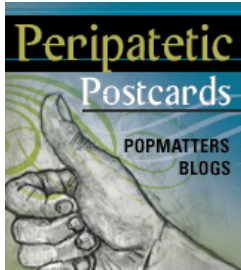


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Rob Horning's consumer culture blog, Marginal Utility, has launched on *PopMatters*.



## FRIFOT

### Sluring

(Northside)  
US release date: 3 June 2003  
UK release date: Available as import

by Gypsy Flores

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Lena Willemark, Per Gudmundsen, and Ale Möller are three extraordinarily talented musicians from Sweden who not only play together as the trio *Frifot*, but also each has had a solo career as well. They are three of their country's greatest purveyors of "traditional" music as well as being involved in more innovative and modern musical styles, especially jazz.

Lena Willemark has long been one of my favorite Swedish singers. Several years ago in 1993 I picked up a CD titled *Music of the Scandinavian Valleys* on the Ocora label. It featured one of my favorite Norwegian singers, Kirsten Bråten-Berg. The recording was a collaboration between Norwegian musicians Kirsten Bråten Berg and Gunnar Substeid and Swedish musicians Lena Willemark, Per Gudmundsen, and Ale Möller. I fell in love with it and wanted to find more by all of them. At that time, Scandinavian music wasn't all that easy to find but I persisted in my search. (Luckily, this is no longer the case, as the label Northside has been an outstanding resource for this music). Although Lena is known for her outstanding contribution to the survival of Swedish traditional singing, she has also had influences from other musical genres such as jazz. Her voice can be as sweet as a lullaby but she can also screech and scream and call the cows home. (Which of course she does, herding calls being a particular Scandinavian song form. She does a particularly haunting one on the album, *Nordan* titled "Vallsvit").

The recording begins with two tunes "Mikkel Per/Kus Erik". The first half takes its melody from the Norwegian song "Vesle-Kari Rud" which in the liner notes says Lena learned from Kirsten Bråten-Berg, who is basically her counterpart in Norway. Lena re-wrote the lyrics based on "some harmless gossip in Lena's village". After this spirited song, they switch into a polska, a Swedish turning dance in 3/4 time. (Polskas are in 3/4 time but they are definitely not waltzes, they can be very convoluted rhythmically and their differences are regional. Lena is from Älvdalen and her region's music is quite different from say Rattvik or Boda -- yet they are all polskas). The concert piece on the "enhanced" part of the CD is a performance of these two tunes and worth seeing for the group's superb performance. When Lena sings she looks like her voice begins at her toes and just wells up through her body and comes out her mouth and seeing Ale Möller play both the mandola and harmonica is quite a sight! Of course, Per Gudmundsen, one of my all time favorite fiddlers, is no slouch himself.

One of my favorite tracks on the album is an instrumental titled "Dubbelpipan" which features Ale Möller on a "drone pipe" he had made for him after he had been in Slovakia. Ale started out as a guitar and trumpet player with a love for American music. He later met a Greek musician who was living in Sweden and Ale fell in love not only with Greek *rembetic* music but the bouzouki as well. He went to Greece to study the instrument and music and after some time he came to the realization that he needed to return to Sweden and re-connect with his own roots. This is when he took up the mandola. He is an expert player but does not confine himself with just this instrument but plays many others such as the folk harp, shawm, harmonica, cow's horn, etc., besides being a fine singer.

Not only is Per Gudmundsen a master violinist but he is a fine singer and bagpipe player as well. One very special but very difficult to find recording is Per's legendary record of Swedish sackpiva music. Unfortunately, it has yet to be released onto CD format, but any one who has ever heard it will agree that Per is a master of this instrument. He is considered responsible for the revival of the Swedish bagpipe and no recording of his would be complete without some of this music. "Hoga berg" (or "Tall Mountain") is the only tune on *Sluring* where he plays sackpiva.

## TODAY'S MUSIC

### CD REVIEWS

- [Tuesday, 27.Sep.05]  
 :: **Her Space Holiday**: *The Past Presents the Future*  
 :: **David Gray**: *Life in Slow Motion*  
 :: **Trisha Yearwood**: *Jasper County*  
 :: **Paradise Boys**: *The Young & The Guest List*  
 :: **The Detroit Cobras**: *Baby*  
 :: **Al Kooper**: *Black Coffee*  
 :: **Dreadful Yawns**: *Dreadful Yawns*  
 :: **Dave Dill**: *See You in the Sunshine*

### CONCERT REVIEWS

- [Monday, 26.Sep.05]  
**Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings**  
 11.Sep.05: Austin, TX

Jones doesn't just perform; she becomes a center of seductive gravity. She commands every inch of the room in ways that make you want to give yourself entirely to fits of raw spirit.

## RECENT MUSIC

In bold are *PopMatters Picks*, the best in new music.

