

STUDIA MUSICOLOGICA UPSALIENSIA

LEVIN CHRISTIAN WIEDES  
VISSAMLING

EN STUDIE I 1800-TALETS  
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WITH AN ENGLISH SUMMARY

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## SUMMARY

### CHAPTER I

#### *The Wiede Collection. Origin, Date and Provenance*

The present study sets out to solve certain problems concerning the source and analysis of the nineteenth century Swedish folksong melodies. The material consists of a collection of folksongs containing about 450 tunes, noted down by Levin Christian Wiede (1804-1882), a curate, together with a team of helpers who contributed together around 25 % of the whole collection.

The songs were collected between 1818 and 1820 and between 1842 and 1853 in Småland and in the northern part of Östergötland called Vikbolandet. Up to now these collections have existed only in manuscript.

Wiede was interested in folksongs even as a child, inspired by the interest in folk culture which prevailed in Sweden during the first decade of the 19th century. As did his contemporaries, Wiede interpreted this folk culture mainly as depreciated upper class culture. This romanticising antiquarian interest in things mediaeval had already provided the stimulus for editions of Swedish folksongs, which presumably served as Wiede's models.

There was an extremely rich tradition in folk culture where Wiede spent his youthful years, and he was utterly convinced that the people had conserved part of the spiritual culture of mediaeval times, both in language and customs. This romantic attitude was fostered more than ever in the conservative university milieu in which Wiede lived during his studies at Uppsala between 1823 and 1827. We can read in letters how Wiede is of the opinion that the folksongs become really beautiful only when they have been decked out in the musical style of the time.

After having been ordained in 1830, Wiede served as curate and deputy pastor in various parishes in Vikbolandet. It was during his stay in Dagsberg in 1842 that he began working in earnest on his collection of folksongs, while the bulk of the material was collected when he was curate in Östra Husby between 1844 and 1847. His priestly duties, especially that of the parish catechetical meeting, gave Wiede good contacts with various kinds of people, and he questioned members of all classes as to whether they had any songs to sing to him.

Wiede received economic and moral support in his efforts as collector of ancient monuments from Bror Emil Hildebrand, the custodian of national monuments. The songs formed part of the consignments of archaeological finds which Wiede sent regularly to the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities in Stockholm. This sanction on the part of an academic institution was of the utmost importance for both quality and quantity of the material. Even as he was beginning collecting in Östra Husby in August 1844, Wiede laments the fact that the older songs are beginning to die out. But as he gets into closer contact with his parishioners, the number of informants and songs increases.

He also sought to interest his colleagues and acquaintances, appealing to them to collect old songs in their home villages, and succeeded in this way in increasing his collection by about a hundred songs. He exhorted his colleagues to seek their organists' assistance when noting down tunes.

By collating information in correspondence and the Royal Academy's minutes, we can date the various song consignments as follows: nos. 1 to 50 Nov. 1844, nos. 51 to 100 May 1845, nos. 101 to 150 Jan. 1846, nos. 151 to 200 July 1846 and nos. 201 to 250 Feb. and March 1847. The songs included in the draft collection are drafts and copies of the earlier collection, together with (from no. 257 onwards) songs transcribed after 1847, and contributions from his helpers.

Wiede's own commentaries and notes concerning the place of origin, when collated with a manuscript of the texts, have made it possible to account for a number of tunes from this period in the later collection (1844-53). Wiede had included these in the first place for purposes of comparison. A faint revival of his interest came in 1872 in the form of copies and some few newly noted songs, and marked the close of Wiede's work.

