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NYCKEL NOTES

JOHN HAMILTON'S NYCKELHARPA STAND

INTRODUCTION

This article is about a Nyckelharpa (NH) stand that was "born out of necessity". It is NOT intended to sway good NH players to use this stand.

They say "necessity is the Mother of invention". And, that's why the *JohnRodie* Nyckelharpa "stand" was created.

About five years ago this "80 year young" author, retired from years in Industrial Management, decided to enjoy himself by making "heirloom wooden musical instruments (see www.johnrodie.com).

In early 2009, the Nyckelharpa (NH) caught my attention - and the rest if history. My NH was completed in 2011, after a bit of delay due to a formation of a arterial blood clot in my left hand.

After surgery on my hand to correct the problem, I found that the middle finger on that left hand ended up "frozen in a straight position". This now made the hand unable to manipulate the keys of any instrument such as the NH (or guitar, etc.) in the conventional manner with the hand "wrapped around the neck of the instrument". In addition to that, arthritis has also taken its toll on the other fingers on both hands.

So, there you have it - a "finished Nyckelharpa", and "no way to play it". "Viola" - the need for the *JohnRodie* NH stand.

You will see, as we get into the details of the "stand", it was going to be difficult to "predict" which position the NH was going to best suit my "restricted hand movement" situation. Hence, the NH stand had to have the maximum adjustability possible.

As it turned out, any user of the NH stand can have virtually unlimited arrangements of the NH - "a lap position", "like a cello", "standing up or sitting down", and on and on. It's pretty much up to the NH player to decide which position they like best.

THE STAND

Picture #1 - The NH Stand in use

This picture shows the use of the NH Stand in one of many different orientations of the stand. It is not meant to illustrate a suggested orientation/choice by a NH Player; it just happens to be the position which closely meets my particular needs. Indeed, the primary feature of the NH Stand is that it should be able to accommodate the needs of ANY NH Player's wishes.

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You might want to experiment with "positions" which you never even considered before - "go for it" - you might be surprised !!!!

Here are a few details about the making of my NH. The hardwoods used on the *JohnRodie* NH are:

Picture #1

(soundboard - Sitka Spruce), (Tangents - hard Maple) (ALL other elements - Cherry). I made my NH using Soren Ahker's plans and Rita Leydon's DVD (and "yikes" - without ANY knowledge of Swedish)

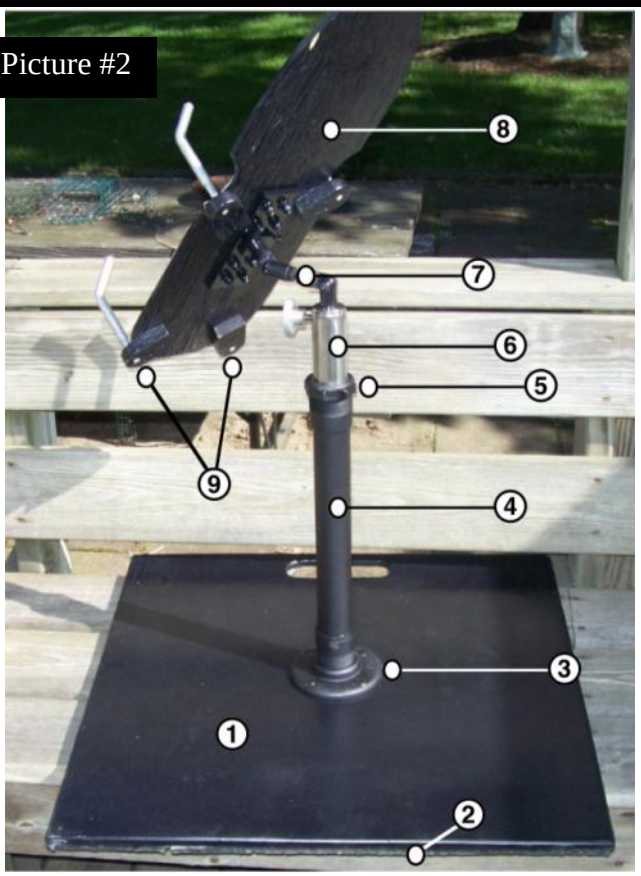
The use of solid Cherry makes my NH quite heavy compared to the more typical use of Sitka Spruce. This is another reason for the use of the NH Stand by *JohnRodie*, given my particular medical/ physical needs.

Picture #2 - Full View of the NH Stand

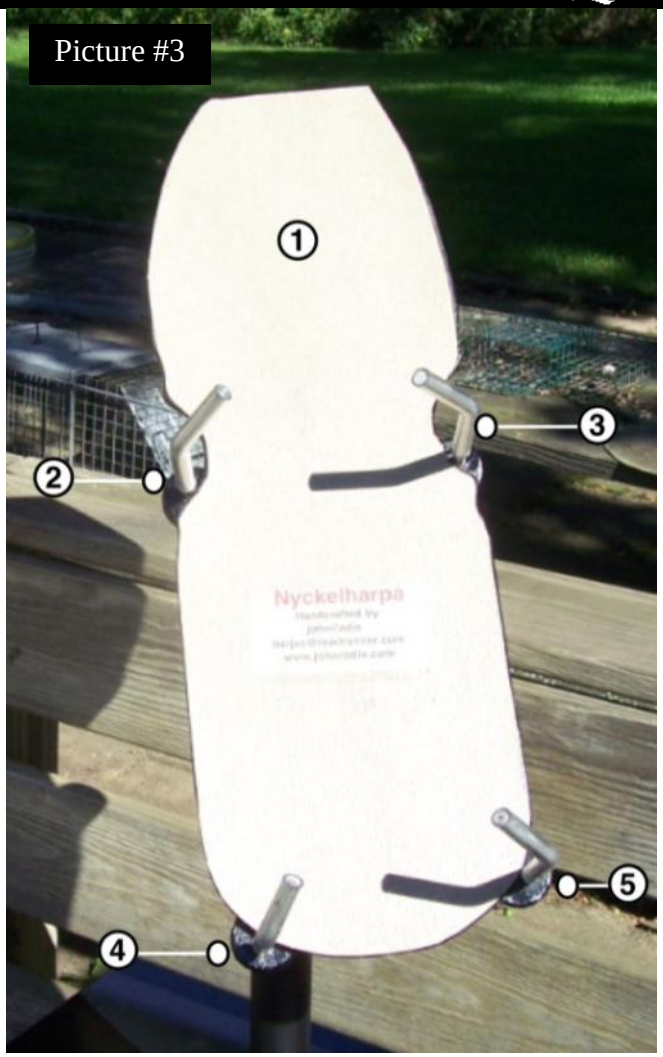
The following information will describe, in some detail, the "elements" of the NH Stand. Each "element" is identified by a "numbered bullet" (e.g. etc.) on the pictures.

(1) The "Base", which is 3/8 inch thick plywood.
(2) The "carpet foam" underlayment which is glued to the "Base", giving the whole assembly a "soft" and "firm" placement on the floor of the room in which you are playing.
(3) A standard 3 1/2 inch "threaded pipe flange" (available at most hardware stores).

Picture #2



(4) A "threaded iron pipe" which threads into the "threaded pipe flange" ***(3)***.
(5) A standard "compression" fitting used in most commercial plumbing fittings (available at most hardware stores). Use of this fitting allows for a "vertical" adjustment of the tube ***(6)*** by some14 inches. The net result is the ability to play the NH ***while standing.***
(6) A "stainless steel" tube, custom fabricated to enjoin the item (4) "threaded iron pipe", AND accept the "down-tube" of the "linkage assembly" (to be shown in more detailed picture in Picture #4.
(7) The "linkage assembly", which is the "heart" of the NH Stand, giving the stand the universal adjustment capability. This "linkage assembly" is described later in much more detail in Picture #4.
(8) The "platform" of the NH Stand, onto which you place your Nyckelharpa when mounting your NH on the NH Stand. A close up of this "platform" is shown in Picture # 3.
(9) Showing two of the four "bosses" which are in place to accept the "metal rods" that contain/hold your NH onto the NH Stand. You will see how these work, in Picture #3.



Picture #3 - A closeup of the "platform area" of the NH Stand

The "platform area" of the NH Stand, shown in this picture, is also seen in Picture #2. This Picture #3 gives you further detail on the construction of the "platform area".

(1) The "platform area" (1) is constructed of 3/8 inch plywood. It is "covered" with a thin sheet of cardboard (e.g. like the backing of a note pad) to provide a smooth surface that protects your NH when it is placed on the "platform area". This sheet of cardboard is "glued" to the "platform area" plywood.

When you make your "platform area", you design it to conform to the dimensions of your NH.

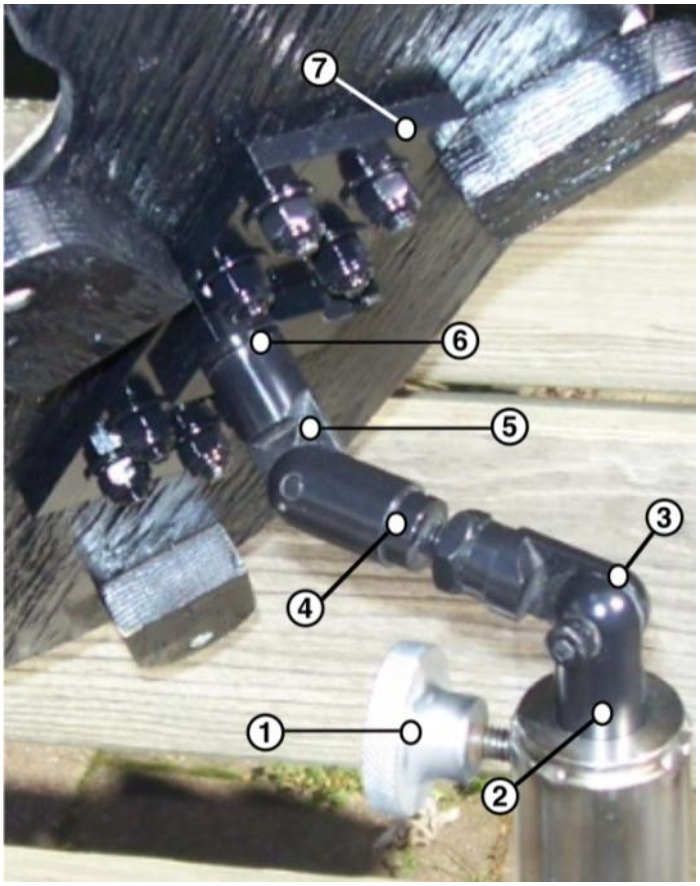
(2) , (3) , (4) & (5) These are aluminum "rods" which are "bent" to a position that will reach "just" over the top of the soundboard of your instrument.

