

A revival?

A way to look at the last 30 years of Norwegian vocal folk music

By David-Emil Wickström

In Norway an interest in vocal folk music¹ has developed over the last 30 years. The number of students studying this music has increased and the number of participants at the different “*kappleiks*”² is also up. But why did the interest start so suddenly in the 1970s? What has fueled the growing interest in this music? Observations have also been made that the singing and performance styles have changed. What has happened? And has this growing interest in the music had any influence on those changes?

I want to look at these processes through the perspective of music revivals. This approach can be used to give an interpretation of why the music suddenly gained popularity and why the singing style might have changed. The following definition can be used as a starting point:

[A musical revival is] any social movement with the goal of restoring and preserving a musical tradition which is believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past. The purpose of the [revival] movement is twofold: (1) to serve as cultural opposition and as an alternative to mainstream culture, and (2) to improve existing culture through the values based on historical value and authenticity expressed by revivalists (Livingston 1999: 68).

This is Tamara E. Livingston’s definition of a musical revival. In addition she gives a list of “basic ingredients” (op.cit: 69) or characteristics needed for a revival. In her article she also refers to work done by Mark Slobin, Eric Hobsbawm and Neil V. Rosenberg³. Using these articles and Livingston’s criteria critically I want to look at the “new wave of Norwegian vocal folk music”⁴ which started in the 1970s⁵. Through this perspective I hope to explain the shift in function within

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1. The term “folk music” is very problematic, because it invokes an artificial division incorporating a romantic and anti-modernist notion between so called “high culture music” and “peasant’s music”, emphasizing a kind of music which is “genuine” stemming from “ancient times” and untouched by modernization. This article argues that this is not true, that “folk music” is as modern as anything else in present day society and is influenced by social and cultural changes. But for lack of a better word for the music, I will use this term.
 2. Folk Music Contests, where the *landskappleik* (The National Folk Music Contest) is the most prominent competition within the Norwegian folk music movement.
 3. Goertzen (1997) using Neil Rosenberg’s book “Transforming Tradition” also looks at Norwegian folk music through a revival perspective. His main aim is the fiddle and *gammaldans* and he combines his focus with an identity perspective.
 4. My term.

Norwegian vocal folk music. To round off the essay, I will compare the movement in Norway with the Bluegrass revival in the United States.

The historical data for my essay is primarily based on two articles. The first one is Ingrid Gjertsen’s article “*1990-årenes vokale folkemusikkbølge i Norge*” (1996) which looks at the growing interest in Norwegian vocal music that began in the 1970s and evolved through the 1980s to its present state, where vocal music enjoys a broad popularity. She also compares it to the similar development in Sweden. The second article is Dagne Groven Myhren’s “*Vokal folkemusikk – en tradisjon og en revolusjon*” (1994), which gives an autobiographical perspective on the growing interest in Norwegian vocal folk music. In addition to these two articles I draw on my own observations.

By using a revival theory approach to this data I want to show that the last 30 years in Norwegian vocal folk music can be defined as a revival. Through a critical use of the theory I also want to show that Livingston’s theory is a “descriptive framework, not a prescriptive structure” (1999: 81) as she says herself, and has to be applied critically to each context it is used in. And finally, through using this theory I offer an explanation for some changes that have occurred in vocal folk music over the last 30 years.

It’s a revival...

30 years of Norwegian vocal folk music theorized from a revival-perspective

Norwegian vocal folk music has been around for a long time. The music itself has been used as functional music while collecting cattle, singing lullabies, in church and for dancing. When the revival of Norwegian folk music began in the end of the 19th century the main focus was on the Hardanger fiddle, and fiddle music dominated within the folk music community. But vocal music, although not as prominent, also existed before and during the revival of Norwegian folk music and was part of the discourse. Due to a quite diverse range of different styles, an established consensus on what was vocal folk music had to be created. This was done through research on vocal music (by Liv Greni, Ola Kai Ledang and others), through radio programs playing vocal music (primarily Eivind Groven and Rolf Myklebust), recordings done of vocalists and the archiving of that material. This provided a basis of repertoire and created an awareness of what vocal music was for listeners of folk music and thus also for the revival.

