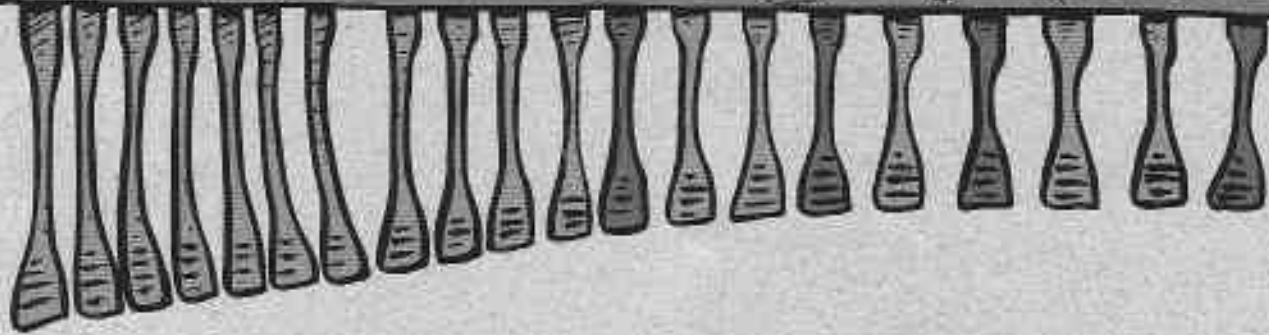


THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN NYCKELHARPA ASSOCIATION

## NYCKEL NOTES



## In Praise and Awe of Age and Experience

by Rita Leydon

Several years ago I got the notion that I wanted to capture on film the precious few remaining nyckelharpa masters in our midst. I've been around the block enough times to know that the elder statesmen of this persuasion have names like Nisse Nordström, Hasse Gille and Sture Sahlström. These men are the pure gold of Swedish traditional music, the deep roots, the aged to perfection wine. Seasoned salts fascinate me, and so I am naturally drawn to the elder practitioners of the nyckelharpa's charms. I envisioned and dared to dream of documenting for posterity private jam sessions between old salts and younger cannons. My motives were not entirely altruistic. I wanted to have such films. I wanted to be able to study and immerse myself in such source material.

I envisioned an ongoing series. Portrait films. Why was no one doing this already? What about the Swedish culture department? Kulturrådet? I see their imprint on almost every recording and musical production coming out of the country. They pour tons of money into young soda pop artists that might appeal to the world market. I've approached them on several occasions with my various nyckelharpa related projects. They skirt the issue, pass the buck, say "no." Why wait for nature to take its toll and then lament the fact that no one bothered to document these folks while there was still time? When Curt Tallroth passed away in November 2001,

effectively cancelling plans I was in the middle of making with Olov Johansson to film the two of them together, I shifted into bona fide panic mode. All of a sudden my desire to document took on emergency status. I realized that if I wanted this, it was up to me, myself, to make it happen, and that time was short.

I asked Peter Hedlund for help. He knows everybody. I flashed him a smile and assured him I can be almost invisible—just me, two video cameras, some tripods, microphones, a few cables. Stuff like that. He smiled back and said he'd see what he could do. In short order, Peter had lined up Nisse Nordström. I was ecstatic.

The requirement of a pre-existing relationship of respect and love between any two musicians is a given. I hoped for magic and believed in miracles. Nisse and Peter were the willing subjects of my test run. We had to film two separate sessions and work out some bugs. No one complained. Nisse was a real trooper, I think he would have played with Peter any number of times just for the sheer joy of it. The Nisse film is now finished and available on DVD from my website—the first of what will hopefully grow to become a wonderful resource library for students and aficionados of Sweden's finest homegrown sounds.

I set about single-mindedly courting the other pairs on my short

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# Tidlöst (Timeless)

*Leif Alpsjö, with friends*

Tongång AWCD-49, released 2003.

*reviewed by Matt Fichtenbaum*

Leif Alpsjö has his music from the people who played it and danced to it as part of their everyday lives. Tradition-bearers like Ivar Tallroth, Viksta-Lasse, and Eric Sahlström. So Leif's playing is solid and down-to-earth—one hears the connection with tradition, the context in which this music has always made sense.

On this CD, Leif allows himself to relax in the company of friends, to lean back and play the music he enjoys. Solo, or with piano or organ or guitar or accordion, he plays an impressive collection of material. Mostly Uppland tunes including a couple of Leif's own tunes, but there are forays farther afield. Bach's "Wachet auf" chorale prelude, for example.

This reviewer very much enjoys the combination of nyckelharpa with Malin Svensson's pipe organ. On the Småland tune "Virestads brudmarsch," and "Wachet auf," and the English ritual dance tune "Abbots Bromley Horn Dance." Every harpa player ought to have a friend with a pipe organ!

Leif plays solo for an Uppland bridal polska, a couple of



polskas after August Bohlin, Eric Sahlström's "Hem från Gesunda," and a most soulful rendition of "När länsman tog kon" ("Svärdsjövisan"). And two of his own tunes, including the gentle, respectful "Little Waltz for Sara" for his granddaughter. His playing isn't flashy, but it's genuine and deep. It conveys what the music has to say, and it's a fine example for us "immigrant" players. Any of these tunes is a worthy addition to one's repertoire.

A couple of waltzes and a polska with piano, a handful of tunes with Dan Erixon's guitar, a rollicking performance of Sahlström's "Tobopolketten" with accordion. If there's anything to question, it's that the guitar sometimes lays down a musical framework so detailed that it overwhelms the polska's natural rhythmic understatement and mystery. But that's a small point, and it doesn't detract from the delight of the music as a whole. The CD ends with the pop standard "On the Sunny Side of the Street," with Leif and accordionist Seth Lindell clearly having a good time with their music.

