

SAS Male Chorus

Visit to the United States

October—November, 1959

2054.42.18

It was with great humility that the members of the SAS Male Chorus, some years ago, began nursing plans for a "journey of song" to the United States of America. There were the overwhelming logistics and economics of such a tour to be considered, there was the delicate problem of obtaining simultaneous leaves of absence for two scores of SAS employees — but most of all, there was a gnawing doubt in our minds about ability. After all, we were well acquainted with the high standards of American choral singing from listening to recordings and attending the concerts of American choral groups visiting Scandinavia.

But slowly, as the preparatory work progressed, our doubts gave way to an overwhelming desire to make the tour. In our jobs, we have daily contacts with the United States of America and the friendliness and warm sympathy that always were apparent gave us reason not to worry too much. The main thing suddenly became not the success of the planned tour but to come here and sing for you and visit with you — to create the kind of subtle but yet so firm bond that only is possible through the medium of song.

It is in this spirit we have come to the United States and it is in this spirit that we appear here in your city. It is only natural that we hope that our songs will give you musical satisfaction — but most of all, we hope that our songs will bring you a message of friendship and good-will from Scandinavia, our home across the Atlantic Ocean.

Arthur Svanden

PRESIDENT
SAS MALE CHORUS

THE SAS MALE CHORUS

A PRESENTATION

The SAS Male Chorus, now on its first American tour, is one of Europe's outstanding airline singing organizations. Coming from nations where group singing has revered traditions, this SAS chorus has conquered foreign and Scandinavian critics alike with its brilliant voices and well-disciplined group singing. To Scandinavian Airlines System employees, the success of their company-sponsored male chorus has been a source of inspiration — although they have taken it for granted that a chorus, picked from among the employees of a company with such exacting demands in high quality, should play a leading role in the world of song.

The SAS Male Chorus was formed by a group of employees in connection with the amalgamation in 1946 of the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Air Lines and the formation of the Scandinavian Airlines System. Only two years later the Chorus was ready for its first public appearance. It was a concert at Nynäshamn — a little town near Stockholm — where the SAS Male Chorus shared the concert stage with local singing organizations. It was a success — the first of many to come.

Encouraged by the enthusiastic reception of their first concert, the SAS singers continued their rehearsals with new energy. The result soon became obvious: the SAS Male Chorus during a short period appeared at some fifty concerts in different places. Everywhere, the Chorus received the same enthusiastic approval of the audiences.

By the Spring of 1950, the SAS Male Chorus was ready for a decisive test. At a concert at the Skansen — the huge open air museum and park in the center of the Swedish capital — the SAS Male Chorus sang their way into the hearts of thousands of listeners. Those who were present on this occasion well recall the thrilling moments before the thunder of the applause started, making it obvious that every listener had considered the concert a musical event of highest caliber. The day after, the feared music critics of the daily papers described the SAS Male Chorus' appearance in very positive terms.

The Skansen concert was the major breakthrough. Ever since, the fame of the SAS Male Chorus has risen steadily — not least among the listening audience of the Swedish Broadcasting Company, on whose programs the chorus often has performed.

All members of the chorus are employed by the Head Quarters of the Scandinavian Airlines System. They are organized in a club the President of which is Mr. Arthur Strander. Mr. Lennart Ek is the conductor.

When you work in modern air transportation it is easy to underestimate distances, and for SAS employees it has become a habit to aim at goals beyond the horizon. It thus may not appear to be particularly outstanding to want to sing for international audiences — even if it may be considered somewhat presumptuous of an amateur singing group to want to do so. The Viking spirit, however, always has prevailed in the SAS Male Chorus, and already in 1949, only three years after the Male Chorus was formed, the members packed their flight bags for their first singing tour. It was with some trepidation that the SAS singers disembarked for their concert in Oslo — the site of their first appearance outside the borders of Sweden — but

their concern was unnecessary. The public reception in Oslo was quite as overwhelming as it had ever been "at home". The following year, the SAS Male Chorus once again visited the Norwegian capital and this time the Male Chorus gave a special concert for the Norwegian Crown Prince family at Skaugum, its summer residence located by the beautiful Oslo Fjord. The same evening marked the second appearance on the Norwegian Radio by the Chorus.

