

# RAULAND RAMBLES



*Ånon Egeland. Bruce Molsky. Arto Järvelä.*

1. Engelska från Korpo
2. Cumberland Gap
3. Harvelandsvalsen
4. Shaking Off The Acorns
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7. Laulu, olut ja viina (trad/Arto Järvelä)
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## A meeting of three masters

A distinctive personal style is a vital aspect of traditional music. True master performers combine a clear rootedness in their tradition with an equally clear capacity for personal expression. To see a meeting of three such masters is a great and rare privilege.

Those of us lucky enough to be at the Rauland International Winter Festival in February 2016 witnessed just such an encounter between **Ånon Egeland**, **Arto Järvelä** and **Bruce Molsky**. All three are masters in the sense described above: each in his own tradition, each with his own particular playing style and each – for that matter – with his own characteristic sense of humor.

I had the even greater privilege of spending several days in the studio with this talented trio, observing how they worked together and recording the results.

All three brought tunes from their own tradition and their own repertoire to the group, and all three absorbed the tunes from the other traditions as if it were the most natural thing in the world. They made the music their own, creating a wonderful, vigorous blend that had the cohesiveness of a seasoned band and yet still managed to showcase the unique talents of each performer.

It is my great pleasure to present the results of this studio session, together with recordings from the group's concert at Oslo's Riksscenen later the same week.

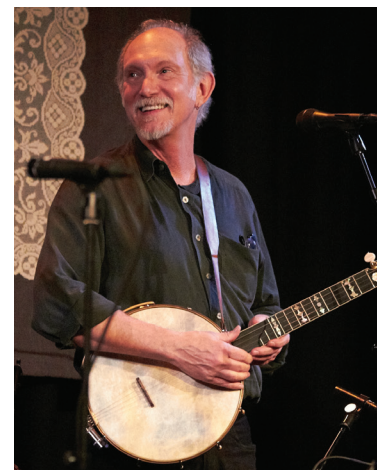
TELLEF KVIFTE



**Ånon Egeland** learnt his craft directly from iconic fiddlers in Norway's Agder County and is best known for his work disseminating this musical heritage. His playing is marked by an archaic yet highly personal style, and he has a vast repertoire of rare tunes. Since his recording debut in 1977, he has collaborated on a dozen albums with some of the finest musicians on the Scandinavian folk scene, and he has taken his music to 22 countries on four different continents. He has worked full-time as a traditional music teacher since 1988, and began his current job at the Department of Traditional Arts and Traditional Music at the University College of Southeast Norway in 1999.



**Arto Järvelä** is a fourth-generation member of the illustrious Järvelä clan, famed for their fiddle-playing. As well as pursuing a solo career, he plays in numerous Finnish folk groups such as JPP, Ampron Prunni, Pinnin Pojat, The Helsinki Mandoliners, Nordik Tree and Erik Hokkanen & Lumisudet. Arto also teaches in the Folk Music Department at Helsinki's University of the Arts. A sought-after folk musician with a solid international reputation, Arto has represented Finnish culture in more than 40 countries.



**Bruce Molsky**, hailed by Mother Jones Magazine as "one of America's premier fiddling talents", is a Grammy-nominated artist on fiddle, banjo, guitar and song. His collaboration with Anonymous 4, *1865 – Songs of Hope and Home* from the American Civil War, has received rave reviews. Bruce is also a special guest on *Tracker*, the latest CD by legendary rocker Mark Knopfler. No Depression Magazine called Bruce "an absolute master." These days he tours with his brand new trio, Molsky's Mountain Drifters, is the Visiting Scholar for Berklee College of Music's American Roots Program, and continues to be the go-to guy for the next generation of old-time fiddlers.

# The Tunes

## 1. Engelska från Korpo

An *engelska*, or English dance, is a particular kind of contradance whose steps follow a figure-of-eight pattern. There are about 20 different *engelska* dances in Finland. This tune comes from Korpo, an island in southwest Finland. It was played by Johannes V. Eklund (1882–1954), a fiddler and sailor from Brändö, the neighboring island to Korpo.

Arto: fiddle  
Bruce: fiddle  
Ånon: fiddle

## 2. Cumberland Gap

This is probably one of the most-traveled old-time fiddle tunes, and the melodies vary widely from one place and one musician to another. This really unusual variant comes from the playing of George Marion Reece of Zionville, North Carolina (near Boone), who was recorded for the Library of Congress in 1936. Born in 1874, Reece's interpretations of just about everything he recorded were quirky and cool.

Bruce: fiddle  
Arto: fiddle  
Ånon: fiddle

## 3. Harvelandsvalsen

"Harvelandsvalsen", or the Harveland waltz, is one of many tunes Ånon got from the fiddler Sigurd Fjeldstad (1903–1984), who came from the small town of Tvedestrand on the southern coast of Norway. Sigurd was well aware of the shift in meter in the second part but insisted that this was the way his own teachers had played it. We're glad Sigurd stood his ground on the matter.

