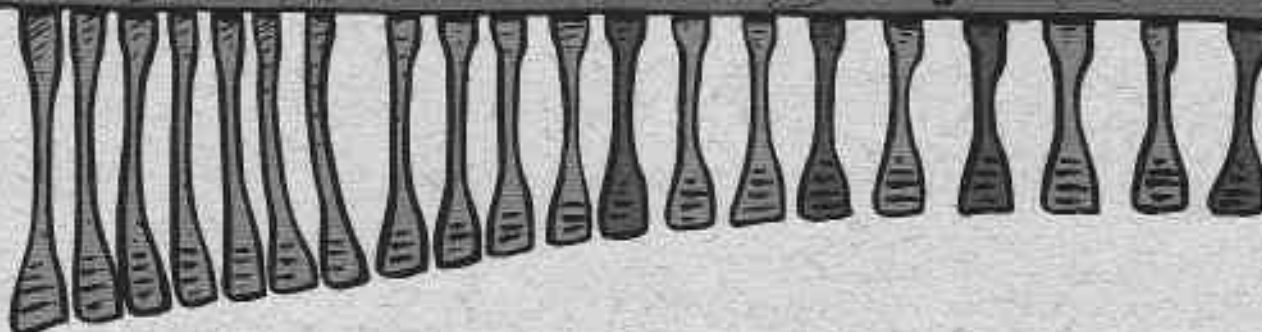


THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN NYCKELHARPA ASSOCIATION

NYCKEL NOTES



1998 Nyckelharpa World Champions (VM)

by Bart Brashers

Eric Sahlström was sometimes called the World Champion of the nyckelharpa. When the first of this competition series was being planned there was a lot of discussion about what the contest should be called. There were many suggestions to name it in one way or another after Eric. There were those that thought, however, that to name it directly after him would imply that it was to be a contest on who could play most like him, or that one had to stick to his repertoire. Naming it "VM" (Världs Mästare, world



champion in Swedish) precluded this, and at the same time the uncrowned World Champion Eric Sahlström would be honored.

Last year's bi-annual Nyckelharpa VM took place at the Soliden stage in Skansen (the outdoor museum and zoo) in Stockholm, on the 30th of May. As usual, there were two classes of competition: gammelharpa and chromatic nyckelharpa, in addition to the award for the "audience's favorite." The gammelharpa (literally "old harpa") class covers all historical versions of the nyckelharpa before the turn of the century: moraharpa, enkelharpa, kontrabasharpa and silverbasharpa. 16 players

continued on page 3

Dues are Due!

It's time to renew your membership in the ANA. Check the mailing label on the envelope this issue came in to see when your membership expires. If it says "Dues paid until 1999" or later, you're up to date. If not, it's time to send some money. Feel free to pay for multiple years at a time.

Fifteen nyckelharpa players in North America have never joined the ANA — Urge you to look over this newsletter and see if it's not something worth supporting.

Your \$10/year includes a subscription to this newsletter, with its article, pictures, events listings and written music. And it helps support our cause, so send in your dues today!

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Two Stämman to be held in 1999! Details on page 12.

Some Kind of Serendipity

by Rita Leydon

Chris and I had had a great rendezvous in Sweden and were winding it up with a few days with my family in Västergötland. These modern Swedes are mystified and amused by our fascination with their old tunes. "They even play nyckelharpa," they tell their friends. When Cousin Jonas called the local tourist bureau with an inquiry on our behalf he offhandedly mentioned our musical interest. "We have a nyckelharpa maker right here in Skövde," said the tourist bureau. Jonas dialed the maker's number. Time was tight and no common slot could be found. Too bad. Maybe next trip. We were not really in the market for harpas anyway. We both had what we considered perfectly serviceable harpas. I say "perfectly serviceable" because we had begun to realize that we were bowing on solid Model A Fords while out there in the world there also exists nimble and exotic thoroughbreds to be had in exchange for slightly bigger piles of money-Ferraris and Maseratis so to say. We had longingly gazed onto the speedway knowing full well that the skill of the driver is of paramount importance. Only two weeks earlier, I had a hard time remembering to breathe after drawing a bow over the strings of a new harpa made by Sören Åbker for our friend Rob from Chicago. So I knew. Chris knew too. It was only a matter of time and we were consciously bidding ours.

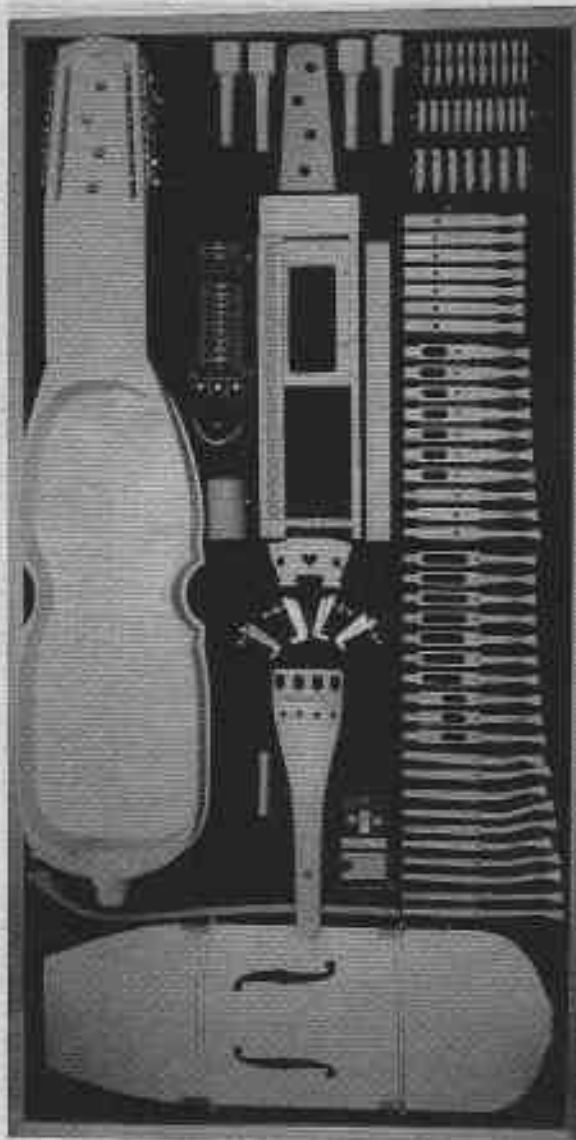
Early in the morning on the day of our departure the phone rang. It was the harpa maker. "I'm coming over. I have to meet the Americans." At ten o'clock Tage Larsson arrived with his wife Siv and a car full of nyckelharpas. Tage was my gnarled and stooped uncle's age. My uncle and Siv took a hard look at each other. Then they smiled and embraced like long lost friends. We were all confused. Turns out that Siv's first husband and my uncle had been best friends in their youth. The

