

Message from your President - Corina Laws

Dear New Sweden members,

Happy Fall.

I hope you are looking forward to the rain and the cooler weather here in the Pacific Northwest, I know I am, especially with the rather warm summer we just went through. It's time to stay inside and watch re-runs of the Scandinavian Stories on Sunday that were produced earlier this year. We are still interested in creating more if anyone has a story to tell. We have a creative event in November, a gingerbread house painting class with one of our talented members (Rayna Flye) teaching the class. Lucia is in the works and we should have some information soon. ScanFair will be at Nordia House this year and we have a table to sell some of our dala horses (painted by Nancy Tingley), split pea soup (good for the upcoming winter) and opportunity to chat with you, so if you get a chance please stop by and say hi. It is a much smaller event but we are happy to have the opportunity to do some shopping and hopefully eat some yummy baked goods.

Stay well everyone

A thousand thanks,
Corina



Astoria Nordic Heritage Park Construction

The Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Association has raised \$1.5 million in donations, pledges and promises they needed to build the Astoria Nordic Heritage Park. In support of the planned park, New Sweden donated \$500. Our name will be inscribed on a bronzestone plate. The plates will outline the main plaza and a path through the park. The accompanying picture is how the plate will appear. Construction will begin in the fall of 2021 and will take 4-6 months to complete. A dedication is scheduled to happen preceding the 2022 Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival scheduled for June 17-19 2022.

Membership News and Notes (by Ute Munger)

New Sweden welcomes Karen Carlson Eckart, Larissa Forseth and Mary Englund.

The Board of New Sweden voted to raise the membership dues on January 1, 2022* to the following:

Basic/Single	\$25.00
Senior couple (both 65 +)	\$40.00
Household/Family (children under 12)	\$45.00

Members who have reached the golden years of 80 in 2021 are considered lifetime members and are relieved of dues.

*Please note that membership dues are asked to be paid each year in January.

This will be my last year as Membership Chair and I thank all you lovely people who helped me navigate in this position. I'll be moving on to other duties, returning to old hobbies or maybe even spending time developing new ones.

Wishing you all a most joyous and hopeful holiday season and a healthy new start into the year of 2022.

Hej då och ha det bra,
Ute Munger

Info of New Sweden members that didn't make it into the 2021-22 Directory

Courtnee & Mark Averskog

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Mary Englund

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Larissa Forseth

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Harrskog

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New Sweden Cultural Heritage Society
PO Box 80141
Portland, OR 97280

Swedish conversation group:

Come join a fun Swedish conversation group. The group meets once a week for 40 minutes. For more info contact Ross Fogelquist at ross@fogelbo.com or phone 503 244 3697.

How Jacin Harter brought Kubb to Portland (by Kristi Gustafsson)



Jacin Harter playing kubb on Nov. 24th 2019



Ute Munger and Jacin

When Jacin Harter lived in Hawaii, a friend told him about a lawn game she'd learned in college with the funny name of kubb. Intrigued by her description, he researched the game on-line and bought a set learning the rules that came with the game. He tried to create interest in the game in Hawaii but was unsuccessful. A few years after moving to Portland, in 2019 Jacin started the PDXkubb facebook page and again began working to promote kubb ultimately leading him to connect with the Nordic community and to join New Sweden. Jacin admits he wasn't aware that the game of kubb is thought to have had its origins in Sweden - at least according to Swedes.

Jacin says what attracts him to the game is that it's so accessible, easy to learn, can be adapted to people of all ages, and most importantly it's a great way for people to come together and have fun. He added "while it's a team competition you are actually competing against yourself." Jacin finds the unpredictability of how a thrown baton can do unexpected things, depending on the ground surface, adding fun to the game.

With covid restrictions, Jacin considers it a good time to promote kubb which is usually played outside and allows for social distancing. While many consider Jacin the initiator of Portland kubb, he recently connected with Josh Johnson (Danish heritage), the managing partner of Binary Brewing and Uptown Beer Company on SW Scholls Ferry Rd. He learned Josh and his father tried to get kubb started in Portland ten years ago and even made custom kubb sets. Encouraged by Jacin, this fall Josh started Monday evening kubb games in an outside covered area in front of the Beer Company which has been well received by the community and patrons, as well as some of the regular Nordic kubb players.

