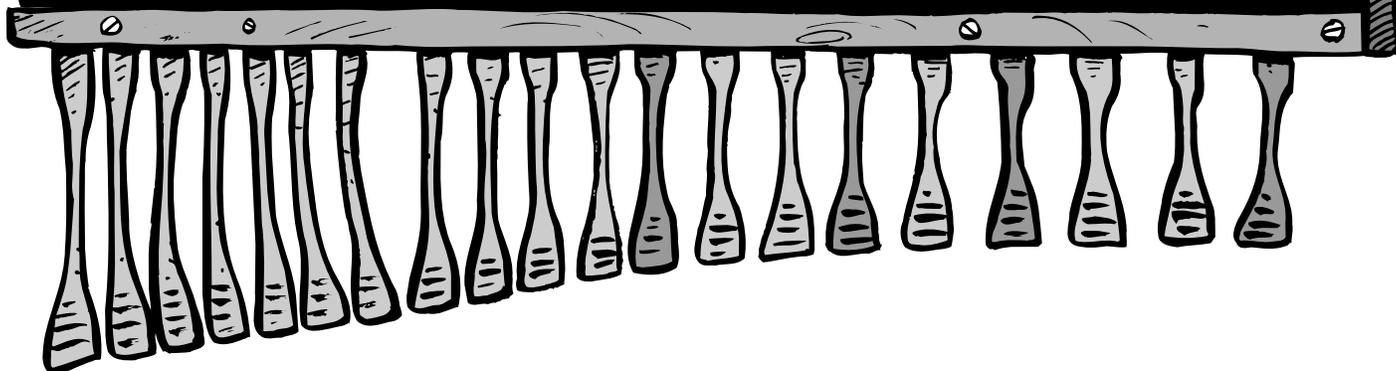


THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN NYCKELHARPA ASSOCIATION

NYCKELNOTES



The Boy with the Dirtiest Feet

by Rita Leydon

How lucky can a person get? I seem to max out regularly and late June was no exception. I found myself once again in Sweden, this time under the protective wing of my good buddy Peter Hedlund. Peter is among Sweden's nyckelharpa elite, having won the title World Champion in 1992. Not bad company if one is as nuts about nyckelharpa stuff as I am. Keep in mind, I'm just a hard working girl from the I-wish-I-could-play-like-that department. What I lack in talent and skill, I make up for in sheer, unbridled enthusiasm. That said, I thought I'd share the first weekend of my two week sojourn in Sweden, the summer of 2000.

Peter and I packed sleeping bags, tent, harpas and video equipment and drove south a few hours from Hälsingland, where he lives, to the annual stämman in Österby, Uppland. A stämman is a traditional folk music jam of any size. This year, the event was also host to the biannual World Champion Nyckelharpa Competition, the same one Peter had won eight years earlier. Sören Åhker and his wife, Eva, were already set up in the camping area with a big four man tent which they offered to share with us. As it was nippy, we figured that four bodies make more heat than two, and thankfully accepted. Sören is a maker of very fine nyckel-

harpas, including both mine and Peter's. Other good friends who cover the stämman circuit together were camping in close proximity, and I felt honored to be welcomed

into their fold. As I said, it was pretty chilly. Peter's wife, Karin, had loaned me a warm leather jacket and her grandmother's fuzzy knitted wrist warmers. When we bade adieu to Karin earlier in the day, she stuck out her lower lip in a pout and said, "Please think of me ALL the time." Karin is a

continued on page 5

ANA Business

The ANA Turns Five

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the founding of the ANA, and the 20th issue of *Nyckel Notes*. We held the first Nyckelharpa Stämman on 26 August 1995 outside of Seattle, with Sture Hogmark as teacher, and took the opportunity to start the ANA. Leif Alpsjö had been suggesting forming an association for years, and had collected a mailing list of about 50 nyckelharpa players that he had met during his travels. Starting with that list, I counted 72 nyckelharpa players in October 1995 – 21 of which came to the first Stämman. Five years later, we number 151 – we've more than doubled.

In the past five years, the ANA has done well in fulfilling many of its goals. We sponsor, or co-sponsor, concerts and workshops that spread knowledge of the nyckelharpa. We import recordings not otherwise available outside of Sweden and make them available to the public and our members. We import

continued on page 12

Inside:

Spela Bättre	2
On Traditions and Allspel	3
Upcoming Events	8
Nyckelharpa Care	9
New ANA Members	10
More ANA Business	12

SPELA BÄTTRE!*The Only Way to Improve Your Playing*

Rolling the Bow

by Matt Fichtenbaum

Scandinavian Week came again to Buffalo Gap this July, and interest in the nyckelharpa just keeps growing. Cajsa Ekstav, Riksspelman from Uppsala, taught intermediate and advanced nyckelharpa. She left us richer in repertoire, more proficient in technique, and wiser in understanding.

