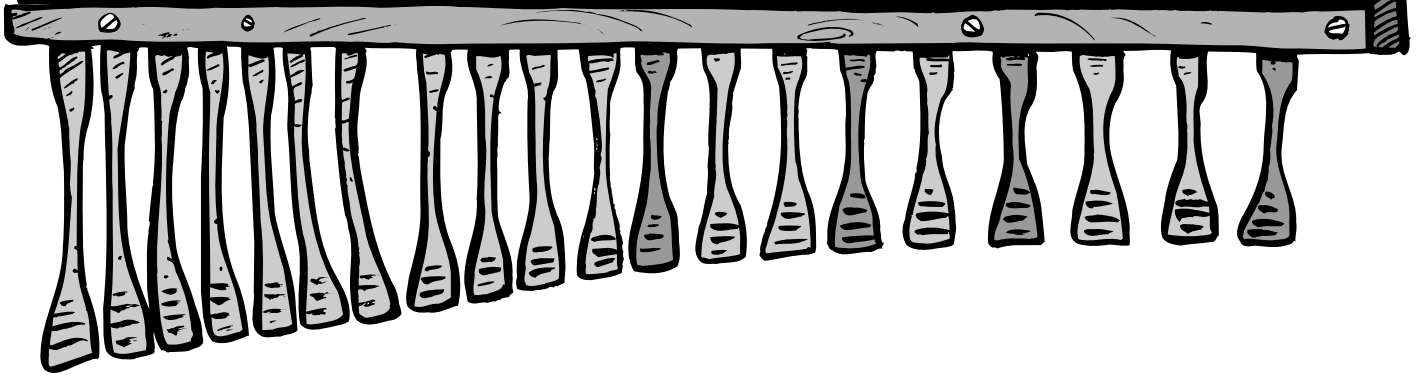


THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN NYCKELHARPA ASSOCIATION

## NYCKELNOTES



## Nyckelharpsfrossa at Musikmuseet: Focus on Eric Sahlström

by Anne-Marie Tärnström, translated by Sheila P. Morris

Eric Sahlström took center stage one Sunday afternoon at Stockholm's Musikmuseet. The event was announced as "Nyckelharpsfrossa" and consisted of two parts. It began with forty-five minutes of discussion by Jan Ling, Sonia Sahlström and Gunnar Ahlbäck, followed by a concert with three musicians: Olov Johansson, Johan Hedin and Sonia Sahlström.

Furthermore, to the delight of those who made it to Musikmuseet on this particular day, the audience included Gösta Sandström, who was Eric Sahlström's playing-partner and friend for forty years.

The discussion was initially led by Jan Ling, who posed questions and acted as the driving force behind the event. From Sonia, the daughter of Eric Sahlström, we got a glimpse of the family's life and Eric's musical days. He played every day, most often a couple of hours and even longer on the weekends. A long time was devoted to "adjust the sound", in other words, he spent a lot of time on his tuning and was extremely particular, testing it in different ways and listening to the chords.

Eric was in complete control of the instrument, played anything and everything, and had no boundaries to his choice of melodies, but played whatever he liked best. In the way that musicians have always had, he took the music



Gösta Sandström talks to the audience about Eric Sahlström.  
Photo: Per-Ulf Allmo.

that inspired him and remade it according to his own personality.

Gunnar Ahlbäck met Eric for the first time in the mid 1960s. Of course, Eric Sahlström was also a builder, and according to the panel

the nyckelharpa would not have survived and taken its great upswing along with the "folk-music wave" without Eric's

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**SPELA BÄTTRE!***The Only Way to Improve Your Playing***A Lesson with Olov Johansson***by Sheila Morris*

When I saw in the January issue of NyckelNotes that Väsen was going to be part of the Folk Alliance Conference in Albuquerque, I immediately began to wonder if it would be possible to get a lesson from Olov Johansson while they were “in the area.” Even for someone who grew up in the West, 450 miles is a little far to drive just for a concert, but I figured it might be worth it to get a lesson. As I rule, I only get lessons when A) I can convince a really good player to come here, B) I go to the summer camp at Mendocino, or C) I go to Sweden. In other words, about one lesson or week of lessons per year. In fact, I don’t usually even see another harpa player in between lessons, though Denver has recently acquired a second player. So to have someone of Olov’s caliber coming to within a day’s drive really caught my attention.

