



Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet

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



Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet | Tel: +1 952-934-4535 | E-mail: enstrengb@gmail.com | Web: www.psalmodikon.com

Notes from MUSIC-ON-A-STRING

Beatrice Hole

In 2001 I was writing articles for the November Newsletter with a heavy heart. A senseless act of terrorism had just occurred on the 11th when two airplanes were deliberately crashed into the Twin Towers in New York City.

This past week I had the privilege of visiting this area in New York City. A beautiful memorial has been erected in the footprints of where the towers stood. It was very impressive, I must say.

As I wrote then and will write again, “Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life”. And I guess that is why many of us are still playing the psalmodikon.

The Annual meeting was such a fun day of visiting and playing our psalmodikons. We just wish more of you could have joined us.

But we plan on meeting again next year.

Anybody have suggestions or ideas for the meeting?? We have been informed that the group of psalmodikon players from Sweden has decided that they will not be coming to USA in 2016.

Wishing you the best and happiest of the Holiday season to come!

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

Annual Meeting of the Psalmodikons

The annual psalmodikon meeting was held on Saturday, August 22, 2015.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the meeting place of the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet was changed to the Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, 505 13th Street South, Hudson, Wisconsin.



Attending were: Floyd Foslien, Kathy Pedersen, Caroline Lenselink, Joan Saathoff and Marilyn Rogers Almie, Beatrice Hole, Emily Evenson and Ardyce Abrecht.

It is always hopeful to see some of the younger folks enjoy playing the psalmodikon. That way we know the psalmodikon will continue to live on in history.

The get-together was very enjoyable. We played nearly every song in the Psalmodikon Songbook and yet had time to catch up on old friendships.

A delicious catered lunch was served by Joan and Harley Saathoff, along with several kinds of sweets brought by those attending.



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Sue Krueger and daughter, Anna, were at the meeting also.

We look forward to the next meeting in 2016. It would be even more fun if more of our members could attend.





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

ITEMS FOR SALE

PSALMODIKON SONGBOOK (revised edition) 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

Send orders to:

Floyd Foslien
 567 High Ridge Drive
 Hudson, WI 54016
www.fffoslien@sbcglobal.net

Notes from Floyd:

These are usually the most difficult components for builders to obtain. I can, however, provide all of the other component parts required to make *psalmodikons*, if the builder is unable to make them or find them locally. You may contact me for prices.

I also sell a complete kit of parts to make a *psalmodikon* for \$130.00. This kit instrument is modelled after an antique Norwegian *salmodikon* (Norwegian spelling) similar to one used by Lars Roverud. He was the "Father" of the Norwegian *salmodikon* and is credited with using transposition sticks to allow playing in various keys without re-tuning so this kit includes a transposition stick. The parts are cut to size and need only to be glued together, sanded, and finished with varnish or lacquer.

Letter from the Editor

Since Beatrice did not have any Letters from Readers to put in this edition's newsletter and she has found a new source to handle the printing, I thought I would just add a couple of words here this time.

It not only has been a pleasure so far to be working on this newsletter for my cousin Beatrice — and I thoroughly appreciate and admire the ongoing efforts everyone does for psalmodikons — but I had enjoyed working with Carl, the previous printer, since taking on editorship. Beatrice and I will miss him, but I believe we will have a good new relationship forming now with Bryan.

I trust everyone has enjoyed the newsletter formats these past four or so years. I encourage you to let Beatrice and I know if you have any suggestions.

Hopefully one of these days before long I will be able to join the group again, either here in Washington or elsewhere, for a meeting.

— Kristen



Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet & Newsletter

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The Newsletter is published using **PagePlus X8** (www.serif.com) and is printed in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

The *Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet Newsletter* is published in the Spring, Summer, and Autumn. We are always looking for newsworthy items and photos that you want to share with other readers.

The **\$8.00 membership fee** helps to cover the cost of printing and postage for the Newsletter, annual fee for the Psalmodikon Web Site, and annual meeting expenses.

Check the date on your mailing label which indicates if your dues are current.

Send membership dues to: Beatrice Hole
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In Memorium

from Beatrice Hole

BETTY LARSON, 1911-2015, of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, was a member of the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet.

In 1995 I drove to Rochester, Minnesota to meet Betty and to see her psalmodikon that had been created using the pattern from Harold D. Laurence of Westminster, Colorado. Laurence was mentioned in the article written by Ardith K. Melloh of Iowa City, Iowa in 1981, entitled "Grandfather's Songbook / The Psalmodikon in America".

In 1997 the psalmodikon and I were invited to participate in the Annual Midsommar Festival at the Swedish American Museum in Swedesburg, Iowa. Betty was a great lady and I have a large file of correspondence from her as she was great to keep in touch with friends.

Eventually she donated the psalmodikon to the Swedish American Museum in Swedesburg, Iowa where it is still on display. Betty would often come down to the Museum and play for the visitors.