Among the good tunes Cajsa taught is Brännvinslåten, a polska after the legendary Bingsjö fiddler Hjort-Anders Olsson. Bingsjö polskas are not the most likely nyckelharpa tunes, but this one has a proper Uppland pedigree. Cajsa has it from Viksta-Lasse (1897-1984), who had many of his tunes from Hjort-Anders. Besides, it's in the key of F, eminently suitable for nyckelharpa. And the tune's "B" part features rolling-bow figures, which gives it good exercise

value and justifies my including it in this column.

The "A" part

One common bowing for Bingsjö polskas is "up and down on each beat," one bow stroke per eighth-note. That's how this tune begins, until the quarter-note at the end of measure 2. To help find the right feel to the tune –

- emphasize the notes that are on the beat, and emphasize each measure's first beat just a little more,
- play the pairs of sixteenth-notes smoothly, dividing the time equally between them,
- try for a smooth, even rhythm-in-three feeling, a phrase that extends over the full measure. Although the long-

Brännvinslåten

Polska efter Hjort-Anders, efter Viksta-Lasse

Taught by Cajsa Ekstav at Scandinavian Week 2000

Alternative "crawl" fingering for measures 1, 2

short-short figure looks like an old-timey “shuffle” rhythm, it isn’t. If the tune sounds like it’s in a two-beat rhythm, or sounds as if it has a backbeat, it’s not right.

Cajsa used the fingering shown. There’s a jump at the start of the second measure. As an alternative, she pointed out that one can “crawl” down the fingerboard rather than jumping.

Measure 3 begins on an up-bow, which breaks the bowing pattern. I sometimes “fix” this by not slurring the two sixteenth-notes that follow, and by not slurring the second beat of measure 4. Play it whichever way feels more natural.

The “B” part

This is where things become interesting. Measures 9 and 11 consist of three groups of four sixteenth-notes. But these are bowed in pairs, two slurred on a down-bow, then two on an up-bow. It’s really the same bowing as in the

start of the “A” part, only realized with sixteenth-notes.

Play measure 9 as an exercise. Play it slowly, several times in a row. Think about –

- dividing the time for one beat evenly among the four sixteenth-notes,
- articulating each note cleanly, with that slight extra bow pressure at the beginning,
- slightly accenting the first note of the measure,
- slurring smoothly from the A string to the C string between the last two notes of each beat.

In the interest of minimizing unnecessary movement, hold the third finger on F while you play the open A string.

Then repeat the exercise with measure 11. There’s a string-crossing here, too, but between the first two notes. Keep both first and fourth fingers down for this figure.

Measures 13 and 15 are a variation on these two measures. Try to give them the same accents and feeling.

On Traditions and Allspel

by Sheila Morris

I would like to respond to Tim Rued and Mel Meer. I, too, am a traditionalist. I much prefer to play the old tunes, though I also enjoy listening to Hulling and Väsen and some of the other newer groups and players. But the recordings that invariably make me reach for my harpa are those of Ceylon Wallin, Hasse Gille, the Hogmarks, and Puma.

However, when we first began discussing the idea of having an American allspel list, Bart and I agreed that it would be more to the point to assemble a list of what was actually being played here. Many of our members will never travel to Sweden, but might easily encounter other American players. The first time Mel and I met, we knew maybe three tunes in common. I had more in common with Tim, because he had been playing so long that he knew everything I knew (which was maybe twenty tunes at that time). I think I had nine tunes that Rita Leydon and I could play together. This gets frustrating after awhile!

The initial list that I proposed was, in fact, made up entirely of classic Uppland tunes, but the responses I got led me to include some of the more modern tunes, as well as some from other provinces. Gånglåt från Äppelbo is so commonly played in Sweden that a lot of people don’t even know where it came from originally [Editors note: Äppelbo is in Dalarna, a little ways up the Western branch of the Dalarna river, before it makes its turn North to Malung and Idre, etc.], and the last two times I was in Österbybruk, my section of the spelmanståg played it as we marched through

the village, because it was the only one everyone knew, even in Uppland!

In terms of making up a “prescriptive” allspel list, one that suggests traditional Uppland tunes everyone “ought” to know — I think the tapes/booklets “Allspel i Uppland” are still available from Leif Alpsjö. Most of the tunes in Leif’s “Spela Nyckelharpa” set are traditional and widely played. Beyond this, things start to get a little complicated.

Once you begin to get into the Uppland tradition, you realize that the proper word is “traditionS”. There are many different but overlapping traditions, and some players have concentrated mostly on one or another. But they probably know the tunes in the above two collections, which draw from the most common traditions.

