

Nyckel Notes

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN NYCKELHARPA ASSOCIATION

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Have you Renewed?

Your first \$10 membership dues have lasted a long time, but now it's time to renew your membership. All memberships are for a calendar year (Jan to Dec).

Mail a check for \$10 made out the "The American Nyckelharpa Association" to the address below. You can enclose it with your voting slip!

Don't delay! This is your last warning before you stop receiving Nyckel Notes, and stop having that **great** feeling deep inside that you are supporting nyckelharpa playing in America.

If it says "Membership Expired" above your name on the mailing label, then you haven't yet renewed.

Vote for the Board

The original ANA board worked out a set of by-laws that include the rules for the terms of board members. We decided to stagger the board elections such that 2 are elected in even-numbered years, and 3 in odd-numbered years. That way we will never have an all-new inexperienced board, but you (the ANA members) will have to vote every year, even though board members serve two year terms. We decided that all five of the initial board members' terms should expire at the end of 1996. We can still serve again, so you can still vote for us again.

To start the staggered system, the two candidates that get the highest number of votes (this year only) will serve 2-year terms, while the next three highest vote-getters will serve 1-year terms.

Nominations will be called for in the Jul issue of the newsletter every year, and the Oct issue will contain a ballot (sorry, I'm late this year).

So cast your votes!

ANA Board Election Form 1997

Vote for only FIVE (5) of the following:

- Bart Brashers, Seattle WA B,P,T
- Matt Fichtenbaum, Chelmsford MA B
- Gail Halverson, Los Angeles CA B,C
- Sheila Morris, Denver CO
- Tim Newcomb, Worcester VT
- Bruce Sagan, Lansing, MI B
- Becky Weis, Minneapolis MN S

The last column indicates the person's current job(s): *B* for current board member, *P* for President, *T* for treasurer, *C* for CD sales organizer, *S* for Stämman organizer.

Mail this form, along with any pending dues, to

ANA
 Bart Brashers
 533 N 73 Street
 Seattle WA 98103-5132



Anders Mattson

photo: Per-Ulf Allm

Nyckelharpa Stämman 11-13 July 1997, in Minneapolis

Thanks for all your feedback on location and time preferences! Votes were overwhelmingly for the July weekend, and evenly split between Minneapolis and Chicago, so since our volunteer coordinator Becky Weis lives in Minneapolis, the ANA board decided to have next year's Stämman there.

Anders Mattson, nyckelharpa world champion in '94 and twice the "audience's favorite", will be there to teach and play. There will be more events than last year's time constraints allowed, including at least one dance (Saturday?) and a concert (Sunday?). Full information will be included in the next newsletter, due out in April.

So mark your calendars, call your travel agents, plan your roadtrips -- just be there!

The 1996 Nyckelharpa World Championship

by Gunnar Fredelius, translated by Bart Brashers
(from *Nyckelharpan* 3/96)

The first nyckelharpa World Championships [VM in Swedish, which stands for Världs Mästerskap = world master] were held in 1990 at the Nyckelharpa Stämman in Österbybruk. Olov Johansson outdid himself and won both divisions, gammelharpa (old nyckelharpa) and chromatic (modern) nyckelharpa. In 1992, the competition was held at Skansen in Stockholm. The title in the gammelharpa class went to Hasse Gille, while Peter "Puma" Hedlund brought home the championship in chromatic nyckelharpa. That year, another separate competition was introduced. The audience voted for their favorite -- that year it was Anders Mattson. He was also the audience's favorite at Gamla Linköping in 1994, as well as winning the chromatic class. The gammelharpa class was won by Lena Jörpeland. The best seat in the house was held by little Elis, a few inches from Lena's harpa. You see, Lena was 7 months pregnant at the time....

In 1996 the competition was back in Österbybruk. The jury was composed of Gunnar Ahlbäck, Jan Ling, Nisse Nordström, Curt Tallroth, Sigurd Sahlström and myself (Gunnar Fredelius). As jury members, we get to hear a lot of points of view. They are welcome, too (except maybe for the ones of the type "the wrong tune won" without any explanation). Some questions come up often, which is usually a sign that many others have the similar questions on their minds. I can take this opportunity to answer some of those questions here.

A common question is "what exactly do we base our decisions on?" We have four main criteria that we score, which are then divided into sub-criterion such that the main criteria are worth different amounts. We look at the Choice of Tune (for example, if the tune is well suited to the nyckelharpa). The next point deals with Playing Technique (which includes overall skill, fingering skill, bowing technique, giving shape to the melody, and tone quality). Then we have Folk-music Performance, with seven or eight sub-items that deal with style, ornaments, speed, rhythm, tempo, drones and double-stops. And finally we have the point Musical Expression, which has the hard-to-define elements of overall presentation and impressions.

Another question is how much we take into account nervousness and that it maybe sounds a lot better back at home in the kitchen. Of course, we have some understanding for mistakes, etc., due to nervousness. Even starting a tune over is accepted. But if a player falters too badly, one must understand that part of the

competition is to be able to handle the situation. Some players have shown great ability to nicely improvise a solution to a tune that has derailed, and in doing so have turned an error into something positive. But what counts isn't what one has done previously in life, or at home in the kitchen. It would be an altogether different type of competition if one could submit a cassette and show how good one *could* be. The only thing that counts is the presentation at the competition -- not old merits or sins.

Some people have suggested that the jury should sit behind a sheet. Not so that one doesn't have to see us, I hope, but because it would be more fair if the jury didn't know who was playing. One argument against this is that we could recognize who it is anyway. One of the fascinations with solo nyckelharpa playing is how personal and individual it can be.

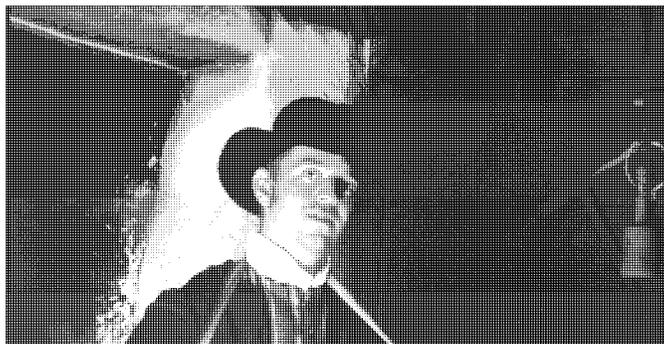
"Does the jury think about its responsibility as to setting the standard if it rewards for example a young virtuoso as opposed to the maturity and tradition of an older player?" is one question we have heard. We don't. The questioner wanted to point out the difficulty of weighing for example tradition vs. slick fingers, but that is something we take a stand on before the competition, by establishing and ranking our criterion. In playing for the Zornmärke [the Zorn medal; those who have been awarded the Zorn medal in silver have the honor of being called Riksspelmän] the player is judged against a norm, while at the VM we have only a single winner. The idea is to play well, or better yet best of all the participants.

Once a champion, always a champion, even if not the reigning one. "Shouldn't the previous champions be barred from competing so others will have more of a chance?" is one question we've heard. A sympathetic idea. But to keep the quality high at the competitions, we do as all other competitions - both in music and in

sports - and give the champ a chance to come back and compete again.