Notice once again, as seen in item ***(9)*** of Picture #2, that there is a "boss" which extends "beyond the outline of the "platform area" for EACH "rod" , in order to allow the "rod(s)" to be properly situated to hold your NH onto the "platform area".

Two of these rods (items ***(4)*** and ***(5)***)are permanently "epoxied" into their bosses. The other two rods (items ***(2)*** and ***(3)*** are only a "snug-fit" into their bosses, so that these two rods can be "rotated" in order to "insert" your NH onto the "platform area".

Picture #4 - A detailed look of the "linkage system" of the NH Stand

This linkage, in Picture #4, is the "heart" of the "adjustability" feature of the NH Stand. It has six different adjustable "points", each of which are indicated by the "circled numbers" in the picture.

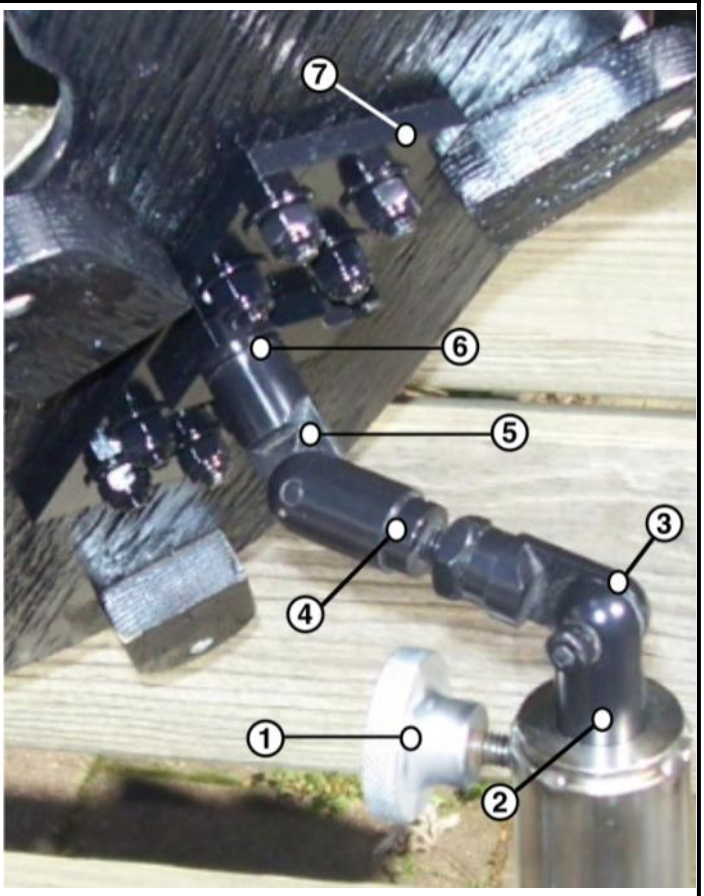


Following is a description of the adjustable feature of each of those "points".

(1) This "knob" sets the vertical position of the "rod

2) "Rod (2)" can be ***extended*** vertically 24 inches, and ***rotated*** 360 degrees ***on the axis of the rod.***
(3) This "joint" can be ***rotated*** 360 degrees ***in one plane.***
(4) This "joint" can be ***rotated*** 360 degrees, ***on the axis of the rod.***
(5) This "joint" can be ***rotated*** 360 degrees ***in one plane.***
(6) This "joint" can be ***rotated*** 360 degrees, ***on the axis of the rod.***
(7) This "rectangular mounting plate" is positioned on the "platform area" such that "rod ***(6)***" is at the ***center of gravity*** of the ***platform area with your NH attached.***

Side Note: Notice the "bosses" - you can see the "aluminum rods" just flush with the bottom of the "bosses".



CRITICAL REVIEW - THE NH STAND VS. A "STRAP-HELD" NH

* NH Stand pretty hard (even possible ??) to carry / play "while marching with a band" (just kidding).
* Much too expensive compared to a strap.
* Much more cumbersome "on-stage" while performing with a group.

CONCLUSION

Of all the many different instruments which I have made and continue to make (www.johnrodie.com), the Nyckelharpa remains my favorite - both in terms of its musical uniqueness and the "challenge(s)" it presented during its creation.

I have yet to satisfactorily learn to play my NH, but I am confident, with the help of the NH Stand, I will someday be able to play it and share it with friends.

Thank all you readers for allowing me to share this NH Stand with you.

I really enjoy hearing you all playing the NH; especially Marco Ambrosini and the NH orchestra.

By the way, if there happens to be sufficient interest, I could have full "engineering plans / Bill-of-Material" made for sale so that you could make your own NH Stand.

John Hamilton

The International Days of the Nyckelharpa in Germany, October 2013

By: Earl & DoAnn Holzman

In our journey of learning about nyckelharpas, we had been picking up bits and pieces about activities in Europe outside of Sweden. We were familiar with the CADENCE web site from our time with Esbjörn Hogmark, and were aware of an annual gathering at a castle in Germany. So we decided to travel to Burg Fürsteneck in Germany for the 10th International Days of the Nyckelharpas, October 3 – 6, 2013. This is a Thursday evening to Sunday after lunch event.

This was not just a good trip, this was a great trip!

To get there from the U.S., we flew into Frankfurt. We arrived in Germany a couple of days early to get our sleep schedule settled before going to the gathering. We took trains and a taxi to get to Academy Burg Fürsteneck. (Due to the October 3rd Reunification holiday, busses were not running, that is why the taxi. Busses normally run from the train station to the town.)

Academy Burg Fürsteneck is a medieval castle that has been refurbished into a seminar/ retreat center. Visitors stay in hotel- like rooms (two twin beds, some single) in the castle and take meals in the dining hall. The academy provides more than 200 seminars each year with a wide variety of topics. Music, and especially folk music, is a main focus and the International Days of the Nyckelharpa weekend is one of the events it does. It is part of the European Nyckelharpa Cooperation (www.nyckelharpa.eu) which promotes nyckelharpor in Europe, and is one of the hosts for the "European Nyckelharpa Training", a two-three year study for professional and dedicated non-professional musicians.

The International Days of the Nyckelharpa 2013 was visited by 70 nyckelharpa players from all over Europe, from Australia and the U.S. There were different nyckelharpa workshops for players of all levels as well as a builder's display room. A total of nine builders came from Sweden, France, Germany, and the U.S. There were also two bow makers from France. The builders had instruments and bows available for anyone to try out. It is a great opportunity for players to try new bows and instruments from different makers.

There was a nyckelharpa variant there which had the sympathetic strings located low on the bridge to reduce the resonation produced by the instrument. They are getting the 12 notes out of 6 sympathetic strings. This version is apparently well liked by people who play Baroque style early music.

There were several music workshops available for the players: Jule Bauer (Germany) and Annette Osann (France) held beginners and advanced beginners workshops; Emilia Amper and Magnus Holmström (both Sweden) provided traditional nyckelharpa music from Sweden; Ana Alcaide (Spain) had an early music from the Iberian Peninsula workshop; Johannes Mayr (Germany) provided European folk music from countries outside of Scandinavia; and Didier François (Belgium), did a workshop on polyphonic playing on the nyckelharpa, or how to play multiple melody lines at the same time. There were also short workshops which facilitated meeting other teachers and the opportunity to try something different, which included *polska* dancing, improvisation, and stretching exercises for players. All workshops are in English, since there are participants from all over the world.

Prior to going, we asked about bringing a nyckelharpa and how should it be tuned. Earl builds nyckelharpor with both C and D tuning. We were informed that all workshops are open to both tunings. All of the workshop leaders teach with both. The nyckelharpa we took with us was EarlHarpa #13, which is D-tuned.

In mainland Europe, it is understood that the nyckelharpa is not yet a mature instrument and that it is still developing. Many of the nyckelharpor being built outside of Sweden have 4 rows of keys, the

fourth row being on the lowest string. Our observation at this event was that most of the advanced players outside of Sweden are playing 4-rowed instruments. The tuning of the main strings is about ½ traditional tuning (C-G-C-A), with the other half using a D instead of C on the 3rd string. The lowest string is usually in C if there are keys on it. Otherwise it is tuned in either C or D.

The level of the music and workshops was very high. Some of the nyckelharpa players have attended the Eric Sahlström Institute or have been (or are) participants of the European Nyckelharpa Training, and they have continued to develop their playing abilities to levels that exceed most of what we have had the opportunity to see or hear before in our many years of exposure to Scandinavian music. Many of the workshop leaders have advanced musical educations and perform and/or teach as part of their livelihood.

Friday evening there was a conference about current nyckelharpa activities. Earl was given the opportunity to talk about the ANA; the director of the Eric Sahlström Institute, Maria Boland, reported about the Institute's programs in Sweden; and Per-Ulf Allmo gave a presentation on his newest findings on the history of the instrument. The ENCORE project was a topic as well as bow making. Jule Bauer presented her hot-off-the-press book "Playing the Nyckelharpa" written in German and English.

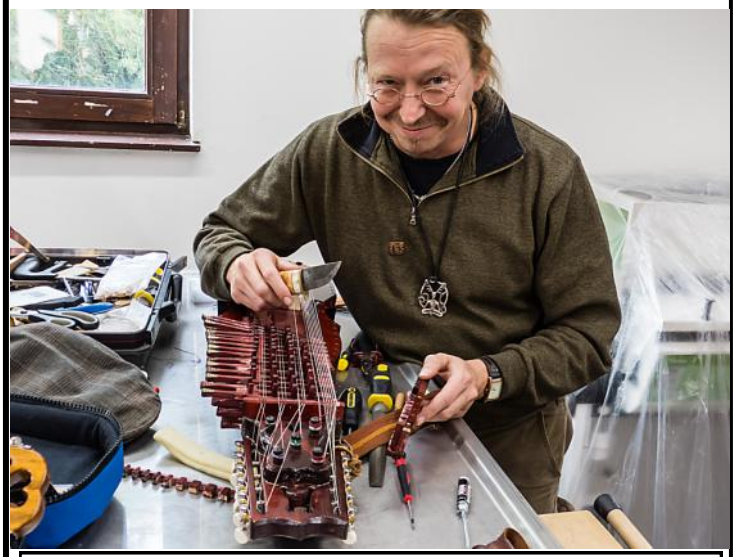
The Saturday evening concert consisted of a presentation of the actual class of the European Nyckelharpa Training, of solo, duo and trio playing of the teachers and it included a selection from the recent ENCORE concert. This was a concert of new multi part compositions for a nyckelharpa only orchestra. There is a CD recording of the August 2013 concert available. A Sunday concert was for the participants only, and consisted of pieces that were worked on during the workshops by the participants. Some of the attendees, for instance Jule Bauer, Holger Funke and Marco Ambrosini, are using nyckelharpa in bands for mediaeval or early music. Their bands are *Triskilian*, *Poeta Magica* and *Oni Wytars*.

