romanser

25 SWEDISH SONGS

with Guide to Swedish Lyric Diction
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ................................................ 5
Romanser – The Art Song of Sweden ......................... 6
Alfvén, Hugo (1872–1960) .................................. 9
from Sju dikter av Ernest Thiel Op. 28
Skogen sover ................................................. 11
Pioner .......................................................... 15
Frumerie, Gunnar de (1908–1987) ...................... 18
from Hjärtats sänder Op. 27
Du är min Afrodite ........................................ 21
När du sluter mina ögon ..................................... 24
Som en våg .................................................. 26
Hallnäs, Hilding (1903–1984) ......................... 28
from I skogen om natten Op. 17
Malarna fladdrar .............................................. 30
Döden tänkte jag mig så ..................................... 32
Karkoff, Maurice (1927–2013) ......................... 35
Ekorren ........................................................ 37
Larsson, Lars-Erik (1908–1986) ...................... 40
from Nio sånger Op. 35
Kyssande vind ............................................... 44
Skyn, blomman och en lärka ................................ 48
Liljefors, Ingmar (1906–1981) ......................... 52
Lägg din hand i min om du har lust .................. 54
Linde, Bo (1933–1970) .................................. 58
from Fjorton sånger om våren
Den ångan där du kysste mig .......................... 60
Appelträd och päronträd ................................. 62
Milveden, Ingmar (1920–2007) ...................... 65
from Tre sånger Op. 6
Kärlekens visa ................................................. 66
Nordqvist, Gustaf (1886–1949) ...................... 68
from Tre sånger
Till havs .................................................. 70
Nystroem, Gösta (1890–1966) ...................... 76
from Sinfonia del mare
Det enda ..................................................... 78
Peterson-Berger, Wilhelm (1867–1942) .............. 82
from Op. 10
Jungfrun under lind ....................................... 88
from Ur ”Fridolins visor”
Intet är som väntans tider .............................. 90
from Fyra mantra visor
Sång efter skördetiden .................................. 92
Rangström, Ture (1884–1947) ...................... 96
from Den mörka blomman
Bön till natten ............................................. 102
from Fem ballader
Flickan under nymånen .................................... 105
Pan .......................................................... 109
from Sköld och svärd
Sköldmön .................................................. 112
Stenhammar, Wilhelm (1871–1927) .............. 116
from Fyra svenska sånger Op. 16
Fylgia ........................................................ 120
from Ur Idyll och epigram Op. 4
Flickan kom ifrån sin älsklings möte ........... 124
Introduction to Swedish Diction
Introduction .................................................. 130
Pronunciation guidelines .................................. 130
Accents ........................................................ 131
Lip rounding in Swedish ................................ 132
Special features ............................................. 133
The Sounds of Swedish
Vowel and consonant chart ............................. 135
Bibliography ................................................. 141
Recordings of Song Texts .................. www.gehrmans.se
Scandinavian song has lately caught the imagination and interest of singers looking to add interesting new repertoire in non-standard languages to their recitals. Swedish song, or romanser as they are known in Scandinavia, offers a wealth of extraordinarily beautiful repertoire choices for English-speaking singers. The sounds of the Swedish language should not be problematic for singers already familiar with the challenges of singing in German, French, Italian and Russian, and who are accustomed to using dictionaries and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in their song preparation. New scholarly editions of songs by Scandinavian composers such as Norwegian Edvard Grieg and Finnish Jean Sibelius are already available here in the United States, but, until recently, the songs of Swedish composers have not been as readily available. For singers wanting to embark on a rewarding exploration of this beautiful repertoire, there has never been a better time. Recordings are plentiful, and, while it is still not an easy task to locate the sheet music, more options are becoming available as publishers move to offer their music on-line. To complete this unique anthology of Sweden's most beloved art songs, the song texts are also available as on-line audio recordings, read by a native Swedish speaker.

But where to begin? There are many Swedish composers of the last century whose songs are featured on the recordings of the most well known singers of the genre. Anne Sofie von Otter, Karita Mattila, Birgit Nilsson, Elizabeth Söderström, Håkan Hagegård, to name only a few, have all recorded songs in various Scandinavian languages, including Swedish. But for singers and teachers wishing to begin an exploration of the Swedish song repertoire, some of the giants of the romanser genre represented in this anthology provide an excellent starting point. Singers will be richly rewarded by beginning with the songs of these thirteen composers, who represent the evolution of romanser from the flowering of late romantic art song in Sweden to the late 20th century. These songs contain the most common themes in Swedish poetry: the forest, the sea, the longing for summer and light after the short dark days of winter and the holidays that are a fusion of pagan and Christian ritual. The IPA transcriptions and guide to Swedish diction contained here have been created to provide an introduction to the language for singers, voice teachers and collaborative pianists. I have chosen to limit the songs included in this anthology to settings of Swedish poetry only, although Swedish composers have composed song settings of English, Dutch, Norwegian and Finnish texts. Swedish songs by non-Swedish composers are also not included. In the interest of creating an introduction to Swedish song, I have chosen only Swedish composers and Swedish texts for this anthology.