In 1952, the Chorus sang its way to the hearts of a giant crowd at Copenhagen's famous Tivoli — another success that was added to the club annals. The following year, Holland was on the itinerary, and at every stop, from the Hague to Volendam, the singers were enthusiastically cheered by the Dutch.
Since then, the SAS Male Chorus has had several international tours, and the passports of the SAS singers now contain stamps from Finland, Great Britain, West Germany and Austria, to mention some of the nations visited.

Nobody is a prophet in his own country, it is said. Perhaps it is not fair to use this old saw when it comes to the SAS Male Chorus, but it was an appearance in an hour-long show on the Dutch radio that broke the ice for a series of concerts on the Scandiavian Broadcasting networks. One of the many memorable broadcasts took place when the Male Chorus appeared at the Stockholm Concert Hall in honor of the famous Captain Albin Ahrenberg, one of Sweden's most distinguished pioneers in the field of air transportation. His name was on the front pages of papers around the world when he, in 1929, made an unsuccessful but highly dramatic attempt to fly from Scandinavia to the United States via Iceland and Greenland.

One of the most cherished of the SAS Male Chorus' singing journeys took it to Vienna, Saltzburg, Wolfgang, Frankfurt and Munich in 1954. It was extremely gratifying for the



Arthur Strander, President of the Chorus

Nordic amateur singers to note the approving reaction from the audiences of these Austrian and German cities where the hallowed musical traditions of Bach, Beethoven, Haydn and Mozart still are so alive.

The tour of England and Scotland two years later was a similarly enjoyable and rewarding event. Wherever the chorus appeared — Birmingham, Manchester or Glasgow — it experienced the same approval of the audiences. In London, the chorus was invited to appear on BBC — an offer which, of course, happily was accepted.

The singing tour to the United States of America long has been a fond dream of the members of the SAS Male Chorus and it is with much satisfaction that the lengthy preparations now have led to the realization of these desires. The members of the SAS Male Chorus, in wishing you welcome to this concert, hope that you will share their happiness about being here — a happiness, they hope, that will be evident in their song.

Presenting the conductor of the SAS Male Chorus

LENNART EK



Lennart Ek, Conductor

For the last seven years, Mr. Lennart Ek has been the conductor of the SAS Male Chorus and much of the success of the Chorus in later years may be ascribed to his tireless efforts.

A supervisor in the Procurement Department of the SAS Head Office in Stockholm, Mr. Ek has been devoted to music since childhood. Many of his early impressions came from the Salvation Army, in which he was enrolled when seven years old. He was to be a Salvationist for the next twenty-one years, and besides being active in the Boy Scouts, he also participated in choirs, bands and orchestras. For a decade, he also served as a conductor. After leaving the Salvation Army, Mr. Ek sang with Stockholm's famous YMCA Male Chorus for three years, and from 1948 he became increasingly active in various amateur and company-sponsored singing organizations. He now devotes all his spare time to the SAS Male Chorus.

Mr. Ek considers himself a "self-taught amateur" among musicians. This is typical of the modesty of this warmly religious man. His knowledge of music, and skill as conductor are not what one usually expects to find in an "amateur". This also is obvious from the results of his work with the SAS Male Chorus. Considering that only SAS employees may become members of the Chorus and that many of the new recruits have had little or no experience with choral singing, the achievements of the chorus must be considered rather outstanding. These achievements are, to a very large extent, due to the conductor of the chorus, Mr. Lennart Ek.