“Österbybruk/Roslag/Ceylon tradition” (sometimes called “järnbruks tradition”):

Maybe the strongest tradition, with the most tunes on the allspel list, this one is centered on the iron-works district in north-eastern Uppland. Characterized by fairly simple melodies and a strong rhythm for dancing, they are often “crooked”, containing extra beats and uneven measure counts. I would strongly recommend the CD/book “Roslagslåtar” (yes, it’s expensive, but worth every penny!). If you don’t require written music with your recordings, try “På vårat vis” by Hasse Gille and Kurt Södergren.

continued on next page

“Sahlström tradition”:

This includes the tunes the Sahlström family has after their father and grandfather, and the tunes written by Eric Sahlström. Eric’s tunes tend to be a bit too complex to be considered as allspel, though they are commonly played by the better players. Good sources are “Hogmarkarna” by Esbjörn, Sture and Göran Hogmark, “Puma”, and Trollrike spelmän has two recordings of traditional Sahlström tunes, though the first is out of print and hard to get. Their second, “På hugget” is fairly new and still available. The “Till Eric” CD doesn’t come with a book, but there is a book available of all of Eric’s tunes.

Other traditions:

“Örsprång” by Olov Johansson and Curt Tallroth (Bohlin tradition) and “Välsmidet” by the Jernbergs (Jernberg tradition) and a group of other players both have

lots of traditional tunes, though they are a bit outside of the main Uppland tradition. This especially applies to the Jernberg tradition, though their CD includes a few Bohlin tunes and some Sahlström ones.

Byss-Calle is sort-of in a class by himself, having played the sixteenth-note polskor, not the more eighth-note bond-polskor that became popular after his death in 1847. Lots of people play his tunes, but they are also more difficult to play. His two or three most common tunes can be found on various recordings, and DRONE just released a CD with the Nyckelharpa Orchestra (the same players as Till Eric) playing 16 of his tunes. Väsen’s first two CDs also have several. There is also a book that has 57 of them written out.

Viksta-Lasse wasn’t a harpa player, though most of his tunes are definitely Uppland tradition. He also had a lot of tunes after Bingsjö fiddler Hjort Anders, which are played fairly often, notably the three Eklunda polskor.

Glöggmarsch was played between dances, while people drank glögg, a warm, spiced wine often served around Christmas. Cajsa plays this with both solemnity and swing, so that it's clearly a ceremonial piece but it makes you want to move along with it. Play with a bit of accent on every beat, and take some liberties with the timing to give it life.

Glöggmarsch

efter Karl August Andersson, Rasbo, Uppland

from Cajsa Ekstav at Scandinavian Week 2000

The Boy with the Dirtiest Feet

continued from page 1

fabulous fiddler. Peter explained that Österby is sort of “his stämman” and he always goes by himself. Did he mind me? I wondered. Looking over his glasses and down the ski-slope nose at the intruder in his car, he assured me that I was welcome.

Swedish midnight in June wears only a sheer frock of light dusk, making it easy to completely miss the night and forget altogether about sleep. This was a small matter, for the camaraderie was wonderful and the music constant. Bow wielding passion saturated the night with melodious harmonies, foot tapping, laughter and good mirth. I tried to join in the playing, only to discover a severed connection between my brain and my hands, a nasty mix of chilled-to-the-bone and nervous angst amongst the natives. Beer and various spirits were offered and shared. These libations made me a bit nervous at first for I had never previously indulged. Ever. I pondered hard and decided I was in the midst of an out-of-life experience. “Yes, thank you,” said I, and sampled the offerings. I rather enjoyed myself while Peter grew increasingly worried that I might be enjoying myself a little too much. How would he explain to my husband, Chris, what befell Rita while under Peter’s vigilant custodial care? He needn’t have worried, Rita just warmed up and radiated a healthy glow.

I had sent Sören a cowboy hat earlier in the year and was amused to find that he had taken a shining to it. Peter sported flashy leather racing duds from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and a hat exactly like Sören’s. They were an amusing and endearing pair in their getups. Around two in the morning, Eva and I retired to our tent, but not before dancing a wild slängpolska in the grass to Peter’s tune, “Polska på Fläcken,” played by everybody. Eva is a warm, robust, and earthy woman. The cowboys followed in short order. Removing only boots and earrings, I crawled into my bag, sandwiched between the two guys. What an arrangement! I considered myself a lucky woman. Sören and Eva didn’t unbutton either. Peter, on the other hand, stripped right down and lectured the rest of us on the virtues of sleeping unclad. The frigid summer temperature was a thin sliver above frozen solid, and my zipped-to-the-nostrils bag wasn’t nearly enough to keep the shivering shakes at bay.

Saturday morning. Competition day. Music filled the campsite long before consciousness stirred in any of our heads. Unfurling to greet the new day around nine, none of

us knew whether or not Peter would play or even participate in the competition. I don’t think even he knew at that point. He seemed concerned only with the joys inherent in the tune of the moment and the musical interaction and communion of trusted friends together. I studied Peter and his interactions more than one would normally, perhaps, for I was also filming him as part of a project we are working on together. After coffee, I put on my baseball cap and headed for the stämman grounds with video gear in tow. I was on duty with a job to do. All business.

I had secured prior permission from the event organizers to film the proceedings on behalf of the American Nyckelharpa Association with intention of editing, reproducing, and ultimately offering for sale the resulting video. My task these two days was to get as much good raw footage as possible. I had a fine new digital video camera and an amazing auxiliary microphone. In other words, I was primed and ready to roll.

