

FROM DRUMS TO DRUMS

(Jens Haven Memorial School)

This production presents the story of music on the Labrador coast from early times to the present.

The information for this play was compiled from many books and recordings, and from the people in the community (Nain).

Direct musical quotations are from "The Central Eskimo" (Franz Boas); the Moravian songbook, "Ingerutsit Notiggit"; and the recording, "50 Years of Radio" (Westinghouse Broadcasting Co.).

CHARACTERS

4 Girls
4 Boys

SCENE I. School dance.

Lights up on rock band playing and others dancing to recorded music. Everyone applauds at end of song.

Amanda. C'mon, just one more dance.

Markus }
Harry } (band members) Not a chance. Naa, we gotta go now.

Jimmy. See you at hockey, tomorrow.

Markus. 10:30 Ailfaliak affakmi.

Harry. 10:00 Kannuingituk.

Markus. No way -- starts at 10:30.

Natalie. (looking at imaginary good-looking boy) Gaaa! Look at him!

Heather. (leading Natalie off) Come on, let's go.

Jimmy. See you tomorrow.

All exit. Lights out.

SCENE II. Present day. Inside a house.

(Everyone except Mother & Son take places on-stage in dark. They should be ready in their positions for the TV clip).

(Spot on Mother, as she changes set, to make house scene).

Mother. (singing) Nutarasuk, sinitsialaurit, etc.

Son. (enters with guitar, right) Suna Kallika T.V.-mi?

Mother. Atsuk, Kaujimangilanga.

(Son turns on T.V. Drum dance begins, among others STAGE LEFT in "Inuvik". This group represents what Son is actually seeing on T.V. At the same time, he sits, viewing the TV, which is placed back-on to the audience).

Jan Tenant: This is Jan Tenant, reporting from the Winter Games in Inuvik. We're here in the community hall watching a traditional Inuit drum dance.

(At the end of Drum Dance, Charly comes forward to talk to Jan Tenant.)

Jan Tenant: What's your name?

Charly: Charly Inukpik.

Jan Tenant: Could you tell me what you were singing about?

Charly: We were singing about hunting seal.

Jan Tenant: How long has drum dancing been a part of the Inuit culture?

Charly: My father taught me, and his father taught him about these drum dance songs.

Jan Tenant: Thank you, Mr.. Inukpik. This is Jan Tenant, CBC News, reporting from the Winter Games in Inuvik.

Lights out. (STAGE LEFT). Spot on Mother and Son.

Son. (getting up to turn off TV) Did we ever have drum dances here in Nain?

Mother. I don't know, but I heard grandfather talking a lot about it.

Son. Maybe I'll ask him.

(Spot off).

SCENE III.

Spot on STAGE RIGHT: Grandfather enters -- an old man, stooped, coughing, smoking a pipe, carving.

Son. (entering) Hi. How is it, Grampa?

G. Karmuingilanga.

Son. What are you making?

G. Nanomik sanangasuagulukunga.

Son. Grampa, you're a good carver. Wish I could carve like you. Good ol' polar bear!

G. Nakomek.

Son. Saw drum dance on TV last night. Did you ever do any?

G. (shaking head) Isumaki!

Son. Why is it foolish?

G. Christiansikkut Moravianimiut timimmatta.

Son. Tell me what happened when the Moravians came.

G. My grandfather told me long time ago. The Moravians talked Inuktitut when they came. They learned in Greenland. The Inuit were heathen before the missionaries came. The missionaries brought instruments with them -- violins and

busauniks. They said the Inuit drum dances were heathen.
That's why we sing the songs the Moravians taught us now...

Transition. A woman is picking berries. She sees a ship; is very frightened; runs to get another (same character as Mother). Together, they run to get Grandfather and Son. Moravians enter from back of theatre, in procession and costume, singing, "Sog kappianatut".

When they reach the stage, Inuk (G.) looks them over and then the Inuit sing a drum dance for the missionaries (Avungaja aja).

Moravian offers Inuk the violin. Inuk is frightened; tries to figure out how to hold it, what to do with it.

Old Inuk offers Moravian a drum. Moravian throws it away in disgust. Inuit huddle together, scared, hurt, confused. Moravian takes Old Inuk aside, to tell him the "Good News". The rest of the Moravians help the Inuit out of skin parkas into white silapaks. Everyone kneels in prayer position.

SCENE IV: Newfies.

Grandfather (sitting position), playing harmonium. Enter Son.

Son. Did the Moravians teach you how to play that?

G. Newfikut kailautunga.

Son. What happened when the Newfoundlanders came?

G. Nallalaugit. I remember when I was first married, the Newfies used to come ashore. They brought accordians, spoons. We thought that step-dancing was really funny in those days. We liked it, though. Those Newfies were very kind -- Jimmy Pitman and Skipper Ryan. They showed us some songs. We had some 'times', I tell you!

