

EVEN WHEN HE IS SILENT

NORDIC VOCALISTS
PATRIK SANDIN

01 Bara så 2:46
LYRICS Cecilia Wilhelmsson
MUSIC Anna-Karin Klockar

02 Du är 2:52
LYRICS Bo Setterlind
MUSIC Anna-Karin Klockar

03 Limu Limu Lima 3:32
LYRICS Traditional
MUSIC Anna-Karin Klockar

04 Till dig 3:44
LYRICS Karin Boye
MUSIC Anna-Karin Klockar

05 Hur kan jag säga 2:26
LYRICS Karin Boye
MUSIC Anna-Karin Klockar

06 Famn som bär mig 3:12
LYRICS Anna Greta Wide
MUSIC Anna-Karin Klockar

07 If I Can Stop One Heart From Breaking 1:52
LYRICS Emily Dickinson
MUSIC Ingunn Ligaarden

08 Hope Is the Thing With Feathers 2:38
LYRICS Emily Dickinson
MUSIC Ingunn Ligaarden

09 Våra egna sår blir läkta 3:45
LYRICS Anders Frostenson
MUSIC Ingunn Ligaarden

10 Psalm 121 6:58
LYRICS Traditional
MUSIC Sven-David Sandström

11 Seventeenth Century Nun's Prayer 8:06
LYRICS Anonymous
MUSIC Sven-David Sandström

12 Evening Sky 3:46
LYRICS & MUSIC Ingunn Ligaarden

13 Even When He is Silent 7:00
LYRICS Anonymous
MUSIC Ingunn Ligaarden

TOTAL TIME 52:41

IN HIS BOOK *The Swedish Choral Miracle*, Richard Sparks – a musicologist and choral conductor based in the United States – explored the Swedish choral music scene after World War II, coined a title for the country’s rich choral life and defined its characteristics. And this phenomenon goes beyond the music produced by composers such as Sven-Erik Bäck, Ingvar Lidholm, Lars Edlund, Sven-Eric Johanson and those who followed in their footsteps, to embrace the choirs and choral singers that have achieved international fame led by the choral conductor Eric Ericson and his students, and their students as well.

The three composers presented on this album stem from this fertile choral soil: **Sven-David Sandström** (1942–2019) sang in Hägerstens Motettkör led by Ericson’s student Ingemar Månsson. There, he was schooled in classic choral music alongside the great works of Bach, Händel and Bruckner all the way to Poulenc and Schönberg. At the same time, he composed music – mainly for

instruments – in a strictly modernist spirit. Complex and artistically notated scores for the musical elite.

When Sandström abandoned modernism for “pleasing music” in the 1980s, some moaned the fact. Some felt he had turned his back on worthy ideals in favor of neo-romantic concoctions, postmodernism. Others received it with open arms, choral singers in particular.

You might assume that Sandström’s intention was “to reach the people”, something that was not highly probable with regard to his previous production, which was demanding in various ways. But that would be an over-simplification of this about-face. He was hardly a speculative person, and this change had more to do with a deeply felt need to express himself in a more personal manner. Possibly even connect to the church he grew up with.

In 2008, after a few years as Professor of Composition at Indiana University in Bloomington, USA, Sven-David Sandström received a unique offer to be “composer in residence” for three years at the Stockholm Cathedral and the Hässelby congregation. His assignment was to compose music for all the feast days of the ecclesiastical year along with larger sacral works. In all, he composed close to 70 works for various settings.

His “Psalm 121” was created during one of the last years of Sandström’s life. It was dedicated to the Hässelby Motettkör and its leader Mona Ehntorp. This hymn is about faith: “My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. The Lord will keep you from all harm, he will watch over your life. The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”

Sandström’s second work on this compilation, “Seventeenth Century Nun’s Prayer”, was composed on his last year of life, 2019. The prayer of an anonymous nun is slightly tongue-in-cheek, insightful and humoristic: “Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Seal my lips on my aches and pains, they are increasing and love of rehearsing them becomes sweeter as the years go by.”

