



Martin Knust

Linnæus University
Univerza Linnæus

20th-century Music in Sweden. An Overview

Glasba 20. stoletja na Švedskem. Pregled

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IZVLEČEK

ABSTRACT

Švedska se je kot izvoznica glasbe na zemljevidu pojavila na začetku 20. stoletja. Locirana med različne spremenljive vojaške in politične bloke je ohranjala politiko, ki je prispevala k do določene meri specifični podobi švedskega glasbenega življenja, ki ga skuša pregled začrtati v glavnih obrisih.

Sweden appeared as a music exporting country on the map in the beginning of the 20th century. Located between different shifting military and political blocks it maintained a politics that contributed to some extent to the specific shape of Sweden's music life which this overview outlines.

Introduction

This text is a highly selective overview about the music history of Sweden during the 20th century. Art music will be in the focus. However, in a Swedish context folk and popular music cannot be ignored completely even when talking about composed music. This macroscopic overview will present some crucial events and works in Swedish music life. Beside compositional aspects it will present some features of music politics and outline the development of a music infrastructure in Sweden that can be compared to the Continental¹ and which took place in the beginning of the 20th century. Sweden

1 From a Scandinavian perspective, "Continental" is somewhat congruent with the notion of the term from a British perspective and aims in music contexts around 1900 at the German speaking countries (including Austria-Hungary), France, Belgium, the Netherlands and (Northern) Italy, not at Russia, South-Eastern Europe or the Iberian peninsula.

is regarded to be a Western country but has maintained an officially neutral position between the military super powers during both world wars and the Cold War. This had an impact not only on the domestic music politics but of course also on the export of music which has always been an important problem for composers and musicians in Sweden. Against this backdrop something like a specific Swedish musicscape may take shape in this overview.

1. National Romanticism

Like in other countries around Germany, where a new kind of nationalism rose in the 19th century,² also in Sweden the period around 1900 is often described as the time of National Romanticism. This description appears to be justified when the aims, tasks and subjects of Swedish composers around 1900 are taken into consideration. National issues dominate the discourses about and among composers. For instance, the opera subjects of Swedish operas that were composed around 1900 are often those from the national mythology of history. Among these Andréas Hallén's *Harald Viking* (composed 1878–80), Wilhelm Stenhammar's *Tirfing* (1897–98) or Wilhelm Peterson-Berger's *Arnlfjot* (1907–09) have to be mentioned. They were afterwards dismissed as “Viking operas”.³

To compose music about national mythology and history was nothing exceptional during the turn of the century 1900. During this time, most of the European nations started to define what was perceived as a cultural canon later. That means, certain works in literature, beaux-arts or music were defined to be examples of the “spirit” of a nation. This is one reason for the raise of national composers around 1900 all over Europe. For instance, Edvard Grieg and Jean Sibelius became not only prominent musicians in their countries but their representatives abroad and their works were and still are regarded to be embodiments of their nations in a domestic context. One could go so far to state that Grieg and Sibelius defined what Norway and Finland are culturally. This process of proclaiming national composers took place also in England (Elgar), France (Debussy) around 1900 as it did in Central and Eastern Europe (Dvořák, Smetana, Szymanowski, etc.) or Italy (Verdi). Interestingly, Sweden proves to be an exception.⁴

The reason for this may be a receptive specificity of the Swedish music life rather than a lack of competent composers. There were three of them who technically wrote state of the art music and who had more or less strong ambitions to fill the “position” of a national composer in their home country. All three of them had their national breakthrough in the 1890s. This is why they often are called the 1890s generation. Among them Wilhelm Peterson-Berger (1867–1942) had the least significance as a composer

2 For an overview about the different waves of nationalism in the 19th century cf. Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed. 1990).

3 Martin Tegen, “Tre svenska vikingaoperor,” *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning* 1960: 12–75.

4 Martin Knust, “Gibt es einen schwedischen Ton? – Kontinentale Reflexionen zur schwedischen Kunstmusik um 1900,” in *Festschrift für Holger Larsen* (= University of Stockholm Studies in Musicology vol. XXI), ed. Jacob Derkert (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 2011), 32–61.