For me this CD fits into both the "for enjoyment" and "listen and learn" categories. I'm going to learn some of the tunes, and I'm going to take inspiration from the playing. Leif has done a fine job with this project, and it's our good fortune that he is sharing it with us.

## Special Summer CD Sale

Now through August 31, 2003—buy any regular priced CD and receive an extra "mystery CD" from our overstocked CD backlog absolutely free. Yes, we mean: free. As long as supplies last. You see, over the years we have ordered too many CDs of Swedish traditional music and folk music with no nyckelharpa content, and our bookshelves are groaning under the weight. We're tired of dusting them off. So we are going to pass this music on to you. Buy one new CD, get one (ANA choice) free. Buy five, get five free. It's that simple.

All of the "mystery CDs" were at one time listed

somewhere on our online catalog, and all of them are brand new and Scandinavian music. Many of them are otherwise unavailable in the USA. Who knows what you'll get? If you like it—great! If not—pass it along to someone who does!

Send in your CD orders now, to take advantage of this one-time offer.

To order, fill out the form printed in this issue and mail it in, or go online to [www.nyckelharpa.org](http://www.nyckelharpa.org) and place your orders there. **Write the special secret code "FREE CD OFFER" on your order!**

# Products for Sale by the ANA

Much more at [www.nyckelharpa.org/sales/music\\_catalog.html](http://www.nyckelharpa.org/sales/music_catalog.html)



*AWCD-49, Tongång*  
**TIDLÖST**  
**Leif Alpsjö**

Leif is a well known and respected teacher and ambassador of the nyckelharpa and Swedish folk music in general. The ANA came into being as a result of Leif's efforts and support and he is therefore an honorary life member. This is actually Leif's first CD, long overdue and very welcome! A beautiful presentation by a man who devotes his life to nurturing and bringing out the musician in all of us. Dan Erixon, Seth Lindell and Malin Svensson also participate on the record.



*AWCD-48, Tongång*  
**VÄGEN**  
**Peter Hedlund**

Peter Puma Hedlund is a legendary harpa player. Twice designated World Champion, first in 1992 and then again in 2000. The long awaited "Vägen," 2002, is Puma's first solo recording in a decade. It is a monumental testament to the exquisite beauty and versatility of the nyckelharpa in the hands of a true master.

Traditional tunes as well as a good many of Peter's own compositions. This is a CD to have and listen to with rapt attention.



*SLP-2071, Sonet Grammofon*  
**LUFFAR SCHOTTIS**  
**Norrtelje Elitkapell**

Available only as CD-burner copies from Norrtelje Elitkapell—actually out of print. Recorded in 1977. Back at the time when Swedes were rediscovering their fantastic traditional music, there burst upon the scene a band of slightly irreverent and highly energized musicians who called themselves Norrtelje Elitkapell (Norrtelje is a town in Uppland). There is no march for the vitality and unbridled joy this music unleashes on the unsuspecting and uninitiated listener. Peter Puma Hedlund handles the nyckelharpa end of things. Need we say more? Also available from Norrtelje Elitkapell as CD-burner copies are "Med pukor och trumpeter" (recorded 1981) and "Oskapliga låtar" (recorded 1979)—both also featuring Peter Hedlund on nyckelharpa.

*AMCD-727, Anigo*  
**BLÅ BERGENS BORDUNER**

The Blue Mountains are between Västmanland and Värmland, and area where "Drone" music survived into the present day. Anders (Stake) Norrude from Hedningarna—medieval nyckelharpa, bagpipes, hardan-



gefele, fiddle, flutes; Ulf Karlsson, fiddle; Goran Fredriksson, bouzouki, bagpipes; Stefan Ekedahl, cello, bagpipes. A really great album!



*ANACD-99-01, ANA*  
**NYCKELHARPA CONCERT**  
**Peter Hedlund**

Peter "Puma" Hedlund, 1992 and 2000 World Champion on the nyckelharpa, plays in the tradition following Eric Sahlström. Very crisp and elegant, with a strong sense of Uppland style. This is a re-issue by the ANA of Peter's first CD for Tongång.



*Atrium, 3984-22107-2*  
**ANGEL ARCHIPELAGO**  
**Johan Hedin**

Nyckelharpa player Johan Hedin

plays his own compositions, with lots of accompaniment on modern instruments. It's not traditional folk music, but Johan has really worked with expression and pushing the limits of the nyckelharpa. The music is large and full, and very interesting. Johan is a Riksspelman (1992) on nyckelharpa, and a master musician.



*DROCD-006, Drone*  
**TILL ERIC**

Six young nyckelharpa virtuosi, including three world champions, play 19 of Eric Sahlström's compositions. A very listenable album, with a mix of solo tunes and smooth ensembles. Very professional and polished.



*DROCD-012, Drone*  
**ÖRSPRÅNG**  
**Curt Tallroth & Olov Johansson**

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 the group Väsén. 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. Very traditional



**DROCD-015, Drone**  
**HÅRDHAJEN**  
**Hulling**

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.

**DROCD-024, Drone**  
**VÄLJE Å VRAKE**  
**Ulrika Bodén**

Singer Ulrika Bodén has finally come out with her first solo CD! She sings tunes from her home area in Ångermanland. She is supported by Niklas Roswall, nyckelharpa, Anders



Norudde, bagpipe and flutes, and Jens Engelbrecht, guitar and mandola



**MCM 4001, Multicultural**  
**Media**

**DITTE ANDERSSON**  
**Ditte Andersson**

Ditte Andersson plays and sings traditional music from Sweden. Her voice and the evocative sound of the nyckelharpa reflect the musical mother tongue of her home province, Uppland.