## CHAPTER II

### *The Collectors*

The people collecting Swedish folksongs during the 19th century were in the first place professionals with musical training, secondly musical amateurs and thirdly those who noted down texts without even the most elementary musical knowledge. These latter usually tried to teach themselves the tunes while they noted the song and then waited for a chance to sing it to someone who could write down the tune in musical notation. Members of the first category, on the other hand, had a tendency to alter the tune to a considerable extent, introducing what were taken to be aesthetic improvements in accordance with the musical taste of the times. Those most fitted for such fieldwork appear to have been the members of the second group, and it is among them we find L. Wiede. His quite solid musical training of the normal middle class type was complemented for the task in hand by the innumerable copies Wiede made of previous editions of folksong melodies. His scientific schooling and his familiarity with and friendship for the folksingers are two further guarantees for the veracity of his transcriptions. Efforts to capture peculiarities of performance such as neutral intervals and details concerning rhythmical agogics, tempi or nuances are extremely rare, and can be collected only by exploring the various rough drafts noted of the tune. Wiede used a violin for checking his transcriptions. By collating certain small fragments of contemporary first drafts which have come down to us we can reconstruct Wiede's technique: first he wrote down the tune itself with small dots without giving the time values except in those cases where the tune is not syllabic or when one note is exceptionally long. After that he forced the tune into a suitable time signature. Probably both pitch and rhythm were schematised, and no attempt has been made to indicate particular ways of singing in the notation. Certain peculiarities of notation show that a special way of singing with folk intonation and special rhythmical effects was used; leading notes vary between major and minor in various stages of the work from draft to final copy. This probably means that the seventh degree was neutral, that is to say, somewhere between major and minor.

Similarly, a number of songs have been written out with long note values at the end of the phrases, which should mean that the final notes were held out a long time: Wiede makes a remark to this effect in one of his commentaries.

Wiede's helpers, who contributed about 25 % of the tunes, were ministers, organists and grammar school boys. The largest contribution came from A. F. Sondén, a minister and mathematics teacher, who noted down 27 songs, followed by P. U. Stenhammar, student of architecture and later composer, who contributed 15, E. Rudebeck, a minister, with 12 and P. H. Ringvall, a grammar school boy, with 10. All of the helpers seemed to have been able to reproduce the tunes in a satisfactory way.

The tunes in the Wiede collection do not reproduce the relatively free metre of folksongs, in which the tune is adapted to the requirements of the text, but instead are forced into a system of regular barlines. Wiede has, however, tried to reproduce the constant alterations of the tune from verse to verse by means of double notes. Many of folksong's tonal and rhythmical peculiarities can be studied neither in the Wiede collection nor in any other 19th century collection. But as far as problems of general analytical methods, forms, types of scale and melodic structure are concerned, we can have complete confidence in the skeleton version left us by the transcribers, and can sort the material out into typological groups to arrive at its age and origin.

The Wiede collection occupies an important position among our collections of vocal folkmusic from the 19th century. At the time they were collected, songs of just this type were a real part of the life of many Swedes.

### CHAPTER III

#### *Singers, their Repertoire and Milieu*

Singing songs was by far the nineteenth century's most widespread amusement. It satisfied the lower class's musical needs before the coming of the Industrial Revolution and the revivalist movements. Increased literacy brought with it an increased amount of singing from ballad sheets, and those songs which were handed down orally became steadily fewer. The Wiede collection includes examples of both these types of songs: older songs in the oral tradition such as medieval ballads, humorous songs, and children's songs, and also more recent songs, made popular via ballad sheets, together with locally composed songs.

The singers are in many cases anonymous. None of Wiede's helpers found it worth the trouble to note anything about the executants of the songs. Wiede himself gave the informant's name on many draft versions, which in addition can be checked and supplemented from an index of songs and singers. In spite of the fact that his information regarding names was often incomplete, the informants have in many cases been identified in parish registers. By identifying the various singers and finding out their milieu we are able to discover the songs' social background. Each repertoire has also been examined and an estimate made of the individual singer's qualifications. Among other things it can be proved how an individual's singing technique has altered the traditional version of the song. However, in the present collection there is no possibility of charting possible links in traditions on the basis of investigations among informants. The individual repertoires have shown that the singers seem in general to have been reliable bearers of tradition; they were in a position to reproduce

tunes of very different kinds. By comparing variants we are able to establish a relatively uncorrupted tradition. In particular is this the case with the older songs, those which have been handed down orally, both in point of text and melody. The more recent songs became corrupted more quickly. We can see by looking through the supplement of tunes that popular tunes were often sung to many texts, and that they in such cases maintain a remarkable degree of stability of tradition. Special melodic characteristics (quasi-recitative; tunes with melodic formulas) are not bound up with individual styles of singing: on the contrary, they re-appear in the repertoire of many good singers and can thus be regarded as phenomena of significance for the songs themselves.