abroad.⁵ He had been trained as a piano teacher, composer and music critic in Germany and was an important link between the Swedish and German music life. For instance, he was an expert in the works of Richard Wagner and acknowledged as such also in Germany as the publication of his book that was published during the Wagner anniversary 1913 about the German composer in German and Swedish simultaneously at Breitkopf & Härtel proves. Peterson-Berger did translate the writings of Wagner and Nietzsche into Swedish for the first time. Compared to the works of his contemporaries both in Sweden and abroad they appear to be rather conservative even though they contain some original ideas. German critics dismissed his music as too old-fashioned for being of interest for a 20th century listener and also among his composer and music critic fellows in Sweden Peterson-Berger was not well-liked at all.⁶ This might have been the case because of his quite sharp style of writing reviews which in the end lead to his isolation as a composer in Swedish music life. Nonetheless his music was popular among the broader audiences. His piano music which follows the model of Grieg's immensely successful *Lyric Pieces* was sold and played in Swedish homes. Peterson-Berger's *Frösöblomster* (Flowers from Frösö; three volumes composed 1896, 1900 and 1914) are still widely known in Sweden. The opera *Arnljot* which Peterson-Berger wrote in Wagnerian fashion onto his own libretto became one of very few repertoire operas in Swedish. It was played for fifty years after its world première 1910 at the Royal Opera in Stockholm. Perhaps the reason for his domestic popularity lies in the rather traditional design of the music. Peterson-Berger both as a critic and a composer was strictly anti-Modernist. As a critic he claimed that the Swedish national "spirit" differed from the Continental if it came to the complexity in music. While a German listener would prefer the complex orchestral music of the New German school for a Northerner the short and clear forms of the Nordic folk music were more appealing. As a matter of fact, Peterson-Berger's music is structurally less dense than, say, the late music dramas of Wagner or the early operas of Richard Strauss. His statement about the important role of folk music might be seen as an aesthetic program considering the periodic melodies of his operas and the – compared to Strauss and the late Wagner – less intense use of leitmotifs. In one instance, he referred to folk music directly, namely in his *Third Symphony* with the title "Same Ätnam" (Land of the Sami; composed 1913–15). It is the first symphonic work that employs thematic material from Sami joiks as he found them in the collection of Karl Tirén who published it in the volume *Die lappische Volksmusik* in 1942. In this symphony, beside its material, many original instrumental ideas occur like, for instance, the combination of harp and piano as orchestral instruments in the first movement.

Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871–1927) has been seen as the Swedish national Romantic composer who has written the most interesting music of his time.⁷ The technical level of his early works corresponded to the recent trends on the Continent to an extent that lead eventually to self-criticism. For Stenhammar, his *First Symphony* (1902–03)

5 About his life and Work cf. Bengt Olof Engström, Orwar Eriksson, Lennart Hedwall and Henrik Karlsson, eds., *Wilhelm Peterson-Berger: En vägvisare* (Möklinta: Gidlunds, 2006).

6 Engström, 54.

7 About his life and work cf. Bo Wallner, *Wilhelm Stenhammar och hans tid*, 3 vols. (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1991).

and *First Piano Concerto* (1893) were too New German in expression and design and he withdrew them and tried to develop a more personal idiom. To this end, he employed Swedish folk music, for instance in his symphonic poem *Midvinter* (Midwinter; composed 1907),⁸ and dealt intensively with counterpoint like his Danish friend Carl Nielsen whose works Stenhammar performed and admired. His last finished works, for instance the Symphony no. 2 with the title “The Dorian” (1911–15), show his counterpointal interest. Stenhammar’s chances to achieve the rank of a national composer were good at the beginning of his career. As a young man he composed many works that were even performed abroad like his concert overture *Excelsior!* (1896) which had its world première in Berlin. But despite this promising start, his great talent in writing music and the attention his works caused in Sweden – the choir movement “Sverige” (Sweden) from his cantata *Ett folk* (One People; composed 1905) became a non-official national anthem – Stenhammar lost the ambitions to pursue a career as a composer and focused on his career as a performer. As a concert pianist and conductor he performed in the whole country and it was due to the tight schedule as a musician that his productivity as a composer declined significantly to a minimum. Nonetheless, he is the only composer of this era who continued to be popular among Swedish composers even after the Modernistic turn after WW II.

