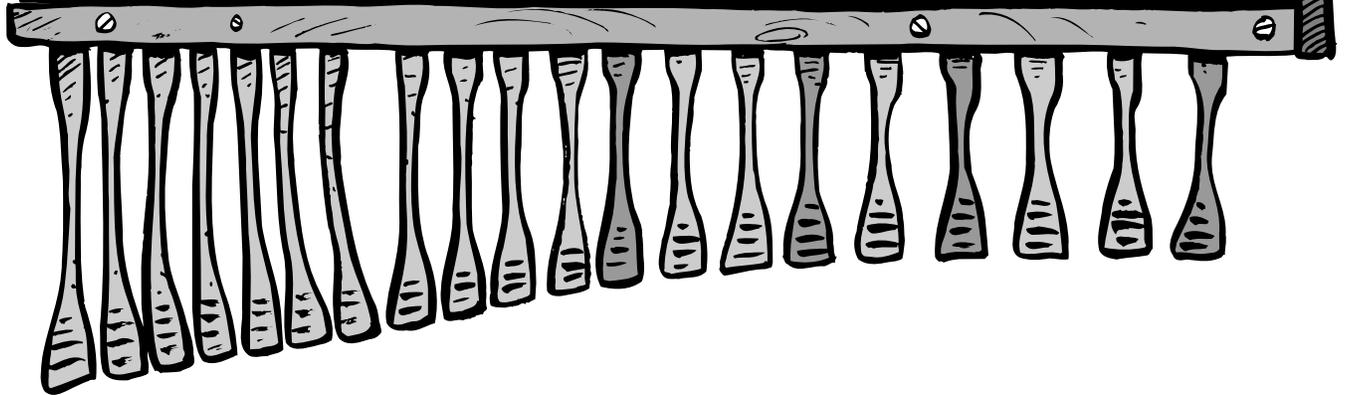


NYCKELNOTES



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Anders Mattson

Photo: Judy Barlas

Anders Mattson, World Master Nyckelharpa Player

by Bruce Sagan

It was the last evening of the Scandinavian Week at Buffalo Gap, 1997. I managed to drag Anders Mattson away from the dance party for an interview. Sitting in a glare of lights outside the cabin where he'd been giving wonderful 'harpa classes all week, I began by asking him about his background.

Bruce: So when and where were you born?

Anders: I was born in 1967 and lived for a while in Örbyhus. But soon we moved to a farm named Grodan in the village of Filsarby, which is right next to Göksby where Eric Sahlström lived. It's about one Swedish mile [10 km or 6 mi.] north of Örbyhus. So I grew up in that area.

Bruce: How did you first come in contact with folk music?

Anders: My father had some of Eric Sahlström's

recordings at home. So I was listening to nyckelharpa from the beginning while we were still in Örbyhus. After we moved, I met my great uncle [paternal grandfather's brother] who had built a few 'harpas and other instruments. So that's when I first got to see the instrument. Still later, Leif Alpsjö started to pay us visits and play on his 'harpa when he moved up to Göksby.

Bruce: So he wasn't living there when you moved but came a little later.

Anders: That's right.

Bruce: And through Leif you came in contact with Eric?

Anders: Yes, I went to Leif's home or to Eric's. We didn't have formal lessons, but they would play and I would record and try to play along as best I could.

Bruce: So where did you get your first 'harpa? Did your parents get it for you?

Anders: Leif loaned me a little 'harpa when I was about ten or eleven years old. He saw that I was very interested in the instrument and asked me if I'd like to try one out. My parents never forced me to play; I was the one who wanted to do it. It was the sound which captivated me that first time. I had never heard the like and I was completely taken with it. We had sessions at Leif's place in Gökösby. Eric, Viksta Lasse, Curt Tallroth, Sven Larson, all the greats would come. So I got to know their rhythm, sound, energy, humor, the whole kit and caboodle. I was entranced and there was no turning back.

Bruce: Among all these masters, who has had the most influence on your playing?

Anders: Eric, without a doubt.

Bruce: What about Eric's playing was so important for you?

Anders: His drive, virtuosity and sound. His way of playing was very special.

Bruce: Did any of the others have a strong influence as well?

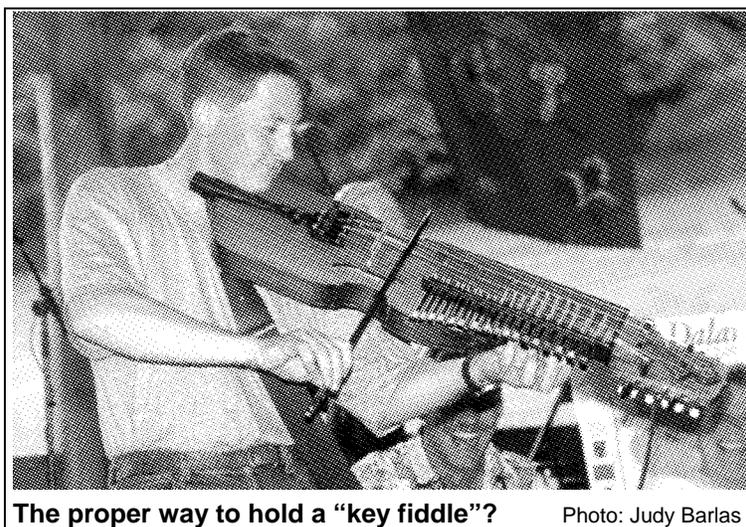
Anders: I really love Viksta Lasse's playing. So those two were the most important for me.

Bruce: When did you win the World Master (VM) Competition for nyckelharpa? Could you describe how the contest functions?

Anders: I won it '94. The Eric Sahlström Memorial Fund wanted to organize a competition in the spirit of Eric and his music. It would be a contest where people would play some of the technically more difficult tunes, although not necessarily Eric's own compositions. To attract a little attention they decided to call it the VM. It's tongue-in-cheek, of course.

