

Music article

From a homeless street musician in Nashville to a top-selling artist in Sweden - The remarkable story of Doug Seegers (by J. Granstrom)

In the previous newsletter, we covered Jill Johnson's highly celebrated TV show "Jills veranda (Jill's Porch)", where she invites Swedish artists to visit her in Nashville to make music and learn more about different aspects about life in the American Deep South. In one of the most popular episodes during the first season of the show in 2014, Johnson and her guest Magnus Carlson - singer of the popular Swedish band "Weeping Willows" which has collaborated with Oasis member Andy Bell on several occasions - met the 62-year old homeless street musician Doug Seegers who was performing on a park bench in Nashville. A street vendor recommended Johnson and Carlson to check out Seegers, and both were immediately impressed by Seeger's voice. He tells them that he "lives in a place where he doesn't have to pay rent - under a bridge", and then brings them out to a church where homeless people are offered free food and clothes. During the visit, Seegers plays his own song "Going Down To The River", which impressed Johnson and Carlson so much that they returned some time later and offered to record the song with Seegers in Johnny Cash's old studio in Nashville.



Seegers with Johnson at the Swedish TV show "Allsång på Skansen"



Seegers with Johnson on the cover of their joint album "In Tandem"

Seegers became an overnight sensation in Sweden after the episode was broadcast, and "Going Down To The River" was number 1 on the Swedish iTunes charts for 12 consecutive days. He was offered a recording contract with Lionheart Music Group resulting in the release of his debut album, also titled "Going Down To The River", which reached number 1 on the Swedish sales charts. Seegers has performed the song on many of Sweden's biggest TV shows, including "Allsång på Skansen". Seegers released four more top 10 albums in Sweden - including the joint #1 album "In Tandem" with Johnson - between 2015 to 2017. In 2018, his autobiography "Going Down to the River: A Homeless Musician, an Unforgettable Song, and the Miraculous Encounter that Changed a Life" was released in the United States. The book tells the story of how within days of "Jill's veranda" being aired - even though Seegers still walked to the public library every day and acquired most of his belongings from nearby dumpsters - he had a number-one selling song in Sweden. He continues to release songs and played the prestigious Take Root Festival in Holland in November 2019. Seegers' life story is truly remarkable, and gives all those who struggle hope that it is never too late for a dream to come true, regardless of how distant it may seem.