



Volume 9 (2006)
© Ingrid Åkesson,
2006

Recreation, Reshaping, and Renewal among Contemporary Swedish Folk Singers

Attitudes toward Tradition in Vocal Folk Music Revitalization

Ingrid Åkesson

[1] Introduction

In ethnomusicological scholarship questions regarding the concepts of tradition and revitalization, the relationship between them, and what comes after revitalization are intensely discussed today.^[1] As different music scenes develop in new directions, new perspectives are launched and new examples of contemporary moulding and mixing are described and analysed.^[2] Several terms and concepts are used and defined in different ways, or are used without a clear-cut definition: revival, revitalization, restoration, recreation, reconstruction, innovation, transformation, etc. (cf. Ronström 1996).

The purpose of this article is to further explore the process of revitalization by introducing a model based on the three concepts, *re-creation*, *re-shaping/transformation*, and *renewal/innovation*.^[3] These concepts or categories define performers' different but often concurrent and overlapping attitudes and approaches to traditional material and styles, and different levels of stability and change. The model can be seen as a potential tool for the study of creativity in re-creative processes, and as a way of considering the links between tradition and revitalization. The terms recreation, reshaping, and renewal are my translations of the concepts *återskapande*, *omskapande*, and *nyskapande* from the Swedish language, concepts which are tightly knit together as different aspects of *skapande*, meaning creating/shaping. I

will also present some musical examples of recreation, reshaping, and renewing traditional vocal music by some contemporary Swedish performers. As a background for the discussion I will reflect on some aspects of the concepts of tradition and revitalization after giving a very short background of contemporary traditional music in Sweden.

I want to point out that the term “folk” in “folk music” or “folk singer” in my text alludes to traditional music (often in contemporary form), not to the much broader “folk music” concept often used in the English language. The text presents some aspects of a work in progress, my Ph.D. dissertation focusing on creative and re-creative aspects on Swedish contemporary vocal folk music in relation to traditional sources. It is also an extended version of my paper at the 38th World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) in Sheffield, August 2005.

[2] Background

Quite far into the twentieth century, traditional songs, and older popular songs were performed for a greater public audience in Sweden either by concert singers, by comedians of the music hall-type,^[4] or in choir arrangements. The performers in the vernacular milieu had learned at least parts of their repertoires in a mainly oral/aural tradition, and what was rather unknown to most the general public. In Sweden, as in several other countries, field recordings of traditional singing and playing, broadcasted in radio programs during the 1950s and 1960s and later issued on LP records, enabled many listeners to hear music performed by “tradition carriers” [*traditionsbärare*] or “source singers” for the first time.^[5]

These traditional singers and instrumentalists have of course had a great impact on the revitalization of traditional music, the so called “Folk Music Vogue” starting in the late 1960s in Sweden. The impact has come from several sources: from personal contact with performers, from careful listening to field recordings, in archives or on more accessible LP and CD releases of these recordings, and from teachers and other musicians who have learned repertoires and styles in those two ways.

By the end of the 1980s a “vocal vogue” or a kind of second revitalization with its focus on vocal tradition started in Sweden (as well as in Norway and Finland). Many of the younger performers became interested mainly in songs of the older types and genres from the repertoires they encountered, including ballads (in the Nordic countries called medieval ballads), working songs, love songs, lullabies and other songs for children, jocular songs, and singing games. Since the beginning of the revitalization, and with an increasing focus on the voice as an instrument and the development of the performer’s singing technique, the interest in “voice music” or wordless genres has grown, that is, herding calls (which

include long phrases in a high voice register as well as several kinds of harsh sounds or noises) and rhythmic lilt of dance tunes, using a percussive voice technique. Traditional hymns with many local and individual variants of melodies also have become popular, very much because of their being ornamented and having melodies of older modal types, as well as because of the harsh beauty of the seventeenth-century lyrics. After a period of holding forth the ancient and “exotic” traits of Swedish vocal traditional music, more modern songs from the early twentieth century with a major-mode-based tonality became popular among many singers.^[6]

To use the term revitalization for this movement is only partly correct, because what has been happening in the 1990s and onwards is rather a confirmation of folk or traditional music as an established musical area among others, like jazz or early music, approximately what Slobin (1993) calls a micromusic, microculture, or subculture.^[7] A couple of the characteristics of such an establishing process are professionalization and musical experimentation within and on the borders of one’s own genre. These characteristics are to be found in the Swedish vocal vogue, but also in performance of traditional songs in more or less traditional ways.