This article has turned out to be more about the competition than the competitors, but at last we turn to the people who entered. 11 musicians played in the gammelharpa class, and a whole 18 in the chromatic class gave the public a first-class show. It is possible that this can seem a little too much for an audience, but they seemed pleased.

In the gammelharpa class, Hasse Gille, Anders Nordfors and Niklas Roswall played kontrabasharpa.



Niklas Roswall

Photo: Per-Ulf Allmo

Björn Björn, Esbjörn Hogmark, Kurt Södergren, Curt Jinder, Lena Jörpeland, Ingvar Jörpeland, Kjell Landström and Christer Wesström played silverbasharpa. We don't normally say who came in second place, but this year we'll make an exception since it was so close.

Björn Björn presented a formidable show with his two Anderén tunes.

There were no imperfections to annotate! Lena Jörpeland did just as well as when she won in 1994. Their playing styles are different, but nothing made the individual styles more clear to the jury than when Niklas Roswall played Gustav III krigsmarsch. After listening and discussions, and more discussions, Lena was chosen over Björn Björn. Thus she became the first to successfully defend her title. That it was a "photo

finish" does not detract from her victory in any way.

In the chromatic class, we heard among others Sture Sahlström, with his delightful and genuine old style. Hasse Gille had intended to compete only in the gammelharpa class, but erroneously was placed on the list for the chromatic class as well. To generate an ear-deafening roar from the public is any musician's dream, but Hasse did just the opposite, which is significantly more difficult. He got the public to be absolutely quiet by holding out the silence in one of his tunes to the

breaking point. You could have heard a horsehair fall at 50 yards. That's spelman's power embodied, to be able to magically hold an audience like that....

Many of the rest of the players gave perfect performances (none listed, none forgotten) so the entertainment level was very high. To hear all of our top players play solo and so well.... Niklas Roswall played a Halling from Värmland, and a tune after Ivar Tallroth that had just been played by the previous contestant Esbjörn Hogmark. Two insightful interpretations - fairly different. A Tallroth sat on the jury, so we of course knew how Ivar had played it, but on the other hand you don't get any extra points for exactly copying another player. Both players put their mark on the tune. Some said afterwards that one can't play Halling on the nyckelharpa, but we thought Niklas proved that one can. The jury reached the decision to give Niklas the title after only a few hours' discussion. Tongång had promised the winner of the chromatic class the chance to make a CD. Niklas has said "yes" to the offer, and we await the result with interest.

Different methods are used from year to year to decide



Lena Jörpeland

Photo: Per-Ulf Allmo

the winner of the audience's favorite award. One year we measured the response with a decibel meter and a stopwatch. This year, 25 members of the audience were chosen and asked to vote via the more conventional ballot slips. The result was clear, and the winner Niklas Roswall received the customary cittra [zither] from Gottfrid Johansson's music store. Those votes that were not for him were widely distributed, a sign that the overall level was very high. Four female musicians were among those who got votes.

Congratulations to Lena and Niklas!

Spela Bättre!

The Only Way to Improve Your Playing

by Sheila Morris (ANA board candidate)

Exercises -- Why bother?

It seems to me that almost every nyckelharpa player I've talked to has been really surprised when I admit to doing scales and exercises. The ones who haven't been surprised are all teacher-types, but everyone else says "Oh, I don't bother with them -- I just like to learn tunes." Well, I like to learn tunes too, but I find that I learn them faster and more solidly if I'm keeping up on my exercises as well.

Maybe it's my background in Music Ed., or maybe it's just my nature, but the first thing I did with my new nyckelharpa (after tuning all those strings!) was find the C-major scales and play them a few times. I actually went around looking for exercises that worked -- I tried a piano book that I already had (but it wanted me to use my thumb), I got a beginning fiddle book (too many of the exercises were in the wrong keys), I even tried my old clarinet book (completely wrong!). Finally, I got a copy of Leif Alpsjö's book *Spela Nyckelharpa I* and was relieved to find that there were, indeed, scales and exercises specifically for the nyckelharpa!

Now, I don't actually enjoy playing scales and exercises any more than anyone else, but having learned to play a dozen or so different instruments in my motley career as a music major, that was the approach I knew best. Since I don't find them particularly entertaining, my practicing was a bit sporadic for the first year or so. Learning tunes is so much more fun!

Then Gert Ohlsson came to visit his friends in Boulder. Since harpa teachers are pretty thin on the ground here in Colorado, I grabbed the opportunity to have a lesson. Gert can no longer play, due to injuries from a car accident four years ago. But he can still teach! We corrected a lot of what I had been doing -- how I held

the harpa, mostly, and how to use the fingers of my left hand. And we did this by playing scales and exercises -- for two hours!

First, scales -- one note per bow-stroke (quarter notes), then two (eighth notes), then three (triplets), then four (sixteenths). Up and down again, without repeating the top note. Not repeating the top note will change your bowing from a down-bow to an up-bow for your second time through the scale, and it takes you through all the available triplet patterns, too! Gert had me go ahead and double the top note for the sixteenth-notes, and start on an up-bow the second time. First looking at my fingers, then not looking at my fingers. Then the same with "broken scales" -- C,E,D,F,E,G,F,A, etc., one note, two notes, triplets, sixteenths. O.K., I admit it -- I like doing this pattern as triplets! It's really tricky till you get the hang of it, but it's kinda fun! Then the same again on arpeggios. We did this in the keys of C, G, F, D, and B-flat (which uses all three melody strings)! When we got done, Gert told me to be sure and do this every day. "Oh," I said, "I'm usually too tired when I get home from work, so on weekdays I just play tunes, but I do this kind of stuff on the weekends." "Then you must get up earlier in the morning and practice before work!" he replied.

Well, we had changed so much about how I used my bow and how I held the harpa that at first I couldn't play much other than exercises. So I did what Gert suggested, and after about three weeks I had finally put a few tunes back together, and I took my harpa to a dance. "Wow!" said the dancers. "That sounds great!" "Wow!" said the fiddlers. "You've been practicing!" And indeed I had, though not nearly as much on the tunes as on the exercises. But the improvement in my playing showed in the tunes, even though I had been working mostly on the exercises.

I eventually settled into a pattern: I get up (yes -- earlier than I used to), fix a cup of tea (you can tune all those strings while the water's boiling), and pick one bowing exercise and my "octave of the day". Then I start with a little bowing work, and then Gert's scale patterns. I incorporate the bowing exercise wherever applicable, and add the sixteenth-note pattern Matt talked about in NN#5 -- slurring the first two notes, separating the last two. Then I do a batch of exercises like the ones in *Spela Nyckelharpa 1*, (which incidentally are great polska-bowing practice), except that where Leif shows twelve patterns, I do forty or so. Recently I've added the simpler of these as practice for double-stops. I just couldn't get the hang of them by trying to stuff them into tunes I already knew. But once I started practicing them this way, my fingers started sticking them in by themselves (occasionally -- I'm not really claiming huge miracles here!). All this takes about twenty minutes. Then I practice whatever tunes I'm currently working on, and finish off with playing a few old favorites. If I'm

playing for a dance that night, this is a great time to pick tunes, because if I've forgotten the B-part to that hambo, I'd rather find out in my living-room than in the dance hall!