**NSD-6004, NorthSide**  
**SPIRIT**  
**Väsén**

Väsén plays heavenly music based in the rural Swedish tradition with a contemporary flavor. This is acoustic ensemble playing at its best, with sounds that can connote classical string quartets at one moment and upbeat folk/pop another. "Spirit" (one of the English translations of Väsén, which also include essence, being, nature, character, noise, sounds, fuss, ado, alien, and soul) compiles

the band's work to date, from two Swedish and one French studio album, a live album, and five previously unreleased tracks. 20 tracks, over 70 minutes.



**NSD-6017, NorthSide**  
**STORSVARTEN**  
**Olov Johansson**

Väsén's nyckelharpa player steps out on his own for a "solo" CD. 11 of the 22 tunes are solo, the rest duos with one other player. 15 of the tunes are traditional, the rest are Olov's own compositions, including "Fullmåffen" (direct hit) written for his teacher Curt Tallroth's 75th birthday—a few nights before his birthday, with a blind punch. Curt knocked a robber in his house out cold. He said about it later, "I just swung, and it was a direct hit."



**NSD-6045, NorthSide**  
**TILL THE LIGHT OF DAY**  
**Ranarim**

Sofia Sandén and Ulrika Bodén—vocals, Niklas Roswall—nyckelharpa, Jens Engelbrecht—guitar.

**NSD-6046, NorthSide**  
**HIMSELF**  
**Anders Norudde**

Solo album from a founding member of Hedningarna. Anders Norudde is a talented multi-instrumentalist and composer. On



this, his first solo recording, Anders explores both traditional and original tunes on fiddle, bagpipe, moraharpa, and flutes. As a soloist, however, Anders is relatively unknown. Many have been captivated by his virtuosity as a multi-instrumentalist and by his ability to write good tunes. Here we hear him play both old tunes and original compositions, accompanied on some selections by Goran "Freddy" Frederickson on guitar and bouzouki. Himself is a musical portrait of one of the great traditional musicians of our time.



**NSD-6051, NorthSide**  
**BYSS CALLE**  
**Nyckelharpa Orchestra**

Byss-Calle is the nyckelharpa's most legendary player; a man whose talents were so great that they were widely believed to be supernatural. Here, the Nyckelharpa Orchestra pays tribute to the master composer and player Byss-Calle. A sextet of Sweden's best players, the Nyckelharpa Orchestra presents traditional tunes in classically-styled arrangements that showcase the unique beauty and remarkable qualities of the instrument and the music.



BLCD-0105, self published  
**ENKOM**  
**Bosse Lindström**

"I am very glad to have had the opportunity to meet, listen to and play with a lot of the old folk musicians. One of them, Curt Tallroth, has given me a lot of inspiration. In the old times, the nyckelharpa was often played by one single musician, therefore it is a challenge to do this CD. I also hope that you as a listener is getting a feeling for what the music tradition from Uppland has to offer."—Bosse Lindström (liner notes)



DRPCD-11, self published  
**ROSLAGSLÅTÅR**  
**Albin & Ceylon & Henry Wallin**

Ceylon Wallin was one of the "grand old men" of the nyckelharpa until his death in 1986. Together with his brother Henry, they carried on the traditional playing of their father Albin. The first disc of this double CD was recorded in 1994, with Diego Regodón and Henry Wallin, singing and fiddle. The second disc features recordings from 1969-1984, with Albin (singing), Ceylon (nyckelharpa) and Henry (fiddle). This CD was produced together with a book that has all the tunes written out, along with lots of pictures and text.



AWCD-1, *Tongång*  
**SILVERBASHARPA ANNO 1992**  
**Ingvar & Lena Jörpeland**

Lena and Ingvar Jörpeland play the older style on turn-of-the-century instruments. Silverbashaarpa was the dominant form of the nyckelharpa in the hundred years preceding about 1930, replaced by the modern (3-row chromatic) harpa. It has a older sound, some say tinny, but with a lot more overtones. This album really shows the roots of modern playing, with rhythm as important as melody. Great music, great musicians. Lena is world master of the nyckelharpa and her husband Ingvar not only plays but builds them too.



AWCD-4, *Tongång*  
**HOGMARKARNA**  
**Esbjörn, Sture, & Göran Hogmark**

This is a recording by a family trio, consisting of the twins Esbjörn and Sture Hogmark on the nyckelharpa, and Esbjörn's son Göran on the fiddle. Esbjörn and Sture grew up in Österbybruk in Uppland, which is one of the places where the nyckelharpa tradition is strongest. Here they perform mostly traditional nyckelharpa tunes, including many of the now classic compositions of Eric Sahlström and other musicians from Uppland. A good album for dance music.



AWCD-7, *Tongång*  
**HULLING**  
**Ola Hertzberg, Jens Engelbracht, Dan Sjöberg**

The group Hulling was formed in 1992, and consists of five young musicians: Ola Hertzberg, nyckelharpa, Dan Sjöberg, fiddle, Jens Engelbrecht, guitar, Patrik Lundberg, percussion, and Johanna Bölja, vocals. Ola, Dan and Johanna have been involved in folk music for a long time, while Jens and Patrik have a background of jazz, rock, Latin and funk. They play acoustic folk music and traditional tunes, which they arrange in their own way. Their music has traditional roots, but the other influences can be heard too. Hulling means "barb", and their music definitely has an edge to it!



AWCD-8, *Tongång*  
**VÄLSMIDET**

This album is based on the tunes of the fiddle player Anton Jernberg (1909-1990), who lived in Österbybruk in northern Uppland, but who came from a line of fiddlers from southern Gästrikland, and his tunes were both from this tradition and from the nyckelharpa tradition of Österbybruk. All the nine musicians on this recording have played with him, and carry on playing his tunes. Curt Tallroth, Sven Ahlbäck, and Jeanette Jansson play the fiddle, and Sture Sahlström, Haas Gille, Kurt Södergren, Esbjörn Hogmark, Sture Hogmark, and Per Gustaf Jernberg play the nyckelharpa.