Bruce: Usually VM refers to a sporting event, yes?

Anders: Right. It's meant to be for fun. I decided to compete just for my own sake, to test my nerves, and to have something to work towards. The first time I participated was '92 when I won the prize for the public's favorite, an honor which I also got in '94. It's perhaps the nicest accolade.



The proper way to hold a "key fiddle"?

Photo: Judy Barlas

Bruce: When was the first contest and how many people usually compete?

Anders: It was in 1990. There are two groups with about ten or twelve people in each group, so between twenty and twenty-five all together. The two categories are one for chromatic 'harpa and one for the older types of 'harpa (kontrabas and silverbas). Each person plays two tunes.

Bruce: Must one play polskas?

Anders: You can decide to play anything you like; it's completely open. There are no criteria that you must conform to.

Bruce: How many people are in the jury and how many prizes do they give out?

Anders: I believe there are three jury members. They award two prizes: one for the player the audience likes best and one for the World Master.

Bruce: Could you talk a little about the history of the Till Eric CD that you played on?

Anders: Olle Paulsson, the owner of Drone Records, had the idea of making a recording in memory of Sahlström and featuring his compositions. So he gathered together six young nyckelharpa players who wanted to pay homage to Eric.

Bruce: How did you decide who was going to play on which tunes?

Anders: Each of us knew some pieces better than others. If there was a tune that one felt deeply about, one could take it as a solo. It was really cool to be a part of the project.

Bruce: Had you played with the others on the CD before?

Anders: There were a few new faces for me. I had played with Olov [Johansson] previously and really enjoy that. I had met some of the others, but not played with them.

Bruce: Could you also talk about your group Upplands Kvartetten and the CD you made with them?

Anders: Sure. Beginning in '92 I started to meet with an accordionist, Arne Berlin, who lives near me. It was mostly to work on different tunes that I had never heard anyone play on nyckelharpa before, purely to improve my technique. It's a bit like doing musical gymnastics! But we began to play together more and more and eventually got some people to play back-up.

Bruce: So you believe that nyckelharpa isn't just an Uppland instrument, but can be used to play anything?

Anders: Absolutely anything! But the traditional 'harpa tunes always lie closest to my heart.

Bruce: However the music you play with your quartet comes mainly from the gammaldans repertoire.

Anders: Yes, it's gammaldans music with a little bit of Carl Jularbo, the accordion king, thrown in.

Bruce: So perhaps those tunes don't lie so well on nyckelharpa?

Anders: No, they aren't so harpa-friendly. But one must try everything.

Bruce: There are two other people in the group who joined a bit latter?

Anders: Yes, there's a bass player [Erland Strid] and a guitarist [Mats Östervall]. Actually they came along rather soon. We play for gammaldans evenings and

that sort of thing, mainly around Uppland. But in August we'll be going to a festival in Todal, Norway. There's a lot of interest in gammaldans in Norway.

Bruce: What do you think of people's interest in nyckelharpa here in the USA?

Anders: I was surprised that there is such a strong interest in Swedish traditions and folk music. This has been an unbelievably wonderful week for me, being among such people.

Bruce: Do you believe that Americans can play the nyckelharpa well even though they have not grown up in the tradition?

Anders: Yes, it's possible. It may be a little harder. But if they are very serious and really want to, then the outlook is good.

Bruce: Do you have any advice for non-Swedes trying to play the instrument?

Anders: One thing that I think is extremely important is to play often for dancing. If a bondpolska is played so that it is good to dance to, then the rhythm is right. Also listen a lot to the older musicians. Try and find old recordings with players who have good rhythm. Don't just listen to the young musicians making new music. The old masters who've used music for dancing include people like the Sahlströms, Tallroth and August Bohlin.

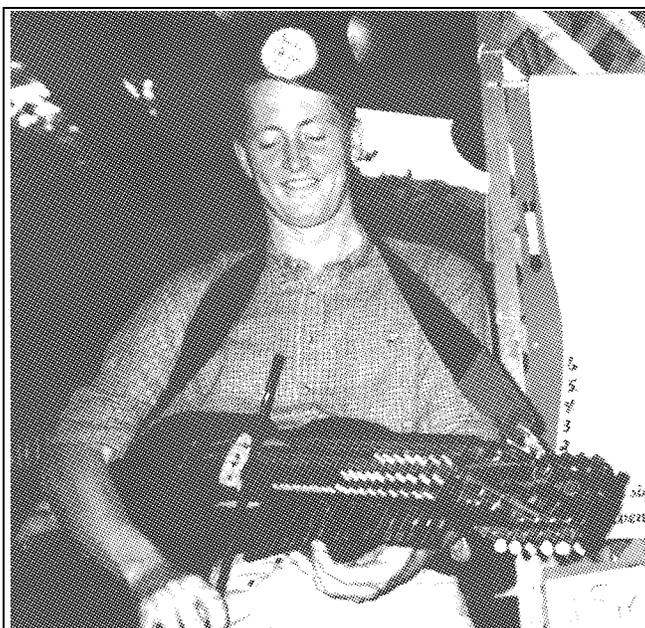
Bruce: Am I right is

thinking that there is no single correct way to play bondpolska, but rather a spectrum?

Anders: Yes, we're individuals, after all. In fact I could even imagine that there was more variation in earlier times when musicians didn't meet each other as often. Now with CDs and courses things may be somewhat more uniform. One doesn't know exactly how it was before, but the differences could have been at least as great then as they are now.

Bruce: One last thing: when you play for dancers, how do you determine that the music is working well for them?

Anders: I start with tunes that I know well. Then I can look at the best dancers to see how they are doing. If they look comfortable then probably the music is right!