I had met Olov at the ANA stämman in Seattle in 1996, and have been in a couple of group sessions with him at Ekebyholm’s nyckelharpa course in Uppland, but I couldn’t really claim to know him. With some trepidation, I sent him an e-mail, asking if he thought there would be a chance for a lesson while he was there. He responded immediately, to say that he didn’t know what the schedule would be like, but he felt sure he could find the time, if I was going to take the trouble to travel so far.

When we met in Albuquerque, between an early-evening concert and the one that started at midnight, Olov decided that he could fit me in the next day, between a radio interview and a sound-check for yet another concert. I spent the time in between thinking about what I wanted to ask him.

First we played a tune that he taught at Ekebyholm—Polska efter Daniel Skärberg. Then, since I now have a harpa student of my own, I asked for a review of basic techniques, so that I could be sure to get Ben off to a good start. Olov says he always keeps the thumb of his left hand gliding along under the third row of keys, touching them but not supporting the harpa at all with his hand, and then continues to keep contact with the back of the neck as he moves his hand up for the high notes. I could see where the dark stain has been worn off of the keys and neck of his harpa over the years. Keeping contact in this way makes the larger movements, the ‘jumps’, more solid and secure, as it gives a reference point. The fingerings—use the tips, as if you were playing on the rows beneath. Press just hard enough to get a pure tone. With double-stops you may need different pressure on different keys.

When holding the bow, Olov tries to keep his hand soft

and straight, with little or no bending of the knuckles nearest the hand, then “the real holding” is done farther along the fingers... the angle of the fingers should come straight from the back of the hand. The thumb is also bent and makes a circle with the long finger and touches the bow hair. The action comes mostly from the elbow and somewhat from the wrist. Then all you have to do is play!

Swedish bow-technique requires a clear ‘attack’—a little extra pressure just at the very beginning of any bow-stroke. “There should be an ‘edge’ on almost all notes, and this makes it easier to hear where the beat is. Every time you turn the bow around, this should happen — it is what makes it sound Swedish.” Olov says that he doesn’t think of it as something extra that he does, it is just what happens to make the right sound.

Then he suggested that we take one of the more challenging pieces that I am already working on, and work our way through it little by little. I chose ‘Byggnan’ av Byss-Calle, because I had been working on it long enough to have the general shape of it and be able to play it at a reasonable tempo, but no so long that I would have a terrible time changing what I was doing. Also, it has some very wide stretches that I had been having trouble reaching.

The first problem that came up was that I had learned it a little differently than Olov plays it. I learned the tune from the Byss-Calle booklet, by Leif Alpsjö and Jarl Holmström. Aside from the fact that the tune is written out in D, for fiddles, instead of the nyckelharpa’s favored F, the downward run in the middle of the A part (meas. 4) is written out so it would start on C (in the key of F) and scale down to F, whereas Olov starts on D and scales down to G. My ear isn’t good enough to hear how other people play it, so I can’t say which is “right”.

Once I had made that adjustment, he made a suggestion for a different fingering for the downward figure in bar 2. I was using all four fingers, but Olov suggested that I leave the little finger out, since it is the weakest, and instead “just climb down with the two stronger fingers.” This adjustment turned out to be more difficult than changing what I was doing in measure 4, so we went over it a bunch of times, very slowly.

Then he had another suggestion, for measure one. While climbing up, you have to stretch to reach the next note, but if you think a little ahead, and start to move your hand a little earlier, it makes it easier. F, A, C—now start to angle the hand a bit for the reach to the next F. Let the hand get comfortable in the higher position before finishing

## Byggnan

Polska by Byss-Calle

3 0 1 2 3 4 2 4 3 2 1 3 1 3 1 4

The musical score for 'Byggnan' is written in 3/4 time and consists of eight staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is characterized by a complex rhythmic pattern, with many notes beamed together in groups of sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and repeat signs. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Transcribed by Sheila P. Morris, May 1999

the shift. We went over this V E R Y slowly—half-notes instead of eighths. Or even dotted-half-notes. You need to practice it with time to think ahead, until your hand learns to do this by itself.

Then Olov said, “It’s easier to stretch down with the first fingers, than to stretch up with the others.” So instead of holding the first fingers down, even if you know you will be coming back to those keys, he recommends letting them

relax and follow the hand, feeling that it will be easy enough to reach back down when you need to, and that it is more important to keep the hand more relaxed than to hold down the lower keys. This is the opposite of what I had been told previously, so I am in the middle of trying to find out what works better for me. Olov prefers to keep his hand a bit above where he is playing—he holds his harpa with an extreme downward tilt to facilitate this. Of course,

he also has extremely long fingers ("Yes, they were expensive!" he said.)