How Jacin Harter brought Kubb to Portland (by Kristi Gustafsson)



Jacin would like to see more people from around the area and diverse groups play kubb. At the "Kubb at the Beach" event in August, promoted by PDX Kubb, New Sweden and Finlandia Foundation, many people curious about the game stopped to play. "People who try it, catch the bug and come back again and again," Jacin says.

Looking to the future, Jacin would like to see the interest in kubb grow and for Portland to eventually host a large national tournament. Currently, most of the tournaments are in the Midwest with the national tournament in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. In 1995, the first World Kubb Championship was held on Gotland in Sweden.

Currently kubb is played at 11:00am, the first and third Sundays of the month, at Nordia House, 8800 SW Oleson Rd., Portland. New players are welcome!

Events in review: Kubb in Cannon Beach and at Nordia House (by Stefan Nornholm)

I had an wonderful time playing Kubb in Cannon Beach on 08/14. Good people & a lot of fun.



I also had a great time playing kubb in the 2021 Inaugural Nielsen Jeweler's Nordic KUBB Challenge Cup arranged by Nordic Northwest (NNW) at Nordia House on September 11th. My friend Lindsay & I were team Odin's Ravens & Lindsay had made our team some really cool team shirts, which can be seen in the pictures (She was Muninn & I was Huginn, which are the names of Odin's two ravens). We didn't win at NNW, but had a lot of fun, which is what it's all about. After the tournament we had a wonderful "KUBB a Que" (bbq) together at Fogelbo. I also got to speak a lot of Swedish today & I won a \$25 gift certificate to Broder Söder in a drawing at our "KUBB a Que".



Lindsay and Stefan at NNW on Sep. 11th

My first orienteering events (by Tanaka Axberg)



Tanaka Axberg, Kristi Gustafson and Carina Cassim.



Tanaka, Carina and Carina's friend Bruce Peterson received instructions on how to use the map.



Carina finds a hidden marker

The first time I heard the word orienteering I had no idea what it was. Before COVID, Kristi Gustafson asked me to get information about the events to see if it was something that would interest New Sweden members. I started finding out more about orienteering and the different groups involved. Most importantly, I discovered orienteering started in Sweden in 1886 at the Swedish Military Academy in Karlberg, and the word orienteering is Swedish for orientation.

As I was doing my research, I was getting a little intimidated because some of the people in the pictures looked serious. In my mind I was picturing a group of people all lined up and taking off at the sound of the starting gun with me being trampled and left behind in the dust, literally. Thankfully I was wrong about all of it.

Recently with things starting to open Kristi asked me if I would be interested in joining an orienteering event in Estacada, Oregon on September 26. Because Kristi asked me and because I'm up for trying anything new once, I agreed, and I was very happy I did. The orienteering event was a lot of fun and nothing like I had imagined.

The event took place at the beautiful Milo McIver Park in Estacada, Oregon along the Clackamas River. Our two teams of two people checked in, were given our map and electronic punchers, and we were off. We had to first figure out where north was and how to read the map. Once we had this down it felt like a casual hike through one of Oregon's gorgeous parks while looking for check points along the way.

We started with the yellow course which is the beginner/intermediate course. It was 2.5 kilometers (1.6 miles) with most of the check points on the trail. We finished this in about an hour and a half. Feeling like experts at this point, we decided to do the next course. This was the orange course which is the intermediate course at 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) with most of the check points off the trail. This one was a little bit trickier and took us a just over two hours. We ended up walking/hiking around 7 miles when we were done. Clearly, we were not in a rush to get through the courses and there was never any pressure to finish in a certain time or even finish at all. Granted, there were participants who were doing harder courses or running through the course.

I loved everything about this event. From learning how to read the map, feeling like I was finally getting a proper hike in, and meeting new people. I'm hooked and ended up participating in the October 11 event as well, and will be participating in more of these events in the future.