Blessed be her memory.

It is Betty's request that we continue to send the Nordic-American Psalmodikonforbundet Newsletters to the Swedish American Museum where they are kept on file for reference.

With Our Condolences

On behalf of the psalmodikon members, we send our sympathy and prayers to Ruth Gibson, of White Bear Lake, Minnesota.

Ruth's husband, Lyle, had been in failing health the last few years and passed away on October 13, 2015.

Renaissance

Beatrice Hole

In 1996, Leif Løchen (1921–2011) of Vågå, Norway, sent me a Christmas gift of a book in which he writes a chapter entitled: *Renaissance*.

In more recent times there has been a big interest in older music and musical instruments. Also has there been a renewed interest in the psalmodikon.

In 1987, at the [Maihaugen Museum](#), a part of the staff became with great spirit to go ahead and create a "Norwegian Psalm-dicon Orchestra". They became serious enough to try [Lars Roverud](#)'s idea to use the psalmodikon to lead the song in churches, then with bigger assemblies could have something to recommend.

In lack of decent equipment, the members first had to take on a building course and

string-making course. They made eight instruments from Bass to Soprano sizes. The sheep gut strings were received of HED-OPP, a common slaughterhouse in Hedmark and Oppland.

Most of the members had no background as professional musicians. Deliberation therefore created the statement, "you can learn to play the first time over", and so with practice you can play good. The next thing you learn is to play from a song sheet, all in slow speed.

The orchestra has taken part in many concerts and has in its short and hectic lifetime proved that the psalmodikon was both easily learned and well suited to lead the song in bigger assemblies.

I first met this group at a psalmodikon meeting in Östervåla, Sweden. 

Right: Leif Løchen – A very active member of folk music organizations and central in their development. ([Folkorg.no](#))

COMPARE AND CONTRAST: TERMINOLOGY

Often times when I am demonstrating the Psalmodikon, people question if the psalmodikon might be a Dulcimer, or a Langeleik, etc. I use the following as a reference:

LANGELEIK:

This is a Norwegian stringed folk instrument dating back to the 16th century, resembling a box zither. The Langeleik originated in the regions of Valdres and Vardal in Norway. It is played with a plectrum on one melody string and can have up to 8 drone strings.

Since the instrument cannot play a chromatic scale nor be easily tuned to other pitches, it is very limited in its ability to play along with other instruments or more harmonically complex music.

This instrument has become more popular in the USA recently with the renewed instruments of our heritage.

DULCIMER:

This is an ancient folk instrument that probably was invented in Persia or Arabia. Many think of it as an instrument of the Appalachians, who maybe played it because it reminded them of the bagpipes. It is a flat box with metal wires stretched across the top. These wires are attached to adjustable tuning pegs on one end of the instrument. The play-

er plucks a single string for the melody and there are numerous strings that resonate.

AUTOHARP:

The autoharp is the oldest of stringed musical instruments which dates back to Biblical times when it was the musical accompaniment to the Psalms. It is played with the fingers rather than a plectrum. A recent development of the autoharp is that it is held in the lap or against the body. (The autoharp sounds very nicely when played with the Psalmodikon.)

NYCKLEHARPA:

This is a traditional Swedish instrument that has been played, in one form or another as it evolved, for more than 600 years.

The modern chromatic nyckleharpa has 3 melody strings that are bowed, one drone string, and 12 sympathetic vibration strings. It has about 37 wooden keys arranged to slide under the strings to create the melodies.

The nyckleharpa almost died out in the 1900s but has become popular once again with folk music groups.



Above: At least once each summer, Zion Lutheran Church in Hudson, Wisconsin invites the psalmodikons to provide special music during their Sunday morning worship. Anyone can come and participate. This summer there were five players. Floyd Foslien, Joan Saathoff, Beatrice Hole, Kathy Pedersen, & Sue Krueger.





L: For the past 20 years or so, Beatrice Hole and Floyd Foslien have been invited to demonstrate the psalmodikon and tell of its history at the Vesterheim Museum during Nordic Fest in Decorah, Iowa. Pictured is Psalmodikon member from Superior, Wisconsin, Steven Johnsen. Floyd and Steven are discussing the psalmodikon in great detail!

C: Emily Evenson, of Montevideo, Minnesota, is playing a psalmodikon that was made by her dad, C. A. "Bud" Albrecht. He became a member in 2000 and passed away in 2003. Ardyce, Bud's wife (seated in background), always comes to the meetings with Emily and enjoys listening to the music. We were reminded of one of the past meetings (2001) when Bud made fold-away music stands for each of the members attending. Many of us are still using this useful little gift.

R: The Vesterheim Museum is one of the venues that sell and promote the Psalmodikon CDs and Songbooks. Photo shows the nice display case in their Museum Store.

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