Hugo Alfvén (1872–1960) is the composer of the 1890s generation who came closest to be the Swedish national composer.⁹ His compositional focus was on demanding compositions for orchestra and he had strong ambitions to be acknowledged abroad. To this aim, he travelled and performed his works in, among others, Spain, Germany, Austria and the US. Even though his works are not innovative compared to the standards of the time – like for Peterson-Berger Modernism in music was an anathema for him – their facture is of high quality. Alfvén maintained justly that he had received the best education in counterpoint among his Northern contemporaries and that he was a skilful orchestrator; he had extensive experience as an orchestra musician because he had played the violin in the Royal Swedish Court Chapel for several years. His Swedish Rhapsody No. 1 with the title “Midsommarvaka” (Midsummer Night’s Vigil; composed 1903) was and perhaps still is the most often played Swedish orchestral composition of all times. As an orchestral composer and also as a performer he dealt with Swedish folk music. His three Swedish rhapsodies contain folk melodies and he arranged many well-known folk melodies for amateur choirs. These arrangements are still in use in Sweden until today. That means, Alfvén did adopt different strategies to establish himself both as a national composer in an international and in a national context: The first happened through composing music that was aiming to the German-speaking music market, the largest of its time, the latter through mediating between art and folk

8 In the composer’s comment to the *Midvinter* score Stenhammar mentions the names and origins of the two folk songs which he employed in this composition; characteristic for many Swedish folk tunes like these two is that they go in triple meter and are played on the fiddle (Dan Lundberg and Gunnar Ternhag, *Folkmusik i Sverige* [Södertälje: Gidlunds förlag, 2nd ed. 2005], 79–80).

9 About his life and work cf. Jan-Olof Rudén, *Hugo Alfvéns kompositioner. Käll- och verkförteckning* (= Publikationer utgivna av Kungl. Musikaliska Akademien vol. XI) (Stockholm: Nordiska musikförlaget, Edition Wilhelm Hansen, 1972); Lennart Hedwall, *Hugo Alfvén* (P.A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag: Stockholm, 1973); Gunnar Ternhag and Jan Olof Rudén, eds., *Hugo Alfvén, en vägväisare* (Södertälje: Gidlunds förlag, 2003). A good online resource about Alfvén is the homepage of the Alfvén Society: <http://alfvensallskapet.se> (retrieved July 11 2018).

music or between professional and amateur music making in his home country; Alfvén was both a long-time director musices at the university of Uppsala and a leader of an amateur choir on the country side. Moreover, he wrote patriotic compositions which found some resonance. One important reason for why he failed to establish himself as a national composer, too, is the decline in his compositional productivity that occurred when he became director musices in Uppsala 1910 and the lack of certain important genres in his oeuvre like music for piano solo or opera. As a kind of substitute for his shortcoming as a dramatic composer Alfvén tried his luck as a composer of a ballet pantomime and at the end of his career as a film composer. These compositions, the ballet pantomime *Bergakungen* (The Mountain's King; composed 1916–23) and the film music for the film *Synnöve Solbakken* from 1935 display Alfvéns somewhat idealistic or even idyllic view onto folk music and life on the countryside. In a Modernist context as it became normative after WW II his music appeared to be out-dated.

2. From the 1910s through the End of WW II

The first decades of the 20th century saw the establishment of a music infrastructure after the Continental model. Until the late 19th century the centre of music life in Sweden was its capital Stockholm. Here the only opera house and orchestra of the country existed. After some civic initiatives also in Gothenburg and Malmö, the second and third largest cities in Sweden, concert societies and orchestras were founded. Ever since the 1910s the Swedish state started to support symphony orchestras in the minor cities. Those were founded in Gävle, Norrköping and Helsingborg 1912. Sveriges radio, the Swedish public service radio, started broadcasting 1925 and a first Swedish radio orchestra was founded the same year.

However, the Continental market remained to be still very attractive for ambitious composers in Sweden. Basically all composers that were active in Sweden during the 1910s through the 1940s maintained good contacts either to Germany or to France. They “imported” not only recent trends in music into Sweden but founded also music organisations according to the German model. The Förening Svenska Tonsättare FST (Swedish Composer's Society), founded 1918, became a precursor of the Svenska Tonsättares Internationella Musikbyrå STIM (Swedish Performing Rights Society), founded 1923, the royalty collecting society that made the so-called “Swedish music wonder” in the 1970s possible when Swedish popular music started to be one of the most successful globally in terms of revenues. The group of composers which was responsible for the founding of both organisations consisted of four composers who wrote music in the late Romantic style: Natanael Berg (1879–1957), Ture Rangström (1884–1947), Oskar Lindberg (1887–1955) and Kurt Atterberg (1887–1974). They called themselves “Spillran” (The splinter). Among them Atterberg is the most remarkable personality. He had excellent contacts to Germany and maintained them also during the Nazi era¹⁰ in which he advanced to the most often played living non-German composer after

10 About his relations to Nazi Germany cf. Petra Garberding, *Musik och politik i skuggan av nazismen. Kurt Atterberg och de svensk-tyska musikrelationerna* (Diss.) (Lund: Sekel, 2007).