This music, like *Psalm 121* and many of his choral works, is composed for a 6-part choir. The style is in keeping with other works of his: slow tempi, great shifts in dynamics, expressivity and often with a few surprising fast flourishes.

Anna-Karin Klockar (b. 1960) grew up in the county of Dalarna with its rich history of folk music. This is not always reflected in her work, but her prize-winning *Missa Dalecarliensis* includes musical material from the region.

Following composition studies led by Lars-Erik Rosell, Daniel Börtz, Arne Mellnäs and Bengt-Arne Wallin at the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm, Klockar moved to Italy. For the next 25 years, she mainly worked for the Italian film and TV industry in Rome, but also as a choral director.

In the mid-2010s, Klockar returned to Sweden and settled in Falun. Her list of post-homecoming works is dominated by choral music for various settings. Her piece *Speeches* for mixed choir reached audiences far beyond Sweden’s borders and earned her first prize in the Allmänna Sången & Anders Wall Composition Award 2016.

When commissioned by Patrik Sandin and Ersta diakoni for a choral work, Klockar turned to the poet Anna-Greta Wide (1920–1965), whose work has had a revival recently. Much of Wide’s production is characterized by searching, possibly for truth, for something to have faith in. “But Wide’s poetry doesn’t fall into neat categories or correspond to preconceived notions”, in the words of literary scholar Dick Claésson. “It acts alongside time:

twisting and turning the pillars of life; probing, discarding and embracing.” The poem “Famn som bär mig” (Arms that carry me) comes from Wide’s 1960 compilation, *Kyrie*.

“Limu limu lima” commemorates the 150th birthday of Swedish composer Hugo Alfvén in 2022, and was commissioned by Sveriges Radio. Unlike Alfvén’s well-known version of this folk tune, Anna-Karin Klockar’s is not an arrangement: The music blossoms into a multitextured piece of its own, where the melody is passed between the parts, vanishes, and reappears again.

“Två sånger om kärlek” (Two songs about love) is a setting of poems by Karin Boye (1900–1941) from the compilation published after Boye’s death, *De sju dödssynderna* (The seven mortal sins). The two songs were originally written for the women’s choir La Cappella in Uppsala and was premiered by them in 2016. A few years later, Klockar reworked the piece for a mixed chorus. The music is restrained, with a hint of an earlier generation’s tonal language, without losing its personal touch.

The author Cecilia Wilhelmsson is a friend of Anna-Karin Klockar’s and this is what Klockar says about “Bara så” (The only way): “I was thrilled to find an inspirational text. And the fact that it was close at hand was great!

Usually you spend so much time looking through books, either online or at libraries. ’Bara så’, for SSAATTBB a cappella, is about forgiveness, not blaming yourself for the choices of others.”

The prolific poet and hymn composer Bo Setterlind (1923–1991) debuted in 1948 with the collection *Månvagg* (Moon cradle), and went on to publish new compilations, novels or books of prose on a yearly basis. “Du är” (You are) was premiered 2020 by the Uppsala choir Allmänna Sången. The original title of the poem was “Tillägnet” (Dedication).

Ingunn Ligaarden (b. 1977) has her roots in Norway and the far north of Sweden. A medical doctor who has a degree in Church Music, she has worked in both fields and as an accompanist on piano and organ as well. Following studies in Composition and Arrangement, she is now a full-time composer.

“Hope”, based on two poems by the minimalist US poet Emily Dickinson (1830–1886), was the runner-up at a 2020 competition for choral compositions arranged by the Linköping University Male Voice Choir. Since then, she has revised the piece for mixed choir as well. “With these songs, in these times of great uncertainty, I wish

you hope. Hope for your life, hope for your future,” is what Ligaarden herself says about the piece.

In 2021, for a Christmas service at Ersta church that was also broadcast by SVT, Sweden’s public service TV channel, Ligaarden created “Våra egna sår blir läkta” (Our own wounds are healed). The lyrics, by one of Sweden’s most prominent hymn writers, Anders Frostenson (1906–2006), are a variation on the Golden Rule from the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

The two compositions “Evening Sky” and “Even when He is Silent” are polyphonic and brimming with musical texture. “Evening Sky”, with lyrics by Ligaarden, is about a moment of beauty and miracles at sunset, while “Even when He is Silent” deals with hope in the darkest hour, inspired by words found on a wall in an underground room in Cologne, Germany, where Jewish refugees had been hiding during World War II.