Time to start on the B part, which again he plays a little differently, but it was only a matter of ornamentation. So we went right on the the third part, with yet more variations and ornaments. Now I know three ways to play the second and sixth measures. I said, "You're doing your bowing differently." "Yes," he said. "Always!" So much for looking for a pattern.....

On to the fourth section. This is the one I have the most trouble with—when I was first learning it, I had trouble being able to play it long enough to work on it without my hand cramping up. Even once I was no longer struggling for the notes, it still tended to make my hand ache. Olov's advice was similar to that for the first part—don't leave the first finger behind on the C, but rather let it come off the key and, instead of reaching back and forth with the fingers, hold the fingers steady and shift the wrist back and forth. This proved to be incredibly difficult! We went through it very slowly, using just one of the patterns. Just the keys, no bowing. Then we took out the middle notes, and just went back and forth—C, A, C, A..... to get the wrist moving. Neither the first finger nor the little finger stays on its key. Ok, I could do that—the problem arises when I need to add the other notes back in. C, flick the wrist, A, F, A, flick the wrist back, C, flick A, F, A.....The unevenness throws me. This will be something I will have to work on myself, at home. It will take time to refine the movement—I can do it, but the motion is too big and takes too long. Maybe with time.....

Olov also points out that when you are reaching for notes that are far apart, there is no rule that says you have to

hit the key squarely in the middle—as long as you catch a corner of it, you will get the right note. You have to catch the corner fairly securely, but by using the corners you can save yourself some distance.

At last I said, "Your upper register rings so nice and clear...how do you do that? Is it you, or your harpa, or your bow, or strings?" He smiled, thanked me for the compliment, and said, "We can check!" He took my harpa and bow and played a little. Of course, it was much better than when I try it! He pointed out that some of my tangents had come loose (it's been a really dry winter here), so they could vibrate a little, and also turn so they were no longer in tune. He said that he had to pull out all his tangents every day, on both harpas, moisten the bottoms of the pegs and set them back in (and intonate them). Then he took out his new 'nyckelharpa tool' (a Leatherman knife-and-pliers combo), and shaved the tangent into more of a point, so it would be more accurate about where it touched the string.

My harpa now in better order, Olov went on to bowing technique. "You have to play in between (the bridge and the key-box), in the middle, and more speed and less pressure." I tried it. "Faster." I tried again. "You're letting your bow swing back and forth—keep it right in the middle." Again. "Even faster." Once more. "Good!" The tones were definitely clearer. Yet more practicing in store, especially the part about keeping the bow right in the middle of the string. Olov seems to use maybe a space about 1/2" wide on his strings, unless he's going for some sort of "effect" by bowing closer to the bridge.

At this point, he decided he needed a nap before the events of the evening. He asked if I had found the lesson satisfactory. No....I had found it much more than that!

## Nyckelharpsfrossa at Musikmuseet

*continued from page 1*

modernization of the instrument. The building of harpas gathered speed when the study-circles came into the picture. In the beginning it was difficult to interest such groups in offering courses in harpa-building—at first they were called "wood-working courses".

Gösta Sandström told some lively stories about the travels, playing, and recording the two of them, Eric and Gösta, did together. He also drew a living picture of Eric's personality, how he never, never said a harsh word to any person and how he always saw the positive side of life. We got many examples of Eric's tactful ingeniousness, as when, at the nyckelharpa-judging in Österbybruk, he took hold of a heavy, clumsy harpa—"Is it actually hollow, this one?" Everyone on the panel emphasized how much Gösta Sandström meant for Eric, in terms of his getting out and finding an audience which valued his artistry. It was also Gösta who, together with Jan Ling, arranged for Eric to receive the stipendium which the government awards to

artists, and which he actually received as a builder, not as a musician.

After a coffee-break it was time for the concert. Anything might happen when one takes three musicians, some who play traditionally and some who play with more modern styling, and then mixes them together. This time the result was glowing. Solo, duet, trio—every combination worked. Mostly nyckelharpa but also fiddle. To the traditional tunes, which were played with precision and commitment, was added the occasional unexpected accompaniment, for example a low harmony played with harmonics. Johan Hedin's accompaniments on tenorharpa lifted the tunes in general. The often, often-played 'Andakten' got a whole new life when Sonia Sahlström played the melody with two harmonies, played pizzicato and using the harpa's whole register—absolutely wonderful! Sonia's interpretation of pappa Eric's 'Vid stormyren', on fiddle, with a warm tone and very pensive, came early in the program but was one of the absolute high points. One can only agree with the newsletter 'Folklore Centrum' when it urges: It is time for a Sonia CD! And at the end, as an encore, Eric Sahlström's composition which surpasses all others—'Spelmansglädje'.