While we're here, I'd like to stick in a few comments on how I practice a tune. When I'm just starting a tune, I play the whole thing through several times -- slowly. I guess being a dancer makes me want to play everything at dance tempo right away, so I find it rather difficult to play at an evenly slow tempo unless I use a metronome. I like the Taktell Super-Mini -- it's small enough to go in my case, it doesn't have an annoying electronic beep, and it's inexpensive.

Playing the whole tune helps me get everything set in my head. It also identifies "the tough parts". When I find myself making the same mistake over and over again, I take that phrase, or part of a phrase, and slow it down even more, until I can play it accurately. And by that I mean with consistent bowing and appropriate rhythm, as well as correct notes. And then I keep playing it at that speed until I can play it correctly five times in a row! Then I speed it up a little. Five times in a row. When I have it almost back to the speed where I was working the whole tune, I add the phrase before. Then I play the whole section. Then I play the whole tune. Then, finally, I start to bring the whole tune up to tempo. This can take days -- be patient! It will be well worth it.

Sometimes, when I'm working really hard on a phrase, my fingers kind of "jam up" or rebel. The phrase gets worse instead of better. Then I do something that Bart suggests: I stop. I shake my hands around, I wiggle my fingers, I move my fingers in patterns that have nothing to do with what I was just doing. This will often fix the problem, and work can proceed. If not, I lay the tune aside for a while, maybe till the end of my practice session, maybe for a day or two. This seems to let me forget the incorrect patterns and remember the right ones.

I think that what my practice routine does for me is:

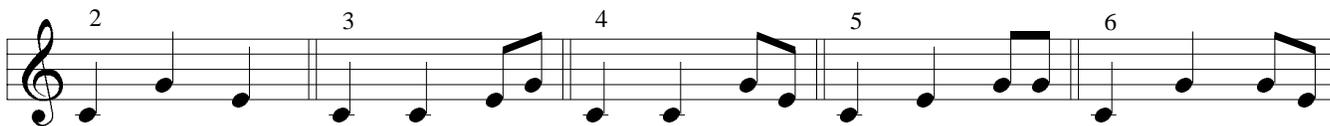
- A) It wakes my fingers up. If I start right into tunes, I usually spend the first fifteen minutes making incredible mistakes anyway, so I'd rather wreck the second octave G scale than "Långt ner i Småland." It's a lot faster to correct a sixteen-note scale pattern than to go back and get a whole tune correctly twice through.
- B) It sets the patterns in my fingers. They get to know that if the tune is in G, they will use the G-scale patterns. Every finger has a specific job to do, and the job changes slightly for each key. Music is based on scales, and knowing the patterns that are likely to occur makes it easier to learn new tunes.

Music Exercises for *Spela Bättre*

The Whole Pattern



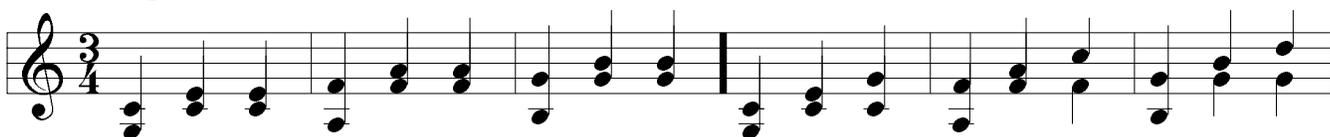
Additional Patterns



"Broken" Scale



Double-Stops (Same Patterns as Above)



C) It leaves my brain free to concentrate on details, because I don't have to think about notes once I've learned the scale. So I can watch my bowing, listen for good tone production, notice fingerings that I could do more cleanly, pay attention to the transition between strings, look for alternate fingerings (you know those three keys on the C-string that you never use?), etc.

D) It makes me into more of a musician, instead of just someone who can play a few tunes on a funny instrument. It helps me pinpoint my specific problem areas, which in turn helps me get more out of any lessons I may take, because I know what questions to ask my teacher. (And boy, do I envy those of you with access to regular lessons!)

So do yourself a favor -- try this or a similar routine for a few weeks, and see what happens. However, I do

not recommend trying to do the whole thing at once, right at first. I've been doing it a while, and even so, when I add a new scale, I just do part of the routine. I've recently begun working on the upper-register scales, and the first time I tried the upper B-flat scale, it took the whole twenty minutes just to get through the scale patterns and the "broken" scale. I don't know why, but my fingers just didn't like it. I could have kept going and done all the rest of it, but I would only have gotten frustrated. So, when you start out, pick just one or two octaves to work on. When you can play the basic scale patterns comfortably, add the "broken" scales. Then add the arpeggios. Then some of the exercises. Then, when it's all feeling pretty good and you're comfortable with it, start a new scale. And by "comfortable" I mean just that. They don't have to be perfect, every time. No one is going to grade you on how well you play scales. Pick one thing to work on,

like accuracy, or good tone production, and concentrate on that. Give yourself a break, and let the rest of it slide a little sometimes. You'll be amazed at how quickly you improve.

Yes, this is a "classical" sort of approach, but there's no law that says folk music can't be approached classically. Just listen to Mikael Marin, of Väsen! Some people seem to think that the nyckelharpa is a second-class instrument, and that folk-music is second-class music. They think that you don't have to practice it, work at it, at all; that you can just play it and it'll sound fine. And it does, to a point. But to get beyond that point, you have to do some work. The harpa is a wonderful instrument, and it deserves your best efforts.

This probably sounds as though I never play for fun. Nothing could be further from the truth! Really, fifteen or twenty minutes at the beginning of your practice sessions is all it takes. I completely agree with Julie Chandler's remarks in NN#5 -- I love to relax in the evening with my harpa, it really does make the day go away. I practice in the morning, when my mind's fresh, but I play in the evening.

I admit, every so often I get bored with all the routine stuff, and I'll go a few weeks without the whole rigmarole. Then I'll start up again with the scales and the arpeggios and Leif's exercises, and in less than a week, some one will say, "Hey, that sounds great! You've been practicing!"

And that's why I bother. People can tell the difference.

Sheila Morris fell in love with the nyckelharpa's distinctive sound shortly after she discovered the joys of Swedish polska dancing. After an encounter with Bart and his harpa at Scandia Camp (Mendocino) in 1994, she emptied her savings account and acquired Colorado's first nyckelharpa. She lives in Denver and plays for weekly dances in Boulder, and at every other opportunity.

Leif Alpsjö: Riksspelman in Our Midst

by Rita Leydon

Leif Alpsjö, of Viksta in Uppland, is a well known and respected name in the Swedish traditional folk music and dance culture -- a Riksspelman (national fiddler) since 1974, a nyckelharpa virtuoso and international ambassador for our rich musical heritage. He has

performed for and shared his skills with ordinary folks the world over, as well as with the King, the Pope, ambassadors, other dignitaries and such. He is the primal point in the rekindlement of interest and passion for the nyckelharpa as the "national instrument of Sweden." In other words, he is a Swedish national treasure.