During this period we find two parallel tendencies: On one hand there is an increasing number of amateur singers and open singing events. On the other hand, there is a strong tendency towards formalization and professionalization of traditional music in Sweden, as well as mediaization.^[8] Many, or perhaps most, of the performing and recording artists have a formal musical education, and several manage to support themselves as musicians and teachers, often combining traditional music with other genres, mainly jazz, early music, modern improvisation and sometimes the “troubadour” or singer-songwriter genre. This is one reason that the Swedish folk music milieu today contains both a revitalization of what is thought of as traditional and several cross-genre encounters. The same musicians may perform in both a “traditional” way and a transformative/innovative one. This situation is not unique to Sweden; the situation is similar in several other national or local musical milieus.^[9]

In my aforementioned work in progress on contemporary processes in the folk music milieu, specifically the vocal genres, I ask some principal questions: how are the songs, or musical items, shaped, handled, and performed within the frames of a continually changing tradition, and on the borders of tradition—for example on the borders between traditional music and other genres? In what ways do today’s singers regard and use the repertoires, the stylistic traits and the musical concepts transmitted by source singers or the singers of the archival recordings? Does “tradition” represent roots, affective qualities and individual

relationships to source singers, or does it represent musical material and a musical “language” and style to be used in your own way—or, perhaps, both? What kinds of relations are to be found between recreation, reshaping/transformation and renewal/innovation of music in peoples’ singing activity today as compared to earlier centuries? This article does not contain answers to all but is an attempt to give the outlines of the problem.

Before I go on to define and discuss more in detail the concepts I mainly use for analysis, I will comment on my use of the concepts “tradition” and “revitalization,” as they have been interpreted in many different ways.

[3] Tradition

The concept of tradition has been a subject of repeated discussion within ethnomusicology, ethnology, history, sociology, etc. Although it is something of a hornet’s nest, I want to take up a short discussion to make clear which view underlies my work.

Some interpretations of “tradition” tend towards static, linear phenomena, a remnant from an older, pre-modern society. This is common above all with scholars who take a bird’s-eye view of “tradition” as a rather anonymous element in large historical systems. One well-known example is the sociologist Anthony Giddens’s (1994) use of Ziehe’s (1989) idea of the present as a post-traditional society. Giddens argues that globalizing processes and globalized modern institutions result in a new phase of modernity where traditional elements are subject to “detraditionalization,” that is, broken down through the dissolution of the local community into relics, habits, etc. (Giddens 1994). However, the author does not wholly associate traditional elements with a past that is unchanging, finished, and left behind; he also admits that they might be available to discourse and dialogue (p.105).

This dialogue with the present is a fact when we speak of a musical tradition (or other traditions of artistic expression). Also, the consequences of globalization might be more diverse than in Giddens’s description, and some forms might coexist with traditional elements that are dynamic and not merely residues. Some emanations of so called “World Music,” created more in a spirit of musical curiosity and playfulness than as a commodity, might be an example of this possibility (cf. Baumann 1996:84).

Some of Giddens’s examples relate to Hobsbawm’s and Ranger’s “invented tradition,” that is, a constructed, formalized and ritualized tradition characterized by selected isolated items of the past.^[10] As David Atkinson (among others) has pointed out (2004:158, footnote 10), their discussion contains an artificial distinction between the term “custom,” which is subject to change and innovation, and “tradition” as a

static connection with the past (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983:8). As an epithet for certain kinds of kitsch-oriented reconstruction, “invented tradition” may yet be a useful concept.[\[11\]](#)

Let us now turn to another view of tradition that is closer to the kind of creative expressions that form the subject of my study. On one level of ethnomusicological discourse, essential or organic definitions of “tradition” seem to have shifted towards a constructivist or symbolic point of view. However, a *musical* tradition can be said to have a kind of double nature. Seen from a point of view that leans towards the essentialist side it represents a “text,” a body of musical items, important forerunners, stylistic traits etc., that have been defined as “tradition,” “cultural heritage,” or “canon.”[\[12\]](#) But if we study the phenomenon from a constructivist angle, tradition is regarded as a symbolical construction, molded in a process of change and selection, being shaped from a viewpoint of the contemporary; or as formulated by Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin: “...tradition is not a bounded entity made up of bounded constituent parts, but a process of interpretation, attributing meaning in the present though making reference to the past” (1984:287). Another way of expressing these two perspectives is as object-oriented or process-oriented research, that is, concentrating on the (material or immaterial) objects or on the processes of selection, change etc. (see, for example, Ronström 1996:8).

As the objects of tradition have always been exposed to more or less change and variation, there is no absolute dichotomy between continuity on the one hand, and discontinuity and innovation on the other.[\[13\]](#) Therefore I agree with scholars who regard “tradition” as a double-sided concept, both organic/essential and symbolic/constructivist, both as an object and as a process. In recent years David Atkinson has pointed out that this double-sided concept of tradition on the one hand comprises continuity and “a canon of texts that provides a cultural identity for its practitioners,” and on the other hand it is unstable across time and continually changing to meet the requirements of the present (Atkinson 2004:149).

Henry Glassie points out in an often-cited article that “Change and tradition are commonly coupled [...] as antonyms. But tradition is the opposite of only one kind of change: that in which disruption is so complete that the new cannot be read as an innovative adaptation of the old.”[\[14\]](#) He also proposes that tradition is not either static or an object of negotiation and emergence, but that it can be both, be transformed and move both forwards and backwards in time (1995:405).

Object and process, continuity and change, tend to converge when you watch “tradition” from the insider’s view. Many performers today have a relationship to both the body of music/the style *and* the process/the

movement—and they are a part of this process themselves.

