

dreamers' CIRCUS





Dreamers' Circus

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, violin; Nikolaj Busk, piano & accordion; Ale Carr, cittern 2026-2027 Biography

Fifteen years after first meeting at a jam session in Copenhagen, Dreamers' Circus have emerged as the pre-eminent international band in Nordic folk and traditional music. This talented trio crafts a sound defined by their virtuosic musical abilities across a diverse range of instruments that include fiddle, accordion, piano and cittern.

Drawing from their backgrounds in traditional and roots music, Dreamers' Circus presents a genre-bending blend of folk sensitivity, jazz improvisation and classical complexity, all infused with influences from popular music. The result is a music that is resolutely contemporary but also rhythmically and melodically engrossing.

Piano and accordion player, Nikolaj Busk, rooted in folk music is highly sought after for his performance and arranging skills in the pop music and jazz realms. Violinist, Rune Tonsgaard Sorensen, while reared in a folk-music loving family, emerged as a prodigious classical player who by his early twenties was leader of the Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra. Swedish-born, Ale Carr, is also from a folk music lineage provides rhythmic drive on cittern underpinning the bands overall sound.

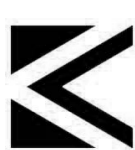
Over the course of seven albums Dreamers' Circus have positioned themselves as among Denmark's leading musical ensembles, as evidenced by their appointment by the Danish Arts Foundation as a "Special Ensemble". Their accolades include numerous Danish Music Awards, contributions to TV and film soundtracks and compositions and commissions for theatre and contemporary dance productions– the most recent being the highly acclaimed Aaben Dans production of 'The Lost Musicians'. A busy touring schedule sees the band frequently visit the USA and Japan. They tour regularly in Europe and throughout the Scandinavia.

The name Dreamers' Circus invokes images of the Big Top and suggests magic, playfulness, acrobatic inventiveness, fun, skill and imagination. In February 2025 they released their latest recording titled "Handed On".

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WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL

JUNE 2025 - PLEASE DESTROY ALL PREVIOUSLY DATED MATERIALS



Dreamers' Circus

Critical Acclaim



“Everything, anything is fodder for a song. They gather up impressions from wherever their travels take them and share. They thrust us into discoveries or sweep us into a meditative moment when being at one with the world is o.k. It’s immersive with mind, heart, body, and soul in music’s sway and lift.”

Nuvo

“This is music that paints images in your mind, that fires the imagination... Dreamers’ Circus celebrate more than the colour and vibrancy of Scandinavian music, they celebrate the ability it has to drive inspiration and innovation, and place themselves firmly in the vanguard of that movement.”

Folk Radio

“Folk-rooted but genre-defying in music that shifted through the playful and the sublime.

The Scotsman

“Not to be left out is the engaging and laid back camaraderie between the musicians as they take the audience on an intriguing and inviting musical journey that could suit any musical taste.”

The Sleepless Critic

“It was a luminous concert that spoke to all senses.”

GAFFA

“It bristles with confidence, with nods to music as diverse as Danish folk and Erik Satie.”

fRoots

“The watchword here is ‘expansive,’ for the trio crafts remarkably open vistas from humble means.”

RootsWorld

“The trio responded with a performance that will be one of the highlights of this year’s festival.”

Fruk

Features

March 10, 2026

Pekka Kuusisto And Dreamers' Circus On Their Plan To 'Pollute' Beethoven

By David Kettle

“I suppose the best defence is Beethoven himself, and what we know about him. He wouldn't be opposed to people having some fun with his music a couple of hundred years later.” It's revealing that Finnish violinist, conductor, director and musical pioneer Pekka Kuusisto uses the word “defence”. For what he – along with Nordic folk trio Dreamers' Circus and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra – have planned for Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 might raise a few eyebrows. Across three March concerts in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, they'll be merrily melding trad and classical, mixing folk tunes and Beethoven's symphonic movements, no doubt throwing up connections and contrasts, correlations and collisions.

That's nothing unusual for Kuusisto, who gleefully disregards what others might consider musical boundaries across classical, folk, jazz, contemporary music and plenty more, and across his many and increasingly influential musical roles. He'll no doubt bring surprising insights and fresh perspectives – as he's recently done with his strikingly stripped-back account of classical staple The Lark Ascending on his invigorating new release, Willows.

But the Beethoven project has precedent, too, in the Vivaldi Four Seasons that he performed with the SCO a couple of years back, joined by Swedish cittern player Ale Carr (who also happens to be one third of Dreamers' Circus) in folk tunes and also forming part of the orchestra's continuo section. “I was googling 'basso continuo' – I had no idea what it was,” laughs Carr. “I discovered it was this kind of accompaniment section in Baroque music,

and you can almost improvise what you play. It was definitely an interesting experience.”

The new Beethoven project grew, to some extent, out of the success of the folk-meets-Baroque Four Seasons. “I just remember it seemed almost an automatic idea that trad music should somehow be allowed to pollute the way we approach the Beethoven,” Kuusisto explains wryly. “Pollute” is another loaded word, and there's an undeniable sense of naughtiness in treating as hallowed a figure as Beethoven in this way. But that, Kuusisto feels, might have more to do with our learning and traditions than it does with the music itself.

“It's one of those pieces that has a lot of baggage,” he continues, “and there's such a strong tradition for certain ways of looking at the piece. I don't think anyone chooses to be stuck in an interpretation they heard when they were young, or something their teachers told them. But I almost wish we could take the red pill, step back, look at the score, and not feel the weight of tradition hanging over it. There's also a kind of underlying sinister plan, to mutilate the classical music vocabulary we inherit from our predecessors and teachers, and all the peer pressure from dead people in terms of playing styles and approaches.”

There's a knowing smile in his voice when he puts forward this cunning scheme. But hard distinctions between musical genres are indeed probably more to do with learning and tradition than musical essence. If evidence is needed, just look at Beethoven himself, who made a huge number of sophisticated folksong arrangements (many of them, incidentally, for Edinburgh-based publisher George Thomson). “That was

partly during the period when he was writing his Symphony No. 7,” Kuusisto continues. “In fact, one of the folk tune arrangements that Dreamers’ Circus have chosen – the Irish tune Save me from grave and wise – actually quotes the tune of the Symphony’s last movement.”

Blurring conventional boundaries between genres is equally relevant to trio Dreamers’ Circus. Alongside Carr on cittern, it features Danish folk/jazz/pop keyboardist Nikolaj Busk on piano and accordion, and fellow Danish violinist/fiddler Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, who blends a deep immersion in folk music with roles as concertmaster of the Copenhagen Philharmonic and leader of the much-lauded Danish Quartet. “Our very first performance in Dreamers’ Circus was with the Copenhagen Phil,” remembers Carr. “Rune was playing a Mozart violin concerto, and we did a ten-minute excursion into folk music in the final movement.” They’ve since toured with the same orchestra, and collaborated widely across classical, jazz and pop. “We like to collect inspiration from everywhere we go.”

One of the trio’s biggest sources of inspiration came not from music, but from a meal. “We’d had a very rough touring period and made it out alive, and we decided to book a table at a restaurant called Geranium in Copenhagen. This is new Nordic cuisine – 17 courses across five hours – and they presented local ingredients in a really contemporary way, and the whole arc of the meal really changed something in us.” That sense of using local things in unusual ways, and building something larger from them, seemed to translate into the trio’s musical ambitions. “You can still have a sense of place in the music you play, but then you can take listeners on a longer curve into electronic music, classical music, contemporary music. It’s all about keeping people engaged and surprised.”