SOPRANO

Sofia Niklasson
Lisa Carlioth
Kathrin Lorenzen

ALTO

Mia Klein
Anna Zander
Johanna Ek

TENOR

Love Tronner
Fredrik Mattsson
Gunnar Sundberg

BASS

Karl Söderström
Erik Arnelöf
Artūrs Švarcbahs

NORDIC VOCALISTS is a 12-member ensemble founded in 2022 by Patrik Sandin.

All of the members are soloists and singers in professional ensembles active in Sweden and throughout Europe.

Based at Ersta kulturscen in Stockholm, Nordic

Vocalists performs their broad classical and cross-genre repertoire in other contexts as well.

And right from the start they featured artists like Lisa Nilsson, Isabella Lundgren, Martin Hederos, and Anne-Sofie von Otter.

This is the ensemble's first recording.





PATRIK SANDIN works regularly with his own ensemble, Nordic Vocalists, and appears as a guest conductor with a variety of musical groups. He is drawn to projects that bridge genres and has collaborated with several of Sweden's most renowned artists, including Lisa Nilsson, Tommy Körberg, Lill Lindfors and Anne Sofie von Otter.

He holds degrees in organ and voice from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. For many years, his artistic focus lay in the oratorio and art song repertoire, and he performed extensively as a soloist in churches and concert halls throughout Sweden and the Nordic countries.

Patrik has premiered works by several Swedish composers, both as a singer and as a conductor. His recordings have received national and international attention, and in 2019 he was nominated for a Swedish Grammy together with The Nordic Baroque Band.

Patrik is Artistic Director of Ersta Kulturscen in Stockholm.

O1 BARA SÅ

Isande snövindskristaller mäter solstrålelängd
väcker mig
Isen bryts sönder av ljus
vatten rör sig
Livet, alldeles intill det allra mörkaste
Jag släpper dig fri från mitt misslyckande
Bara så kan jag älska dig

Cecilia Wilhelmsson

O2 DU ÄR

Du är ensamheten. Du är musiken.
Du är skönheten i hjärtats riken.

När jag far med sånger ut i världen,
Är du hos mig som gestalt på färden.

Borta är min ångest och min hunger.
Vägen genom mörkret sjunger.

Bo Setterlind

THE ONLY WAY

Only these hard ice crystals in snowy wind
can match the range of sunbeams
waking up
as ice is shattered by light
water in motion
life so close to deepest darkness
I release you from my defeat
This is the only way I can love you

TRANSLATION *Steen Andersen*

YOU ARE

You are solitude. You are music.
You are the beauty in humanity's heart.

When I take my songs on the road,
You are by my side

Gone is my dread and my hunger.
The path through darkness sings.

PROSE INTERPRETATION *Ingrid Eng*

O3 LIMU, LIMU, LIMA

Limu, limu, lima
Gud, låt solen skina
över bergena blå,
över kullorna små,
som i skogen ska gå
om sommaren.

Traditional Herding song from Sweden

Limu, limu, lima
Lord, let the sun shine down
on our highlands of blue,
and the young maidens who
tend faithfully their herds
come summer

PROSE INTERPRETATION *Ingrid Eng*

TVÅ SÅNGER OM KÄRLEK (TWO SONGS ABOUT LOVE)

O4 TILL DIG

Du min förtvivlan och min kraft,
du tog allt eget liv jag haft,
och därför att du krävde allt
gav du tillbaka tusenfalt.

Karin Boye (ur De sju dödssynderna, 1941)

TO YOU

You my despair and my strength,
you took all the life I controlled,
and because you demanded everything,
you gave back a thousandfold.

(from The Seven Mortal Sins)

TRANSLATION *David McDuff*

O5 HUR KAN JAG SÄGA ...

Hur kan jag säga om din röst är vacker.
Jag vet ju bara, att den genomtränger mig
och kommer mig att darra som ett löv
och trasar sönder mig och spränger mig.

