

Northern California Spelmanstag News

Promoting Scandinavian Folk Music and Dance

January, 2011

San Francisco Bay Area Scandia Festival 2011

February 18 – 20
Petaluma, California

Presenting dance and music from Northern Sweden
Featuring:

Swedish dance teachers
Sven & Britt-Marie Olsson

Swedish musicians
Andströms
Mats, Ulf, and Nils Andersson
Anders Hällström

plus, party night extra
Gunnar Nordlinder & Karen Petersen

Dance Teachers: Britt-Marie and Sven Olsson return to share some of their favorite dances of Northern Sweden. Their outstanding dancing and teaching ability has taken them on numerous teaching engagements in Europe, the USA and most recently a teaching engagement in Japan. They earned their big silver in Polska dance more than 20 years ago. In recognition of Sven's interest, knowledge and dance ability, he was appointed one the three judges for the Polska Medal Testing or Uppdansning where he judges hundreds of dancers each year. We look forward to another visit by these two charming teachers.

About the band: From Central/Northern, Sweden, Andströms are Mats, Ulf, and Nils Andersson and Anders Hällström. They are on their Swedish Folk Band Bay Area, USA Tour 2011. The need to make music is a serious addiction and Andström has a very bad case of polska obsession! Andströms' music is the traditional dance music of Sweden, mainly from the provinces of Jämtland, Medelpad, and Norrbotten. The music is lively, intricate, and just plain fun to hear and dance to. Mats and Ulf Andersson are energetic fiddlers who both

hold the prestigious title of Riksspelman, or national fiddler. The brothers grew up in Föllinge, where they were taught by Jämtland tradition-bearers. Anders Hällström is a talented multi-instrumentalist from Överkalix who specializes in fiddle and accordion. The three have played together for many years, teaching and performing together at the Föllingeveckan folk music week and other events. Now they are joined by Ulf's son, Nils, on bass. Already an outstanding musician, Nils has the polska heart-beat in his blood. Investigate their MySpace page: <www.myspace.com/andstroms>.

Party Night Extra: Gunnar Nordlinder & Karen Petersen join us from Sweden to play music during evening parties. Gunnar specializes in harmonica and Karen in various stringed instruments. They are the backbone of the Sunday music and dance scene in Stockholm. Gunnar is a Rikspelman in Harmonica and can teach harmonica on request.

Registration Information: The weekend package includes: • Dance Workshops Saturday and Sunday. • Music Workshops Saturday and Sunday. • Dance Parties Friday and Saturday nights (open to all). • Saturday and Sunday lunch.

The town of Petaluma, CA is located 35 miles or 43 minutes north of San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge.

Dancers participation at dance workshops is by preregistration only. We will try to keep a good balance

(Continued on page 2)

Newsletter Inside:

A Box from the Basement	2
How did you get started in Traditional Scandinavian dance or music? By Matt Fichtenbaum	3
Internet Sites	6
Regular Events — Northern California	10
Special Events — Northern California	11
Special Events — United States	12
	13

(Continued from page 1) **Scandia Festival**

of men and women, and dance partners will be rotated frequently. Because the number of women dancers admitted is usually limited by the number of men who register, we ask men to register early. The number of dancers is also limited due to space constraints, so register early. You will be notified of your status (In, or Wait-list) with a schedule and list of suggested motels in Petaluma. Dancers of all levels are welcome. However, prior knowledge of the fundamentals of Scandinavian couple turning dance is essential for full benefit.

Musicians' workshops: Part time registration is available for musicians. Teaching will be at the sonic and supersonic levels. Please talk with Marie Kay Hansen about any concerns or special requests.

Contact: <scandiafestival@gmail.com> with any questions about the registration, workshops or special requests. Dancers and Musicians can find the application at:

<<https://sites.google.com/site/scandiafestivalpetaluma/home>>.

Dance Workshops:

Nobi Kurotori and Brooke Babcock, (415) 334-3455, or Mark Wegner and Mary Korn, (510) 527-9209, or Jane and Frank Tripi, (510)654-3636.

Dance Registration: Catherine Miller, (707) 865-9856.

Music Workshops & Registration:

Marie Kay Hansen (209) 836-5494.



Mats, Anders, Nils, Ulf

**The Northern California Spelmanslag News
is published quarterly.**

The NCS News is also online at:

<www.norcalspelmannslag.org>.

Deadline for next issue: April 20, 2010.

Send articles, calendar information, and comments to:

Marie Kay Hansen, editor NCS News,
(209)836-5494, <brizal@comcast.net>, or 15564

A Box from the Basement

I neither play the Scandinavian fiddle nor dance but I am very interested in the music.

Many years ago I bought Sloane's book which has a section on making the Hardanger fiddle. I became interested. I bought a Helland Hardanger fiddle -- a long story, and met a Helland here in Salem who was the son of Knute Helland, a great Hardanger fiddle maker in the early 1900s -- but he died young in 1919.

Because Marvin was two years old when his father died, and his mother remarried and moved to Oregon, Marvin grew up not knowing his heritage. Two days after I met Marvin, he called to say that he had brought a box of family memorabilia up from the basement.

From that box has come an unpublished book, "A Box from the Basement" about the Hellands. I was invited to the AmeriKappleik in Minnesota in 2003 to make a presentation about the book.

I was side tracked by other writing and haven't published the book. It needs much rewriting and editing. But I can make a CD available in PDF -- just for the postage -- if anybody wants a copy. I hope to rewrite the book someday but in the mean time I would like to share the story.

Lew Holt, Salem, Oregon,

<Oregonoldtimefiddling.org>, <Lewholt.com>.

