

Lur



Eilif Gundersen teaching young lur players.



CD 1 - 7

Eilif Gundersen, *lur: Fyrispel / Koma guta liggje*, etter Helge Strand / Knut Sanden Bråten (Hallingdal)

The *lur* is one of Norway's oldest instruments and has, through time, been connected to life at the mountain summer pastures. It was used in particular as for communication. Most often, it was milkmaids who played the instrument, which is also known as *langlur* or *neverlur*, whilst the herdsman played the *bukkehorn* (billygoat's horn). Via the sound of the *lur*, the farming folk could communicate with each other, or it could be used as a means of calling the animals home in the evening. In addition, the *lur* could be used to scare away predators such as wolves or bears.

We know the *lur* from very old excavations. In Norway, a wooden *lur* was found in the Oseberg excavation, thus meaning the *lur* dates from around 850 A.D. In

Denmark, a wooden *lur* was found during the excavation of an Iron Age settlement from around 400-500 A.D. The Danish *lur* was constructed in much the same way as the *lurs* in the Norwegian tradition. This consisted of a piece of wood which was split, then hollowed out, and then put back together again by winding strips of wood around it. In Norway, birch bark is generally used.

The blowing technique is the same as for the trumpet, and the thinnest end is carved to form a mouthpiece. The *lur* is usually around one to two metres long. The longer it is, the more notes in the natural scale can be created. In the natural scale, the distance between the notes decreases the higher in pitch one plays.

The *lur* is also used nowadays, but perhaps not as much on the mountain farm. The instrument now appears in connection with ceremonies, both within and outwith the folk music environment.