For their Beethoven collaboration, that surprise will no doubt extend to the performers themselves: when we speak, it’s still a concept, not yet a concert. “This will be very much a world premiere in every sense,” Carr laughs.

“But I couldn’t hope for a better place and a nicer orchestra to try out such an idea with,” Kuusisto adds. “It’s going to be about not deciding too many things beforehand, but being sure that the things really feel like they need to happen. And that’s a wonderful situation to be in when the orchestra is the SCO.”

For both practical and artistic reasons, both men are understandably tight-lipped about the specifics of the plan they’re hatching. “We’re not planning to interfere too much with the original Beethoven,” Carr admits. “But the music we’ll play will hopefully lead listeners into the Beethoven, and then the other way round too.”

Kuusisto will be wearing several of his many musical hats during the performances. How does he view his role in the project? “Oh, I’m mainly going to be admiring my colleagues,” he laughs. “I’m prepared to wave my arms around in front of the orchestra, and I will almost certainly play some violin. It’s going to feel really stupid not to make any noise myself.”

But as well as providing fresh insights to the audience, it’s also about new discoveries for the players themselves. “The focus shouldn’t just be making the concerts as good as possible,” Kuusisto continues, “but also making sure we all learn from each other. Bringing in musicians like Dreamers’ Circus is a way of including new elements in familiar situations. If you have something familiar like the Beethoven Symphony, and you add something significant that isn’t normally seen in the same room, that might be enough of a disruption to liberate things. We’ll see.”

the Strad

February 26, 2025

‘The twilight zone where all paths remain open’: Violinist Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen on the latest project from Dreamers’ Circus

Although he plays in a world-famous string quartet, Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen’s musical identity extends far beyond the classical stage. A founding member of the Danish Quartet, the versatile violinist and fiddler also pursues his passion for Nordic folk music with the trio Dreamers’ Circus, alongside fellow Dane Nikolaj Busk on piano/accordion and Swedish cittern virtuoso Ale Carr, an expert in the plucked string instruments central to Nordic folk tradition.

Dreamers’ Circus has just released its new album [*Handed On*](#), which draws on a [project of the same name](#) it launched during the pandemic, when the trio composed dozens of original tunes rooted in traditional style. Sørensen and his colleagues compiled these into a [tune book](#) to serve as a pedagogical resource, with material ranging in difficulty from beginner’s level to advanced.

For the new album, recorded at Copenhagen’s Farvemøllen Studios with producer Kristian Leth, Dreamers’ Circus has selected particularly evocative tunes that showcase the trio’s vibrant connection to this tradition, celebrating the creative malleability of folk music.

Currently on an American West Coast [tour](#) with the band, Sørensen spoke with *The Strad*’s US correspondent Thomas May about *Handed On*, the collaborative style of Dreamers’ Circus and the endless fascination of folk music.

All three members of Dreamers’ Circus became immersed in folk music from an early age. What inspires you and your colleagues to keep returning to this rich source?

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen: At its core, folk music has always been about bringing people together. Whether for a dance, a celebration, a ritual or something else, this music has always been the thread connecting people. Even after folk music found its way onto concert stages about a century ago, this communal spirit remains deeply ingrained in the tradition.

The best thing about this music is often found in the simplest moments – sitting in a pub, jamming with friends. The sole purpose is to have a jolly good time, and somehow, that sense of freedom sets the music loose. All technical concerns fade away. Somehow, it’s music-making in its most playful form. That was also how the three of us were brought together in the first place.

But traditional music also offers a clear insight into our cultural heritage – who we are as a people and as a country. It reveals the influences that have shaped us and how geography has played a crucial role in forming local traditions. In many ways, folk music is a window into understanding our identity. For us, that is really fascinating.

At its core, folk music has always been about bringing people together

What is your approach to the traditional material you drew on for your new album *Handed On*?

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen: With the *Handed On* project, we found ourselves returning to the very essence and story of our band. We wrote 58 new tunes in the traditional Nordic style, incorporating a variety of melody and dance types, and structured them in a way that added a pedagogical dimension to the project. It acknowledges the past while responding to the present – we call it *New Nordic Music*. We see tradition as something progressive – if left unchallenged, it risks fading into a museum piece. So, while honouring these old melody forms, we also wanted to give them a fresh and personal touch. As the famous saying goes: 'Folk music is not what it was, and it never has been'.

For the album, we selected our favourite tunes from the collection and added a few with a more-contemporary feel to create a cohesive whole.

Dreamers' Circus originated from a spontaneous jam session at a bar in Copenhagen back in 2009. Is leadership of the trio equally shared?

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen: Like many other groups, we each have our roles in Dreamers' Circus. With the violin as our main instrument, Ale and I grew up as melody players, while Nikolaj, as a pianist, refined his role as a great accompanist. That being said, we strive to break away from these stereotypes, letting the tunes themselves dictate the instrumentation and roles.

If traditional folk music were like early Haydn, with the first violin leading the charge, we aim to be more like Beethoven, where every player has a distinctive voice. Not only does this serve our music best, but it also creates a stronger dynamic and brings more variation to our setlists.

Each of you plays a multi-instrumental role in Dreamers' Circus. How does the trio divide up the instrumentation?

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen: Normally, Ale is the plucked-strings guy, Nikolaj

covers all the keys, and I mainly switch between violin and keyboards. But we also enjoy challenging ourselves with new instruments, as it deepens our understanding of musical roles and adds an unexpected element to our concerts.

Personally, I've always loved playing the piano. It was the friend that tapped me on the shoulder when having to practise violin became too much. So whenever I get the chance to play a tune on the piano, I never turn it down. For us, it should always come from a desire to express something in a new way. When Nikolaj switches from piano to accordion or Ale from cittern to violin, it's not just to add another flavour to the music. It's also because we love the freshness that comes with playing different instruments.

Could you describe some of the more unusual instruments you're using? What do they add to the soundscape?

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen: We enjoy showcasing old Nordic instruments on stage when we perform. One of them is the [clog fiddle](#) from southern Sweden – essentially, a poor man's violin made from a wooden clog. It has a rather nasal tone, adds a touch of humour, and, on top of that, Ale is the official world champion on the instrument – yes, that's actually a thing!

We also bring a tagelharpa on stage – one of the earliest bowed instruments, depicted in 1,000-year-old church paintings in Norway. With its strings made out of hair, it has a raw, unpolished sound – crooked, hoarse, and almost primal – full of character and edge. We use it in a few new tunes centred around the theme of ritual.

Do you play the same instrument as a fiddle player for Dreamers' Circus that you use for your Danish Quartet music-making?

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen: Yes, I play the same instrument – the only difference is that in Dreamers' Circus, we play amplified. I have the privilege of playing a wonderful old Gagliano, which has been my companion for 15 years now. It offers me a broad palette of sounds to work with, so I see no reason to switch to another

instrument. For me, being a fiddle player is more about the music than the instrument itself.