Tanaka Axberg after the Catherine Creek Classic orienteering event Oct 11, 2021, near Lyle, WA in the beautiful Columbia Gorge. This wonderful event was sponsored by the Columbia River Orienteering Club.

New Sweden event: Gingerbread house painting class on November 13th

New Sweden invites you to "paint" a gingerbread house! Get a jump-start on the holiday season by using paint pens to decorate a metal gingerbread style house which will bring delight for years to come. Open the door and add a candle to bring in light on cold winter nights.

Crafter enthusiast/instructor Rayna Flye will demonstrate the decorating process and provide a template but encourages you to add your own flair to the project. So bring your creativity, power of imagination, and enthusiasm and let's get crafting!

Provided supplies:

- Metal house, pre-painted the color of gingerbread
- White paint pens in medium and fine point
- Clear coating to preserve the paint
- Design template
- Drying stations

You Bring:

- Pencil
- Flat edge for painting straight lines

When & Where: November 13th, 2021, 12:00pm until 2:30pm, at the West Hills Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 8470 SW Oleson Rd., Portland.

Price: \$30 for New Sweden members \$35 for non New Sweden members

Please register online at <https://www.newsweden.org/events/>

Any questions? Contact Kristi Gustafson, kristigus@aol.com, 503-807-9808.

Please come vaxxed, masked, and ready to craft!



New Sweden Lucia video

New Sweden is planning to record and release a Lucia video by December 13th. Please check your e-mail for forthcoming information.



Scanfair 2021 on December 3, 4 and 5

Experience the sights, sounds, tastes, and traditions of the Nordic Holiday season. Scanfair brings Nordic Christmas to Portland through traditional food vendors, locally crafted items, a holiday exhibit, and an exciting raffle!

This year, ScanFair will return with a modified format to fit within Nordia House, Nordic Northwest's campus and Fogelbo. We invite you to join us for this family favorite event. Tickets \$5 for everyone ages 6+ (free for children under 6) can be booked at <https://www.nordicnorthwest.org/tickets>

TOURS
Christmas at Fogelbo Tours

December 17 & 18, 2021
10 AM - 2 PM

10 to 11am
11am to 12pm
12 to 1pm
1 to 2 pm

Tours will be limited to 12 people per one hour time slot.

NORDIC NORTHWEST MEMBERS: \$25
GENERAL ADMISSION: \$30
ALL YOUTHS, 12 AND UNDER: \$10
ARTS FOR ALL: \$5

More information: <https://www.nordicnorthwest.org/fogelbo-tours>



Walk through Fogelbo's indoor winter wonderland this Christmas season. Hear about the history of Fogelbo and the large collection of Nordic antiques. You will not want to miss a chance to see the inside of this registered National Historic Place built by the famed architect Henry Steiner. In Swedish, fogelbo means "bird nest" and is derived from the Fogelquist family name, which means "bird on a branch."

Sweden during World War II

Audio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mq-tc2uR6E>



The boy ran down to the railroad tracks, laughing as he went. The sun illuminated the trees, seeming to smile down on the earth below. As he and his friends approached the train station with smiles on their faces, they heard the loud noise of a train car in the distance. Seeing the people in the car, their eyes lit up, and they smiled and waved as the train car passed. Looking back at them from the train car were men with severe wounds, wearing clothes adorned with Swastikas. They looked tired, defeated. But the children just kept waving and sporting huge grins while the trains drove past, basking in their youthful obliviousness. When most people think of their childhood, they typically recall memories of playing games with their friends on the playground, watching fun shows on T.V., and doing arts and crafts. However, when I asked Hans Lundin, my grandfather, about his experience as a young boy, what I got was a story of war-torn Europe told from a unique perspective. Hans was born in Kumla, Sweden in 1933, making him a person who has witnessed firsthand one of the most fascinating (and controversial) times in Swedish history: World War II. Despite the pressure from other countries to enter into World War II, Sweden decided to stand by its long-standing policy of non-belligerency; one it had adopted during the Napoleonic wars. The country was thus neutral, not belonging to either the Allies or the Axis Powers. "Non-belligerency," however, only meant that Sweden would not fight for either side ("Why Didn't Sweden Join World War 2?"). This is an important distinction to make, given the amount that Sweden became involved with the war in other ways. Although the country was neutral, this was more or less a facade that they could use to justify helping either side depending on how the war was going. Throughout the war, Sweden provided Germany with resources such as iron ore, which is abundant in the country. This was immensely helpful to Germany in their war efforts, and Sweden ended up sending ten million tons of ore per year. Furthermore, German troops were allowed to travel through Sweden into Norway after it was conquered, following much conflict amongst the Swedish government over whether this was the right decision (Rai). Because they had provided so much aid to Germany, many were beginning to question if Sweden was truly neutral or if they should officially join the Axis Powers. Sweden responded by beginning to help the Allies through espionage, increased trade, and letting Jewish refugees into the country.