**The Nyckelharper Club, son of The Mickey Mouse Club.
N-Y-C... K-E-L... H-A-R-P-A!**

Photo: Judy Barlas

ANA Business

Vote for Three Board Members

Please copy and fill out the voting ticket below and send it to me at the address listed on the ticket. Votes must reach me by 15 Dec to be valid. Please make sure I can tell who you are by putting your return address on the envelope. I have to make sure no one votes twice....

Renew

Go ahead and renew at the same time! \$10/year is all! Feel free to renew for several years at once, if you'd like. Just enclose a check with the voting ticket.

Roster Additions

Here are some more additions to the Roster of Nyckelharpa Players in North America that I sent out with the summer issue. I somehow dropped the A's and most of the B's from the original Roster. My apologies! Of the rest, Tracey and Simon are existing players, and the rest have either recently purchased or recently made a nyckelharpa. I'd like to extend a warm welcome to them!

Allman, Paul
2204 Ardmore Ave
Manhattan Beach CA 90266
310-546-8407 (H) 310-546-6896 (W)
ptsusa@earthlink.net

Arneson, Karin
7 Amherst Lane
Dearborn MI 48120
313-336-2311

ANA Board Election Form 1997

Vote for only Three (3) of the following:

- Matt Fichtenbaum, Chelmsford MA B
- Gail Halverson, Los Angeles CA B,C
- Sheila Morris, Denver CO
- Tim Newcomb, Worcester VT
- Bruce Sagan, Ann Arbor, MI B

The last column indicates the person's current job(s):
B for current board member, C for CD sales.

Mail this form, along with your renewal dues, to

ANA
Bart Brashers
PO Box 45126
Seattle WA 98145-0126

Ayala, Joachin
403 ST GEORGE ST
NEW WESTMINSTER BC V3L 1L1
CANADA
604-522-1894

Barton, Susan
9215 FOREST HILLS BLVD
DALLAS TX 75218
214-327-6823
davidgb@tenet.edu

Batley Jr, Brad
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ROCHESTER HILLS MI 48306
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Goering, Tracey
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785-234-4151 (H) 816-340-7601 (W)
75603.2055@compuserve.com

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PO Box 125
Los Altos CA 94022
415-948-4383
FiddlerMag@aol.com

Mathisen, Ron
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Buffalo MN 55313
612-682-9052

McCandless, Brian
Elkton MD
410-398-6594
bem@udel.edu

Peterson, Wes
4841 Orchid Lane
Plymouth MN 55446
612-559-9312
ladonn@concentric.net

Spalding, Simon
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Wilmington NC 28404

Thorburn, Meg
5 Queen St
Guelph Ontario N1E 4R4
CANADA
519-822-2430
mthorburn@ovcnet.uoguelph.ca

Add these to your Roster, on the blank page.

Spela Bättre!

The Only Way to Improve Your Playing

by Sheila Morris and Bart Brashers

Schottis Fest '97

A while back, I mentioned to Bart that my schottises apparently weren't "schottish-y" enough, at least according to some of the dancers I play for. After making a brief attempt to explain the correct styling in writing, he made me a tape, which I have attempted to transcribe here. Unfortunately, I can't transcribe all the examples he recorded, and the flow and language patterns are pretty obviously spoken -- it doesn't sound like written text. If it doesn't make sense or looks funny, try reading it out loud to yourself....

Bart's said (heavily edited):

What makes a tune sound like a schottis? For me, there's a standard schottis bowing: down-up-down-up

down-up.  There's no slurs at all,

and the second bow-stroke is ridiculously short, shorter than pure music notation suggests. I guess part of it is that besides stressing the beats, there's two main, stressed bow-strokes in that pattern -- the very first one and the very last one: "ONE-e-and-a Two-AND". The "ONE" gets more stress than the "Two", and the "AND" is stressed in a different way: an 'accelerated connectedness'. In fact, the last one is really a sort of pick-up to the first one of the next measure, so if you wanted to start a schottis pattern, you might think "And ONE-e-and-a Two" -- so that the pick-up - down-beat combination really accentuates the "woomph" feeling

on the downbeat.  The note on

beat two doesn't get as much emphasis, so you get a kind of 'sub-rhythm' going that's two beats long -- "Woomph... two, Woomph... two" under "WHOOMPH-e-and-a Two-AND, WHOOMPH-e-and-a Two-AND". The downbeat is really a wave-like surge, rather than an impact or a klunk, like the sound of a book hitting the floor. It's more the sound of a big down comforter hitting the floor. You get a sort of an acceleration through that surge, and that helps to push the music and the dancers along.

People often talk about the "backbeat" of schottis -- "mm-CHUCK, mm-CHUCK, mm-CHUCK" as good as any Beatles tune or reggae tune (except that it's a lot slower) where you're squinching up your shoulders a little as you dance. The trick is that you don't have to accentuate the "and" of EVERY beat. In fact, as a basic pattern, I only accentuate every other one: "one (-e-and-a two) AND one (-e-and-a two) AND one" not

"one (-e-AND-a two) AND". That helps add to the surge associated with the down-beat (the dashed slur above). I kind of see parallels with the polska-rhythm, where the heart of the polska is the pick-up to the down-beat: "And-one (two and three), And-one (two and three)". The pick-up and down-beat together really make both the polska and the schottis what they are, for me. That's the way I think about it, anyway.

There's not really any jerkiness in the majority of Swedish music, but in a lot of the nyckelharpa music there *is* a lot of jerkiness. If you just listen to how most people play, I think you'll notice that most nyckelharpa players play with a lot more jerkiness than fiddle players. But not all. One style, picked up on by Eric Sahlström and then followed by the younger generation like Olov Johansson and Johan Hedin and Ola Hertzberg and people like that, is to play this music with a whole lot of smoothness. I mean really immaculate, very smooth bowing, with still a lot of "attack" within the smoothness. A lot of nyckelharpa players just hear the "attack", so they play the downbeat very short, lifting the bow off the strings. That makes the music come to stop for me, and since schottis is a very smooth, continuous dance it doesn't feel right to me. I really like the way those younger red-hot players sound, so that's the way I try to sound.