In addition, following the radical political movements of the 1960s, focusing on alternative lifestyles and closer connections with nature, a base of potential followers emerged who had a strong interest in the “folk” and who viewed vocal music (and folk music and folk art in general) as a form of returning to their roots. This movement can be seen in parallel with the folk song revival in the United States around Mike Seeger, Alan Lomax and Ralph Rinzler. One of the centers of this movement was Club 7, an alternative club in Oslo established 1963, which was

5. Saying that the last 30 years can be looked at as a revival is kind of arbitrary since one can say that the revival of the music has been going on for more than 30 years. But in the context of this article I have chosen 1970 as the starting point, because that is when the courses were initiated at Club 7 in Oslo and the music introduced to a new social group.

open for all forms of cultural expression and thus became platform for the counterculture’s move against commercialism and “high culture”. The Club’s concerts ranged from mainly Jazz and Blues to Norwegian vocal folk music (Førland 1998).

These two factors, the establishment of a consciousness of what vocal folk music was and the radical political movement of the 1960s, were very important when Agnes Buen Garnås, Maria Høgetveit Berg and Dagne Groven Myhren started organizing courses at Club 7, which introduced the revival of Norwegian vocal folk music to a new social group using the music. Those courses were copied in other places in Norway and the interest in vocal music started growing. This short summary⁶ of the development provides the background for looking at what happened through Livingston’s criteria for a revival.

The first defining attribute of music revivals listed by Livingston is “an individual or small groups of `core revivalists`”(1999:69) who start the revival movement. In Norway, as mentioned above, this was centered around the Club 7 in Oslo. In 1970 Agnes Buen Garnås, Maria Høgetveit Berg and Dagne Groven Myhren initiated and taught courses in *kveding*⁷ in cooperation with the AOF⁸ there. These singers, who came from Telemark, had a solid background in vocal folk music and were representatives of the living tradition.

The next two characteristics mentioned by Livingston are the use of original sources and revivalist ideology (1999:69). Through a strong focus on tradition using living sources and (archival) recordings for teaching, the revival had its legitimation and a foundation. This was taken for granted and used when formulating the style and repertoire. The revivalists’ goals were to promote their own music culture as an alternative to mainstream music culture, to present the music to a broad audience and to give singers more confidence in what they were doing and in their tradition. Within the seminars they organized they wanted to create an arena where people could sing for each other, not only focusing on concerts (Skaug 2002: 98). In addition their goal was to be treated on the same level as fiddle music and not to be the “intermission signal” during the kappleiks.

Livingston’s criteria of revivalist activities and a group of followers that form the basis for the community are fulfilled through the movement’s activities, which drew a lot of followers wanting to learn how to sing. The idea of the “kvedar” courses was copied in other parts of Norway. The revivalists also created their own activities, like the “*kvedarseminar*”, a meeting where songs could be learned and exchanged through group work. The first seminar took place in Rauland 1975 and was a great success (Myhren 1983: 16). Following those seminars, courses in singing were organized (Skaug 2002: 98). Other forms of institutionalized teaching included and still include the “Ole Bull-academy” in Voss and the folk music program at the “*Raulandsakademiet*” (part of the Telemark university college), both offering programs in vocal folk music. The program in Rauland, which is more or less open to anybody with a high school degree, is gaining more and more popularity among young people. A large number of them had been previously unknown within the folk music community. Some did not even have a folk music

6. Partially based on (Blom 2001)

7. *Kveding* is a term used for singing Norwegian vocal folk music. This term has been used for all Norwegian vocal folk music, but originally the word only referred to certain forms of vocal music and was only used in certain parts of Norway. For a further discussion of this term and its problems, refer to (Sørnæs 2000). I will use the term Norwegian vocal music in this work to avoid the connotational problems with the word “*kveding*”.

8. “*Arbeidernes opplysningsforbund*” (“The worker’s information organization”), which organizes courses for adults. For more information: www.aof.no

background before they started their studies (Bitustøyl 1997: 30) and managed to be placed in the A-class⁹ at the Landskappleik shortly after graduating. In addition, a *hovedfag*¹⁰ in traditional art, including folk art and folk music, will soon be added to Rauland, giving the students the possibility of deepening their knowledge of folk music and spreading it. The “*kvedar- and spelemannsskulen*” at the Ole Bullakademy only accepts a limited number of new students every other year (in 2002 three for singing). The singing lessons are taught by singers in the local tradition the students want to learn. The courses are not only at the academy (in Voss) but also outside of Voss, sometimes at the home of the specific singer students study with, thus stressing what is perceived as the “traditional way” of learning the song material. In addition the number of rated participants at the Landskappleik went up from 4 in 1970 to 19 in 1980, 26 in 1990 and 55 in the 2002 competition¹¹. And finally, an organization (“*Norsk Kvedarforum*”) for the singers was founded 2002, with Agnes Buen Garnås as one of the prime movers behind it.

