

riccardo  
delfino

skalden



**Skalden** were Old Norse singers and poets who lived in the retinue of tribal lords and wrote heroic epics. Their poetry, which also had ritual significance, was often attributed magical powers.

Word, song and dance have a deep connection in Scandinavia. Therefore, in more recent times, the name "skalde" has also been applied to singers and poets. To this day, there is a strong tradition of songwriters in the north, a great culture of choral singing and very lively traditional dance music.

In rural areas, ancient music-making techniques and instruments have survived into the 20th century: including staff rhyming in Norway, where the feet mark the stresses of words; the "kvad-dans" (ballad dance) in the Faroe Islands, where oral chants have been alive for centuries; the Icelandic chants in parallel fifths, that date back to the Middle Ages; the intricate rhythms and use of micro-intervals in Swedish and Norwegian folk music. The folkmusicians seek the source and inspiration of the music in the strong Nordic nature. Some say they go "picking" melodies in the forest!

The energy with which economic, technological, social and cultural development has taken place in Scandinavia in a very short time shows a side of the North that is already echoed in mythology and medieval texts: a strong will to change and to shape the future, which also entails the inevitable dissolution of traditional forms.

1 **Lilla långdansen**  
trad. Sweden

2 **Herr Olov i älvornas dans**  
Music: R. Delfino, Text: trad. Sweden

3 **Taivas on sininen**  
trad. Finland

4 **Ó, min flaskan friða**  
Music: trad. Iceland and Norway  
Text: Eggert Ólafsson (1726-1768)

5 **Tonerna**  
Music: R. Delfino / trad. Sweden  
Text: Erik Gustaf Geijer (1783-1847)

6 **Staffansvisa**  
trad. Sweden

7 **På verandan vid havet**  
Music: R. Delfino / trad. Sweden  
Text: Viktor Rydberg (1828-1895)

8 **Sköldmön**  
Music: R. Delfino / trad. Sweden  
Text: Karin Maria Boye (1900-1941)

9 **Sateessa**  
Music: R. Delfino / trad. Sweden  
Text: Viljo Kajava (1909-1998)

10 **Polska fra Røros**  
trad. Norway

11 **Sven i Rosengård**  
trad. Sweden

12 **Kvöld är komið i heim**  
Music: R. Delfino / trad. Iceland, Text: trad. Iceland



## 1 Lilla långdansen - The little round dance

Music: Lilla långdansen från Bingsjö, trad. round dance from Sweden;  
voices from Chiara Delfino and the Swedish TV-News

"What remains of us, what has weight, we leave in the hands of  
our children like a feather, like a ray of sunshine, like a little bird chirping."

Viljo Kajava

## 2 Herr Olov i älvornas dans - Herr Olov in the elf dance

Text: Medieval ballad from Uppland and Östergötland, Sweden  
Music: Riccardo Delfino

Herr Olov han red sig ut om en otte,  
Och så kom han in i älvedansstim.  
Den dansen går väl, så väl uti lunden.

Älvefader räcker vit hand ifrån sig.  
"Kom, kom herren Olov träd dansen med mig!"

"Och inte jag vill, och inte jag får.  
I morgon skall mitt bröllop stå."

Och älvemoder räcker vit hand ifrån sig.  
"Kom, kom herren Olov träd dansen med mig!"

"Och inte jag vill, och inte jag får.  
I morgon skall mitt bröllop stå."

Och älvesyster räcker vit hand ifrån sig.  
"Kom, kom herren Olov träd dansen med mig!"

"Och inte jag vill, och inte jag får.  
I morgon skall mitt bröllop stå."

Och bruden hon talte till brudsätan så:  
"Vad månede betyda att klockorna gå?"

"Det är sådaner sed på denna vår ö,  
Var ungersven ringer hem sin mö."

"Och sanning för Er jag ej dölja må.  
Herr Olov är död och ligger på bår."

Och andra dagen, innan dagen blev ljus,  
Så var det tre lik i herr Olovs hus.

Det var herr Olov, hans fästemo,  
Och så hans moder i sorgen blev död.

Mr Olov rode out at the eighth hour,  
He came across a swarm of elves.  
The dance goes round, round in the grove.

The elf father stretches out his hand:  
"Come, come, Mr Olov, dance with me!"

"I don't want to, I mustn't,  
for tomorrow is to be my wedding day."

The elf-mother stretches out her hand:  
"Come, come, Mr Olov, dance with me!"