Yet another interpretation of “tradition” is made by Henry Glassie as “the historical axis within creative acts,” meaning a dimension of creative work when transforming traditional material and combining maintenance and experiment (1995:408–409). He finds a different form of creativity than the one that is commonly honored and associated with the “original work of art.” This creative process, which is present in the reshaping and renewal of traditional material (and also in re-creating an item in a way which contains some individual touch), is still waiting to become a subject of much more study.^[15] It is one of the central issues that I am exploring by asking what it is you really do to the music in the processes of recreation, reshaping, and renewal.

[4] Revitalization

The double-sided concept of tradition does not exclude parts of the revitalization process, seen as a representation of both change and continuity. “Revival” is the term used in most texts in English,^[16] but “revitalization” is usually used in Sweden; besides, its meaning is closer to “give new life and energy to something” than to “revive something nearly dead.” Like “tradition” to some scholars, “revitalization” has been regarded as a retrospective process, oriented solely towards an undefined past (see, for example, Gerholm 1985:65); it has been defined as reviving or keeping (in a new context) abandoned cultural elements with a new function;^[17] it has been tightly associated with “folklorism,” often meaning something stereotyped and without variation, used to reinforce regional or national identity, etc. (Centergran 1992:118–20).

Negative associations are also connected to Hobsbawm’s and Ranger’s use of the term “revival” as a non-dynamic concept, as a synonym to “invented tradition” (1983:7–8). It has been associated with a type of historical recreation where the authenticity of form is more important than the authenticity of content. This is called by some scholars re-enacting or re-enaction (MacKinnon 1994:60–61, Ronström 1996:6–7).

In his study of the English folk music revival (1994) Niall MacKinnon emphasizes that revival includes the social side of music and an extensive participation, where medium and message are merged. Revival/revitalization to him represents an open attitude, where it is permissible to mix contemporary elements with elements of the past, and to create something new on the basis of tradition. A recent Swedish example would be over-blown “reed-flutes” of plastic material.^[18] My impression is that the greater part of the Swedish folk music milieu today is characterized by this open attitude, but elements of re-enaction are present in some parts of most revitalization movements, and there may occur some overlapping.

In practice, revitalization is often connected to and parallels a *vitalization* of living tradition; it is not merely a recontextualization of abandoned cultural elements. Several revitalizations or revivals have followed each other [19], the later ones carrying with them concepts from the earlier processes, like Romantic ideas of the nation. Being a process, it is a matter for discussion where and when revitalization ends, or if it is characterized by overlapping phases. Besides, if tradition includes parts of the revitalization process, an element of tradition is also included in revitalization, as they are not isolated from one another.

In today's mainstream ethnomusicology, it appears that revitalization/revival is regarded approximately in the way I have sketched here, as an active process, not merely one directed towards the past. Tamara Livingston has presented a model of folk music revitalizations (revivals is the term she uses), as a descriptive framework. It describes the main typical elements apparent in a revitalization process:

1. A core of enthusiasts ("core revivalists");
2. revival informants/original sources such as historical recordings;
3. a revivalist ideology and discourse;
4. a group of followers;
5. revivalist activities (organisations, festivals, competitions);
6. non-profit and commercial enterprises/a market (Livingston 1999:69).

There are also different branches or sub-movements within a revitalization movement, with different attitudes towards the balance between recreation/reconstruction and transformation/innovation of the tradition. [20] Two more elements could be added: archives and research institutions play an important role, and so do influences from other revitalization processes, e.g., in neighboring countries or neighboring areas/genres of music.

Livingston suggests the possible end of a revival might be marked by a breaking down into different styles and an arrival at a point where there cease to exist a revitalized genre because "authenticity" (that is, "style markers that are consciously employed for historical reference," p. 81) is not so important and "tradition" feels too restrictive. But she also sees the possibility of the parallel existence of the new styles and the "traditional" strains (*ibid.*). I would like to add that these "new" and "traditional" styles do exist simultaneously, often with the same musician, and that they sometimes merge enough to be hard to discern as independent styles. But of course revitalization is followed by something else, and that process is at work in many countries. We may call it the establishing of a "genre" (if "genre" is allowed to mean e.g. folk music, jazz, or early music), or, with Slobin, a microculture or micromusic (Slobin 1993). [21]

My interpretation of the multiple Swedish folk music milieus or arenas is that now, in the beginning of the twenty-first century, layers of revitalization co-exist with layers of established microculture, and with layers of (living) tradition. A period of time cannot be defined in only one way.

[5] The Model

In my experience, the more we study folk or traditional music and musical practice, the more interest is focused on the mentioned co-existing layers and the interrelations between them, for example, oral and mediated, folk tradition and literary songs, tradition and revitalization, or stability and innovation. A fruitful and constructive way of regarding these concepts is to see them as different positions on a scale rather than dichotomies, or in a tension field, where the musical items may be placed near to one of the poles, or rather somewhere in-between, stretching and overlapping.

