

NORDIC-AMERICAN PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET

“A Society dedicated to the education and preservation of the Psalmodikon and Sifferskrift Music”

SUMMER 2015

VOLUME 18, ISSUE 2

Notes from

MUSIC-ON-A-STRING

Beatrice Hole

Here I sit writing another Psalmodikon Newsletter on a hot July day. Just the kind of weather we have been waiting for!

I am looking forward to our next get-together on August 22-23 and hoping many of you will be there. Please R.S.V.P.

The psalmodikon group in Sweden will be having their Annual Meeting on the same weekend as we do. If they decide to visit us in 2016, we will have a very busy year preparing for our guests.

I am sad because this is the last time that my “friendly printer” will be assisting me with the Newsletter, as he has done for many years. Carl and his wife have decided to sell their business and retire. I will be at a loss without his help. As is said, “when one door closes, another opens”.

I will be waiting! Best wishes to Glen Prairie Press!

“May you always have a song in your heart and music at your fingertips!”

ANNUAL MEETING FOR THE PSALMODIKONS

Ruth Gibson has offered to host the Psalmodikon get-together on August 22-23, 2015.

The meeting will be held at the Arden Hills Lutheran Church in Arden Hills, MN, 1700 E. Highway #96. (Intersection of Highway #96 & Highway #10).

The meeting begins at 9:00 a.m. and you may enter at Door “C” of the church. We will have lunch at noon. Coffee and sweets will be available throughout the day.

The psalmodikons have been invited to participate at the 11:00 a.m. worship service on Sunday morning followed by a Brunch at the church.

Everyone is welcome for a day of fun and fellowship if you play the psalmodikon or not. Spouses and friends are encouraged to attend. This is a great time to learn more about the psalmodikon, new songs, or if you have questions on building or repairing a psalmodikon, etc. There are several special topics that we will be discussing on future happenings.

**RSVP to: Ruth Gibson 651-429-5572
ruthlylegibson@yahoo.com**

**Floyd Foslien 715-386-4196
ffoslien@sbcglobal.net**

**Beatrice Hole 952-934-4535
enstrengb@gmail.com**

HUDSON STAR-OBSERVER

Hudson Star-Observer



Jo-An Saathoff plays a psalmodikon, a one-stringed instrument used for teaching hymn singing in churches in Norway and Sweden in the 1800s. Saathoff and Floyd Foslien, in the background, own several of the instruments and are trying to keep the music alive. Both are from Hudson.

On March 28, 2015, Concordia Language Village's Norwegian language immersion programs (Skogfjorden & Barnehage) hosted a Mini Norwegian Village at the Middle School in Hudson, WI. Joan Saathoff and Floyd Foslien of Hudson, WI participated in the free event that was open to the public and the youth. This event offered interactive activities and information to people interested in Norway and all things Norwegian. This was especially focused on the children of the community.

A large crowd attended and many took part in the activities offered that day.

Dear Beatrice,

My name is Bernard Taylor and I live in Bourmemouth, England.

I came across the Psalmodikon while looking at single stringed instruments and thought it would be fun to make one.

The attached photo shows the result. I drew my own plans by scaling photos from the internet, so dimensions may be a bit off. It is 32-1/2" long, by 3-1/2" wide and 2" high. The body is made of various woods that I bought from hobby shops. The fret board has 26 frets and is mahogany. The single .016" string is tuned to G.

What a beautiful sound it makes, particularly when bowed. I shall now have to take some time to learn to play properly.

I hope that this is of interest to you.

Best Regards, Bernard



LARS ROVERUD – 1776-1850

FATHER OF NORWEGIAN PSALMODIKON

Lars Roverud, of Norway, a skilled musician and Professor at the Norwegian University of Theological Seminary in Christiania, was one of the original figures, in the period of psalmodikon history. He was very aware of the need to improve singing in the churches. It is not surprising that when Roverud travelled to study in Leipzig in 1819, he became very interested in learning of the Sifferskrift method of writing music. At about this same time, Roverud traveled to Denmark and discovered a “one-stringer” being introduced in the schools. He was very eager and enthusiastic to make his own for possible use in teaching music as well as to promote his own ambition of improving church singing.

We must remember that the idea for the psalmodikon first came from the ancient Greek Philosopher Pythagoras (ca. 570-490 b.c.) who used a monochord instrument for teaching and experiments in music.

Roverud decided to hire Professor Christopher Hansteen, a mathematician, to measure the fret board in half-step increments and then put numbers 1-7 above the frets. Roverud then used (Sifferskrift) a numbering system to play the psalmodikon by number instead of musical notes. He also developed four long, flat boards (transposition tables) for a greater range of notes. Roverud constructed larger instruments, Tenor and Bass to supplement the Alto and Soprano psalmodikons for use with 4-part music.

Roverud being an energetic type of fire soul, went on to introduce the psalmodikon to the State Church of Norway. In 1835 he received official permission and authorization from the Foundation of Education of the Royal Resolution, to use the psalmodikon for the betterment of church singing. He also received a grant and was commissioned to teach psalmodikon in the Gudsbrandsdalen parish and larger cities such as Christiania. Because this instrument was easy to build and play the psalmodikon was received with much enthusiasm from both children and adults.



If you see a psalmodikon with “transpositional sticks”, it is most likely one of the early/authentic Norwegian psalmodikons. The transpositional sticks were never used with the Swedish psalmodikons. The Norwegian hymns are written to indicate which transpositional stick to use with each song.