husband had died of tuberculosis, leaving Siv a young widow in her twenties. They hadn't seen each other in all that time. Small world.

Then came the next surprise. Tage had noted the name at the end of the farm entry-Ullberg. The name jostled memories. "I flew gliders with a Gun-Britt Ullberg in the 40s. Any relation?" All warmed up and smiling, my uncle pointed to me. "That's her mother." My mother was quite famous for her flying prowess. She set multiple Swedish records. To this day, no one has broken her female record for distance flight. My mom died last year. Tiny world. Such improbable links.

No longer strangers, we all marched into the house where both my mother and uncle were born and raised, carrying eight harpa cases between us. Chris and I also fetched our own harpas. Then we played some tunes with Tage and made mental note to schedule time with him on our next trip to learn some of his Västergötland tunes.

It takes your breath away to see so many nyckelharpas spread out all at once. The instruments were beautiful and exquisitely made. It was obvious that Tage knew what he was doing. Chris discovered small details that delighted his engineer self. "This man is thinking, look how cleverly he solved this." Being basically novices, we're not really up to speed on how to even look critically at harpas. "Close your eyes and trust your ears," said Chris. We both independently gravitated to a specific harpa with a voice all its own. Chris and the harpa excused themselves, retiring to another room to commune privately together.



*Tage Larsson's traveling display of an exploded nyckelharpa
Photo by Rita Leydon*

While Chris was away, Tage — who speaks only Swedish — told me that Markus Svensson, the young man who only a month or so earlier had become the reigning Nyckelharpa World Champion, recently purchased his third harpa from him. This impressed me. “How many have you made?” He guessed about 130, give or take a few. I asked how much he charged for his instruments, and was quoted a number smaller than I expected. Then he sweetened it a bit, smiled and said “today only.” I smiled back. Chris reappeared, obviously totally besotted with the harpa. I whispered numbers in his ear. His eyes opened fully. “Really?” I nodded.

My aunt announced coffee and ushered us into “fin rummet.” No harpas allowed, only civilized conversation while munching her delectable cakes and sipping strong brew from transparent bone china. Eight elegantly extended

little fingers wondered how this impulsive meeting would conclude. With his last sip, Chris declared that he would like to buy the harpa in question, having clearly forged a tight bond. “The price is very fair,” he said, “but we don’t have that much cash on hand.” With that, my resourceful aunt tiptoed up to her mattress and brought forth the required sum. Sale consummated, Chris became the custodian of a fine new thoroughbred nyckelharpa. Tage was excited because it is his first harpa to go to America. We left the old harpa with Tage who shipped it to us later, and flew home. Anybody need a slightly used harpa?

Contact info for Tage:

Tage Larsson, Hentorpsvägen 54, S-541 52 Skövde, Sweden

1998 Nyckelharpa Champions

continued from page 1

participated: 4 played silverbasharpa, 3 played kontrabasharpa, and 9 played chromatic nyckelharpa. Two players, Esbjörn Hogmark and Markus Svensson, entered both classes, playing kontrabasharpa and nyckelharpa. The prize for each class, in addition to the honor and a diploma, is a miniature nyckelharpa in silver, made to scale following a set of nyckelharpa schematics.

Björn Björn, from Lau on the island of Gotland, won the gammelharpa class. He grew up in the Mariehäll and Spånga districts of Stockholm. He has had as teachers Calle Ågren and other older nyckelharpa players and has preserved the ancient Uppland traditional playing in a living way. He now lives in Lau, a small town in the eastern part of Gotland, the larger island in the Baltic Sea. He builds nyckelharpas, sells wood, strings, kits, schematics, etc. for nyckelharpas and other instruments, and teaches nyckelharpa. Both he and his wife Katarina are Riksspelmän (have been awarded the Zorn Medal in Silver) on silverbasharpa. A circle of local nyckelharpa players has grown up around them on Gotland.

Markus Svensson, from Stockholm, won both the chromatic nyckelharpa class and the “audience’s favorite” prize. Markus was born in 1973 in Almerud outside of Vänersborg, and is currently a student at the Royal Music



Marcus Svensson, left, with the rest of Trio Patrekatt: Annika Wijnbladh, center, and Johan Hedin

School in Stockholm, studying nyckelharpa and folk music. He was awarded the Zorn Medal in Silver in 1992, and can be heard on the CD “Till Eric” along with 5 other young virtuoso nyckelharpa players, and on the CD *Trio Patrekatt*. He is also a member of the group Kalabra. As winner of the World Championships, he has the chance to put out a solo CD on the Tongång label. As always, the prize for the “audience’s favorite”, which Markus won convincingly, was a cittra (Swedish zither) donated by Gottfrid Johansson’s music store in Gamla Stan in Stockholm. An interesting side note: the last VM winner (Niklas Roswall) also played both kontrabasharpa and nyckelharpa at the 1996 competition.

Congratulations to Markus and Björn! We look forward to CDs, hopefully from both of them!