What this weekend really exposed us to is that outside of Sweden, the nyckelharpa is being accepted as a great sounding instrument and is being actively used for many types of music. The nyckelharpa is not just a Swedish music instrument any more.

During and after the nyckelharpa gathering we were able to visit with several instrument builders. Earl is incorporating new refinements learned on this trip into his instruments and bows.

We strongly recommend anyone who is serious about the nyckelharpa consider attending this event. We will be going back.

The dates for 2014 are: October 2nd through 5th.



Holgar Funk repairing an instrument at International Days of the Nyckelharpa, October 2013.

Per-Ulf Allmo at the International Days of the Nyckelharpa, October 2013.

The International Days of the Nyckelharpa in Germany, October 2013

Builders display (above) and (right) Earl giving a talk about the ANA at International Days of the Nyckelharpa, October 2013. (Below the top photo on this page): Emilia Amper's workshop group giving a concert.

JAN LINGS NYCKELHARPAN
English pages translated by Patrick Hort . Originally published by P.A. Norstedt & Söner, Stockholm, 1967

Chapter 7
Playing Techniques - Bowing
Silver-drone keyed fiddle (continued)

Jansson is aware that he uses the bow to emphasize the rhythm of his melodies but he cannot explain the bowing technique involved. He simply remembers having learned it while playing with and studying older players. Each bow-stroke is accentuated by a little jerk at the beginning. Jansson also seems to impart rhythmical character to his melodies by using different bowing patterns for different types of tunes.

Jansson plays marches almost entirely with detached, heavy bow-strokes. In this, and other types of melody as well, it is only semiquaver figures that are slurred, either as two slurred strokes (cf. [***154***] bars 3, 7, 11 etc.) or with the first two semiquavers slurred and the other two played detached (cf. [***154***], bars 1, 5, 9).**[Ed: for [*151-154, 157*] see NNs #52,]**

Although there is no stereotyped bowing pattern for waltzes, a down-stroke is common on the first beat of the bar, particularly at the beginning of each two-bar phrase for four-bar period. The beginning of each four-bar period is in fact almost always emphasized with a strong down-stroke [***155***].

The bowing of the *polska* has a stereotyped, recurrent pattern that serves to emphasize the first and third beats of each bar. Jansson arranges his bowing so that these beats are performed with down strokes (see ex. [***156***] and [***157***]; sections 3 and 4 on the record). If the third beat is slurred with the second, Jansson accentuates the third by increasing his bowing pressure or accelerating the bowing, at the same time stamping his foot heavily (ex. [***157***], section 4 on the record).

Jansson further emphasizes the difference between a waltz and a *polska* by performing the final tones differently: a waltz is concluded with a long down-stroke [***155***], while a *polska* ends with a long, but powerful, up-stroke ([***156***], [***157***], section 4 on the record).

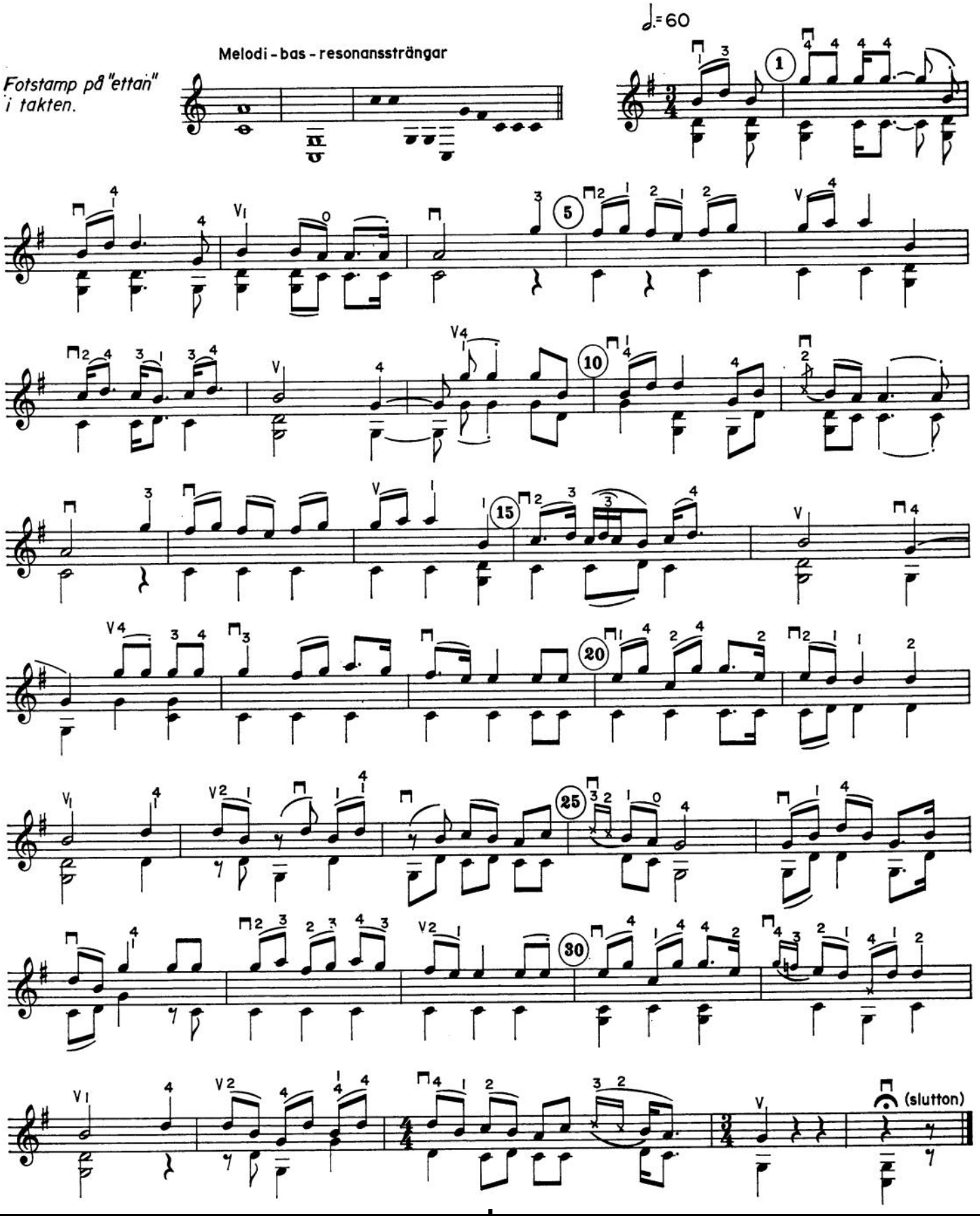
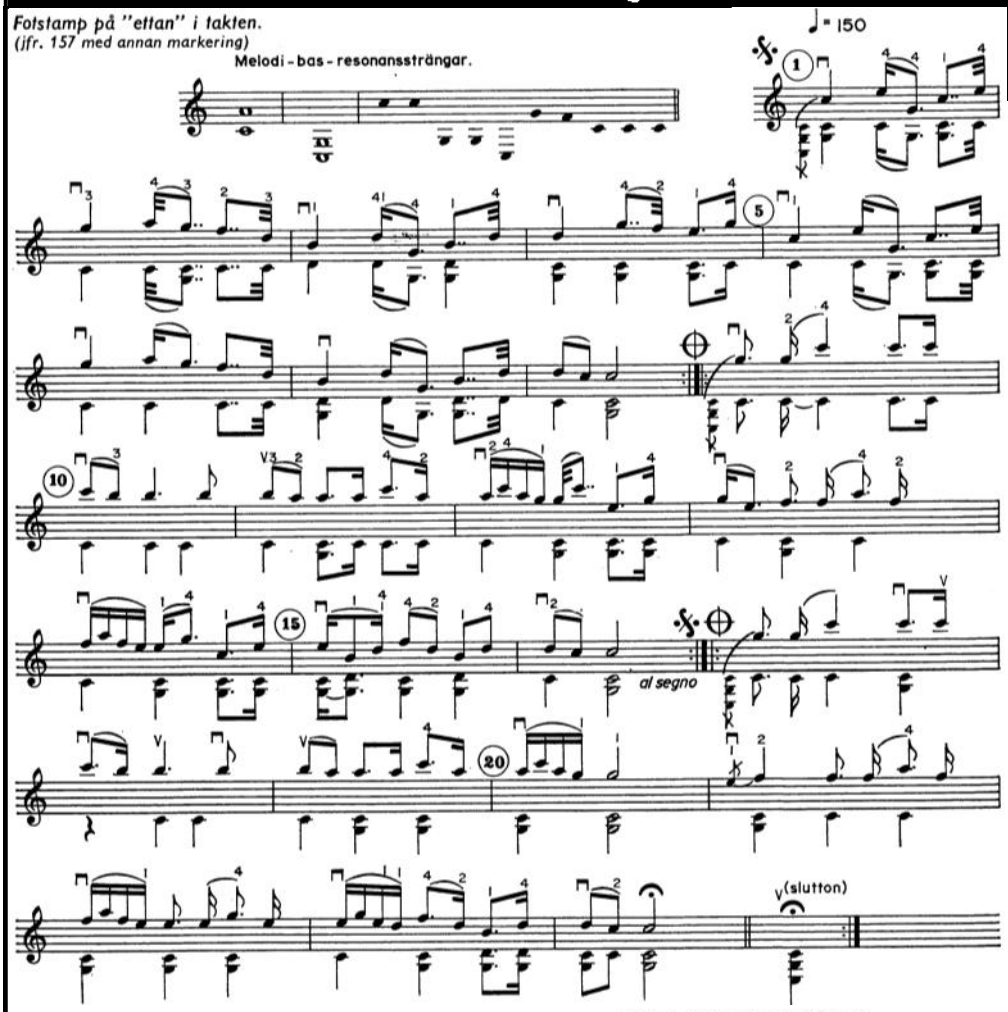
It is interesting to compare Jansson's bowing with that of Helmer Karlsson (b. 1892), see **([*140*] [Ed: see NNs #51, p. 17)**. The latter plays with the bow hairs very slack and his bow-strokes are slower than Jansson's. He has no fixed bowing pattern but commands several small ornamental figures which he executes on the same stroke as the main tone [***159***], bars 1, 4, 6 etc). Karlsson does not accentuate the bow-strokes as much as Jansson and this is probably a further reason why the rhythmic profiles of his waltzes and *polskas* are less clearly differentiated. He generally uses at least one stroke for each beat in a *polska*, whereas in waltzes two beats are often slurred, i.e. the first and second or the second and third, sometimes the third and first ([***159***]). Slurring the third and first beats produces a sort of grouping by super-ordinate beats. Like Jansson, Karlsson uses the bow for phrasing a melody (see above) and plays marches in a similar manner. Karlsson does not use a 'dipping' technique but, by pressing heavily on the strings with his bow, he keeps the second melody string sounding throughout and often the *g* drone string as well.