# An American Allspel List

by Sheila Morris

It has recently been impressed upon me what a spread-out little community we American harpa players are. I can go for a year at a time here in Colorado without meeting another harpa player. I met Toby Blome in Albuquerque during the Folk Alliance Conference—we knew about three tunes in common. Rita Leydon stopped by on her way back to Pennsylvania after visiting her father in southern Colorado—we did better; we knew about ten of the same tunes. The same thing has happened every time I have had the good fortune to actually find someone to play with. The people who live where there is an active spelmanslag tend to play a lot of fiddle tunes, and those of us who are more or less on our own tend to play things that appeal to us personally, or that the local dance group asks for. Even when we manage to find a teacher to work with, the same problem exists. Becky Weiss teaches one set of tunes, Bart teaches another.

I encountered a similar problem the first time I went to Sweden. I didn't really play enough of the most common tunes to be able to sit down and play at any of the stämmas, and even in one-on-one situations I got tired of always having to be the one who suggested a tune. Before I went back the second time, I went through all three of Leif Alpsjö's books and the Allspel i Uppland tapes, and I learned all of the tunes that were common to both, figuring that if they had made it into TWO collections, they were pretty much in the basic repertoire. This proved to be moderately successful—I had much better luck at playing with people last summer.

So, I have suggested to Bart that we attempt something of the same sort in order to make up an American Nyckelharpa Allspel list. As a starting point, we have posted my list on the ANA website ([www.nyckelharpa.org](http://www.nyckelharpa.org)), and would like to invite all of you to send me a list of which of those tunes you play, and a FEW suggestions of others—particular favorites. Simply copy the list into your e-mail program, delete the ones you don't play and add your suggestions, to make a total of about 30 tunes. Send it to me at [spmorris@ecentral.com](mailto:spmorris@ecentral.com).

For those of you who don't have e-mail, here's the basic list:

## Proposed Allspel list:

Björklingelåten  
 Brännvinsmarschen  
 Dödens vals (Farfarsvalsen)  
 Iskällarbacken  
 Kärleksvals  
 Kyrkmarschen  
 Långbacka-Jans gänglåt

Masbopolkett #1 (Ettan)  
 Masbovalsen  
 Polska efter Båtsman Däck  
 Polkett fr. Lövestabruk (both, often played together)  
 Polska från Lövestabruk  
 Polska efter Märten Blank  
 Polska efter Smultrongårds Ida  
 Polska fr. Hällnäs (aka Kalles hambo)  
 Rapp-Kalles vals  
 Salmakar Kalle schottis  
 Stures schottis (aka Istärn)  
 Tierpspolska  
 Tobogubben  
 Vagnshusvalsen (the crooked one)  
 Vendelspolskan  
 Örbyhuspolskan

## Also popular:

Josefins dopvals  
 Långt ner i Småland  
 Skälarna  
 Slängpolska e. Byss-Calle  
 Äppelbo gänglåt

Xerox it, cross off the ones you don't play, and send it to me at:

Sheila Morris  
 900 E 8th Ave #4  
 Denver CO 80218

If the 9 responses I have so far received are any indication, there will be some significant changes made, but I hesitate to impose the tastes of 10% of the membership on the whole organization. And if you have tunes to suggest, be as specific as possible—Polska fr. Uppland could be anything, and there are many tunes which go by the same name. I know for sure that there are two different ones called "Avskeds gänglåt".

Once we get a list compiled, we may consider recording the tunes, and they will certainly be printed in NyckelNotes.

Ha det bra!  
 Sheila

## CD Reviews

### Puma

Peter "Puma" Hedlund is a stupendous nyckelharpa player. Soaring sound, an easy, light virtuosity combined with modesty and elegant style characterize the tunes on this remarkable CD. He plays for fun, he says, and his style and interpretation reflect this light joyous approach, while at the same time maintaining a clear continuity with the Uppland tradition. Nothing is labored and all the virtuosity is in the service of the music, not the musician.

Puma, 36 year old at the time of the recording, is from Upplands-Bro. He was World Champion at the 1992 Skansen competition. Many consider him the leading traditional player of the modern nyckelharpa, saying that his technique and beautiful tone are unsurpassed.

Eight of the tracks are solos, and the others are duets with various instruments: fiddle, nyckelharpa, guitar, or cello. The ensemble in the duets is first rate and maintains the spirit of the music. Often the accompaniment is so skillful that the duet sounds like one instrument.