I missed him on his last swing through the US two years ago because I was in Sweden at the time, but my husband, Chris, had the pleasure of encountering Leif when he came to our regular Thursday night dance (Skandinöje dancers in Highland Park, NJ, led by Joel Remde, 201-635-0546). Chris met me at the airport on my return, and of course, we swapped experiences. He was brimming over with the enthusiasm of having experienced this person, Leif Alpsjö. I couldn't help but absorb and internalize Chris' extremely positive reactions. He later showed me a dance that Leif had taught, Schottis from Viksta. In this dance, the woman jumps up high in the air and lands with soft punctuation. Beautiful.

Imagine our delight when Joel announced that Leif would visit us again. His scheduled appearance coinciding with Halloween -- a double pleasure for me as it meant escape from all the trick-or-treaters and avoidance of the sweet tooth mania that surrounds that event. I decided to over-indulge in Leif instead.

My dear friend, Andrea Larson, invited me to stay with her in her Manhattan apartment if I cared to partake of Leif's two engagements in NYC the day before Halloween. Absolutely. Yes. No pondering required.

Andrea is a lovely young woman struggling with life in the Big Apple. Her passions are firmly planted in music -- she has the voice of an angel and the burning desire to become a great fiddler in the Swedish tradition. A month or so ago when she visited us in Bucks County, we took her to the stone barn where we regularly practice our dances. As she stood erect in the center of that enormous space, fiddle perched under her chin and with music cascading freely from her instrument--we were stunned by the acoustic brilliance that resonated in the space. Our very bones rattled and goose bumps rose. Composing ourselves, we broke into a gliding Bingsjö polska, whirling around Andrea and her fiddle. She had met Leif before and shared the following with me in a note: "The first Swede I danced the hambo with was Leif Alpsjö, and I've been a little bit in love with him ever since." I'm as much of a romantic as my friend and certainly understood this sweet testimonial.

The first Big Apple event for Leif was a demonstration in the Department of Musical Instruments at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Andrea met me there. A modest number of chairs had been set up in a corner of the silent, musty ancient instrument area. I chatted

amiably with a guard who told me that very little ever happens in the music department and that Leif's appearance was highly unusual. I smiled. The room gradually filled -- some folks I recognized from the dance world -- one professorial type came because he had searched the Internet for information about hurdy-gurdys and happened upon this event. He thought it sounded mysterious and intriguing. A standing-room-only crowd was treated to an hour of intimate music, talking and sharing with Leif, who is very comfortable and accessible. He oozes welcome and enthusiasm, has a glint in his eye and a mischievous edge, yet maintains the scholarly and serious discipline demeanor that is required both to play with focus and to carry authority. A particularly poignant piece Leif shared with us was the desperately sad wedding polska composed by "Byss-Kalle" -- a fiddler who lived 1783 - 1847. Byss-Kalle had loved a maiden. The love had been frustrated by the maiden's father who had pre-arranged a marriage with the neighbor's son so that their two farms could be joined. Byss-Kalle was asked to compose the traditional wedding polska, and his broken heart did so. Even hardened New Yorkers -- a century later -- could feel Byss-Kalle's pain.

Andrea and I then retired to her home at the southern end of Manhattan -- our conveyance being my Jeep. I was fascinated by the audacity and arrogance exhibited by the city drivers along my route; of necessity I quickly caught on to the push and shove required to advance block by block to my destination. A receding personality probably could not drive in New York. The city mouse was proud of the country mouse.

Fortified by a wonderful dinner served picnic style on a tablecloth spread out on the bed (Manhattan apartments can be very small), Andrea and I walked north to East 14th Street where the synagogue that houses the NY Scandinavian dance enthusiasts is located. Andrea participated with perhaps a dozen or so others in a one hour music workshop with Leif before the dancing.

I may be 100% Viking by blood, birth and molecular structure, but a bit of my soul is American West. If you see me somewhere it is likely that I'll be embellished with Navajo silver and turquoise and wearing cowboy boots on my feet. Cowboy boots fit snugly and are a bear to get off -- at home I have a "boot jack -- away from home one needs help with the pulling. This can be an amusing spectacle as the "helper" pulls me and the chair I'm sitting on halfway across the room in the process. On this evening I asked Leif to pull my boots off. He was delighted and had a better way -- using the logic of physics. Turning his rump to me, he took my foot between his legs and instructed me to firmly place one hand on each of his buttocks and then push him away hard as he pulled on my boot. I was amused and

followed his instructions precisely -- after all, this man is a virtuoso -- and it worked like a charm.

Dancing started after the workshop. Meetings and greetings. High enthusiasm. Since my Chris was not there I had to get myself into an aggressive gear so that I would not spend the evening decorating the wall. Not a problem. Several hours of nonstop aerobic dancing -- waltz, schottis, Boda polska, Rättvik polska, snoa, hambo, Bondpolska från Viksta (taught to the group by Leif), etc. -- requires a lot of water replenishment. It is amazing how soaked one can become, sweat unabashedly dripping off my nose in a most un-lady-like manner. Andrea and I were two happy ladies, both of us equally enchanted and charmed by this music and dance despite our generation of age difference (I'm old enough to be her mother). We enjoyed a couple of girl-talk hours before drifting off to delicious sleep. The morning broke quickly with bright sun and lots of hustle bustle on the street five flights below. I gathered myself and departed underground through the Holland Tunnel.

Thursday night. Chris and I -- together this time -- were eager for what we knew would be a fun evening. "Oh, it's you again!" was my greeting from Leif. As we hugged I explained that this was my dancing home, with Joel and these friends. As Chris started to pull off my boots, Leif, not missing a beat, jumped in, demonstrating for Chris his hands-on-the-buttocks technique. All were amused and the evening took off from there. This was a more "homey" evening, more intimate and relaxed. Joel and Leif were already friends and Leif didn't need to be "on" as much. He gave us a little presentation on his nyckelharpa and he taught the Bondpolska from Viksta, but he also danced with the ladies and enjoyed himself. I had two dances with him: a hambo and a Bondpolska. The Bondpolska starts close, with the woman facing the man, both wrists draped over his shoulders, they proceed walking on beats one and three -- woman rearwards and man forwards -- then continue with the energetic turns. Leif inhaled a deep swig of air as we started out and instantly became intoxicated by my perfume, commenting on its power. "Shalimar," I said. "Ah," he said and then a few words about another woman he'd known who also used that fragrance. Not only has he got an ear -- also a nose!

Leif's manner is one of engaging encouragement, enthusiastic sharing and solemn devotion to the traditions of his culture. As I had written in a previous article about Chris' and my Hälsinge Hambo experience, we here in America are very fortunate in that we receive as traveling ambassadors the best of the best that Swedish music and dance tradition has to offer. It is simply a matter of keeping one's ears to the ground and antennas tuned.

Chris and I have an interest in possibly purchasing and learning to play nyckelharpa -- Chris can already play four or five instruments by ear -- me, I just love the music it produces and if the attempt is an abysmal failure, it really wouldn't matter because a nyckelharpa is such a beautiful object that if it had to live over the mantle, one could gaze lovingly at it while listening to CDs of others playing. Leif represents several nyckelharpa makers and can facilitate a purchase of an instrument. He explained to us that these are not made in any factory anywhere, each is strictly handmade, one at a time, by individuals who understand and love the instrument, just the way it should be.