Österby ironworks, with its lovely setting, was host to the weekend festivities. A beautiful manor house. Lots of wagon houses and stalls. Huge old trees and park like surroundings. A large waterway with floating lilies in bloom and an abundance of aquatic fowl. Music everywhere. Small groups and large groups.

Hardy veterans of the circuit. Well used and banged up old harpa cases seemingly held together by souvenir stickers representing different stämmans all over Sweden. Socializing and joy.

“Let’s play a tune.”

“Do you know this one?”

Bright colors. Beautiful, cool, crisp weather. The “backyard” boasted grand avenues of mature trees and broad lawns. A rear terrace decorated with quivering birch branches served as the stage. The sound system was manned by a guy named Roger who had a mixer in the back of his car parked in the shade on the sidelines. Wooden plank benches awaited an audience.

Musicians normally sign themselves up if they want to compete for the World Championship. I knew for a fact that Peter had not signed up. None the less, when the list of contenders was posted, Peter’s name was on it. Gunnar Fredelius was later suspected of the deed. But would Peter play? None of us had the courage to ask him, perhaps feeling it was too personal to intrude on his decision making. That’s how I felt anyway.

I positioned myself front row center, rump on the grass, back leaning against a saw horse bench support, and



Rita Leydon and Puma

continued on next page

The Boy with the Dirtiest Feet

continued from page 5

pulled up the knees to serve as bipod for my video camera. It was important that I get every moment on film. First up was the Gammelharpa Class, with nine first string contestants. The well-seasoned Ingvar Jörpeland appeared as a turn-of-the-century bon vivant, impeccably black suited with lots of small vest buttons and the requisite round bowler hat, which he placed primly on the ground next to his chair. This looked very nice through my lens. A kinetic youth in black leather and tousled hair, Daniel Pettersson, played a Mora harpa made by his father. Looking through my lens, I thought, "Oooh yes, he's the one."

After a short break, thirteen more masters of the genre vied in the Modernharpa Class. Anna-Kristina Widell, whom I ran into last year in Lindsborg, Kansas, played first. She was amazing, composed and mature. Everyone played two selections. Eventually, Peter was announced. He materialized wearing his Leydon Restorations T-shirt, which warmed my heart and made me chuckle, smiled, and proceeded to blow us away, playing Ragnar Berglund's "Knäppgöken" and Tore Zetterström's rendition of "Vals från Karlholm."

A potpourri of fabulously skilled and dexterous younger contestants, balanced by deliciously ripe veterans, all strutted their stuff. They all wowie kazowied me ... but our Peter out distanced them all. It was a done deal. No contest. The whole thing took about two and a half hours.

The honored jury consisted of Curt Tallroth, Nisse Nordström, Sigurd Sahlström, Gunnar Fredelius, Gunnar Ahlbäck, and Jan Ling. Earlier in the day, I saw Curt Tallroth, whom I have met several times before. Noticed his beautiful smiling face in the crowd and had to go say hello. Shaking his hand, I asked if he remembered me. "How could I ever forget you?" he said, grinning broadly as he squeezed my hand, holding it securely for a moment with the other hand as well. I felt honored and validated. A small but meaningful kindness. Halfway through the competition, Curt collapsed in his juror's chair and was taken to the hospital where he stabilized.

Afterwards, I was totally spent. I had struggled to keep the camera from shaking during the last several candidates. My knees quivered. My left calf cramped each time I shifted. My back was in agony from tension and pressure against a saw horse. I was a wreck. Trembling with fatigue and chill, I packed my gear and went straight to Peter, declaring emphatically that I needed a therapeutic, bone crunching squeeze around my middle. He was most accommodating. Leaning way back, all the little bones popped sweetly back into alignment. Ahhh! He suggested that, if one was good, two might be better, and gave me another vice grip squeeze. Ohhh! Appeased, I wandered off in search of food.

After food, I walked around the grounds and filmed folks enjoying themselves, ending up at the wagon house dance. It was jam packed with gammal-dancing and smiling people. I peeled off some layers and asked a wall flower if

he'd like to dance. He looked ecstatic, which I took for a "yes." After forty-five minutes I had enough. Dripping with sweat and happy, I said, "Thank you very much," and left.

Went straight to the ballroom in the manor house in search of an electric outlet to recharge a battery for my video camera. I plugged in and collapsed on the floor. Lay there listening to twenty, perhaps thirty harpas. Folks coming, joining in, going. It was wonderful. I didn't miss my own harpa for I was too exhausted, and besides, my repertoire is pretty limited. These folks were amazing ... gazing around, bows flying, fingers finding keys in unison. Didn't seem to be fumbling or in a panic like I would have been. No, I was fine, lying there in my soaked shirt, listening and charging my battery.