Friendliness Amidst Mass Destruction: Sweden in World War II (by Calvin Lundin)

Allied aircrews in Sweden during World War II (video):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=853Om16oTPk&t=417s>



By the end of the war, Sweden had seemingly done a complete 180, switching over to the side of the Allies (“Sweden”). Sweden’s neutrality despite their heavy involvement in the war has led some to call the nation cowardly, but Hans uses the term “friendly.” After all, he wasn’t even 10 years old when the war broke out; everything he saw was from the perspective of a young child just growing up. The events Hans witnessed amidst the war paint a clear picture of what Sweden was like at the time: helpful, but maybe too helpful. In December 1939, just before Christmas, he had just moved into a new house that his father had built for him and his family. With the upcoming holiday and the new home, the time should have been happy and hopeful. However, all of this was overshadowed by a huge news story that was breaking: the U.S.S.R. had just invaded Finland, marking the beginning of the Winter War. Though this war only lasted around three and a half months, it was a huge deal to people living in Sweden at the time due to its close proximity. Hans recalls him and his family being “plastered” to their radio, listening for updates. After the war began, Hans got some new friends around his age next door; Finnish children, to be specific. As Finland became unsafe in the midst of the war, Sweden took in Finnish residents, giving them a safe place to stay until the war had blown over. Hans remembers playing with them and having a great time before they went back to their home country. This wasn’t the only instance of Swedish aid he witnessed; he also recalls a time when two U.S. B-17 planes landed in a field in his town of Örebro because of some problems they were having with navigation. Unsure of where they were, they thought they may have been in enemy territory and were ready to blow up their planes, but were relieved to find out that they were in Sweden. Though the people in Hans’ town had helped the Finnish people just a few years before, they were ready and willing to help the lost Americans, who had been fighting against the Axis powers that Finland was a part of. In the field where they had landed, there was some barbed wire at the end. With the wire still there, the field wasn’t quite long enough for the planes to take off and go back to their base in England, so it was taken down. After a few days, the planes were fixed, and the two soldiers took off from the field they had landed in.

Friendliness Amidst Mass Destruction: Sweden in World War II (by Calvin Lundin)

The last story Hans tells me is from the time when German soldiers travelled through Sweden on their railroads, and it's almost haunting to picture. Some of the trains that came through his town were hospital trains that carried wounded soldiers back into Germany, which sounds like a horrible scene to witness to the average person. However, when Hans talks about this, he doesn't make it sound like something violent or scary. Instead, he says him and his friends would go down to the railways

and wave at the wounded Nazis. To a modern-day reader, this sounds almost unimaginable with what we know about the Nazi regime. But in his childhood innocence, Hans just saw them as he would any other person. His outlook on wartime life as a young boy is reminiscent of Sweden's guise of neutrality while they helped countries that were committing horrible acts of violence. Both juxtapose goodness and purity with huge amounts of violence and suffering, displaying the almost unbelievable aspects of war. My interview with Hans was immensely eye-opening; not only to Sweden's position in World War II, but to his life as a whole. Even with how much time I have spent with him, I had never heard any of the stories he told me. Going into the interview, I wasn't sure how much he would remember, but was impressed to see that he remembers countless events with great detail. Though I only wrote about his stories from World War II, I was also told about his experience with moving to the U.S. for the first time, working in many places on construction projects, and racing rally cars all around Europe in the 50s. Over Spring Break, I went to visit him and my grandmother, and got to talk to him about all the stories he had told me. We looked at newspaper clippings from all the rally car races he was in, and I got to hear a super detailed version of when he first came to the U.S. with nothing but one friend and an engineering degree. This had been a long time coming, and I regret not asking him about these stories earlier. I think the main thing I took away from talking to him was how precious our memories are. The stories I got to hear from him were like relics of the past, of a world that I never experienced. I only hope that I can recall events from my own life with the same vividness when I'm his age.