Chromatic keyed fiddle

The bow grip for the chromatic keyed fiddle suggests imitation of, or at least an influence from, the bow grip for the violin. The question of whether any elements of bowing technique are derived from the violin will be considered in the following.

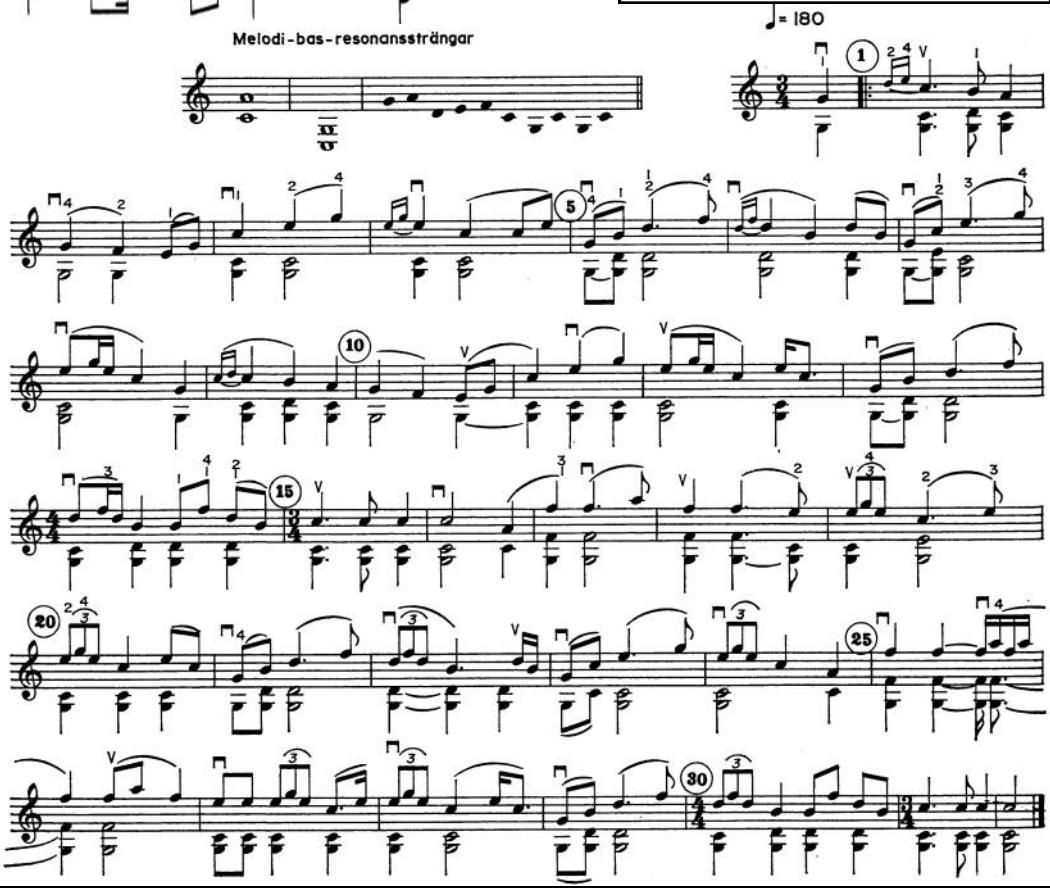
The chromatic keyed fiddle has the bridge placed at right-angles to the strings in the same manner as the violin. Eric Sahlström, who has been chosen to represent the playing technique for this instrument, plays either with a shortened violin or cello bow, or with a bow made by himself which is somewhat curved at the tip in a conscious imitate of the older type of bow [***172***]. Sahlström's grip is similar to that used for a violin bow. The bow travels in a practically straight line, indicating that the wrist is not 'locked' as has been shown to be the case with an older technique. The bow is held so that the full width of the hairs rests against the string and Sahlström performs smooth strokes using the entire length of the bow. He is also a skillful fiddler and his bowing technique is based on experience of the violin.

As with chromatic keyed fiddles in general, the bridge on Sahlström's instrument has a more rounded top than one finds on older types of keyed fiddles. He has no difficulty in playing on one of the three melody strings without touching an adjacent string, even in very rapid passages. In addition to a curved bridge, this technique requires tight bow hairs and the bowing practice described above. On the other hand it makes drone playing..... **(text to p.10)**

[*155*] VALS EFTER GULAMÅRAVITEN spelad av Joel Jansson.

[*156*] STIGPOLSKA spelad av Joen Jansson.

on the first beat of a bar. In marches, however, Sahlström groups his bow strokes so that he always plays the first and third beats of a bar with a down-bow [***161***]. Sahlström does not keep as rigidly to a bowing pattern in 'semiquaver *polskas*' as he does in 'quaver *polskas*': he sometimes even reverses the bowing in a repeat, i.e. the bowing rhythm is the same, but down-bows and up-bows have been interchanged (cf. [***162***], second repeat).

Several players besides Sahlström (M.M. 64/65: 35, 38, 51, 53) **[Ed note: M.M. stands for Musikhistoriska museet, Stockholm. A collection of recordings & other materials.]**

[*159*] VALS spelad av Helmer Karlsson.

(continued from p. 8)
and the use of 'dipping' more difficult.

For the 'quaver polskas', Sahlström uses the same fixed pattern of bowing as Joel Jansson, down-strokes on the first and third beats. These melodies appear to be suited to this pattern of bowing: the third beat often falls on a dotted quaver and a semiquaver; the latter is almost always played with a rapid up-bow in order that the first beat of the next bar can be played with a down-bow (cf. [***160***]). Waltzes are not as regular as this, syncopation over bar-lines being used and sometimes an up-bow

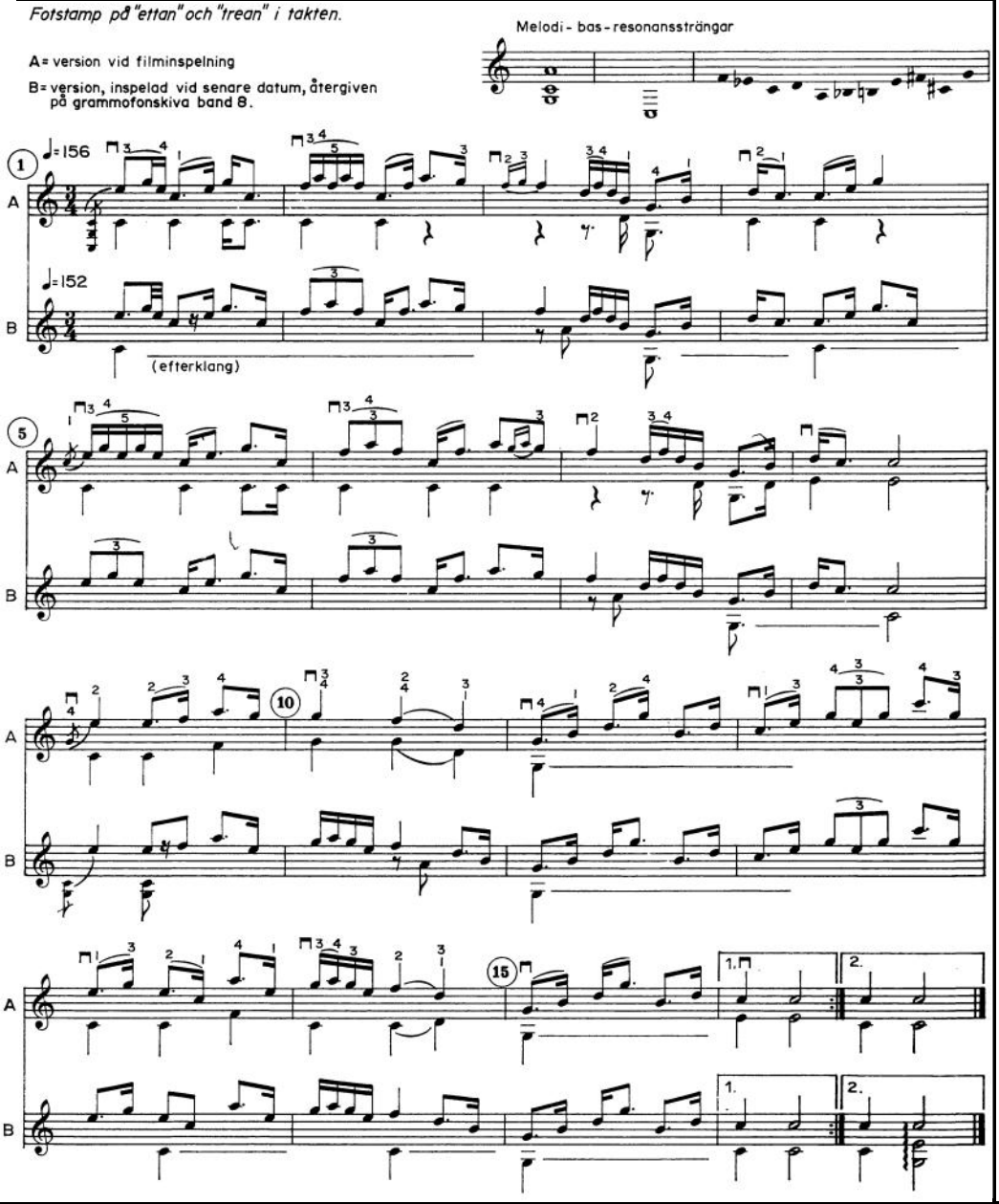
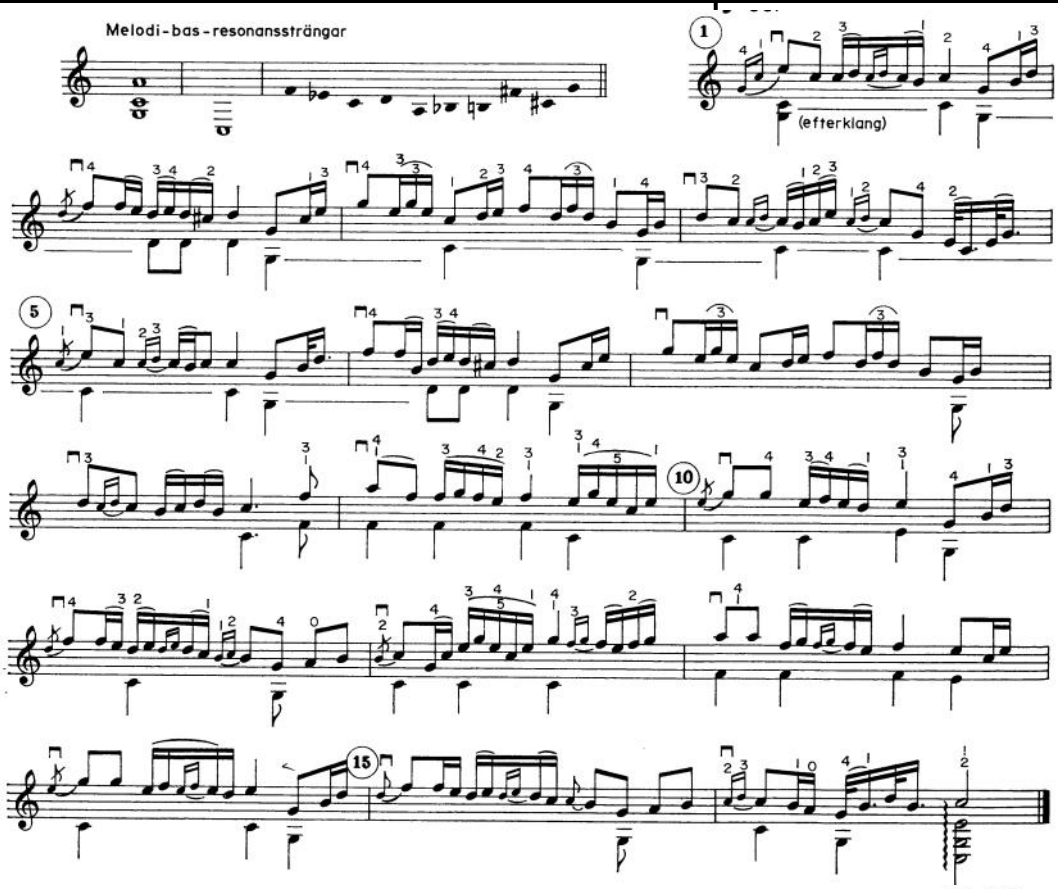
Chromatic key-fiddle playing technique continued from page 10:

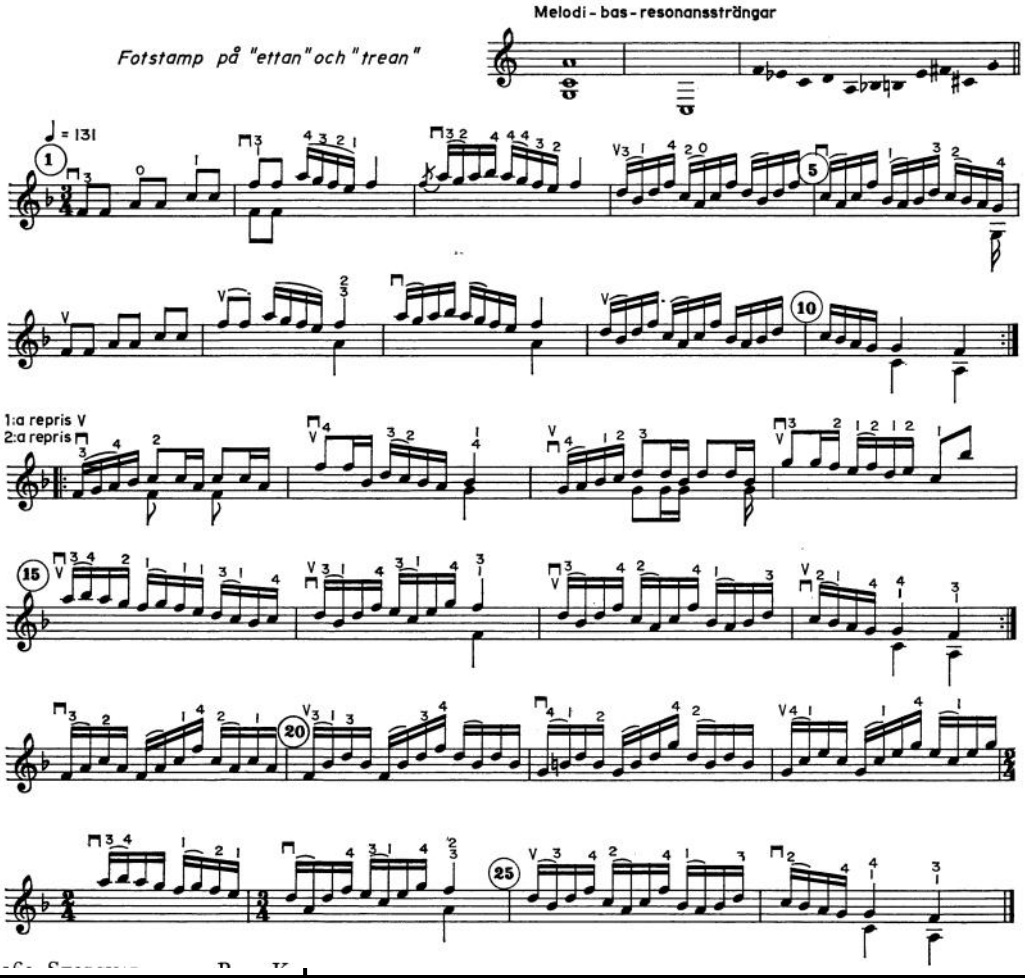
first learned to play the *silverbasharpa* and did not switch to the chromatic instrument and its bow until they were 40-50 years old. Unlike Sahlström, however, many of them have not managed to retain the bowing pattern characteristic of the 'quaver *polska*'. In many cases their bow grip is a mixture of old and new. These players concentrate so much on using one string at a time that they neglect important aspects of the bowing. Their habitual bowing patterns gradually disappear and with them important accents that otherwise give their tunes their rhythmical characters (cf. below concerning key technique). It seems that the players who switched straight from the violin to the chromatic keyed fiddle have been more successful in transferring the violin's bowing technique, at the same time retaining the characteristic bowing patterns of the melodies (M.M. 64/65: 46, 54).

Several changes have occurred in the transition from the bowing technique of the *silverbasharpa* to that of the chromatic instrument. Certain phenomena, however, have survived the transition i.e. special bowing patterns for certain types of melody. The bowing pattern for the 'quaver *polska*' remains the same irrespective of the type of instrument and differences of local tradition. This must have to do with the function of these melodies as dance music, with the consequent demand for regular accentuation. With the exception of the two players from Österbybruk, whose bowing technique is probably derived from a special *polska* tradition, a deviation from the *polska's* bowing pattern (with down-strokes on the first and third beats of a bar) is almost always due to the melody in question never having been played for dancing. There is a definite risk that this special '*polska* rhythm' will disappear now that the keyed fiddle is so frequently played without the dancing that formerly went with these melodies.

.

[Ed: the text for Playing Techniques - Key Technique, continues on page 13]

[*160*] POLSKA EFTER FARSAN spelad av Eric Sahlström
[Ed note: Named #41, POLSKA, Eric Sahlström efter Styfberg, in the book: *Eric Sahlström, Upplandslåtar upptecknade av Gösta Sahlström*]

[*161*] MARSCH
spelad av
Erik Sahlström.

[*162*] STORSVARTEN
av Byss-Kalle
spelad av
Erik Sahlström.

[Ed note: Also found in NNs #44 & #49.]

Chapter 7
Playing Techniques

Key Technique

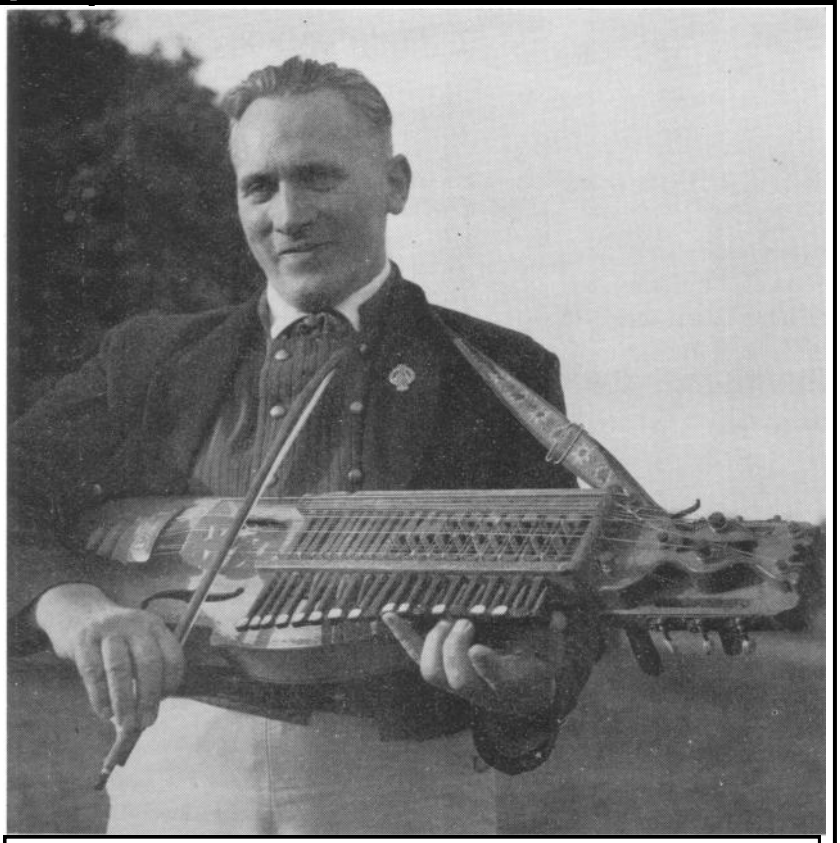
A number of questions concerning key technique have been touched on above in connection with the manufacture of the key mechanism. The present section is concerned with a description and comparison of details concerning key technique in the light of sources from different periods.

Position of the key hand

The key technique of players today is conditioned by the position of the key hand and the way in which the neck of the instrument is supported by the forearm or wrist. Since both the manner of holding the instrument and the position of the key hand are the same in the modern tradition as in iconographic sources for keyed fiddle playing from the Middle Ages to the present day, it is likely that key technique has been influenced by these conditions throughout the history of the keyed fiddle.

The key hand of the player is held in the same position as the fingering hand of a player on the lute or guitar. The same position is also to be found in mediaeval reproductions of fiddlers who are holding their instrument horizontally. (see e.g. [***98***], [***99***]).

The keys facilitate location of the intervals on the keyed fiddle in much the same way as do the frets on the lute, guitar and viol. Since the instrument is held horizontally, it is also considerably easier to finger the heads of the keys, which project from the side of the instrument, than it would be to stop the strings themselves. The hand and the wrist do not have to be crooked to the same extent. This does not arise with the guitar and lute because the strings are plucked. If the strings are to be bowed, the position of the left hand becomes more uncomfortable and the manner of playing more complicated. Perhaps it was partly for these reasons that all horizontally held bowed instruments were abandoned during the 15th and 16th centuries with the exception of the keyed fiddle, which is made easier to play by the special key mechanism.



[*172*] Eric Sahlström (1912- 1986), Tegelsmore sn., Uppland. Shown here with a harpa of his own construction. The bow is held as for a violin. Finger-tip action.