When Leif Alpsjö finishes playing his instrument in a presentation, he plants a sweet kiss on its sound box and then holds it up so it can receive its own recognition -- all the while smiling broadly at his audience.

Odds and Ends

An occasional column devoted to cooperative self-help among geographically isolated nyckelharpa players.

by Mel Meer

We invite nyckelharpa players to share their solutions to the inevitable problems of tuning, fixing, sources for supplies, etc. Some of what works for other bowed instruments works for us; some does not. Send your ideas for sharing what has worked for you to

Mel Meer
2510 Oak Circle
Bryan TX 77802

scandia@tam2000.tamu.edu

Solutions Others Have Used.

Master Thomas Slye of Seattle writes to *Odds and Ends*:

I read your suggestion for replacing sympathetic strings when they go under the tailpiece. On my old harpa, I had that problem. My solution: keep the old, light-weight sympathetic string, and fold it in half. Stick the fold through the hole, and use it to hook the end of the new sympathetic string, which has been folded near the end. And, like the old fashioned needle threader, pull it through.

Of Buttons and Bows

Two articles in our last issue discussed the outfitting of a nyckelharpa case for the harpa. But what about the

bow(s)? Some cases leave room for an accessories box long enough to hold a short bow. But it bounces around in the box.

It is not hard to mount the bow on the inside of the case cover, again like violin bows. Because the bow will be much shorter than the case, standard violin bow spinners may not be effective at constraining a NH bow, though a pair of spinners may work. With foam pads at the ends of the inside of the case cover, I found it easy enough to carve out a small pocket of one and stick the tip of the bow into it. If you don't use pads, a small pocket for the bow tip can be fashioned out of some fabric stiffened with interfacing and fastened to the inside of the box.

The frog end of the bow can be held by the bow's button (skruv) by means of a nylon clip sold at hardware stores intended for holding electrical wire against a wall. They usually come with a self-adhesive, or can be affixed in any convenient manner. The very best clips for this purpose, in my experience, are made in Germany but are no longer imported into the US.

You might be able to find them in Sweden. Let us know! Here is a sketch of what they look like in cross-section, shown larger than actual size (about 3/8 inch [1 cm] in diameter):



A Solid Bow

A good many NH players have instruments that cost at least as much as our fiddle friends pay for their fiddles. On the other hand we use bows that are much less expensive. That's because, for the most part, they're made of laminations (plywood). It's much easier and far less costly to bend laminations and glue them to shape than to band and carve solid wood to that shape. There's no doubt that for the shorter NH bow, there's less of a reason to opt for a better bow . . . or is there?

I'd been looking for a bow of the size and shape I wanted for quite a while. I had played with two similar

bows that I admired very much, but I hadn't been able to locate one like them for myself. On a trip to Colorado, I was introduced to a talented violin bow maker who was interested in an experiment, and in a moment of weakness I agreed to have him build a bow for me out of solid pernambuco, the preferred wood for fine violin-family bows.

I gave him detailed measurements of the bows I admired, and showed him how the bow was held. He weighed and measured a few NH bows, and we discussed the aesthetics and shapes of older style bows, as from the viol family.

Then I waited and held my breath -- for almost 4 months -- as an experiment I could not be at the top of his priority list. Then it came, and after some initial apprehension, I'm absolutely delighted with it.

Let me tell you what I feel and hear relative to the laminated bows made by Anders Hellstrand that I and many of us use. The new bow is far livelier. At the beginning it wanted to jump off the strings; my bowing took a few steps backward. Laminated bows now feel very much dampened by comparison. After a while, my bowing improved noticeably. My wife Becky says that the sound is much nicer; she describes the tone as "purer" and "clearer". When I tune, I notice that the needle (LED's really) on my tuning meter are far more stable than they had been previously. As I became used to the bow, it became very controllable, and finally perfectly comfortable. What I feel now is a very definite "beginning" to a note in my bow hand, like a minute grip and release that starts the note.

Understand the complete naiveté here; I do not play fiddle and cannot compare this experience with any other. These are just subjective impressions.

If any of this appeals to you, I would very strongly recommend that you look for a *local* bow maker with whom you can work. There are many talented ones around the country. Ask your fiddle friends. If you work with a violin bow maker you will have to be extremely clear and detailed about what you want.

If you want to inquire of the maker of my bow, he is

Eric Norman Paulu
145 South 35th Street
Boulder CO 80303

(303) 494-3864.

His price for a simple bow will be \$450. It can go up from there if you want anything fancy. That is about one-fourth of his fee for a violin bow.

If you decide to go this route, please let us know and write with your impressions.

Nyckelharpa Care

by Bart Brashers

Sticky keys

This is a common problem with nyckelharpas. The key just won't come back out after you've pressed it, and its tangent either keeps pressing against the string (producing the wrong note) or buzzes against the string. You have to stop and pull it back "out" manually. There are essentially two ways of dealing with it: lubrication or sanding. Both involve removal of the key from the keybox, but that's not nearly as hard as it looks. Lubrication will help in marginal cases, but often that's not enough.

First you need to get the sticky key out of the keybox. If the key in question is in the first (top) row, easy, and if it's above the G on the first string it's even easier. Usually, overcoming the fear involved is much harder to do than the actual repair itself.

Look at the top of the keybox: there is a thin strip of wood on the right edge (just the other side of the tangents from the A-string) that holds the keys in their slots, call it the "comb-lid". The keybox is just 3 layers of "combs" (wood with slots) on top of each other, with the comb-lid holding the top-most layer of keys in place.

Put your nyckelharpa on your work surface (I use my kitchen table). If you want, you can use a cloth or carpet remnant under it to protect the bottom from scratches. In this article, when I say "up" I mean perpendicular to the table (and the harpa top and bottom). When I say "in" and "out" I mean in the directions the key travels in normal use: "in" as in 'press the key in, toward the string'.

Take a small screwdriver and remove the 2 or 3 screws that hold the comb-lid in place. Often, the screws are not all the same size, so make a note of which one goes where, and put the comb-lid aside. You don't need to remove the comb-lid-like piece of wood that's on the other end of the keys (under the low C-string) since the keys can just be pulled out from the comb on that end.

If the sticky key is on the first string and higher than a "G" (i.e. doesn't have a slot in it for the 2nd or 3rd row tangents to protrude up through) then you should be able to simply pull up on the key until the "shoulder" of the key clears its slot, then slide it out from under the strings. The other end of the key (the non-finger pressing end) will simply get pulled out from its slot. You may have to loosen some of the strings to be able to lift the key up far enough to clear the comb.

All the other keys require that you loosen all the strings. Not just a little, but a whole lot. You should be able to lift a string up at least an inch above its normal position, so a key can clear the tangents that protrude up through it. It's either loosen your strings, or remove the tangents from the keys in the lower rows.

Of course, if you loosen your strings, there will be no tension on the bridge, so it will be free to come off, and the sound post may be able to move. So before you start, measure the length of your A-string and your low C-string -- they should be 40.0 cm long, but if they're not, write down the actual string lengths so you can put the bridge back in the same place when you're done. Make sure you remember which side of the bridge face the keybox, too. Look in through the f-hole at the sound post, and try to remember where it is in relation to the foot of the bridge. You can even try to measure its position by using heavy paper with a notch (for the sound pin) inserted through the f-hole until the notch touches the pin, then tracing the edge of the f-hole on the paper. Now loosen the strings. I've even sometimes removed the tailpiece to get the strings completely out of the way without having to unwind all the string from the tuning mechanisms.