Why was Sweden Neutral In WW2 (video):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Osntnpq4qo>

Works Cited

- 1) Raj, Kaiya. "Was Sweden Really Neutral in World War Two?" History is Now, <http://www.historyisnowmagazine.com/blog?tag=Sweden+during+World+War+Two#.YIDTv2dKiUl>.
- 2) "Sweden." Yad Vashem, https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20206061.pdf.
- 3) "Why Didn't Sweden Join World War 2? (Short Animated Documentary)." YouTube, uploaded by History Matters, 26 September 2019, <https://youtu.be/Dj-YeFjnUMQ>.

**Toasting and Singing Snapsvisor:
A Swedish Tradition (by Göran Rygert)
Submitted by Ute Munger**

What is a Swedish Snaps-Song?

To begin with, to say “Swedish Snaps- Songs” is tautology! All snaps-songs are Swedish. This tradition of writing and singing snaps-songs does not exist outside Sweden and some Swedish-speaking parts of Finland. If you hear a snapsvisa in Denmark or Norway, then you heard a Swedish one or translated from Swedish.

History

The Swedish custom of drinking snaps with a meal is deeply rooted in the souls of Swedes. The tradition goes back to the Middle Ages. The Icelandic sagas described how people drank to Oden and other gods. They drank from the same bowl. There were rules describing how the bowl should be passed around, starting with the oldest man. It was very important that everyone had the same quantity to drink, as they passed the vessel all around the table, or around the company = *laget om – lagom*. From here the Swedish language got its expression “*lagom*,” meaning not too much, not too little, just right!

A French diplomat visited Sweden in 1634 and wrote about a wedding he attended. Everyone had to stand up and drink toasts for the king of France and the queen. Then they had to deliver a long speech for a table neighbor before the toast passed on. Then people started to quarrel about whether they should repeat everything for the king of Spain. Then they started to throw cups and glasses around.

Throwing the stoup away was a tradition. They were mostly made of tin. But soon people started to drink from glasses. When king Erik the fourteenth in 1563 hosted a Christmas party, 174 glasses were crushed. It did not get any better for his brother king Johan the third, who at a party in 1573 had 375 glasses broken.

How much did they drink?

In the 16th century three to four liters of beer (one gallon) was absolutely necessary every day. Rich people drank more because they also drank wine.

What did they drink?

Beer was the center of all kinds of events.

Wine was a luxury. Water was not a good choice because it was rarely clean. In a book printed in the 18th century, a farmer wrote: “Water is drunk by all dumb animals that rarely get anything else to drink.” Coffee and tea did not show up in Sweden until in the end of the 18th century. In the 15th century, alcohol was used only for the manufacturing of gunpowder. But 100 years later it became a luxury beverage, at first as medicine. It was considered good for everything. In the 18th century snaps became more and more common and, of course, the drunkenness increased, and so did the number of restaurants. In 1754, the number of restaurants, inns, and taverns in Stockholm was 723, equal to one of every 79 residents. In 1829, five-and-a-half gallons of alcohol per inhabitant were produced in Sweden – moonshine not included. In the countryside, everyone was treated with a so-called morning-bite at 3:00 a.m. This breakfast consisted of a piece of bread and a snaps that normally was at least 10 cl – 3.3 ounces. The farmer himself then treated himself with a snaps or two with every meal.