Wiede's singers come from all social classes, a proof of the folk-song's wide distribution in the nineteenth century. But, as could be expected, the song proved not to be at home in the upper classes; in those cases where members of the upper class are informants, it seems probable that they took their songs from lower classes. It is sextons' wives, farmhands, soldiers and their wives who provide Wiede with his best informants; among them was cultivated a vital folksong tradition, forming in all probability a daily habit. The exceptional roll which women played as bearers of the old tradition is shown also in the present investigation: there is only one man among the chief informants, and his contribution seems insignificant in comparison with the material provided by the six really important women singers. In the rank and file of the informants we find men, to be sure, but with few exceptions they had more recent songs in their repertoires.

Up to now there has been no musical equivalent to the generic division of the texts of nineteenth century songs adopted by research workers, which has been used in the present work in summarizing repertoires. Is it possible to divide up the material into various genres by means of melodic analysis carried out with musicological methods? If so, what connection is there between the various text genres on the one hand and the melodic genres on the other? In order to answer these questions, analytical methods accepted in the fields of musicethnology and folksong research will be used here: the songs will be divided up with regard to form, type of scale, melodic features and rhythm.

## CHAPTER IV

### *The Structure of the Tunes*

With regard to the structure of the tune, the songs have been divided up into two main groups on the basis of the form of the text: songs with refrains, a group consisting mainly of medieval ballads; and songs without refrains, containing the other songs. When describing the various tunes, we shall use the word "motive" for that part of the tune which covers one line of the text. By the word "variant" I shall mean different versions of one and the same tune, but the mutual relations between them must be strengthened by relationships between the texts or demonstrable effects of the handing down process. Tunes which have considerable outer resemblances but which lack the above connections will be called "parallels". The melodic motives corresponding to the lines of the text are indicated by small letters, those corresponding to the lines of the refrain with capitals. Motives which are not identical are differentiated by means of figures placed below and to the right of

the letters. Identical repeats, indicated by the transcriber by means of repeat signs, are here indicated by brackets preceded by the figure 2.

That special organisation of melodic motives in verses and refrains which, in the case of the medieval French carol, was linked with performance by a chief dancer on the one hand and a ring of dancers singing the refrain on the other, is represented by isolated examples in Wiede's collection. This method of performance by soloist and chorus is documented in the Swedish nineteenth century tradition by one song, the tune of which possesses the structure in question. It might therefore be possible to assume that a few ballads in Wiede's collection were previously performed in a similar way, without necessarily indicating any direct connection with the mediaeval French carol. The majority of the ballad tunes have no such special construction, however.

The songs without refrains are divided up according to the number of lines in the text; i.e. the melodic motives and the form of the tune are shown. Well-known melodies which have become an integrated part of the repertoire of the social class in question have been studied in an effort to ascertain what happens to those tunes when they are handed down orally. In many cases the tune has become altered in the wear and tear of general performance, the number of motives in the song can be diminished, and, in place of the motive which has been removed, the singer uses repetitions of motives which stand out in his memory, or exchanges certain parts of the less-known tune for motives taken from the traditional melodic repertoire. This process, involving as it does the creation of new and often simpler structures, can be considered to be a formal creative activity on the part of the folk singer. The tune belonging to a text with a certain form of stanza can easily be fitted to other texts with the same form of stanza, and this fact was taken advantage of by the singers when adapting tunes to the newer songs which were being made popular by means of the ballad sheets. But the folk singer is also able to fit a tune to many different forms of stanza, and in so doing radically alter the tune's contours. A form which has escaped this alteration at the hands of folk singers to a very great extent is the bar form, different types of which appear with songs both with and without refrains.

### *The Tonal, Modal and Rhythmic Characteristics of the Tunes*

Any division of tunes into genres must be based on melodic phenomena of fundamental importance for the tune, which have remained relatively unaltered in the course of many performances by folk singers. The degree of veracity which can be ascribed to any version of the tune is of the greatest importance in analytical research. There are many uncertain factors inherent in the tunes belonging to the nineteenth century Swedish folksongs, due to their notation, which was too schematic. The melodic standardisation implicit in a single written-down version is an arbitrarily chosen projection of the perpetually varying musical organism constituted by the tune when it is part of a vital musical tradition. And although Wiede's notes contain hints of the folksong's morphological characteristics, these are unfortunately insufficient to provide a basis for a thorough analysis.

On the other hand, a study of the tonal vocabulary of the tunes can be made on the basis of transcribed material of the type represented by the present collection with a sufficient degree of certainty.