In your work with the Danish Quartet, you've been exploring new approaches to folk material, as on your wonderful new album *Keel Road*. Any interesting examples of how this work has cross-pollinated with the Dreamers' Circus collaboration? Does your classical side influence your approach to these folk sources? or vice versa?

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen: In many ways, we in Dreamers' Circus approach music much like a classical ensemble. We work extensively with character, colour and dynamics, always returning to the fundamental question: What do we want to express and convey? How do we create music that tells a clear story, sparks curiosity, or evokes emotions that feel universal?

In classical music, composers have wrestled with these questions for centuries, and that serves as a great inspiration for Dreamers' Circus. On the other hand, folk music embodies the playground – the

freedom, spontaneity and sheer joy of making music together – which, in turn, has been a major source of inspiration for the Danish Quartet.

At the end of the day, neither group is a purely classical ensemble nor a purely folk band. We are drawn to the unexplored territory in between – the twilight zone where all paths remain open.

What do you hope fans take away from the new album and the shows you're performing on this current tour?

Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen: We hope that with our *Handed On* album, listeners will hear where we come from and feel the love we have for traditional music. For the live tour, the audience should expect the unexpected – traditional and new, dusty and bright, quirky and simple, surprising and familiar. Music that speaks to the heart, mind and feet. But most importantly, we simply hope that, for a couple of hours, people will forget everything else happening in the world at the moment and that our music will serve as a unifying force between people.

The Boston Globe

February 23, 2023

Meet Dreamers' Circus, Hayao Miyazaki's favorite Nordic folk trio

The Denmark-based band performs at Jordan Hall Friday, kicking off a six-city US tour
By A.Z. Madonna



The year was 2016, and the Nordic folk trio Dreamers' Circus was half a world away from home on its first tour of Japan. Violinist Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, pianist/accordionist Nikolaj Busk, and cittern player Ale Carr were backstage at the night's venue when the band's Japanese representatives came in with breaking news: "Miyazaki-san is here!"

That was "Miyazaki-san" as in Hayao Miyazaki, the widely celebrated animator behind "My Neighbor Totoro," "Spirited Away," "Howl's Moving Castle," and other beloved films released by the Tokyo-based animation house he cofounded, Studio

Ghibli. Busk and Carr had seen some of these, but Sørensen was wholly unfamiliar. "I didn't know who he was back then," the violinist said in a recent Zoom interview with Busk from Denmark. "At least now I do!"

Miyazaki quickly and quietly left after the concert ended, but he later sent the band his compliments and an invitation to visit him at home. When Dreamers' Circus next toured Japan, the trio played a private house concert for the filmmaker, his family, and several Studio Ghibli staff members. "That became a friendship with him and his family," Busk said. "He's a lovely man."

This week, there's no need to be a Ghibli employee to see Dreamers' Circus close up. The trio plays at Jordan Hall Friday in a concert presented by Celebrity Series of Boston; it's the first stop on a six-city American tour that continues to destinations including Orono, Maine, (Feb. 26) and New York City (Feb. 27).

It's not hard to see why Miyazaki was so drawn to the trio. His films cherish all things handmade and enduring without being blindly nostalgic for the so-called good old days. In a similar vein, the band's music is deeply rooted in and inspired by traditional Nordic dance music, but not bound to its conventions either.

The trio was born out of a midnight chance encounter at a 2009 folk festival in Copenhagen. Busk had played a gig outside the city that same night, and he decided to check out the festival's after-hours acts. In the corner of a bar, he found Sørensen (whom he'd met previously a few times) and Carr, playing traditional and original folk tunes together. There was a piano nearby, and Busk asked if he could join in. The jam session continued until daybreak.

To Busk's delight, Carr and Sørensen reached out to play together again. "I didn't dare ask them because they were already a duo, but I wished so much that they would ask me, and now here we are 14 years later, still playing together," said Busk. "I'm so happy that I did not drive home that night."

The band's lifespan has so far included five full-length albums, contributions to video game and television soundtracks, and collaborations with artists including accordionist Sharon Shannon, the Danish String Quartet (with which Sørensen also plays), and a Denmark children's choir.

The "tiny little festival" where the band met no longer exists, said Sørensen, but its atmosphere continues to inspire them. "I remember, a lot of people there, in a tight and packed little venue," he said. "And you

can hear people playing in every single room. It's just amazing."

Aptly enough for a trio of two Danes and one Swede, one word that describes Sørensen's impression of that festival is "hygge," a Danish and Norwegian term that translates roughly to "a feeling of contentment and comfort in community," and has lately been appropriated in the Anglosphere to sell such items as oatmeal-colored throw blankets and scented candles. But besides their own music, the only thing that the Dreamers seem to be selling is an invitation to join the circus, so to speak. During the pandemic, the trio assembled "Handed On," a book of original music written in a traditional style, designed to be accessible to amateur players who are just starting out on their instruments or unfamiliar with Nordic folk tunes.

"We wanted to make a sheet music book for many years but never had time," said Busk. "Then COVID came and suddenly we had time. So we decided, 'Let's get it done.'" To accompany the project, the trio recorded videos for all 58 tunes contained in the book and [posted them on YouTube](#).

Sørensen explained that the trio found ample inspiration for "Handed On" in the Suzuki method, the popular classical training curriculum through which the band members learned their own instruments as children. Because Suzuki emphasizes learning music by ear as one would learn a language, said Sørensen, it has some things in common with the aural traditions of folk tunes.

And there was one more thing. "Me and Ale, we remembered when you learned a piece of music, you got this little sticker [from the Suzuki teacher] that you could put in your sheet music book, and that was the proof that now you know this tune," said Sørensen with a chuckle. "And that was always the most amazing moment. So we copied that idea and printed a lot of stickers for our book."

October 3, 2022



MOTIVATION MONDAY

Violinist Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen — Exploring Different Genres is Key

The Violin Channel recently caught up with violinist **Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen**, while on the last of a U.S. tour with his folk ensemble, **Dreamers' Circus**.

Made up of violinist Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, pianist Nikolaj Busk, and accordion player Ale Carr, Dreamers' Circus draws inspiration from the deep traditions of Nordic folk music and reshapes it for the modern audience.

Concurrently, Sørensen also plays in the GRAMMY®-nominated **Danish String Quartet**, whose interpretations of classical canon repertoire has garnered them awards such as the Borletti-Buitoni Trust and Carl Nielsen Prize.

We were curious to gain some insight into the positive effects of playing multiple genres and the projects Sørensen is working on...

How have you combined both folk and classical music in your career?

It has always been natural to have folk and classical music in my musical backpack. I started listening to traditional music when growing up in Roskilde, which is quite close

to Copenhagen in Denmark. Soon after, I got my first violin and a Suzuki teacher. My parents would help me practice 10 minutes a day and bring me to traditional music and dance evenings in the local community house most weekends.

I never really intended to create a career as such. Meeting my friends in the Danish String Quartet at the beginning of the millennium and Dreamers' Circus some years later, in many ways defined my life path, and I haven't looked back since.

Are there differences, especially technical, in your approach to classical repertoire vs. folk music?

I wouldn't say there are any differences in my approach. Some classical pieces can be quite technically demanding and maybe need some more personal practice, but since the music of Dreamers' Circus is concert music (as opposed to the traditional "use" of folk music), I try to treat it the same way as when I play classical pieces.

In terms of storytelling, colors, emotions, etc., it's all just music.