SPELA BÄTTRE!*The Only Way to Improve Your Playing*

Music Minus One (for nyckelharpa?)

by Matt Fichtenbaum

Well, not exactly. There aren't really recordings of entire musical suites minus the nyckelharpa part. But it is possible to play along with nyckelharpa recordings, and one CD in particular strikes this player as very well suited to the task. I'm speaking of Väsen's first album, called, simply, *Väsen*. With its sparse production and clear playing, this is music that invites you to join in.

Ensemble playing offers challenges that don't happen when you're playing alone. You're forced to play at tempo, and you can't stop to correct mistakes or slow down for the rough passages. You and the other musicians need a common vision of the music you're playing. You need to listen to each other's playing, to keep together and to make music as a group rather than a collection of solo players who happen to be in the same room. In return, you have the support of the other musicians, you can build something together that's bigger than one person can accomplish alone, and you can experiment with harmony or accompaniment.

One day while playing I tried to remember the tune Hälsingemarschen, and couldn't. I had been playing some similar tune, and it had displaced the one in question in my mind. So I went to the source and played the CD and, since I had my harpa hanging around my neck, played along. This was a small revelation.

I usually find playing along with a recording to be more difficult than making music with another live person: there aren't any visual cues, and the recorded players don't acknowledge me as part of their group. But this time it worked. Roger Tallroth's clear rhythmic accompaniment and Olov Johansson's sparkling melody gave a groove that I found easy to follow.

So here's a chance to play with other people, even if you live off in the middle of nowhere without another nyckelharapist around. An opportunity to play with people who really know their music, and who will play for you tirelessly for as long as you're willing to push the "Play" button on your CD player. There are only a few prerequisites:

1. You need to know the tune they're playing
2. Your harpa needs to be tuned to their pitch
3. You have to be willing to play at their tempo

Any tune that Olov plays on chromatic nyckelharpa is suitable material, but I particularly like Hälsinge-marschen. There are only Olov and Roger playing, so there's more room for you, and it is not as rhythmically eccentric as some of the polskas. And if you don't happen to own the Väsen CD, the same tune appears on the compilation album *Spirit*.

The tune

If you don't already know this tune, listen to the recording until you do. It's in three parts, in the key of G, C, and G, respectively. The tune is intermediate in difficulty, stimulating but not impossible, and you can take some time to work up playing it at Väsen's tempo.

The transcription here is a basic one. I haven't included any bowings, ornaments, or variations. Try to learn the tune so that you can play it without having to read the music.

Tempo and tuning

Olov and Roger play the tune rather quickly. You can learn it at this tempo, or, if you have a variable-speed tape recorder, you can slow it down by half. (You can also slow it down by a little and tune your harpa low, but that's a fair amount of trouble for small gain.) Tune your harpa to match the recording.

And play...

Take the big step — push the "Play" button and follow along. Turn it up loud enough to hear over your own playing, and listen to Roger's guitar to keep in time with them.

You might find it easiest to learn one part at a time, letting Olov and Roger play the others by themselves. Perhaps the third part is the one that falls most naturally under the fingers.

Practice, stretch yourself, let it get to be more and more natural. Play accompaniment or experiment with harmony. Try some of the other tunes on the CD. Most of all, enjoy playing "with" some of the best in the business!

Hälsingemarschen

av Johan Bohlin

From Väsen

A musical score for the piece 'Hälsingemarschen' by Johan Bohlin. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket. The second staff continues the melody and includes a second ending bracket. The third and fourth staves continue the main melody. The fifth and sixth staves conclude the piece with a final cadence.

Transcription by Matt Fichtenbaum, 1999



Two-thirds of Väsen at Scandinavian Week, 1996: Mikael Marin (wearing a wig he became fond of) and Olov Johansson announce the next dance tune.

Nyckelharpa Encounters Across the U.S.A.

by Karin Arneson

In the August issue of *Nyckel Notes* I enjoyed reading about the experiences of some of our American Nyckelharpa Association members with well known musicians at the Ekebyholm nyckelharpa course, as well as separate encounters with other harpa players in Sweden this summer.

Although I did not have the opportunity to travel there in 1998, I met up with a number of nyckelharpa musicians from both Sweden and the U.S. at various Scandinavian events around our country.

At the end of April I ventured once again to the Viking Fest in Georgetown, Texas where the Svärdsjö Spelmanslag was the featured entertainment for the second time. They are from the area of my ancestors in Dalarna and I met them first at the Falun Folkmusik Festival in 1994. It was exciting to again join them in a jam session at the riverside park where they were promoting their recordings. Returning were nyckelharpa players Micke Eriksson and Olle Plahn who is also a harpa builder. Due to recent surgery he was not toting his harpa along this time. Through Olle I was able to purchase Ólov Johansson's latest CD *Storsvarten* before it hit the general U.S. market. (In September I had an opportunity to talk with Olov at a coffee house back home in Michigan during Väsen's concert tour.) I had hoped to run into Mel Meer again at the festival, however he and Becky had already moved back to the East Coast where they could again participate in the active Scandinavian dance and music scene.

Over the Memorial Day Weekend I dropped in at the Walter Eriksson Musikfest at Vasa Park in Budd Lake, New Jersey during a visit to my son and daughter. Participating in the activities was Folkdansgillet Nerike comprised of over 46 dancers and musicians from Örebro in Sweden. They performed an outstanding program of dances illustrating various seasonal events and activities around the year. Among the musicians were no less than 5 nyckelharpa players! One of them, Åke Uhlin, remembered me from the fiddle stämna in Ransäter, Värmland last year. Another, Bo Brewitz, mentioned that he had been Bart Brashers's teacher at a harpa course in Sweden a number of years ago. Several of our ANA members including Wally Eriksson (Walter Eriksson's son), Mel Meer, and Chris and Rita Leydon were strolling the park grounds with harpas in hand. It was great

fun joining the Swedes in a buskspel between their scheduled performances. Festival organizer Jeanne Widman (Walter Eriksson's daughter) may be joining our ranks as well. She purchased a harpa during a recent visit to Sweden.