Rancho Ramon Dr., TRACY, CA, 95304-9754

To update Web Page Calendar between issues,
send information to:

Jim Little, (650)323-2256,

<webmaster@norcalspelmannslag.org>,

560 Kingsley Ave, PALO ALTO, CA 94301-3224

Address all other correspondence to:

Northern California Spelmanslag

560 Kingsley Ave, PALO ALTO, CA 94301-3224

How did you get started in Traditional Scandinavian dance or music?

Here is request I have been sending out and passing around. My husband, John Hamilton had the idea. It seems to be popular! It is an ongoing request, so there is time for you to write your story. I, for one, would like to hear everyone's story!

What was your inspiration? What led you in this direction? If you both dance and play the music, what came first, your feet or the fiddle (musical instrument)?

I plan to include the stories in the next few issues of the Northern California Spelmanslag News. This newsletter is mailed, and is also online. You can see the newsletter at: www.norcalspelmannslag.org.

You can write a little or a lot, say 10 – 1000 words. Photos welcome.

Marie Kay Hansen, 15564 Rancho Ramon Dr.,
TRACY, CA 95304-9754, or
brizal1@comcast.net or 209-836-5494.

Good question. I'll look forward to reading others' answers.
Herewith mine.

I moved to Sweden in 1976 to teach electrical engineering at the university in Linköping. It was the height of the folk revival there, when people were reviving things their grandparents had done that their parents had rejected as "not modern."

A month into our stay there, I saw a TV clip from a spelmansstämma, two fiddles and two nyckelharpas. A quick double-take, then "That has to be easier than a violin - I need to know more."

It was the second year that Sweden's highly developed adult education system offered nyckelharpa courses - build your own harpa and learn to play it. And my Swedish wasn't good enough to understand how much work it was going to be, so I signed up.

We were eight Swedes - who had grown up doing woodworking in school - and two Americans in the build-your-own course. With no small amount of help

from the instructor, I came out of the course with a finished harpa. No great instrument, but workable to begin playing. And during the six months of building, I'd been listening to all the traditional music I could find, so I was eager to get started.

The playing course followed the building course. My American classmate and I had good musical background, so we quickly caught up. I had played piano since childhood and guitar in high school and college, but the bow experience was new. Somehow we survived.

That summer, one of the local fiddlers came back from a one-week course with Leif Alpsjö in Österbybruk north of Uppsala. There was one course remaining on the schedule, with two places still open. Off to Uppland. It was a good course - good teachers, solid music, meetings with guest teachers who had their Uppland music in real tradition. A very rewarding week.

That fall there were an abundance of people who'd recently completed their nyckelharpas and were ready to learn to play. There was also a shortage of teachers for the playing classes. And that is how this American, new to the nyckelharpa but highly enthusiastic, came to introduce a delightful group of Swedes to their traditional instrument.

Matt Fichtenbaum

P.S. Playing came first, nyckelharpa and subsequently fiddle. Dancing hasn't happened yet - I'm somewhere between hopeless and dangerous on the dance floor, so I usually hold on to an instrument for dear life. :-)

My wife was an international dancer in high school...late 1960s. We did some square, etc. for several years, and got into scandi around 1983 when we moved to the Norwegian community.

I and my late wife live in a Norwegian community, and got involved with the local Sons of Norway demo group that did turdans. I sought bygdedans, became involved with Folklore Village and their performing group. I now have a little vertigo and turning dances are very hard.

Mike Mudrey ---Wisconsin

How did you get started ... continued

I used to do a lot of contra-dancing, and they always did a hambo after the break. I took several lessons on how to do it, and couldn't quite manage it. One evening, I finally almost got it, thanks to a strong partner. I knew there was a Scandi group in Boulder, and figured they probably did more than one a week, so I went there one evening to get in some more practice.

The dance taught that night was Orsapolska--not really recommended for a starting-point! The music just sort of reached out and grabbed me....I sat there the entire evening, unable to do most of the dances but unable to leave the room. People dragged me onto the floor from time to time, for snoas and waltzes and such.

I went out the next day and found a tape of Swedish folk-music and listened to it obsessively for the next week until it was time for another class. I took the tape with me and told one of the fiddlers about it--he said "Where in the world did you find a tape with Swedish folkmusic?!?" I showed it to him, and he said, "That's Swedish, all right, but it's not what we play." I found this confusing, not realizing how many different styles of music there were--the tape was from Blekinge, in southern Sweden.

I went into the dancing with everything I had. I collected tapes. I practiced in my kitchen. I joined the performing group, made a costume, picked up some Swedish. Then, I heard a nyckelharpa....and it just got worse! I went to camp at Mendocino and met Bart Brashers. He gave me one lesson, and the next thing I knew, I was buying a nyckelharpa!

Alone in Denver with my new instrument, I had to call Bart (in Seattle) to find out how to tune it. He suggested I call Leif Alpsjö, in Viksta, Sweden, and order his course--a book and tape called "Spela Nyckelharpa" (Play the Nyckelharpa). I dialled nervously and explained my quest. "Welcome! Welcome to the Nyckelharpa!" While I waited for my book, I played lots of scales and picked out the usual simple tunes.

Once I had the book, I started learning dance tunes. I had coaching from Mike and Erica about bowing, but other than that was on my own. After I knew a few tunes, I took the harpa to the dance group and nervously played for them. The Boulder group is great for

beginning musicians! They were very encouraging, and yet managed to give useful feedback.

And some less useful...."Your bondpolska sounds more like a hambo." But how to fix it? Another call to Bart....the phone is not an ideal way to get a lesson, but we gave it a try. Gradually, I came to be able to distinguish the different styles. And of course I kept dancing....

I learned Swedish. I went to Sweden, for the week-long nyckelharpa course at Ekebyholm, where I found myself teaching Bingsjöpolska to Swedes! Few of the Swedish players danced. I find it very useful to do both--my dancing informs my playing, and as a dancer I feel I have greater appreciation for the music.

