



Ekeborn and Johansson

“Dracula”

“Störst av allt”

Henriksson

Between a hand in heaven and the roots of fear - The songs of Jonathan Johansson and Johan Ekeborn (By J. Granstrom)

Jonathan Johansson has been one of Sweden’s most prominent singer/songwriters in the broad genre of electronic pop during the last decade. His breakthrough came in 2008 with the single “En hand i himlen (A Hand In Heaven)”, and the album with the same title followed in 2009 when he was also nominated as “Best New Artist” at the Swedish Grammy Awards and “Best Artist” in P3 Gold, which is a major music prize from the national Swedish radio station P3. Many of Johansson’s lyrics are characterized by his spirituality, with the music aiming to achieve a kind of dream-like state where the boundaries between our world and the spiritual one become less distinct. Johansson and his musical collaborator Johan Ekeborn are also exploring the roots of fear in their work, especially in their songs for Martin Lyngbo’s musical adaptation of Bram Stoker’s “Dracula”, which was staged at Uppsala Stadsteater in 2012. Unlike many other adaptations of “Dracula”, we never actually see Dracula on stage in Lyngbo’s adaptation. Instead, Dracula is a foreign threat which must be eradicated, and his lines are sung by a choir which instills a fear that grows larger as the story progresses. This can be linked to the rhetoric of the resurging far right in Europe and other parts of the world. Regardless of interpretation, “Dracula” examines the roots of fear against “the unknown” in a suggestive and not overly dramatic way - without using any traditional “vampire kitsch” like blood, vampire teeth or black capes - leaving it to the audience to interpret what Dracula may (or may not) have been.

More recently, Jonathan Johansson wrote Molly Sanden’s song “Rosa himmel (Pink Sky)” for the TV series “Störst av allt (Quicksand)”, released on Netflix in April. It is based on the novel of the same name by Malin Persson Giolito. “Quicksand” is the first original series for Netflix produced in Sweden. A school shooting takes place at a fictitious high school in the affluent Stockholm suburb Djursholm, and the story centers around Maja Norberg - the only person left alive after the shooting following the death of her boyfriend and shooter Sebastian Fagerman - and the underlying reasons why the murder was committed. Ekeborn is also very active at this time, working with Swedish pop stars Linnea Henriksson and Ulrik Munther. Ekeborn has produced Henriksson’s Christmas EP “TILL__FRAN__ (TO__FROM__)” which will be released on November 1. The EP features classical Christmas songs sung both in Swedish and English as well as two brand new songs, where Henriksson shares the hopefulness, nostalgia as well as disappointments of Christmas. The EP will be followed by a Christmas tour throughout Sweden.