- |                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>CD REVIEWS</b>        | The Most Serene Republic     |
| The American Analog Set  | The Mutts                    |
| <b>A.R.E.</b> Weapons    | <b>The New Pornographers</b> |
| <b>Badi Assad</b>        | <b>Me'Shell Ndegeocello</b>  |
| <b>Devendra Banhart</b>  | Nickel Creek                 |
| Natasha Bedingfield      | <b>North Mississippi</b>     |
| <b>Art Blakey</b>        | <b>Allstars</b>              |
| Bring Back the Buffalo   | <b>Novillero</b>             |
| Broken Spindles          | OK Go                        |
| Pieta Brown              | <b>Opeth</b>                 |
| Stephen Bruton           | Our Lady Peace               |
| Andy Caldwell            | Portastatic                  |
| <b>Johnny Cash</b>       | Prefuse 73                   |
| <b>June Carter Cash</b>  | <b>Princess Superstar</b>    |
| Chelsea                  | T. Raumschmiere              |
| Eric Clapton             | Amy Rigby                    |
| David Allan Coe          | The Rolling Stones           |
| Coldplay                 | Röyksopp                     |
| The Coral                | <b>Billy Joe Shaver</b>      |
| Cranes                   | Sigur Rós                    |
| Criteria                 | Stellastarr*                 |
| Rodney Crowell           | Stereolab                    |
| Curumin                  | <b>Sufjan Stevens</b>        |
| The Dandy Warhols        | <b>Marty Stuart</b>          |
| <b>Miles Davis</b>       | The Sun                      |
| Death Cab For Cutie      | Super Furry Animals          |
| Decomposure              | Supergass                    |
| Diamond Nights           | Richard Swift                |
| DJ Craze                 | Tenement Halls               |
| <b>Donovan</b>           | Satoshi Tomiie               |
| Dropsonic                | Turbonegro                   |
| Greg Dulli               | John Vanderslice             |
| <b>Bob Dylan</b>         | Gerald Veasley               |
| Echo and the Bunnymen    | Laura Veirs                  |
| Missy Elliott            | Waco Brothers                |
| <b>The Fall</b>          | The Warlocks                 |
| Fates Warning            | <b>Abigail Washburn</b>      |
| Fine China               | Kanye West                   |
| The Fleshtones           | Windsor for the Derby        |
| The Frank & Joe Show     | Wooden Wand and the          |
| Gabin                    | Vanishing Voice              |
| <b>Giant Drag</b>        | Susumu Yokota                |
| Alex Gold                |                              |
| Goldfrapp                |                              |
| José González            |                              |
| <b>Dexter Gordon</b>     |                              |
| Vivian Green             |                              |
| <b>Harv</b>              |                              |
| <b>Richard Hawley</b>    |                              |
| Head of Femur            |                              |
| Himuro                   |                              |
| Horace X                 |                              |
| <b>Hanne Hukkelberg</b>  |                              |
| I Am Kloot               |                              |
| Idlweild                 |                              |
| <b>Iggy Pop</b>          |                              |
| <b>The Immortal Lee</b>  |                              |
| <b>County Killers 3</b>  |                              |
| J-Live                   |                              |
| Jackie O Motherfucker    |                              |
| Jamiroquai               |                              |
| Leela James              |                              |
| Josh Joplin              |                              |
| The Kennedys             |                              |
| Kingsbury Manx           |                              |
| The Knitters             |                              |
| Leo Kottke / Mike Gordon |                              |
| Jamie Lidell             |                              |
| Lina                     |                              |
| Lina                     |                              |

### CONCERT REVIEWS

- Akron/Family + Great  
 Lake Swimmers  
 Architecture in Helsinki  
 DKT/MC5  
 The Dudley Corporation  
 Eminem + D-12 + 50  
 Cent  
 Green Day  
 Nanci Griffith  
 Billy Idol + Our Lady  
 Peace + Static-X  
 Lollapalooza 2005  
 Magnolia Electric Co.  
 Motley Crue  
 Tom Petty  
 Queens of the Stone Age  
 + Interpol + Bloc Party  
 Rilo Kiley + The New York  
 Dolls  
 Siren Music Festival 2005  
 Patti Smith  
 Sounds of the  
 Underground Tour  
 The Spinto Band  
 Bruce Springsteen + The

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One of the best parts of the album is the three-part vocal harmony that Frifot has included for the first time on their recordings. They all have beautiful voices and together they create a truly wonderful sound. I hope that future recordings by them will feature even more.

As is the case with *Sluring*, Northside has increasingly come out with "enhanced" CD's. This one includes a concert piece as well as a recipe for "Sluring" (and you will have to buy the CD to find out what that is), but suffice to say the recipe sounds better than the name for it and that it takes lots of tankards of water. Recipes aside, this is a truly beautiful album and highly recommended.

— 6 January 2004

[Little Brother](#)  
[Longwave](#)  
[The Love Hall Tryst](#)  
[Timo Maas](#)  
**[The Magic Numbers](#)**  
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