PARTICIPANTS

FIRST TENOR:

Arthur Strander
Göte Wiggström
Erik Fridlund
Karl Jonsson
Evert Enstedt
Olle Wallin
John Ström
Hans Nilsson
Gösta Erdestam
Kirill Forelius

SECOND TENOR:

Tage Keding
Harry Hedfors
Sten Sandén
Bertil Haglund
Bengt Ekman
Roger Engvall
Edvin Wickström
Bengt Rodeby
Anders Nilshammar
Elis Hinds

FIRST BASS:

Åke Zetterqvist
Harry Hellman
Erik Thornberg
Sture Eriksson
Stig Uvebrandt
Tage Rapp
Sven Erikson
Gunnar Jägstål
Arne Johansson

SECOND BASS:

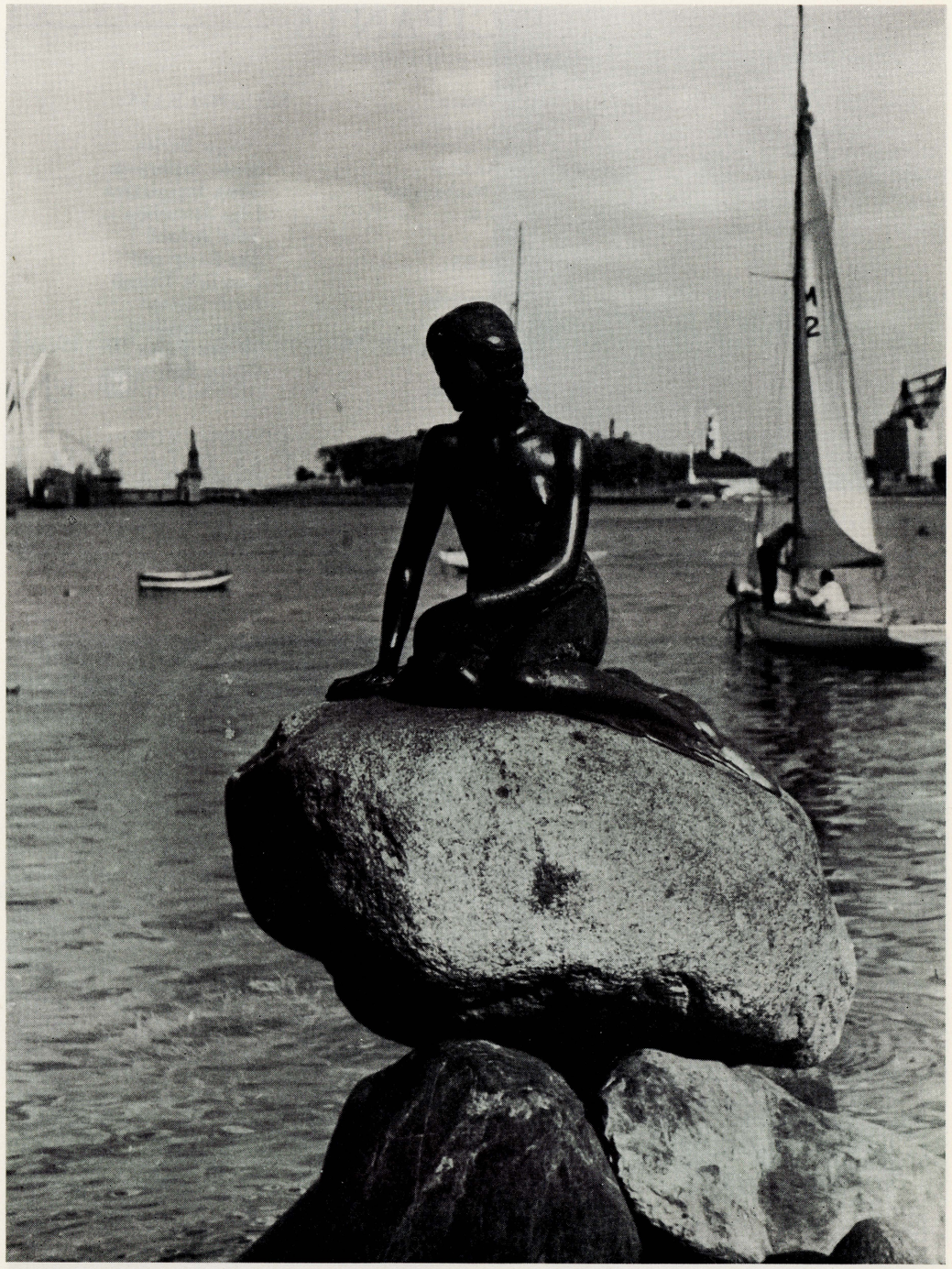
Holger Burlén
Simon Stålbrandt
Gösta Ingemanson
Lage Samuelson
John Ackzell
Åke Lamperud
Lars-Eric Ehlesjö
Bertil Carlson
Bengt Sandberg
Bo Sundström
Göran Söderström