Ånon: fiddle  
Arto: fiddle  
Bruce: banjo

## 4. Shaking Off The Acorns

Edwin "Edden" Hammons of West Virginia was born the same year as George Marion Reece (1874), and although they were hardly neighbors, their fiddling shared a certain dark and soulful sensibility, perhaps only by coincidence, or maybe because of being from that time in history. Hammons was recorded in 1947 by folklorist Louis Watson Chappell. We love these kinds of tunes.

Bruce: fiddle  
Arto: kantele  
Ånon: Jew's harp

## 5. Napolilainen katulaulaja (Gerhard Winkler)

The Finns have a thing about tangos. In the 1960s and 1970s they became so big in Finland that even folk fiddlers ended up playing them. Arto learned this one – a straight-forward, simplified folky version of the hugely popular 1936 hit 'O mia bella Napoli' – from his grandpa, Johannes Järvelä (1906–1994).

Arto: fiddle  
Bruce: fiddle (pizzicato)  
Ånon: ukulele

## 6. Reuben

Also known as Train 45, there are probably dozens of verses to Reuben. But they all center around the engineer's train journey and ensuing wreck, often interspersed with verses that have nothing at all to do with the story but add so much color, like: "I'll pawn you my watch, and I'll pawn you my chain, But I won't pawn my fiddle or my name." Good sentiment for a fiddler who has their priorities straight!

Bruce: vocals, banjo  
Arto: kantele, vocals  
Ånon: overtone flute

## 7. Laulu, olut ja viina (trad/Arto Järvelä)

Arto composed the melody for this song for a gig at a beer society's party. The lyrics are drawn from a poem in the *Kanteletar*, the old runo songs of Finland. The song, whose title translates as 'Song, beer and booze', is highly educational, dealing with vital issues such as how much it's advisable to drink and the consequences of overdoing it.

Arto: vocals, fiddle

## 8. Ein Gamle-Jens spila jamt når han kom ifrå byen

Ånon got this rare *springdans* tune from a private recording of the Hardanger fiddle-player Jens K. Mykland (1894–1969) from Mykland in Aust-Agder county, southern Norway. He used to announce it as 'A tune Old Jens always played when he came back from town'. Not a title as such, it raises a few interesting questions about just why Old Jens – Jens T. Mykland (1845–1931) and the uncle of our source – was so keen on playing after making his way back from the nearest town 45 km away.

Ånon: Hardanger fiddle  
Bruce: fiddle  
Arto: fiddle

### 9. Boys Them Buzzards Are Flying/Cotton Eyed Joe

The first tune in this set was written by Garry Harrison, a contemporary of ours who sadly left us too soon in 2012. From Charleston, Illinois, Garry was a true authority on the traditional music of Illinois, and did a lot of field recording of fiddlers from his home region. The second is Bruce's own mash-up of Cotton Eyed Joe, the old dance favorite.

*Bruce: fiddle*

### 10. Spoof Polonaises 1 & 8

In 1793 Maria Helena Spoof (1768–1828) of Lempäälä, southern Finland, started to note down tunes in her little music book. By 1796 it was filled with a collection that included 57 polonaises and polskas. It is the oldest known source of traditional fiddle tunes collected in Finland.

*Arto: fiddle*

*Bruce: fiddle*

*Ånon: Hardanger fiddle*

### 11. Gamle-Olav

Also known as 'Lea deg, Gamle- Olav' – 'Shake a leg, Old Olav!' – this is a well-known *halling* tune popularized by Rudi & Okshovd (Knut Ø. Rudi & Ola G. Okshovd) of Valdres, Norway, who were the first Hardanger fiddle duo ever to be commercially recorded. Ånon got his version from the great Andres K. Rysstad (1893–1984) of Hylestad in Setesdal, southern Norway.

*Ånon: Hardanger fiddle*

### 12. Poor Little Mary Sitting In The Corner

This tune comes from the playing of Enos Canoy (b. 1909), of Magee, Mississippi, and was recorded in 1939. On the original recording, Jim Myers "beat straws" on Canoy's fiddle (an old-time technique of drumming on the open strings of the fiddle while the fiddler was playing). Ånon beats chopsticks on Bruce's fiddle here, and happily does not do any damage. Arto adds kantele, which probably makes this combination of instruments a first!

*Bruce: fiddle*

*Arto: kantele*

*Ånon: chopsticks*

### 13. Sjøfløytehamborg

The source for this tune is a recording from the 1950s made by Knut N. Juveli of Flesberg in Numedal Valley, southern Norway. He played the *sjøfløyte*, the local generic term for whistles and recorders. A *hamborg* – a dialect term for a dance that is a relative of the polka – should actually be played fairly quickly. But Knut Juveli was over 90 and short of breath when he made the recording. What's more, his flute was cracked and leaky, so the tempo is much slower than normal. But we rather like it that way.

*Ånon: Hardanger fiddle*

*Bruce: fiddle*

*Arto: fiddle*

Recorded on 23 and 24 February 2016 in the studio of the Department of Traditional Arts and Traditional Music, University College of Southeastern Norway, Rauland, Norway, and live at Riksscenen, Oslo, Norway, on 25 February 2016.

Produced and mixed by Tellef Kvifte  
Mastering by Tor Magne Hallibakken

Digital release by Taragot/5b.no AS

**Taragot 04**

CD release by OArt Music

**OArtCD9**

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