The movement could also draw on commercial enterprises and media coverage, the last criteria mentioned by Livingston. Record companies like Heilo/Grappa and Kirkelig kulturverksted produced recordings, which were accessible to the public, and there was also coverage in state television and radio (Myhren 1994: 14). However one of the main discussions in both “*Kvinten*” and “*Spelemannsbladet*” (the publications of the two folk music organizations) over the last years is that Norwegian folk music is not getting enough airplay. But this is a general problem within the folk music community.

Using Livingston’s criteria I have argued that the past 30 years of Norwegian vocal folk music can be defined as a revival and that the vocal folk music scene in Norway is active and thriving—with the core revivalists, like Agnes Buen Garnås, still active in singing and teaching (Skaug 2002: 99). But what insight does this give us in regards to the music and social activity linked to the revival? And what use can be drawn from this? In order to answer those questions, we will have to look at one of the dynamics involved in the revival.

Focusing on one style

A revival tends to move the style of thinking away from a lateral / associational style, drawing influences from different styles or traditions, to a linear style where the focus is on one style¹². It does so by focusing on a certain tradition and thereby creating a new normative style.

Traditionally Telemark and Hardanger have been strongholds of folk music, because the common notion¹³ was that the singing style there was older and “purer” (not influenced too much by other styles) than in other regions. Thus in the folk music revival the music of this region was privileged over music of other areas. Also, as noted above, the revivalists originated in Telemark. Within the Norwegian folk music community the term “*Telemarkimperialisme*”, predominantly a derogatory oral¹⁴ term, has been used, which points to that fact that the Telemark style (both in

9. The A-class is the highest class you can enter in. In order to enter the A-class you had to be placed in the “*I. premiegrad*” (first rank) within the B-class twice.

10. A two year program, which can be taken after completing three to four years of university studies.

11. Numbers based on the listings in *Spelemannsbladet*, a Norwegian folk music magazine, of the respective year.

12. The terminology used here is mine, but the general idea is reflected in inter alia (Middleton 1990: 127ff.).

13. Inter alia (Blom 2000: 322f.) and (Blom 2001: 85). This common notion is also implicit in a lot of conversations and discussions within the folk music community.

fiddling and in vocal music) dominated the scene to the extent that in order to get points at the national competitions, one had to play / sing in that style. Herdis Lien indirectly points to this when she tries to define the singing style of folk music in her thesis.(2001: 35) Using this aspect of revival dynamics it is possible to explain why the use of particular ornaments (like “*krull*”) in the singing and the typical use of the voice, which in the people’s opinion is a Telemark trait, has increased in the singing style outside of the core revival region. Those traits are seen as being elements of an older, “purer” singing style.

But the identity aspect still is very important in Norway, and within that context, small revivals of regional styles in areas where the people think that little or no folk music exists (like in Haugesund and the coast of Hordaland), are happening. These focus on the rediscovered regional style that decentralizes the revival and goes against the main revival’s style aesthetics. This tendency towards local styles can be seen in a record review done by Bjørn Aksdal, where he praises Unni Løvliid¹⁵ for not trying to move her singing style towards the Telemark style, and for being loyal to her home singing style, although also open to other ideas¹⁶.

These two points do not contradict each other when saying that the mode of thinking is moving toward a linear style, since the focus is so strong on one singing style, it being either the dominant revival style or the local revival style, trying to keep it “pure” from other influences. In other words, the revival brings in a new consciousness of contrast between one’s own regional style and other styles.

...Isn’t it?

The music’s change in function and use

When focusing on this problem and looking at Norwegian vocal folk music as a revival movement one should not forget that vocal music did exist before the revival started. It has been a part of the *landskappleik* since 1955 (Lien 2001: 23), but very few took part and were rarely rated (Myhren 1994: 13). And in private circles the music has always been used. Looking at this one can agree with what Mark Slobin (1983: 37) points to in the beginning of his article “Rethinking ‘Revival’ of American Ethnic Music”, that the term “revival” is not appropriate as a term in this context, because expressive cultures do not disappear. Also when things are revived something new is created, an aspect revivalists are not aware of or try to conceal, preferring to accent the historical continuity.