"I don't want to, I mustn't,  
for tomorrow is to be my wedding day."

The elf-sister stretches out her hand:  
"Come, come, Mr Olov, dance with me!"

"I don't want to, I mustn't,  
for tomorrow is to be my wedding day."



And the bride asked the bridesmaid:  
"What does it mean that the bells are ringing?"

"It is the custom on our island,  
Every young man rings home to his bride.

I cannot withhold the truth from you,  
Mr Olov is dead and lying on the bier."

And the next day, before dawn..,  
there were three corpses in Mr Olov's house.

It was Mr Olov, his bride,  
and his mother, who died of grief.

### 3 Taivas on sininen - The sky is blue

Text and Music: trad. Finland

Taivas on sininen ja valkoinen  
ja tähtösiä täynnä  
niin on nuori sydämeni  
ajatuksia täynnä.

Enkä mä muille ilmoita  
mun sydänsurujani;  
synnkä metsä, kirkas taivas,  
ne tuntee mun huoliani.

The sky is blue and white  
and full of stars,  
so is my young heart full of thoughts.

I will tell no one  
that my heart is full of sorrow,  
the dark forest and the bright sky  
they know my sorrow.



### 4 Ó, min flaskan fríða - Oh, my fine flask

Music: Tvísöngur, trad. chant, Iceland / Halling efter Ulrik Olsen  
Jensestuen, Valdres, Norway / Halling efter Alfred Lundberg,  
Bohuslän, Sweden, Text: Eggert Olafsson

Ó, mín flaskan fríða!  
flest ég vildi líða,  
frostið, fár og kvíða,  
fyrr en þig að missa;  
mun ég ei mega kyssa  
munninn þinn, þinn, þinn,  
Munninn þinn svo mjúkan finn,  
meir en verð ég hissa.

Íslands ítra meyja,  
engra stelpugreyja,  
heldur hefðarfreyja,  
sem hvergi sómann flekka,  
mun ég minni drekka.  
Fái þær, þær, þær,  
fái þær æ fjær og nær  
frið og heill án ekka.

Þú mig gæðum gladdir,  
góðu víni saddir,  
hóf ég hæstu raddir,  
hraut mér stöku vísa,  
pytluna mína' að prísá.  
Þú ert tóm, tóm, tóm,  
þú ert tóm með þurran góm,  
þér má ég svona lýsa.



Oh, my fine flask, many things I want to suffer, frost, danger and sorrow, rather than avoid you. I want to kiss you on the mouth, mouth, mouth. I feel your mouth so soft, that surprises me very much.

To the health of Iceland's beautiful maidens - not poor maidens, but noble maidens who do not spurn honour - I will drink a toast. May they, they, they, may they always, near and far, have peace and salvation, without any sorrow.

You have made me happy with gifts, satiated me with good wine. I have raised the highest voices and verses have escaped me to praise my bottle. You are empty, empty, empty, you are empty and your palate is dry, that is how I can describe you.

Eggert Ólafsson (1726-1768) studied philosophy at the University of Copenhagen before devoting himself, as the first of all Icelanders, to the study of natural history. He first became known as a writer through a travel book he wrote between 1752 and 1757 together with the physician Bjarni Pálsson. Written on behalf of the Danish Academy, the travelogue presents the first comprehensive study of weather conditions, animal life, geology and folk traditions and customs in Iceland. Ólafsson is further known both for a series of didactic poems on Icelandic agrarian culture and for his drinking songs. The poet, who drowned west of Iceland at the age of forty-one, was later declared one of the most important precursors of Icelandic Romanticism.

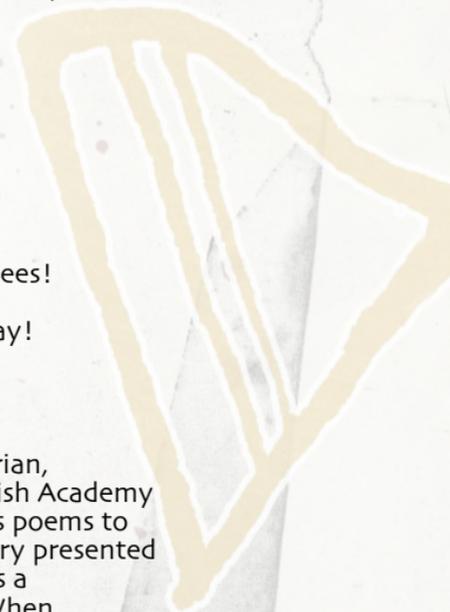
## 5 Tonerna - Die Tones

Music: Riccardo Delfino / Storpolska från Orsa, trad. Sweden  
Text: Erik Gustaf Geijer

Tanke, vars strider blott natten ser!  
Toner, hos eder om vila den ber.  
Hjärta, som lider av dagens gny!  
Toner, till eder, till er vill det fly.