AWCD-9, *Tongång*  
**UR-UPPLÄNSKT**  
**Nils Nordström, Ann-Christine Granfors**

Nils is the only player who kept the local nyckelharpa tradition alive in the township of Bladåker in Uppland. He has played with other nyckelharpa players from surrounding areas, but still keeps his style basically unchanged, with a lively but delicate phrasing as well as a pronounced rhythm. Ann-Christine is 45 years younger than Nils, and has been playing the nyckelharpa together with Nils for half of her life. Together they form a fine duo, where Nils mostly plays the melody in his traditional style, and Ann-Christine mostly plays a second part or accompaniment to the tune.



AWCD-15, *Tongång*  
**NIKLAS ROSWALL**  
**Niklas Roswall**

Niklas Roswall is a young nyckelharpa player who became world champion on the chromatic nyckelharpa in 1996. On this CD he plays a fine selection of both unusual and common tunes, keeping a good balance between holding on to the tradition and evolving it in his personal way. Most of the tunes are from Uppland, the centre of the nyckelharpa tradition, but there are also a number of tunes from other parts of Sweden and Norway. Niklas plays both solos and duets with some of

his friends: Jens Engelbrecht on the guitar, and Ola Hertzberg and Markus Svensson on the nyckelharpa



*AWCD-18, Tongång*  
**I STÖTEN**  
**Falu Spelmanslag**

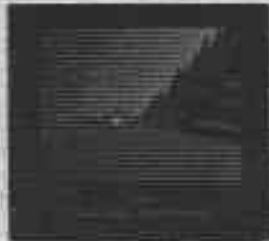
The Falun Fiddlers have been going for ten years, and mostly play dance music with pulse and energy. Falun itself has not had a strong tradition of folk music, but since it is a centre for the very musical province of Dalarna there are many folk musicians who have moved in from surrounding areas, and the tunes on this album reflect this. This recording was made live with dancers, with about 30 players; mostly fiddlers, but also accordion, double bass, nyckelharpa, trumpet and guitar.



*AWCD-20, Tongång*  
**SLAKTAR LOBERG,**  
**JANNE I KÄRVEN**  
**Ingar & Lena Jörpeland**  
**& Leif Sällqvist**

This recording consists of tunes which Lena, Ingar and Leif have got from three older musicians who have had an important influence on their music. The tunes on this album reflect the traditional repertoire that would have been played around the turn of the century in Uppland, at a time when the accordion had influenced the local folk music.

Lena and Ingvar both play silver-basharpas made around 1900, and Leif plays an accordion made around 1920. Together they prove that these old instruments and this old music still sound fresh.



*AWCD-22, Tongång*  
**SKIKT**  
**Johan Hedin & Harald**  
**Pettersson**

Sweden's folk music scene is full of surprises—and unexpected meetings. Here's a bunch of both—instrument virtuosos Johan Hedin and Harald Pettersson met and started to play together. The result was breathtaking and we just had to capture it on CD. Johan and Harald play their contemporary folk music from Europe's North. With their ancient instruments they invite to a spellbinding journey in a wide landscape of music.



*AWCD-25, Tongång*  
**KONTRABASHARPA 1914**  
**Per Sundin**

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.



*AWCD-26, Tongång*  
**BOHLINS BARNBARN**  
**MED CURT TALLROTH**  
**Bohlins barnbarn**

The group "Bohlins barnbarn" is named after the nyckelharpa master August Bohlin (1877-1949), whose grandson Janne Bohlin plays nyckelharpa with the group. August Bohlin is credited with making one of the first fully chromatic 3-row nyckelharpas in 1925. Janne formed this group in 1990, with Ulla Vinterbäck and Annika Lidin also on nyckelharpa, and Lars-Ove Lundberg on the zither. They are also joined by Curt Tallroth, who heard and played with August Bohlin (1877-1949). This recording features August's tunes, traditional tunes from Northern Uppland.



*AWCD-27, Tongång*  
**GUBBSKIVAN**

Recorded in 1979, with Eric Sahlström (born 1912), Curt Tallroth (born 1920), Bo Larsson (born 1941), Viksta Lasse (born 1897), Leif Alpsjö (born 1943), and Gunnel Viking (Viksta Lasse's granddaughter, born 1966). This is a snippet in time, a recording made during an evening of music, food and drink. The musicians were primarily having fun, playing tunes and telling stories—that the tape recorders were going was secondary. On this record you can

hear how several generations of spelmän get together and play just for fun.



*AWCD-28, Tongång*  
**OCH LIKSOM VINDEN FRI**  
**Eva Tjörnebo**

On this album of traditional Swedish folk songs, Eva is joined by Viskompaniet, a group consisting of Inge Hennksson on accordion and vocals, Kjell Landstrom on nyckelharpa and vocals, and Leif Åhlund on guitar, nyckelharpa, zither and vocals. There are also a number of guest musicians on clarinet, double bass, jew's harp, bagpipe, hurdy-gurdy, drum, recorder, and fiddle. Like Eva's solo album (AWCD-3), this album contains a great variety of love songs, ballads, comical songs, sung dance tunes, and more. The arrangements here are more elaborate, and add something to the songs rather than detract from them.



*AWCD-29, Tongång*  
**PULS**  
**Stockholm Spelmanslag**

Stockholm's spelmanslag started in 1989, and mostly play tunes from the provinces of Dalarna, Uppland and Hälsingland, as well as some Norwegian tunes. They are influenced by the musical traditions of these country areas, but in their music you can also hear the pulse of the

big city, as well as the quiet waters that surround it. Apart from fiddle players, the group also has accordion, nyckelharpa and recorder players, and there is also a bit of singing on this recording, though it is mostly dance music where the fiddles dominate the playing.