Later, I came upon Peter hunkered down over a very nice looking, personal size pizza in a box on his knees. I could see he was intent on eating it himself. He certainly deserved it. I was hungry and cold and stood there looking and salivating. He was cutting bite size pieces and chomping with singular purpose. He wasn't offering me any. What a rat, thought I, and snatched the next piece he cut. He glared at me. Trying hard not to smile, he continued cutting and I continued taking every other bite. Finally he said, "You know that no one else would dare do that."

"I know," said I and glared back.

As Saturday drew to a close, the group migrated back to base camp and the warmth of one another. It was way too cold to play outside, each breath condensing to a vaporous cloud in the chill night air. We squeezed into a camper for a few hours of jovial socializing. Some of us hiked over to the wagon house and two stepped to Hasse Gille's jazz band for a bit. Hasse was sad for his best friend and playing partner, Kurt Södergren, had just died the previous week. They made that recording called "På Vårat Vis" (In Our Way) that Chris likes so much.

Sunday morning wasn't much warmer. Caloric sustenance was on a table and each helped himself. Hot water with instant. We were a motley crew by then. I left camp early to experience the stämman proper. Busk spel (literally, playing in the bushes) is the time honored core of any stämman. Spontaneous music from the heart popping up everywhere like mushrooms in a damp, dark forest.

I caught up with Peter after a while. Folks were congratulating him right and left, saying he was Number One no matter what the judges decided later in the day. He just smiled. The man's got a killer smile.

The public was expected in the afternoon, and they in turn, expected a musical program. I positioned myself center front as before. Glorious sunshine. Very large audience. Standing room only. A couple of hundred nyckelharpas and fiddlers of all ages and skill levels made a grand entry from two directions simultaneously playing the classic "Gånglåt från Äppelbo." There were flags, banners, birch branches, bright costumes, and pomp and circumstance. I filmed away, feeling like a pro and thankful for the show. Hasse Gille led the "allspel" splendidly from a perch high above the stringed multitude. A distinguished lady in folk dress, Birgitta Dahl,

Sweden's "Riksdags talman," officiated and started the proceedings. Many different performers came before us and they are all on my film.

At one o'clock, it was time to announce the two winners of the 2000 Nyckelharpa World Championships. Gammelharpa Class went to the tousled youth in black leather with his Mora harpa, Daniel Pettersson. I wasn't surprised. Daniel took us on a victory lap in his signature kinetic style. Then I held my breath and thought mostly about keeping the camera still. Gunnar Ahlbäck, the Master of Ceremonies, spoke at length about the great difficulty of judging, then declared Peter Hedlund, whom he referred to as "the old man," winner of the Modernharpa Class. The old man turned all of forty-three a couple of days later. *Deja vu.* "Is Peter here?" wondered Gunnar. Peter took his good old time to appear, casually mounting the stage with his gig bag slung handily over a shoulder and peering around with amusement over small dark glasses resting on the ski-slope. I was a'burstin' my seams, smiling so hard my cheeks ached, and trying to be super calm for the sake of my art. The bipod was a'knockin' and a'shiverin' from cold and excitement. Peter accepted the audience's ovation, played "Spelmansglädje" with aplomb, and bowed humbly to his public.

I hastily threw video gear into my canvas bag and ran to

congratulate my friend. Everyone wanted to shake his hand and offer best wishes. I gave him a good squeeze and gushed how supremely proud I was. Reassembling my camera, I shot a few minutes of adoring fans swarming Peter, then the rest of the afternoon's program. I was elated and relieved, for I had five hours of solid footage with incredible sound. My friend was King of the Mountain, and all was well.

Peter was insufferably modest and humble, insisting it was nothing, really. I was immoderately jubilant with tingling toes that didn't quite reach the ground. I loved being part and witness to Peter's victorious moment. Peter pointed to his watch and said soberly, "Let's leave in about an hour," bringing me back to earth with a thud. He asked if I'd rolled up my sleeping bag yet. I hadn't. "I rolled up mine," said Mr. Goody Two Shoes. "Why didn't you just roll up mine at the same time?" No answer, just the smile. I quickly covered the circuit, saying all my goodbyes. Then I remembered the sleeping bag. Peter, hands on hips, shook his head as if to suggest I was just about impossible. He informed me tersely that my bag was now rolled up. Such a boy scout! "Ok, let's go."

We called Karin from the car to say we were on our way. Peter forgot to tell her the big news. Jeez! I made eye contact and gestured wildly... "Oh, yes," he stammered, "and I won the Championship again." Karin squealed with delight and surprise at the other end. After a few hours of driving north, we were back in the real world. Karin and the boys welcomed the two reeking campers with buoyant enthusiasm. Peter went straight to bed.

I showed Karin my footage of Peter's performance. She shuddered visibly at a particularly difficult passage and said it was good she hadn't been there for she would have been too nervous. Peter had fetched me at Arlanda airport early Thursday morning, and between then and when he competed on Saturday, he hadn't practiced at all, just horsed around with his pals at the camp site. And yet, when it was time, out came the music with majesty and strength and beauty and soul.