The quality of the recording is excellent. An altogether satisfying CD.

*Recording: Tongång AWCD-2. Available from ANA.*



### Hogmarkana

Hogmarkana features the Hogmark twins Esbjörn and Sture playing nyckelharpa and Esbjörn's son Göran playing fiddle. They have made music together for many years, and their sound as a group reflects this - the instruments are tightly interwoven, balanced, and stylish.

This is unmistakably traditional music, played with considerable respect for the Uppland nyckelharpa tradition. They learned all their tunes by ear from old fiddlers in and around Österbybruk where they grew up. One purpose of the album is to "preserve not only the tunes themselves but most of all the unique way of performing them, the Uppland nyckelharpa dialect." Like their forebears, they play nyckelharpas they built themselves. All three have been recognized as Riksspelman ("National Folk Musician").

The playing on the CD is a delight. They perform solos, duets and trios, all at a very high level. The music is sometimes lilting, sometimes driving, with tasteful ornamentation throughout. A fine CD.

*Recording: Tongång AWCD-4. Available from ANA.*



## New Stuff for Sale from the ANA

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

**AWCD-22 Skikt (layer)** with Johan Hedin and Harald Pettersson. Sweden's folk music scene is full of surprises - and unexpected meetings. Here's a bunch of both - instrument virtuosi Johan Hedin and Harald Pettersson met and started to play together. The result was breathtaking and we just had to capture it on CD. Johan and Harald play their contemporary folk music from Europe's North. With their ancient instruments they invite to a spellbinding journey in a wide landscape of music. Here's your ticket.

**AWCD-27 Gubbskivan (the little-old-men record)** with Eric Sahlström, Curt Tallroth, Bo Larsson, Viksta Lasse and more. This reissue of the 1979 LP

features several old fiddlers gathered for an evening of playing. In the fall of 1979 Leif Alpsjö and Curt Tallroth had just completed their joint recording when they had an idea for another project, something to help them relax and at the same time take advantage of the momentum they'd gained. Calls went out to fiddling friends and soon they gathered in Göksby, the home of Lillemor and Leif Alpsjö.

After some hesitation the technicians were allowed to place microphones and set the reels turning. The recording began and was not interrupted until the evening was over. Time passed with talking, playing and trading tunes, not unlike the stämmas (play-ins)

## Do you want a nyckelharpa.org e-mail address?

The ANA can now offer its members free e-mail service, thanks to hosting by fmail.com. This service is only useful if you already have access to the internet, either from home or from a terminal at work or your local library, etc. You can get an e-mail address like bart@nyckelharpa.org or Tim.Newcomb@nyckelharpa.org. Access to e-mail received at that address is through one of two ways: web-based reading or forwarding to another e-mail address.

If you don't have an e-mail address but can access web pages from a computer at the library or school, then the former method is right for you. All you have to do is go to the ANA's e-mail web page, where you log in and can read and send e-mail. The web interface is nice, and pretty easy to use. It's handy when travelling, since you can access it from the web anywhere (e.g. an internet cafe, friend's computer, etc.).

If you already have e-mail at work or school or through your internet service provider, you may still want to sign up for a nyckelharpa.org address. Any e-mail sent to your nyckelharpa.org address is automatically and immediately forwarded to your current e-mail address, whatever that happens to be.

**Benefits:** This address will be permanent, and can be forwarded to another e-mail address if/when you have one. If you graduate, change jobs, or get a new ISP, you can change the forwarding to your new e-mail and people will still know what e-mail address to use to get in touch with you. You might also want to keep your work and

personal e-mail separate, or 'filter' your personal e-mail by waiting until lunch to read those sent to your\_name@nyckelharpa.org.

You can delete your nyckelharpa.org account yourself, at any time. You can change between forwarding and web-based reading yourself, at any time (i.e. when you leave home for a trip). You can attach files from your computer to outgoing e-mail messages using the web-based access, just like normal. It has an auto-responder feature that can send a message like "I'm away from XX until YY, and will get back to you when I return." to all incoming messages.

Plus, there's a certain status in having a nyckelharpa.org e-mail account!

**Drawbacks:** A few lines get appended to your incoming mail messages (and outgoing messages if using the web-based access) that says:

This Message was Powered by Xcel Communications

Sign up for your FREE EMAIL account today at <http://www.mailroom.com>

Give your FAX machine an email address <http://www.faxroom.com>

To sign up for your free nyckelharpa.org e-mail, surf on over to [www.nyckelharpa.org/resources/email.html](http://www.nyckelharpa.org/resources/email.html) and follow the directions.

these fiddlers had been part of countless times before. No effort was made to impose a structure for the sake of the recording — the evening was simply allowed to evolve. The uniqueness of the recording lies in its spontaneity, and beautifully illustrates the skill of the Gubbarna who share their expertise, tradition, and guidance in this amazing evening.