The evolution of the Swedish romans began with the court of Gustavus III, the unfortunate king whose assassination was the subject of Verdi's opera Un Ballo in Maschera. Gustavus III (1746–1792) was a great supporter of the arts in Sweden. He
Hugo Alfvén (1872–1960)

Skogen sover
No. 6 from Sju Dikter av Ernest Thiel [Seven Poems by Ernest Thiel] Op. 28 (1908)

Pioner
No. 2 from Tre Österlingssånger [Three Österling-songs] Op. 22 (1905)

Hugo Alfvén was one of the most important figures in the music of Swedish romantic nationalism, and made his mark in many genres, including choral, symphonic and song. He lived long enough to be considered a reactionary at the end of his career, yet in the beginning was considered quite progressive. Skogen sover is from a group of Alfvén’s earlier songs, written at the beginning of the 20th century. The poet, Ernest Thiel (1859–1947), was a Swedish financier and art collector whose villa in Stockholm, Thielska Galleriet, on the island of Djurgården, houses one of the most important collection of Scandinavian art in the world today. Skogen sover paints a beautiful picture of the Swedish forest at the time of midsommar (midsummer), still one of the most important holidays of the Swedish calendar. Pioner, from the poet Anders Österling’s (1884–1981) Grinden åt havet (The gate to the sea), is a strong and abrasive song, which portrays the fragile peonies of the title unable to stand against the brutal forces of the earth.

Suggestions for further study:
› Jag längtar dig (Sju Dikter Op. 28:5)
› Såa tag mit hjerte

Skogen sover
’skugön ’sovər
The forest sleeps

’skugən ’sovər ’strimːan pɔ: ’fɛːstət ’flɛmːtər mɔt:
Skogen sover, strimman på fästet flämtar matt.
The forest sleeps, the ray on the firmament flickers feebly.

’dɔːɡən ’vɔːkər i ’jʊnɪˌnat:
Dagen vakar i juninatt.
The day watches in June night.

’tʏsːtnat hɔːɾ nʏsː ’hɛːnːəs ’mʊntrə skræt: ’rɛːdən hʊnː ’sovər
Tystnat har nyss hennes muntra skratt, redan hon sover.
Silenced has just her merry laughter, already she sleeps.
Skogen sover

Ernest Thiel

Hugo Alfvén

Andantino

pp

Sko - - -

pp

so - ver.__ Strim - man på fas - tet fläm - tar matt.__

sempre poco arpeggio

poco

Da - gen va - kar i ju - ni - natt._
Gunnar de Frumerie (1908–1987)

Du är min Afrodite
No. 5 from Hjärtats sånger [Songs of the Heart] Op. 27 (1942)

När du sluter mina ögon
No. 1 from Hjärtats sånger [Songs of the Heart] Op. 27 (1942)

Som en våg
No. 6 from Hjärtats sånger [Songs of the Heart] Op. 27 (1942)

These three songs from the six of Frumerie’s 1942 song cycle are, in turn, sweeping and passionate, quietly joy-filled, and meditative. The composer’s choice of poetic images reflects the typical Nordic obsession with the sea. In addition to being one of Sweden’s foremost composers, Frumerie enjoyed a multi-faceted career as pianist and teacher. Stylistically, his music runs the gamut from Baroque and classical inspirations to that of the traditional folk music of Sweden. He is considered one of the country’s most important composers of 20th century romanser. The influence of impressionism on Frumerie’s music (he was strongly affected by the music of Debussy while studying in Paris) is especially obvious here in these settings of the poems of Swedish poet Pär Lagerkvist (1891–1974). Lagerkvist is considered one of the first modernists among Swedish poets, whose early work was tied to Expressionism and Cubism in art. In Hjärtats sånger, Lagerkvist returned to an archaic, rhyming verse style which perfectly expressed the lifelong tension between his early religious upbringing and his existential despair. From the urgency and dramatic flair of Du är min Afrodite, to the simple declarative vocal line of När du sluter mina ögon and the murmuring dream-like recitative of Som en våg, one can see examples of the exceptional sensitivity to text displayed by Frumerie in all of his romanser. Singers studying this particular set of songs should be mindful of Frumerie’s desire that they be sung with the most elegant högsvenska diction.

Suggestions for further study:
› Det är vackrast när det skymmer (Två romanser Op. 24:1)
› Det kom ett brev (Två romanser Op. 24:2)

Du är min Afrodite
You are my Aphrodite
as light as the wave’s foam of ocean spray
lifted in the sunlight.
And you are my deep dark sea,
my life, my dark grave,
my heart’s unrest, a heavy peace,
all that has never been allowed
to live in the sun.

© Pär Lagerkvist Estate – licensed by ALIS.

You are my Aphrodite, born out of the sea,
Du är min Afrodite

Pär Lagerkvist

Allegro appassionato

Gunnar de Frumerie

Music: Copyright © 1944 AB Nordiska Musikförlaget.
Printed with permission by Ehrlingförlagen AB.
Lyrics: Copyright © 2008 Gehrmans Musikförlag AB.

Copying prohibited by law!