[*98*] Angels playing fiddle & recorder in Brunnby Church, Skåne. Murals date to late 15th century.

The position of the key hand for the keyed fiddle has no direct parallels among the other known keyed instruments. The key mechanism of the hurdy -gurdy, for instance, is operated with the hand held on top of it. While it is true that the thumb is seldom, if ever, used for either the keyed fiddle or the hurdy-gurdy, the very different position of the key hand makes it unlikely that there is any direct connection between the techniques for playing these two instruments. There are no similarities in other respects and it seems that their playing techniques have been developed independently.

As in the case of bowing techniques, a review of fingering and touch and their importance for the manner of playing must be based on a study of actual performances or films of these. One can then attempt to establish general characteristics of playing technique connected with the instrument's idiom, besides trying to discover individual or local practices.

The performers selected above to represent different bowing techniques for the contra-drone double-keyed fiddle, the silver-drone and the chromatic instrument, will also serve to represent the key techniques for these types of instrument.

Fingering and touch

Contra-drone double-keyed fiddle

Whereas the bowing techniques of Vickman and Gille agree in detail, there are several differences in their technique with the keys. Vickman holds his hand and fingers practically straight, playing the keys with approximately the middle of the top joints of his fingers. Gille cups his hand and plays the keys with his finger tips. Gille has a number of fixed finger combinations, which Vickman prefers to let his hand range freely over the keys. He often plays scale passages above e^2 with his little finger only, a kind of 'one-finger' technique. Gille, on the other hand, almost always moves his hand to a new position when the melody so requires (see e.g. [***152***], bar 30. **[Ed: NN #52, page 20.]**

Both Gille and Vickman have a very light touch which does not cause the key mechanism to clatter in the manner characteristic of older keyed fiddle music. Each melody is always played with the same finger.

Gille's and Vickman's key technique comprises a somewhat limited number of fingerings, which reflect an individual manner of playing.

[*99*] Fiddle with four strings and heart-shaped sound holes. Rynkeby Church, Fyn, Denmark. Murals dated to 1560.

Their fingerings are presented in Fig. [***164***]. This individual manner appears to have arisen because these players use their keyed fiddles only for the melodies which they have learned from older players of this instrument. For other music they use an accordion. This is a very different situation from that of players who try to extend their repertoire and are continually having to adapt new melodies to the idiom of their instrument. Such playing involves the unconscious development of fingering techniques with a wider application. (see below).

Silver-drone keyed fiddle

Like Gille and Vickman, most of the players of the silver-drone keyed fiddles use the same fingering whenever they play a particular melody. Their fingerings may vary considerably, however from one melody to another, depending upon whether the tempo allows time for the execution of ornaments in the form of double stops or whether it is so fast that the second melody string can only be used as an occasional drone. This difference is particularly clear in Joel Jansson's playing. When playing simple, relatively modern melodies consisting mainly of crotchets, Jansson has developed a technique for decoration the tune with harmonies, e.g. double stops (see [***170***], whereas older waltzes, marches and *polskas* are mostly ornamented simply with the obvious harmony d^1 --- b^1 and with d^1 --- d^2, obtained by double stopping.

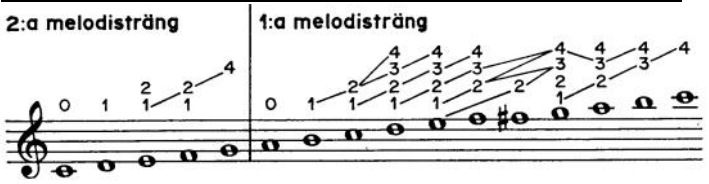
Jansson's key technique reflects a consistent fingering that is well suited to the instrument. He has a sort of technique for shifting position: when the melody involves semiquaver figures, Jansson moves his hand to a convenient position (see [**165**]).

He sometimes prepares for a passage by changing fingers when repeating a preceding tone. (**[*154*],** bars 1-2). Otherwise he always used the same finger to play the same key several times in succession.

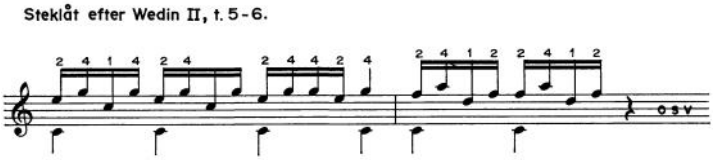
When playing rapid scale figures Jansson does not always have time to play with his finger tips but used the top joint instead. At times his touch becomes quite uncontrolled and his finger simply land on the relevant keys (**[*157*]**, bar 4) Jansson also has set fingerings for various double stops (see below).

Jansson's various fingerings have been compiled in Fig. **[*166*]**. While the main features are the same as for other players of the silver-drone keyed fiddle, there are certain differences in matters of detail. In general, Jansson has very few individual mannerisms and he practically never uses a 'one-finger' technique. **[Ed note: [154] & [157] are in NN #52,**]

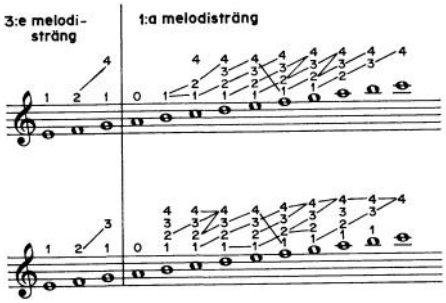
[*166*] Fingering forJoel Jansson.

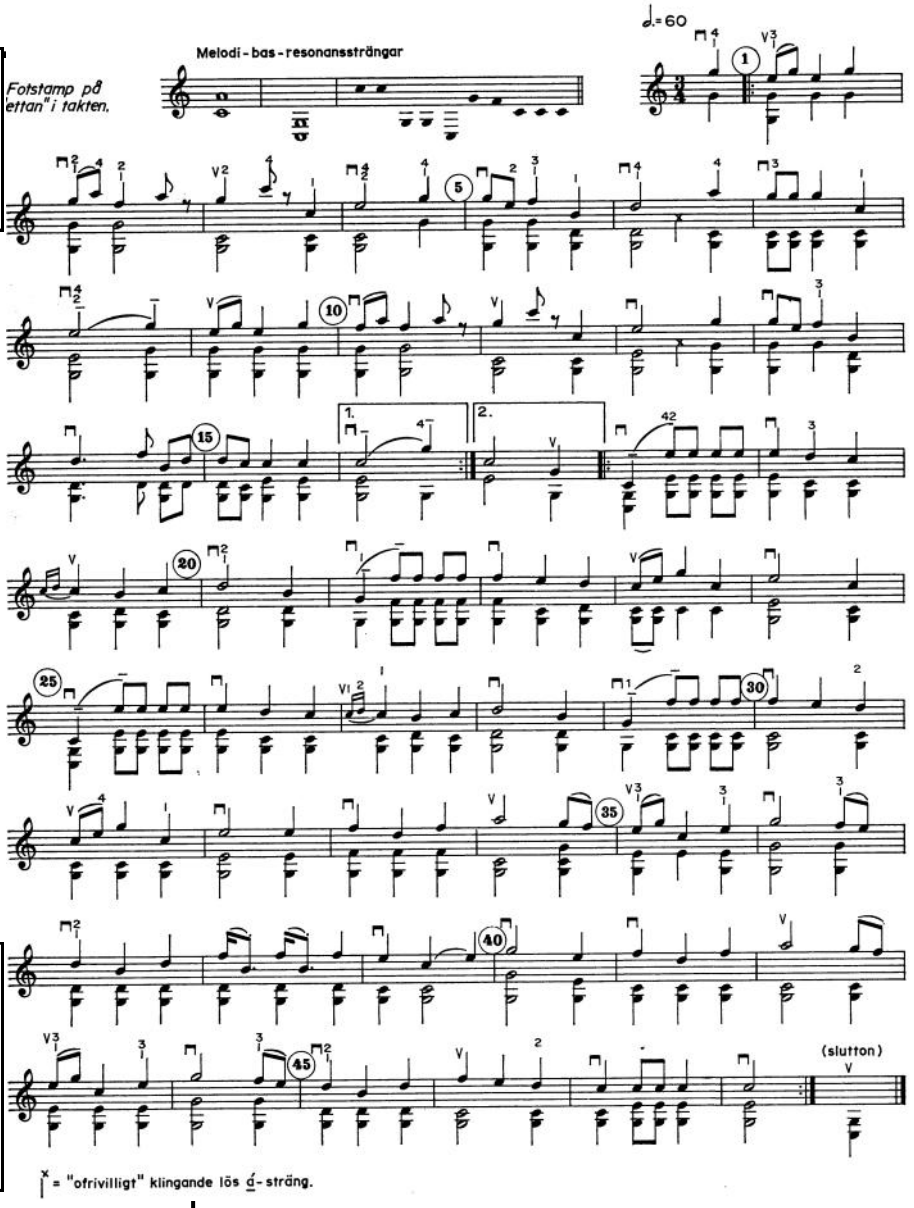


[*165*] Bars 5-6 of a *Steklåt efter Wedin* as played by Joel Jansson.

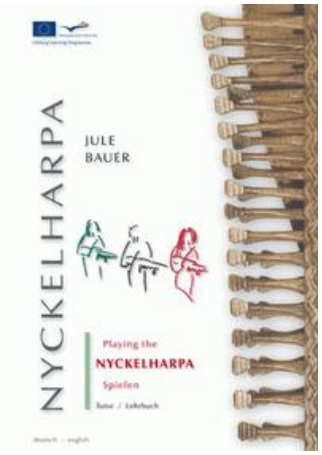


[Ed: The next section, <u>Key Technique: Chromatic keyed fiddle</u>, will be continued in the next Nyckel Notes, no. 54].



[*164*] Fingering for Justus Gilles (upper clef) & Viktor Vickman (lower clef).

[*170*] TEGENBORGSVALSEN spelad av Joel Jansson.

Playing the Nyckelharpa - Tutor Book by Jule Bauer



The Verlag der Spielleute publishing company recently published *Playing the Nyckelharpa* by Jule Bauer in English and German. Jule Bauer has had a deep and close relationship with the nyckelharpa for many years. She studied musicology and music pedagogy, and was the first graduate of the "European Nyckelharpa Training." She has been teaching both singing and the nyckelharpa since 2003 in Academy Castle Fürsteneck in Germany, the Scoula di Musica Popolare di Forlimpopoli in Italy, and the Conservatoire Intercommunal de Musique Deux Vallées in Milly-la-Foret, France.

This instruction book is aimed at beginner level Nyckelharpa players, providing a systematic, auto-didactic approach, dealing first with the history and construction of the instrument, and then progressing onto essential basics such as different instrument and bow holds. The player is guided step by step from the first bow strokes through proper technique in various keys and styles. The book contains over 50 melodies which provide the player with an exciting and varied repertoire that is carefully chosen to support the learning progress. Numerous exercises help the player work through the 22 Chapters, with many pictures illustrating the content. In the appendix the author deals comprehensively with physiological concerns associated with playing a musical instrument.