Sibelius. In contrast to Sibelius, Atterberg also actively engaged himself in the Nazi-founded Ständiger Rat für die internationale Zusammenarbeit der Komponisten and became a board member of it.¹¹ After WW II Atterberg who had controlled the domestic music life to a large extent faced critique. His reaction to it was unconventional. He applied for conducting an investigation about his contacts to Nazi Germany, the only one that was carried out against a musician in Sweden. Even though this investigation found no evidence for an improper cooperation Atterberg's career as a composer and music organizer was over after 1945. He continued to compose, for instance a Ninth Symphony (1955–56), but described himself as a "living corpse". His works were banned from the Swedish concert halls and opera houses.

The way Atterberg's music was treated after WW II is typical for the sharp turn in music politics that occurred in Sweden and that shows many similarities with the radical shift of paradigms in West-Germany, France and Italy after 1945 (cf. caption 3). Certainly, his music was following musical trends rather than formulating new ideas. Nonetheless, it did fit the taste of time for grand orchestral effects and combined those with Swedish folk melodies. Atterberg shaped his musical forms in a clear manner and saw himself more as a classicist than a romanticist. For the German audience his music lacked some decidedly Nordic traces – which might prove the closeness of his idiom to Continental composing – but composer fellows like Jean Sibelius and Hilding Rosenberg appreciated it and even from the US commissions for compositions arrived. Atterberg found inspiration in the Russian music of the late 19th century¹² and experimented with some Modernist techniques like bitonality, for instance, in his Symphony No. 8 (1944). At present it is difficult to tell how popular he was in his home country before 1945. His works were played often on the radio until then and performed by famous conductors like Strauss, Toscanini and Furtwängler abroad. In any event, his dominant position in Swedish music life from the inter-war period until the end of WW II influenced and shaped Swedish music politics for almost one generation and his era ended abruptly.

3. Swedish Modernism

Beside the late Romantic composers of the Spillran other currents appeared in Sweden during the 1920s and lasted well until the 1960s. Several composers started to write in a neo-classical style in the 1920s and achieved popularity among their country fellows. Lars-Erik Larsson's (1908–1986) suite *Förklädd gud* (A god disguised; composed 1940) and Dag Wirén's (1905–1986) *Serenade for string orchestra* (1937) belong to the most favourite compositions among Swedish audiences. They were and are often performed and recorded. Peterson-Berger's statement about the Swedish preponderance for clear structures in music seems to prove true in this case. Wirén's music is characterized by sometimes mechanistic rhythms and a melodic style that is easy to grasp but not simplistic. He developed a compositional metamorphosis technique that lets his

¹¹ Garberding, 84–88.

¹² Herbert Connor, *Svensk musik vol. 2: Från Midsommarvaka till Aniara* (Stockholm: Bonniers 1980), 159.

themes appear in ever-changing shapes. Wirén wrote not only music for the concert hall but also for radio and TV productions.¹³ Swedish neo-classicism existed parallel with the Modernist strand and had a stronger position in the music life than in the West-European countries on the Continent. In the 1950s a second generation of neo-classicist composers became active. To them belonged, among others, three composers who studied with Larsson: Maurice Karkoff (1927–2013), Jan Carlstedt (1926–2004) and Bo Linde (1933–1970).¹⁴

The arrival of Modernism in Sweden was the world première of Hilding Rosenberg's (1892–1985) *String Quartet No. 1* in the year 1923.¹⁵ It caused a fierce discussion about Modernism in music and divided the Swedish critics. In it, Rosenberg employed atonality¹⁶ and was heavily criticized for it by, among others, Peterson-Berger. One important champion of Rosenberg and Modernism in music was the critic Moses Pergament (1893–1977) who was a composer himself.¹⁷ Pergament was also in favour of the jazz and declared it to be a relevant music genre for composers. He and Peterson-Berger exchanged many personal invectives and displayed a clash of aesthetics that was representative for the disputes about Modernist music of the time and as charged with spiteful rhetoric.¹⁸

