

Saint Paul Swedish Male Chorus 100 Years

In the spring of 1881 a quartet was organized at Feifers Hall, St. Paul, by members of a Swedish society called Vega Literary Society, then but a few months old. This quartet was the beginning of the present chorus and consisted of Messrs. John T. Nordstrom, first tenor; John E. Landin, second tenor; Elis Nyström, first bass, and O. F. Peterson, second bass. August Ohman was the organizer and instructor. The primary object of the quartet was to furnish musical programs at the social functions of Vega Literary Society, an organization which naturally took deep interest in matters musical and already in the Fall of 1881, not only had the quartet developed into a sizeable chorus, but there was also a mixed chorus of 25 voices which existed for about four years. The two choruses were directed by David Sheibe. The Male Chorus in 1887 took the name "Harmony" but after six months adopted the name of Vega Singing Society and elected Oliver Nordstrom director. The first president of the Male Chorus was O. F. Peterson, Mr. A. Fredlund was

secretary and one of its most enthusiastic members was H. N. Claus.

In 1890 J. O. Valline became director of Vega Singing Society, a post which he held until his death in 1921, with the exception of two years when the position was filled by David Sheibe, Jr. When in 1905 the financial aid from the Literary Society ceased, the chorus launched upon its career as an independent organization, relying on its own resources for existence.

In 1888 Scandinavian choral societies were quite numerous in America and this same year, five such choruses in the East amalgamated under the name of the United Scandinavian Singers of America. From that body sprang later the American Union of Swedish Singers, organized in Chicago 1892. Vega Singing Society was a member of the first named organization and charter member of the latter. One of its members, J. T. Nordstrom, was elected vice-president of the new union.

From this time the activities of the chorus became more than local, thus the chorus took active part in the great singing festivals in Chicago 1893, 1905, and

1924, Moline 1907, Duluth 1912, Minneapolis 1914, Omaha 1916, Denver 1916, New York 1926, and Stockholm, Sweden 1930, and from that time all of the AUSS as well as the Northwestern Division and the Central Division conventions.

In 1923 the name St. Paul Swedish Male Chorus was adopted.

Artists of international reputation have been brought to St. Paul by this organization. Knut Ohrstrom from the Royal Opera, Stockholm, Sweden, 1924; The Stockholm University Chorus, 1926; Lund University Singers, 1947; The Royal Swedish Navy Band, 1926; Mme. Karin Branzell from the Metropolitan appeared as guest artist at the Singing Festival in 1946.

Throughout its long history the chorus has given hundreds of concerts and its aim is to combine sociability, service and determination to make the art of singing more of a study, rather than a recreation and as a whole to fulfill its mission in the community as well.

Paul F. Haglund

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TOP ROW, left to right — Bror Borg, Herluf Soderlind, Dan O'Donovan, Henry Swanson, Leslie Erickson, Larry Peterson, Roger Dodd, Wayne Landstratt, George Gustafson, Bruce Baker, Mike O'Donovan, James Kroll, Tom Johnson, Harry Anderson.

3rd ROW, l to r — James Nordling, Carl Johnson, Milton Johnson, Norman Dreyer, Roy Hjort, Ron Nelson, Virgil Lundgren, Grant Johnson, Ken Haag, Arnold Stromberg, John Gilbertson, Gary Peterson, Don Peterson.

2nd ROW, l to r — Werner Lindstrom, Clarence Franzen, Clarence Aakre, Rod Johnson, A. A. Stromwall, Fred Clauson, Reuben Gustafson, Stan Palm, Myron Rogers, John Sundberg, Miton Carr.

1st ROW, l to r — Leonard Wardrum, Knute Linder, Erick Borgeson, Director Don Torgeson, Accompanist Jane A. Peterson, Arthur Carlson, Dick Swanson, John Johnson.

Not in picture: Paul Haglund, Alf Ohm, Curt Johnson.



Apollo

New Haven, Conn.

A recap of what happened in 1980 and some plans for 1981.

May 1980 we celebrated our 75th anniversary at the Pine Orchard Country Club in Branford, Conn. Thanks to our fellow singers of the Eastern Division some 120 persons attended and made a fine tribute to our Club. Lots of singing, eating, some drink and dance.