The opportunity to take a class from well known Uppland nyckelharpa performer and instructor Ditte Andersson, as well as learn tunes from fiddlers from Småland (another ancestral area) attracted me to Scandinavian Week at Buffalo Gap, West Virginia at the end of June. I had first met Ditte last year in Sweden at the Österbybruk nyckelharpa stämna. Other ANA members enjoying the workshops included Becky Weis (also a teacher) Joel Remde, Tim Newcomb (*Nyckel Notes* producer), Karen Myers, Mel Meer and of course, Bruce Sagan, the camp's music director. By coincidence, Småland fiddle teacher Anders-Svensson was acquainted with the nyckelharpa and fiddle musician Tage Johansson who had played at the reunion party with my new-found relatives in the northern part of that province a year ago.

In September I traveled to the Chicago area for Scandinavian Day at Vasa Park in South Elgin. This year a musical headliner from Scandinavia was Norske Mannskap, a band assembled from talented musicians who play in other groups in Norway. They performed some of the most lively dance music I have ever heard! This was also a time to say farewell to Paul Höglund and wife Susanne Persson who are moving to Sweden. Susanne will be working for Rättviks Kommun and Paul plans to set up a tailor shop where he will sew Dalarna folk costumes.

Paul, Susanne, Don Peterson, myself and Rob Krapfl joined in a final harpa jam session. Rob is a Chicago folk dancer who purchased a nyckelharpa this summer while in Sweden for the Hälsinge Hambo competition.

Rounding out my Scandinavian music travel circuit for the season will be Swedish Music & Dance Weekend at Folklore Village in Dodgeville, Wisconsin the latter part of October. Paul Dahlin and a portion of the ASI Spelmanslag from Minneapolis will be performing, leading fiddle workshops and provide music for the dancers along with the fiddle students. I hope to encounter other nyckelharpa aficionados from the Midwest with whom to share my joy for playing this unique instrument.

Smaller than you think....

By Tim Newcomb

I moved my graphic design business into a new series of offices in January. We're located in a wonderful old Montpelier, Vermont mansion built with the grand detail that was common in large homes in the mid-1800s. The rooms have 12-foot high ceilings, bay windows with mahogany trim, marble fireplaces, and newly-refinished oak floors. With lots of space and great acoustics, I had rented the offices with the unprofessional thought that it would be a wonderful place to host music parties. There are virtually no other Scandinavian musicians in Vermont, so my office-warming party was in the form of an Irish music session. People came from hours away, and we broke in the grand new space in style. There were a number of fiddlers, button-accordion players, whistle players, singers, a guy on harmonica and bodhran, a couple guitars, mandolins... it was great.

I had mixed feelings about bringing my nyckelharpa, since it's not exactly an Irish session instrument. But I thought that the first instrument my new office should hear was the harpa, and spent an hour practicing

before anybody arrived.

About three hours into the session one of the local guys said, "All right, Newcomb, it's about time to pull out your harpa." I said, no, it's not an Irish instrument, and I don't want to hog attention.

A tall, slender guy (the harmonica and bodhran player) who I had never met, but instantly liked, blurted out, "What? You have a nyckelharpa?" I stared, amazed someone knew what a nyckelharpa was, and said "Yes, I have a nyckelharpa here. How is it you know about nyckelharpas?" He said, "Both of my parents play nyckelharpa." I gave him a good, scrunching look and declared, "You're a Leydon! You're Chris and Rita's son!" To which he looked equally shocked and said "Yes! How did you know?"

Everyone else at the session was a bit dumbfounded, (both at their first sight of a nyckelharpa and this chance meeting.) Turning to my computer (which, being in my office, was on), I double-clicked on the photo of the Leydons and I, still in the Nyckel Notes folder. "Ack!" was the response from the young Leydon, a senior at Dartmouth. "It's my parents!"

Sometimes even the world of folk music is smaller than you think.

NYCKELHARPA CARE

Nyckelharpa Strings

by Bart Brashers

I recently received some questions from ANA member John Farrow, about replacing the strings on his nyckelharpa. John writes:

"... with new playing strings — I nearly fell over — I could hardly recognize the sound of the instrument. Before the low C and G strings were thin-sounding, and if you went above B on the G string it got really weak. Now both strings sound full and strong, even as you play up on the G string. It is as though the whole instrument opened up. Before, the A string was solid, not wound, so it had a very bright sound that was in sharp contrast to the more mellow C string, so crossing strings from C to A was rather jarring. Now there is no noticeable break in a C scale when you cross strings. The C is stronger than before, and the A is much more mellow without being at all wimpy. You can play in higher positions on the C

string without losing so much tone quality. It really does not sound like the same instrument.

I am eager to replace the resonance strings as well, but I need some advice first. The D'Addario strings you sent are, as I am sure you know, way too long for a nyckelharpa. How do you shorten them? Do you simply cut them? If so, with what? How many inches beyond the peg do you cut? Do the windings unwind?

Yes, you should cut off the excess. I use a pair of side cutters that I keep in my nyckelharpa case. I've thought for many years that I should get a better set of pliers to keep in there, ones with wire cutters built in. I use the pliers to fine-tune the tangents, but the ones that I have don't have built-in side cutters. They do have flat (no teeth) jaws, so they won't mark up the tangents, which is why I use them. I should go to the hardware store and get a good pair, and grind them down if necessary.

You want to leave enough excess string to wind about 5 times around the cylinder of the tuner (the "post"). From my guitar playing days, I use a technique where I make an arch of the string (ball end attached, the other held near the tuner) whose height is equal to the width of my hand spread, thumb to pinkie. That is, spread your hand (palm perpendicular to the top of the nyckelharpa) running the string over your thumb. Cut the string then at the tuner, and when the string straightens out it will have the appropriate amount of excess.