It was Rosenberg and a group of younger composers who shaped the music life in Sweden after 1945. It is difficult to tell how big the Modernist impact in Sweden was prior to this because this group determined the major narratives of Swedish music history in the second half of the 20th century also retroactively.¹⁹ It was Hilding Rosenberg's pupil Karl-Birger Blomdahl (1916–1968) who became the informal leader of a group of young composers who were interested in radical Modernism and started to meet with some regularity at the end of WW II and during the second half of the 1940s. They were called "Måndagsgruppen" (Monday's group). There are certain similarities in their informal program that they shared with the Gruppe 47 in West-Germany – a formation of writers and critics – which tried to deal with the past critically and became dominant during the following decades. Even though Sweden did put its past behind itself and declared to start into a new Modernist and progressive era the contacts between Sweden and Germany, that means mostly West- but in the 1970s and 80s also East-Germany, remained to be vibrant.

13 About his life and work cf. Martin Tegen, ed., *Dag Wirén: en vägvisare* (Södertälje: Gidlunds 2005).

14 Lennart Hedwall, *Svensk musikhistoria. En handbok* (Stockholm: Reimers, 1996) 149–50.

15 Rosenberg's long life and work list have not been investigated systematically yet. An overview about early research in it is the anthology: Hans Åstrand, Bo Wallner and Sven Wilson, eds., *En bok till Hilding Rosenberg 21.6.1977* (= Kungl. Musikaliska Akademiens skriftserie 19) (Stockholm: Royal Swedish Academy of Music, 1977).

16 He was among the first in Sweden to embrace the music of Arnold Schönberg (Wallner 1991 vol. III, 502–03).

17 Gregor Andersson. "Die Musik in Schweden im Spannungsfeld zwischen Nationalem und Internationalem im 20. Jahrhundert," in *Nationale Musik im 20. Jahrhundert. Kompositorische und soziokulturelle Aspekte der Musikgeschichte zwischen Ost- und Westeuropa. Konferenzbericht Leipzig 2002*, ed. Helmut Loos and Stefan Keym (Leipzig: Gudrun Schröder, 2004), 371.

18 Peterson-Berger's attacks on Pergament were as vicious as were Hans Pfitzner's on Busoni. Henrik Rosengren has investigated the racist and anti-Semitic assaults on Pergament in the essay "A Wagner for the Jews': Moses Pergament, Richard Wagner and anti-Semitism in Swedish cultural life in the interwar period", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 38 (May 2013), issue 2, 245–261 and in his monograph *Judarnas Wagner: Moses Pergament och den kulturella identifikationens dilemma omkring 1920–1950* (Diss.) (Lund: Sekel, 2007).

19 Take, among many others, this somewhat programmatic overview: Bo Wallner: "Scandinavian Music after the Second World War," *The Musical Quarterly* 51, No. 1, Special Fiftieth Anniversary Issue: *Contemporary Music in Europe: A Comprehensive Survey* (Jan. 1965), 111–43. Wallner was a member of the Monday group and an influential music critic.

In what follows some parallels between the post-war Modernism in Western Europe and Sweden will be outlined.

Sweden was relatively early to adopt serial music compared to, for instance, Finland. Like on the Continent, the 1950s were a time of radical Modernism not only in music but also in architecture and design in Sweden. Romanticism was regarded as a period that had to be left behind. Electronic music arrived in Sweden shortly after it had established itself in Germany and France. The music historiography in Sweden focused now like on the Continent on the Second Vienna School and its music became the model for the generation of the Monday group. Ethical values displayed in after war literature in Germany as embodied in pacifism, human rights, anti-totalitarianism and early environmentalism were the same in Sweden. Of course, the music politics of the country mirrored the general political climate of the time. Sweden successfully positioned itself as a country propagating and implementing human rights and equal opportunities after WW II.