Sheila Morris

In 1976 when I was in 5th grade, my Father had a sabbatical and we lived in Sweden with my Grandmother. He found an adult education course (Vuxenskolan) in how to build the nyckelharpa, and built one. I worked with him on it, and we build another smaller nyckelharpa as a "starter". I played nyckelharpa in the school orchestra for a year starting in 1977, and continued to play very un-seriously for the next 10 years -- mostly around Christmas, when Swedes become the most Swedish.

In 1987 when I finished my B.S. at Cal, I went back to live with my Grandmother for another year. I borrowed a nyckelharpa, and found an informal "course" on Friday nights. I also started dancing that year, with Arboga Folkdansgille. I've been pretty serious about nyckelharpa since then, and to a lesser degree, dancing.

In 1991 I started playing the fiddle, and in 1992 started playing the kontrabasharpa. When I bought a house and had kids, the fiddle playing got pushed to the back burner. It will be there for me when I can come back to it.

These days, I have a band named *Mäd Fiddlu* with Anna Abraham and John Peekstok. We play for dancing and concerts in the Seattle area fairly often. Most of my dancing energy goes toward Family dancing with my kids, Alice (7) and Emmett (4). They've both been dancing with *Barneleikarringen of Greater Seattle* since they were 3 1/2.
Bart Brashers

How did you get started ... continued

I've told this joke when I was playing Hardingfele a few times - "I am not Norwegian, but I grew up in Norway." After the 'oohs' from the audience, I say "Town of Norway, Wisconsin." This is true. When I was a little girl, I was sure that most Americans attended the Norwegian Lutheran Church.

I had been in the elementary school orchestra, but since I was busy with work and raising children, I did not play the violin much again until my forties. I started playing alone, but I wasn't playing well at all.

About six years ago, I found a good classical violin teacher, Joanne Donnellan, who comes from a family of traditional Norwegian Hardanger fiddle players. I acquired a Ron Poast Hardingfele from an estate sale and started to play it with her. I have played Hardingfele a few times for Scandinavian events in Bellingham, Washington.

Through the SCAND list, I came into contact with Carol Olson, who plays Swedish dance tunes on the fiddle. With a few university students, we formed a band, called Dansaspel. We play for dances in Northwest Washington State a few times a year. I play Swedish twin fiddle harmony most of the time, which I enjoy.

I especially like the Swedish approach to fiddling in groups. Unlike the Norwegians, the Swedes don't care if everyone's bow isn't going the same direction all the time. Unlike traditional Irish session groups, where everyone is expected to play identical melody notes together, Swedish fiddlers welcome harmony and improvisation, as long as it blends well and doesn't mess up the dance rhythm.

Liz Gabay

Too late to fit into Calender section:

3/18, 3/19 Fri. & Sat.-- MINNEAPOLIS, MN—Nordic Single Drone Bagpipe Instruction for beginners (pipes furnished) and accomplished pipers sponsored by Norden Folk, Dunn County WI. Noted piper Olle Gallmo from Uppsala Sweden will lead the instruction occurring daily from 8:30--4:30. Lunch is furnished. Advanced Piper workshop will be held at the American Swedish Institute, Turnblad Room on 3/18. The Beginner Piper workshop will be held at Tapestry Folkdance Center on 3/19. Concert & Dance evening at Tapestry Folkdance Center 3/19, 7:30--9:30 p.m. Go to www.nordenfolk.org Workshops have limited enrollment, so sign up early. Contact: grr@nordenfolk.org for additional questions.

We started out in international folk dance, and when everything began to seem the same (hard for us to keep track of differences in regional/national styling, and most people were dancing everything the same) we switched to just our favorites, which included Scandinavian. Fortunately, we had access to a regular Scandinavian dance class. Music came later.--

Carolyn and Wes

How I was seduced into Scandinavian dance:

In 1995 I attended Mendocino Folklore Camp for the first time and it was a wonderful experience. I particularly enjoyed the class taught by Ingvar Sodal and his wife Sally. They are excellent teachers and they taught Rorospols, which is still one of my favorite dances. I spent the whole week trying to master the dance unsuccessfully. I could do it when the teachers were explaining it but lost it as soon as the class was over. Also, I tended to hold on to my partners with a death grip which caused them to turn blue.

Someone mentioned that I could continue learning it at Jane and Frank Tripi's class in the Bay Area – almost my own neighborhood. So here I still am 15 years later. Now I can do Rorospols and many other Scandinavian dances which Jane and Frank have patiently taught us.

Judy Stonefield

When I was 14 years old, confirmed (in the church) and therefore a "licensed grown-up" by the standards in the farming community where I grew up (west of Trondheim, Norway), I wanted to go out and experience some sin. With that in mind, a visit to the local dance hall on Saturday night was the thing to do. My sister Målfrid, who was five years older, thought it would be good for me to learn some dance steps first, so she took me down to the barn and taught me some basic Reinlendar and Waltz. She knew that dancing with the girls inside the dance hall was a lot better for me than being outside getting into mischief with the drunken boys who didn't know how to dance. To quote (loosely translated) the famous Norwegian songwriter Alf Prøysen: "You are safe as long as you keep on dancing, but when you stop anything can happen."

- Ingvar Sodal

About six years ago, Matt wrote this article for the American Nyckelharpa Association. It was originally published in "Nyckel Notes". The article is too long to fit in the paper issue of NCS Newsletter. I have a compromise. I will include the whole article in the online version of NCS News. In the printed version, the first half will appear this issue and the second half in the April issue.