Therefore I am trying to catch the process in the three concepts of recreation, reshaping/transformation and renewal/innovation as a model. In my opinion the model works both contemporarily and historically, that is, it describes attitudes among today's singers and their handling and shaping of traditional music, but it can also be used to describe the corresponding process in earlier centuries. The model also goes well together with the three-dimensional tradition concept, mentioned above, of body/canon, process, and a creative dimension. The following definitions are connected to the shaping and performance of music, relating to my musical examples. However, the terms may also be used to describe revitalized or invented musical situations etc.; when alluding to recreation of a musical genre, for example, the term must have a wider definition. If used for instrumental rather than vocal music, the terms will need slightly different definitions.

Recreation[\[22\]](#)

- means staying close to the source;
- means keeping the form of the musical item;
- contains an element of imitation;
- includes minor (unconscious) changes typical of oral/aural tradition (for example, of intonation or ornamentation, words and phrases).

Reshaping/transformation[\[23\]](#)

- means consciously changing and/or arranging traditional music, changing the form, etc.;
- includes conscious variation typical of musicians with a tacit knowledge of the craft/idiom (e.g. replacing, repeating or omitting motifs or stanzas);

- includes the same techniques used by educated musicians with access to a larger musical material;
- includes combination of variants or of lyrics and melodies, bricolage, medleys, etc.

Renewal/innovation[\[24\]](#)

- means creating new melodies and/or lyrics based on traditional style and with knowledge of the tradition, keeping the essence;
- includes combining new melodies with old lyrics and vice versa;
- includes combining traditional tunes with newly-created introductions, interludes, etc.;
- includes genre-crossing compositions based on traditional music but with a mix of idioms (non-Swedish folk music/world music, jazz, rock, modern art music, etc.).

As I define the concepts, recreation, reshaping/transformation, and renewal/innovation are rather broad and inclusive concepts. The model is meant to embrace all kinds of relationships to traditional material, traditional style, and different kinds of combination and innovation. The concepts should not be seen as isolated categories: both reshaping/transformation and renewal/innovation mostly include an element of recreation, at least on a general level; the border between unconscious and conscious change might be debated in the case of forgetfulness, which may result in unconscious reshaping of a musical item. I also want to point out that the element of *recontextualization* is found in most revitalized or microcultural musical situations, as we always use music in the present time, however much we sometimes may try to re-enact the past.

On this continuum, an actual piece of music, a song performance, may be placed in one of the positions; or it may represent, e.g., both recreation and reshaping/transformation, or represent all three. Examples of recreation, transformation and innovation may all be found, often overlapping each other, in the singing and music-making of one individual—in the past as well as in our time. For example, a singer may perform one part of her or his repertoire in a mainly re-creative, source-oriented way, keeping close to the style and performance of the singer from whom the songs are learned; in another context or another part of the repertoire, the same individual may perform her/his songs in a more transformative way, changing and combining textual and musical phrases or whole stanzas or tunes. Some traditional singers have made new songs besides performing the songs of a mother or grandfather. It is not the individual who is recreative, reshaping/transformational or renewing/innovative, but the relationship or attitude to “tradition.”

[6] Musical Examples

Here follow some short sounding examples of my use of the model, on the level of musical performance. The subject really needs more space and time than my short commentaries, but I hope the reader will get at least some impression. The examples are taken from phonograms of Swedish folk music except No. 7, which is a composition of modern art music based on traditional vocal music. The genres of the examples can be said to be more or less representative of contemporary repertoires as far as this narrow choice goes.

Example 1 is the lyrical song "[Kvällen stundar](#)" (Evening draws near, *Fäbodlöt* [25] 1993), performed by Dansar Edvard Jonsson (1893–1976). He was a singer from the western part of Dalarna with a highly individual singing style, characterized by a tonality, phrasing, and ornamentation that is thought to represent older layers of Swedish traditional song. Dansar Edvard Jonsson is regarded by several performers and scholars as one of the most important forerunners in the Swedish revitalization, especially for his singing style. His influence has been transmitted by both archival recordings and personal encounters. This version of the song is recorded by Hars Åke Hermansson.

Examples 2, Marie Selander: "[Kvällen stundar](#)" (*Utsocknes låtar*, Hurv 1987), and 3, Hars Åke Hermansson: "[Kvällen stundar](#)" (*Fäbodlöt* 1993), the same song sung by two younger singers, are chosen to show mainly recreative performances: in the singing of both Marie Selander and Hars Åke Hermansson we can discern imitation of style and idiom. Both the younger performers are influenced by Dansar Edvard's special style, with a free phrasing, rich ornaments, and a microtonal modality. Hars Åke Hermansson comes from the same area as Dansar Edvard, and his quality of voice is near to Dansar Edvard's, learned directly from him and other male singers in western Dalecarlia. Marie Selander, one of the core revivalists in Sweden and also a blues singer and a skilled experimental composer, has listened to the recording of the song on the lp mentioned above and sings almost exactly that variant. Neither singer copies the "original" fully, they both vary the ornamentation a little in their own way.