CONDUCTOR:

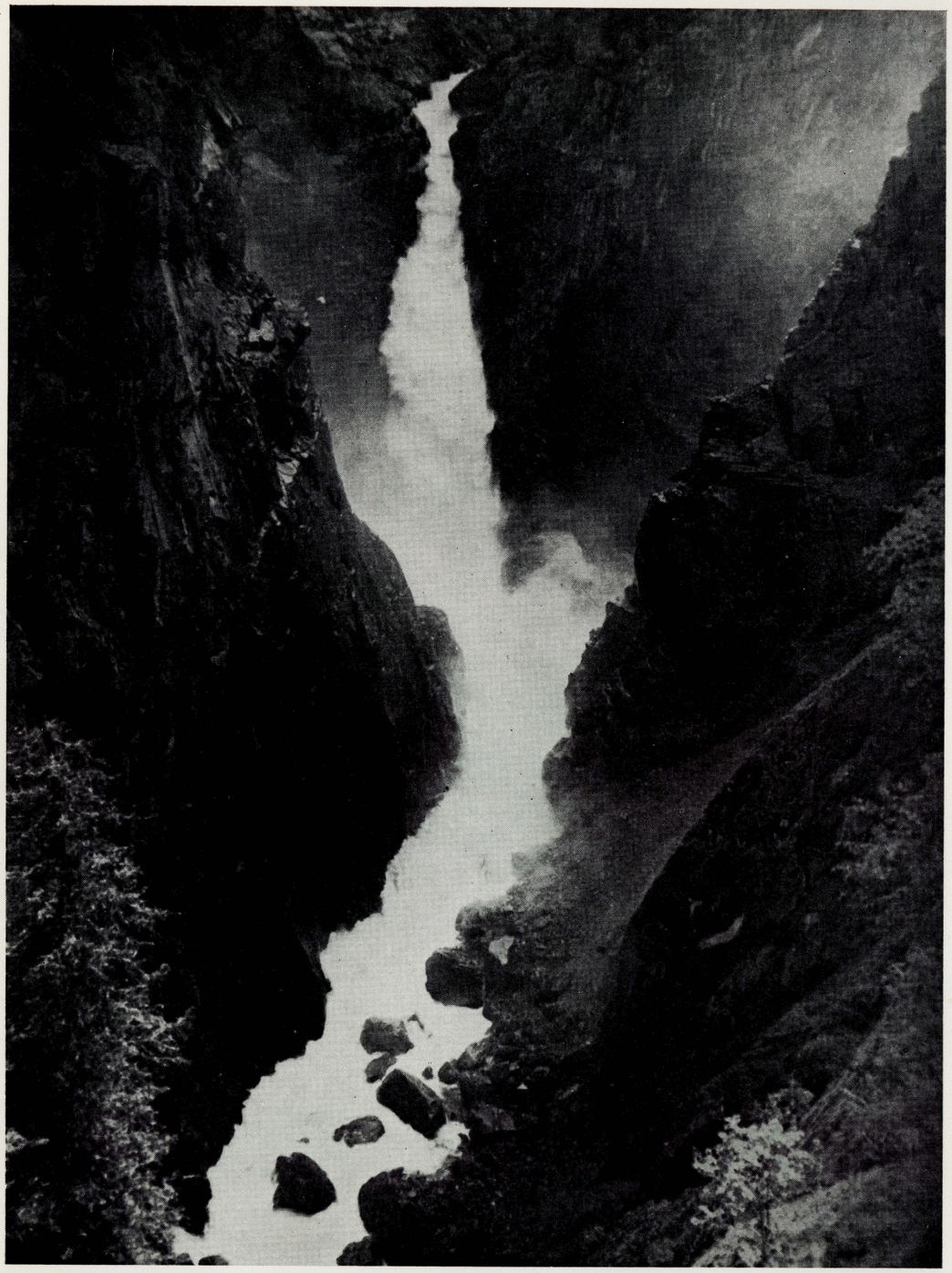
Lennart Ek



SAS Male Chorus abroad: An SAS concert in front of the City Hall, Vienna, Austria