Gubbskivan is an aural document. In the space of one evening several generations of fiddlers came together, each from northern Uppland yet each possessed of his or her own speciality within that genre.

**AWCD-30 Jamtaleikar** by Lasse Sörlin. Fiddle music from the province of Jämtland. Lasse Sörlin takes inspiration from Skip James to Shikasta but most of all from the 19th and early 20th century fiddlers from his home province.

**AWCD-31 Ö.R.A.** by Örjan Viking, Robert Larsson, and Anders Matsson on accordion, fiddle and nyckelharpa. Plain and simple. Anders is the 1996 Nyckelharpa World Champion, Robert is the grand-nephew of Viksta Lasse, and Örjan is married to Viksta Lasse's granddaughter Gunnel. They can't go wrong!

**DROCD017 R7** by Rosenbergs Sjuu. Susanne Rosenberg, Ulrika Bodén, Sofia Sandén, and Eva Rune on vocals, Sven Ahlbäck on fiddle, Ellika Frisell/Hady Prett on viola, and Annika Wijnblad on cello. Amazing music, a natural extension of the Swedish vocal tradition with the arrangements of a choir, plus some really great fiddle playing.

Send orders to:

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

## NYCKELHARPA CARE

# Your Tailpiece

by Bart Brashers

During my recent trip to Sweden, I took my nyckelharpa with me in a soft gig-bag style case because it has shoulder straps like a backpack and I expected to be heavily laden with suitcases on my return. I've flown with it before, as a carry-on item, with no problems. At the metal detector in Copenhagen, as I swung my nyckelharpa case onto my back I bonked the tail end against the metal table. I thought "ouch" and winced a little, but didn't think it was a hard enough hit to cause any damage.

The next time I got out my nyckelharpa to play, I noticed the playing strings were about a half-step flat. But since the nyckelharpa had just flown so far and come from a rather different climate, I didn't think much of it. Then I noticed the bridge had moved a little, and thought "uh-oh". It turned out that the bonk at the airport in Copenhagen had pushed the tailpiece "up", away from the body of the nyckelharpa. That's not supposed to be able to happen, if the nyckelharpa is designed and built correctly. The "heel" of the tailpiece, where it touches the body of the harpa, should be cut at an acute angle (less than 90 degrees). The matching place on the nyckelharpa body should have the same angle, so that the tension of the strings keeps the tailpiece from being able to move up away from the body. My tailpiece was not angled enough, and the bonk was enough to overcome the tension-enhanced friction.

It's important for the sound of the nyckelharpa that the tailpiece touch the wood of the top (face). That contact enhances the vibration of the top by transmitting more of the string's vibration to the body of the harpa. In my case, when the tailpiece moved up, it pulled the top with it a little. It pulled a piece about 2 inches wide away from the body about 1/4 inch, which put two small splits in the top. The splits were about 3 inches long, and went along the

grain. Now you might think this ruined the nyckelharpa and turned it into fancy firewood, but it didn't.

I loosened the strings, untied the string that goes between the tailpiece, the harpa body, and the strap, and took off the tailpiece. Then I got out my hacksaw and cut the angle in the tailpiece a little deeper. I only had to take out a wedge about 1/8 inch at the widest, but that was enough. I got out my hide glue (a special type of glue popular among furniture makers because it takes 45 minutes to set) and with a toothpick pushed and tamped some glue into the cracks in the top and between the top and the top of the sides. I put the tailpiece back in place, which held the "tongue" formed by the cracks back down against the top of the sides. This time, I threaded a piece of wire through the holes in the tailpiece and the "nubb" that sticks out of the body of the harpa. I also threaded the string through there again, so I could attach my strap again.

After getting my bridge back in the right place (400 mm from the nut) and getting the sound post back in place (another story), I tightened the strings again. I think the sound post moved a bit, which changed the sound of the nyckelharpa, but other than that it's fine and sounds just like normal.