Reshaping occurs in many forms and is not always discernible when listening to a performance—this goes for shifting stanzas, combining variants, etc. I have chosen two examples where it is rather easy to hear the reshaping. In No. 4, Rosenbergs Sju: "[Vallåtar från Gammelboning](#)" (*Uppå marmorns höga berg*, Giga 1996), herding calls, traditionally a solo genre of work music, are arranged by Sven Ahlbäck and performed in parts and combined with herding songs by the four singers of the group Rosenbergs Sju. The group is led by Susanne Rosenberg who is also a song teacher and composer of folk music. Herding calls are a good example of formerly functional music transformed into a contemporary aesthetic phenomenon. [26] When arranged like this, the

calls are performed in a fixed, though transformed, version; as functional music, or used more spontaneously today, they are seldom fixed but ever changing through variation and improvisation. This is an example of how variability can be transmitted from form to function in mediaized arrangements.

The other example of reshaping, No. 5, "[Oxen och mågen](#)" (*Järven*, Caprice 1996/*Summer song*, Northside 1999), is a medley of fragments from a jocular ballad and a short rhythmic song/lilting tune. The two melodies originally have nothing to do with each other but are joined by the group Frifot on the basis melodic and, above all, rhythmical likeness. The first part of the medley is sung by Lena Willemark, singer and fiddler, the other by Per Gudmundson, fiddler and bagpipe player. With the multi-instrumentalist Ale Möller they play in the group Frifot. I want to point out that medleys and suites are rather new phenomena in Swedish folk music; they do not originally belong to the tradition but are much used by contemporary ensembles.

Now two examples of what I call renewal/innovation. No. 6, Ranarim: "[Stolt Ingrid](#)" (*Till ljusan dag*, Drone 2000/*Till the light of day*, Northside 2000), is a melody composed by the young singer Ulrika Bodén to a text variant (recorded without a melody) of a traditional ballad, performed by the group Ranarim, of which Bodén is a member. This is one of many examples of simultaneous renewal and recreation; that is, the group recreates a ballad from a text document but combines this with a newly-made melody. One non-traditional element is the two melodic themes, one of which omits the refrain and thus is used to speed up the telling of the story. Certainly the vocal/instrumental arrangement also contains several non-traditional elements, but that goes for a great number of arrangements.

No. 7, Susanne Rosenberg, Lena Willemark (singers), Helena Gabrielsson (percussionist): "[Puksånger och lockrop, part 1: Det for två vita duvor](#)" (*Davids nimm*, Phono Suecia 1996), is a cross-genre composition: traditional music and contemporary art music meet in a composition by the contemporary composer Karin Rehnqvist, made for two folk singers and a percussionist. The piece is composed for the two singers on the recording, Lena Willemark and Susanne Rosenberg, whom we have heard above. Both are central persons in the microculture of folk music in Sweden; both perform traditionally as well as in experimental ways, and both perform music of several genres. Rehnqvist's composition is partly a reshaping of fragments of traditional songs; the piece represents both recreation, reshaping, and renewal/innovation.

In example No. 8, Vikes Johan Persson: "[Det for två vita duvor](#)" (*Folkmusik i förvandling/Folk Music in Transition*, Caprice 1997), we

hear an archival recording of one of the re-shaped songs.[\[27\]](#)

The last two examples show an overlapping of re-creation, re-shaping and re-newal on more than one level. Linting of dance music, mainly *polska* tunes, is in itself a type of re-creation of fiddlers' music, of much older origin than the revitalization of the twentieth century.[\[28\]](#) In "[Skålbergslåten](#)" (*Britta & Maria Røjås*, Filur 1991), Example 9, the sisters Maria and Britta Røjås, both professional musicians from a well-known family of traditional singers and instrumentalists, perform a fiddlers' tune which they have learned from their father in traditional parts, transformed to voices. They use the common kind of "linting sounds" or syllables that are used in this type of "mouth music" (cf. Sundberg 1991).

Example 10, Envisa: "[Polska efter Lindblom](#)" (*Flod Drone*, 1998), is another traditional *polska* reshaped and renewed by the three singers of the group Envisa, all former students at the Folk music Department of the Malmö Conservatory. It is a less traditional performance than No. 9, inspired by modern voice ensembles, and maybe scat song. The introductions are improvised, and the parts are made up by improvising before being fixed.[\[29\]](#) The singers use some other sounds than in usual linting.

One interesting comparison between herding calls and linting in reshaped form is that the linting of dance tunes keeps and reinforces its function as dance music in contemporary use; as a matter of fact revitalized linting might be seen as a micro-genre with its own profile. Dance music has mainly the same function as in the nineteenth century; herding music has since several decades almost ceased as everyday practice, and is performed at shielings only for tourists or in connection with local summer festivals. The signalling function of calls and horn tunes has been transformed to the opening of festivals or to being a tool for focusing the attention of the audience in concerts.

[7] Recreation, reshaping and renewal in past and present

We lack a lot of knowledge of how singers of the past thought about their singing; for too long the collectors kept records on mainly the oldest repertoires, not on the performers and the performance. Still, both recreation, reshaping, and renewal of nineteenth-century singers have left some traces in the recordings. In what ways, then, do singers of the nineteenth century and singers of the late twentieth century resemble each other, as the relations between stability and change are concerned? Which techniques and attitudes are new and connected with mediaization and professionalization?