An example that assembles and focuses on all those values, discussions and issues is Karl-Birger Blomdahl's opera *Aniara* (composed 1957–58). His music marks the peak of Modernism in Sweden.²⁰ This opera about an epic of Harry Martinson can be described as a dystopian science-fiction space opera. After humanity has made earth a precarious place to live on through wars and pollution, colonists start to settle on Mars. But the spaceship "Aniara" with a group of colonizers on board misses its goal. After some navigational mistakes the ship takes course into deep space without any chance to reach Mars. Nothing but death is certain. While the ship leaves its course to its original destination a final message from earth reaches it witnessing about the end of human life on earth. This message is the first electronic piece of music at all composed for and performed in an opera. Strictly taken it is not electronic music but rather a collage of sounds and words on tape after the model of the *musique concrète*. On this tape, among others, speeches from Hitler and Mussolini, the voice of the composer and the cry of a baby can be heard. The message leads the artificial intelligence that controls the ship to shutting down itself. From now on the only thing to wait for the travellers is cold space and they are aware of being the last of human kind before freezing to death. The opera starts as it ends with a group of tones sending the name of the space ship in the Morse code into space. *Aniara* became the most often played Swedish opera in Sweden and abroad.

4. Some Tendencies after the 1970s

During the 1950s and 60s Sweden succeeded in taking a leading position internationally in avant-garde music. Musically it was the most progressive Nordic country. Prominent guest teachers in composition like György Ligeti or Krzysztof Penderecki came to Stockholm. Different from its neighbouring countries the development of art music in Sweden after the 1970s followed international trends quite closely but had a relatively small impact on the domestic audiences. Generally, folk music and after the Swedish

20 Robert Quist, *The History of Modern Swedish Music* (Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 206.

“music wonder” also popular music shunned the successes and achievements of Swedish composers abroad and at home.²¹ To say it bluntly, art music in Sweden never was so much in the focus of public attention as, for instance, in Finland or the Baltic states. The manifold reasons for this cannot be presented in this text. What is important, however, is that popular and folk music even in postmodernist Sweden maintained and still are maintaining a strong position in composed music.

Selecting examples from the decades that followed the 1970s and from present music life in Sweden is a subjective act.²² Just some in my opinion remarkable individuals shall be presented briefly.

What makes the works of Allan Pettersson (1911–1980) especially interesting is their reception. In Sweden, his massive symphonic works²³ were appreciated most during the last one-and-a-half decade of his life. Pettersson received his education as a composer in Paris and despite some loose contacts to the Monday group never joined it. He remained solitary both artistically and in his private life. After his death, his works were neglected in Sweden but discovered and worshipped in West-Germany at the same time. Here, the first Pettersson society was founded (including a year book about his and other Nordic works), a festival with his music was held and his works were recorded in their entirety and published on CD for the first time. The non-synchronicity of the appreciation of his works in both countries is telling if it comes to the music life of these two countries. It shows how audiences in the late 1960s in Sweden, where his music was seen as a political statement and appreciated by the young generation, and in the 1980s Germany differed, where his music was interpreted and treated as a close relative to Mahler's and Shostakovich's symphonies, something the composer had denied they were.²⁴

The impact of popular music can be traced in the work of the post-modern composer Sven-David Sandström (born 1942), among others. Like many post-modern composers – cf. Einojuhani Rautavaara in Finland or Krzysztof Penderecki in Poland – Sandström started his career as a radical Modernist and developed a neo-Romantic idiom during the 1980s. He worked as a composition teacher in Sweden and the US and his music became more and more neo-tonal, romantic and informed by popular music also concerning the means of its performance. His opera *Batseba* which had its world première 2008 in Stockholm extends the range of female vocal “Fächer” that appear in it by one new. The role of Tamar has to be performed by a rock singer with a microphone. Moreover, this opera is a document of feminism as part of the cultural mainstream in Sweden.

Talking about the important role of women and the feminist approach of Swedish society and politics in the late 20th century, I would like to conclude my short overview

21 A corresponding holistic approach has entered Swedish music historiography as well. Cf., among others, Leif Jonsson and Hans Åstrand, eds., *Musiken i Sverige: konstmusik, folkmusik, populärmusik 1920–1990* (Stockholm: Fischer, 1994).

22 An overview about composers who were active during the shift of the millenium is Göran Bergendal, *22 nya svenska kompositörer* (= Kungl. Musikaliska Akademiens skriftserie Nr. 94) (Stockholm: Royal Swedish Music Academy, 2001).

23 About his life and work cf. Laila Barkefors, *Allan Pettersson: Det brinner en sol inom oss. En tonsättares liv och verk* (Stockholm: Sveriges Radio, 1999). The first biography about Pettersson is a document about his contemporary image in Sweden: Leif Aare, *Allan Pettersson* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1978).