Either that, or cut it 6 to 8 inches too long.

I also fold the last centimeter or so over, and put the folded end in the hole in the post. This makes it easy to remove later, as the very end sticks back up out of the hole like a little "tail". After unwinding just enough to take the tension off the string, you can grab the "tail" with a pair of pliers and pull, pulling it out of the hole. Keeps you from having to unwind the whole thing, which gets rather tiring.

Speaking of which, I use an item I purchased from a Rock-n-Roll guitar store, a "speed tuner". It's a handle attached to an arm with a pin, so that the arm can spin

about the handle. On the other end of the arm is an oblong cup that fits over the tuning knobs. The arm is about 2 inches long, so by rotating the handle in a circle around the tuner knob you can quickly unwind or wind the string. Much less tiring than grasp, rotate 1/2 turn, let go, grasp, rotate 1/2 turn, let go.....

The windings of the resonance strings will unwind a minuscule amount when cut, but once it's under tension around the post of the tuner, it will cease to unwind. The tension pressing the string against the post keeps it from unwinding further.

I also cut off the excess from my playing strings, but here it's **very** important to leave some of the colored thread. The thread keeps the string from unwinding by itself, and cutting it below the thread will cause it to unwind appreciably, making the string unplayable. Make sure you have at least two inches of the thread-wound portion of the string left. The tension pressing the string to the peg will inhibit unwinding for a while, but eventually it will affect the sound. Since the strings are not exactly cheap, it's better to be careful and leave some thread.

Below are musical examples that should have accompanied the Spels Bättre article "Bowing From the Wrist Down" in Nyckel Notes #13.

Example 1: Boda polska written as...

Played as...



Example 2: Rättvik polska written as...

Played as...



Example 3: Schottis written as...

May be played as one of these variants



Example 4: Polska written as...

May be played as triplets



Avskedsgånglåt

by well-known Hälsingland fiddler Jon Erik Hall

Leif Alpsjö sent me this tune in a Christmas greeting a few years back. It's melodic, gentle, properly melancholy. It's not a dance tune, so you can take your time with it and put some feeling into it. And it's a great tune for harmonies. And to practice playing the runs and making the position shifts smoothly.

The "A" part is, indeed, twice as long as the "B" part.

Perhaps because the "A" part's two halves are different, this doesn't feel unnatural. Sometimes I hold the last note of its twelfth measure for an extra beat.

Incidentally, "Avsked" has more than one meaning. You can think of this as "the parting tune," or "the farewell tune," or even "the I-just-got-fired-from-work tune."

Avskedsgånglåt

"The Parting Tune"

Jon-Erik Hall, Hälsingland

From the playing of Leif Alpsjö

The musical score consists of six staves of music in 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written in a single line. The second staff continues the melody with a similar rhythmic pattern. The third staff shows a change in the melody, with a more complex rhythmic structure. The fourth staff features a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by two measures of music with first and second endings indicated by '1' and '2' above the notes. The fifth staff continues the melody with a similar rhythmic pattern. The sixth staff concludes the piece with a final measure and a double bar line.

transcr. Matt Fichtenbaum '99

This is the third of Viksta-Lasse's (1897-1986) Eklundapolska tunes. This one is moderate in difficulty and is a popular tune among nyckelharpa players in Sweden. It's included on Peter Hedlund's CD "Puma." (Eklundapolska #2, in F, was the subject of "Spela Bättre" in NN #10, January 1998.)

The transcription shows the tune with some variations. The first variation is Measure 1 as Peter Hedlund recorded it.

The second is the way many people play the B part phrases - think of quarter notes with a "pulse" in the middle.

The third variation, for the first phrase of the B part, adds double-stops for the G and D chords; the fourth variation, for the third phrase of the B part, changes the G chord to an E-minor chord. Some people like play the B part with the G-chord double-stops the first time and the E-minor chord the second time. Experiment!

Eklundapolska Nr. 3

by Viksta-Lasse

Alternative for Measure 1

Alternative for Measures 9, 13

Alternative for Measures 9-10

Alternative for Measures 13-14

Alternative for Measures 9-10

Alternative for Measures 13-14

New Stuff for Sale from the ANA

*CD prices are \$15 for members, \$17 for non-members except where noted.
Prices include shipping.*

AWCD-25 **Per Sundin Kontrabasharpa 1914**

How did a kontrabasharpa sound in its prime? Per Sundin (1858-1928) was a carpenter and lumberer from Harg in northern Uppland. During a private tour to make extra money in 1914, C. W. von Sydow, a docent in folk studies at the University of Lund, recorded about 20 of Per's tunes for the Lund archives. These unique recordings of deeply traditional kontrabasharpa playing feature both tunes from the common Uppland repertoire and from the hits of the time. His playing style is robustly Uppland.

DROCD012 **Curt Tallroth & Olov Johansson Örsprång (ear ache)**

Curt Tallroth comes from Harbo in northern Uppland, and plays fiddle, nyckelharpa, clarinet and guitar. Together with his brothers Ivar, Sven and Artur he has preserved a unique tradition from the legendary fiddler and nyckelharpa player August Bohlin. When Olov Johansson was 14 he met Curt for the first time, and this was the beginning of a long friendship. Olov plays nyckelharpa and fiddle, and is well known for playing with Väsen. On this recording we hear two master musicians playing together. You'll hear 37 tunes they have played many times over the years, with a unique closeness between fiddle and nyckelharpa.

DROCD013 **Rotvälta i Österled (toward the east).**

Here the group Rotvälta travel east to the Swedish-speaking parts of Finland. They have found folk music on phonograph cylinders recorded at the beginning of this century, which included a style of fiddle playing with a special drive, and unique two-part singing, influenced by eastern European traditions. Rotvälta present these tunes and songs in a fresh way yet still true to the spirit of the originals. The tracks on this CD range from driving dance tunes to haunting ballads, played and sung by Susanne Rosenberg, vocals, Sven Ahlbäck, fiddle and vocals, Mats Olofsson, cello and Mikael Marin, viola and vocals.