One probable hypothesis is that with increasing levels of publication (in print and sound), mediation, mediaization, education,

professionalization, etc., reshaping/transformation and renewal/innovation have increased in relation to recreation from the nineteenth century till now. Much more music is accessible, archival sources as well as contemporary material. Music has at least in some contexts become a commodity, and there is a market and an audience for the new.^[30] One result of musical education and mediaization is that most musicians meet traditional music as one of many musics, and with a pre-knowledge of several genres and styles, which clears the ground for more elaborated kinds of reshaping, etc.

Some elements of reshaping and innovation seem to be common to “traditional” music of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and contemporary transformation of vocal folk music. Some examples are: minor changes to text; borrowing stanzas from other songs; completing the narrative of a song; stressing certain motifs in ballads, for example; creating stanzas from formulaic elements; melodic variation and, probably, creating new melodies.^[31] Other elements are typical of the contemporary: instrumental introductions, interludes and arrangements; omitting repetition and parallels instead of reinforcing them in the “traditional” practice; elaborated multipart singing; and the use of an aesthetically conscious technique of bricolage, which might mean to combine elements of text and melody from several variants, to use two or more different melodies and/or rhythmical patterns in one version of a song, to combine traditional and newly-composed elements, or to put together non-traditional medleys of vocal/vocal or vocal/instrumental type, often out of intertextually related songs or tunes (cf. example 5).

Traditional music has long been associated with the concept cultural heritage. Striving to improve the status of this music, to achieve space in mass media, to get governmental subventions, etc., the folk music movement has tried since the 1980s to establish a “genre,” a microculture, on the same conditions as other small musics, like jazz. Simultaneously, with increasing professionalization, mediation and mediaization, there is a tendency to view folk music tradition as a whole more as a material/style/musical language accessible to anyone who really wants to learn than as representing cultural roots and personal affections of the musicians of older times. The latter qualities were stressed in the revitalization of the 1970s—today the other view tends to dominate among younger musicians. Still, there is a certain overlapping of concepts and values, of the “roots” and the “material” side, among performers.

[8] Summary

I have discussed some aspects of the concepts tradition and revitalization, and in this context I have presented a model consisting of the concepts recreation, reshaping/transformation, and renewal/innovation as a way of describing and analyzing performers’

different but overlapping attitudes to traditional material and styles. The model can also be seen as a possible tool for the study of the creativity of re-creative processes, and as a way of regarding the links between tradition and revitalization, stability and innovation, etc. One main point is that reshaping or renewal in this sense are seldom present separately and (probably) never isolated from recreation; these different working forces may be at hand on different levels. Recreation, reshaping and renewal define attitudes among contemporary singers, but the model can also be relevant for singers of the past, provided that we have sufficiently detailed recordings. Vocal traditional music is the subject of my study, but my hope is that the model, with adjustments, can be used for other kinds of “traditional creativity.”

References

- Åkesson, Ingrid 1996. “Folklig vissång idag: gehörstradition i nya former.” *Noterat* 4. Stockholm: Svenskt visarkiv: 87–95.
- Åkesson, Ingrid 2005. “Homogenisering och pussel. Medeltidsballader i nutidsdräkt.” *Noterat* 13. Stockholm: Svenskt visarkiv: 63–77.
- Atkinson, David 2004. “Revival, Genuine or Spurious?” *Folk Song: Tradition, Revival, and Re-Creation*. Eds. Ian Russell & David Atkinson. Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen, Elphinstone Institute: 144–62.
- Baumann, Max Peter 1996. “Folk Music Revival: Concepts between Regression and Emancipation.” *The World of Music* 38/3: 71–86.
- Beck, Ulrich, Anthony Giddens, & Scott Lash 1994. *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bergeron, Katherine and Philip Bohlman (eds.) 1992. *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bithell, Caroline 2005. *What Comes after Revival? Ideology, Cultural Policy and Musical Revitalisation in Corsica*. Paper at the ICTM World Conference, Sheffield, UK, August 3–9, 2005.
- Boyes, Georgina 1993. *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- Bohlman, Philip 1988. *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Centergran, Ulla 1992. “Folklorism och revitalisering.” Brottningar med

begrepp. En antologi redigerad av Birgitta Skarin Frykman & Helene Brembeck. Göteborg: Etnologiska föreningen i Västsverige.

Cook, Nicholas and Mark Everist (eds.) 1999. *Rethinking Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gerholm, Lena 1985. "Revitaliseringens fenomenologi." *Nord-Nytt* 25, 1985: 65–72.

Giddens, Anthony 1994. "Living in a Post-Traditional Society." *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*. Ed. Beck, Giddens & Lash. Cambridge: Polity Press: 56–109.

Glassie, Henry 1995. "Tradition." *Journal of American Folklore* 108 (1995): 395–412.

Handler, Richard & Jocelyn Linnekin 1984. "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious." *Journal of American Folklore* 97: 273–90.

Hill, Juniper 2005. *From Ancient to Avant-Garde to Global: Creative Processes and Institutionalization in Finnish Contemporary Folk Music*. University of California, Los Angeles. Diss. <http://juniperlynnhill.net/>

Hobsbawm, Eric & Terence Ranger (eds.) 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jansson, Sven-Bertil 1999. *Den levande balladen: Medeltida ballad i svensk tradition*. Stockholm: Prisma.