This is Denmark; the famous "Den Lille Havsfrue" (The Little Mermaid) in the harbour of Copenhagen



This is Norway: Steep rocks, roaring waterfalls, deep valleys



SAS Male Chorus in front of a "Caravelle", one of the company's medium range jetliners



This is Sweden: A Laplander with one of his reindeer at the famous open-air museum, Skansen, in Stocholm

The SAS Male Chorus Program

DU DANSKE MAND *C. Nielsen*

AFTENSTEMNING *C. Nielsen*

NAAR FJORDENE BLAANER *A. Paulsen*

SANGERHILSEN *E. Grieg*

SUOMIS SÅNG *F. Pacius*

FINLANDIAHYMNEN *J. Sibelius*

ISLAND *H. Möller*

STANDARDSÅNG *I. Widéen*

ACK, VÄRMELAND, DU SKÖNA *Swedish folk-song*

EN DALMASTRALL *A. Wiklund*

UTI VÅR HAGE *Folk-song from Gotland*
Arr. *H. Alfvén*

AFTONSTÄMNING *Th. Melander*

JÄGARKÖREN UR OPERETTEN FRISKYTTEN
C. M. von Weber

MADRIGAL *A de la Hale*
Arr. C. Schreiber

VILA VID DENNA KÄLLA *C. M. Bellman*

KRISTALLEN DEN FINA *Swedish folk-song*
Arr. *O. F. Tullberg*

KOSTBARA GÅVA *A. Rücker*

TAKE UP THY CROSS *A. H. Ackley*
Arr. C. Skinner

NÄRMARE MIN GUD TILL DIG *L. Mason*
Arr. Lennart Ek

FLYGARVALSEN *J. Sylvain-F. Winter*
Arr. G. Wallenius

VÄRLDEN RUNT-VALSEN *Lennart Ek*

NUDISTPOLKA *Evert Taube*
Arr. Einar Ralf

NIGANDE VALS *Evert Taube*
Arr. Lennart Ek

INGRID DARDELS POLSKA *Evert Taube*
Arr. Lennart Ek

FRITIOF ANDERSSONS PARADMARSCH *Evert Taube*
Arr. G. Wallenius

JAG VÄNTAR *G. Turesson*
Arr. G. Wallenius

GÄRDEBYLÅTEN *Hjort Anders Olsson*
Arr. Gunnar Hahn

SÅG DU VÅRT SVERIGE *K. Östby*

SVERIGES FLAGGA *H. Alfvén*

MIN STAMFAR *I. Widner*



SAS Male Chorus abroad: Entering a bus in Frankfurt, Germany. The President of the Chorus, A. Strander, in front



SAS Male Chorus abroad: Members of the Chorus with some new friends, children of a small Dutch village

Comments about the actual Composers

CARL NIELSEN *(1865—1931)*

Denmark's greatest composer in modern times not only wrote symphonies, concertos and chamber music, which have achieved appreciation among music lovers far beyond his own country. He also found his way to the hearts of all Scandinavians through the simple melodious charm of his songs, mostly written for solo voice or chorus.

ALFRED PAULSEN *(1849—1936)*

Norwegian-born prominent leader of many Chicago singing groups (i. a. the distinguished Chicago Norwegian Glee Club), Alfred Paulsen never lost contact with his mother country. He was a pupil of Edvard Grieg and the popular Norwegian tongue always penetrated his musical language. One of the typical examples of his stylish writing appears in the song for choir "Naar fjordene blaaner" (When the Fjords Turn Blue).

