

About the Department of Traditional Music

The Department of Traditional Music was established in 1949 by Arnt Bakke, a lecturer in music in Tromsø. Before that, the traditional music of Northern Norway had been collected by a number of devotees. The first major collection was assembled in Rana by the priest Ole Tobias Olsen. Northern Norway had also been studied by professional music collectors including Catharinus Elling and O.M. Sandvik. Arnt Bakke led the department, mainly in his sparetime, until his death in 1976. In 1982 the position of a "konservator" was established.

The department is responsible for documentation of Norwegian, Sami and Finnish ("kven") musical traditions of Northern Norway. It is a centre for ethnomusicological research. The main tasks are collection, documentation, research and publishing. The department is the main Norwegian archive for Sami traditional music.

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