Well, if you do the same motion with your arm but don't actually lift your bow, you get a very strong beginning of the note (the attack) almost like a pluck, but then it turns into this drawn-out end-of-the-stroke that connects smoothly with the next note or bow stroke. The bow stays on the string, so your bow is playing, physically, the same as a very legato passage, but psychologically you hear it as if it were a staccato passage. What you're really playing is a combination between those two -- the beginnings of the notes have all the power and "pluckedness" of staccato, but then have the continuity and smoothness of legato.

So you get a rhythm going, where (like in most Swedish folk-music, you're doing two things at once, two contradictory things) you're playing staccato and legato with the same bow-stroke. That's almost an epiphany, right there -- staccato and legato in the same bow-stroke -- I'm gonna remember that one! And, while you're doing these two things at once with your bow, there is also that "Woomph-e-and-a Two-AND" surge to the music at the same time as that "mm-chuck, mm-CHUCK" back-beat. That's a lot of seemingly contradictory details to think about at once: staccato yet legato bowing, a wave-like stress on beat one with a lesser stress on beat two, and the peppy backbeat with a push on the pick-up to the down-beat to add to the wave. Sort of a staccato / legato / Woomph / mm-Chuck schottis.

One way to think about schottis is to play the "Woomph... two, Woomph... two" rhythm for their

feet and the "mm-CHUCK, mm-CHUCK" rhythm for their shoulders. They squish up their shoulders when they lift onto the sole of their feet on the back-beats. At least in modern schottis. There's another kind of schottis, the "retiree's schottis" as they sometimes call it in Sweden, where they hop around a lot -- they call it that because it's good exercise. You can't really dance like that all evening long. Go to a dance these days, and you'll see very smooth schottises compared to that hoppy dance you'll see at the old folk's home or at an elementary school where the main point is to tire out the dancers.

Sheila adds:

Now, as to what use I am making of this information -- I take whatever schottis I'm working on at the moment, and first I play it through once, just to make sure I've got the notes right. Then I play it a couple of times, concentrating on getting the Whoomph effect on beat one. Then I add the back-beat (or pick-up, whichever way you prefer to think of it). This is pretty hard -- I find I have to really slow the tune down a lot to be able to get it. Then I forget all of that, and play the tune a couple of times with all staccato notes (great exercise for the wrist!), and then a couple of times completely legato, but without adding any slurs (I find that this takes more elbow than wrist.). Then I just play it a couple more times, trying not to think too much about anything. If I try to actually think about all that stuff at once, I can't play at all! So I'm just trying to get my right arm into some of the habits it needs to learn, with the hope that it will eventually carry over into my playing.



Carol Rasmussen

My Trip to Tierp, 1997

by Carol Rasmussen

Ten years ago, I traveled to Tierp, a little Swedish community in Northern Uppland, on an invitation to do two concerts of American folkmusic (I've been a "folkie" since the sixties). So, this was the 10th anniversary trip.

I've been a member of Tierps Spelmanslag since early 1988. I learned to play the nyckelharpa on one of Eric Sahlström's instruments lent to me for my first year of trying, with the help of Leif Alpsjö's *Spela Nyckelharpa*. I Went back again for a series of Christmas concerts that winter, and Tierp's mayor awarded me an honorary citizenship - now I can really call Tierp "home". This trip, my fourth (including singing at the dedication of Eric's statue in '92) was more of a thank-you from me to the community which has embraced and adopted me. Aside from my "early" birthday party actually thrown for all of them (we were 42 fiddlers and musicians - great FUN! great MUSIC!) I did an evening concert in Tolfta church (from the 1400's) - together with Tierps Spelmanslag and Leif Alpsjö (who had just arrived back from the US that morning!).

When you visit Tierp, and I hope you ALL do someday, every house will serve you good Swedish coffee, home-baked pastries, and everyone makes music! I made more music in two weeks than I do in two years here in NY. Sitting on patio chairs in the summer twilight, under heavy-laden apple trees, on the rocky coastline soaking up the sun, in Leif's house on a stormy, rainy night - the music is everywhere!!!

Leif and I spent a day touring (we've been friends since '83) and finally decided, in Österbybruk, to take a chance that Hasse Gille (the great harpa builder and player and old New Orleans jazz musician) might be home. He welcomed us with great affection. He played a new gammalharpa he had just completed, then passed me a 4-string banjo and asked me to sing a few tunes. We climbed the stairs up to his "workshop" - a walk-in closet tucked under the attic stairs, where his tools and his gifted hands turn wood into heavenly instruments. We laughed as our heads touched the slanted ceiling. Hasse loves to laugh.

The birthday party (my 50th - ugh!) proved to be more than special! After the food was cleared away, the fiddlers took turns playing in my honor, as tradition dictates. First, I sang a welcome song (I had borrowed Smultron-Ida's polska melody) then the fiddling began. My dear friends Sture Sahlström and Lars Uno Hellstedt played the same polska, then a second. Christer Häggmark, a master key-fiddler from Iggesund played from the Ångermanlands tradition as the music continued. The greatest surprise was when the great

Upplands tradition-bearer Curt Tallroth stood up to play for me. (I hardly even imagined he would be at my party - it was truly an unbelievable honor) He played together with his spelkamrat, Eva.

We all played "Kaffelåten" as the birthday cake was ushered in - then dancing started. The music is still ringing in my ears. Harpaspelman Gösta Hellström and his wife Asta were there as well (friends for a long time) - if you've listened to the Jörpeland's new CD, available from the ANA, some of Gösta's Västlands tradition is preserved there.

