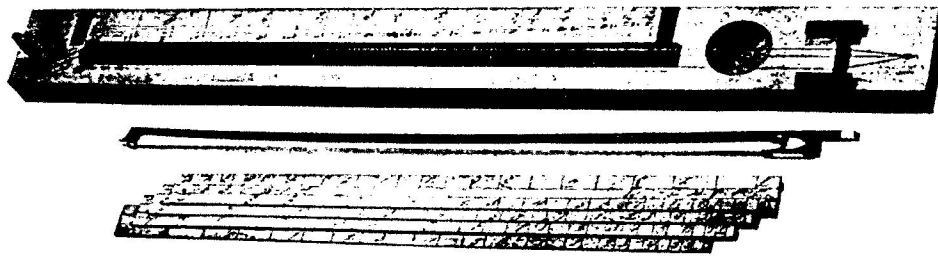


Father of the Norwegian Salmodikon

Lars Roverud was a music teacher at the Norwegian University Theological Seminary in Christiania (Oslo), Norway. He is credited with adding numbered frets to the salmodikon (Norwegian spelling) in half-step increments. He used transposition sticks (shown below with his salmodikon) that allowed the instrument to be played in various keys without re-tuning. He promoted the salmodikon as a simple teaching tool. He received a grant to experiment with music instruction using the salmodikon in schools and rural churches in Norway. He later added alto, tenor and bass instruments to form a quartet for use in churches that lacked organs. His development of the Norwegian salmodikon was influenced by a single-stringed instrument in Denmark and numerical notation used in Germany.



Lars Roverud 1776 - 1850



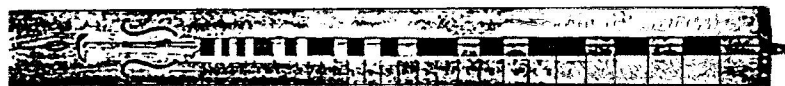
Lars Roverud's Salmodikon, with its bow and transposition sticks



Johannes Dillner 1785 - 1862

Dillner and the Swedish Psalmodikon

The Rev. Johannes Dillner was particularly concerned about the poor quality of congregational singing that followed the state church's adoption of a new hymnal in 1819. He constructed a psalmodikon, and promoted its use for the teaching of hymns. In 1830 he published his first of several books of church hymns written in sifferskrift, which also included instructions for reading the notation and making and playing the instrument. Dillner's instruction method was promoted for use in churches and schools throughout Sweden. While serving as pastor at Östervåla from 1839 until 1862, he encouraged the people of his parish to make their own psalmodikons and learn to play them. At that time there were over 10,000 psalmodikons in that area of Sweden. Lars Roverud visited Dillner in Stockholm in 1828. The two men probably influenced each other.



Dillner's psalmodikon has chromatic frets marked in a diatonic pattern with light and dark colors. Much like the black and white keys on a piano. To play in a different key, he simply retuned his psalmodikon.