

LIVING TRADITION - LOCAL DANCES AND MUSIC FROM FANØ ISLAND - DENMARK.

Fanø Island is a tiny little island on the westcoast of Denmark. Its is the only location in Denmark with a local, and still living music - and dance tradition, which goes back at least 300 years back in time.

There are two villages on the island - one in the north, close to the mainland and civilization, called NORDBY with around 2800 inhabitants - and the village of SØNDERHO in the south spot on the island with a population of around 300 people.

As the island were populated by seafaring people/malepopulation and the women were looking after the chieldren and doing everything at home, this tiny society was both a very cosmopolitan and a very traditional grounded place. The local music were brought back with the sailors and geared into the two local dances.

There are two traditional dances from the island - SØNDERHONING from the village of Sønderho - and FANNIKE-DANCE from Nordby. On the island they are not considered as "folkdances" but more like "local dances" you learn from your parents - maybe a sister, a uncle or your neighbour.

Today the village of Sønderho is the only place where the dances are used to all kind of parties among young people - old people, and to all kind of celebrations.

The local Fanø-dances is a special variation of the so called "Polish Dances" - They originally came to all Scandinavia in 16-century (1600) brought by Polish mercenaries. In Sweden known as POLSKA - in Norway known as SPRINGAR or GANGAR - in Denmark known as POLS - and in Fanø island known as SØNDERHONING and FANNIKE-DANCE.

The dance is a couple-dance with two different parts and three steps - The very special and unik thing for the Fanø-dances is the music is played in 2/4-time. Normally the music for the Polish Dances all around Scandinavia are played in 3/4-time - BUT IT WORKS OUT PERFECTLY GOOD;-)

SØNDERHONING: The first part is a walking/marching-part, where the couples are marching after each other in the dancing-circle. The second part is the round-dancing part where the dancers do the three steps. We have around 100 different tunes for the Sønderhoning-dance.

FANNIKE-DANCE: The first part is a "dancing-on the same-spot-in-the-wrong-direction"-part. The second part is the round-dancing with the three steps (in the right direction;-). The FANNIKE-DANCE is a bit faster than the SØNDERHONING-DANCE. We have around 15 different tunes for this dance.

Actually there is a third "traditional" dance on the island called: FAST SØNDERHONING. Nobody really knows when this dance original started to be used - but it is sure a "modern" thing;-) and we know it all started around 1900-1920

This dance is very fast and only danced "round and round" with the three steps. There are around 10 different tunes for this dance.

The tempo of the SØNDERHONING-DANCE is BPM (beats per minute) 95

The tempo of the FANNIKE-DANCE is BPM 120

The tempo of the FAST SØNDERHONING is BPM 150