Let this serve as a warning to you nyckelharpa players out there! Go get your nyckelharpa, and inspect the joining of the tailpiece and the "nubb". Make sure the angle sufficient to hold the tailpiece to the body by the tension of the strings alone. The optimal angle is about 91.5 degrees, according to Sören Åhker (3 mm change over 20 mm depth). If your nyckelharpa doesn't have some wire holding the tailpiece to the "nubb", get yourself some copper wire. Make sure you get solid wire, not the other stuff made of a bunch of little wires. Strip off the insulation, thread it through the holes and twist it on the side away from your body. Cut off the excess, and bend the twist in out of the way so it won't catch on things.



# Nyckelharpa Strings for Sale

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

## Playing Strings

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

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

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

## Resonance Strings

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

### 6+6 is

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

### 4+4+4 is

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

### 12-step is

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

## Order Form

*Prices are listed for ANA members/non-members.*

*Price includes shipping in the US.*

*Add an appropriate extra amount for international orders.*

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

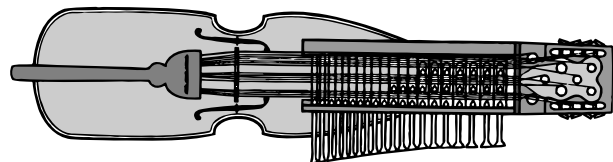
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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

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



“Femtolen” is Väsen’s name for a 16th-note polska after the great nyckelharpa player Byss-Kalle (1783-1847). It’s on their second album, “Vilda Väsen.” I think this is a great tune, and it offers opportunities to practice phrasing, string crossings, expression and variation, and all that.

If you know the Byss-Kalle polska “Brostugan,” you’ll see that its B part and the B part of this tune are almost identical, although in different keys. Olov Johansson attests nonetheless that they’re two separate tunes.

## Femtolen

*Polska efter Byss-Kalle*

from “Vilda Väsen”, transcribed by Matt Fichtenbaum

*Tie last note of B1 into first note of B2*

This G-minor polska, associated with the legendary Bingsjö fiddler Pekkös Per, is often played for dancing. I was surprised to find how well it works on nyckelharpa. There isn’t much need for shifting left hand position, and the second part is great practice for crossing strings smoothly. Begin at a relaxed tempo, and work up to dance tempo as you become comfortable with the tune.

## Polska efter Pekkös Per

*Bingsjöpolska*

transcr. Matt Fichtenbaum '99

# Upcoming Nyckelharpa Events

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

## Events in America

### 3-10 Jul 1999: Nyckelharpa teaching during Scandinavian Week at Buffalo Gap

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

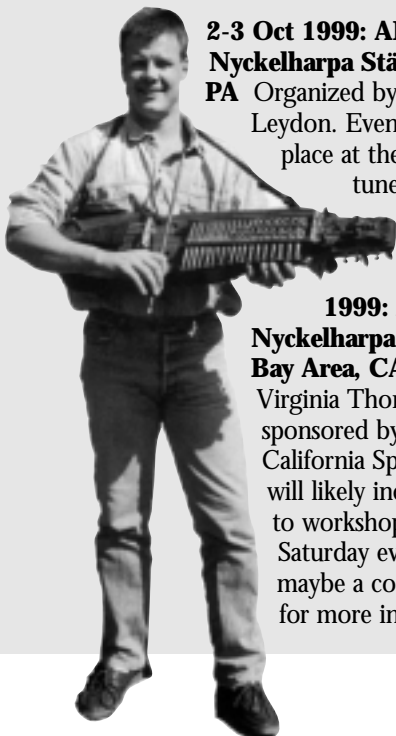
Judy Barlas  
MFAC, PO Box 2354  
Silver Spring MD 20915-2354  
301-649-6921  
jbarlas@erols.com

### Two ANA Nyckelharpa Stämman:

For the 5th annual ANA Nyckelharpa Stämman, we decided to double our coverage and have two Stämman. Peter "Puma" Hedlund will be featured at both:

**2-3 Oct 1999: ANA East Coast Nyckelharpa Stämman, Lahaska PA** Organized by Rita and Chris Leydon. Events will likely take place at their home. Stay tuned for more information.

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



## Events in Sweden

### 7-18 Jun 1999 Eric Sahlströms Stämman, Ottarsborg, Vendel

A good place to find a few hundred nyckelharpas...

### 18-20 Jun 1999 Nyckelharpa Stämman at Österbybruk

Another good place to meet nyckelharpa players...

### 19 June 1999: Junior Championships in Nyckelharpa

The first Junior Championships in Nyckelharpa will be held during the 25th anniversary Spelmansstämman at Österbybruk, Uppland in June of 1999. The goal of the competition, organized by Österby folkdanslag in conjunction with the Eric Sahlström VM (World Championship) Committee, is to give young people the opportunity to perform in exciting circumstances in front of the public and to encourage traditional playing. Each participant will be able to discuss their playing with the jury after the competition. The Jury will be comprised of past World Champions. For more information:

Gunnar Ahlbäck, +46-295-430 78  
Gunnar Fredelius, gunner.f@earthling.net or +46-70-665 29 67.