The younger competitors were technically superb and obviously in love with their music, still, I missed something intangible and indefinable in their presentations. A lack of depth perhaps. Soul maybe. I chewed on this for a while with Karin. "Yes," she said finally, "one needs to have experienced life in order to put forth rich, true music ... and one needs to have suffered a bit." I think she's right. Over a cup of tea later in the evening, she told me that when Peter was about twelve years old, he won a prize for having the dirtiest feet in camp. That's my kind of guy!



Matt Fichtenbaum and Miye Bromberg battle bowing and bugs at Buffalo Gap this summer. Below, Bart Brashers teaches a large Nyckelharpa 1 class.



Upcoming Nyckelharpa Events

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

6th Annual ANA Nyckelharpa Stämman 17-19 November 2000

The year 2000 ANA Nyckelharpa Stämman will be held the weekend before Thanksgiving, at the Leydon's in Lahaska, PA. Featured teacher again this year will be Peter "Puma" Hedlund, the reigning World Champion. Plan on spending the weekend playing to your heart's content, then working a short week before the holiday.

Puma is one of Sweden's most accomplished folk musicians. He has played fiddle since 1966, played nyckelharpa since 1971, and been a Riksspelman since 1975. He won the Nyckelharpa World Championships in 1992 and again in 2000, becoming the only player in the modern harpa class to repeat. Peter is especially known for his technique and powerful, warm and rich tonal quality on nyckelharpa. He states, "Nyckelharpa music is probably the only type where rank beginners can play with old masters as well as the current idols in a completely natural and relaxed setting. This is what I strive for in all of my workshops." Written music will be made available prior to the workshops, though Puma has the tendency of choosing tunes on the spot, depending on who is in his class.

The Stämman Schedule:

Friday 17 Nov 2000

Arrive, afternoonish
Dinner (at home)
Socialize/play music

Saturday 18 Nov 2000

Breakfast
Workshop 1
Lunch
Workshop 2
Dinner (at a local restaurant)
World premiere film: VM2000*

Sunday 19 Nov 2000

Breakfast
Workshop 3
Lunch (end of stämman proper)
PM: Go home OR have private lesson at \$35/hour

Workshop fee: \$20 each or \$55 for all three.

Meals (not including Saturday dinner): \$50.

Accommodations: Sleeping bag floor space (free) or take a room at a local motel.



Please call Rita before Fri 10 Nov to tell her you're coming, so she can shop/prepare the right amount of food.

Trans-Bridge Lines (610-868-6001) offers bus service directly to Lahaska from Manhattan (several times per day) and Newark Airport (fewer times per day). Visit http://www.transbridgebus.com/sched_frenchny.htm (the arrows mean the bus does not stop) or call for their schedule. We can meet the bus. We cannot pickup at the airport.

Rita Leydon, PO Box 127, Lahaska PA 18931
Phone: 215-794-8660 • Fax: 215-794-0635
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* VM2000 is a 2½-hour film of last summer's Nyckelharpa World Championships. The video is a full (every note) showing of the competition with lots of nice close-ups of fingers and bows, also a lot of music we don't ordinarily hear. Twenty-one different high-caliber musicians playing two tunes each. A "gotta see" for harpa players. This VHS format film will be made available for purchase (in either NTSC or PAL format).

4 - 6 May 2001: Hasse Gille in Seattle WA

After attending the French Quarter Jazz Festival in New Orleans, nyckelharpa player and tradition bearer from Österbybruk Hasse Gille will come to Seattle for workshops and a Nyckelharpa Stämman. Stay tuned for further details, or contact:

Trella Hastings
4650 89TH Ave SE, Mercer Island WA 98040
206-232-1912
trella@home.com

24 - 28 June 2001: Ekebyholm

Residence course the week following midsommar every year, from Sunday to Thursday, at Ekebyholm castle, just north of Rimbo, Uppland. This course was started by Eric Sahlström, and is the most well-known course for learning Uppland music. Most participants are nyckelharpa players, but it's open to fiddle players as well.

The course is for nyckelharpa players at all levels, and all but beginning fiddle players. Cost for 2000 was 3300 SEK, which includes tuition, room and board, lessons and evening programs. The application period is about 20 March to 15 April 2001. Don't send any money yet, as only 75 students will be accepted.

Nyckelharpa teachers may include Ditte Andersson, Lotta Franzén, Johan Hedin, Peter Hedlund, Peder Källman, Sture Sahlström, Sven-Olof Sundell, Esbjörn

continued on page 10

NYCKELHARPA CARE

Coping with Cello Strings

by Bart Brashers

Marilee Cowan, nyckelharpa player and ANA member in Portland OR, writes:

Two of the windings on the ball-end of the Helicore cello strings extend over the bridge and muffle the sound. I was wondering if I should trim them back, and with what? Should I then add a drop of super-glue to keep them from unraveling? What kind of tool do you trim with?