24 About the differences in the German and Swedish Pettersson reception cf. Martin Knust, “Die Rezeption von Allan Petterssons Werk in Schweden und Deutschland: Ein Vergleich,” in *Musik-Konzepte: Allan Pettersson*, ed. Ulrich Tadday (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 2013), 73–92.

with mentioning some of the most prominent female composers in Sweden today. The first female professor in composition in Sweden is since 2009 Karin Rehnqvist (born 1957) at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. As an artist she is among others referring to female vocal techniques in folk music like the so-called “kulning” that was practised by herders in Dalecarlia. One composition which transposes this specific vocal technique into spiritual music is the vocal composition *I himmelen* (In heaven; composed 1998). Rehnqvists idiom is clear, easy to grasp, emotional and feminist. And it marks a sharp turn in composing music in academia in Sweden because folk music was practically excluded from new art music in Sweden ever since the days of the Monday group.

A young composer who displays the wide range of neo-tonal composing in Sweden is Britta Byström (born 1977). In her *Games for Souls* (2015) and her *Walk* compositions for string instruments (*A Walk to GADE* and *A Walk to Tchaikovsky* were finished 2016, *A Walk to Biber* and *A Walk to Britten* 2017) she combines influences from gamelan music and reggae and employs them in a context that can be compared to Mussorgsky's *Pictures of an Exhibition*. These compositions share thematic material and form a work cycle that is not finished yet but a work in progress whose parts are composed and performed separately with longer intervals.

Summary and Outlook

Swedish music history in the 20th century turns out to be influenced by major political and social shifts like on the European continent. The time around 1900 was like in many other countries the time of National Romanticism. The 1910s and 20s were a period in which a variety of compositional approaches and a sustainable development of the musical infrastructure took place. Modernism arrives early in Sweden – compared to its neighbouring Northern countries – and became the dominant “school” after WW II. The radicalism of Swedish Modernism is remarkable and reminding to the Continental shift of paradigm in composing after 1945. Even though this is not unique, the impact of folk music on composing in Sweden has been deep – with the exception of the Modernist era during the 1950s and 60s – and shapes the art music until today. Like in other countries the arrival of post-modernism implied a turn away from Continental traditions and a turn towards Anglo-American commercial music. Its dominance in Swedish music life today is massive. For instance, pop music has almost completely pushed art music into the background in the school curricula, a process that started in the 1970s.²⁵

It is of course impossible to speculate about where exactly music life in Sweden will go in the future. The influence of popular music is compared to countries in central Europe so overwhelming that composing music in any event will be influenced by it. Many young composers who study composition in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö have a background as rock or pop musicians and so have many Swedish performing artists in

25 Cf. Fred K. Prieberg, *Musik und Musikpolitik in Schweden* (Döring: Herrenberg, 1976) who hailed this radical shift in Swedish music pedagogy.

classical music. The general knowledge standard about the state of art music or art music as such is lower than in other European countries and there is no reason to believe that this may change on the one hand. On the other hand, the folk and popular music education infrastructure in Sweden is more developed than anywhere on the Continent at this moment. The question is how art music as a relatively marginal cultural phenomenon that it always has been will maintain its ground in Swedish cultural life.

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Online resources

<http://alfvensallskapet.se>
www.swedishmusicalheritage.com

POVZETEK

Na zgodovino švedske glasbe v 20. stoletju so vplivale največje politične in družbene spremembe v Evropi. Čas okoli leta 1900 je bil kot v mnogih drugih državah čas nacionalne romantike. Drugo in tretje desetletje 20. stoletja so zaznamovali številni kompozicijski pristopi, razvijala pa se je tudi glasbena infrastruktura. Modernizem je prišel v Švedsko zgodaj – v primerjavi s sosednjimi severnimi državami – in je postal prevladujoča »šola« po drugi svetovni vojni. Radikalnost švedskega modernizma je izjemna in nas opozarja na spremembo kom-

pozicijske paradigme po letu 1946 na evropskem kontinentu. Čeprav ne gre za posebnost, je bil vpliv ljudske glasbe na kompozicijo na švedskem velik – z izjemo modernističnega obdobja v 50-ih in 60-ih letih – in oblikuje umetnostno glasbo še dandanes. Kot v drugih državah je pomenil prihod postmodernizma obrat proč od kontinentalnih tradicij in obrat k anglo-ameriški komercialni glasbi. Prevlada slednje v današnji švedski je očitna. Tako je popularna glasba skoraj v celoti izrinila umetnostno glasbo v ozadje v šolskih učnih načrtih – gre za proces, ki se je pričel že v 70-ih.