We carried the party over to next day when we played at the Rapp-Kalle Stämman held at the Västlands-church. Bright sun, the bluest sky, the greatest music in the world hanging on every branch.... I think it's as close to key-fiddler heaven as I've ever been. Next time you play Tierpspolskan, I hope you'll think of me, and plan a trip of your own. You are most "welcome to my home".

Included on page 12 is a polska I wrote in 1987 for Tierps Spelmanslag. When they sent me an "official" TSLag sweatshirt, the unofficial song title became "Tack for Tröjan" (Thanks for the Pullover) It's been in their repertoire for 10 years. I hope you'll add it to yours. I'm glad to share it with the ANA - happy playing.

Member Spotlight

by Sheila Morris

How it All Began....

I just got back from a trip to Sweden, to take the course at Ekebyholm, and everyone there was very curious about how I got started playing "their" instrument. To answer properly, I had to include how I got interested in Scandinavian dancing, which is where I first heard recordings of nyckelharpas.

About six years ago, a couple of friends dragged me, under protest, to a contra dance in San Diego. Much to my surprise, I had a great time. I liked the music, I liked the people, I liked moving to music. I was hooked. But after a while, I got tired of always having to sit out whenever they played a hambo, so I started trying to learn it. I would take a workshop, but then they wouldn't play another hambo at a dance for about two months, by which time I would have forgotten what I had learned. Finally, I got a partner who could kind of drag me around into the right place at the right time, and I thought, "That was kind of fun, but if I'm ever going to learn this dance, I have to go someplace where they do them more often."

I had a couple of friends who danced with the Boulder Scandinavian Dancers, and so I went one night to their Monday night class. Unfortunately, it was late in the year, and they were teaching Orsa polska (not recommended as a beginner's dance!), but I survived the experience, and got to dance some hambos, too.

But the music totally blew me away! I began my college career as a music major, but I had never heard anything like what they were playing that night. I went out the next day and actually found a cassette of Swedish folk-music (not having a clue as to how hard that should have been!). It was by the Blekinge Spelmansförbund, and included some nyckelharpa, though I was so unaccustomed to the style that I couldn't separate out the different instruments for awhile. I listened to that tape constantly until it was Monday night again.

Rättvikspolska is not exactly a beginner's dance either, but by the end of that second evening I was completely sold on the music and on polska dancing. I kept going, and eventually they got back to the beginning of the teaching cycle, by which time I had pretty much learned most of the basic dances by watching and asking a lot of questions. But as time went on, and I learned to distinguish the different village-styles and began to have time to actually listen to the music, it was the nyckelharpa that invariably caught my attention.

"What is that? It sounds so cool! Maybe I'll learn to play one!" My friend Erica showed me some pictures of this totally weird-looking instrument. Everyone said that they cost a lot of money, and I work in the arts. There was just no way I could afford to lay out a lot of money on something like that. How would I learn how to play it? What if I couldn't play it? What if I didn't like playing it?

Then I went to Scandia Camp Mendocino, and there was Bart. And his nyckelharpa. Oh, it was even better in real life! I spent the week drooling over that harpa, and finally Bart suggested that I have a lesson, just to see how it went.

I could play it! I actually got a recognizable chunk of a tune out of it! And it was fun! And it didn't cost nearly as much as I had been told. But I still wanted to think it over. After all, I would be alone with this beast in Colorado, and while I knew that our fiddlers would help as much as they could...it wasn't a fiddle, and the musical styling was different, too. I wasn't sure they'd be able to help much.

After a couple of sleepless nights--"You can't afford it! But I want it! I really, really want it!", I wrote out a check and sent it to Bart, and left on a month-long vacation with my mom. When I got home, there it was! I started off by playing scales and the like, finally learned "Gavells Ella" (a hambo), got Leif's book, and have never looked back.

However, I have discovered that it's handy to have a sign with you if you play in public-- something to the effect of: 1) It's called a nyckelharpa. 2) It's from Sweden. 3) No one knows for sure, maybe around 1300 AD. 4) Mine was built in 1994. 5) I'll be happy to talk about it after I finish this tune.... And I have recently been forced to consider the need for a velvet rope like they have in banks--one lady was so fascinated that she said, "And you're actually playing it by pressing on these buttons!" as she ran her hand across my left hand--in the middle of a tune!



Karin Arneson

Swedish Harpa Stämman Experiences

by Karin Arneson

For several years it has been my dream to spend a summer in Sweden traveling to as many folk music events as possible. That came true this past June and July as I traversed the central part of Sweden by train, bus and foot, with fiddle in hand. My harpa, residing presently in a large plywood case, was not an option this time. During these two months, nyckelharpa and fiddle stämman and other music festivals in Dalarna, Uppland and Värmland were interspersed with visits to friends and relatives.

I was particularly looking forward to the nyckelharpa stämman at Österbybruk as Leif Alpsjö had given me a personal tour of the beautiful historic iron working community during my 1994 visit to Sweden. This year

my arrival at the estate was not exactly timely. Not having found affordable evening accommodations on coming to Uppsala from Värmland, I opted for the last bus (midnight) to Österbybruk. A park bench was to be my bed for the night until a group of teenagers wandered by on a late-night stroll. They were fiddle and harpa students there for a week and insisted that I come and stay with them at Österbybruk School. This also afforded me an opportunity to listen in on some of their classes as well as nyckelharpa workshops (through open windows) with Sture Hogmark and Ditte Andersson, and peek in on harpa building and improvement classes with Esbjörn Hogmark, Hasse Gille and others. It was interesting to have a close view of Johan Hedin's great green tenor harpa at the latter. In addition to enjoying the performances at the main house and the church, it was exciting to personally meet many of the well-known harpa players I had seen compete at the 1994 World Championships in Gamla Linköping, some of whom I have been corresponding with. Among those not mentioned before were Lena and Ingvar Jörpeland and Peter "Puma" Hedlund who was surprised that I still recognized him with his new longer hair style. I also ran into American harpa players Sheila Morris from Denver and Don Peterson who plays with Scandinavian groups in Chicago. My greatest joy was participating in the "buskspel" (jam sessions) which continued day and night. It was a thrill to be surrounded by so many enthusiastic nyckelharpa players.