Vad vet jag om din hud och dina lemmar.
Det bara skakar mig att de är dina.
Så att för mig finns ingen sömn och vila,
tills de är mina.

Karin Boye (ur De sju dödssynderna, 1941)

O6 FAMN SOM BÄR MIG

Famn som bär mig idag.
Öppen är du som havet,
som ett vårhav i solen.

Ingen stänger du ute,
ingen stänger du inne.
Ditt enda grepp är din värme.

HOW CAN I SAY ...

How can I say if thy voice is beautiful.
I only know that it pierces
and makes me tremble like a leaf
and tears me into rags and pieces.

What do I know of thy skin and thy limbs.
It only shakes me that they are thine,
so that for me there is no sleep or rest,
till they are mine.

(from The Seven Mortal Sins)

TRANSLATION *David McDuff*

Arms that carry me today
Open as the sea you are,
a sunlit sea in spring

You shut no one out
No one in
Your warmth is all that clings

Famn som bär mig idag –
bär mig också i morgon,
i morgon när jag förnekar dig.

Anna Greta Wide (Kyrie, 1960)

Arms that carry me today
Carry me tomorrow as well
Tomorrow, when I renounce you

PROSE INTERPRETATION *Ingrid Eng*

HOPE *Two Poems by Emily Dickinson*

O7 IF I CAN STOP ONE HEART

FROM BREAKING

If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.

O8 HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS

Hope is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all –

And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –
And sore must be the storm –
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –

I've heard it in the chilliest land –
And on the strangest Sea –
Yet – never – in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of me.

09 VÅRA EGNA SÅR BLIR LÄKTA

Våra egna sår blir läkta,
när vi helar andras sår.
Böjda under bördor bärs vi.
När vi hjälper, hjälp vi får.

Ur den tröst jag gav en annan,
tröst mitt eget hjärta fick.
Hem jag kom, när bort till någon
som behövde mig jag gick.

Anders Frostenson

Our own wounds are healed
when we heal the wounds of others.
Bowed down by burdens, we are carried.
When we help others, we get help.

From the solace I gave another,
solace my own heart received.
In going to one who needed me,
I came home.

TRANSLATION *Ingrid Eng*

10 PSALM 121

Jag ser upp emot bergen:
varifrån skall jag få hjälp?
Hjälpen kommer från Herren,
som har gjort himmel och jord.
Han låter inte din fot slinta,
han vakar ständigt över dina steg.
Han sover aldrig, han vakar ständigt,
han som beskyddar Israel.
Herren bevarar dig,
i hans skugga får du vandra,

I lift up my eyes to the mountains –
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot slip –
he who watches over you will not slumber;
indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord watches over you –
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

han går vid din sida.
Solen skall inte skada dig om dagen,
inte månen om natten.
Herren bevarar dig från allt ont,
från allt som hotar ditt liv.
Herren skall bevaka dig
i livets alla skiften,
nu och för evigt.

11 SEVENTEENTH CENTURY NUN'S PRAYER

Lord, thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will some day be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom it seems a pity not to use it all, but thou knowest Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not

the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.
The Lord will keep you from all harm –
he will watch over your life;
the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of other's pains, but help me to endure them with patience. I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a saint – some of them are so hard to live with – but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the Devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people. And, give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

Anonymous, 17th century

12 EVENING SKY

The evening sky aglow,
golden echo of the sun
All clouds made new,
the waves deep blue
Summer breeze
in yearning trees,
a moment of beauty and wonder

Sacred place
Heaven as near as Earth
Unveiled the universe
Someone coming close,
His presence bringing hope

The evening sky aglow,
scarlet echo of the sun
No voice, no words,
but silence speaks,
revealing the forgotten dream,
Awakening our deepest longing

Melody of truth,
and it tells us:
We are wrapped
in overflowing grace
We are called
by the One who knows our name,
called by Love

Ingunn Ligaarden

13 EVEN WHEN HE IS SILENT

I believe in the sun
even when it is not shining.
I believe in love
even when I cannot feel it.
I believe in God
even when He is silent.

Anonymous, 20th century

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