How important do you think it is for young musicians to explore different genres? What can they gain from stepping outside their comfort zones?

I think it's the most important thing you can do as a young musician. Of course, it's important to practice your scales and etudes, but I think that learning from other genres and other art forms is crucial in order to find your own identity as an artist. Stepping out of your comfort zone can be frightening at times, but also represents a space where you can develop the most.

Where did the name of the ensemble Dreamer's circus come from? How was the group founded?

The three of us met in a jam session in 2008. There was an instant spark of musical and personal chemistry and from that moment we knew that we would play together for many years.

The name Dreamers' Circus is based on associations. Think of the vivid colors we associate with childhood memories of the Circus. Remember the magic of entering the tent as a child — the way our senses were engaged. The excitement and slight trepidation came from daylight into darkness.

In our music, we always strive to invoke a place of freedom, somewhere for our imagination to play in and a space for dreaming.

What is your connection to Danish folk music? Why is it so important for you to keep it alive and share it with the world?

Basically, because we love it. But also because music is a universal language and can provide an insight into other cultures. With the ever-growing polarization — east/west, red/blue, etc., it's more important than ever to communicate and understand each other. Here, music can play a pivotal role.

Your award-winning folk trio has recently released a music book titled "Handed On," including 58 original melodies inspired by traditional songs and accompanying videos. What was the process like in creating something like this?

The project began during lockdown in 2020 and has grown in size and ambition until the release event on Sep 10th. We started with a writing day in Nikolajs apartment and since then, we have managed to compose around 70 tunes. After that, we had a long selection process with testing and feedback from peers. Many tunes were sacked, new tunes were written and in this process, a more educational profile of the project emerged.

Taking inspiration from the Suzuki method, the tunes from Handed On are divided into four levels of difficulty so that everyone, from beginners to more experienced players, can participate.

Then came the notation process, writing little background texts for every tune, creating the artwork, setting up layout, proofreading, recording and filming music videos for all tunes in four different locations, and planning the release event with 40 guest musicians. All in all, a very time-consuming but rewarding process.

Check out this video previewing the book:

What are your next projects with Dreamers' Circus?

Next big projects for us include four Christmas shows with Danish National Girls Choir, concerts with Zürich Chamber Orchestra, various commitments as town musicians of Roskilde among other things and we'll continue to play our own trio gigs also in Denmark, Europe, and Asia. We love it.

The last stop on the Dreamers' Circus U.S. tour is on Wednesday, October 5, at 7:30 pm in Provo, Utah's Harris Fine Arts Center. For tickets, click [here](#). They return to U.S. audiences in late February, stay tuned!

February 26, 2020

Danish trio Dreamers' Circus brings Scandinavian folk to Asheville



Late one night in 2009, Nikolaj Busk strolled into a bar in Copenhagen and chanced upon two strangers performing a sweet harmony of traditional Nordic tunes. Spotting a piano in the corner of the room, Busk joined in with fiddle player Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen and cittern player Ale Carr — and, instantly, it became clear that there was musical chemistry, as magic, melodic electricity filled the air.

That spontaneous, late-night jam session — when three musicians met by chance — launched an incredible journey.

“We had a really good jam session the whole night, until 3 or 4 in the morning,” Carr said in a 2017 interview at Sweden’s Change Music Festival. Following their performance, the musicians exchanged numbers, and, a few hours later, Carr received a text message about forming a trio.

Now, more than a decade later, Dreamers’ Circus has earned international renown, traveling from their native Scandinavia to perform throughout Europe, Asia, Australia and North America. Called “authentic folk music from another planet” by fellow musician Peter Bastian of the

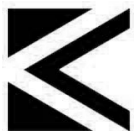
Danish band Bazaar, Dreamers’ Circus takes audiences to a magical and wondrous place, transcending genres and evoking vivid, colorful imagery by blending traditional Nordic folk with sounds from around the world.

“We really see traditional music as a great opportunity to go new places,” said Busk, who plays both piano and accordion. “We add lots of new, fun instruments that we find (around the world) and try to paint pictures and to tell stories through the instrumental pieces.”

A love of folk music

Coming from various musical backgrounds, the trio is united by an interest in and love for folk and traditional music. Tonsgaard Sørensen grew up in a household where traditional Faroese dance and music was enjoyed, but he also studied classical music — and, when not on tour with Dreamers’ Circus, he plays as a member of world-class chamber music ensemble The Danish String Quartet. Busk, on the other hand, has a background in jazz that is evident in his fluid and melodic playing, while Carr is from a family of well-known traditional musicians and teachers in his native southern Sweden — and his rhythmic drive forms the backbone of the band.

None of the musicians, however, claims the role of the band’s frontman. “We’re all very flexible when it comes to making the music, and we all participate in arranging and composing,” Carr explained. “We play different instruments and switch roles, but if you forced us to define (ourselves), then I guess Rune is more or less the melody-player, I am the one who drives the rhythm forward and Nikolaj is the painter.”



When composing folk music, Tonsgaard Sørensen, in particular, turns to his background in classical music for inspiration. “There’s a lot of detail written into every score in classical music,” he said, “and we try to use that same level of detail in shaping the music (of Dreamers’ Circus).” “If you ask, outside Denmark: Do you know what Scandinavian folk music is? And especially with Danish folk music — not many people know what it is,” Tonsgaard Sørensen continued. “So it’s nice to be ambassadors for something that we believe

in and that we actually think is really cool. Not that we are a museum traveling around showing old stuff, but we just take these old melodies and try to bring them into (the present) in our own way. And that’s an important thing to us: To move the music forward.”

At 8 p.m. Feb. 28, Asheville audiences will get a taste of Scandinavian folk music, mixed with modern influences, during Dreamers’ Circus’ performance at the Wortham Center for the Performing Arts.

Reviews

Edinburgh Music Review

March 23, 2026

SCO: Beethoven, Pekka & Dreamers' Circus

By Donal Hurley

I was back to Glasgow's City Halls on the night of 20th March for the second of three outings for a programme billed as "joyfully unconventional ... masterminded and conducted by much-loved Finnish violin pioneer Pekka Kuusisto" and titled 'Beethoven, Pekka & Dreamers' Circus'. The headline "Beethoven" element was the evergreen A-major Seventh Symphony Op.92 of 1812. Dreamers' Circus is a Danish/Swedish folk trio comprising Nikolaj Busk on piano and accordion, Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen on violin and Ale Carr on cittern. The movements of the symphony were interspersed with (mainly) Nordic folk tunes played by Dreamers' Circus. The concert was very well-attended.

With his customary wry wit, Pekka introduced the programme ("Good news: we've rehearsed; we played it last night: it'll probably be OK") before passing the microphone to Nikolaj, who said it was great to be back in Glasgow, where Dreamers' Circus have been regulars at 'Celtic Connections', before introducing their first two numbers. The first was their own composition, quite impressionistic in texture, with a melody that reminded me of Debussy's *'La fille aux cheveux de lin'*. It was followed by a more folklike melody, beginning on the cittern (fitted with a pickup and subtly amplified) with the character of a slow jig in A major, leading seamlessly to the opening *coup d'archet forte* chord of the Beethoven symphony.