**AWCD-31, Tongång  
ÖRA**

Ö.R.A. with Anders Matsson (Nyckelharpa World Champion 1996), Robert Larsson (nephew to Viksta Lasse) and Örjan Viking (married to Gunnel, Viksta Lasse's granddaughter). Nyckelharpa, fiddle and accordion. Plain and simple, really great music!



**AWCD-32, Tongång  
PÅ HUGGET! EN  
VANDRING I  
SAHLSTRÖMSKOGEN  
Trollrike Spelmän**

At last it's here: the much-requested CD number two from the Trollrike Spelmän. Twenty-three pearls from the rich flora of tunes in the Sahlströms hiding places. And there is plenty to choose from, a great variety of old polskas, waltzes and marches passed down from generation to generation in the Sahlström family.



**AWCD-34, Tongång  
ZEKE  
Duo**

Cecilia Österholm and Kerstin Andersson. Two of Sweden's youngest nyckelharpa virtuosos. 15 tunes from two daughters of folk musicians who took them to stämmas for years. Finally they became interested in the music, and their playing really took off.



**AWCD-36, Tongång  
LÅTAR PÅ NYCKELHARPA  
FRÅN ÖSTERBYBRUK**

A reissue of the 1975 LP which was released at the first Nyckelharpa Stämman at Österbybruk. It features some of the old players—Viktor Vikman och Justus Gille, playing kontrabasharpa med dubbellek; some of those that are now tradition bearers—Hasse Gille and Eric Sahlström, and some younger players—Per Oskar Hellgren and Per Jernberg; and the Österbybruk Spelmanslag. A classic recording!



**AMCD-724, Amigo  
FOLKSAMLING**

A wonderful compilation of traditional music by some of Sweden's best musical and vocal artists. Sale price \$7.00 while supplies last.



**AWCD-40, Tongång  
BITAR EFTER  
LÖVSTAGUBBARN  
Björn Björn**

Recorded in 2001 and containing twenty-four selections, or "bitar," from the Lovstabus lineage. Shoulder lifting pieces that demand sympathetic rhythmic movement. Fifteen polskas, seven waltzes, and two schottises thrown in for good measure. Björn Björn has twice won the World Championship in old style nyckelharpa playing.

#### BOOKS AND DVDS

**PETER HEDLUND'S  
NYCKELHARPA WORKSHOP  
Volumes I and II**  
DVD \$75.00+ \$5.00 each  
shipping and handling

Learn to play or improve your playing with two time world champion Peter Hedlund as your personal trainer. DVD format. Swedish and English. Two viewing angles.



Notes and text as PDF files. Order through the ANA, or through [www.ritaleydon.com](http://www.ritaleydon.com)



**BUILD A NYCKELHARPA  
WITH SÖREN ÅHKER**  
Sören Åhker  
DVD \$75.00 + \$5.00  
shipping and handling

See every single step required to make one of these fine instruments. Master builder Sören Åhker shows us how he does it. Fabulous closeups of everything. DVD format. Order through the ANA, or through [www.ritaleydon.com](http://www.ritaleydon.com)

**VM2000:WORLD  
NYCKELHARPA  
CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
DVD \$40.00 + \$5.00  
shipping and handling

A two and a half hour film of the competition held in Österby, Sweden, in June 2000. The video is a full (every note) showing of the competition with lots of nice closeups of fingers and bows, also a lot of music we don't ordinarily hear. Twenty-one high caliber musicians. DVD format. Order through the



ANA, or through  
www.ritaleyd.com

**SWEDISH FOLK MUSIC  
TREASURES**  
**Nisse Nordström, with  
Peter Hedlund**

*\$40.00 + \$5.00 shipping  
and handling*

First in a series of films  
documenting older masters of  
Swedish music. DVD format.  
One hour 12 min. Order  
through the ANA, or through  
www.ritaleyd.com



**CHROMATIC  
NYCKELHARPA**  
**A construction manual**  
**by Sören Åhker, 2002**

*\$65 ANA members  
\$75 non-members*

This book, by master harpa  
builder Sören Åhker, was  
originally only available in  
Swedish (we have a couple of

those too), but it is finally  
available in English. Detailed  
building instructions and full scale  
drawings for both child's and full  
size nyckelharpa. Indispensable if  
you are going to build your own.  
Also terrific for simply  
understanding how your  
nyckelharpa functions. A great  
companion piece to the DVD  
film, Build a nyckelharpa with  
Sören Åhker, by Rita Leydon.



**ROSLAGSLÅTAR**  
**ALBIN, CEYLON OCH**  
**HENRY WALLIN**  
**pub. by Wallin family, 1993**

*\$30 ANA members  
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**Books, etc.:** Price varies, check listing

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Mr. Thomas Lee  
President  
American Federation of Musicians  
1501 Broadway Street, Suite 600  
New York, NY 10036-5501

JAN 17 2003

Dear Mr. Lee:

As a follow-up to our earlier meeting with Mr. Hal Ponder of the American Federation of Musicians, following are the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) revised policy and procedures regarding the screening and carriage of musical instruments through security screening checkpoints at our nation's airports and transport of musical instruments aboard aircraft.

- On December 20, 2002, TSA instructed aircraft operators that effective immediately, they are to allow musical instruments as carry-on baggage in addition to the limit of one bag and one personal item per person as carry-on baggage on an aircraft.
- Additionally, these revised procedures were communicated to our TSA screeners at the passenger screening checkpoints throughout the country. Should your membership experience problems at the security screening checkpoints, please advise them to request to speak to a screening supervisor for resolution.

If I can provide further assistance, please feel free to give me a call.

