fine fur)

Icy Waves, cold dark sea. My beloved back to me...back to me...
Crashing waves top the prow, wind dragon wet fields plow!

Desert Sand far from fjords, years away, far off shores
I will sing you home, gifts for safety come

Casting - on, casting - off, Crashing - cut, cutting through
Austri, vestr, sudri, nordri (East, West, South, North)

Radiho, othelo, eohl, tyr...(runes for vehicle/wheel, homeland, elk and victory)
Back to me, lost at sea, back to me, victory

Track Five - Lita Blå (Little Blue) - Huldrelokk from Sognefjord, Norway found in the collection of Asbjørnsen and Moe (1841). Music, translation, arrangement Tauring, 2006.

A Huldrelokk is a song learned from a Huldre or is about Huldre (Scandinavian land wights pictured with cows tails). Lokk is a luring call to bring animals in from the pastures or to summon land wights such as the Huldre.

1. Granehøg og Greve, og Vindelett og Lave,
og Lurve og Larve og Spegelglatt,

Ch: Rekkje og Snekkje Skaute og Raute, Langt-fram
lulolo, lulo, lulo, lulo, lulo, lulo

2. Sommarlauv og Sale, og Branderygg og Svale,
og Lurve og Larve, og Lita blå.

Ch2: Rekkje og Snekkje Skaute og Raute, Langt-fram, Skinfakse, Sjulibrand, Lulolo lulo lulo lulo lulo lulo
lulo.

1. Tall spruce and winding path
Light breeze sifting through
Shabby and lazy, smooth as glass

Ch: Reach for the sailboat, guide rope, cows lowing, far from it all

2. Summer leaves, securely sit
Carved beam and coolness
Shabby and loafing, little blue

Ch: Reach for the sailboat, guide rope, cows lowing, far from it all
Shining hair, seven beams – ah!

Track Six - Svarterabben - Another Sognefjord Huldre-lokk from the Asbjørnsen and Moe collection. Tune, arrangement and translation Tauring, 2006, with help from Dr. M. O'Leary 2008.

In this story, Mr. Blackridge ignored the advice of his wife, over loaded his wagon and took all of his animals at once up the mountain. The wagon swayed and fell into a ditch. He even ripped his pants, calling his hired boy and girl, Knut and Brita and his wife to help.

Knut and Brita heard me scream and they all came running, even the dogs. Some came with a big staff some with a stick all crawling around the horse like ants. They couldn't haul it up.

A hundred and ninety winches couldn't budge it. Even all greased up they stuck firmly. We had to call the Huldra (kjempa) and she came with great chains

The Huldre threw her burden down and hauled. She got the horse up and the goat. There she lay, kicked and rolled and pulled so hard that she dug up the earth.

Now Blackridge has to give the giant bread, 190 laiva, seven sheep and seven butter kegs, the skin of 16 reindeer, twelve barrels of cream and twelve barrels of ale, twelve barrels of sour cream, and twelve barrels of flour, my own knife and scabbard and my best mare.