DROCD014 **Envisa (stubborn) Flod (river, or high tide).**

The group consists of three singers with different musical backgrounds who come together in folk music. With the voice their only instrument, they give folk singing a new look and stretch the limits of what you can do within vocal folk music. Envisa uphold the tradition and have one foot rooted in it, but they are also of their own times, willingly succumbing to present influences, and strive for the unpredictable in their break-neck improvisations. The "Flod" CD

reflects the musical breadth of Envisa. The repertoire takes in everything from pastoral choral melodies to heady dance rhythms, all with the same characteristic Envisa stamp on it.

DROCD015 **Hulling Hårdhajen (hard shark)**

This is the second album from Hulling, a group of five young musicians. Ola Hertzberg on nyckelharpa, Dan Sjöberg on fiddle, and Johanna Bölja on vocals have been playing and singing folk music for a long time, while Jens Engelbrecht on guitar and bouzouki and Patrik Lindberg on percussion have a background of jazz, rock, Latin and funk. On this recording we hear how their skill at playing together has developed since their first album three years ago. Hulling's music consists of a varied selection of dance tunes, songs and ballads in arrangements full of new ideas.

DROCD016 **eter (ether)**

Eter is a group of young musicians, who met at the music college in Ingesund. They play young folk music from Sweden and Norway, and a large part of their repertoire consists of their own compositions. Eter also have new views on how to play and arrange tunes, and season the arrangements with improvisation. Their unusual setting also gives an interesting sound to the songs and tunes. All of these young musicians are very talented, and together they drive folk music forward in new directions.

The following items are published by the Eric Sahlström Minnesfond (memorial fund). They are available by special order only, contact Gail Halverson at the address below. Prices are slightly higher, with the added proceeds going directly to the Minnesfond.

MINCD001 **Eric Sahlström and Gösta Sandström Spelmanslåtar från Uppland (tunes from Uppland).**

This is a re-issue of the LP that won a Swedish Grammy in 1971, and the only CD where you can hear the legendary Eric and Gösta play. Mostly traditional tunes from Eric's family repertoire, with a few of his own tunes. Special price: \$17/\$19.

Eric Sahlström Book, with chapters by Jan Ling, Sture & Greta Stina Sahlström, Anna Sahlström, Sigurd Sahlström, Sigbritt Sahlström, Sonia Sahlström Larsson, Gösta Sandström, John Olsson, Esbjörn Hogmark, Gunnar Ahlbäck and Gunnar Fredelius.

Meet the legend, the most famous nyckelharpa player of this century, as told by his family and friends. The book

also analyzes his playing, nyckelharpa building, background and tradition. Price: \$32/\$35.

Eric Sahlström Tune Booklet.

22 of Eric's original compositions are written down by Gösta Sandström. This book is the second edition of the one released shortly after Eric's death, and has corrections to the original tunes plus three new tunes: "Namlösen, Örebropolskan" and "Hvilsta polskan". The latter has since been identified as a tune Eric had after Oskar Petterson, "Spel Oskar", Eskilstuna. It is said that Eric could write a tune on the fly (improvising) and probably made many more, but only these 21 tunes have survived to be passed on to us. Price: \$18/\$20.

The Leufsta Collection, I, II and III.

In 1915, Baron De Geer commissioned the transcription of some of the tunes played in Lövsta by the foundry workers (the "bruk" in Österbybruk means foundry.) These are reproductions of the original printing of the result, complete with the idiosyncracies of the transcription. For example, if a player's nyckelharpa happened to be tuned 1/2 step low, a tune he played in the key of C was written down in

the key of B. Lövsta and Österby were and continue to be centers of nyckelharpa playing in northern Uppland, and these books offer a rare glimpse into the past. Price: \$32/\$35 each or \$75/\$80 for the set of three.

MINMC001 Allspel Cassette I.

At most gatherings of folk musicians in Sweden, an "allspel" (everyone play) will take place, where everyone gets up on stage and plays some tunes together. Tunes are chosen from the common repertoire of the region. This cassette was produced as a learning aid, to spread these selected tunes and help everyone have close to the same version of the melodies. Special price \$10/\$12.

MINMC002 Allspel Cassette II.

Volume two of the above. More common tunes from Uppland. Special price \$10/\$12.

Send orders to:

Gail Halverson
American Nyckelharpa Association
PO Box 1394
Venice CA 90294-1394

The 1999 ANA Nyckelharpa Stämman

This year, the American Nyckelharpa Association will host not one but **two** Nyckelharpa Stämman: October 2-3, in Lahaska PA, and October 23-24, in the SF East Bay Area.

Teaching at both events will be Peter "Puma" Hedlund, from Bollnäs in Sweden.

Puma has played fiddle since 1966, nyckelharpa since 1971, and is a "Riksspelman" (1975). He is a professional music teacher, and organizes courses at his farmhouse in Hälsingland.

His primary teacher, after starting with Mats Kuoppala, was Eric Sahlström. He is well known to many American nyckelharpa players, and can be heard on his Solo CD *Puma* available from the ANA.



The Stämman will feature workshops with Puma and time for jamming and getting to know nyckelharpa players from other parts of the country. Friday evening sessions may occur, along with a Saturday evening dance and a Sunday concert.

Save the date, and stay tuned for more information in the next issue of *Nyckel Notes!*

Peter "Puma" Hedlund

Upcoming Nyckelharpa Events

Check the ANA's web page for the most current scheduling information

Events in America

Väsen's upcoming North American activities:

24-28 Feb 1999: Folk Alliance conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico: Väsen is part of the opening concert on the 23rd and will be showcased with other Swedish artists (Frifot, Björn Ståbi and Kalle Almlöf) during the conference. Väsen will also have a separate gig in Albuquerque at the South Broadway Cultural Center on the 27th.