Jansson, Sven-Bertil 2001. "Ballader, långa och korta: Om balladen, maskinen och människan." *Allt under linden den gröna: Studier i folkmusik och folklore tillägnade Ann- Mari Häggman*. Vasa. Finlands svenska folkmusikinstitut: 95–106.

Jersild, Margareta 1990. "Tre östgötasångerskor och deras ballader." *Inte bara visor: Studier kring folklig diktning och musik tillägnade Bengt R. Jonsson den 19 mars 1990*. Ed. Eva Danielson. (Skrifter utgivna av Svenskt visarkiv; 11) Stockholm: Svenskt visarkiv: 178–207.

Jersild, Margareta 2002. "Strofvariationer i balladmelodierna. Om melodierna i Sveriges medeltida ballader." *Noterat* 10. Stockholm: Svenskt visarkiv: 105–16.

Kaminsky, David 2005. *Hidden Traditions: Conceptualizing Swedish Folk Music in the Twenty-First Century*. Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Diss.

Kollberg, Py 2000. *Stor musik i litet format: Om äldre folkliga småvisor i*

vår senmoderna samtid. Umeå universitet, Institutionen för kultur och medier. Uppsats för 60 p i etnologi.

Kollberg, Py 2001. *Talet om sången: Folksångens utövare i förhandling med föreställningar kring en musikgenre*. Umeå universitet, Institutionen för kultur och medier. D-uppsats i etnologi.

Livingston, Tamara E. 1999. "Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory." *Ethnomusicology* 43/1 (Winter 1999): 66–85.

Lundberg, Dan 2003. Swedish Folk Music. From Village Greens to Concert platforms. <http://www.visarkiv.se/en/folkmusic/index.htm>. An earlier version published in *Music in Sweden*. Stockholm: The Swedish Institute 1998.

Lundberg, Dan, Krister Malm och Owe Ronström 2003. *Music, Media, Multiculture: Changing Musicscapes*. Stockholm: Svenskt visarkiv. <http://www.visarkiv.se/mmm>

MacKinnon, Niall 1993. *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity*. Ballmoor: Open University Press.

Murstad, Anne 2003. *Sireners sang eller himmelske samtaler? Noen perspektiv på framføring av lokk*. University of Bergen, Grieg Academy. Master's thesis in ethnomusicology.

Ramnarine, Tina K 2003. *Ilmatar's Inspirations: Nationalism, Globalization, and the Changing Soundscapes of Finnish Folk Music*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Ramsten, Märta 1992. *Återklang. Svensk folkmusik i förändring 1950–1980*. Göteborgs universitet, Musikvetenskapliga institutionen. Diss.

Ramsten, Märta 1994. "Folkmusikvågen." *Musiken i Sverige IV: Konstmusik, folkmusik, populärmusik 1920–1990*. Leif Jonsson, Hans Åstrand (eds.). Stockholm: 297–303.

Ronström, Owe 1996. "Revival Reconsidered." *The World of Music*, 3 (1996): 5–20.

Rosenberg, Neil V (ed.) 1993. *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Russell, Ian & David Atkinson (eds.) 2004. *Folk Song: Tradition, Revival and Re-Creation*. Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen, Elphinstone institute.

Skarin Frykman, Birgitta & Brembeck, Helene (eds.) 1992. *Brottningar med begrepp: En antologi*. Göteborg: Etnologiska föreningen i Västsverige.

Slobin, Mark 1993. *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West*. Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press.

Sundberg, Johan 1991. "Tra-la-la eller da-ba-da?—stavelseval vid spontantextad sång" *Sumlen* 1989. Stockholm: 170–72.

Sweers, Britta 2005. *Electric Folk: The Changing Face of English Traditional Music*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Wickström, David-Emil 2003. *Signifyin' Vigdal: Aspects of the Ragnar Vigdal Tradition and the Revival of Norwegian Vocal Folk Music*. University of Bergen, Grieg Academy. Master's thesis in ethnomusicology.

Ternhag, Gunnar. "Inflytelsrika inspelningar. Exemplet kulning." (Forthcoming).

Ziehe, Thomas 1989. *Kulturanalyser: Ungdom, utbildning, modernitet*. Stockholm/Stehag: Symposion.

[1] Just to mention a few studies from different years: Bohlman 1988, Rosenberg 1993, Boyes 1993, Ramnarine 2003, Bithell 2005, Hill 2005, Sweers 2005.

[2] One recent event for such discussion was the 38th World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) in Sheffield, Aug. 2005.

[3] I use a hyphen here to stress the re-prefix; in the text below the hyphen will occur only occasionally.

[4] These artist were called *bondkomiker*.

[5] The term "source singer," often used in British practice and literature, represents older singers who have learned at least a part of their repertoire in an oral/aural tradition and become models for younger performers. The synonym "tradition carrier" is often used by performers in Sweden, but the term has been criticised among scholars as giving associations with a passive role of just passing on "tradition" without individual creative impact (e.g. Ternhag 1992:19 f).