The rest of the first row of keys can be removed by lifting them up far enough to clear not only the comb, but far enough to clear the tangent from the 2nd and 3rd rows as well. That's why the strings have to be so loose -- they would prevent you from lifting the key up far enough to clear the tangents from the lower-row keys. Lift a key up enough to just clear the comb, then move it forward (out) so that the other end is pulled from its comb, then lift it up to clear the tangents sticking up through its slot.

If the sticky key is on the first row, you only have to remove that key, but if you have sticky keys in the 2nd or 3rd row, you'll have to remove ALL the first row of keys. Remove them one by one, placing them carefully to

the side. They should be numbered on the bottom, near where the tangent is attached. If not, number them yourself, starting with 1 for the B^b key, 2 for the B , 3 for the C , etc. Once you've removed all the 1st-row keys, you'll notice that the 1st-row comb can be removed by taking out a few screws that hold it to the 2nd-row comb. This frees you up to remove the 2-row keys in the same manner as the 1st-row keys came out. Keep in mind, you don't have to remove the non-finger end combs -- just pull the keys out of their slots. Make sure the 2nd row keys are numbered as well. Of course, if you don't have any sticky keys on the 3rd row, you only have to remove the sticky 2nd-row key, not all of them.

The 3rd-row keys are a bit different. There's not enough wood below to use screws to hold the 3rd-row comb in place. (The screws are actually screwed in from below, through the relatively thin "bottom plate", which is then itself screwed to the neck. You don't want to remove the whole keybox if you can help it, so leave the bottom plate in place). Many nyckelharpas have small holes drilled into each key just inside of the comb, into which a small (1 mm) dowel or other plug is placed. The plug protrudes up far enough to keep the key from sliding out, but not far enough to touch the

work the tangent out of its hole in the key.

Graphite works well as a lubricant. The idea is to apply some graphite to the side of the key where it touches the keybox, and to the slot that the key rides in. You can use a normal soft-lead pencil, and just "color in" that area. Put on a lot, as it certainly won't hurt, and will keep you from having to do it again for many years. Blow away any excess with a puff of breath.

However, often just lubricating the keys is not enough. You'll have to remove some of the wood in either the key or the inside of the slot. **DO NOT USE SANDPAPER!** It is critical that both surfaces be smooth and flat, to form a solid junction. The better the connection between the key and the slot, the clearer that note will be. It is nearly impossible to hold sandpaper flat -- you'll end up taking more wood near the edges, and creating a convex surface rather than a flat one. Use a file. I have a very nice small fine-toothed file that I keep in my nyckelharpa case.

Inspect both the key and the slot first, looking for burrs or other irregularities, which are almost always the cause of a sticky key. Look also at the bottom and top surfaces of the key, not just the sides, and the bottom and top of the slot, looking for a reason the key is sticking. File away only a little bit at a time, and work the file only one way (pushing or pulling, but not both). You don't have to take very much at all, really. The key should slide easily in the slot, but not be so loose that it rattles excessively. Take a little, then replace the key and try it out, pushing it back and forth with your fingers, or pressing the key and letting gravity pull it back. Keep in mind that the actual distance the key travels when your nyckelharpa is all in one piece is very small!

Lubricate your keys as you put them back with pencil.

Although it sounds like the most dreaded line in a car-repair manual, assembly is the reverse of the above. Put the 3rd-row key(s) back in place, inserting the little plugs as you go. If you lose one or if it was destroyed trying to get it out, whittle another. Then screw on the 2nd-row comb. Make sure you don't screw it down so tight that it pinches the 3rd-row keys and they can't move. Put the 2nd-row keys back, and then screw the 1st-row comb in place, making sure the 2nd-row keys can still move freely. Then put the 1st-row keys back in place, and the comb-lid.

Before you start to tighten your strings again, inspect the sound post. If it has fallen over and is rattling around in there, or has migrated, you'll have to move it back to its original position. This can be hard to do, and violin makers use special tools (available in catalogs, I might add) but do the best you can with the tools you have, or go to a violin shop and ask for help. Tighten your strings evenly, each one a bit at a time,

making sure your bridge is in the right place (string length 40.0 cm). Note that as you tighten, the strings tend to pull the top of the bridge toward the keybox, making the bridge lean. Make sure it sits up straight, with both feet planted firmly on the top of the body (make sure there are no "cracks" between the foot and the top). If the feet don't make full contact with the top, you won't get full transmittance of the sound from the strings into the body, and your nyckelharpa won't sound as good. It helps to tune the nyckelharpa once an hour for a few hours before playing, as your strings will be stretching again under the tension and won't stay in tune.

Then play. Often. A lot. Have fun. Call me if you have problems.

Recordings for Sale from the ANA

We are very pleased to announce the availability of the following recordings, directly imported from Sweden.

Cost is (price includes shipping)

	ANA Members	Non-Members
CDs	\$15	\$17
Cassettes	\$8	\$10
AWCD6*	\$20	\$22

To order, fill out the form below and enclose a check for the appropriate amount made out to the American Nyckelharpa Association.

Nyckelharpa Recordings

DROCD001 - **Väsen**, a milestone in Swedish music history! Väsen's first recording, featuring Olov Johansson, Mikael Marin and Roger Tallroth. Olov won both categories (modern and old harpa) at the first world championships in 1990. A good album of mostly traditional tunes treated with a touch of modern flair (Roger's guitar playing).

DROCD004 - **Vilda Väsen** (Wild Väsen), Väsen's second recording. Very high energy, very wild. Mostly traditional tunes with a few composed by the band members. One of my personal favorite albums, it finds attitudes present in the music and amplifies them.

DROMC004 - **Vilda Väsen**, on cassette.

DROCD009 - **Levande Väsen** (Väsen Live). Sweden's best live band? From a radio broadcast, it includes

talking (in Swedish) on separate tracks from the tunes. A very nice presentation of both traditional and newly composed tunes with Väsen's special style and energy.

DROCD006 - **Till Eric** (A Tribute to Eric Sahlström), Six young nyckelharpa virtuosi, including three world champions, play 19 of Eric's compositions. A very listenable album, with a mix of solo tunes and smooth ensembles. Very professional and polished.

AWCD1 - **Silverbasharpa Anno 1992**, Lena and Ingvar Jörpeland play the older style on turn-of-the-century instruments. Silverbasharpa was the dominant form of the nyckelharpa in the hundred years preceding about 1930, replaced by the modern (3-row chromatic) harpa. It has an older sound, some say more tinny, but with a lot more overtones. This album really shows the roots of modern playing, with rhythm as important as melody.

AWCD2 - **Puma**, Peter "Puma" Hedlund plays modern nyckelharpa. World champion, 1992. Excellent playing in the tradition following Eric Sahlström. Very crisp and elegant, with a strong sense of Uppland style.

