

# Mp3 Loretta Kelley - Amerikaspel

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The leading American-born player of the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle (hardingfele), an ornately decorated fiddle with sympathetic strings and a 300-year tradition, presents a driving mix of springar and gangar tunes with a strong beat, perfect for dancing. 20 MP3 Songs WORLD: Western European, FOLK: Traditional Folk Details: AmerikaSpel is music for dancing. It presents the rhythm and excitement of the Norwegian hardingfele, playing the music it was meant to play, accompanying the springar and gangar dances of Norway. The springar and gangar are among the oldest couple dances found in Norway. In the areas of Telemark, Valdres, Hallingdal, Setesdal, Numedal, and the west coast from Hardangerfjord up to Sognefjord, these dances have been preserved in a living, evolving tradition up to the present day. Their survival and development has been bound up inextricably with the music of the hardingfele, or Hardanger fiddle. This instrument, which differs from the ordinary violin by having sympathetic strings, a flatter bridge and fingerboard, and ornate decoration, has been played at least since the mid-1600s. Its music has been handed down in living tradition to the present day, by ear from master to pupil. To dance a springar or gangar is to experience the highest degree of intimacy with music. Karin Brennesvik, one of Norway's foremost dance teachers, said, Let the music tell you what to do. The springar is inherently improvisational, which allows the dancer to express the nuances of the music, to echo the flow of the melody in the phrasing of the dance, and to give form to moments of pure unrestrained joy. AmerikaSpel means hardingfele playing in America, and it is special in that it presents Norwegian music played by Americans. This album would have been unthinkable only twenty years ago. When the Norwegian immigrants were freshly arrived in this country in the last century, there were hundreds of hardingfele players. But as they aged and died, no young fiddlers learned from them. In 1976 the ones that were left could be counted on the fingers of two hands, and most of those were over 70. But starting around 1976, there has been an explosion of interest in the hardingfele and its dances, both among Norwegian-Americans and those with no Scandinavian background. Today there are probably at least a hundred and fifty active hardingfele players in this country, and many of them have immersed themselves in all aspects of the tradition. Some have traveled to Norway for intensive study, and even participated in

fiddling competitions there. Although the hardingfele reaches its highest levels of artistic achievement as a solo instrument, it has become popular in this century for fiddlers to use accompaniment. Loretta is joined on this recording by other accomplished players and singers of Scandinavian music from every corner of the U.S. Paul Morrisett plays together with Loretta on hardingfele for two telespringars. This reflects a trend in Norway towards group playing, with all members of an ensemble playing the same part. In a traditional Norwegian dance evening in Telemark, the hardingfele player might include a few gamaldans tunes, such as waltz and reinlender. AmerikaSpel includes examples of these, featuring the hardingfele accompanied by Matt Fichtenbaum on piano. Also included is a dance from Western Norway which has become very popular in the U.S., the vossarull, featuring accompaniment by Dick Rees on accordion. Anita Anderson contributes a singing reinlender with Loretta providing accompaniment. And as a fitting close to the evening, Anita sings a lyrical song as the exhausted dancers sit to enjoy one last musical moment in the wee hours before saying goodnight. AmerikaSpel is dedicated to all the Norwegian hardingfele masters who have given their time and talents to teaching Americans, both here and in Norway. Without their support and encouragement, the rebirth of the hardingfele in America would not have been possible. Loretta Kelley of Washington, D.C. is the premiere American player of the hardingfele. She began serious study of the instrument in 1979, when she made the first of many trips to Norway. Loretta has taught and performed extensively throughout the U.S., has written several magazine articles about the hardingfele, a book chapter, and a book of tune transcriptions. From 1991 to 1994 she served as president of the Hardanger Fiddle Association of America, and in 1994 her playing was featured in an hour-long program on Norwegian radio. Her first recording, Dansekveld was released in 1990. Performing with Loretta: Anita Anderson of Seattle has been singing Scandinavian folk music at dances and concerts for more than ten years, and gives singing workshops as well. She has studied with Kirsten Brten Berg and Maria Rjs, among others, and sings on Dansekveld, Loretta's first recording. Matt Fichtenbaum began his interest in Scandinavian folk music while teaching in Sweden in the 70s, when the revival of the nyckelharpa keyed fiddle was at its peak. Matt took up the nyckelharpa and then the fiddle, and later began to explore the possibilities of the piano as an instrument of traditional Scandinavian music. Matt lives in the Boston area and plays regularly for Scandinavian dancing. An accomplished multi-instrumentalist, Paul Morrisett, from the greater New York City area, began playing the hardingfele in 1987. Since then he has made numerous trips to Norway to study the instrument with

master fiddlers. He currently plays bass with the Klezmatiks, one of the premiere klezmer music ensembles, and plays trumpet with the Zlatne Uste Balkan brass band. Dick Rees is a full-time musician specializing in Scandinavian music on button and piano accordion as well as fiddle, and has made numerous trips to Scandinavia. An original member of Garrison Keillors Powdermilk Biscuit Band, he lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, and has several of his own recordings to his credit. Credits: Producer: Charlie Pilzer Engineer: Heidi Gerber, Bias Studio, Springfield, Virginia Mastered by: Charlie Pilzer and David Glasser, Airshow, Springfield, Virginia Designer and illustrator: Tim Newcomb

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