Thought, whose struggles only the night sees!  
Sounds, with you it asks for rest.  
Heart that suffers from the noise of the day!  
Sounds, to you, to you it wants to flee.

Erik Gustaf Geijer (1783-1847) was a historian, philosopher, lawyer, member of the Swedish Academy - and a Romantic poet who set some of his poems to music himself. His interpretations of history presented the impetus for historical developments as a combination of tradition and creativity. When Sweden had to cede Finland to Russia in 1809, he adopted a rather conservative, nationalistic attitude. In contrast, his historical research led him to radical, new political ideas that changed Sweden's education and social system, for example.



## 6 Staffansvisa - Staffansweise

Text and Music: medieval ballad from Sweden / "Kulning", trad.  
pastoral call from Sweden

Staffan var en stalledräng  
- vi tackom nu så gärna -  
han vattna` sina fålar fem.  
- Allt för den ljusa stjärnan.  
Ingen dagar synes än,  
stjärnorna på himmelen,  
de blänka.

Två de voro röda,  
de tjänte väl sin föda.

Två de voro vita,  
de var de andra lika.

Den femte han var apelgrå,  
den rider Staffan själv upp på.

Innan hanen galit har,  
Staffan ut i stallet var.

Innan solen månd uppgå,  
betsel och gullsadel på.

Staffan rider till källan,  
han öser upp vatten med skällan.



There is still no daylight to be seen,  
the stars twinkle in the sky...

Staffan was a groom. He watered his five foals.  
Two were red, they probably deserved their feed.  
Two were white, they were the same as the others.  
The fifth was grey, on which Staffan himself rode.  
Before the cock crowed, Staffan was outside in the stable.  
Before the sun rose, the bridle and golden saddle were ready.  
Staffan rides to the spring, where he draws water with the ladle.

There is no daylight yet,  
the stars in the sky twinkle...

## Trollformler - Spells

Text: anonymous, from the Middle Ages, trad. Sweden

I dag skor jag min högra fot  
med en segerhuva,  
med en stålfot  
och med örnemakt  
och med den heliga kraft.  
Seger skall jag hava,  
och seger skall jag tala,  
och seger skall i mina kläder,  
och seger åt mina vägar!

Jag lägger hällar om mina ovänners fötter,  
och fjättrar om mina ovänners ben,  
galler om mina ovänners tungerötter.

Och stamme ovänner,  
och tige ovänner,  
men jag talar!

Mina ord skall rädas,  
mina blad skall bredas,  
först för Gud i himmelen  
och sedan för alla goda Guds människor!

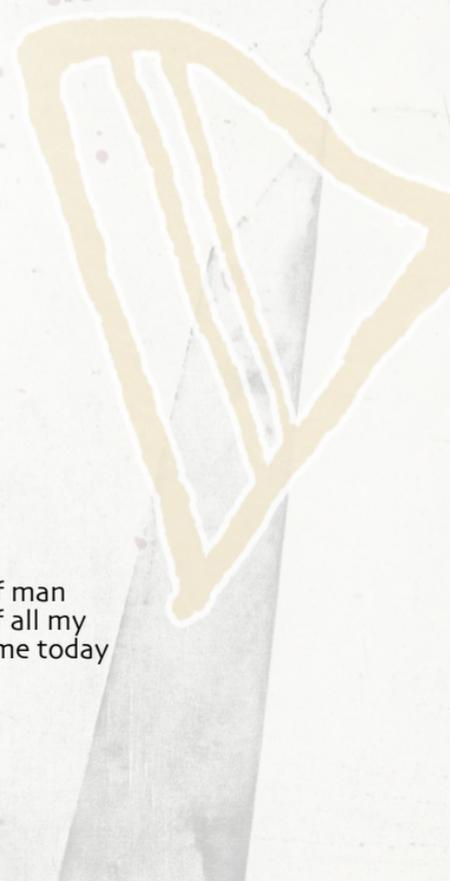
Och om jag hade byar brännt  
och jungfru skänt,  
om jag hade gjort hor och mord  
och om jag hade lagt fader och syster i jord,  
då skall det icke mer på mig skena  
än solen den rena.