Music as conversation

The energy in a tune comes from the story it tells

by Matt Fichtenbaum

The great fiddler Björn Ståbi, leading a fiddle workshop, once observed that my playing was "mechanical," too closely bound to the rhythmic grid. "A polska is a conversation," he said, "it flows, it pauses, it breathes. It can be insistent, it can be thoughtful. It needs to follow the rhythm, but not so tightly that it stifles the expression." He was telling me that there's more to a tune than just the notes and the basic rhythm. The tune must have something to express and be able to say it.

That's this month's topic: what is it that puts the content and the expression and the excitement into the music you play. Some things to listen for when someone's playing piques your interest, so that you might better understand what makes it interesting. Some parallels between music and other forms of expression, for illustration and to prompt you to think about your music in new ways.

Layers

Imagine the notes of a tune as marchers in a procession, or dancers in a dance. You can stand on the floor amidst them as they pass by, seeing each one close up but never more than a few at a time. Or you can sit in the balcony looking down from a greater distance, farther from the details but able to discern the patterns, the flow, the big picture.

You can listen to a tune and hear it as a sequence of notes. Or you can hear the music on multiple levels, realize that there is a "big picture," a structure, an additional dimension.

Most of the music we nyckelharpists play is dance music, and fundamental to good dance music is that we provide our dancers with a rhythm. That's our first layer. It's necessary, but it's not itself very exciting. The music needs a "shape" as well: it has to lift the dancers or let them down again in step with the dance figures; it has to stir up their energy and then let them relax, along with the phrases. For the dancers, these two levels are sufficient and that's all they hear, the rhythm and the energy.

But we're a demanding lot, we musicians, and we want a melody besides. A tune we can hum to ourselves or hear in our minds, a basis for the harmonies that add so much to this music, a way of distinguishing one bondpolska from another. So we take the melody – our third layer – and drape it over our rhythm and shape.

On top there are all the ways we individualize our music. Ornaments melodic and rhythmic, double-stops, variations from one time through to the next, notes added or left out. There might be more to say on this topic later.

An observation

Regarding a tune as if it's built up of these layers helps to answer a bunch of questions. Why following a particular bowing pattern is of interest (because it forms rhythm and shape, regardless of the specific melody you play with it). What to do when you come to a too-challenging spot in the tune you're playing (leave out some notes, but keep the rhythm because that's what the dancers depend on). How some people effortlessly remember dozens of tunes (only

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6) *Music as conversation*

the melody is unique; the rhythmic structure is common to “all” the tunes for that dance; listen more closely and you’ll even find that the same melodic phrases and snippets turn up in different tunes).

The written word and the spoken word

Consider Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” soliloquy. If you’ve ever seen the play, just the mention of it probably brings it to your mind, as clear as when you first heard it. Now imagine reading the play and seeing the soliloquy. Most likely, you’d read the text and once again hear that memorable performance. But suppose you’d never seen the play, never heard an actor present the text. Suppose the text were read by the same voice that announces the time on the telephone, or by synthesized speech from a computer; it would sound very different. The actor playing Hamlet clearly adds something to Shakespeare’s words. He contributes the phrasing, the dynamics, the stressing of some syllables and the subduing of others, the melody, the emotional content.

It doesn’t take the drama of Hamlet to demonstrate this. When you speak, you don’t present each word with the same emphasis, the same pitch, the same articulation. You speak the words that matter, half-swallow the ones that don’t, emphasize the really important words. You give your speech a shape that conveys the emotion behind it.

As the player, you must similarly turn the notes of a tune into music – expressive, energetic, exciting music. You have the same tools as the actor: phrasing, accenting, dynamics, and variations and details that surprise and delight.

The sung word

A song – music with words attached – is the clearest possible illustration of musical phrasing. The natural flow of the lyrics, the words that are emphasized, the pauses where one breathes all shape the way the tune is played. Consider the march “Skänk en slant åt spelman,” or the waltz “Allt vad du vill, så får du” – the lyrics give their shape to the tune.

Rhythmic excitement

Much of the excitement in music, to my mind, is the subtle differences between what you expect and what you hear. The little rhythmic eccentricities that make notes come a little before or after they’re “scheduled,” the ornaments and other embellishments. For example,

A figure of four sixteenth-notes is often played “slightly dotted,” with the first, or the first and third, notes lengthened (and maybe accented) at the expense of the notes that follow. This is common in schottis tunes, and also found in sixteenth-note polskas, especially on the first beat of a measure.

The first note of a phrase sometimes “starts early,” i.e., begins on the last eighth- or sixteenth-note of the preceding measure and continues over the bar line. Sometimes there’s an extra accent or “push” on the downbeat.

The articulation at the end of a phrase can bring the phrase to a stop, or it can leave a feeling of momentum that naturally leads into the next phrase.

A tune can be played “stately,” where the phrases and the sections within them starting and ending as written, or “leaning forward,” with notes starting early and with phrase endings leading the listener into the next phrase. And it can “swing.” I believe that the degree of “leaning forward” depends on how and when the notes on the beat are played; the “swing” depends on the offbeats, but this is speculative and subjective and your perceptions may differ.

Three items of caution:

While the rhythmic feel of a tune comes from the timing of the notes, it’s a mistake to focus on the precise timing as an end in itself. Carefully playing each note, one at a time, “just when it’s supposed to happen” makes the music sound contrived, spliced together. Instead, use these ideas to understand what you’re hearing when someone plays a tune, but focus on the feel of the music instead, and let your feelings guide how you play. “Easy for you to say,” you

(Continued on page 8)

*(Continued from page 7)***Music as conversation**

might think, but give it time and practice and it will come.

When experimenting with rhythmic variations, don't forget the tempo. Lengthening or shortening a note without a compensating change in a later note will slow down or speed up your music. And if you're playing with others, don't focus so much on what you're doing that you don't notice you're no longer in step with the others.