But in this case something new did happen with the emergence of the *kvedarkurs* in the 1970s. The music began to be exposed to the public—a different one than the traditional one—on a

14. Although it also has been used in debates, like in *Spelemannsbladet* 40:1 (1981), p. 3 and 40:3 (1981), p. 8. Agnes Buen Garnås criticizes the use of the word implying that the problem is that most of the music in the archives comes from Telemark. She encourages singers in her article to collect music from their own region. (Buen Garnås 1980: 132f.)

15. Although she comes from an area where the vocal music was and still is alive and in use.

16. Aksdal (2000: 28): “*I motsetning til mange andre kvinnelige kvedere faller hun ikke for fristelsen til stilmessig å legge seg nært opp til den velkjente telemarksstilen.*”

broad basis, taken out of its usual context like being used to collect the cattle (“*kulokk*”). This change of function helped in creating a new style. The artists started to focus on certain traditional sources, like Aslak Brekke, Brita Bratland, Talleiv Røysland and Ragnar Vigdal (and many others). They started to perform on a stage, which created a different surrounding / performance event than traditionally used¹⁷. The consequence of this was a different way of interacting with their audience. And through the institutionalization of the education through study programs in Norwegian vocal music, like at the Raulandsakademiet and the Ole Bull-academy in Voss, the teaching was centralized. These factors helped in creating a new normative style for what is “authentic” vocal music. But one should not forget that these changes were mainly not intentional. The main intention of the revivalists was not to create a new style, at least not in the beginning, but to preserve the tradition.

In the end of his article, Slobin expands his definition of “revival” to include “a variety of phenomena that seem to come from a community’s impulse to reach back for something” (1983: 42) which also applies, as shown, here.

Is the tradition invented? Enter Hobsbawm

This change of function can also be looked at in the light of Hobsbawm’s differentiation between convention or routine and (invented) tradition (1983: 1ff.). While in Hobsbawm’s view the convention / routine normally does not have any symbolic or ritual function (it can incidentally acquire it and in this case the vocal folk music also had some symbolic value), its use is technical and the procedures can change. (Invented) traditions on the other hand, have fixed rules that embody certain values and norms of behavior. And as the term “invented” implies, the continuity with former traditions is mostly fictitious.

When looking at Norwegian folk music before the revival, one can look at its role in society as a convention / routine. It had its proper function in everyday life (cow calls, lullabies etc.). Due to change in agricultural structures and social forms of interaction and through the revival making the music more public, it moved away from its functional aspect and gained more symbolic value, ritualizing and formalizing it – changing the realm of vocal folk music to that of an invented tradition. Of course the national romantic influences during the 19th century, which moved folk music in general in the direction of invented traditions and tried to conserve the “authentic” style, also influenced vocal music at that time. But not as strongly as the instrumental music, and vocal music was largely preserved within its original context. Hobsbawm also points to the fact that new traditions can emerge over a considerable period of time.

When looking at Norwegian vocal folk music, I think Hobsbawm’s term “invented tradition” can be problematic. His concept of invented tradition is that it is more or less frozen to change. Any existing tradition came out of either a custom¹⁸ (which can adapt itself to change) or routine / convention (when one routine does not work, another one is created). But if we look at tradition from that point of view, then all traditions are invented and no tradition can be genuine. Alternatively a genuine tradition would be what he calls custom, since a genuine tradition, he

17. Although some people still use vocal folk music in its original function. See (Eskild 1998) and personal observations.

18. Hobsbawm defines custom as something that does not oppose innovation, but the innovation has to be compatible with the past, which limits the possible changes. Custom is habitually intertwined with tradition. He adds that custom dominates in so called “traditional societies“. (1983: 2)

argues is adaptional. And he adds: “here the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented.” (op.cit.:8)

The problem arises because the vocal folk music was revived, but did exist before. Would that imply that vocal folk music is a genuine tradition and the revival was an adaptation to a change in function? The changes are more complex than that answer suggests. I prefer to use the differentiation between convention / routine and invented tradition as a model to explain the shift in function. It represents the use of the music before the revival and helps explain the formalization after the revival. One can say that the tradition was invented for the new group of people to whom the music was revived to. But in regards to the music itself the concept of inventedness draws the focus away from continuity, which is a significant moment here. Taking that into consideration, the idea of “invented tradition” can be used.