[6] About contemporary repertoires see e.g. Ramsten 1992 and 1994, Kollberg 2000 and 2001, Åkesson 1996 and 2005.

[7] “Subculture” in this case without the usual associations to youth culture. See also e.g. Sweers 2005:11.

[8] The term mediaization was introduced by Wallis & Malm 1984 and means that a form of music is changed in different ways and adapted to the media system—see Lundberg, Malm & Ronström 2000:68. An example could be an arrangement of a traditional song for a cd by lengthening or shortening its duration and adding instrumental parts, etc.

[9] A number of studies analyze the situation in Nordic countries. Here I just mention a few: Ramnarine 2003 and Hill 2005 are studies of modern Finnish folk music and the Sibelius Academy in Finland. Wickström 2003 and Murstad 2003 take up different aspects of vocal revitalization in Norway. Ramsten 1992 and 1994 are studies of the Swedish revitalization; Kollberg 2000 and 2002 concentrate on Swedish contemporary vocal folk music performers. The focus of Kaminsky 2005 is on the conceptualization of Swedish folk music among some contemporary performers. A web publication in English is Lundberg 2003. See also Sweers 2005, a study of English folk rock, and the anthology by Russell & Atkinson 2004.

[10] “The term ‘invented tradition’ [...] includes both ‘traditions’ actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easy traceable manner within a brief and dateable period [...] a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.” (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983:1) The authors’ examples are taken from e.g. architecture and officially instituted and planned ceremonials

[11] The Swedish philosopher Bertil Rolf states that “invented tradition” should be replaced by “fake tradition,” as the concept really has nothing to do with what is traditional (Rolf 1991:144 f).

[12] The concept of canon in music has been discussed e.g. in Bergeron & Bohlman (ed.) 1992, and by Weber and Everist separately in Cook & Everist 1999. The term might allude to canons *of music* or to canons of *texts/theories about music*, i.e. different strains of scholarship. I use the term meaning *canons of traditional music*, what Bohlman calls “repertoires and forms of musical behavior constantly shaped by a community to express its cultural particularity and the characteristics that distinguish it as a social entity” (1988:104). The term is often used in the plural, scholars being aware of the existence of different kinds of canons

and sub-canons.

[13] Several scholars stress that change and tradition are not antonyms; besides Glassie and Atkinson, cited below, I want to mention Philip V. Bohlman, who stresses that oral tradition fosters both stability and creativity (1988).

[14] Glassie 1995:395. See also e.g. Bohlman 1988:9.

[15] So far, mostly pedagogues of traditional music have been interested in these issues; it might be a field where ethnomusicologists, pedagogues and performers can co-operate.

[16] For a history of the term see Rosenberg 1993:17–20.

[17] Anders Salomonsson cited in Centergran 1992:117.

[18] A connected discussion of different attitudes to a musical tradition and different concepts of authenticity is found in Lundberg, Malm & Ronström 2000 about the approaches of the categories “medievalists” and “early musicians” (pp.309–332). Those musical milieus, though, are not quite comparable to the folk music circles.

[19] See e.g. MacKinnon 1994, Sweers 2005.

[20] Livingston builds her model on other American ethnomusicologists' studies of different revitalization movements: Neil V Rosenberg's and Jeff Todd Titon's essays in Rosenberg (ed.) 1993; Mark Slobin: “Rethinking 'Revival' of American Ethnic Music” in *New York Folklore* 9:37–44, 1983 and Slobin: “The Neo-Klezmer Movement and Euro-American Musical Revivalism” in *Journal of American Folklore* 97:98–104, 1984.

[21] Slobin's terminology was originally conceived for multiethnic societies or cultures, but may as well be used for subcultures that are not primarily ethnic. See e.g. Sweers (2005) regarding English electric folk music as a microculture in Slobin's sense.

[22] in Swedish: *återskapande*

[23] in Swedish: *omskapande*

[24] in Swedish: *nyskapande*, which means “create within certain frames, within a genre”

[25] Tape cassette issued privately.

[26] For more discussion of herding music in contemporary use, see

Ternhag (forthcoming) and Murstad 2003.

[27] A short commentary in English can be found in the cover of the cd *Folkmusik i förvandling—Folk music in transition*, Caprice 1997.

[28] Folk music scholar Märta Ramsten has studied one famous singer and lilter, Martin Martinsson, from the west coast of Sweden, “Martin Martinsson: Folkmusikidol och scenartist. Studier i en samtida ‘traditionsbärarkarriär’” in Ramsten 1992.

[29] Interview with one of the members, Anders Larsson, 2004-06-10.

[30] For comments on the commodification, etc. of traditional music see e.g. Lundberg, Malm & Ronström 2003.

[31] Sources for this summing-up are Jansson 1999 and 2001, and Jersild 1990 and 2002, combined with my own study of contemporary musicians’ practice. See also Åkesson 2005.

© Ingrid Åkesson, 2006

STM-Online 9 (2006)
[www.musik.uu.se/ssm/stmonline/vol_9/
pbroman@bgsu.edu](http://www.musik.uu.se/ssm/stmonline/vol_9/pbroman@bgsu.edu), 2006-10-19