Don't let local rhythmic variations obscure the rhythm of the tune as a whole. For example, in sixteenth-note polskas like Byggnan or other Byss-Kalle tunes, one should feel a smooth three-beat rhythm. This is achieved with a mild accent on the first sixteenth of each beat while the other notes are played smoothly enough so as not to intrude.

Enough theory. What can you do for your own music?

You can only aim for the goals you know about. The first step is to listen to some music that excites you, and try to understand what's happening in that music that makes it interesting.

For example,

The rhythmic shape. Is it even? Is it asymmetric, and, if so, how? Does it swing?

The accents. Are they on the beats? The offbeats? Both? As an exercise, you might play a march and accent the beats, then play it again, accenting the offbeats, and once more, accenting both the beats and the offbeats (but not the notes in between). Do these different styles inspire you to move in different ways, or to different degrees?

The articulation. Do the notes start sharply, or do they start quiet and swell up? Do they end sharply, or do they fade away? Does the articulation vary throughout the tune, and does the variation follow a consistent pattern?

The layers. Can you hear the basic rhythm below the melody? Can you divide the melody into "foreground" and "background," for example, in a fast tune with lots of notes, do the notes on the beat carry the melody, with the other notes mostly adding garnish?

Sing the tune

The next step, in my opinion, is to learn a tune as an entirety, without concentrating on the note-by-note details. Listen to a recording over a couple of weeks' time; even better, listen to different players' recordings of the same tune. Try singing the tune (it's OK; nobody's listening). You probably sing more naturally than you play an instrument, and you're not worrying about fingers and bow strokes. You can experiment with accenting and articulation, and the musicality and expression of the tune as you sing it might surprise you: in other words, you may understand its "soul" better than you consciously know.

Play phrases, not notes

Now, finally, it's time to try playing the tune. But don't try to play it a note at a time. Take a phrase or a couple of phrases or a whole section and try to play it. Play as slowly as you need to, but play it so that it hangs together, flows, has the shape you want it to have. By now you know the tune, you can sing it or at least hear it in your mind. Take that tune and move it to your instrument without breaking it into too-small fragments. Learn that first phrase so that you're relaxed with it, then add the next and the one after, until you have the whole tune.

Learning tunes as phrases rather than individual notes has practical benefits, too. I think it's easier to remember a few phrases and their order than a whole bunch of separate notes. And it may be easier to solve the technical challenges – fingering, bowing, string crossings – by dividing the tune into phrases. Divide and conquer.

Another observation

For the first phrase that you play, you have to learn the rhythm, the shape, and the notes of the melody; that's a lot. It gets easier after that: the rhythm and the shape apply to the whole tune, and so learning the later phrases becomes easier. Besides, phrases repeat, or reappear as variations, so the way gets less steep as you progress.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Music as conversation

Sculpting a sound with your bow

The articulation in your music comes from the bow. The bowing determines whether a note begins at full volume or starts quietly and grows, whether a note ends sharply or makes a smooth transition into the next note. The lift on the second beat of a bondpolska, the way the first beat of a Boda polska trails off into a period of quiet before the explosive start of the second beat, the difference between the smooth and the bouncy schottis tunes – the bow hand wields the power.

I have written before about bowing, about making the small movements and quick notes with the wrist, hand, and fingers (“as if you were writing with a pencil”), making the large movements and long notes with the shoulder and arm (“as if you were writing on a whiteboard”). And the notions of “brandishing” your bow for the sharp-edged notes, “caressing” the strings with it for the smooth phrases. What’s relevant here is the role that bowing plays in creating the shape and feel of your music. Listen for the articulation in the music you hear, and experiment with and develop your articulation as you work on the other aspects of your playing.

A word about written music

Printed text specifies what is to be said, but it’s the actor who determines how to say it, or the reader who hears it in his mind and supplies the emotional impact. I think it’s appropriate to draw a parallel with written music: the music specifies the notes to be played, but not how to play them or what they are to say.

By all means, use written music to remember tunes or to learn new tunes. But complete your version of the tune in other ways: by listening to other players’ versions, by knowing other tunes of the same style, by playing for dancers and asking for their feedback. This is an aural tradition, and transcriptions rarely tell you of the rhythmic subtleties, the dynamics, the ornaments.

North America Scandinavian Music and Dance Internet Sites

Northern California Spelmanslag:
<www.norcalspelmanslag.org>

Nordic Footnotes, South Bay Area, California :
<http://sites.google.com/site/nordicfootnotes/>

Nordahl Grieg Leikarring og Spelemannslag
<<http://www.ngls.net/>>

Scandi Dance, Santa Cruz
<http://sites.google.com/site/scandsantacruz/>

Sacramento, California Area
<<http://www.folkdance.com/scandi/>>

Los Angeles area Scandinavian Dance & Music:
<<http://www.dancin-fool.com/scandia.html>>

Scandia Camp Mendocino:
<www.ScandiaCampMendocino.org>

Portland Scandinavian dancing, Norske Runddansere,
Oregon: <<http://www.norskerunddansere.org/>>

Seattle, The Skandia Folkdance Society
<www.skandia-folkdance.org/>

Vancouver B.C., Scandinavian Dancers of Vancouver
<<http://www.vcn.bc.ca/scandi/welcome.html>>

Austin Scandinavian Dancing.
<www.austinscandi.org> >

Twin Cities Hardingfelelag
<<http://www.tchardingfelelag.org>>

Scandia D.C.
<<http://www.scandiadc.org>>

Speledans: Boston's Scandinavian Dance Group:
<<http://jc.tzo.net/speledans/>>

The American Nyckelharpa Association:
<www.nyckelharpa.org>

The Hardangar Fiddle Association of America:
<www.hfaa.org>

Blue Rose, Karen Myers's Scandinavian WebSite:
<www.bluerose.KarenLMyers.org>

Listserv, Scandinavian "Scand Digest":
<<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/scand/>>

