



Nordic Musical Heritage Brought to New Life

'...før de spredtes' : Tomas Raae feat. Eline Hellerud Åsbakk

A phrase from Ernst Frandsen's book *Danske Folkeviser* (Danish Folk Songs) from 1945 serves as the title for the album *...før de spredtes* (*before they scattered*). The album is a study of, and a tribute to, the Nordic region and its musical heritage. It captures themes such as words, change and development, melancholy and light, nature, and humanity. The nine tracks are a mix of newly written songs and folk music from the period 1580-1870.

Så stiller han mjød og vin frem på sit bord (**"Then he placed mead and wine on the table)
 "Drik nu Venelite glem din far og mor" ('Drink now, Venelite, forget your father and mother')
 - Tiril lilil lilil haugjen min (Tiril lilil lilil My Dear Girl)
 Og de leged' så let gennem lunden (And they played so lightly through the grove"**))

Da Venelite tredie gang af mjødglasset tog (When Venelite drank from the mead cup for the third time)
 Glemte hun sin faders gård glemte hun sin tro (She forgot her father's estate, forgot her faith
 - Tiril lilil lilil haugjen min (Tiril lilil lilil My Dear Girl)
 Og de leged' så let gennem lunden (And they played so lightly through the grove.)
 (Excerpt from Venelite)

"The old songs are vivid and incredibly powerful. Imbued with both poetry, sharp and precise descriptions, and deep reflections on life in all its wonder and mystery—love, pain, sorrow, and acceptance. I was completely overwhelmed and captivated when I delved into them. And when I happened to hear Eline sing, I could immediately feel myself reflected in the lyrics," explains Tomas Raae. In addition to writing, producing, and performing music, from improvisational

pieces to pop and TV series, Tomas has also released three full-length albums since 2020, all of which have reached a broad audience on streaming platforms.

Ernst Frandsen's book discusses the documentation of these old songs before they would otherwise fade from collective memory. Although the songs were written down and thus preserved, this musical tradition was never about preservation in a museum-like sense. Instead, it centered on understanding what it means to be human and reflecting on the world around us. And dancing. Chain dancing, which was one of the great entertainments of the Middle Ages, spread from France to the rest of Europe. The melodies came with the dance, but the lyrics were created locally, written about life in the local community.

With this album, Tomas Raae seeks to carry this tradition forward, creating a modern interpretation of Nordic folk music, both in terms of sound, selection of existing songs, and new lyrics and melodies. The album honors and respects the unique logic of Nordic musical heritage.

The music is composed of soundscapes and light melodic elements that together create an airy sound, deeply influenced by Nordic jazz and improvisation. The music is primarily recorded with acoustic/analog instruments, drum machines, vocals, and electronically processed sounds.

What sets this album apart from Tomas Raae's previous works is the collaboration with vocalist Eline Hellerud Åsbakk from Tromsø, in northern Norway. Eline Hellerud Åsbakk draws inspiration from hymns and folk tunes from northern Norway, combined with a strong foundation in experimental and improvisational jazz.

The full quote from Ernst Frandsen's book reads: *'Og det var en lykke, at det blev dem, at netop det befolkningslag, som gennem århundrede havde nedlagt deres sjæl i disse poesier, også fangede dem ind i flugten, før de spredtes'* - *"And it was a blessing that it was they, that it was exactly that social class, which for centuries had poured their souls into these poems, that also caught them in flight, before they scattered."* (Ernst Frandsen 1945, *Danske Folkeviser*)

Details:

Album: ...før se spredtes

Created By: Tomas Raae

Release Year: 2025

Feat:

Eline Hellerud Åsbakk:	Vokal
Lea Foxman:	Vokal (6 & 7)
Victor Dybbroe:	Percussion (7)
Bjørn Heebøll:	Trommer + Marimba (1, 2, 4, 5 & 8)
Lars Emil Riis:	Piano (2,5 & 9)
Tomas Raae:	Moog, Polysix, Guitar, Piano, Bas (all)