June 1980 was our Annual Spring Concert at the Christ Luth. Church in Hamden, Conn. Soon after we all boarded buses to Jamestown, N. Y., for the Eastern Div. Convention. Many words of thanks have been spoken about this fine affair but we repeat "Thank you, Jamestown," it was great.

September we hosted our third annual "Fall Foliage Concert" in Londonderry, Vt. We had a chorus of 48, a banquet serving 116, a Sunday brunch for 74. The chorus made three separate appearances in the two day period so you can see it was a busy weekend. The support came from our brother singers in Bridgeport, New Britain, Providence, West Springfield, Worcester, Jamestown. Must have been a good time for many are asking about 1981 (see below).

December our annual glögg party. This too was a success with some 200 people in attendance.

The chorus made appearances for many groups and organizations during the year 1980.

1981 — We must have done something right in 1980. We started our January rehearsals with four new singers. We are currently rehearsing jointly with North Star for two joint concerts, one in Bridgeport, the other in New Haven.

Plans for the fourth Foliage Concert are in the works. The dates are set — Oct. 2, 3, 4. Headquarters will be at Dostals Inn, Londonderry, Vt. Concert at the Second Congregational Church, banquet and brunch at Dostals. More info will follow.

Objective—Apollo wants a full chorus at Seattle in 1982. The singers' wives have really taken off on raising funds, via the making and selling of various crafts. They have a real gung-ho spirit.

To the West we say, see you in Seattle; to the East we say, thanks for your fine support.

V. J.

• The Swedish Pripps

brewery has signed an agreement with Scottish and Newcastle Breweries of Edinburgh, to market Pripps Kalback, a beer with a 3.8 percent alcohol content in pubs and hotels across the UK.

From the AUSS Financial Secretary

The secretaries of seven of our choruses are herewith reminded that payments of dues are to be made to the Financial Secretary on or before March 1 (By-Laws Article XI, Annual Dues).

Since our last report the following choruses have fulfilled their obligations:

| | | |
|--|----|------|
| Eastern Division: Nordic Glee Club of New York | 17 | (19) |
| North Star Singers, Bridgeport, CT | 19 | (18) |
| The Swedish Singing Society Norden, Bridgeport, CT | 1 | (1) |
| Wennerberg Male Chorus, New Britain, CT | 20 | (21) |
| Central Division: American Swedish Institute Male Chorus, | | |
| Minneapolis, MN | 39 | (38) |
| Arpi Swedish Male Chorus of Detroit | 29 | (26) |
| Rockford Veterans Singers, Rockford, IL (in addition to | | |
| previously reported 12) | 2 | |
| Svithiod Singing Club Chorus, Chicago, IL | 27 | (33) |
| Western Division: Scandinavian Male Chorus, Portland, OR | 31 | (33) |
| Svea Male Chorus, Seattle, WA | 50 | (53) |
| Swedish Women's Chorus, Seattle, WA | 33 | (32) |

The numbers in parenthesis represent last year's membership.

Finally, another reminder from Seattle: "See you, in eighty-two."

Gunnar Nordstrom

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MUSIKTIDNING SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS

The Story of Musiktidning

As told by

JOEL S. SODERLUND

in Musiktidning, April, 1956

(Continued)



HJALMAR NILSSON
Editor MT, 1913-24

In 1913 Mr. Hjalmar Nilsson of St. Paul, Minn. (no relationship to Dr. Nilsson), became the editor and publisher of the paper. Although no other person of the singers was richer in experience as a journalist than Dr. Nilsson, there could not be found a better qualified person, in regard to the singers and their activities, than Hjalmar Nilsson, being president of the AUSS at the time, and one of the foremost workers in the organization from its founding. Hjalmar used his great inborn ability as a writer and his experience as a leader to bolster the interest among the singers for the paper, but in spite of all his enthusiasm and energy, he was still not able to secure enough support to make it financial successful. In 1925, at the convention in Chicago, he tendered his resignation, which was reluctantly accepted by the delegates. He was given a standing vote of thanks for his splendid work and properly reimbursed for the financial loss sustained.