All melodies included in the instruction book are written for *nyckelharpas* with three and four rows of keys, also for both tunings, the Swedish C-G-C-A, and the continental European, C-G-D-A. A special feature of the publication is that all melodies in the book can be downloaded as MIDI files from the author's website, which allows the player to play by ear, or as a demonstration. The book includes a foreword by Per-Ulf Allmo.

Nyckelharpa Exercises Book by Marco Ambrosini

The Verlag der Spielleute publishing company in 2012 published a new addition to its line of Nyckelharpa books: *Exercises for Daily Practice*, by Marco Ambrosini in English, German and Italian. Ambrosini is an accomplished musician and teacher, lecturing on the nyckelharpa at the Academy Burg Fürsteneck and giving master classes at the Musikhochschule Trossingen, both in Germany, and the Scuola di Musica Popolare di Forlimpopoli in Italy. He is the didactic director of the European Nyckelharpa Trainging (http://www.training.nyckelharpa.eu). For more information about Ambrosini, check out his website: http://www.ambrosini.de.

In this book, Ambrosini addresses the increasing demand for etudes for players to practice and improve their technique with the nyckelharpa, collecting 21 exercises, each arranged for instruments in multiple tunings, to ensure that all players can benefit from the work regardless of whether their instrument has 3 or 4 rows of keys, or uses the traditional Swedish (CGCA) or 'continental' (CGDA) tuning.

The book also includes an introduction discussing the different tuning styles and their practical differences, what those differences mean to students and teachers of the instrument, and advice for how best to approach the exercises which are the core component of the book.

Both books (Bauer & Ambrosini) are available from the following retailers:

In Germany at Verlag der Spielleute:
http://www.spielleute.de/wbc.php?sid=419246e7f7&tpl=produktdetail.html&pid=267

or in Sweden at Förlaget Tongang:
http://www.tongang.se/tongang/home.html

or in the USA at Holzman Folk Traditions:
http://www.earlharpas.com/

Nisse Nordström
SWEDISH FOLK MUSIC TREASURES
A Video Review
by David Elliker-Vågsberg

Rita Leydon's first video production of influential Swedish Folk Musicians is another in a must-have collection from Leydon Grafix. This and many other important videos may be obtained from Rita Leydon at **www.ritaleydon.com** .

In June of 2013, along with Olov Johansson, Nisse Nordström received the Zorn Medal in Gold ("För genuint och dansant spel av låtar från Uppland"). This is an honor that only a few important folk musicians have received over the years. Nisse joins the company of musicians such as Eric and Sture Sahlström, Styrbjörn Bergelt, Ivar Tallroth, Peder Hedlund, Sonia Sahlström and other important folk musicians.

The video is a musical collection of tunes and comments by Nisse Nordström with the assistance of Peder Hedlund. Peder adds his harmonic accompaniment and occasionally plays the melody to the 25 tunes. A very enjoyable listening experience with the only drawback in the fact that the two players blend their music so well that the melody is not heard prominently on all tunes to use the recording as a learning tool. That said, it is still a very worthwhile addition to any nyckelharpa player's video collection.

. Nisse was born in 1921 in *Bladåkers socken i Roslagen* and turned 92 this year. At an early age he learned both the fiddle and the nyckelharpa. His first Zorn medal was awarded to him in 1959. He became a *Riksspelman* in 1974 and in 1978 became the first *spelman* employed full-time in that capacity by the Swedish state.

Nisse's repertoire from Uppland stems from the tradition of Grop Gustav and Albert Jansson.

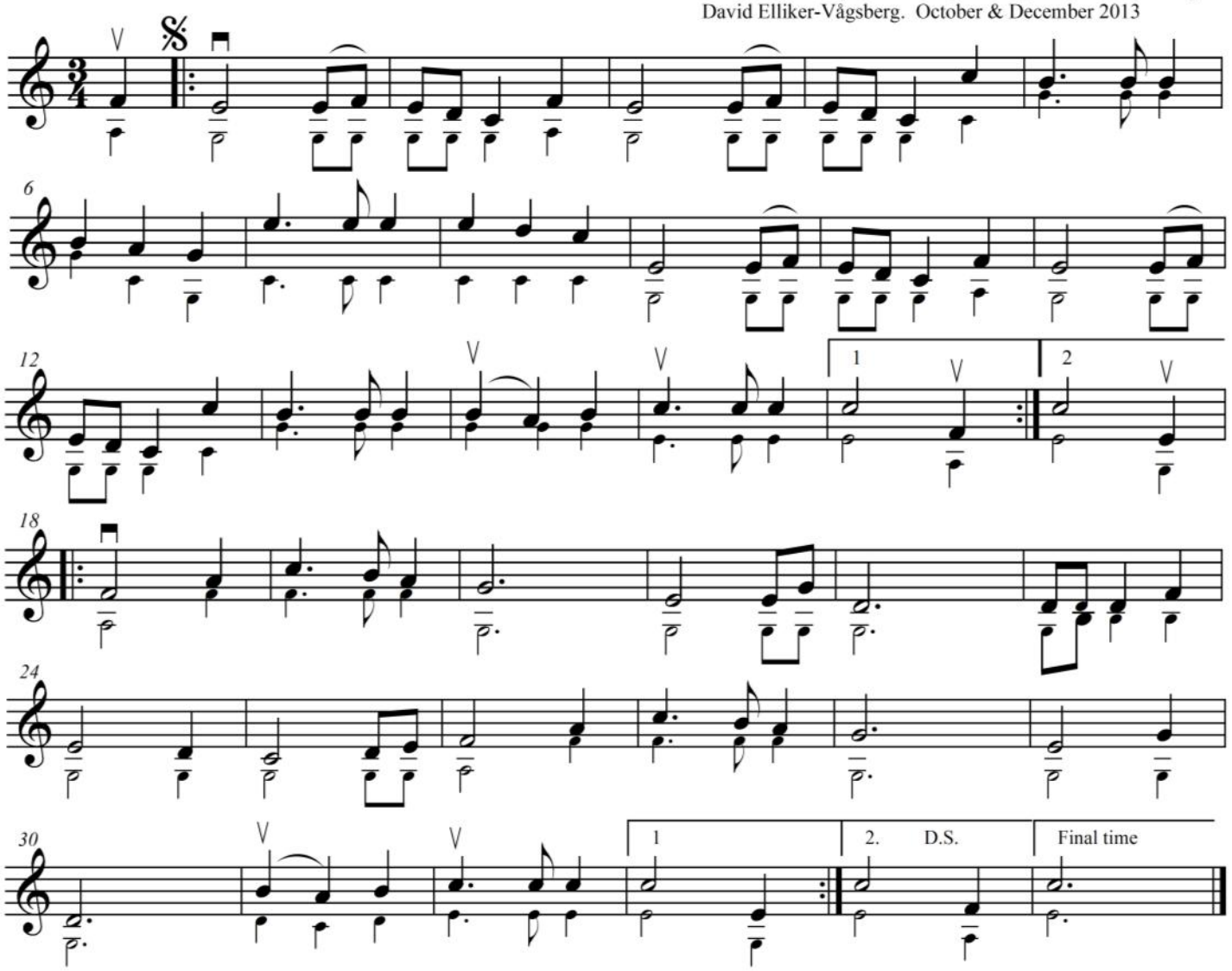
Tunes from the DVD:

1. Kräftpolskan av Nisse Nordström..... a tune that Nisse learned while fishing for crayfish.
2. Brudvals efter Grop Gustave
3. Brudmarsch " " "
4. Oktobervalsen av Oscar Larsson
5. Gånglåt av Oscar Larsson
6. Mazurka
7. Bondpolska efter N. Nordström i tradisjon efter Jorlin.

Foto: Christina Frohm, Juni 2013

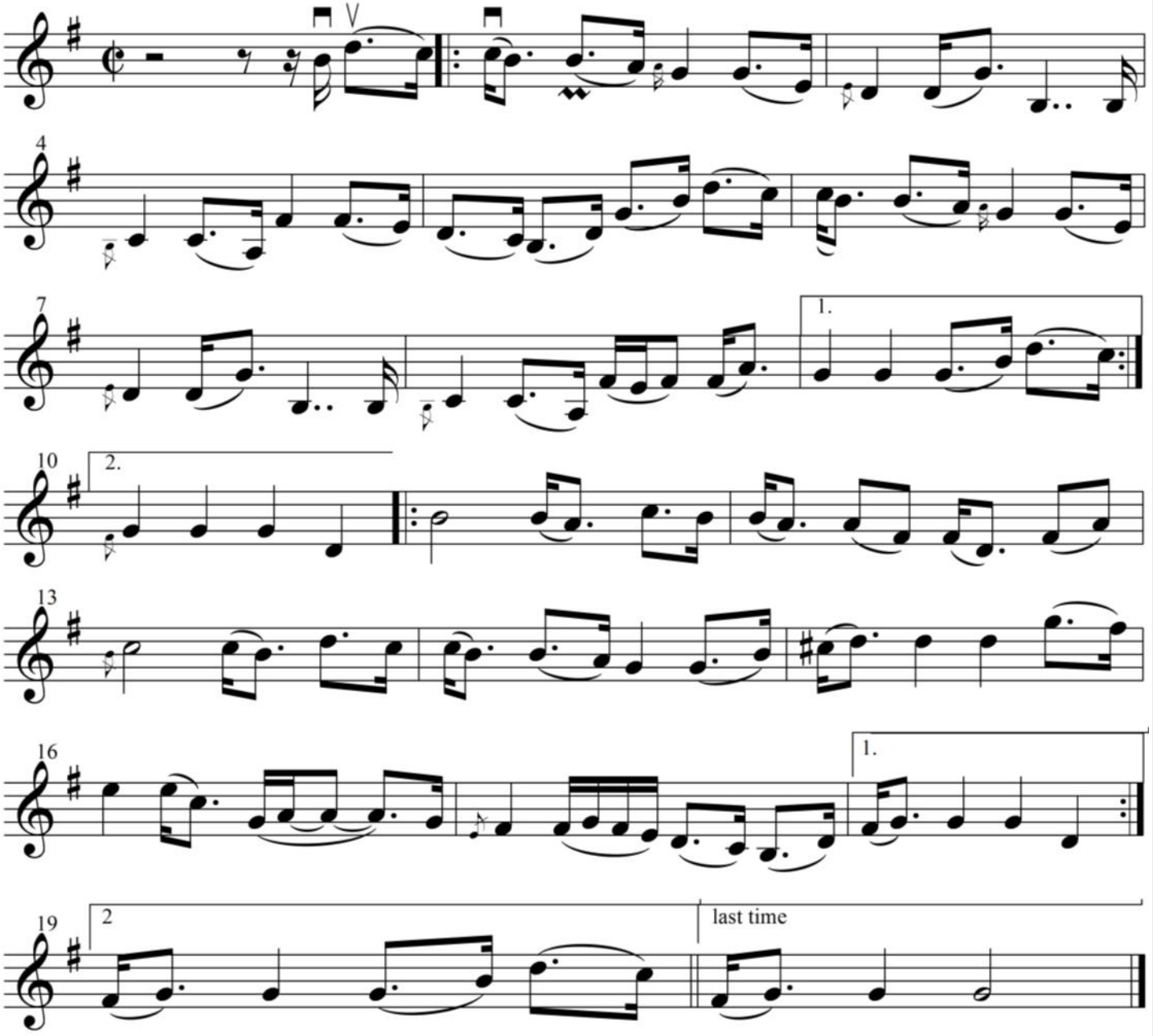
8. Mosstorp
9. Vals efter Gåsvikarn
10. Baklängsvals från Harg
11. Mungalåtan **(see NNs #52)** in the style of Nörrbom with a different ending.
12. Polska (No. 12-15, Nisse plays silverbasharpa)
13. Armen i Natt.....Learned from G. Gustav. "Where shall I lay my arm tonight?"
14. Boda Mattis polska
15. Tegenborgsvals
16. Kyrkpolska efter Lasse Näsbom
17. Så lika polskan
18. Tobopolkettan av Eric Sahlström
19. Senpolska efter E. Sahlström
20. Mosstorp 2
21. Byss-Kalle Slängpolska
22. Deppvalsen
23. Långbacka Jans polska
24. Rapp-Kalles vals
25. Bränvinsmarschen