Toasting and Singing Snapsvisor: A Swedish Tradition (by Göran Rygert)

Toasting rituals

The word “skål” probably came from the Low German language: “enes schale drinken,” which means to drink to someone’s prosperity. It was extremely important to a person to accept a toast that was dedicated to him. Refusing could have ill-fated consequences. A story from the 17th century tells about a man at a restaurant in Stockholm’s Old Town who got killed with a knife after he refused to accept a toast from a “friend.” Carl von Linné (Linneaus) describes in a book how he, while visiting a farm, had to drink a “welcome toast,” a full drinking-glass that must be emptied. Linné felt like “his stomach was about to burst, his head to crack and the health and all life’s pleasure to say goodbye”.



The singing

When toasting, look straight into the eyes of the other person. Do not clink glasses.

Early Greeks and Romans sang to the toast. Even Swedes have been singing to the toast for 500 years. Many songs came from German immigrants who brought manners and customs, such as maypoles and Walpurgis Night bonfires. But nowhere in the imported songs, not even in Bellman’s production, is the word “snaps” mentioned. That word is found for the first time in 1799. Then, in the 19th century, snaps became Sweden’s favorite beverage and the snaps song was born. And the snaps songs are not only typical Swedish – they are uniquely Swedish. You find them in Sweden – and the parts of Finland where Swedish is spoken – but not in Denmark and Norway, other than a few snaps songs translated from Swedish.

In the first half of the 19th century the snapses were numbered, Helan, Halvan, Tersen, Kvartern, etc., followed by the expansion of this systematics. Today no less than 20 snapses are numbered and entitled.

The singing of snapsvisor became extremely popular because it increases the atmosphere of the party and has a nice side-effect: you drink less because you are busy singing! So, the singing is more important than the drinking. The unwritten rule is that you don’t drink until you have first sung a snaps song. You don’t even touch your glass before the first snaps song is executed!

What makes a good snapsvisa?

There are five important components:

1. It must be written to a well-known melody so everyone can sing along. No sheet music should be used. Melodies can be children’s songs, folk-melodies, and popular songs.
2. Each syllable must follow the music exactly.
3. It should be funny, with a joke, and put into rhyme.
4. It must be easy to learn and remember.
5. It must be short – the snaps is waiting!

Toasting and Singing Snapsvisor: A Swedish Tradition (by Göran Rygert)

Toasting ...

How to toast and how to drink

There are some, mainly unwritten, rules for how to toast. A foreigner described the Swedish toasting technique in a book in these words: "With your best Sunday look, you lift your glass up to a level of an imaginary third uniform button, while starring the person you are toasting within the white of his eyes. After doing this, you are allowed to drink, but you still have to look straight into the other person's eyes.



When done toasting, put your glasses down, don't look at each other anymore!

Then you can put down the glass. Everything must be with a facial expression of ceremoniously pleasant gravity, that for many foreigners would take years to learn."

These are some of the rules, actually still strictly followed at formal, full-dress dinners, but otherwise very relaxed, if at all practiced. For instance, most women will not hold back toasting with a man.

- DO NOT touch your glass before the host takes hold of his, proposing a welcome toast.
- Men are supposed to toast with the lady on his right.
- DO NOT toast with the host. No one is allowed to toast with the host.
- DO NOT toast with the hostess if there are more than eight at the table.
- Never clink with your glasses!

A lady never toasts with her cavalier.

Cold and freezing cold beverages effectively kill any taste. If you are having a Budweiser or any other tasteless beer it does not matter, because you are not drinking it for the taste – you could as well drink water. But, if you like a good beer, like an ale from a microbrewery, DO NOT chill it too much. It should not be colder than about 55-60° F, otherwise it will lose its taste. Same with the snaps: do not serve it colder than about 50-55° F, and DO NOT put it in the freezer! If you enjoy a nicely spiced snaps you will effectively lose the taste if you serve it frozen. But if you are drinking a cheap vodka or moonshine, then you should serve it as cold as possible.

For the same reason – the taste – always drink the beer from glasses and not too cold. You never drink wine from the bottle, so why drink beer from the bottle? Microbreweries understand it. If you come to taste their brew they always serve it in glasses.

Finally, here is a good snaps-song, first in Swedish and then in an English, singable translation. The melody is "She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain."