27 Mar 1999: Symphony Space, New York, presented by the World Music Institute, with JPP from Finland and the Annbjørg Lien Band from Norway.

29 Mar 1999: Chicago Cultural Center, with JPP.

30 Mar 1999: John Waldron Arts Center, Bloomington Indiana, with JPP.

31 Mar 1999: Väsen will play with JPP at 8:00 pm at the Reynolds Industries Theater, Bryan University Center, Duke University West Campus (next to Duke Chapel) Durham, NC. Tickets are on sale now from the Duke Box Office, and can be ordered by calling 919-684-4444.

2 Apr 1999: Cedar Cultural Centre, Minneapolis Minnesota, with JPP (Part of the Nordic Roots Festival, April 1-4, which will also include Hedningarna and Wimne).

3-10 July 1999: Nyckelharpa teaching during Scandinavian Week at Buffalo Gap. Lotta Franzén will teach advanced nyckelharpa at this year's camp. Lotta comes highly recommended by among others Ditte Andersson, who was at Buffalo Gap and the ANA Nyckelharpa Stämman last year. If she's even half as much fun as Ditte, we'll be in for a treat. See <http://www.math.msu.edu/~sagan/Folk/campcur.html> For more information, contact:

Judy Barlas
MFAC
PO Box 2354
Silver Spring MD 20915-2354
301-649-6921
jbarlas@erols.com

Two ANA Stämmas:

For the fifth annual ANA Nyckelharpa Stämman, we decided to double our coverage and have two Stämmas. Peter "Puma" Hedlund will be featured at both:

2-3 Oct 1999: ANA East Coast Nyckelharpa Stämman, Lahaska PA. Organized by Rita and Chris Leydon. Events will likely take place at their home. Check the next issue of *Nyckel Notes* for the latest information.

22-24 Oct 1999: ANA West Coast Nyckelharpa Stämman, SF Bay Area, CA. Organized by Virginia Thompson, and co-sponsored by the Northern California Spelmanslag. Events will likely include, in addition to workshops with Puma, a Saturday evening dance and maybe a concert. Check the next issue of *Nyckel Notes* for the latest information.

Events in Sweden

12-14 June 1999:

Junior Championships in Nyckelharpa

The first Junior Championships in Nyckelharpa will be held during the 25th anniversary Spelmansstämman at Österbybruk, Uppland in June of 1999. The goal of the competition, organized by Österby folkdanslag in conjunction with the Eric Sahlström VM (World Championship) Committee, is to give young people the opportunity to perform in exciting circumstances in front of the public and to encourage traditional playing. Participants will be divided into classes by age, and are to play two tunes of their choice from the traditional repertoire before the public and a jury. Each participant will be able to discuss their playing with the jury after the competition. There will be one winner per age group, but no overall "winner." Additional honorary diplomas may be awarded. The jury will be comprised of past World Champions. For more information:

Gunnar Ahlbäck
+46-295-430 78

Gunnar Fredelius,
gunner.f@earthling.net
or
+46-70-665 29 67

Nyckelharpa Events, *continued*

27 June - 1 July 1999: Ekebyholm. Residence course the week following midsommar every year, from Sunday to Thursday, at Ekebyholm castle, just north of Rimbo, Uppland. Teaching at the course will be ten of the leading nyckelharpa players (names to be announced) from Uppland, and at least one fiddle player. This course was started by Eric Sahlström, and is the most well-known course for learning Uppland music. Most participants are nyckelharpa players, but the course is open to all acoustic instruments.

For information, contact

Lars Lindkvist
 Aprilvägen 43
 177 61 Järfälla
 SWEDEN

Telephone +46-8-58 03 16 21
 E-mail (work) lars.lindkvist@jarfalla.se

Last week of July 1999: Zornmärkeuppspelning (Play for the Zornmärke) Each year, musicians can play for a jury and seek the Zorn medal, named after the artist Anders Zorn who organized the first spelmansstämma in 1906. About a third of those who play are awarded one of the following grades: Bronze Diploma, Bronze Medal, Silver Diploma, and Silver Medal. Those who have received the Silver Medal have the honor of calling themselves Riksspelman. Additionally, some years the Zorn medal in Gold is given out to a spelman for life-long achievement and commitment to Swedish traditional music.

1999's event will be held in Arvika, Värmland during the last week of July, with award ceremonies to be held on 31 July.

Contact:

janelow@hem2.passagen.se
 or visit:
 home5.swipnet.se/~w-57386/
 for more information.

Polska efter Anders Liljefors the Elder

from the playing of Ditte Andersson

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled 'Polska efter Anders Liljefors the Elder'. The score is written in 3/4 time and consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is characterized by a steady eighth-note rhythm. The second staff has a '3' written below it, indicating a triplet. The third staff has a '2' written below it, indicating a second ending. The fourth staff has a '9' written below it, indicating a ninth ending. The fifth staff has a '11' written below it, indicating an eleventh ending. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

after Ditte Andersson, variations after Leif Alpsjö

Nyckelharpa Strings for Sale

The American Nyckelharpa Association is pleased to announce the availability of strings for the nyckelharpa! ANA member Robert Krapfl has volunteered to handle string sales. We have five different products for you — two brands of playing strings and three versions of understring sets.

Playing Strings

The "playing strings" are the four largest strings, the ones that you actually touch with the bow. We have two brands to choose from, both manufactured in Sweden:

PRIM brand strings are made by an old Swedish string manufacturing company. Their fiddle strings are popular among folk musicians, and are available widely in the US. Their nyckelharpa strings are basically the same as their cello strings, except that they are the correct length for nyckelharpas instead of about a foot too long. All four strings are wound. The A-string is .020" (0.50 mm) in diameter.