A good question, faced by many nyckelharpa players who choose to use cello strings. They are much longer than nyckelharpa strings, and the distance between the end of the tailpiece and the bridge is longer on a cello. On each end of the string there is some colored thread wound around the string, to keep the outer layer of the string from unwinding. Sometimes, the length of the thread windings at the ball end (tailpiece end) is longer than the distance between the tailpiece and the bridge. If you just put them on, then part of the vibrating portion of the string (between the bridge and nut) will have thread on it, and will dampen the sound. It may also interfere with the bow, if the thread winding is really long.

I've used an X-acto knife, held parallel with the string (blade flat against the string) to cut off part of the thread. I've also used the blade from my Swiss army knife. I cut through the threads on the top, and pull off the rest of the loose threads. Then use superglue as you suggested, or any other type of glue. The idea is to keep the now loose end of the thread from unraveling with time. Once I had access to shrink-tubing and a heat gun and put a half-inch of that on it. Geek-boy strikes again!

The other possible way of dealing with the issue is to shorten the string. I usually make a knot in the string about one inch from the end. It's difficult without pliers, but not so hard with them. The knot then acts like a new ball on the end. When you put it on the harpa and bring it up to pitch, the tension helps tighten the knot. Then use wire cutters to cut off the little tail of extra string-plus-ball-end.

She answered:

Thank you for your reply. I ended up using a rose thorn knife, which worked very well, and (the girly way) some clear fingernail polish. I like the sound of the Helicore

strings. It has taken a couple days for them to settle and get acquainted with the resonator, or maybe it's just my ears. The transition between the higher C and the A was very noticeable at first, but I think I may be doing something to compensate or something, because that seemed to be better last night. I'm finding also that all the tangents seem to be a little off, but I'll wait another day after I take the windings down before I re-do them. On the nut end of the string I made loops of the extra string, not wanting it to unravel.

Sure, fingernail polish works, especially clear polish. Or pick a color that compliments the existing thread windings, or maybe your strap.

At the nut end, we nyckelharpa players who use cello strings often end up with about a foot too much string. The string should wrap around the post (wooden peg) about a half-dozen times. Some people make little loops of the extra string, wrap it up in itself, and have the loops hanging in mid-air off their tuning pegs. However, the same rule goes for this end: you only need the threads to keep the string from unraveling. You can cut off all but about an inch of the thread-wrapped portion of the string. Again, a spot of super glue or similar will help keep the threads from unraveling. At this end it's not so important, since the strings are held tight against the peg, and I often simply cut them off and don't use any glue.

Theoretically, the position of the tangents should not change when you change strings, as they are governed by the ratio of the vibrating portion of the string to the total string length. In the real world, you have to tune your tangents when you change brands, and even (if you're picky, like me) every time you change strings. The ratio argument assumes that the density of the string is constant, and no real string is ever perfectly made. They have some small variation in their width, or the number of windings per inch, or the hardness of the metal used. This is especially true when comparing strings from two different manufacturers.

When you change brands, you should let the strings settle in for a couple of days, and then fine-tune your tangents according to the method described in the February 2000 issue of *Nyckel Notes*. The same article is available on the ANA website, www.nyckelharpa.org, on the "Resources" page.

Upcoming Events*continued from page 8*

Hogmark, Sonia Sahlström and Leif Åhlund.

For more information, contact:

Lars Lindkvist
 Aprilvägen 43
 177 61 Järfälla, Sweden.
 Tel. +46-8-58 03 16 21
 or: lars.lindkvist@jarfalla.se

Aug 2000 - May 2001:**Year-long Nyckelharpa Course at ESI**

For the third year in a row, the Eric Sahlström Institute (ESI) is offering a course in nyckelharpa, in Tobo, Uppland, Sweden. This course is presented in conjunction with Väddö Folkhögskola, so college credit is possible. Head teachers will be Olov Johansson, Ditte Andersson and Sonia Sahlström but you will meet other teachers — Niklas Roswall, Gunnar Ahlbäck, Andreas Berchtold, Curt Tallroth, Hasse Gille, Johan Hedin and Esbjörn Hogmark among others.

Course content is concentrated on nyckelharpa, but will also cover music theory, transcription, arrangements, folk music history, nyckelharpa history, folk singing, folk dance,

playing for dancing, instrument knowledge and maintenance, playing on stage, etc.

Students live in the Institute's modern annex, adjacent to the lecture hall. The cost is 3100 SEK/month for a double room, 3800 SEK/month for a single room. That includes the monthly rent, breakfast, lunch, dinner and coffee (of course — it's Sweden) on weekdays. You buy your own food for the weekends. Teaching is free, but you must pay for your own paper, pens and you might have to buy a few books, and other incidentals such as small trips.