AWCD4 - **Hogmarkarna**, Esbjörn, Göran and Sture Hogmark. Very traditional playing by the twins and Esbjörn's son. Mostly tunes from Uppland on nyckelharpa (either solo or duet) with some fiddle tunes by Göran. A good album for dance music.

AWCD7 - **Hulling**, Dan Sjöberg, Jens Engelbrecht and Ola Hertzberg. Hot young group plays traditional tunes and a few of their own. They have a nice attitude toward the music, and a lot of zest. The ensemble gives a big, full sound that you will love.

AWCD8 - **Välsmidet** (Well Forged), a collection of the best Uppland Spelmän play tunes from the Jernberg tradition in Österby. Includes Per Gustaf Jernberg, Sture Sahlström, Curt Tallroth, Hasse Gille, Esbjörn and Sture Hogmark, etc.

AWCD9 - **Ur-Uppländskt** (totally Uppland), Nils Nordström and Ann-Christine Granfors on modern- and gammel- (old) harpa. They've been playing together for decades, and have a very traditional style and approach to the music.

AWCD-10 **L'agréable**, music from the 1700's on nyckelharpa, with Kersti Macklin and the Midgård ensemble. Full text in both Swedish and English. It's amazing how well the sound of the nyckelharpa blends in. This is destined to become one of my favorites for relaxation.

The American Nyckelharpa Association
MUSIC ORDER FORM

Name _____

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City _____ State ____ ZIP _____

Write the number of the recording in the left column, (e.g., DROCD001) and the cost in the right:

Number	Price
_____	_____
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Total	_____

Mail this form and a check made out to the American Nyckelharpa Association to:

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

Other Recordings

DROCD002 - **Änglarnas Språk** (The Angels' Language), Magnus Gustafsson, Marie Persson, and Toste Länne play and sing tunes and songs from Southern Sweden. The tunes are well researched, and the fiddles have two drone strings (like a Hardangefele).

DROCD003 - **Högtryck** (High Intensity), Erik Pekkari, Riksspelman on durspel (two-row accordion). A very good album of accordion music (not a contradiction in this case).

DROMC003 - **Högtryck**, on cassette.

DROCD005 - **Skärvor**, Sågskära's best songs. A compilation disc with many gifted singers singing their favorite tunes. Same core group as *Änglarnas Språk* and *HÖÖK!*.

DROCD007 - **HÖÖK!** Folk- and Baroque-music with indistinct boundaries. Music from hand-written notebooks from the 17th and 18th centuries. Magnus Gustafsson and by Väsen's Mikael Marin were the driving force behind this CD, featuring music from a time before the split between classical and folk musics.

DROCD008 - **Härjedalspipan**. Unique flute music. Ale Möller, Mats Berglund, Greger Brändström and Lasse Sörlin. Music on the traditional wooden fipple flute from Härjedalen in Sweden, which has a long and rich history.

AWCD3 - **Å Längtat Haver Jag**, singer Eva Tjörnebo. Eva is from Skåne, but has collected tunes from all over Sweden. Some songs are presented solo, most are with accompaniment on instruments including nyckelharpa, guitar, fiddle, accordion, etc.

*AWCD6 - **Svarta Jordens Sång** (Black Earth's Song), Styrbjörn Bergelt. CD and 116-page book (including a full translation to English) featuring Viking-age music on instruments designed following archeological grave-site discoveries. Background noises such as water and birds establish a rich and mythical feel to the album.

* *Special price: \$20 members, \$22 non-members*

AWCD11 - **Ingvar Fohlin** He plays a variety of button accordions of various sizes and keys. All have a rather old sound, and the music is lively and fun.

Please note that Väsen's 3rd CD, *Essence* (AUVIDIS, Ethnic, B6787) is available in many record stores, including Tower Records.

Classifieds and Advertisements

Intended to help our members buy and sell nyckelharpas, bows, cases, strings, music, etc., or otherwise communicate with each other.

Personal Ads: FREE.

Commercial Ads: \$5 per column-inch, \$15 per quarter page, \$25 per half-page, \$40 per full page.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF SPELA NYCKELHARPA VOL. 1

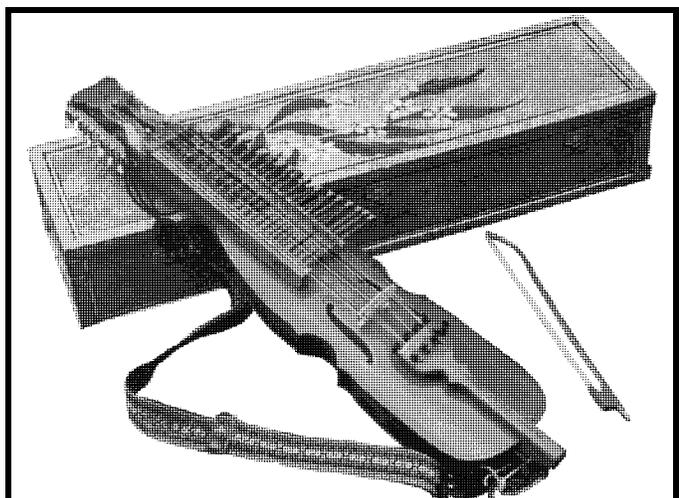
Leif Alpsjö's "Spela Nyckelharpa, Vol. 1" is available in an "authorized" (by Leif) English translation, for \$5, which is approximately the cost of copying and mailing. It covers the text only and makes reference to the figures in the Swedish original, so you'll need that too. "Spela Nyckelharpa" is available directly from Leif; the English translation of Vol. 1 from

Matt Fichtenbaum
46 Sleigh Road
Chelmsford MA 01824

NYCKELHARPA FOR SALE

Nyckelharpa with bow -- built by Tim Rued, price \$400. Good beginner's instrument. Previously owned by Bruce Sagan.

Contact Karin Arneson at 313-336-2311



Kromatisk Nyckelharpa

of absolutely highest quality.

Built by Olle Plahn, who has won the highest marks at the yearly judging of nyckelharpas associated with the Nyckelharpa Stämman at Österbybruk.

Price, incl. bow and folk-style painted case: 12,000 SEK.

Other variations available, according to desire.

Olle Plahn, Herrhagsv. 463, SE-791 76 Falun, Sweden

or contact

Per-Ulf Allmo at perulf@hallf.kth.se, +46-8-778 29 73

Upcoming Events

EVENTS IN NORTH AMERICA

Anders Mattson at the ANA's Nyckelharpa Stämman and Buffalo Gap

11 - 13 Jul 1997 The ANA Nyckelharpa Stämman

The 3rd American Nyckelharpa Association Nyckelharpa Stämman will be held in **Minneapolis**, arranged by ANA board candidate Becky Weis. Becky has just returned from a year in Sweden studying the nyckelharpa for her Ph.D. thesis!

We will have ANDERS MATTSON there to teach and play. There will be at least one dance, and many more events than last year's timing constraints allowed. There's even been talk of an outing to a swimming hole, with picnic lunch (and nyckelharpas) on Monday... Mark your calendars, and watch this space for full details in the next issue.