Norsk, Ltd., Recorded music for both dancing and
listening. <<http://www.norsk.us>>

Ingevalds Spelmän- Lawrence, Kansas
<http://ingevald.wordpress.com/>

Norden Folk, Upper Midwest,
<http://www.nordenfolk.org/>

Nordic FolkDance Society of Calgary
<http://nordicfolkdance.ca/>

Nordic Fiddles & Feet Camp.
www.nordicfiddlesandfeet.org

Nisswastämman Scandinavian folk Music Festival.
www.nisswastamman.org

Multe Music, A blog and weekly audio show.
<http://MulteMusic.com>

Bellingham and Burlington WA
<http://www.nordicdancersnw.org/>

Mid-Atlantic Norwegian Dancers
<http://mand.fanitull.org/>

Calendar Regular Events — Northern California

- Mondays** **Weekly** **Sacramento. Scandinavian Dance Class.** Six week sessions. 7 - 9:30pm. 4855 Hamilton Street, Sacramento, CA 95841. Contact Marida Martin: (916)358-2807, or : <<http://www.folkdance.com/scandi/>>. Next sessions: Session 1: Jan 3rd—Feb.14th, Session 2: Feb. 28th – Apr 6th, Session 3: Apr. 11th-May 23rd, No class –Apr 25th.
- Tuesdays** **Weekly** **Petaluma. Scandia Dance Class.** Tuesdays from 7:15 to 9:15pm. At Hermann Sons Hall. We encourage anyone interested in Scandinavian dancing to come, beginners especially. No partner needed. The teaching is by Vince Taylor and Emma Charlebois. Contact: Vincent Taylor, <vtglass@vom.com>, (707) 996-8300.
- Tuesdays** **Weekly** **El Cerrito. Weekly Scandinavian Session for Fiddlers and Nyckleharpers.** 8 - 10:30pm at the home of Fred Bialy and Toby Blomé, 1925 Hudson Street. Mostly on Tuesdays. Contact ahead of time for updated schedule of gatherings or to be put on Fred's list . Contact: Fred or Toby, (510)215- 5974, <bialy10@comcast.net>.
- Wednesday** **Weekly** **Mountain View. Nordahl Grieg Leikarring dance class and performance group.** Everyone welcome. Masonic Hall, 980 Church St., 7:00 - 9:30 p.m. Contact: Anne Huberman or Greg Goodhue: (408)259-9959. <<http://www.ngls.net>>, <goodhue@hotmail.com>.
- Thursdays** **Weekly** **Oakland. Scandiadans.** Teaching and open dancing, 7 - 10 pm, at Oakland Nature Friends, 3115 Butters Dr. Hwy 13, to Joaquin Miller Rd, east (up the hill), second right onto Butters Dr., go about 1/2 mile. On the right, look for post with 3115 on it (also “Scandiadans” sign). Take driveway down to a large parking area. Contact: Jane Tripi or Frank Tripi at (510)654-3636, <fjtripi@juno.com>.
- Fridays** **Weekly** **Mountain View. Scandinavian Fiddle Class.** 7:30 - 9:30 pm, often at Anita Siegel's, but location varies. Ask to be on class email list. Contact: Jeanne Sawyer, (408)929-5602, <jsawyer@SawyerPartnership.com>, <<http://sites.google.com/site/nordicfootnotes/>>.
- 1st, 3rd, 5th Mondays** **Santa Cruz. Scandinavian Folk Dance Class.** 7:30 pm, Market Street Theater/SCO Clubhouse, 222 Market Street, Santa Cruz, 95060. Instruction in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, and Finnish folk dance by Ellen Moilanen. \$5/session. Everyone welcome. Contact: Ellen or Michael Block at <mikelblock@gmail.com>, (831)336-9972, or <<http://sites.google.com/site/scandsantacruz/>>.
- 1st Fridays** **Monthly** **Santa Cruz. Cultural Evenings.** Usually at Viking Hall, Plymouth, at Button St., Santa Cruz. Contact: . Contact: Michael or Ellen at <mikelblock@gmail.com>, (831)336-9972, or <<http://www.scc-santacruz.org/>>.
- 1st Saturdays** **Monthly** **Menlo Park. Nordic Footnotes 1st Saturday Scandinavian Dance Party,** 7:30 p.m. -12:00. Next few dances: Feb. 5th, March 5th, April 2nd.. The dance includes a teaching session before the dance party, from 7:30-8:30. Our new regular place is St. Bede's Episcopal Church , 2650 Sand Hill Road, 94025. However, always check for the current dance location! Cost: \$8. Contact: Jeanne or Henry, (408)929-5602, <jsawyer@SawyerPartnership.com>; <<http://sites.google.com/site/nordicfootnotes/>>.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11) *Calendar Regular Events — Northern California*