Shortly before my stay in Sweden came to a close, I returned to Uppland for the Eric Sahlström Nyckelharpa Stämman at the former Viking center of Vendel. It was good to chat with Leif Alpsjö again, and discuss with Per-Ulf Allmo his up-coming book containing old and rare photographs of nyckelharpa players of the past. Over the three-day weekend, much music making took place and it was difficult to decide where to be when. I wanted to listen to the Trollrike Spelmän whom I had met previously in Chicago, join the many jamming groups on the grounds as well as play with various musicians at the adjoining campground. The nice thing about these gatherings is that musicians of all levels of experience are welcome to play along with the well-known names in the nyckelharpa world in the informal sessions. I had the pleasure of meeting one of the latter, Gösta Sandström who was a partner with Eric Sahlström and now plays with his brother Sture. Anders Mattson and family also appeared. I had seen him win the World Championship in nyckelharpa three years ago, but missed the 1997 U.S. Nyckelharpa Stämman in Minneapolis where he was guest musician.

Between these two events, I took part in numerous non-harpa per sé festivals where these instruments could also be found in abundance. At the Ransäter Fiddle Stämman I found Gert Ohlsson, and Göran Håkansson whom I met originally at Scandinavian

Week 1993 at Buffalo Gap where I first experienced playing the nyckelharpa. At Bingsjö I ran into several harpa musicians from the Svärdsjö Spelmanslag whom I had played with last year at the Viking Fest in Texas. While strolling part Dalarna's Museum during the Falun Folkmusic Festival, I discovered two friends from Nacka (outside of Stockholm) playing their nyckelharpas on a bench along the river. I had been corresponding with Jan and Britta Lundqvist but we never met personally before - what a surprise! I also had an opportunity to hear Väsen during the Festival. I was already in Sweden when they performed in Michigan. North of Falun in Enviken I visited new-found relatives and, to my delight, found a nyckelharpa hanging on the living room wall - a musical tie between our families as well!

My final days in Sweden were spent in the Stockholm area, and I strolled over to Birgitta Wallin's weaving studio in Gamla Stan. We had a nice conversation in Swedish and I had a chance to see up close two of her brother-in-law Ceylon's harpas which were displayed in the window. Earlier I had met Birgitta's husband Henry at Österbybruk where he invited me to join him in a tune on fiddle.

While playing fiddle at these many folk music events was great fun, it was very frustrating not to have my own nyckelharpa along, being surrounded by hundreds of them during the summer. Upon my arrival home, I immediately whipped mine out of its case and sat down to play. It had been three months since I had touched it, but, amazingly, tunes I had never tried before magically came forth. However, this was not to be repeated in later attempts. I must return to Sweden again, with harpa this time, so that Näcken can renew the magic which will hopefully last longer. Of course, some serious practice before then wouldn't hurt.

Recordings and Books for Sale

Väsen's new album is finally here! NorthSide released Whirled a few weeks ago, and we have copies ready to ship. We have also found another major Swedish label that offers several folkmusic CDs: Xource Records (and their sister company Resource Records that re-issues older albums on CD.)

Note also that sales of **Vilda Väsen** are no longer restricted to ANA members! We can thank NorthSide for buying the rights to the album from Green Linnet, who certainly didn't look like they were EVER going to put out the CD. Now anyone can own this great CD.

The ANA will be looking into other sources of recordings, including sources for cassettes. Contact Gail at the address below with any suggestions.

Cost is (price includes shipping)

	ANA Members	Non-Members
CDs	\$15	\$17
Cassettes	\$8	\$10

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

Please Note

Due to the increasing number of recordings and books we carry, we have decided to not include a full listing with each issue any more. Instead, only the newest items we have added to our offerings will be listed. A full listing will go out once a year, and is always available for the asking. Just contact either Bart or Gail, or visit the ANA Web site which will always have a full listing. Addresses and the Web site URL are on the last page of this newsletter.

New Nyckelharpa Recordings

NSD6006 - **Whirled**, Väsen's long-awaited studio album, already released in Sweden on Xource Records as "Världens Väsen". This is the first album since adding percussionist André Ferrari and features the music of their 1997 US tour. This CD contains mostly the band's own compositions, rather than traditional tunes from Sweden. The music is listenable and inspiring, and Olov proves he is still the master of the nyckelharpa. André plays only hand-held percussion, not drum kit as on the few cuts on **Spirit** that feature him. His sensitivity keeps the drums from overpowering the traditional instruments, and adds rather than detracts from the overall sound. Roger and Mikael are up to their usual antics....

NSD6004 - **Spirit**, by Väsen. "Spirit" (one of the English translations of Väsen, which also include essence, being, nature, character, noise, sounds, fuss, ado, alien, and soul) compiles the band's work to date, from two Swedish and one French studio album, a live album, and 5 previously unreleased tracks. A total of 20 tracks, over 70 minutes.

XOUCD101 **Kaksi!** by Hedningarna. Sanna Kurkio-Sounio and Tellu Paulasto join Anders Stake, Björn Tollin and Hållbus Totte Mattsson for their second album ('Kaksi!' is Finnish for two) released in 1992. Their special singing make this record a mystical and new experience. Even Anders Stake, who plays medieval nyckelharpa among other things,

sings the song Kruspoliska (the only song on this record that has Swedish text).