Neil Rosenberg argues that revivals” are more akin to what Hobsbawm calls “custom” (1993: 20), which is open to change / innovation to a certain point, but still has to be compatible with the past. His argument is that Hobsbawm’s “invented tradition” is for looking at tradition from the elitist point of view of a nation, and not really suited for dealing with tradition from a folklore-study point of view, which puts an emphasis on the non-elite and informal parts of a culture. The term “custom” comes closer to a folklorist definition, but the problem with custom is that Hobsbawm limits it to “traditional societies”. Rosenberg concludes that although revivals contain some elements of cultural invention, Hobsbawm’s labels are not the best way to examine them.

Using “custom” could also be a way of looking at the revival of Norwegian folk music, by arguing that although the music has changed, it is still compatible with the music sung before the revival. But in this case I prefer the routine / convention model, which explains the shift in function more precisely than custom does.

Concluding this part one can say, that the “new wave of Norwegian vocal folk music” can be defined as a revival movement according to the criteria by Livingston and through changes in style and function. But one should take into consideration that vocal folk music always has been present and that this new interest is embedded in a continuous tradition.

But what happens when the revival style meets new influences? Examining this question I would like to draw some parallels with Bluegrass.

Another revival: Bluegrass

If we compare Norwegian vocal folk music revival with a different revival, the Bluegrass revival¹⁹ of the 1960s, some indications can be found for how the former might incorporate new elements and evolve in the future.

Bluegrass developed out of southeastern American Hillbilly music and was created by Bill Monroe and his group “The Blue Grass Boys”, founded around 1939²⁰, The music, after suffering

19. Based on (Rosenberg 1985) and personal conversations with Bluegrass aficionados, especially James E. Pelzer.

a phase of low interest due to the rising popularity of Rock and Roll in the 1950s, was introduced to a broader audience within the American folk song revival with Alan Lomax, Mike Seeger and Ralph Rinzler as major promoters²¹. Their interest in the music was due to Bluegrass’s roots in Hillbilly music and because, in contrast to both Country Music and Rock and Roll, Bluegrass was a purely acoustic genre. These two aspects gave it the appearance of being more “authentic” American music.

With this revival came a conflict of origin. The traditional Bluegrass musicians were mainly rural white workers from the south, who, like Monroe, had moved north to the industrial centers and played their home music with other (ex-) rural workers. The folk music enthusiasts, on the other hand, were mainly of urban middle class origin. They looked at the music as an authentic aspect of “real American culture”. These would eventually become hippies. And these “city billies”, as they were called by the Bluegrass musicians, would play Bluegrass very well– but they did not stop at that. They would also combine Bluegrass with other music styles, like jazz and rock (Sam Bush, David Grisman, John Hartford and others), and use electric pickups inside their instruments. This progressive form of Bluegrass was referred to as “Newgrass”. This resulted in people like Bill Monroe refusing to have these “progressive” musicians in their bands. At festivals they would perform on side stages and special dancing areas were created (Bluegrass–although danceable music–is listened to when sitting down). The main anxiety was that these new forms would destroy traditional Bluegrass. But 30 years later traditional Bluegrass is thriving and festivals like the Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival²² offer a wide variety of Bluegrass, progressive Bluegrass / Newgrass and Bluegrass-related music and thus enhancing the total musical experience.

Bluegrass contrasted with Norwegian vocal folk music

Returning to Norwegian vocal folk music, I want to point to two parallels between the movements. One difference between the revivals is that the Norwegian vocal folk music revival was initiated by singers who came from within the tradition. Since they were known from before, they did not have a problem when defining the style and could count on support from the folk music community. The Bluegrass revival, on the other hand, was started by people who originally did not come from the Bluegrass community. As a result of that, they had to get the trust of the Bluegrass musicians and convince them that they were working for the Bluegrass cause. One example of this can be seen in Ralph Rinzler’s attempt to interview Bill Monroe. Rinzler asked for an interview in June 1962 and Monroe refused. After some help by the Stanley brothers, another Bluegrass band, Monroe gave the interview in August 1962; this was Monroe’s first major interview in his career (Rosenberg 1985: 182). This interview presented Monroe as the originator of Bluegrass and opened “contact with the national network [...] among folk revival bluegrass musicians outside the South” (op.cit.: 185). What the two revivals have in common is the fact that they both originated in a middle class urban context linked to a broader ideology of returning to their “folk roots” as mentioned above. Although the singers from the Norwegian revival did not come from Oslo, they studied in Oslo and were part of the urban academic community influenced

20. One of the debates within the bluegrass community is about who created the bluegrass style and sound–was it Bill Monroe alone or was it his most famous line up with Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs in the late 1940s?

