

Podcast transcription.

LD=Lukas Djupsjöbacka (Interviewer)

FO=Francis Oyeyola

KN=Kenneth Nordman

LD: Hi! This is the Lafo integration genom kultur podcast. This episode is a dialog between two folk musicians, Kenneth Nordman and Francis Oyeyola.

Kenneth is from Tjock/Finland and Francis is from Ghana/West Africa and as host me Lukas Djupsjöbacka. We are discussing differences and similarities between folk music from south Ostrobothnia and west Africa, this project is financed by Leader Österbotten and Svenska kulturfonden.

Intro Jingle.

LD: if we talk folk musicians, was there a higher status to be a folk musician? Kenneth?

KN: I think that would completely depend on back in which day (laughing) be course i think that has changed and maybe, there have been dips but at times I think the traditional player been regarded quite high.

FO: Yeah, it's the same in Ghana, of course then it was only genre so for you to be able to learn and play that, you were regarded high in the society. But in the modern day traditional player you have weary different variety and different style of playing music, people focused on different things but back than if you played the gong gong.. if you walked in the village everybody kind of greeted you.

KN: If you go back, people worked hard. Like a hundred years ago, its not like today you have to work 40 h/week and then you are free. You mostly worked from early morning to late at night. When you had the opportunity like a Silver wedding or a "uppsito" or something like where you dance, the guy providing the music of course he is going to play a major role. So I think that's self-explanatory, but then again I think at least here not every "spelman" I don't know how to translate "spelman".. when you say "spelman" over here people think of the traditional folkmusic. A spelman" was also often a little peculiar, a lot of the "spelmän" where a little funny people, they could be heavy drinkers or they would not be your average guy they had some "issues" but they were good at playing!

FO: I think its still the same now, for instance most of the live musician. you are either drinking or you are a womanizer (laughing)

KN: if you are a artist of any kind, many artists are kind of.. we should not generalize (everybody is laughing) WE here are normal people! (everybody is laughing)

FO: no we are not generalizing, it comes with the art! (everybody is laughing)

KN: yeah some part of it, some more than others.

FO: yeah that's true, for instance KIZZ, a lot of things come to mind, woman , drinking maybe smoking certain things come to you, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they are all the same.

KN: No, you can call them colorful people (everybody is laughing) they have character.

FO: Yeah that's a nice way to put it.

KN: A lot of the ones you have talked about today that people remember.

FO: ah the colorful once (laughs)

KN: Yeah, be course there are so many stories about them

FO: Yes!

KN: about the weird kind of things they did and I think that's kind of charming as well.

FO: Yes, sometimes people often go and see not the band but..

KN: yeah, and if you where really good, the best and you also had a lot of character, you were a colorful guy, then you were going to be remembered for a long period of time.

FO: that's true.

KN: There where also some who weren't the best players but is remembered be course they did of lot of things (everybody is laughing)

FO: that's true that's true...

LD: lets go to some of the instruments, can you talk about your drums a little bit? The people here in the podcast cant see them but what's there name and..?

FO: Traditionally in every culture in the world, every group, every dialect they all have certain instrument they use to make music and all of them at some point had some kind of percussion. For instance if you look back in the Nordic stuff, the Viking movement, you see they have some sort of.. there is a element of percussion somewhere. But the way this percussion is built is different but it follows the same principle. Piece of wood. Animal skin. And strings. All of them follow the same principle but the tekNIK how they are made are different. This one, this one is typical my tribe, we call it the Kpanlogo Drum. And this is weary similar when you look at congas

LD: yeah

FO: they look weary similar, why? Be course on a conga you change the tune by reducing by tighten the bolt, that changes the tuning of it. This is also the same, but we have something called "the peg" it means that that the wooden stuff here can go in and come out, and this is different from the Djembe. The Djembe is made with strings and it does not have "the peg" meaning no matter what you do you get the same tone.

KN: but you can wet the skin. ?