For more info, contact

Becky Weis
2944 39th Ave So
Minneapolis MN 55406-1851
612-729-8694
edweis@juno.com

28 Jun to 5 Jul 97 Anders Mattson at Buffalo Gap

In 1997 Scandinavian Week will be once again held at Buffalo Gap Camp, Capon Bridge WV. And that's returning to a Saturday-Saturday schedule (we've been Sunday-Sunday at Ramblewood the last couple of years).

Nyckelharpa player ANDERS MATTSON will be on hand to teach advanced nyckelharpa, and BRUCE SAGAN will teach beginning nyckelharpa. Anders is a lyrical musician and excellent teacher carrying the recommendation of Väsen's Olov Johansson. He won the VM (the nyckelharpa world championship) in 1994, and it was shortly thereafter that Bruce and Judy heard him play. They were blown away, and have been hankering to bring him over ever since.

For more information, contact

Judy Barlas
MFAC
1404 White Street
Ann Arbor MI 48901-5085
313-327-3636
jbarlas@pilot.msu.edu

Leif Alpsjö in U.S. summer and fall 1997.

In Oct - Nov of 1996, Leif made his 12th trip to the US, with concerts and workshops in fiddle and nyckelharpa playing, dancing and singing. Two more nyckelharpas found their homes in Seattle and Vermont.

Leif has been invited to do two more trips in 1997. There are still be more details to be worked out: look for more info in the next issue of *Nyckel Notes*.

28 Jul to 1 Aug 1997 Leif in West Virginia

Leif will give a fiddle class (only some nyckelharpa) at

Augusta Heritage Center
DAVIS & ELKINS COLLEGE
100 Campus Drive
Elkins, WV 26241

Phone 304-637-1209, FAX 304-637-1317

To help with airfare costs, Leif is looking for one or two more events before or after the week above. It may be anywhere in the US, any type or size of arrangement, performances, workshops or whatever. Please contact Andrea Larsson at 212-228-8727 or Leif.

Oct - Nov 1997 Leif in DC, MN, WI, NY

Leif's tour Oct - Nov 1996 was very successful and will be repeated at the same times and places in 1997:

- Washington DC, contact Kerstin Hendrickson at 301-474-2583
- The American Swedish Institute Spelmanslag in Minneapolis, call 612-935-4056
- Folklore Village in Wisconsin, 608-924-4000.
- New York, Andrea Larsson, (212) 228-8727

Last November, Leif gave a very successful concert at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (see article this issue). It will be repeated in the same place and time in 1997 but now in a bigger auditorium. Leif also has preliminary plans for a tour in Northern California.

As usual, Leif will bring recordings, written music, cow horns, folk flutes, bows, etc. to sell and of course nyckelharpas ranging from about \$1160 to \$2310 depending on the exchange rate. If you want to order a nyckelharpa, please contact Leif as soon as possible to get everything set in time. If you write, please include your phone number.

Leif Alpsjö
Rångsta, VIKSTA
S-74030 BJÖRKLINGE
SWEDEN

Phone & Fax 011-46-18-372300

Polska efter Sven Gräf

Orsa Polska

Trad.

Musical score for Orsa Polska, a 3/4 time signature piece in G major. The score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody features several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' above a bracket) and various rhythmic patterns including eighth and sixteenth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Furubom's Polska

Hambo

av Lisa Furubom, Boda

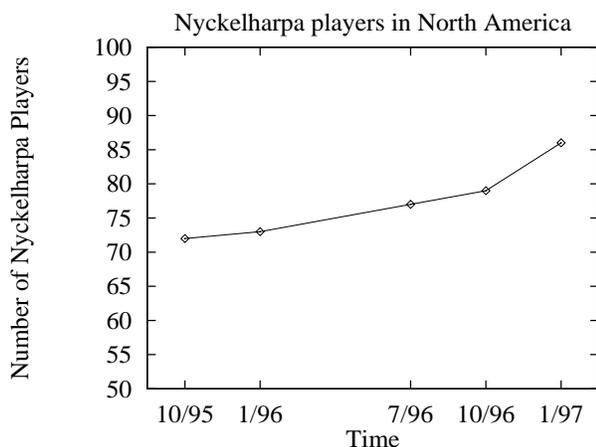
Musical score for Furubom's Polska, a 3/4 time signature piece in G major. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is characterized by a steady eighth-note pattern with occasional sixteenth-note accents. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Trans. Bart Brashers, Jan 1997

Editor's Note

The ANA now has 126 Members, of which 76 play nyckelharpa. 7 of our members live in Sweden (5 of whom play), 1 in Norway (she plays), and 5 in Canada (all players). As far as I know, there are now 85 nyckelharpa players in North America, of which 70 have joined the ANA.

To see how our numbers have grown over time (and because I'm just *such* a science geek) here's a graph:



I have gotten in contact with several suspected nyckelharpa players (people that I had heard played, but hadn't found out for sure) since the last issue, as part of the Roster preparations. That explains the sudden rise in our numbers since October. Before that, we were increasing at a rate of 5 per year, which means we'll hit the magical 100 mark by the year 2000. Unless of course there is the expected exponential growth in nyckelharpa players, since it is such a cool instrument...

I still haven't gotten responses from 22 of the nyckelharpa players that I know of, as far as releasing their name and address in the Roster. I plan to put out the Roster in February, either way. Check out the line above your name on the mailing label: if it says "Not in Roster" then you haven't told me it's OK to list you. Contact me ASAP!

The tunes in this issue were chosen in direct response to a suggestion from an ANA member wanting to learn tunes that are in the fiddle-players *Allspel* repertoire. The idea is to have some tunes in common with fiddle players across the US and Sweden, so we have something to play together when we meet.

The first tune is from Orsa in Northern Dalarna, and works quite well on the nyckelharpa, and sounds very beautiful. It's often hard to transcribe tunes with an "early two" like this one. Some measures were (I felt) best approximated by three quarter-note triplets in the

first two beats. The idea here is that the second "beat" (at least the up-bow that marks it) comes about 2/3 of the way through the first beat as defined according to classical music. The 3rd of the quarter-note triplets does not get an emphasis like the second one. This creates a sub-rhythm with 2 "beats" almost evenly spaced under the 3 beats of the measure, a two-on-three poly-rhythm with the coincident beat being on 3 rather than on 1 as you might expect.

You'll notice that sometimes a quarter-note triplet will get 'cut in half' and turned into two 8th-notes. This is akin to 16th notes, and is often written that way instead of the quarter-note triplet way (e.g. measure 4). In a few of the measures, I felt the tune was more closely approximated by the more common transcription (e.g. a quarter note followed by 4 16th's). The best way to learn a tune like this is by ear, but that's sometimes impossible, so we do the best we can within the limitations of classical music's transcription method.

The second tune is quite common among both nyckelharpa players and fiddlers alike. It was originally a Boda polska, but like many Boda polskas and Bond polskas, it got turned into a hambo. I've given complete workshops in how to make a hambo sound like a hambo and a Bond polska sound like a Bond polska, so I won't go into that here. Maybe in some other issue...



Future nyckelharpa player?

On a more heartwarming note, let's all congratulate 1996 ANA board member Mel Meer and his wife Becky States on the birth of a baby girl! Allison States Meer was born at St. Joseph Hospital in Bryan, TX on January 10th; 7 pounds, 12.5 oz.

Varma Hälsningar,

- Bart