### Last week of July 1999: Zornmärkeuppspelning (Play for the Zornmärke)

Each year, musicians can play for a jury and seek the Zorn medal, named after the artist Anders Zorn who organized the first spelmansstämman in 1906. About 1/3 of those who play are awarded one of the following grades: Bronze Diploma, Bronze Medal, Silver Diploma, and Silver Medal. Those who have received the Silver Medal have the honor of calling themselves Riksspelman. Additionally, some years the Zorn medal in Gold is given out to a spelman for life-long achievement and commitment to Swedish traditional music.

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

Contact [janelow@hem2.passagen.se](mailto:janelow@hem2.passagen.se) or visit [home5.swipnet.se/~w-57386/](http://home5.swipnet.se/~w-57386/) for more info.

## New Nyckelharpa Players

Anna MacFarlane  
45 Pugsley Street  
Nackawic NB E6G 1B1  
CANADA  
506-575-2280  
i91t@unb.ca

Paul Krings  
665 Hazelvaley Drive  
Hazelwood MO 63042  
314-831-2993  
PKrings@genetics.com

Toby Blomé  
1925 Hudson St  
El Cerrito CA 94530  
510-215-5974  
tobyblome@aol.com

Tim Cutts  
31 Warren Ave  
Ottawa ONT K1Y 0R9  
CANADA  
613-729-5453  
cuttsomr@magi.com

Elise Peters  
904 Rice St Apt 307  
St Paul MN 55117  
851-488-0765 (H)  
612-992-6019 (W)  
ElisePeters@juno.com

Jeanne Widman  
PO Box 712  
Baldwin NY 11510  
516-868-7290  
JWDragospel@aol.com

Carolyn Muggenburg  
2805 Calle Del Rio NW  
Albuquerque NM 89104  
505-342-0475  
bmuggenb@lrri.org

Martine Chiasson  
6410 25e Avenue  
Montreal QC H1T 3L6  
CANADA  
514-729-0747  
athanor@cam.org

*And some with new addresses:*

Sam Cooper  
1425 La Salina B  
Oceanside CA 92054  
760-757-8808  
boyo35@aol.com

David Niebuhr  
POB 891  
Gloucester Point VA 23062  
niebuhr@vims.edu

### The American Nyckelharpa Association

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

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

### ANA Web Page

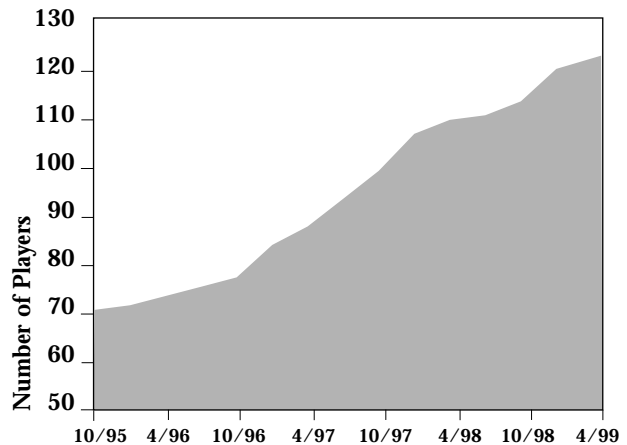
Source of information about the nyckelharpa, nyckelharpa players, a history of the instrument, nyckelharpa events and more! The URL is: <http://www.nyckelharpa.org>

### Nyckel Notes

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

## Nyckelharpa Players in North America



**For Sale:** Kromatisk Nyckelharpa of the highest quality, still in new condition. Built circa 1996 by Olle Plahn of Falun, Sweden who has won the highest marks at the annual judging of nyckelharpas associated with the Nyckelharpa Stämman at Österbybruk. Price, including bow and folk-style painted case, \$1500. Contact

Robert L Johnson Sr  
6880 FM 621  
Martindale TX 78655  
512-357-2121  
awjan@corridon.net

**Nyckelharpa Videotape**, with eight of Sweden's best players recorded in 1990, in Sweden, showing examples of old and new nyckelharpas, including the moraharpa at the Zorn Museum. Produced by Tim Rued, who has a few copies left. \$28 postage paid.

Tim Rued  
POB 30456  
Stockton CA 95213  
209-825-2669