Today I lace my right foot with a victory helmet,  
with a foot of steel, with the power of the eagle and with the holy strength.  
Victory I will have, victory I will speak, victory my garments,  
Victory on my path! I will put slabs of stone around the feet of my  
enemies, and fetters around their legs, a grating around their tongues.  
Silence, enemies, be silent, enemies, but I speak!  
My words shall be feared, my blade shall spread, first for God in heaven,  
then for all good men.

And if I had burned villages and defiled virgins, if I had committed  
fornication and murder, and if I had put my father and sister under the earth  
then it shall shine no more for me,  
the pure sun.

Jag står upp en morgon  
ifrån alla mina sorger.  
Jag binder mig med vredes linda  
från man och kvinna,  
ifrån svärd, ifrån värld,  
ifrån all min ofärd.  
Så skall hat och avund smälta  
på mig i dag,  
som saltet smältes  
i friska vattnet.

I rise one morning from all my sorrows.  
I bind around me the bond of the wrath of man  
and woman, of the sword, of the world, of all my  
mischief. So let hate and envy dissolve in me today  
like salt in fresh water.



## 7 På verandan vid havet - On the veranda by the sea

Music: Riccardo Delfino / Senpolska efter Mattias Blom från  
Hälsingland, trad. Sweden  
Text: Viktor Rydberg

Minns du de skymnande böljarnas suck, att vid målet de hunnit  
endast en jordisk kust, icke det evigas strand?  
Minns du ett vemodssken från himlens ovanskliga stjärnor?  
Ack, åt förgångelsens lott skatta de även till slut.  
Minns du en tystnad, då allt var som sänkt i oändlighetsträngtan,  
stränder, och himmel och hav, allt som i aning om Gud?

Do you remember the shimmering sigh of the waves when they  
reached their destination only on the earthly shore, not on the  
beach of eternity? Do you remember the wistful glow of the  
imperishable stars of heaven? Ah, despite the fate of transience,  
they shine to the last. Do you remember the silence when  
everything was absorbed in the desire for infinity, beaches, and  
sky and sea, sensing everything like God?

Viktor Rydberg (1828-1895) - Romantic poet, member  
of the Swedish Academy, professor at Stockholm  
University, temporary member of parliament - was an  
idealist, true to the tradition of Romantic poetry:  
liberal in his political and social worldview, with broad  
interests in religion, philosophy and psychology.  
Growing up alone - his mother died early of cholera,  
his father was an alcoholic - he had to abandon his  
education for lack of money and began writing for the  
liberal newspaper "Göteborgs handelstidning". Here he  
published "The Last Athenian",  
a novella that made him famous in Sweden. In it he  
describes the clash of pagan and Christian cultures in  
ancient Athens.  
His statements painted the representatives of religious  
intolerance and orthodoxy in dark colours and had a  
direct impact on social life in Sweden. His entire  
oeuvre bears religious, modern scientific, but also  
time-critical and social traits. One of Rydberg's most  
significant achievements is his congenial translation of  
Goethe's "Faust".

## 8 Sköldmön - The Valkyrie

Music: Riccardo Delfino / Polska efter Anders Sundin, Medelpad, Sweden  
Text: Karin Boye

Jag drömde om svärd i natt.  
Jag drömde om strid i natt.  
Jag drömde jag stred vid din sida  
rustad och stark, i natt.

Det blixtrade hårt ur din hand,  
och trollen föll vid din fot.  
Vår skara slöt sig lätt och sjöng  
i tigande mörkers hot.

Jag drömde om blod i natt.  
Jag drömde om död i natt.  
Jag drömde jag föll vid din sida  
med banesår, i natt.

Du märkte ej alls att jag föll.  
Din mun var allvarsam.  
Med stadig hand du skölden höll  
och gick din väg rakt fram.

Jag drömde om eld i natt.  
Jag drömde om rosor i natt.  
Jag drömde min död var fager och god.  
Så drömde jag i natt.



I dreamt of the sword tonight. I dreamed of war tonight. I  
dreamed I fought by your side, armed and strong.

It flashed hard from your hand, the troll fell at your feet. Our  
flock stood closely together and sang at the threatening, silent dark.

I dreamed of blood tonight. I dreamed of death tonight. I  
dreamed I fell by your side with a wound of doom.