21. In contrast to the revival within Norwegian vocal music the revivalists here are people not originally linked to the Bluegrass scene.

22. www.greyfoxbluegrass.com

by that ideology. Thus it was not a coincidence that the courses started at “Club 7” in Oslo and not somewhere in Telemark or another place in rural Norway.

The second point is a major aspect of revivals: a revival and the attention that the music gets through the revival attract not only artists from within the tradition, but also outsiders (like “City billies” in Bluegrass) who grew up listening to other music. These bring their own personal background and style to the musical tradition they are trying to enter. And this is one of the ongoing processes within Norwegian vocal folk music today, where traditional singers cooperate with non-folk musicians (e.g. the CD “Rosensfole” with Agnes Buen Garnås and Jan Garbarek), and singers like Kjersti Wiik and Berit Opheim, who originally came from other musical backgrounds, are singing vocal folk music. This process is necessary to keep the revival going and to maintain the interest in the music. And as can be seen with Bluegrass, innovation did not destroy the revived music - it enhanced it and strengthened the traditional aspect through a heightened awareness of it.

There are also discussions within the folk music community pointing to the fact that more and more people with a background in classical singing are singing folk music and that their singing style lacks certain elements of “traditional” vocal folk music. (Aksdal 1994: 16) The critics point to the use of too-clean intervals, a too-classical timbre, mispronunciation of dialect words, a too-controlled use of the voice and a too-strong focus on the melody and ornamentation while neglecting the text in general. This is partly because some singers focus on copying the “old elements” of the music like ornamentation and micro tonal intervals thinking that those are key elements in what vocal folk music is. Thus they neglect the text, which according to other singers is the main aspect of vocal folk music. But on the other hand, singers need time to learn the style and this can be heard on the recordings of some folk musicians.²³ In addition, even established singers from within the tradition tend to sing in a more classical style when one compares their singing style with that of Brekke, Vigdal or Strand, who are used as sources. This can be partially explained by the increased exposure of current performers to other music styles besides folk music, but also through a heightened awareness of the necessity of training the voice and using singing techniques (partially derived from classical singing) in order to meet the requirements which singing from a stage brings. In addition some singers sometimes deliberately make the choice to sing in a more classical way, use less micro tones because they have a more classical background and / or it is difficult to accurately sing those intervals.

Concluding remarks

As I have shown in this essay, the rapid growth of popularity of Norwegian vocal folk music can be traced back to the courses initiated in 1970 in Oslo set within an urban middle class context influenced by an ideology interested in the “folk”. This movement can be defined as a revival when using Livingston’s definition and criteria - taking into consideration that the singing was present and used before the revival.

As a result of the revival, Norwegian vocal music has gained and still is gaining more and more popularity. This decentralized the revival, forming many local revivals. Linked to the main

23. I am deliberately not mentioning names in this context.

revival is the music's change in function and thus social meaning, moving it from private use to the stage and a more formal performance setting. Another effect is that it made it easier for outsiders wanting to learn the music to gain access to courses and study programs. These outsiders normally bring along their own musical background and ideas, which can influence the style of the music.

Returning to the definition given by Livingston in the beginning I have shown that this revival originated out of the desire to be an alternative to mainstream culture. And through a strong focus on tradition they focused on “authentic” vocal music creating a normative style. But the concept of authenticity is discursively constructed and thus changeable. What was considered authentic 30 years ago is still used as a guideline today, but the performers do not necessarily follow those rules. This can be seen in the use of the so-called older tonality and timbre. The use of those elements is desired and it is often pointed out that some present performers do not use them.²⁴ But the singers themselves are very conscious about that problem and partially out of personal reasons choose to use or not to use them²⁵. This shows that the particulars of singing style have become part of the discourse. This kind of debate is necessary to maintain a healthy tradition, dynamic and open to new impulses (as it always has been)!

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24. Inter alia (Landsverk 2002, Kjøk 1993), “*Rettleiing for bruk av dommarskjemaet for vokal folkemusikk*” (the guidelines used during “*kappleiks*”) and own observations within my research.

25. Lien 2001), own observations.

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