

RHYTHUM

This song is a circle dancing song known throughout Scandinavia. In Iceland it is danced left hand to breast while clasping the next person's right hand; two steps to the left, one to the right and repeating all through the A-part. In the B-part everyone stoops and short-steps into the middle, where they throw up their hands (still entwined), shout, and back-step out. This is done twice. The tune first builds on a 1-3 and 2-5 relationship. Then it strongly voices the flatted 6th as a reciting note and melodic turn-around. *Rhýthum* translates as meaning "just a little bit faster", and so we do. The tempo steadily increases to a peak, then backs down to a dwelling single-line, and out. This is a good song for learning triplets, pull-offs, tempo control, and a general feel for the melodic D-Aeolian minor.

The story in the original Icelandic text of this song is about a man who is on his way to visit his sweetheart one dark winter's night. He begins his ride light-heartedly cantering on his very short-legged Icelandic pony (resembling a Shetland). He hears a noise behind him; and, fearing it to be a troll or goblin, he leans over his horse and urges it to go faster. The noise continues to pursue him until he is in headlong flight. Perhaps this song-story is the Icelandic equivalent of the Headless Horseman and Ichabod Crane.