"Valsen hans Andreas"

Written down by Asbjørn Sunde, arranged by Einar Eimhjellen, Naustdal, Norway. Renotated, rearranged and comments by David Elliker-Vågsberg. October & December 2013

This vals comes from a small valley (Instedalen) near the town in Naustdal in the county of Sogn og Fjordane, Norway. The vals was written down by Einar Eimhjellen from the playing of Asbjørn Sunde (1900-1987). Asbjørn's father, Bertel Hunsgård came from Breim i Nordfjord, married Oleanna Sunde and took over running the farm, Sundet. Asbjørn was one of the most influential fiddlers of the 20th century for the Naustdal area. He was one of 9 brothers and sisters and two of his brothers became fiddlers also. Asbjørn learned this tune from his Uncle, Andreas Sunde (born 1888). In 1937 Asbjørn married Magnhild Teigen and took over running the farm, Sundet, in 1937. He played both Hardanger fiddle and regular fiddle and music was very close to his heart. Asbjørn also was a master craftsman and rosemaled many cabinets, cupboards and ambars for people in the community. He also made a few fiddles and taught music to the Instedalen Spelemannslag which later became the Naustdalen Spelemannslag. He taught many tunes to many musicians. **[Ed: The Naustdalen Spelemannslag plays this tune in the key of "D" but I changed it to "C" and added insome harmony notes for the nyckelharpa.]**

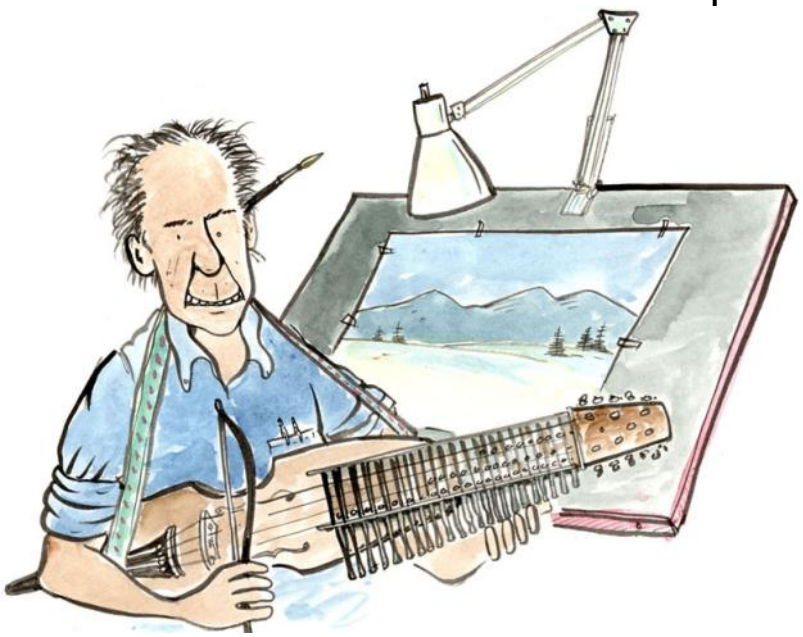
Kleivaslåtten

eller Reinlender etter Valton Torvik

Frå spele av Arne Sølvberg, Nordfjord og Einar Eimhjellen, Naustdal. Transkripjon og bearbeidet for strengeinstrument av David Elliker-Vågsberg, April 2002 & Desember 2013.

"Nosakleiva er eit høgt platå mellom Fjelli og Randabygda, med mektig utsyn over fjorden. Her sette Jon Rosenlid seg ned ein grytidlig morgon han kom gåande på veg heim. Musikken strøymde på, og fela måtte fram. Ho låg på trollstille, og dermed fekk vi ein av dei svært få reinlendarane med slik stemning." (A. Sølvberg)

I Nordfjord blir det hevda at Jon Rosenlid komponerte denne reinlendaren. Då dette vart fortalt til Einar Bakkane sa has at "denne reinlendaren er mykje eldre enn Rosenlien. Eg lærde den av Torvikn før eg var konfirmert".

Einar Eimhjellen



String Bazaar

The ANA is pleased to offer Nyckelharpa strings for sale! We have playing strings and three versions of understring sets.

ORDER FORM

Prices are for ANA members/non-members.
Price includes shipping to a US address.

Playing strings	Quantity	Member Price	Non-member Price	Total Cost
Prim Full Set		**$77**	**$87**	
Prim A (1)		**$15**	**$17**	
Prim C (2)		**$18**	**$20**	
Prim G (3)		**$20**	**$23**	
Prim C (4)		**$24**	**$27**	
Resonance strings:				
6 +6 resonance set		**$22**	**$27**	
4+4+4 resonance set		**$22**	**$27**	
12 step resonance set		**$22**	**$27**	
			TOTAL	

e-mail for inquiries: strings@nyckelharpa.org
Send this form along with a check payable to:
American Nyckelharpa Association to:
Tim Newcomb
P.O. Box 51
Montpelier, VT 05602

Playing Strings

The playing strings are the four largest strings, the ones that you actually touch with the bow. 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.

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 :
6 wound strings .021" (0.053 mm) in diameter,
6 plain strings .014" (0.36 mm) in diameter.

4+4+4 :
4 wound strings 0.24" (0.61 m) in diameter,
4 wound strings .021" (0.53 mm) in diameter,
4 plain strings .014" (0.36 mm) in diameter.

12-step :
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.

Dear Nyckel Notes Readers,

Another busy month almost gone by as we near the end of the year 2013. *Fossegrimen* again participated in the Scandinavian Heritage Foundation's annual Scan Fair and again this year we played for the St. Stephan's Lutheran Church's "Lil Julaften" service the weekend before Christmas.

Claire and I have been playing our nyckelharpor for many of the Oregon Old Time Fiddle Association's (OOFTA) gigs that we have attended and introduced folks on Christmas Eve Day to the tunes of "På låven sitter nissen" and "Hej, tomtegubbar".

In October we were pleased by a visit from Einar Eimhjellen from Naustdal, Norway and we organized Oregon's first "NorOreWegian Jam" with members of our local OOFTA and held at our local Sons of Norway Lodge. Einar taught everyone present, two new (for the local OOFTA fiddlers) tunes. A vals and a reinlender. You will find the tunes on pages 18 and 19 of this issue of Nyckel Notes. The reinlender, *Kleivaslåtten*, really has two names depending on whether you live in the Nordfjord area or in the Naustdal area. But that's really the way many of the folk tunes progress through the ages. I've tested both of these tunes out on the nyckelharpa and I think you'll find that they work very well and may become favorites for some of you.....

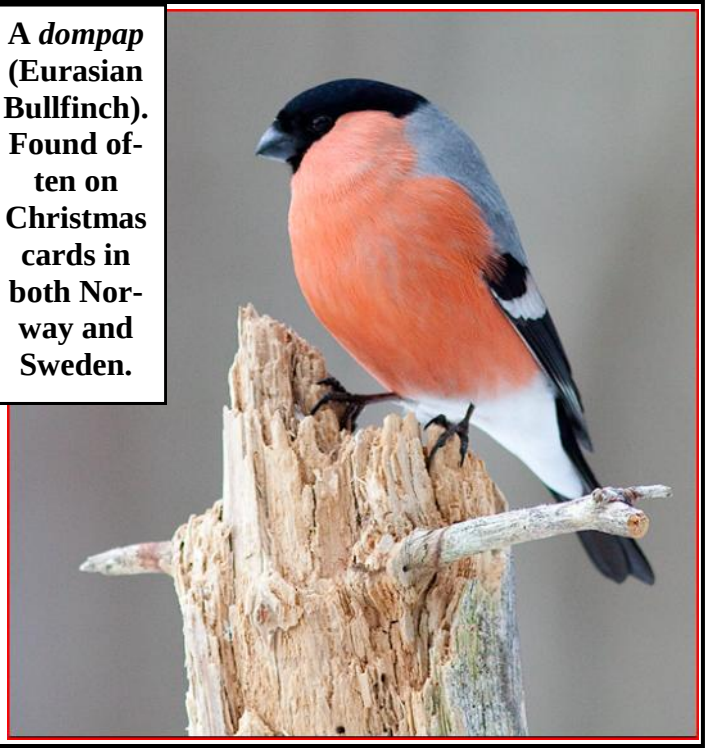
Godt nyttår,
David

Left to right: Einar Eimhjellen, David Elliker-Vågsberg & Claire Elliker-Vågsberg at the October "NorOreWegian" Jam in October.

COMING UP - ISSUE 53:
Summer 2014

1. **Continuation of Jan Ling's *Nyckelharpor*, English pages.**
2. **More articles submitted by the ANA membership!**

A *dompap* (Eurasian Bullfinch). Found often on Christmas cards in both Norway and Sweden.



UPCOMING EVENTS:
Please consult the ANA website for up-to-date information.

The American Nyckelharpa Association

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

ANA Membership dues are $12 per year, which included a digital subscription to this newsletter. $30 per year for a snail mail membership. Sign up on the web-site below. **www.nyckelharpa.org**

. Send article submissions to **Nyckel Notes** at:
nyckelnotes@nyckelharpa.org

or to
David Elliker-Vågsberg
84890 S. Willamette Street
Eugene, OR 97405-9500