The slow introduction of the first movement featured glorious ensemble tone and crystal clarity of detail. The teasing transition to the dotted rhythms of the *Vivace* was delightfully leaned into. Beethoven's characterful dynamics and the exposition repeat were all

observed. A sense of mystery at the start of the development added thrilling drama. Rhythms were crisply infectious. The subtle *rubato* in the conversation of solo winds near the beginning of the recapitulation was delicious. The "pause-and-whimper" before building teasingly to the coda was as cheeky as I've heard. Top-drawer characterful Beethoven like it is meant to be.

Citternist Ale Carr switched to violin and Nikolaj switched to accordion for the next trio number, beginning with drone on 2 violins and melody on accordion. As a 6/8 tempo became established, the orchestra joined in, the arrangement inhabiting a sound world that reminded me of Shaun Davey's music for 'The Brendan Voyage' and 'Granuaile'. A brisk reel-like Danish folk-dance sustained the impression to the end. It was followed by a movement from a Beethoven sonata for violin and piano, played straight at first, then with the cittern in the texture, becoming a 3-way conversation and increasingly folk-like, concluding with the same texture as the first piece they had played. Tastefully done, it led *attacca* to the A-minor wind chord of the start of the 2nd movement of the Symphony. The *tempo* for the *Allegretto* was majestic without a shred of "sepulchral", with string playing of great nobility. The counter-melody's first appearance on the violas was delicious and the violas remained vital to the texture throughout the movement. Crystal clarity of the detail was thrilling also. The *fugato* section built magnificently in tension and volume, spooky at first, then discursive, and finally declamatory. The twice-encountered wistfully idyllic major key interlude was touching both times. The delicate passing of the vanishing theme from

section to section and the final sigh that is the *coda* were magical.

The first half concluded with another piece composed and arranged by the trio with orchestral accompaniment. Starting spectrally high on the piano, it was quite spookily filmic, a pulse established early on the orchestral violas a strangely unsettling presence throughout until the *diminuendo* end. Intriguing piece.

After the interval, the orchestra remained offstage for 2 extended sets by Dreamers' Circus. Nikolaj introduced the first item as "Swiss, from 1532 – really old shit, but quite beautiful". The Glasgow audience were surprised, not of course by the mild expletive (as if), but by the realisation that the melody on the accordion over a 2-violin drone was that of the hymn, known in Scotland as 'All People That On Earth Do Dwell', in Ireland as 'Receive, O Father, in Thy Love', and in England (I think) as "The Old Hundredth Psalm Tune" (in that case with a cracking arrangement by Vaughan Williams). A portion of the audience hummed along. Some even knew the words. A pair of Danish reel-like dances followed, one with the supposed title "Was it you who stole my goat?" The first set concluded with a quirky piece written by citternist Ale called "The Catastrophe", an attractive melody with increasingly odd harmonies and wild rhythms, a quasi-improvised solo on the cittern, concluding in a syncopated passage that ended abruptly. The second set opened with a charming Swedish dance written by Ale for solo violin over cittern chords, though it seemed to my ear to have a free metre without any discernible bar lines. It was followed by a pair of joyous Danish folk dances for the trio using accordion, violin and cittern, the first ("The 2 of Hearts") rhythmic and stylish, the second faster and gleeful, about 'Ascending the Peak *Brande Krat*'. Swede Rune pointed out that this majestic Danish 'peak' is all of 141 metres high.

The orchestra returned to the stage and tuned. The rambunctious *Scherzo* of the symphony bowled along impishly, with laughter from the winds and full exploitation of dynamic contrasts and rhythmic jolts. The

horns and winds in the *Trio* were excellent and played to the acoustic of the auditorium, equally elegant at lower volume when the *Trio* makes a second appearance, a mischievous *tenuto* dramatizing the false start third time round. The *Trio* was a bit *meno presto*, but not *assai* for my personal tastes, sustaining the mischief right enough but losing some of the exploitable lyricism (to voice a very subjective personal preference). Still excellent.

After an enthusiastic Glasgow response to 'permission' to applaud after a non-finale symphonic movement, bridging to the *Finale* were two wee gems. A Danish *Polska*, an energetic Polish-derived dance popular in Denmark since the 17th century, was scored for folk trio and orchestra, with an additional solo cello part played by the vivacious Su-a Lee from the orchestra. It was followed by a reworking for the trio of the melody of an Irish song, 'Save Me From the Grave and Wise', from Beethoven's own arrangement as No.8 of his '12 Irish Songs', WoO 154. Remarkable enough to have more Beethoven in the folk segment, but the melody was the one he plundered for the *Finale* of the 7th, which of course was then played *attacca*.

I have written before that my personal history with the *Finale* is longer than my memory (I am told I used to bounce up and down to it as a baby). Pekka directed from the violin, playing along with the first violins. The tempo was perfect for just the right mix of "gotta dance" obsession and inebriated abandon. Irresistible impulse met willing victim. In 2024 at the close of the East Neuk Festival and in Callander Kirk a week later, the overly fluid *tempi* of Maxim Emelyanychev's reading of the *Finale* with the same orchestra had disappointed this reviewer: Pekka's was the real deal. The expansive moments breathed without loss of momentum or drive. A thrilling roller-coaster ride to the finish. Superb.

To be truthful, I had had reservations about "interrupting a Beethoven symphony", but was determined to show up with an open mind. Equally truthfully, my reservations evaporated on contact with the expertly curated programme, the persuasive excellence of collaborative music making,

and the charisma of the performers. Some years ago, Danish conductor Thomas Dausgaard presented a series of concerts with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra exploring the influences on various composers, in some cases, most notably Bartók, including folk music and performances from folk musicians.

Simultaneously scholarly and enjoyable. This concert achieved something similar, less overtly scholarly and rather more organic and spontaneous. Both get my vote. But I can't deny a special warmth towards those who occasionally 'Save Me From the Grave and Wise', with the same irreverence as Beethoven himself.

**dreamers'
circus**


THE SCOTSMAN

March 21, 2026

**SCO, Pekka Kuusisto & Dreamers' Circus
Queen's Hall, Edinburgh**

By David Kettle

When the whooping and cheering starts before even a note has been played, you know it's hardly going to be a conventional classical concert. With musical agent provocateur Pekka Kuusisto at the reins, that's virtually guaranteed, but his collision of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra with Nordic folk and more from partners in crime Dreamers' Circus was on another level – of audacity, risk and also revelation.

Kuusisto's brisk, demonstrative Symphony and the trad and newly composed tunes from the Danish/ Swedish trio existed entirely in their own terms (well, mostly), offering striking, memorable contexts for each other, and sounding bracingly fresh, new and surprising as a result.

The concert's first half was more closely integrated, and stronger, with Dreamers' Circus's opening pair of tunes almost running into the Symphony's explosive opening chord, cunningly arranged so that both were in the same key. There was a hum-along hymn tune, and even a supple, tasteful arrangement of a Beethoven violin sonata movement for the Dreamers' Circus trio.

Kuusisto's account of the Symphony was probing and perceptive, and the SCO musicians were wonderfully alive to his detailed direction and urgent tempi. For their part, Dreamers' Circus provided bewitchingly clean, crisp performances: fiddler Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen had a winningly silky, crystalline sound, and Ale Carr swapped his mandolinlike cittern for a fiddle, too, in a couple of muscular numbers.