- 1st Sundays Monthly. **Sunnyvale. Nordahl Grieg Spelemannslag**, 3 to 5pm, at the community center for the Mary Manor mobile home park at 125 North Mary Avenue. Contact: Bill Likens at (408)739-1848 to confirm meeting dates and location.
- 2nd Sundays Monthly **Oakland. Traveling Dance Class**. Norwegian dance class meets 2 - 5 pm. Usually at Bjørnson Hall, 2258 MacArthur Blvd. Everyone welcome to attend. Contact: Gudrun Tollefson at (510)638-6454, or Gerd Syrstad at (650)363-2743.
- 2nd Sundays Monthly **Los Gatos. Barneleikkaring**. (Children's Norwegian Dance) classes, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, at Nordahl Hall, 580 W. Parr Ave. Both location and day may change, so call ahead! Contact: Ginny Hansen (408)745-1595.
- 2nd Saturdays Quarterly **El Cerrito. Open Sessions for Fiddlers**, at the home of Fred Bialy ~ 2 - 5 pm. This is a practice session for the Second Saturday Scandinavian Dance. We meet at the home of Fred Bialy, 1925 Hudson Street. Contact: Fred: (510)215 - 5974, <bialy10@comcast.net>. Call a few days ahead to confirm date, time, and place.
- 2nd Saturdays Quarterly **Oakland. Scandia 2nd Saturday Quarterly Dance**. March 12th, and May 14th. Nature Friends Center. Cost: \$7. Musicians encouraged to play. Dance teaching: 7:30 - 8:30 pm, Dancing, 8:30 - 11 pm. Directions, see Scandiadans above. Contact: Jane Tripi or Frank Tripi at (510)654-3636, <fjtripi@juno.com>. or Brooke Babcock, (415) 334-3455, <forbrooke@juno.com>.

Calendar, Special Events — Northern California

- Feb. 18-20, **Scandia Festival of the San Francisco Bay Area** in Petaluma, California. Presenting dance and music from Northern Sweden featuring: Swedish dance teachers Sven & Britt-Marie Olsson and Swedish musicians Andströms with Mats Andersson, Ulf Andersson, Nils Andersson, and Anders Hällström. Plus Gunnar Nordlinder & Karen Petersen. Contact: <<http://sites.google.com/site/scandiafestivalpetaluma>>, <<http://sites.google.com/site/nordicfootnotes/home/schedule>>, see also page two.
- Feb 22 **Andströms**. 2908 Coffee Road, Modesto, CA 95355, 6 PM Pot luck, 7 – 7:30 concert, 7:30 to 9 live music for dancing – Beginners Welcomed! Easy dances to be taught. Sponsored by: Village Dancers of Modesto. Cost: \$10.00 (children and students free). Reservations are encouraged but not required. Contact: Judy Kropp (209) 480-0387, <Judy_Kropp@sbcglobal.net>.
- Feb. 27: **Andströms** (Mats, Ulf, and Nils Andersson, plus Anders Hällström). Swedish American Patriotic League in San Francisco (Don't know yet if this concert will be open to non-members).
- March 2, **Andströms** (Mats, Ulf, and Nils Andersson, plus Anders Hällström). House concert in Mountain View. (Daniel Steinberg).
- March 3, **Andströms** (Mats, Ulf, and Nils Andersson, plus Anders Hällström). House concert in Salinas. (Robin Welch).
- March 5, **Andströms** (Mats, Ulf, and Nils Andersson, plus Anders Hällström). In Palo Alto. Workshops followed by a mini-concert and dance party.
- March 6, **Andströms** (Mats, Ulf, and Nils Andersson, plus Anders Hällström). Concert at West Valley College. (open to the public).
- June 11-18, 2011 **Scandia Camp Mendocino**. Dance & Music of Gudbrandsdal, Norway, Tor & Randi Stallvik (dance), Erlend Viken (music), Dance & Music of the Slängpolska, Central & Southern Sweden, Karin Hansen & Ellge Jakobsson (dance), Christer Samuelsson (music), Singing, Tor Stallvik. Hardingfele, Erlend Viken. Nyckelharpa, Ben

(Continued on page 13)

*(Continued from page 12)***Special Events — Northern California**Teitelbaum. Allspel, Peter Michaelson. New this year: Scandinavian Dance Fundamentals.Contact: <<http://www.scandiacampmendocino.org/>>, <Registration@ScandiaCamp.org>.

June 29 - July 12, **Tim Rued's Personalized Folk Tour of Sweden** – 2011. Two full weeks intimately exploring all aspects of Swedish folk culture. Optional week extensions before and after. The tour begins and ends in the vicinity of Stockholm. After all tour participants have been confirmed, each will be asked to help determine the itinerary according to his or her interests. The tour is limited to 5 participants in addition to the guide. Travel will be by passenger van. Price of two week tour: \$2950.00. Contact: Tim Rued, <www.folksweden.com>, <tim@folksweden.com>, (209) 609-6183, PO Box 30456, Stockton, CA 95213.

Calendar, Special Events — United States

Jan. 27 – 30 **Fifteenth Annual Ski/Dance Weekend**. Fairlee, VT. Christian Borlag – Hardingfele. Arnhild Brennesvik - Dance Teaching. Sefhan Ohlström - Swedish Fiddle. Toby Weinberg and Sarah Kirton – Hardingfele. Held at Hulbert Center. Contact: Annamarie Pluhar, (802) 451-1941, (802) 579-5975, Registration:

<<http://www.nordic-home.com/skidance/>>. More info: Tom & Barb Kringstad, <tkringstad@hotmail.com>, <bkringstad@hotmail.com>, (401) 785-1124, (612) 789-0777, Toby Weinberg & Ginny Lee, <tobyweinberg@hotmail.com>, <ginnylee7@hotmail.com>, (315) 481-4353.

Feb. 4--5 **Vinterdansen**, Seattle. Head to Seattle for great Scandinavian music and dancing. Friday night's gala Vinterdans starts at 8 pm. Seattle Skandia Spelmanslag will play lively gammaldans and bygdedans tunes, and special guest instructor, Roo Lester, will teach a mid-evening hambo workshop. On Saturday, Roo will teach Springleik from Vågå, accompanied by accomplished fiddlers Irene Myers and Peter Michaelson. Come join us for a great weekend. Festive wear and folk costumes are welcome. Contact: Judy Patterson, 206-784-7470, <[skandia-folkdance.org](http://www.skandia-folkdance.org)>, <forskandia@yahoo.com>.