FO: but that's quite risky, be course with the djembe when wet you also have to be weary careful, be course the skin is already weary tight. So for instance if you are playing and you want a low note in you playing you can't actually do that on a djembe, what I mean is that (starts beating the drum) do you hear the sound? Now listen. (the note is lower) the note changes. I like this drum, not just be course it`s from my tribe, playing this is smoother and easier compared to the djembe. And the technic is different this one has more rhythm, and of course its following the same principle we have wood, skin and we have the ropes. But the djembe the ropes are not like this they are tight to the wood so it can not pull together. I can loose this a bit and still get what I want (FO showing on the drum) so this makes this drum a bit unique and its funny be course djembe is from west Africa the mandinka tribe, and mandinka tribe cover Guinea, Senegal, Gambia all this French speaking tribes in West Africa it use to be one big (mumbles) and then they just chop them up to pieces but that's a different story (laughs) they use the djembe, but we who are a bit eastern part of west Africa use this type of drum so when you come to this side its more rhythmic (beats the drum) compere when you go to the far east and the way they use them drums are completely different. Nowadays its cross-cultural influence meaning that if you go to Ghana now there is almost every group are using djembe, but djembe is not from Ghana. But every group have the Kpanlogo and the djembe. But a funny thing is that we from eastern part of west Africa we can play the djembe but those from west Africa cannot play this Kpanlogo drum. And all comes down to the Teknik, the way they play it is different with Kpanlogo your hand is a bit lower but whit djembe your hand is completely outside the drum. And be course of the that, its weary hard for them to calm down the hand. And a story about this happened when we went with my band to Tampere to perform there where a group from Gambia or Senegal they had Djembe and other instruments and I had Kpanlogo and djembe, so when they where going to perform one guy saw this Kpanlogo and then he took it and tried it but he didn't know how to play it so he just put it down. It was then when I realized they are completely different, so this this drum is weary unique to me once you understand this it's easier to play djembe.

LD: the skin of the Kpanlogo, is it cow?

FO: Yeah this one is cow its mostly cow and sheep, in Gambia most of the djembes they use goat skin, and those drums made from that area are usually weary expensive compere to drums made from us. This Kpanlogo is more expensive than the djembe and there are also different variations based on what you want.

LD: The details on your Kpanlogo drum is weary detailed.

KN: Yeah there are carvings, a giraffe and a..

LD: Yeah there is animal carvings!

FO: Yes its funny, making this piece of drum it goes to a process, meaning its goes to factory you have this department who does this and that departments doing that. There are special people who does the carving, so if I am a drum builder, I buy this wood, clean it and everything then i go and give it to someone who carves.

LD: Ah ok!

FO: So those who make the drums are not the same people who does the carving.

KN: So you choose the giraffe?

FO: yes! For me I decided that I want the giraffe

LD: aah! Its like a tattoo artist

FO: Exactly! Yeah because there are artist who does this stuff.

LD: Lets go into the violin!

FO: What's the main difference between a violin and a fiddle?

KN: It's the same instrument its just has to do with what you are playing, the fiddle is the style of music that you play a fiddler or you play the fiddle its folk music the violin is more classical music.

FO: You are using the violin to play folk music?

KN: yeah... when I play this it's a fiddle. But if I give it to a classical musician, he plays the violin. But a fiddle player would have maybe different kind of strings and the lower setup for the strings so it's easier to play, if you are a classical musician specially when you are a soloist you have to project and the sound so if you have stings further up you get more sound but its harder to play. In folk music.. maybe not so much in this region, well if we go further back like a hundred years or more it would be more common to tune violin differently and I think a classical musician they don't do that, but in folk music it is. I have now the standard tuning, what we think is the standard tuning. If you go to Norway and show this tuning they call this the low tuning be course its really uncommon for them to even have this what we think is the standard tuning for a classical musician standard tuning. If we have (Kenneth is tuning it in a different tuning) what happened if you are in AEAE tuning you get a lot ring from the instrument so when you play notes (Kenneth starts to play) the whole instrument starts to resonate. But this just works if you play in certain keys, If you play in lot of different keys then it's easier to have the standard tuning but if I play I tune in A on this (Kenneth starts to play a folksong) it resonates.

LD: I covered my bit on the questions, any of you guys have anything to bring up that we forgot to talk about?

KN: I would have thought it would be more differences, but I think there were a lot of similiter and also how society has changed and things evolve, its kind of the same

LD: yes that's true!

FO: Its true! Even thou wthey have not had any contact, but the way changes are happening here it's also happening there.

LD: yes! Only with different twists.

FO: Yes.

LD: Lets wrap it up with a song.

KN: Try to play something and I can see if I can find something.

FO: (Starts playing a groove with the Kpanlogo drum)

KN: Ok! That would go nice with a shottis maybe a shottis from Kvevlax.

can we go a little faster?

(they start jamming on a beautiful folktune,)

Then the podcasts end.