//: *Du ska få mitt gamla snapsglas när jag dör. ://*

*När jag reser mig ur askan
dricker jag direkt ur flaskan.*

Du ska få mitt gamla snapsglas när jag dör.

//: *You'll inherit my old shot-glass when I die. ://*

*When my mortal time elapses
I'll be swigging all my snapses.*

You'll inherit my old shot-glass when I die.



With kind permission to reprint from - Göran Rygert, Vasa Drängar, Atlanta, Georgia



Sören von Malmborg



Avicii



Alan Walker



"My Song" by K-bird

From Avicii to K-bird - The works by music engineer Sören von Malmborg (by J. Granström)

Sören von Malmborg is widely regarded as one of Europe's most prominent mixing and mastering engineers. His career spans over 25 years and covers international artists from Ace of Base and the late Avicii to Alan Walker, whose multi platinum selling hit single "Faded" was the first non US/UK song to hit the milestone of one billion streams on Spotify and has tallied a staggering eight billion streams on all streaming platforms combined. Sören was born in Lycksele in Northern Sweden in 1966, and started out as an independent keyboard player and programmer in the 1980's. Other than international artists singing in English, he has also worked with a lot Swedish artists singing in their native tongue, from Veronica Maggio to Oskar Linnros and Daniel Adams-Ray, who will star in the new season of the Swedish TV program "Så mycket bättre (So Much Better)" this autumn. You can read more about "Så mycket bättre" on page 15 of this newsletter.

An important part of Sören's job is also to provide his services to upcoming artists. One example is K-bird (Katti von Sparr), whose new releases "My Song" and "I Don't Want To Get Over You" were mastered by Sören and have received tons of praise from the independent digital music press in Sweden. The songs have been selected for several playlists, including Hymn and MusicLover, and "My Song" was also selected by Keep Walking Music as one of "The Big Seven" new songs that "definitely deserve more attention than Justin Bieber". The songs were written by K-bird with production by K-bird and Andreas Grube, who has previously worked with Carola and written music for a number of Swedish movies and TV series. Both songs feature K-bird's characteristic sound, combining heartfelt vocals with beautiful strings and heavy drums or a strong beat into bombastic yet intimate pop. "I Don't Want To Get Over You" in particular conveys a soulful Swedish sentimentalism following in a proud tradition by other female artists such as Jennie Löfgren, Lisa Miskovsky and Molly Sanden of "Husavik" fame. K-bird's previous release "Oh Anna" was also featured in Swedish media, including the Swedish National Radio channel P3 and digital magazine Popmani. K-bird has also released a scaled down version of Whitney Houston's "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" on youtube. The cover was arranged by K-bird with Linnéa Lundgren and Amanda Hofman-Bang, who also played the strings on K-bird's new releases. Only time will tell if K-bird will follow in the footsteps of some of the other artists who have worked with Sören, and subsequently become one of the most prominent artists in Sweden and beyond.



K-bird performing "I Wanna Dance With Somebody"



Helen Sjöholm played the title role in the musical "Kristina från Duvemåla" by the ABBA guys.



Helen released the album "En ny tid (A New Time)" in 2020. A tour will follow this autumn.

"A New Time" - The exquisite Sjöholm/Palmgren/Järpehag collaboration (by J. Granström)

Helen Sjöholm is one of Sweden's most beloved singers and actresses. She got her big breakthrough when she originated the title role in the musical "Kristina från Duvemåla" by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus of ABBA fame. The musical became a huge success, and has been seen by over one million people in Sweden, Norway and some Swedish-speaking parts of Finland. The musical has also been performed in Minnesota and the prestigious Carnegie Hall in New York City in September 2009, with Helen reprising her the role as Kristina. She has recorded several albums, both as a solo artist and in Benny Andersson's Orchestra (BAO). With BAO, she released the song "Du är min man (You Are My Man)" which stayed on the weekly record chart Svensktoppen - which first aired on Swedish national radio in 1962 - for a record-breaking five years. Recently she participated in the 2020 edition of the Swedish TV4 show "Så mycket bättre (So Much Better)", which is one of Sweden's most popular TV shows. In the show, both established and upcoming artists interpret each other's songs and get to know each other better during a few summer weeks on Gotland.