You did not notice that I fell. Your mouth was serious. With a  
firm hand you held your shield and went your way.

I dreamed of fire tonight. I dreamed of roses tonight. I dreamed  
my death was graceful and good. So I dreamed tonight.

Karin Maria Boye (1900-1941) was a poet and novella writer who is considered one of the leading figures of Swedish Modernism. Her work (beginning with 1922; "Clouds" ending with 1941; "The Seven Deadly Sins") and biography show her development: from a girl from a middle-class background with her dreams, to an eager adolescent seeking life, to a visionary woman with bold, broad perspectives and a compassion for the sufferings of humanity. Her best-known novellas include 1934; "Crisis", based on her coming to terms with her homosexuality, and 1940; "Kallocain", which describes the intolerable rule of a future totalitarian system. During World War 2, faced with the horrors and suffering and the failure of communism in the Soviet Union, Karin Boye committed suicide.

## 9 Sateessa - In the rain

Music: Riccardo Delfino / Faut Marits polska från Älvdalen, trad. Sweden  
Text: Viljo Kajava (with the kind permission of Maija Pietilä)

Kaikesta huolimatta  
laulan sammakon kanssa sateessa,  
risulla lahokannon rumpuun  
tahtia lyöden.  
Yhtyettä ei enää ole  
koska heinäsiirkka viuluineen  
jäi niittokoneeseen.

Kaikesta huolimatta  
vaikka koneet uhkaavat  
peräputket paukkuen,  
me laulamme sateessa,

ja pisarat putoilevat,  
läiskähtävät  
syyskoleaan maahan,  
kuin lantit  
kahdelle laulajalle.

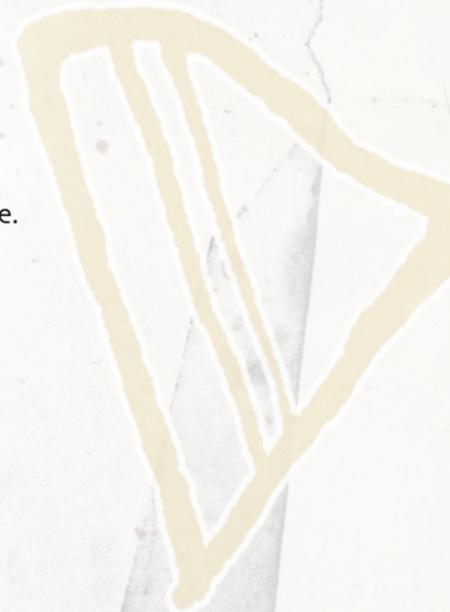


In spite of everything:  
I sing with the frog in the rain,  
With a rice I beat the beat  
A rotten tree stump is my drum.  
The orchestra is finished:  
The grasshopper and his violin  
Has got caught in the mowing machine.

In spite of everything:  
Even though the machines threaten,  
the exhausts roar -  
we sing in the rain,

and the drops fall,  
splash  
on the autumn-cold ground,  
like coins  
for two singers.

German translation  
With the kind permission of Heiderhoff Verlag, Eisingen,  
from: Viljo Kajava "Nahes Ufer, fernes Ufer", Eisingen 1988



The Finnish poet Viljo Kajava (1909 - 1998) came from Tampere, Finland's largest industrial city. After studying aesthetics and literature at the University of Helsinki, Kajava first worked as an editor for several Finnish magazines and newspapers. Later he became a freelance writer, mainly a lyricist. He spent the period 1945-1948 in Sweden, but most of his life Kajava lived in Helsinki. He began as a working-class poet. In addition to lyrical-impressionist prose, he published numerous volumes of poetry between 1935 and 1996. Characteristic of the form of his poetry are free rhythms and the omission of end rhyme. With great sensitivity, he observes and describes his home province and the diverse nature by the sea. In sketchy miniatures, he finds his own voice full of life-affirming optimism and with a fine sense of humour as a nature lyricist and singer of life.

## 10 Polska fra Røros - Polska from Røros

Music: trad. from Røros, Norway /  
Original recordings "Kvad-dans" from the Faroe islands

## 11 Sven i Rosengård - Sven from the rose farm

Music and Text: medieval ballad from Sweden

"Var har du varit så länge,  
Sven i Rosengård?"  
"Jag har varit i stallet,  
kära moder vår.  
I vänten mig sent eller aldrig!"

"Vad har du gjort i stallet?"  
"Jag har vattnat fålarna."