In order for the power of tradition and handcraft to bind together the past, present and future, it only works if those involved in teaching and practicing feel the responsibility to pass on the handcraft. For without that sense of importance, folk art would quickly die out because it no longer serves the everyday purposes it used to. We should view tradition as "a transfer of responsibility for a valued practice or performance."

A Journey Beyond the Ordinary

(translated from Psalmodika, the Swedish Psalmodikon Newsletter)

Some of you are interested in travel to Minnesota and meet Beatrice Hole and her group in our sister association, ie USA Psalmodikonforbundet. I have proposed early June 2016. Departing the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th and be in Minnesota 5-7 days. We take instruments (not required) and play according to the program from Hole. Later plans to tour Wilhelm Moberg's emigrant places and perhaps a tour of Minneapolis/St. Paul. Please come with suggestions about other places that we should visit together so that everyone is happy and satisfied. Minnesota is the most Swedish of all states. You must see to appreciate. Within the Board we are naturally very happy if we know as soon as possible who's interested. Then we can start planning, rather than wait until the Annual Meeting in Linköping on August 22-23, and discuss further. Beatrice is also waiting to find out how many will be coming so she can plan a great program to be announced in their November 2015 Newsletter publication.

Goran Carlstom

ITEMS FOR SALE

PSALMODIKON SONGBOOK

Written in Sifferskrift and 4-part harmony for psalmodikons **\$19.00 pp**

PSALMODIKON QUARTET CD

\$15.00 pp

Send orders to:

Singsaas Lutheran Church

Attn: Music CD's

P. O. Box 87,

Hendricks, MN 56136

<http://www.countrychurchmusic.com>

PSALMODIKON COMPONENTS

Psalmodikon Pattern	\$10.00
Tuning Peg	3.75
String	1.25
Fine tuner w/tailpiece	17.75
Maple fret board w/frets	30.00
Sitka spruce top material	
Small psalmodikon	17.00
Tapered psalmodikon	22.00
Cherrywood violin bow	28.00
Rosin	5.00

Send orders to: Floyd Foslien

567 High Ridge Drive, Hudson, WI 54016

www.fffoslien@sbcglobal.net

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The mailing label on your newsletter indicates your current membership status.

The dues are \$8.00/year which support the printing and postage of the Newsletter.

Membership in the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet

In a capsule, the mission statement, clearly states a compelling reason why we join, support and remain members of this unique organization.

“A Society dedicated to the education and preservation of the Psalmodikon and Sifferskrift music.”

In the age of Hip Hop, Rap, I-Pods – you name it; to enter the world of the psalmodikon is like a breath of fresh air! What people of many years ago discovered in a simple instrument has now enjoyed a renaissance. In the eighteen years since the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet was founded, its membership has grown from a handful of interested persons to its current membership of almost seventy-five and geographically spans the country from Maine to California, Oregon to Texas, Minnesota to Georgia and many, many points between.

The Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet has been recognized as a genuine organization, as evidenced in 2005 the awarding of a grant from the Sons of Norway Foundation, for the purpose of compiling a songbook, written in Sifferskrift and four-part harmony for psalmodikons.

Recognition is far reaching in that we are allied with a sister organization in Sweden and one of the N/A Psalmodikon psalmodikons has found a home in the Norwegian Emigrant Museum in Ottestad, Norway.

What might the future hold? We have tried to develop interest in the psalmodikon through demonstration,

education, individuals getting together just for the joy of playing this unique music together, instructional videos, and tape recordings.

In 2008 a CD was made of psalmodikon songs by the Psalmodikon Quartet. Musicmakers Kits in Stillwater, MN sells psalmodikon kits to make your own. A Psalmodikon Newsletter is published three times a year and we also maintain a web site and hold annual meetings.

What else we might do to be sure of continuation of the organization and expand its outreach? Just dream a little bit – we know that there are psalmodikons residing in attics, storage rooms and would it not be a wonderful project to discover more of the instruments to learn of their history and to make sure of their preservation.

Some of our members are skilled in the making of psalmodikons and we could assist new members in developing their playing skills or making their own instrument. We could approach college and school music departments (such as the Hardanger Fiddle Organization has done) which could introduce the psalmodikon to a new generation of young persons. What else can you think of that would be of value to the organization? Let us know.

The modest annual membership fee is \$8.00 per year. Your interest and support is valued and we treasure your continued help in the realization of our mission statement.

You may send your dues to: Beatrice Hole, 6560 Leesborough Ave., Eden Prairie, MN 55346

**NORDIC-AMERICAN
PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET**



MUSIC-ON-A-STRING
Beatrice Hole
6560 Leesborough Ave.
Eden Prairie, MN 55346-2823

Psalmodikon website: <http://www.psalmodikon.com/>

**Norwegian Table Prayer
Skogfjorden**

4 -- 4	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">1</p> <p>Å <i>Oh</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">1</p> <p>du <i>you</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">1</p> <p>som <i>who</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">1</p> <p>met - ter <i>feeds the</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">6+</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">6</p> <p>li - ten <i>lit - tle</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">6</p> <p>fugl <i>bird</i></p>
	For <i>For</i>	hel - se <i>health</i>	and <i>and</i>	gle - de <i>joy</i>	and <i>and</i>	dag - lig <i>dai - ly</i>	brød <i>bread</i>

5	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">4</p> <p>Vel - sign <i>Bless</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">4</p> <p>vår mat <i>our food</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">4</p> <p>å <i>O</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">3</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">4-4-4</p> <p>Gud. <i>God.</i></p>
	Vi <i>We</i>	tak - ker <i>give</i>	deg <i>you</i>	å <i>dear</i>	Gud. <i>Lord.</i>