XOUCD119 **Adam** by Trio Patrekatt. Markus Svensson and Johan Hedin (1996 World Champion) on nyckelharpas, with Annika Wijnbladh on cello. This is an album I've been seeking for a long time, so I'm very pleased we can offer it to the American public. Trio Patrekatt has taken Sweden by storm, playing the most amazing arrangements of traditional tunes. Johan plays his tenor nyckelharpa (an octave lower) on many of the tunes, as he does on some tunes on **Till Eric** (DROCD006).

AWCD20 - **Slaktar Loberg, Janne i Kärven...**, Lena and Ingvar Jörpeland (silverbasharpa) and Leif Sällqvist (accordion). Lena is the two-time world champion in the gammel-harpa class. 27 traditional tunes from Northern Uppland, played on turn-of-the-century instruments with turn-of-the-century style. Very rhythmic and driving music.

AWCD23 - **På Vårat Vis** (our own way), Hasse Gille and Kurt Södergren. 34 Tunes from the Österby area, including 22 that they used to play with Ceylon Wallin, presented "in our own way" i.e. the

way they have shaped the tunes from 20 years of playing together. 3 tunes by Hasse on a kontrabasharpa from 1787! Very traditional playing on modern, silverbas- and kontrabas-harpas from the primary tradition bearers from Österby.

NCB893404 - **Östnora Folkton**. Three nyckelharpas (Sven Nordin, Ann-Mari Nordin, Kjell Hagberg) and an accordion, with occasional harmonica by Sven. Very traditional playing from a small town 35 km south of Stockholm. English text included. 28 tracks.

Other New Recordings

RESCD515 **Folk & Rackare: 1976-1985**. (Compilation CD). Some of my friends have become very inspired by this now-defunct band. They were among the leaders in the 70's folkmusic revival in Sweden, and play traditional tunes on a variety of instruments.

RESCD514 **Stockholm 1313 km** by J.P. Nyströms A compilation from their first 8 albums, 1978-1987. If you've been around Swedish traditional music for any length of time, you've heard about these 5 guys who play lively music from Norrbotten. And I mean Lively!

RESCD504 **Vintervals** by Filarfolket. One of the first experimental folk/world bands, Filarfolket uses traditional instruments from various corners of the globe to play traditional Swedish music. Many many current greats started with Filarfolket, including Mats Edén and Ale Möller. Very well done, they are experimental without being "rock".

XOUCD105 **Ravn** by Norrlåtar. Their latest studio album. This is modern music based on traditional tunes from Norrbotten, played by the 6 members on all sorts of instruments including nyckelharpa, fiddle, saxophone, trombone, bass, guitar, percussion, accordion, etc.

RESCD506 **Sign of the Raven** by Norrlåtar. A compilation from the group's first 6 albums, 1975-1987. Modern interpretations of traditional music, with some nyckelharpa.

AWCD14 - **Lure**. Harald Pettersson, Sweden's hurdy-gurdy virtuoso with friends, fretting, plucking and blowing your mind away. Bass, bouzouki, fiddle, viola, viola d'amore, accordion, härjedalspipa, hurdy-gurdy, Swedish bagpipe, sälgflöjt. A wonderful sound, both modern and traditional at the same time. Many slängpolskas from Skåne. One of my favorites, the very first time I listened to it! A must for every fan of traditional and modern Swedish folk music.

**The American Nyckelharpa Association
MUSIC ORDER FORM**

Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State ____ ZIP _____

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

Number	Price
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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

AWCD18 - **i stöten** by the Falu Spelmanslag, a very dance-oriented group of around 50 musicians. The recording was even made at an evening dance, so you hear all the gusto they put into their music. Very well recorded (not much foot noise) and very listenable and danceable.

AWCD21 - **Alder**, Per O. G. Runberg and Violina Juliusdotter. Music inspired by the Viking era on goat- and cow-horn, tagelharpa, jaw-harp, flutes, bagpipes, and lur. A follow-up to **Svarta Jorden Sång?**

New Books

Nyckelharpan Nu och Då (The Nyckelharpa, Past and Present), by Birgit Kjellström. Book and cassette, full text in both Swedish and English, with lots of photographs. Features a history of the nyckelharpa's development, both in words and on the cassette, starting with tunes played on the medieval nyckelharpa and progressing to the modern chromatic nyckelharpa. *Price: \$16 members, \$18 non-members*

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.

WANTED: used beginner's 'harpa for around \$400.

Contact: Peter Evan at (812) 857-3430 or pdevan@indiana.edu

Upcoming Events

No notifications of upcoming nyckelharpa-related events were received. Bummer.

Nyckelharpa Care

by Bart Brashers

Moving Your Bridge

Recently, an ANA member had to repair her harpa. The repair required the removal of the guitar tuners, so all the strings had to be taken off. When she put them back on, she found that she had acquired a buzz. Looking closely and listening closely, she found that the understring closest to the 2nd row of tangents was so close to the tangent that when it vibrated it would hit the backside of the tangents, causing the buzz.

The string's position is determined by the nut and the bridge, she reasoned, and since the nut is glued in place, that must mean the bridge had moved. Either that, or the keys have moved, but since the keybox is screwed to the neck that didn't seem likely. It did feel to her like the distance the keys had to travel before stopping a string was a little longer than before.

So she had to move her bridge. There are several ways to do this, the easiest of which involves no tools at all. Hold your nyckelharpa about the "waist" (where the dents are in the middle, near the f-holes) with your thumbs on the legs of the bridge just where they come in contact with the top, and your fingers on the sides of the harpa. You can support the nyckelharpa on your lap or on a table, or even on a carpeted floor if you like. Then press with your left thumb until, with a satisfying "pop", the bridge moves to the right. As long as the top of your nyckelharpa is relatively smooth, you don't even have to loosen the strings. It makes the "snap" or "pop" sound when it releases its current position and stops in the new position. The string tension will keep it from moving radically, and may move it back somewhat. There's only a small range of spots the bridge can sit without the tension moving it.