To facilitate comparison between the different tunes, we shall refer to versions which have been transposed so that they require the least number of accidentals. Tunes which use a minor or major scale will thus have *a* or *c* respectively as their tonic.

A small group of tunes finishing on *e* or *d* possess in addition to the type of scale other characteristics of the Phrygian and Dorian church modes, respectively. Some tunes cannot be included in any of the above groups; they lack a tonal centre.

About 80 of the tunes in the collection use a minor scale with no sixth. These tunes could thus also be said to belong to the Dorian mode.

Of those tunes finishing on *c*, 95 % are diatonic major tunes; however, in spite of this they do not form a homogeneous group (see below).

Tunes finishing on *d* or *e* with characteristics reminiscent of the church modes would appear to have some connection with the surviving characteristics of hymns, which the informants were well acquainted with from congregational singing. Those tunes with haphazard keynotes appear to represent exceptions to the conventional pattern of keys. The fact that these tunes are characterised by frequent use of melodic formulae (see below) seems to indicate that they are possibly examples of a primitive or perhaps an older type of melody. In the same way, certain *a*-minor tunes without sixth would seem to belong to a group of their own with special characteristics.

Many of the tunes are definitely major or minor, and in all probability have been taken over relatively late from other social groups. The difference between the various melodic types, however, is often not a matter of the actual scale but more a question of the shape of the melodic line.

Those quasi-recitative tunes contained in the collection are most probably examples of primitive folk melodies, but the possibility that they represent a throw-back from a musical culture, the origin and age of which are at present unknown to us, cannot be excluded.

Melodic formulae are an important characteristic of the construction of a great number of the tunes. By the designation "melodic formulae" we mean those small motives, with a range of a fourth or fifth, lasting one or two bars, which form the basis of the melody and which can become crystallised to fixed tonal formulae. A striking motivic formula can permeate large parts of an informant's repertoire. The tunes move by step, in any case seldom with jumps of more than a major third. In the Wiede collection, this type of melody is represented by a very large group of tunes which belong almost entirely to older types of text such as ballads, children's songs and singing games.

The greater part of the tunes are characterised by a "harmonic" construction based on thirds, however. Most of the tunes belonging to the younger, ballad sheet songs are of this type. The tunes are usually unmistakably major or minor, major predominating. Examples of pre-major-minor melodic construction of the older type, with layers of thirds, which has been adopted by C. Sachs as criterion of an older European melodic style, also occur especially in Swedish folk music, however, and can also be detected among the ballad tunes in the present collection.

An essential and comparatively invariable element in folk tunes is that constituted by the tonal material's mutual relationship seen quantitatively. The number of notes and their length changes when the tune is fitted to the various stanzas, naturally, but these fluctua-

tions are seldom such as to disturb the quantitative distribution according to different pitches in any obvious way.

A number of practical experiments undertaken in conjunction with the task of cataloguing tunes at the Swedish Archives of Folk Songs have shown that the note or notes (placed in relation to the keynote) which account for a quantitatively large part of the length of the tune give the folk tunes their distinctive character: a scale step which accounts for more than a quarter of the length of the tune has been found to be an important centre for the tune in question. A scale step which accounts for less than one twentieth of the length of the tune (5 %) and which is not important by virtue of its position is in the majority of its appearances a leaping note or passing note, occurs only sporadically and is of less constitutive importance for the tune. Those steps which account for fifteen to twenty per cent of the length of a tune are taken to be of moderate importance. A melody with a step which takes up thirty per cent or more of the tune's length is in the majority of cases of a special type; quasi-recitative, characterised by formulae or constructed of continually repeated triadic figures.

In order to illustrate the quantitative importance of the individual steps, we shall use various note values as symbols for the percentage of time which that step takes up within the tune. A crotchet represents an average length (i.e. is used for steps which take up fifteen per cent of the length of the tune). (For the remaining symbols and their values see p. 71 in the complete Swedish version).

Each scale step's percentage can be ascertained in the following way: first the length of the tune in quavers is calculated. The example given for type number 6 consists of seven bars of six quavers each, making forty two quavers in all. The note *a'* occurs for a total of eight quavers' time. This number eight is about nineteen per cent of forty two; therefore *a'* is inserted in the structure as a crochet. The time taken up by rests is also shown in proportion to the complete length of the melody. (Alternative notation: in the example, *g'* instead of *b'* in the fifth bar is written with alternative notes in brackets.)