If anyone was worried about a lack of serious-minded intellectual intent, that was more that made up for by sheer musical verve and vitality, and by the evident joy of performers making music together. There were plenty more whoops and cheers for the two encores – deservedly so.

The Red & Black

October 29, 2025

Dreamers' Circus mesmerizes Athens with genre-defying Nordic folk fusion

By Brady Ladbush

Denmark's celebrated folk trio [Dreamers' Circus](#) filled University of Georgia Performing Arts Center's Hodgson Concert Hall on Tuesday, Oct. 28 at 7:30 p.m. with a lively blend of Nordic folk traditions and modern sound, captivating the audience with their inventive, genre-bending performance.

The concert is part of the "Nordic Dream: Voices from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden" series within the UGA Presents World Stage calendar, which allows Athens and local residents to engage with tunes from the northern Europe region that are both authentic and traditional.

Known for their inventive blend of instruments, the trio, Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen on violin and other instruments, Ale Carr on cittern and violin, and Nikolaj Busk on accordion, piano and synthesizers, captivated the crowd with their rich harmonies and spontaneous interplay. The band says they try to encourage their audience to view their music as something that can transcend genres. While they are often asked what type of music they play, it does not necessarily lend itself to instant classification.

This is not Dreamers' Circus' first time performing at Hodgson Concert Hall since they began as a band. The trio returned to Athens for the second time after performing on Feb. 29, 2020, right before the pandemic lockdown, and reminisced on how they have changed in those five years.

"We've changed a lot, we are a different band," Carr said.

Audience member Christopher Smith and the Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Denmark, was one of the hundreds of attendees packed into Hodgson Hall, amazed at the performance he witnessed. As Denmark's honorary consul in Georgia, Smith has been all over the state supporting artists from the region.

"The performance was magnificent, and we always support Danish artists as part of our public diplomacy rule," Smith said.

This year, Dreamers' Circus released four new singles with their most recent being "Philip's Lake" inspired by a peaceful, snow-covered lake in Maine that left a big impression on the band. The song was written to share with their audience that there can be peace in the world amongst the chaos and its gentle, soothing melodies have brought their listeners together since the release. The band performed it as their encore on Tuesday night.

"We had this amazing experience in Maine, we were playing in Orono, and we were staying in a little wooden cabin on the lake and it was winter time when we went down there, and it was just so breathtaking being there," Sørensen said. "It is sort of like a warm, peaceful tune."

The band was invited to stay with the couple that housed the trio in Orono, Maine, which they spontaneously accepted and "Philip's Lake" was thus born from the calming atmosphere and warm hospitality that the couple kindly brought to them.

"Normally, we stay at hotels," Busk said. "But we were also like, 'Okay, well, maybe

this would be a nice thing as a change to do something different.”

The woman who hosted the trio came to their show in New York on Oct. 27, and surprised them after their performance. The four of them were able to rekindle and get to know each other more after staying with her not too long ago.

Honored as one of Denmark’s leading musical ensembles, the trio’s spark of musical chemistry began in a Copenhagen bar in 2009, a spark that guides them, as they continue to dream their way through their creative music writing and performing for all of the world.

dreamers'
circus



April 14, 2025

Dreamers' Circus

Handed On

Go' Danish Folk Music

By Chris Nickson

From their small beginnings, meeting at a Copenhagen festival in 2009, the Danish trio has built up an impressive global following – certainly large for a band that makes instrumental music with its feet firmly planted in the Danish folk tradition. They regularly tour places as far apart as Japan and the United States and have quite a devoted online following. For this new album, they've looked back a short way - to the pandemic. Then, unable to play shows, they composed, calling the collection of tunes *Handed On* and eventually going into the studio to record a few of the 58 pieces they'd written, plus a couple that look much further back in time.

The debt to the Danish and Swedish traditions are strong, as shown on the opener, "Uhrbrand's Cabin," a graceful tribute to the Uhrbrand family of Fanø (Peter Uhrbrand has been a linchpin in the Danish folk scene for decades). Led by the violin of Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen – who's also a member of the Danish String Quartet – it's music for the dance, as is much older Danish music, deliciously light and sprightly, with the kind of warm, immediately melody that's become one of the hallmarks of Dreamers' Circus over the years, and helped endear them to audiences who arrive with no knowledge of Danish folk music. But that's far from the only arrow

in their quiver. "Iron Halls" offers a brisk, rhythmic stomp that owes a lot to the Québécois music Ale Carr heard when he was young, and "Promenade," as befits the title is an airy, quiet stroll with a gorgeous melody that highlight Nikolaj Busk's piano works, as does the traditional "Regnars Styk," which the group learned from Peter Uhrbrand, bring things neatly full circle.

"Make High The Gate," a familiar hymn tune (there's a long Nordic tradition of crossover between folk music and hymns), comes alive in a stately, fascinating arrangement that blends the instruments to resemble a bagpipe, with the underpinning drone giving it real gravity before opening up into the traditional children's song, "The Billy Goat," full of joy and springtime playfulness.

For a project originally conceived as something to fill an awful time, the album takes on a life of its own. It's not only informed by the past, it adds another layer to it, to the point where it can be sometimes hard to find the line separating history from the present. That in itself is quite an achievement. It's one to satisfy the old fans and probably bring in a few more. With *Handed On*, Dreamers' Circus might well have created a new tradition of their own.



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March 14, 2025

Dreamers' Circus goes back to Danish folk roots – kind of – with “Handed On”

By celtbritfolkfan



We have seen Dreamers' Circus, the pride of Denmark's modern folk scene, on stage only once. That was in Celtic Connections 2023 when they played in the main hall of the Royal Concert Hall. Their gig was preceded by Finland's very own Frigg who were absolutely great (and we were patriotically so proud in the stalls), but the Danes were... cosmic. I don't think any other word describes the quality of the music that poured from the stage, or my stunned disbelief as Nikolaj, Rune and Ale changed and switched instruments, playing what each tune requires. And they were having a great old time doing all that. Jealous? Who, me? So yeah, DC are, for me, something of a “Rush of Nordic Folk”: three amazing

musicians doing whatever they please, with this strange mix of bravado and humility. They know they're amazing, they let it show, but they don't make a show of it. I love it. Dreamers' Circus have never restricted their oeuvre; they can move fluently from trad to jazz to baroque and back to trad, without leaving you on the wayside wondering what happened. They know what they're doing so just enjoy the ride. And that's why I was a bit surprised when I pressed play on **Handed On**. The opening duo of **Uhrbrand's Cabin** and **The Great Sea** felt so trad that I assumed, without checking the album details, that DC have gone and done their “back to the roots” album, maybe inspired by Frigg's fairly recent **Perintö**, their all-trad blast. But on the third track, **Tretur**, I began to doubt it. The melodies are very trad-flavored but there was something so sophisticated that I gave in and checked the facts. And the facts are interesting. This is what they tell us on Bandcamp: The enforced downtime during the COVID pandemic encouraged the band to compose a collection of tunes, which they compiled into book form and published under the title **Handed On**. As the band states: “We went back to go forward.” They returned to their roots, drawing inspiration from the traditional Nordic music that has guided and driven them since the beginning. A total of 58

tunes were published in both book and digital formats (see <http://www.handedon.com>).