Now you'll have to re-tune, since you've changed the tension on all the strings. Play a little, and make sure you didn't move the bridge too far. If any of the playing strings touches a tangent (other than the one that you're pressing) then it has moved too far. Keep in mind that different string gauges will deflect different amounts when vibrating, and that a string deflects more when played loudly than when played softly.

The bridge should be placed such that the playing strings just barely don't buzz against the higher tangents when you play a loud note. That will get you the optimal action, such that your keys have the minimum distance to travel when you play.

I carry a small piece of oak in my nyckelharpa case, to help me move and straighten bridges. But I moved mine just last night with only my hands....

Polska Between Friends

"Tack För Tröjan"

av Carol Rasmussen

for Tierps Spelmanslag
and my friend Holger Willén

Hicksville, New York, 10 Sept. 1987
(Trans. B. Brashers Oct 1997)

Första Polskan

Bond Polska fr Överhärde

av Bart Brashers

trans. B. Brashers, Oct 1997

Polska efter Börjes Olle

Rättvik Polska

Trad.

The musical score for 'Polska efter Börjes Olle' is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a measure number '1' and contains a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff begins with a measure number '6' and also contains a triplet. The third staff begins with a measure number '10' and contains a triplet. The fourth staff begins with a measure number '14' and contains a triplet. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

trans. Bart Brashers, Apr 1997

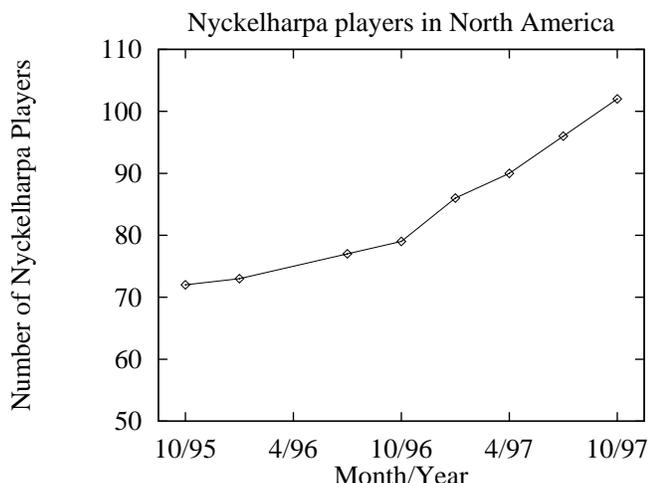
Harpar-Klas Gånglåt

traditional, Uppland

The musical score for 'Harpar-Klas Gånglåt' is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a measure number '1' and contains a repeat sign. The second staff begins with a measure number '2' and contains a repeat sign. The third staff begins with a measure number '3' and contains a repeat sign. The fourth staff begins with a measure number '4' and contains a repeat sign. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

transcr. Matt Fichtenbaum 1997

Editor's Note



Member count

There are now 102 nyckelharpa players in North America: we've hit the century mark! There are 8 in Canada, but none (that I know of) in Mexico....

The ANA now has 130 Members, 79 of which play nyckelharpa. 6 of our members live in Scandinavia, and 6 in Canada.

The Tunes

The tunes for this issue were from a variety of sources. "Polska Between Friends" a.k.a. "Tack För Tröjan" was written by ANA member Carol Rasmussen 10 years ago (see related article p. 6). "Polska efter Börjes Olle" is part of our on-going series of tunes that work well on both fiddle and nyckelharpa and are commonly played in the US and in Sweden. The idea is to give you some tunes that the fiddlers will know, so you can play with them when you meet them. The notation is a bit unconventional (the mixed 8th-note and quarter-note triplets) but it tries to convey the 'early 2nd beat' feel that this polska has. "Harpar-Klas Gånglåt" is a traditional tune from Uppland, the center of the nyckelharpa world. Most nyckelharpa players you meet in Sweden will know that one. And the last one (included to fill up the space, ha ha) is "Första Polskan", a tune I wrote in 1991. It was the first tune I wrote on the fiddle, after I'd been playing for only 5 months. It works very well on nyckelharpa and though it's a bit simple, it grows on you. I usually play it for the Bond Polska från Överhärde, which is much smoother and more hambo-like than the Bond Polska från Viksta. By the way, we're thinking about producing a tape so you can hear how these tunes sound, so stay tuned.

Varma Hälsningar,
- Bart

ANA Information

The American Nyckelharpa Association

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

The ANA is on the World Wide Web

For those of you with Internet access, check out our home page, where you'll find color pictures from the Nyckelharpa Stämman, pictures of Swedish and American nyckelharpa players, a nice history of the nyckelharpa, fliers for our events, and lots lots more. The URL is

<http://www.atmos.washington.edu/~brash/ana.html>

Nyckel Notes

Published quarterly (Jan, Apr, Jul and Oct), edited by Bart Brashers. Send submissions to "Nyckel Notes" at the address below, or preferably via e-mail to brash@atmos.washington.edu

Deadline for the next issue: 31 Dec 97 .

The American Nyckelharpa Association MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Country _____
 Phone _____ (H) _____ (W)
 E-mail _____
 Do you play nyckelharpa? _____
 If so, can we publish your name in our roster (sent to other nyckelharpa players)? _____ Yes _____ No
 How did you first get interested in the nyckelharpa?

Mail this form and a check for \$10 (individuals) or \$25 (institutions) made out to the ANA to

The American Nyckelharpa Association
 PO Box 45126
 Seattle WA 98145-0126