JÖRPELAND brand strings are made by a gammalharpa player and artist named Ingvar Jörpeland. He makes strings for the gammalharpa too, but the ANA carries only strings for the modern 3-row nyckelharpa. The set is called "Jerker Special", which admittedly doesn't sound so good in English. The man who first taught Ingvar to spin strings (Nils Eriksson) was nick-named Jerker (YERKER), and the strings are named after him. The A-string is plain, and the rest are wound.

Resonance Strings

We offer three versions of understrings, described more fully in the January 1998 edition of Nyckel Notes. Basically, the three sets can be called 6+6, 4+4+4, and 12-step. There's actually some logic here:

6+6 is

- 6 wound strings .021" (0.53 mm) in diameter
- 6 plain strings .014" (0.36 mm) in diameter

4+4+4 is

- 4 wound strings 0.24" (0.61 mm) in diameter
- 4 wound strings .021" (0.53 mm) in diameter
- 4 plain strings .014" (0.36 mm) in diameter

12-step is

- 12 strings, varying from .025" (0.64 mm) to .014" (0.36 mm), by steps of .001". The lower 6 are wound, the higher 6 are plain.

Order Form

*Prices are listed for ANA members/non-members
Price includes shipping in the US.*

Add an appropriate extra amount for international orders.

| String Set | Qty | Price | Cost |
|-----------------------------------|-------|---------------|----------|
| Prim Playing Strings | _____ | \$53/\$60 | \$ _____ |
| Jörpeland Playing Strings | _____ | \$43/\$50 | \$ _____ |
| 6+6 Resonance Strings | _____ | \$20/\$25 | \$ _____ |
| 4+4+4 Resonance Strings | _____ | \$20/\$25 | \$ _____ |
| 12-step Resonance Strings | _____ | \$20/\$25 | \$ _____ |
| <i>(Make checks out to "ANA")</i> | | Total: | \$ _____ |

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

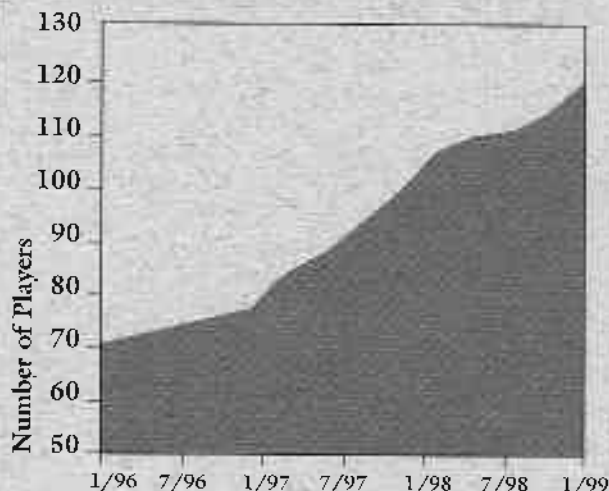
E-mail _____

*Send this form, with a check made out to the
American Nyckelharpa Association, to:*

Robert Krapfl
4651 N Wolcott, Apt. 1, Chicago IL 60640
rpk@signalinteractive.com



Nyckelharpa Players in North America



There are 124 nyckelharpa players in North America, as of February 22, 1999. Seventy of them have joined and/or are up to date (1998 or better) on their dues.

New Nyckelharpa Players

| | |
|---|--|
| Laurie Riley 130 5th Street #B-102 Langley WA 98260 360-221-8148 larp@whidbey.com | Ben Teitelbaum 4521 N Diamondleaf Dr. Castle Rock CO 80104 303-526-1869 ChaimSwede@aol.com |
|---|--|

The American Nyckelharpa Association

The ANA is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering the nyckelharpa, its music and its dance in North America. We sponsor and produce music and dance workshops across the country featuring the traditions of the nyckelharpa.

Membership dues in the ANA are \$10/year, which includes a subscription to this newsletter. Send to the address below, and please indicate if you play the nyckelharpa and if we can publish your name in our roster.

ANA Web Page

Source of information about the nyckelharpa, nyckelharpa players, a history of the instrument, nyckelharpa events and more! The URL is: <http://www.nyckelharpa.org>

Nyckel Notes

Published quarterly, edited by Bart Brashers and Matt Fichtenbaum. Send submissions to *Nyckel Notes* at the address below, or to: bart@hpcc.epa.gov

The American Nyckelharpa Association
PO Box 2291, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2291

ANA Board Election

The following members have been nominated to serve a two-year term on the ANA Board (1999-2000):

| | |
|--|--|
| Bart Brashers 222 Old Fayetteville Rd Apt E106 Carrboro NC 27510-5530 919-969-9405 bart@hpcc.epa.gov <i>President, Newsletter Editor</i> | Rita Leydon PO Box 127 Lahaska PA 18931 215-794-8660 leyfco@tradent.net <i>1999 Stålmanna Co-ordinator</i> |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| Robert Krapfl 4651 N Wolcott #1 Chicago IL 60640 773-784-5956 rpkr@signalinteractive.com <i>String Sales Coordinator</i> | Mel Meer 33-04 214th Place Bayside NY 11361 718-428-3659 mel@tbp.com <i>Past Board Member</i> |
|--|--|

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|---|--|
| Chris Leydon PO Box 127 Lahaska PA 18931 215-794-8660 BugattiDoc@aol.com <i>1999 Stålmanna Co-ordinator</i> | Tim Newcomb 579 Hampshire Hill Rd. Worcester VI 05682 802-229-4604 tnewcomb@aol.com <i>Newsletter Producer</i> |
|---|--|

Please vote for two (2) of the above. Either cut this voting slip out, or (if you don't want to mutilate your copy of Nyckel Notes) write two names on a slip of paper. Feel free to pay your dues at the same time!

Your Name: _____

Vote for two (2):

Bart Brashers
 Robert Krapfl
 Chris Leydon
 Rita Leydon
 Mel Meer
 Tim Newcomb

Mail to:

American Nyckelharpa Association
PO Box 2291
Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2291

or e-mail to:

bart@hpcc.epa.gov

Votes will be counted by a disinterested party.