EDVARD GRIEG *(1843—1907)*

It is hardly necessary to attempt any kind of characterization of Scandinavia's best known composer, a towering personality who is so dear to music lovers everywhere on the globe. Together with Denmark's Carl Nielsen, Finland's Jean Sibelius and Sweden's Franz Berwald, he forms a quartet of international standing. "Sangerhilsen" puts you in touch with his exquisite miniature style, which nevertheless strikes an impressive magniloquence.

FREDRIK PACIUS *(1809—1891)*

Honored with the title "the Father of Finnish Music" German-born Pacius has come to identify himself with his adopted country. He established himself in the double role of concert musician and composer. He organized students' singing groups inside Finnish university life, was a frequently heard violin soloist and also performed chamber music works. As a composer he struck patriotic ground, among which "Suomis Song" still today is a vital ingredient on national occasions and also is heard in vocal concerts.

JEAN SIBELIUS *(1865—1957)*

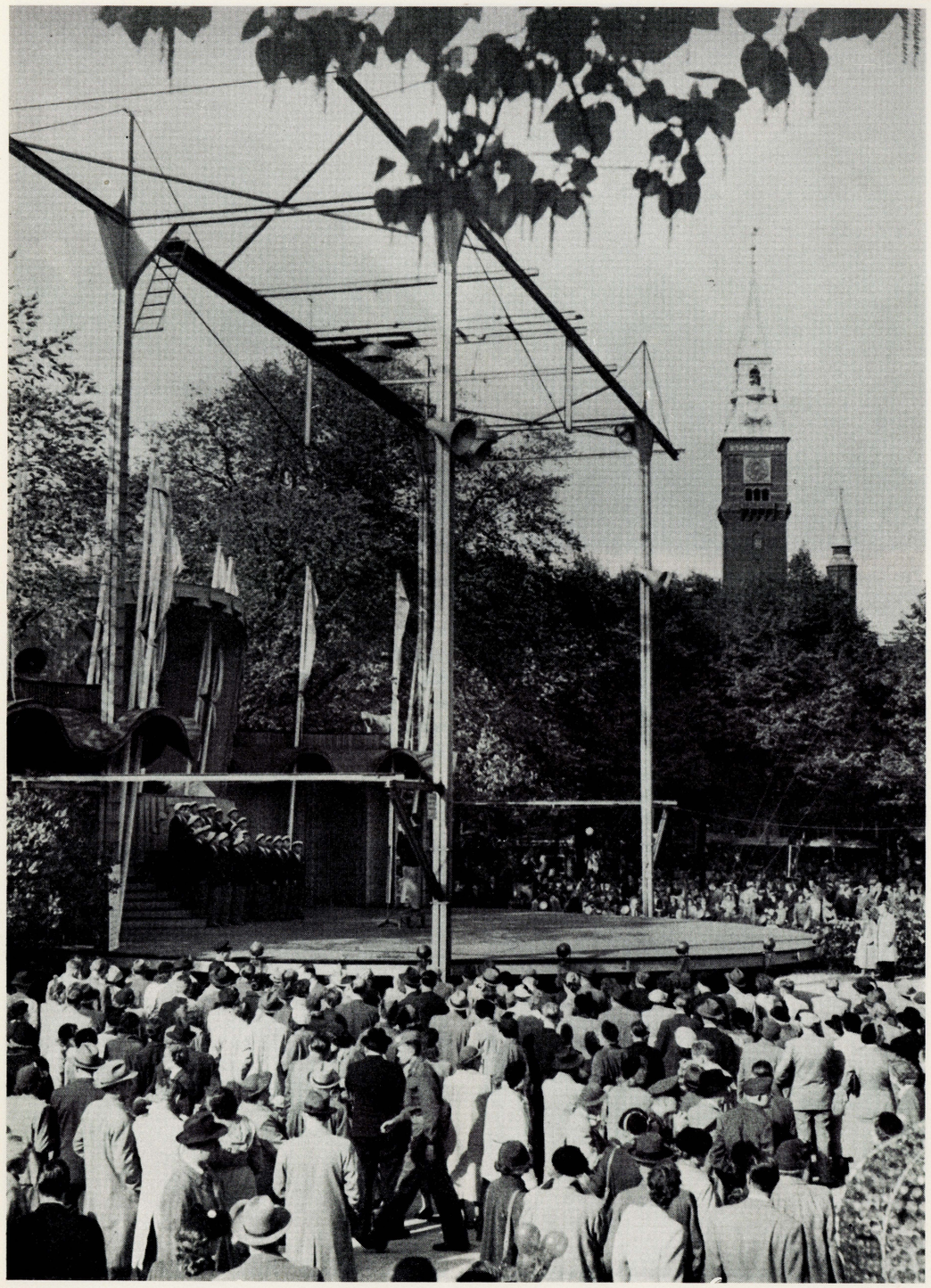
It is rare that a deceased composer is honored by a whole world, but when Sibelius passed away two years ago, it became the occasion of mourning for the musical world. His own country honored him with a special stamp in his memory and a public funeral. For his countrymen his music became a symbol of the resistance against the Russian occupation in the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th Century and it can be noted that "Finlandia" was originally not allowed to be publicly performed under its original name, even abroad, and when it was written in 1899, it was out of question that the occupation power would accept any performances at all in Finland.