During her first 25 years as an artist, Helen never recorded a solo album with brand new songs. That changed in September 2020, when her new solo album "En ny time (A New Time)" was finally released. The album was loved by the fans, and it was recently announced that Helen will tour Sweden during the autumn of 2021. For "En ny tid", Helen worked together with a songwriting team matching her own diversity, experience and creative range. The most senior songwriter on Helen's album is probably Andreas Mattsson, who got his big breakthrough in the Swedish Indie ("Swindie") band Popsicle with the hit "Not Forever" around the same time that Helen Sjöholm and Peter Jöback got their big breakthroughs in "Kristina från Duvemåla" in 1995. Peter originated the role of Robert in "Kristina" before embarking on a career in musical theater which landed him the title role in "Phantom of the Opera" on Broadway in 2013. However, prior to his international stardom, Jöback recorded a number of chart topping albums in Sweden, including "Det här är platsen (This Is The Place)", which included several songs co-written by Mattsson. This autumn, both Mattsson and Jöback will be featured in the new season of "Så mycket bättre", which will again air on Swedish TV4.



Mattsson and Jöback in the new season of "Så mycket bättre"



Paulina Palmgren and Jonatan Järpehag

Paulina Palmgren's new album

Selma's saga

Most of the songs on Helen's "En ny tid" album were written by Jonatan Järpehag and/or Paulina Palmgren, who had already collaborated on multiple projects for several years prior to writing the songs for Helen's album. Paulina performed on the Swedish TV3 show "True Talent" in 2011, and followed it up with a number of critically acclaimed solo albums. Her new album "Paradiset & Jorden (Paradise & Earth)" was not an exception, with one reviewer raving about Paulina's ability to combine an eclectic mixture of influences and sounds into unpredictable, poetic and exciting pop. An important part of Paulina's sound can be attributed to her partner Jonatan Järpehag, who has worked with Paulina on a number of her albums and other projects. In addition, Jonatan is also a prolific soundtrack composer, including music to the Swedish National TV (SVT) Christmas Show "Julkalendern - Selma's Saga" in 2016. Julkalendern is one of Sweden's most popular TV shows for children, and has aired annually from (around) December 1 until Christmas Eve, featuring a new story every year since the first season in 1960. Järpehag's versatility as a composer was further highlighted with his soundtrack for the short movie "From Bagdad to the Kiosk" about the exciting and often dangerous life of Tariq Alkhizais, who plays Karim in commercials for the Swedish cell phone service provider Comviq. The short movie features a score which perfectly captures the wide range of locations and emotions in the story. Järpehag also performs and produces songs with the critically acclaimed band Karakou.

For Helen's album, Paulina and Jonatan wrote an exquisite collection of songs, including the title track "En ny tid (A New Time)". In the song, Helen mirrors her own emotions about her home town Sundsvall in Northern Sweden. In a 2017 interview for "Svenska Yle", the Finnish-speaking part of Finland's public broadcasting company, she talks about how much her home town has meant to her. Sundsvall was a very active music town in the 1970's and 80's, which gave Helen ample opportunities to perform. She still has a lot of her family up there, and would probably move back if her husband was willing to move away from their current home in the Stockholm area. In a way, the song "En ny tid" expresses some of the sentiments from the song "Hemma (At Home)" that Helen performed in "Kristina från Duvemåla". Although circumstances and distances are dramatically different between the 1840's - when Kristina moved from Sweden to America - and Helen's feelings for her home town in this day and age, the two songs both recognize the importance of one's roots. The strongest song on the album "En ny tid" may possibly be the poetic and melodic treasure that is "Jag är elden (I'm The Fire)". The song starts with a low-key solemnness, with Helen singing to the person standing at "the cliff of hope", before breaking into the big chorus lines "I'm the fire, that can set fire to your forest, you're the river, breaking up my dry soil". With "En ny tid", listeners have gotten to know Helen better, as well as clarifying her connection with the character "Kristina" which once paved the way for her career.