Son. Show me, eh?

G. Oh, my old legs are not very good now. (Shows him the steps).

(Amanda, meanwhile, sets up table with cloth, lamp, and lights it. Then G. enters and lights a second oil lamp; takes bench).

(Music starts; a Newfie jig. Newfies begin step-dancing up the aisle. Amanda and Grandfather come to the door, to welcome the fisherman, who dance their way in. Amanda & G. try the dancing a bit. Enter two others, who also give it a try; followed by two more. Fisherman now realizes there are now eight people.)

FISHERMAN. Now that there are eight people, why don't I teach you a square dance? O.K., b'...

NEWFIE. Come on, me sons, grab yer partner!

(Fisherman and Newfie lead/push people into position. Square dance begins, with FISHERMAN calling and playing harmonium).

Fisherman. (at the end of dance) Let me show you a song -- you'll learn it right fast:

(Fisherman and Newfie start to sing "I'se the B'y". Everyone joins in: first verse twice, then all the way through. Some people play spoons).

(As song ends, Amanda turns lamp down, and Grandfather and Son move back to their earlier positions, STAGE RIGHT).

SCENE V: Radio and Gramophone.

(While Grandfather & Son talk, Amanda gets gramophone -- still in house setting).

Son. Lotsa fun, those old dances.

G. Aaaa.

Son. Why don't we dance with fiddle music now?

G. Auka - nallautik kalikugit.

Son. How old were you when you first had a radio?

G. 40-mi jarikkakauvunga. I remember Sunday afternoons -- we gathered around the gramophone listening to old hymns -- weren't allowed to play. Had to sit there all afternoon, listening. (sings): "In the sweet by and by ...". Do you know that one?

Son. No.

G. Some radios came on a ship and we bought one. Everyone pitched in some money and my wife ran down to the boat and got one. We got KDKA pioneer station in Pittsburgh. We got opera, all over the world -- England, St. John's -- ever'where. Country music: that was the best -- Nashville!

(Oil lamp up again).

(Everyone is sitting listening to pre-recorded gramophone music: "In the Sweet By and By". Enter G. and Son. [Transition]).

Son. I wish we had a radio.

Boy. Yeah, me too!

G. Me, too!

Woman. Maybe some came in on the boat.

Amanda. I'll go see, eh?

G. I got \$30. left over from that cross-fox I got. Will anybody lend me some money if I need it?

Woman #1: I got \$5.
Woman #2: I got \$4 from skin boots I made.
Boy: I got 6.50
Man: I got \$7. from that parka.

(They all cluster around giving Amanda money and she exits).

Boy: I wish she gets a good one.
Woman #2: Hope she gets one --- if there is any!
Son: Let's play "Sweet By and By" again.
Girl: I'll wind it.
(Amanda comes in. Great excitement).
Man: Let's play it right now.

(Everyone huddles around radio, listening to pre-recorded radio show, which fades out).

Woman #1: What's wrong? Is it broken already?
Woman #2: Maybe the weather's ugly down south.
Amanda (blows out lamp) I think I'm going to bed now.
Woman #1: Could we pulak tomorrow and listen again?

(Everyone leaves).

SCENE VI.

(As players carry off house set, and set up classroom, Grandfather and Son return to original position, STAGE RIGHT.)

Son: Thanks for telling me all the stories you remembered from when you was a little boy up to being an old man.
G: Nakomek.
Son: Well, I guess I have to go to school now. See you.
G: Aaaa. See you.

(Lights on school scene. Students talking, fooling around).

Student #1: (at door) Teacher's coming!
Son: Kailittuk.

(Teacher enter, carrying chart).

Teacher: What are you doing out of your seat?
Student #2: Just fooling around.
Teacher: Do you remember the song I taught you yesterday?
Which country does it come from?
Student #3: Germany?
Student #2: Hopedale?
Student #4: Israel?
Teacher: Thank goodness somebody remembered something! We'll learn a dance for it, today. Let's sing it, first.

(All sing: "Gut Schabus Aich").

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Teacher. Get in a circle, starting with right foot (she demonstrates:) over, cross-over, kick; now the other way: left foot: over, cross-over, kick. Now right foot: again: over, in front, over, behind, over in front, over, kick.

(All try).

Teacher. Good. Let's sing it as we do it. (All try).
The chorus goes like this: (she shows them. All try again).

(Bell rings. Kids scramble).

Student #5. (to teacher:) Can you make an announcement?
(to students) Tonight at 8:00, there'll be a
dance for all school kids -- but not for drop-outs.

(Students leave. Student #2 and #4 walk out together:)

Student #2. There should be dropouts, too, or I'll quit.
Student #4. Quit, then.
Student #2. Not for you!

(Lights down. Students remove school set).

SCENE VII.

School dance again, as in Scene I.