HENRIK MÖLLER *(1852—1918)*

Students' singing has old roots in the Scandinavian countries and much of the singing literature grew from the necessity for creating new material. Henrik Möller was the trainer of the singing groups inside the University of Lund in southern Sweden and was also active as music instructor at the famous Cathedral School in Lund. Among his numerous compositions, "Island", originally conceived for male quartet, ranks as one of his most important masterpieces.

IVAR WIDÉEN *(1871—1951)*

Composer, church musician and music teacher of nationwide importance, Ivar Widéen belongs to the group of Swedish composers who got their inspiration from the dreamy beauty of the countryside. He specialized in writing for choir or solo voice, of which the patriotic "Standarsång" is a good example.



SAS Male Chorus singing at Tivoli, the famed amusement park in Copenhagen, Denmark



The Queen of Light (Santa Lucia) is in Sweden traditionally and ceremonially greeted every "Lucia Morning" (Dec. 13th)

ADOLF WIKLUND *(1879—1950)*

Wiklund was one of Sweden's most versatile musicians. He was conductor of international prominence (guest appearances in Vienna and London). He belonged to the Stockholm Opera during the years 1911—1924, after which he took over the Stockholm Concert Association Orchestra until 1938. After that time he only appeared as guest conductor an special occasions. Among his compositions the orchestra thus becomes the natural medium, but he also wrote a number of songs, thus following up the Swedish traditions in the field. They are imbued with folk-song and the typical Dalecarlian tune that appears on the SAS program still maintains a popularity among all Swedes.

CARL MICHAEL BELLMAN

(1740—1795)

Bohemian, poet, performer, Bellman was a kind of towering genius in Swedish 18th Century life. He won great fame during his lifetime, but he was always in money trouble — which can easily be understood when you are told that he spent most of his time in the cafés of Stockholm. His songs usually depict life in the Stockholm of his day with rustic simplicity; this is also the case of "Vila vid denna källa".

JULES SYLVAIN *(1900—)*

A prolific composer of popular music, including operettas (that even have found their way to the Capital of Operetta, Vienna) and musical comedies as well as film scores. Sylvain has a natural melodic inventiveness of his own that goes straight to the heart of the listener. One of his early hit tunes is Flygarvalsen (The Pilot's Waltz), written during the pioneering years of Swedish aviation.

LENNART EK *(1920—)*

Conductor of the SAS Male Chorus. (See page 6!)

EVERT TAUBE *(1890—)*

Taube can be characterized as a sort of a 20th Century François Villon — one vital exception being, though, that he does not possess the criminal instincts of his Medieval predecessor. Taube is a composer and he writes his own texts. He is also a painter and a successful author of many books. He is the foremost representative of the Swedish ballad, an art which through him has found a new renaissance. His songs are known by every Scandinavian, young or old, and their melodious rhythm and vitality has gained even non-Scandinavian friends in constant increasing numbers.