The first semester starts the last Monday in August and ends the third Friday in December. The next semester starts second Monday of January and ends the last Friday of May. There are some weeks of holidays (one in November, one in February and one in April). For more information, contact:

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 Web: www.esitobo.org

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Bill Layher
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 seaberg@uswest.net

New ANA Address

The ANA has a new address, which should be used for memberships and renewals, as well as back issue requests:

American Nyckelharpa Association
 PO Box 661
 Lahaska PA 18931-0661

CD and book orders should still go to Gail Halverson:

American Nyckelharpa Association
 PO BOX 1394
 Venice CA 90294-1394

Nyckelharpa string orders should still go to:

Robert Krapfl
 4651 N Wolcott Apt 1
 Chicago IL 60640

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.

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

Sympathetic Strings

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

6+6 is

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

4+4+4 is

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

12-step is

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

Order Form

Prices are listed for ANA members/non-members.

Price includes shipping in the US.

Add an appropriate extra amount for international orders.

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

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

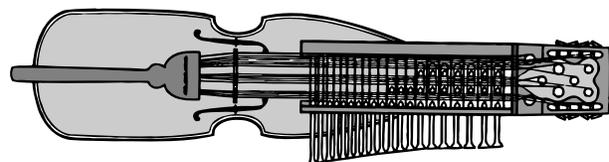
State _____ Zip _____

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



ANA Business

continued from page 1

nyckelharpa strings, for the ease of our members. We've published a *Roster of Nyckelharpa Players in North America* so our members can find each other, and maintain an up-to-date version on the Web. We've published many articles about nyckelharpa playing both in Sweden and in America, with on-going series about how to play nyckelharpa, nyckelharpa repair, odds and ends, and written music. We've developed a list of common tunes that we play, and published all the tunes in both written and recorded format on the Internet. We've served as a resource for new players in everything from where to find a harpa to how to hold a harpa to the finer points of nyckelharpa straps.

Please join in congratulating ourselves on five great years, and help in keeping the ANA going strong, for many years to come!

The ANA Needs You — to Volunteer!

For the past five years, Bart Brashers has served as ANA president, treasurer, newsletter editor, webmaster, keeper of the membership database, and mailer of newsletter back issues. As you can guess, that's a lot of work! In order to prevent burnout, it's time to turn over some of the work to others. Plus, now that he's done with school and married, and his wife Margaret is almost finished with her Ph.D., kids are likely to enter the picture soon and you know how

The American Nyckelharpa Association

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

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

ANA Web Page

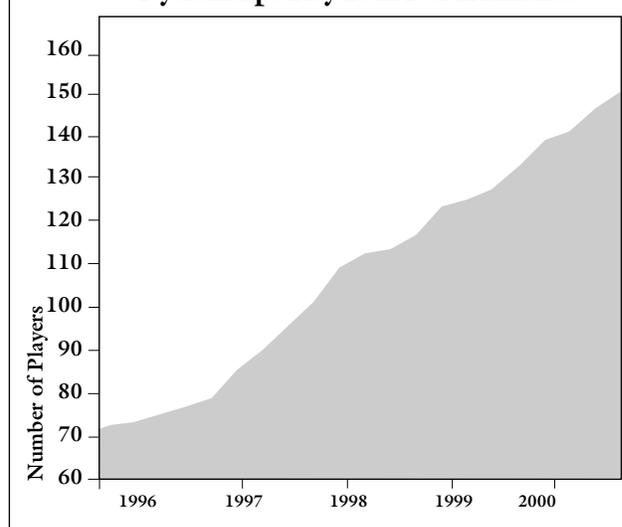
Source of information about the nyckelharpa, nyckelharpa players, a history of the instrument, nyckelharpa events and more! The URL is: <http://www.nyckelharpa.org>

Nyckel Notes

Published quarterly, edited by Bart Brashers and Matt Fichtenbaum. Send submissions to *Nyckel Notes* at the address below, or to: nyckel.notes@nyckelharpa.org

The American Nyckelharpa Association
PO Box 661, Lahaska PA 18931-0661

Nyckelharpa Players in North America



much time they leave over for hobbies.

Tim Newcomb, who has for the last few years helped produced the newsletter, has volunteered to handle the back issues. Together with Rita Leydon, he will also serve as treasurer and maintain the membership database.

Bart will continue to serve as webmaster and on the board (if nominated and elected) but we need a new newsletter editor! The editor is responsible for the newsletter's content, including soliciting submissions, selecting articles, determining their order, and seeing that the issues comes out in a timely fashion. Tim will continue to do the mechanics of producing and printing the newsletter, and handle the mailing. Matt Fichtenbaum, as well as others, will continue to write articles, as inspiration strikes them. We need someone who can gently twist the arms of potential writers, and have the vision to put together a newsletter that serves our members well.

Nominate Two Board Members

It's time to nominate two board members for the ANA board. The terms of Bart Brashers and Tim Newcomb will be up at the end of December 2000. Both can be re-nominated if so desired, since this is currently Bart's third term and Tim's first. According to the ANA bylaws, a person can only serve five consecutive terms on the ANA board. A ballot will appear in the November issue of the newsletter. Please send nominations to:

ANA Nominations
PO Box 661
Lahaska PA 18931-0661

Or e-mail nominations to ana.info@nyckelharpa.org