Sincerely yours

Thomas R. Blank  
Assistant Administrator for Security  
Regulation and Policy

cc:  
Mr. Hal Ponder  
American Federation of Musicians  
1741 K Street, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20036

## In Praise and Awe of Age and Experience

*continued from page 1*

list—Sture Sahlström and Sonia Sahlström, Hasse Gille and Anders Mattsson—intimating the inestimable benefits to be gained by yet to be born enthusiasts if my request to intrude and film were granted. By this time a fiddler had been added to my wish list—Tore Lindqvist, with Julia Ryberg as younger counterpart. I had no financial backing, barely any credentials, and could offer nothing other than my sincere desire to preserve musical traditions as well as the chance of seeing their households disrupted and turned upside down for a day. Everyone was unbelievably gracious and accommodating, happy and eager to do what they could to help me and facilitate my work. I think maybe they were tickled that someone cared enough to make a fuss.

Can you imagine how special it was to be welcomed with open arms and allowed entry into the homes of Sture, Hasse, Nisse and Tore? Very humbling. Very special. I wanted to be mindful to not rumble in like a bulldozer with all my equipment, yet be prepared. I wanted to show respect and patience, yet focus on the task at hand and gather as much precious footage as time and energy allowed. I wanted to peek into the harpamaster's soul, yet not be invasive. I wanted to fill the cameras to overflowing, yet not be greedy. Tricky concerns to balance any way you

look at it, akin to walking a tightrope.

I used only available light on these shoots and as the afternoon light faded, the colors in my frame faded too. I worked with two digital video cameras—one on a tripod, and a second hand held one which I moved around with and took close ups for visual variety. But I was still only one person with two cameras rolling at once. Ideally there ought to be two of me so we could monitor things better. I tried to think of everything and not miss anything, but sometimes in my great care to cover all bases I'd cancel myself out and cause a problem which became apparent only afterwards. This happens to some degree every time I'm out. It's the natural cure for a swelled head.

The subjects of my films are tradition bearers. Seemingly bottomless sources of wonderful tunes from the past. The relationship between young and old—Sonia to Sture, Peter to Nisse, Anders to Hasse, Julia to Tore—is one of respect, admiration, love and honor for that which the elder passes on. While playing together, age is of no consequence. Both are equal. And yet, the viewer senses the passing of a baton. The unspoken understanding is clear: "I've nurtured and kept these tunes alive for a while, I'm entrusting them to you now. Take care of them and continue to pass them on." This is the fanning of the flame we call "tradition"—a vital thread in the tapestry of a community's collective culture. Maybe it is life itself.



*People to People International invited the Labaska spelmandag to perform at a local chapter event in Newtown, PA on May 2, 2003. About 1000 folks watched and listened as Chris and Rita Leaton, Nancy Brown, and Drew Brady presented a Swedish set. The organization was started by Dwight Euenhower and the group's motto is: "Peace through understanding."*

# Nyckelharpa Strings for Sale

*The American Nyckelharpa Association is pleased to announce the availability of strings for the nyckelharpa! 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.

JORPELAND 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 nicknamed Jerker (YERKER), and the strings are named after him. The A-string is plain, and the rest are wound.

## Sympathetic 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	\$ _____
Jorpeland 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>		<b>Total:</b>	\$ _____

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

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P.O. Box 51, Montpelier, VT 05602



# Upcoming Nyckelharpa Events

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

## 19 - 21 Sep 2003: Nyckelharpa Stämman with Hogmarkarna in Seattle, WA

Esbjörn, Sture, Göran and Åsa will be in Seattle for a nyckelharpa stämman this fall. Esbjörn and Åsa are a well-known couple, trying hard to play "just like Eric Sahlström." Esbjörn is also well-known for his involvement in ESI, and for his skills at making (and teaching how to make and repair) nyckelharpas. Sture was taught at the ANA's first stämman in 1995, and has been a favorite every since. Esbjörn's son Göran is known for his fiddle playing, but is a great nyckelharpa player as well. Planned events include:

- A dance at the Cedar Valley Grange on Friday, where Esbjörn and Åsa will teach Bondpolska från Viksta at 7:30, followed by the dance 8:30 - 11:30 where Hogmarkarna and others will play.
- \* Workshops on Saturday morning and afternoon, location TBA. Jam session Saturday evening, most likely at Dave and Trella's house on Mercer Island.
- \* Pot-luck brunch on Sunday at Karen Nelson's house in West Seattle, followed by a concert featuring Hogmarkarna at 2:00 PM at the Nordic Heritage Museum.

Private lessons are available on request, if we can work

## Peter Puma Hedlund Nyckelharpa Workshops at Scandinavian Folk Festival September 5-7, 2003

Peter Puma Hedlund, a two-time world champion nyckelharpa player from Sweden, will be performing and conducting workshops at the Scandinavian Folk Festival, September 5-7, 2003 in Jamestown, New York. There will be workshop sessions for nyckelharpa players of all levels.

The Scandinavian Folk Festival offers a weekend of music and dance as well as Scandinavian foods and products. There will be a number of historical and handicraft exhibits, a recreation of a Viking village and Viking ship, film and lecture presentations, and more. It promises lots of fun for the whole family!