To be reckoned as of essential importance for the tune from a quantitative point of view, a step must thus take up at least fifteen per cent of the length of the tune. Such steps will be called *prominent steps* in what follows. An arrangement of this sort—which can be called a “material scale”—provides a possibility of differentiating tunes in addition to assigning them to the various types of scale. Various combinations of prominent steps form the basis for dividing up the tunes into a number of different groups.

Groups with *b*, *ab*, *abc* as prominent notes are typologically related and belong usually to an older type of song which has been handed down orally. The tunes are characterised by melodic formulae. Tunes where the quantitative importance of *c* has increased at the expense of *b* often have a different, triadical and harmonic conception. This latter is even more pronounced in those tunes where *c-e* has a prominent place.

Major tunes, on the other hand, have proved not to be amenable to division into different clearly defined types in this way. It has been shown, for instance, that songs characterised by formulae and those constructed mainly out of triads do not differ in their quantitative distribution of melodic degrees.

When the tunes are forced in between bar lines in an all-pervasive time signature, this involves in many cases a schematisation of the rhythm of the living folk tune. On the other

hand, such use of conventional bar lines and time signatures is not completely misleading. Many of the tunes have obviously been taken over so late from the repertoire of serious music that they have retained the rhythmic organisation of the original. But many of those tunes characterised by the use of formulae can also be forced between bar lines as they are usually intimately coordinated with the metre of the text. This means that the metre of the ballad text with four stresses per line gives rise to a corresponding musical accentuation, either by means of the use of a double length note, e.g. a crotchet instead of the usual running quavers in the transcription, or by virtue of being placed immediately after the bar line. This "ballad rhythm" is noted either in simple or compound time, the first being the more common. To judge from the transcription, the rhythm has played its part in giving these tunes an isorhythmic flavour, reminiscent of an older or more primitive type of melodic construction.

The quasi-recitative tunes included in the collection are the ones which have suffered most in transcription. The free, rhythmical way of singing which we feel from the draft transcriptions to be appropriate has been forced between completely irrelevant bar lines.

Those tunes characterised by formulae and those of recitative-like nature can usually be distinguished by their syllabic style. Only exceptionally do we find two notes for one syllable. Notes longer than crotchets occur only in motives from the refrain and in cadences, where the tune seems to have a point of rest.

The majority of those tunes which are conceived harmonically also have a rhythmic accentuation corresponding to the metre of the text. Also among the more recent tunes, a very large group is characterised by long final notes, which, as already said, agrees with the usage of the time in the matter of hymn singing, and should be interpreted as an effect thereof. These more recent tunes, however, exhibit quite a different rhythmic organisation. They are constructed out of motives of two bars each, put together to form four bar motives and eight bar periods. The assumption that these tunes are rooted in a pre-classical "galant" stratum is supported by the various kinds of ornaments such as mordents, trills, rapid semi-quaver runs etc., in a melodic line of pronounced triadic nature.

### *Conclusions*

Wiede's collection includes tunes representing two different styles as can be seen by comparing various characteristics.

1 The first, probably the older, style has the following characteristics: narrow compass, a fifth to an octave; melody built up of formulae or with quasi-recitative nature; a minor type of scale without sixth and with a neutral seventh degree. The octave compass is  $e'$  to  $e''$ , and the quantitatively prominent notes are  $b$  or  $a-b$  respectively. The rhythmic organisation is connected with the metre of the ballad verse with four accents in each motive, corresponding to the four stresses in each line of the text.

2 The other style consists of tunes with a compass of between an octave and a twelfth, harmonically conceived melodies based on triads, in major or minor. Quantitatively prominent notes are the keynote and the third or fifth. The major tunes seem to belong in part to a very much younger genre, with chromatic flavour, paving the way for modulations towards both the dominant and the sub-dominant side in a progression of latently harmonic

character. The periods are conventional eight bar units. The ornamentation suggests the influence of preclassical melodies.

The above styles are very often mixed. This means that we must be very careful in deciding on the age and type of individual tunes. The first style is found mainly in tunes connected with old texts, handed down orally, such as ballads, humorous songs and singing games, while the second contains for the most part tunes to more recent songs which became popular in ballad sheets.

(Translated by Brian Willson, B. Mus.)