March 18-20 **Valdresspringar Dance & Hardingfele Workshops**. Also with some flat fiddle workshops featuring tunes from throughout Norway. Folklore Village, Dodgeville, WI. Featuring: Brit Totland and Knut Arne Jacobsen: Dance. Laura Ellestad: Hardingfele. Loretta Kelley: Hardingfele and Flat Fiddle. Contact: <www.folklorevillage.org>, Melissa, (608) 924-4000, or <melissa@folklorevillage.org>. Melissa Leef, Program Director, Folklore Village, 3210 County BBDodgeville, WI

March 25 – 27 **Boulder Spring 2011 Scandinavian Dance Workshop**. Dance: Valdresspringar. Teachers: Knut-Arne Jacobssen and Brit Totland. Fiddlers: Loretta Kelly (and possibly one more). Knut-Arne and Brit taught Valdresspringar at Mendocino this past summer. Knut-Arne also sings traditional Norwegian songs. Loretta Kelly is the foremost American performer on the hardingfele and has studied with some of Norway's top hardingfele players. The workshop runs from 7:00 pm on Friday through 4:30 pm on Sunday. Often, the teachers and musicians are still here and also teach and play on Monday night. All events at the Avalon Ballroom. Now is a good time to start checking for those good deals on airfare. Contact: Sheila, <spmorris@ecentral.com>.

4/22—25 **Springdans Northwest**, Skandia Folkdance Society. Seabeck, WA. Three days of dance instruction, music workshops, and endorphin-charged evening dances with amazing live music. Held at Scenic Seabeck Conference Center on Hood Canal. Camp features Tommy and Ewa Englund teaching Western Dalarna dances. Joining them will be Swedish fiddler, Mattias Helje, and Seattle's Bart Brashers, teaching nyckelharpa. We currently have follows on a wait list, but encourage leads and couples to register. Contact: <www.skandia-folkdance.org>, or (206)784-7470, or <publicity@skandia-folkdance.org>.

4/29—5/1 **Spring Springar Spree and Labyrinth Walk/Dance**, May Day Weekend. At the border of Takoma Park, MD and Washington, DC. Contact: <<http://mand.fanitull.org/>>, Jenny Foster, pi (at) xecu (dot) net.

6/10—11 **12th annual Nisswastamman**. Nisswa, MN .Contact: <www.nisswastamman.org>, <pwilson@brainerd.net>.

June 26 to July 3, **Nordic Fiddles & Feet**. Camp Ogontz, near Littleton New Hampshire. Camp Ogontz, New Hampshire. Sweden: Ingrid Strömvall & Thomas Johannson - Bingsjö, Boda, Rättvik, Orsapolska, Västergötland. Norway: Sissel Rudningen & Ulf-Arne Johannesson – Hallingspringar. Hilde Kirkebøen on hardingfele, Sissel singing. Stateside: Roo Lester & Larry Harding - Scandinavian dance basics. Andrea Hoag gammaldans, Karin Code beginning hardingfele and Norwegian requests. Contact: NFF, 4401 Alta Vista Way, Knoxville, TN 37919. (865) 522-0515, <fiddlesandfeet@bellsouth.net>.

7/21-24 **Hardanger Fiddle Association of America's Annual Music & Dance Workshop**. Folklore Village, Dodgeville, Wisconsin. Featuring the exciting music and dance of Valdres. Guest teachers from Norway: Hardanger Fiddle: Håkon Asheim. Dance (Valdresspringar): Knut Arne Jacobsen & Mary Hegge. HFAA nurtures beginners! You are very welcome, even if you've never played Hardanger fiddle or danced before. Contact: <<http://www.hfaa.org/Home>>.

Northern California Spelmanslag Mailing List Form

Name _____ Home phone _____

Address _____ Other phone _____

_____ email _____

_____ Musician ___ Dancer ___ Audience ___

May we publish your name, address, and phone on a Spelmanslag roster? _____

Do you want to receive information?: ___ music workshops: Swedish ___ Norwegian ___ Danish ___ Finnish ___

___ dance workshops: Swedish ___ Norwegian ___ Danish ___ Finnish ___

___ dance parties; Swedish ___ Norwegian ___ Danish ___ Finnish ___

___ concerts and performances: Swedish ___ Norwegian ___ Danish ___ Finnish ___

How are you able to help? Are you willing to bring potluck snacks and refreshments to Spelmanslag events? Are you willing to house out-of-town participants for Spelmanslag festivals, or entertain overseas visitors before or after a festival or camp?

Are you willing to volunteer for various tasks to help organize or run Spelmanslag events (making punch, set-up, clean-up, collecting admission, loaning/operating sound equipment, designing fliers, photocopying, playing for dances)?

Are you willing to write an article, take photos, or draw illustrations for our newsletter?

Donation: _____ \$15.00 ___ \$25.00 ___ \$50.00 ___ other

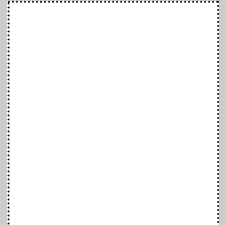
Send to: Northern California Spelmanslag, 560 Kingsley Ave, PALO ALTO CA 94301-3224

Donation is not necessary for membership.

Your tax-deductible donation helps the Spelmanslag bring over instructors from Scandinavia, and covers the costs of publishing and mailing fliers and newsletters. Any amount you can contribute is greatly appreciated!

See our web page at: :<www.norcalspelmanslag.org>.

Northern California Spelmanslag
A California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation
560 Kingsley Ave,
PALO ALTO CA 94301-3224



FIRST CLASS MAIL