The Folk Festival is sponsored by Lutheran Social Services and the Scandinavian Studies Program. Pictures from last year's festival can be seen at [www.lutheran-jamestown.org](http://www.lutheran-jamestown.org). For further information contact [dsandy@netsync.net](mailto:dsandy@netsync.net) or Don Sandy, 430 Crossman St., Jamestown, NY 14701.

out the timing. Check back for more information as it becomes available, or contact:

Karen Nelson, 4403 51st Ave SW, Seattle WA 98116  
206-937-0441 or [knelsondr23@aol.com](mailto:knelsondr23@aol.com)

## August 2002-May 2003: Year-long Nyckelharpa Course at ESI

The Eric Sahlström Institute (ESI) offers its annual course in nyckelharpa, in Tobo, Uppland, Sweden. Teachers have included Olov Johansson, Dirte Andersson, Sonia Sahlström, Niklas Roswall, Gunnar Ahlbäck, Andreas Berchthold, Håss Gille, Johan Hedin and Esbjörn Hogmark. The course covers theory, transcription, arrangements, folk music history, nyckelharpa history, singing, dance, playing for dancing, instrument knowledge and maintenance, playing on stage, etc. For more information, see the ANA web site or contact:

Eric Sahlström-Institutet,  
Bruksgatan 3, S-748 50 Tobo, Sweden  
Tel +46-295-342 93; Fax +46-295-342 99  
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# Build a Nyckelharpa with Sören Åhker

*A DVD video by Rita Leydon*

*Reviewed by Matt Fichtenbaum*

Those who've seen Peter "Puma" Hedlund's instructional nyckelharpa videos are familiar with Rita Leydon's work. In her latest project, she watched and filmed while master builder Sören Åhker brought forth a nyckelharpa, then edited her copious raw material down to just over four hours of concise, flowing story. Sören's own calm, wise narration complements what we see.

As the instrument takes shape, one notices

- How harmoniously Sören works with his tools. His knife is just as much an extension of his arm as Peter Hedlund's bow is of his.
- How quietly confident Sören is, bringing decisive force to whatever he's doing – never hesitant or tentative, but never going too far or breaking things.
- That whatever is going on, we just happen to be seeing exactly the right thing, a tribute to Rita's skill as a videographer and editor.
- That Sören goes about his work and his description easily and calmly, oblivious to the filmmaker hovering over him with her camera, so it's just "Sören and us" in the room.



At the end, Sören's longtime friend Puma comes over, plays the newly-finished harpa, and pronounces it worthy. But after watching it take shape, we had no doubt it would be.

If you've ever wondered how the instrument you play got to be this way, this film provides the answer. If you have Sören Åhker's book *Chromatic Nyckelharpa* and want the action as well as the text, this is it.

And if you're thinking about building an instrument, you absolutely need this film – it provides the answers, it divulges the secrets, it will keep you from missteps and wrong turns. Just be forewarned: Sören is so completely at home with his tools that the mere mortal, watching, might conclude "If that's what it takes, I might as well stop now."

There's just one problem: Sören, Swede that he is, speaks Swedish. For his opening segment, in which he presents himself and his background, there's an English translation in the form of an Acrobat file on the disk. There's also a translation of the segment in which Sören stands in the forest and discusses choosing and cutting wood for his instruments. But for the actual construction, the non-Swedish-speaking viewer must follow along in Sören's book or let Sören's actions speak for themselves.

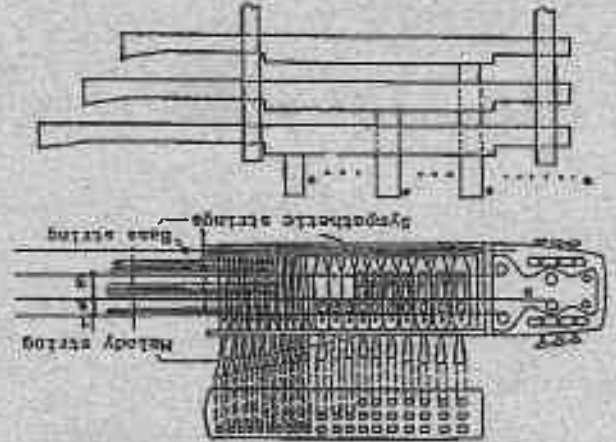
*Neither Chris nor I can play worth beans and talk at the same time. So, for those occasions when we find ourselves in outreach mode—summer festivals and the like—we have a cheap and simple handout that covers basic "what is that?" questions. It's not my brilliant idea. I got something similar from some visiting Swedes at Budd Lake, NJ a few years ago. Most of it I stole from their design, then Bart Brashers helped me a bit with the text.*

*We've given out hundreds. Maybe others will find a use for it too. Feel free to make copies for your own use. I usually have a bunch in a basket and if anyone looks like they are going to spew forth a question, I smile and point my bow at the basket.*

*To make handouts: Copy the next page on both sides of a sheet, turning it 180 degrees on the second side so all four pages are included. Then cut the paper in half, so your cut pieces measure 8 1/2 by 5 1/2. Fold once, and it's done.*

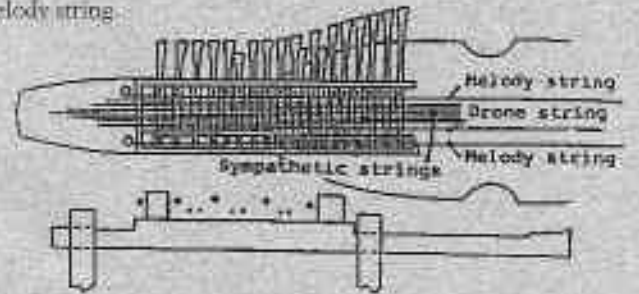
— Rita Leydon

In 1930, there was only a handful of nyckelharpa players left in Sweden and the tradition was almost lost. In the 60s, a new interest in folk music stirred the souls of young and old who began making their own instruments and learning to play. Today the nyckelharpa is thriving in Sweden as well as in the USA where we have over 100 players. ■