In tendering his resignation he also included a proposal that Musiktidning in the future be edited and published by the Secretary of the AUSS, stating that such an arrangement had proved beneficial and successful to the mother organization in Sweden. This proposal was approved by the convention. He also submitted the writer's name in no-

mination for the double duty post; being unopposed, I was elected. I accepted the appointment with misgivings, well knowing my limited experience in journalism, but eager to serve for the welfare of the organization. I was also assured assistance by the newly elected president, Fred Bolling, a promise he faithfully kept during our long association in office. His experience in newspaper work and his sincere devotion to the organization proved to be of immeasurable value in the years to come.

As stated before, the financial condition of Musiktidning was anything but satisfactory. Had it not been for the fact that the paper was printed in my own place of business and therefore able to extend credit, it would be difficult to continue its publication.

At the convention in New York, 1926, the report showed no cash on hand and the book assets, consisting of outstanding items for advertising and subscriptions, doubtful. The delegates, however, persuaded the editor to continue its publication and promised support in every way. A sum of \$500 from the treasury was advanced to finance the publication. The promise of support from the choruses were soon forgotten after the convention and at the next meeting the report again showed an empty treasury. The same promises were again given and just as promptly broken.

In addition to publishing the Journal, the editor was asked to print the Song Albums for the conventions and also take over the sale of uniform caps for the singers. This arrangement was instituted in the belief that these items would be profitable and help in financing the publication. However, it proved to be the opposite, as many a number of orders for caps and Song Albums were sent on credit assignment and never paid for, thereby causing a loss instead of a profit. Adding to these troubles came the years of war and depression, when some of the choruses were forced to disband or consolidate, leaving years of subscriptions unpaid.

There were, however, supporters of the publication. Some of the individual members and choruses faithfully paid for subscriptions and in other ways gave encouragement. A few of the best known Swedish-American writers also willingly donated their talent from time to time. We wish to mention especially the late Jacob Bonggren, Frithiof Malmquist, Oliver A. Linder, John Brunzell, Abel

Holmstrand, Henning Nelson and Carl Stockenberg, as valuable contributors.

At the convention in Philadelphia, 1938, I tendered my resignation as Secretary-Editor, but agreed to remain as publisher, as the newly elected Secretary was not in position to take over

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40 Years of Service



ERIC HAGGBERG

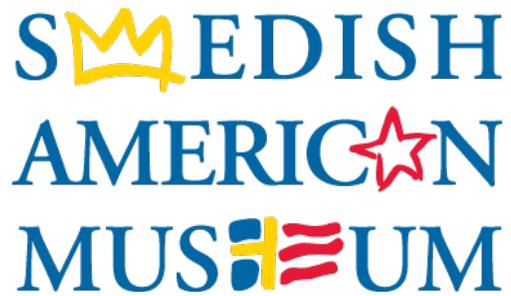
We present herewith one of the unsung heroes in the story of Musiktidning, Mr. Eric Haggberg, who, believe it or not, has been doing the typesetting and make-up of our magazine for over 40 years. He is not only an excellent printer, whether in English or Swedish, but he is also an uncanny cryptographer, able to decipher the most illegible handwritten manuscripts put in his hands. He has been the valuable right hand to the Editor for over 25 years, which is deeply appreciated.

Eric was born in Värnamo, Sweden, where he began his apprenticeship at the age of 13. Arrived in USA 1922 and worked at the Augsburg Publishing House in Minneapolis until he moved to Chicago in 1924.

Here he became involved in Swedish organizations and is a past president of Viking Athletic Association; past president of Swedish Typographical Union; charter member of Smålands-Förbundet, and corresponding secretary of Verdandi Lodge No. 3, I.O.S.

Eric and his charming wife, Margaret, have two daughters, seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

We salute Eric for his artful contributions to, and interest in, Musiktidning during the last 40 years. — Editor.



This archival record has been partially scanned, including covers and initial pages for each issue. For more information about a particular issue of this publication, please contact the Swedish American Museum Curator.