Taking some of the best tunes from this collection, Dreamers' Circus immersed themselves in Farvemøllen Studios in Copenhagen with producer Kristian Leth, seeking to capture live the spirit and energy that originally inspired them to play traditional music. Handed On reflects and celebrates the importance of oral transmission, community, shared heritage, and the vibrant, living contemporary tradition of Nordic music.

So that explains it: **Handed On** is the Dreamers' Circus version of Danish traditional music. To use an analogy: if this was a tech scene, we could say that this album is a set of synthetic data inferred from a larger set of real life data: it has all the same qualities and attributes the original has, but it's completely new (I've been getting into this stuff in my job lately). And that is not a criticism, mind you. **Handed On** is as lively, as inspired and as colorful as any previous Dreamers' Circus release – if you're already familiar with DC's magic, you

know what I'm talking about. To keep the facts straight: there are some traditional tunes as well. **Regnar's Styk** (I think that means "Regnar's Tune") and the set **Make High the Gate / The Billy Goat**. The first tune in that set is an old hymn. My wife, who knows loads of Lutheran hymns, sang along right away, with the Finnish words. What I especially love about them is the hard-to-explain quality of *light* in their music. There's always space and air between the instruments and even the slow tunes are never gloomy or dragging. Maybe it's the hygge, the pølse, the Carlsberg – maybe all of them together? Doesn't really matter where that sound comes from, it's lovely. Of the tunes already mentioned, **Tretur** is definitely one of my favorites here, likewise the nocturnal and cinematic **Owls in the Bog**, and the classically leaning **The Promenade** is absolutely beautiful in its serenity. Not a weak track on this album, as to be expected from Denmark's best and the light they bring, the light we need right now.

**dreamers'
circus**


THE SCOTSMAN

February 6, 2023

Dreamers' Circus

By Jim Gilchrist

...If these first two outfits played pretty well the kind of repertoire we've come to expect from them, you can never be quite sure of what Denmark's folk-based but genre-defying **Dreamers' Circus** might come out with. On this occasion, fiddler (and Danish String Quartet violinist) Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, cittern player Ale Carr and pianist and accordionist Nikolaj Busk proved characteristically capricious. One moment they were whistling and vocalising over a perky accordion melody, next they were into Vivaldi's Four Seasons, Sørensen's fiddle trilling birdsong.

They ranged gleefully through brisk Scandinavian dances, enlisted electronic keyboard for what sounded like a perky advertising jingle, before celebrating their mutual culinary enthusiasms with Kitchen Stories, fiddle, accordion and cittern ebbing and flowing with unadulterated zest.

dreamers'
circus



**Dreamers' Circus takes us
along the sunny side of
midnight**

Rita Kohn Feb 3, 2022

As a trio fully in sync with each other, the collective Dreamers' Circus is taking us along with them into the kind of world they want to live in and pass along to our emergent generations. We're all together, safely masked & seated in the pitch-perfect setting of the Indiana Landmarks Centre, separated from the rhetoric of divisiveness, for an hour.

Ale Carr, Nikolaj Busk, and Rune Tonsgaard Sorensen glide effortlessly from a piece one of them composed to one they reimagine upward from tradition; from something they've already recorded to one they've recently conjured up. Everything, anything is fodder for a song. They gather up impressions from wherever their travels take them and share. They thrust us into discoveries or sweep us into a meditative moment when being at one with the world is o.k. It's immersive with mind, heart, body, and soul in music's sway and lift. Imagine unity. Wow.

They move. We move. WE are breathing for good purpose—our collective joy. Setting worry aside for the moment refreshes. We're watching, and listening to the segue across a dozen instruments conjuring up the sounds and beats particular to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and yet generously indigenous to us all—and transformable within our birth clime.

Landscapes teach us how to safely navigate underfoot, how to scan the sky to foretell incoming weather, how to feel the weight of air. This is the feel of the trio's playing—safely guiding us through a passage where our senses are nourished and our intelligence is expanded. I will wager it's hard for the discontented to remain sullen, ill-tempered, begging for a fight, in the presence of something this gloriously expansive.

I carried home the group's four CDs, with the intention of sharing them with friends and family. I checked what was on the

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program that comes from the albums. None are from their first offering, “A Little Symphony,” recorded with The Danish String Quartet and the European Traveling Brass Carnival. Here’s what came from the other three:

From their 2015 album, “Second Movement,” the opening “Sofastykket,” wafts in like dawn across a fjord. Busk teases the accordion to awakening, Carr stirs movement with the cittern, Tonsgaard Sorensen gets imperative with the violin. And then we’re up and away adventuring with the trio as they glide each preceding piece into the next.

“Dreampolska,” based on a traditional jig, moves Busk to the piano; it’s a constant sleight of hand with trade-off instruments for Carr and Tonsgaard Sorensen; and so it goes forward to the end of the program, with ever-changing beats and allusions.

“Since we started playing together we’ve traveled widely with our music and it is sometimes when you travel farthest that you come to realize how much you value wherever it is that you call home,” they offer in introducing their 2020 album, BlueWhiteGold, released at their tenth anniversary.

“While travel opens up new vistas and ideas it also encourages reflection on where you come from,” they tell us. “So, here, while we continue opening new ground in our music, we also give a nod to the familiar by including some traditional Nordic tunes, the music we are rooted in and the music that brought us together...”

“Pentamime” jogged my memory back to Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen. And Sweden and Norway, too, were recalled with Hjerter To, Ottemandsdans, Aerindetur, Nodebog 16, Skon Pols, Tretur, Grindevisen (traditional to Faroese Island), and with Promenaden.

“The World Was Waiting,” a whistle song, inserts itself as one of those moments when you just sort of whistle without intending to and then anyone else you’re walking with, or is passing by, gets caught up in the moment, and yes, I noticed that some of us in the

seats were leaning forward and whistling...why not?

The accordion, violin, cittern feature in this namesake BlueWhiteGold theme.

“A Room in Paris” comes from the 2015 album, Second Movement. Again, I’m carried into memory with this sumptuous ballad rising up with the piano taking the lead.

“Kitchen Stories” is from the 2017 album, “Rooftop Sessions,” and then we’re sent home with the melange of sounds of “Farther Into It” from the album Second Movement.

We’re chatting with each other as we exit. “Otherworldly” is the favorite descriptor for Dreamers’ Circus among the quoted critics; yet I find something deep-rooted inside this trio, that’s reaching too into the best parts of ourselves. We have come together as a community, in unity. We wore our masks; we left the performance space if we had need to cough. Upon leaving, I walked lightly on our Mother Earth and though my gaze up to Father Sky skirted toward worrisome, I felt lighter-hearted than when I came.

Safe at home, I leafed through “Peopling Indiana: The Ethnic Experience,” to the chapter “Scandinavians.” Here I am reminded of the immigrants from Sweden, Denmark, and Norway who have helped build Indiana and particularly Indianapolis. The standouts of course are Col. Eli Lilly, whose family tree “traces back to the 1200s to the province of Sodermanland, west of Stockholm...” and our beloved Johnny Appleseed, (John Chapman), whose grave we visit in Fort Wayne. There’s also Knute Rockne, who was born in Voss, Norway, and also gained legend status with Notre Dame. Purdue, too, has its Nordic claim with Frederick L. Hovde with Swedish heritage, and Arthur G. Hansen with roots in Norway.

