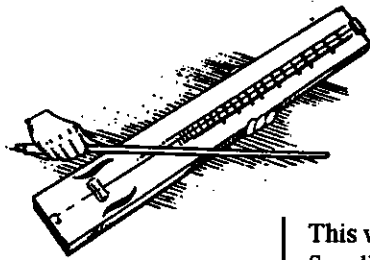


November 1, 1996



## NOTES FROM MUSIC-ON-A-STRING

This is my first attempt to write a PSALMODIKON NEWSLETTER. I have come in contact with each of you during the last five years or perhaps you remember my playing partner, Harlis Anderson. Since his death two years ago I have been playing the Psalmodikon alone. I have come to know that we all have one thing in common, and that is a mutual interest in the Psalmodikon and what an important part of our heritage it is.

As many of you already know, I was invited to Ostervalla, Sweden last year to participate in the NORDIC PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET, which is held annually in various areas of the Scandinavian countries. It was a valuable learning experience for me and at the meeting, they invited me to become an Honorary Member of the NORDIC PSALMODIKONFORBUNDET. It has been a dream of mine, ever since I returned, to organize a group of Psalmodikon enthusiasts here in the United States. I feel now that I have been in contact with enough people to start a small group. It is my intention for this group to maintain a fellowship among those that want to pursue an active interest in carrying on the tradition of the Psalmodikon, maintain a bond between Psalmodikon enthusiasts here in the United States and in the Scandinavian countries, to preserve this part of our Scandinavian culture that is almost forgotten, to hold annual meetings and to periodically publish a newsletter.

I would appreciate hearing from each of you to learn of your interests and have your input in this idea of starting a group. And if so, I will need your support, ideas, and assistance in order to form a group who are interested in carrying on the Psalmodikon heritage.

Last year was a busy time for me and the Psalmodikon. We traveled many miles covering seven states plus Norway and Sweden. This year is proving to be much the same. I have enjoyed my travels and to interact with the audiences. They are so receptive and I dare say that 99% of them have not heard of the Psalmodikon before and many of them are Scandinavian!

This was a busy year of celebrations for those of Swedish heritage as it was the 150th year of Swedish immigration.

No doubt many of you have read Vilhelm Moberg's book "The Emigrants" and focused in on the eighth chapter where it mentions Danjel playing the Psalmodikon or better yet in the movie where there is considerable footage given to where he plays the Psalmodikon while the others at the table are singing.

Another book I found to be interesting is "Between Rocks and Hard Places" by Ann Urness Gesme, explaining traditions, customs, and conditions in Norway during the 1800's. My favorite being the part where she describes the duties of the Klokker and how he "led the singing of the hymns, sometimes accompanied by a salmodikan (a one-stringed instrument played with a bow)".

One question most often asked is, "was the Psalmodikon invented in Sweden or Norway"? Now we all know the Psalmodikon was modified after the Greek monochord instrument that was used to measure sounds. Both Lars Roverud and Pastor Johannes Dillner are to be given credit for this as they both played a very large role in the use of the Psalmodikon and influencing others to make their own instruments and to practice singing. History reads that Lars Roverud, a klokker and school master, received approval from the State Church in 1825 to play the Psalmodikon in the church. Rev. Dillner was so influential among his parishioners that at one time there were at least 10,000 Psalmodikons in the Uppsala area. Many are still in existence today. Pastor Dillner died in 1862 and his Psalmodikon is still in the church where I performed last year in Ostervalla. Roverud & Dillner didn't live very far apart and no doubt collaborated their ideas as to how the Psalmodikon should be constructed and played. Perhaps this will answer the question for you also.

Here's wishing you a blessed Holiday Season but please, may I hear from each of you before then?

Hilsen,

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