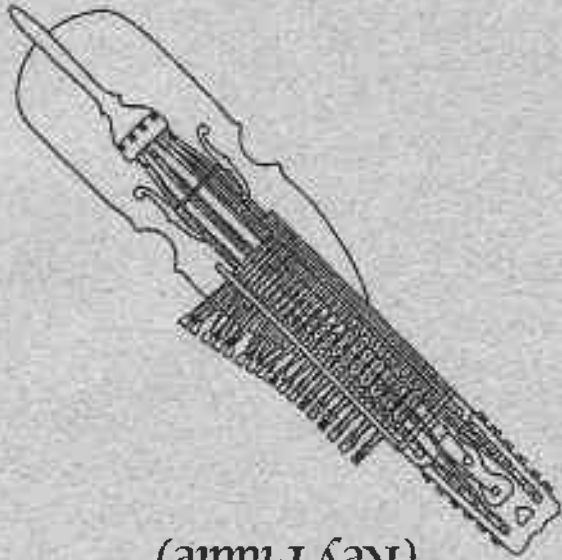
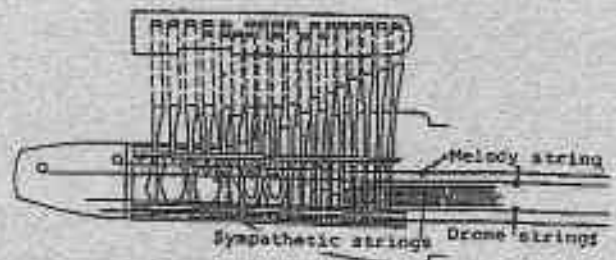


In the 1920s, the instrument further developed into the form we see today: three rows of keys, three melody strings, one bass string and twelve sympathetic strings—the chromatic nyckelharpa. Today's instrument has a range of three octaves.

The kontrabasharpa was developed in the 17th century after a British sailor brought back the concept of resonance strings from the orient about 1600. Very similar to the earlier simple harpa, but for the addition of a melody string a fifth lower than the first melody string.



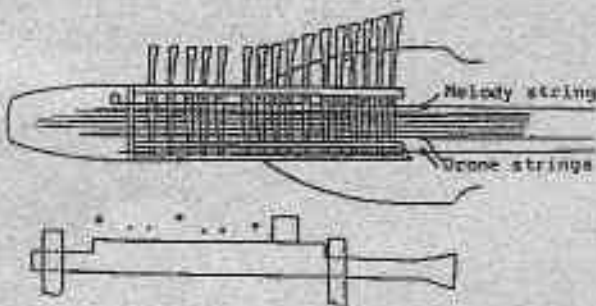
In 1836 the kontrabasharpa was succeeded by the silverbasharpa, so named because the lowest drone string was wound with silver. It had two melody strings but now there were two rows of keys with a range of more than two octaves. The musical ideal had changed from bordun (drone) instruments to counter-point harmony.



## The Nyckelharpa (Key Fiddle)

THE nyckelharpa (key fiddle) is one of the world's most genuine traditional instruments.

The nyckelharpa is a stringed instrument associated with the province of Uppland in Sweden. The earliest form of the nyckelharpa had no resonance strings, just one melody string and two drone strings. The oldest known harpa, dated 1526, can be seen at the Zorn Museum in Mora, Sweden. This harpa is quite different from today's harpas. Two similar early harpas have been found, one in Norway and one in Finland.



## From the Editor

# Learning to Play Nyckelharpa in the 21st Century

by Bill Layher

Looking at my bookshelves, I'm amazed at the number of resources I have at my fingertips that have helped me learn to play the nyckelharpa. Want to see some sheet music? Here you go—paper copy or pdf file? Want to hear how this hambo goes? No problem. Nyckelharpa music flows all around us, instantly available and ever the same. Recordings of every stripe have turned the ephemeral tunes of a polska trill into an everlasting monument of a moment in musical time. From archives of 1930's radio broadcasts, to phonograph records, to cassette tape, DAT tape, video tape, DVD—the modern player has a wealth of opportunities to learn from the masters. That is what this issue is about—identifying the resources out there that help us to learn and improve our playing.

### 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 Bill Layher. Send submissions to *Nyckel Notes* at the address below, or to [nyckelnotes@nyckelharpa.org](mailto:nyckelnotes@nyckelharpa.org)

Bill Layher

4255 Plad Ave., St. Louis MO 63110

But what was it like before all of this arrived on the scene?

### Let's look back.

Back in the 18th-century days of Byss-Calle, how did anybody learn to play the nyckelharpa? There were no books on the subject, no sheet music to study. Nobody cared much about so-called "folk traditions"—ethnology hadn't been invented yet—and the music was just a way of getting people to dance, anyway. Tunes were made for dancing, not for playing per se. A "nyckelharpa concert" would have been a contradiction in terms. If you wanted to play the instrument, somebody had to show you how. Then you started out on your own, a minnow swimming in the stream of tradition. You heard the tunes being played around you—breathed them in—and learned to do likewise. You just did it—after your hard day's work was done and your hands were tired. If you were poor, maybe you had to make your own harpa first: cut the lumber, shape the boards, mix the glue, plane the sides. You had to twist your own strings, cut your own bow, trim your own pegs. The only saving grace was the musical tradition itself: it lived all around you, in every village, in the fleet dancing feet of the common people throughout Sweden and in the musical memory of legendary players like Byss-Calle who gave their tunes to posterity.

That tradition, albeit greatly reduced today, still lives on in the 21st century, but our ability to grasp onto it is limited. Since most of us live in the USA—thousands of miles from Sweden—we can't easily get up and meet with other players, or scroll down to Trollrike and take in the atmosphere. (In many cases, we are the only nyckelharpa players in our hometowns.) That's why the CDs, DVDs, videos, books, sheet music collections are so important to us—they show us where that tradition is coming from, help us to learn to appreciate and enrich it, and they give us an opportunity to help in its continuance.

For your education and enjoyment, this issue of *Nyckel Notes* features some of the newest and best nyckelharpa "stuff" out there. We present these items in the hope that you will find something here that is useful, helpful, or just plain cool. But keep in mind, it's not just about listening to the tunes or watching the musicians on the screen—et yourself be inspired to play.