GUNNAR TURESSON *(1906—)*

Turesson is the originator of numerous popular Swedish songs, where he often strikes a sentimental and idyllic tone. He is also an excellent performer, who has made extensive concert tours in Scandinavia and also in the United States. He has several times set poems by the poet Dan Andersson to music, as is the case with "Jag väntar vid min mila".

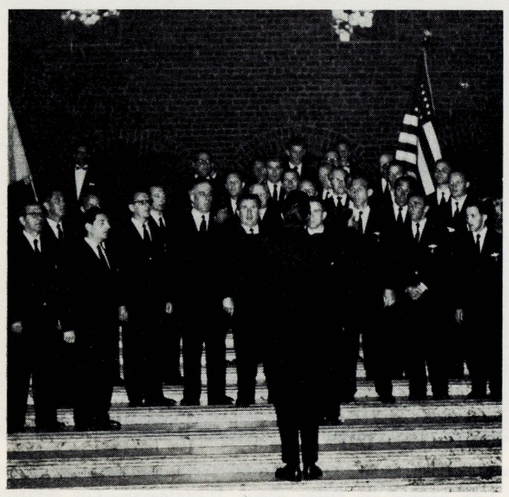
KLAUS ÖSTBY *(1865—1945)*

Östby was born in Norway, but was from 1903—30 leader of the music department of the Salvation Army in Sweden. He was famed all over the world as one of the Army's topranking experts on music theory. Most of his well over 100 songs have been published by the Salvation Army, and he has made arrangements of 800 other songs for choir and organ as well as 700 tunes for brass band.

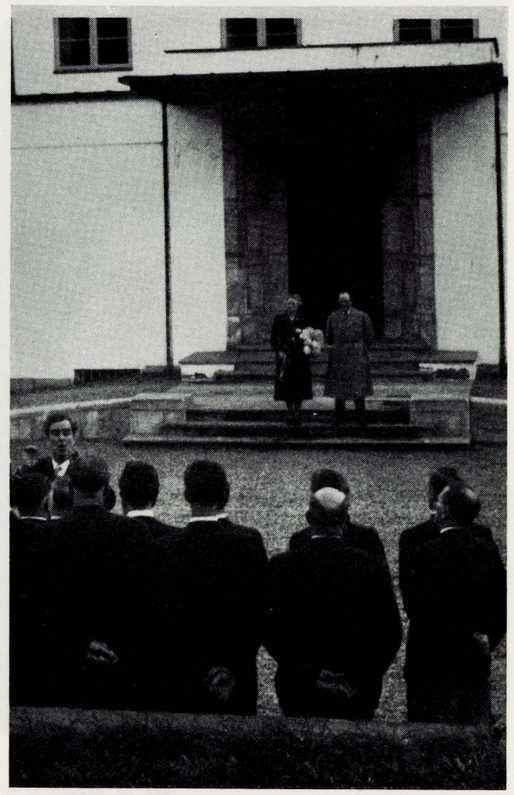
HUGO ALFVÉN *(1872—)*

Even if you, by any chance, should not know his name, you know his music! Nobody listening to music can avoid hearing the "Swedish Rhapsody", which, incidentally, only contains the first part of Alfvén's original Midsummer's Vigil. In the serious music Alfvén is undoubtedly Sweden's best known living composer and he has written works in almost all styles: symphonies, oratories, cantatas, rhapsodies, choirs etc. The 85 year old composer is still vital and active; his most recent work is he ballet "The Prodigal Son".

SAS Male Chorus giving a concert in the City Hall of Stockholm, celebrating the United States' Independence Day, July 4th



Saluting the Crown Prince (present King) and Crown Princess of Norway at the Skaugum Castle near Oslo





Even cold and icy Greenland has come close to Scandinavia and America in the age of aviation, since SAS opened its Polar Route Scandinavia—Los Angeles

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