"Vi är din fot så blodig?"  
"Svarta fålan trampa mig."

"Vi är din svärd så blodig?"  
"Jag har slagit min broder."

"Vart skall du då ta vägen?"  
"Jag skall rymma av landet."

"Vad gör du då av din hustru?"  
"Hon får spinna för födan."

"Vad gör du då av barnen små?"  
"De får gå för vars mans dörr."

"När kommer du tillbaka?"  
"När svanen han svartnar."

"Och när svartnar svanen?"  
"När korpen han vitnar."

"Och när vitnar korpen?"  
"När fjädern han sjumker."

"Och när sjunker fjäderna?"  
"När gråstenen flyter."

"Och när flyter gråsten?"  
"Stenen flyter aldrig!"  
I vänten mig, men jag kommer aldrig.

Where have you been for so long, Sven vom Rosenhof?  
I've been in the stable, my dear mother.

Expect me late or never.

What were you doing in the stable? I was giving the foals water. Why is your foot so bloody? The black colt kicked me. Why is your sword so bloody? I have slain my brother. Where will your path take you? I will leave the country.  
What are you doing with your wife? She has to spin for the bread.  
What will you do with your little children?  
They have to beg at the doors.

When will you return? When the swan turns black.  
When does the swan turn black? When the raven turns white.  
When does the raven turn white? When the feather sinks.  
When does the feather sink? When the grey stone floats on the water.  
When does the grey stone float? The stone never floats...!

Expect me, but I never come.

## 12 Kvöld är komið i heim - The night is now approaching

Music and Text: trad. Iceland

Kvöld är komið í heim, konungur himnanna sætis,  
ekki mjer aumum þvi gleym, önd mína vakandi geym.

Eg hefi sofið of sætt synða við hægindi límdur;  
margri er mannanna ætt, mjög við þeim svefninum hætt.

Night is now approaching the world, ruler of the heavenly throne,  
See, my soul still awake, take heed now to me poor!

I have slept too sweetly, I feel the sinful guilt,  
many of our kind tend to the same sleep.

## Hávamál - The spells of Odin

Text: from the old moral poem, ca. 9th - 13th century,  
trad. Iceland and Norway

Sá einn veit  
er víða ratar  
og hefir fjöld um farið,  
hverju geði  
stýrir gumna hver  
sá er vitandi er vits.

Ungur var eg forðum,  
fór eg einn saman,  
þá varð eg villur vega,  
auðigur þóttumst  
er eg annan fann,  
maður er manns gaman.

Lítilla sanda,  
lítilla sæva,  
lítill eru geð guma.  
Því allir menn  
urðut jafnspakir,  
hálf er öld hvar.

He only knows who travels far and wide and has made many journeys,  
what inwardly each other cherishes, if his wit prove his worth.

A tiny lake has little sand and a man little wisdom;  
Nor are all alike in understanding: difference is everywhere.

Young I was once, lonely I wandered, then my way became confused;  
Happy am I when I found my companion:  
Man rejoices in man.

Many thanks to...

Florian King for his great dedication

Ellika Frisell, Sven Berger, Per Sandberg, Gunnel Sjögren, Thorbjörn  
Olsson and Ale Möller, who introduced me to Scandinavian music

Hjördis Davidson, Minna Kesäläinen, Prof. Dr. Ingrid Schellbach-Kopra  
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Jürgen Treyz and Matthias Loibner for the help in the studio

Rainer M. Thureau for the harps

my wife Doris Kulossa-Delfino for her support,  
confidence and love

... to all children ... to all those who will be ...

Riccardo Delfino

historical and electro-acoustical harps,  
keyboards, percussion, backing-vocals

Featuring:

Anna Lindblom

vocals (swedish, Track 5,6,7,8,11)

Anders Ådin

vocals (swedish, Track 2,6,8)

Tellu Turkka

vocals (finnish, Track 3,9)

Gerður Gunnarsdóttir

vocals (icelandic, track 12)

Guðni Franzson

vocals (icelandic, track 4,12)

Florian King

double bass, bass guitar, bouzouki, percussion

Markus Faller

percussion, drumset

Matthias Loibner

hurdy gurdy



Arrangements, recording, mixing and production: Riccardo Delfino  
Tellu Turkka recorded from Sami Silén, Seinäjoki, Finland  
Mastering: "Music and Science", Ray Kacinsky  
Artwork and Design: Riccardo Delfino

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