Architect Jens Jensen, of Danish ancestry, was “the most eloquent of those who first spoke out on behalf of the Dunes.” The list goes on to include my here and now neighbors, and to the subject of a soon to surface column...stay tuned.

**dreamers'
circus**


THE SCOTSMAN

January 25, 2021

**CELTIC CONNECTIONS REVIEWS:
DREAMERS' CIRCUS**

By Jim Gilchrist



...Saturday night further exemplified the kind of compendious online delights the festival has been curating. Live from Copenhagen came the Danish-Swedish trio **Dreamers' Circus** (*****), folk-rooted but genre-defying in music that shifted through the playful and the sublime as Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, Ale Carr and Nikolaj Busk switched seamlessly between instruments, as in their magical opening air as fiddle and cittern gave way to the chimes of the kannel zither. Elsewhere, fiddle strings skirled over ringing piano in traditional Danish dances while in *The World Was Waiting* – a tune “about hope” – they whistled as well as played its irresistibly jaunty melody.

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**dreamers'
circus**

The Sleepless Critic

April 14, 2021

**Celebrity Series of Boston @home presents
mesmerizing musical trio Dreamers Circus**



One of the main attractions of virtual concerts is being able to discover new music anywhere in the world.

Inside Copenhagen's iconic Round Tower that houses a church, library, and an astronomical observatory, three musicians deliver a mesmerizing musical experience as Dreamers Circus. Warmly introduced by violinist Rune Tonsgaard Sorensen, this performance was filmed in Round Tower's immaculate library as Swarm, a floating exhibit created by female Denmark

artists Baskets4Life, contributes to the concert's surreal setting.

Celebrity Series of Boston welcomes award-winning musical trio Dreamers Circus streaming through Thursday, April 15. The concert premiered as a live streamed concert on Friday, April 9 and includes a Q & A with the group. [Click here for more information and for tickets.](#)

Comprised of violinist Rune Tonsgaard Sorensen, pianist and accordionist Nikolaj Busk, and Ale Carr on Nordic Cittern,

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Dreamers Circus draws from classical, Swedish, and Nordic rhythms to weave a collection of playful, breezy, and mesmerizing selections well suited to the band's name while providing a haven in this dark time.

Among the many highlights of this performance is the quirky originality and chipper rhythms in their telling song, *The World is Waiting* from their latest album, *White Gold*. The sunny piano and whistling medley exudes a lighthearted anticipation of what's to come. *Pentamime* delves into hypnotic rhythms, suspense, and building intensity while *City Gardens*, from their album *Rooftop Sessions*, offers a fascinating and intricate mix of soothing rhythms, bright notes, as well as haunting, eclectic, and electronic sounds that brings out the song's unique vibrancy.

Busk introduces *Kitchen Stories*, a rich number that fluctuates between lively and tranquil while showcasing Sorensen's

nimble artistry with the violin and Busk's switch to an accordion before joining together for a memorable folk reel.

Hjerter To/Fangden Og Hans Pumpestok has a bright, catchy, and fanciful medley as Busk pulls double duty performing on the piano and the accordion.

Introducing what Carr calls "a poor man's viola," Carr duets with Sorensen for traditional Swedish song, *Folkrothvalsen*.

The concert builds to a thrilling finale with *A Room in Paris* and *Prelude to a Song*. While *A Room in Paris* delivers an upbeat and joyful urgency, *Prelude to the Sun* provides a perfect blend of sonic and dreamlike harmony.

Not to be left out is the engaging and laid back camaraderie between the musicians as they take the audience on an intriguing and inviting musical journey that could suit any musical taste. Celebrity Series of Boston @home presents Dreamers Circus on demand through Thursday, April 15.

dreamers'
circus

folk radio

your folk & roots bread and butter

August 6, 2018

Dreamers' Circus: Rooftop Sessions

By Neil McFadyen

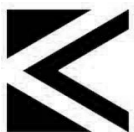


Recently Folk Radio premiered the video for *Then We Waltzed*, from Danish/Swedish trio Dreamers' Circus. As that article explained, we first encountered this remarkably talented trio entirely by accident at *Celtic Connections*. Aside from the quite dazzlingly impressive musicianship they displayed, it was the way that they managed to stay firmly rooted in Scandinavian folk and classical music while, at the same, refusing to be restricted by it, that made their performance so memorable.

Dreamers' Circus, Nikolaj Busk (piano, accordion) Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen (violin) and Ale Carr (cittern), have previously released two albums in Europe. Their third album, *Rooftop Sessions*, sees the band enjoy a worldwide release at last. The album itself matches

this extending of their horizons, with a collection of self-written instrumental pieces that move a few degrees more towards the conceptual; in a series of intricate musical narratives on the spaces that provide respite from an ever more demanding and fast-paced world.

The unmistakably Scandinavian *City Gardens* opens the album at an exquisite pace; lively, but unhurried, and with an intensity that ebbs and flows towards a soft, extended departure. *Kitchen Stories* is brisker and offers more adventure, putting the listener in mind of *Lau* with a Nordic twist. This comes through, not only in the accordion and violin combination but in the rhythm, the tempo changes, the peaks and troughs. Beyond that, there's a Bach-inspired violin that climbs exultantly and sings as clear as a bird.



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The pace is often more moderate, and the mood more earnest. The mysterious and ethereal opening of *Foreseen* leads to a piercing cry on the wind and a heart-rending lament with a Romany soul. The equally sombre opening of *Meanwhile* is soon sweetened by a poetic violin. Although *Opus 2, 5* seems to draw on the trio's classical background more than any other track, there are touches of mystery in there too; among the graceful piano, the soft strings and the more intense conclusion that leads to the short, dream-like *Draft. Mormor* (Grandmother) is a soft, stately dance with a mysterious twinkle in its eye. There's a definite sense of adventure in this music that's reflected in the wide range of instruments used by the trio. Bass drum, vibes, and even a toy piano (among many others) all find their place in this extensive soundscape.

Rooftop Sessions Part 1 and *Part 2* seem to epitomize the album and, indeed, the band themselves. *Part 1* opens with piano,

violin, cittern in a typical Dreamers' Circus ensemble setting. There's a latent energy that stirs softly until piano starts to follow a slow, diving spiral into dark storm clouds with ever increasing tension. *Part 2* brings soft rainfall, a far, but persistent, rumble of thunder, and distant birds seen against dark clouds. To close the album, *Afterwards* is like a clearing of the air as the sun rises.

This is music that paints images in your mind, that fires the imagination. There's no doubt that *Rooftop Sessions* is far more thought-provoking than the trio's previous, thoroughly impressive, releases. As well as finding those quiet moments our souls seek out in a hectic world; with *Rooftop Sessions* Dreamers' Circus celebrate more than the colour and vibrancy of Scandinavian music, they celebrate the ability it has to drive inspiration and innovation, and place themselves firmly in the vanguard of that movement.



Dreamers' Circus Discography

Vertical Records

Langt ud' i skoven (2022)

Vertical Records

Handed On (2025)

The Lost Swans (2022)

Blue White Gold (2020)

Rooftop Sessions (2018)

GO' Danish Folk

Second Movement (2015)

*Danish Music Awards Folk 2015 Album of the Year

A Little Symphony (2013)

*Danish Music Awards Folk 2013 Album of the Year

Dreamers' Circus EP (2010)







