



*Stockholms
Studentsångare*

U.S. TOUR

CENTENNIAL

1925-2025



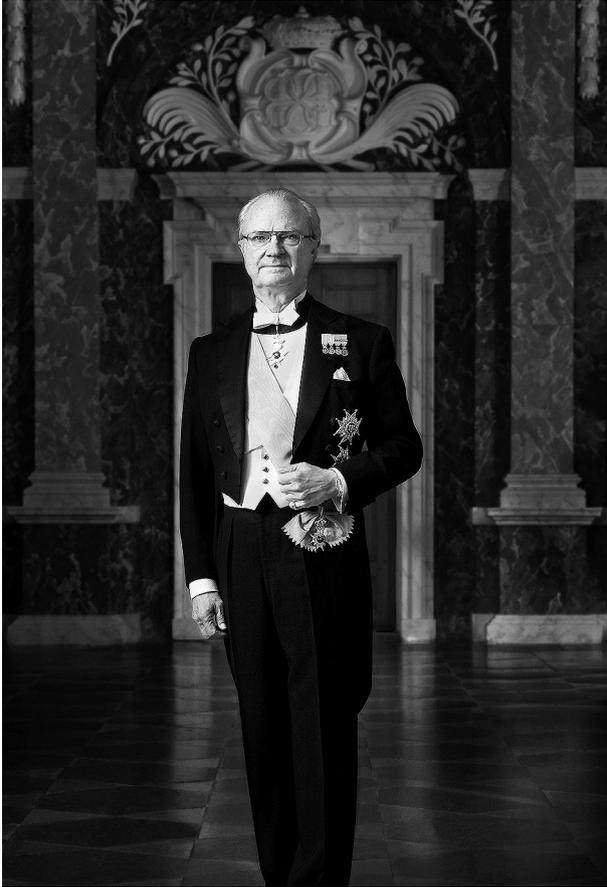


FOTO: BRUNO EHRS © KUNGAHUSET.SE

H.M. KING CARL XVI GUSTAF OF SWEDEN

*Patron and first honorary member of
Stockholms Studentsångarförbund*

Dear audience, singers & friends!

Choir singing unites people. Within a choir, between choirs. All choirs around the world are proud of their choir's brand and their legacy. Part of Stockholms Studentsångare's legacy is the trip this choir made to the United States in 1925. A legendary tour that lasted for more than a month. Well, in fact *two* months, if we count the boat trips and a 10-day warm up tour in Sweden... Two months away from work, family, friends!? How was it even possible? This must have been a very important trip? The more we learn about their tour and what they got to experience, we can't help but feel humbled. Two sold out concerts at Carnegie Hall? Receiving the Key to the City in Worcester? Endless receptions, and official tasks to perform? On pages 8–10 we have tried to collect a few glimpses and highlights from that tour, as described in the travelogue that was published in 1926.

We can't really recall when the idea of a centenary tour was proposed. It was a random idea that turned into a loose possibility ... and eventually turned into a conviction – *of course* we should go on a U.S. tour in 2025! And, here we are; trying to follow in our predecessors' steps and honoring their legacy – and creating our own.

A century is a long time though, and many things have changed in a hundred years. In 1925 Stockholms Studentsångare met and sang together with numerous Swedish-American male choirs. Today, as far as we know, none of those choirs are still around, but we certainly are, and proud to be a lively 120-year-old!

Some say it's more difficult making new friends when you get older, so therefore we feel extra grateful that today there are American choirs who heard and responded to our call –our *Sangerhilsen*– from across the Atlantic. And through their generosity and engagement making it possible for us all to sing together, getting to know each other, making new friends by uniting around our common male choir heritage. Thank you for welcoming us back after all these years.

Brothers, sing on!

/ STOCKHOLMS STUDENTSÅNGARE

JONAS EKMAN, *President*

JOAKIM ANDERSSON, *Conductor*

TOMAS JÖNSSON, *Tour Manager*

ABOUT US



PHOTO: ELISIA CHESSEL

STOCKHOLMS STUDENTSÅNGARE – STOCKHOLM ACADEMIC MALE CHOIR

Stockholms Studentsångarförbund* was founded in 1905 as initially an association of student singers from Stockholm's universities. Academic male choir singing had previously been sporadic in Stockholm for a couple of decades. On special occasions, primarily the celebration of Walpurgis Mass, male choir singers from the various universities gathered to sing songs celebrating spring (btw these spring songs are what most people in Sweden to this day still associate academic male singing with. A very much beloved repertoire!).

At the Nobel Prize ceremony in 1909, an ensemble from Stockholms Studentsångare performed, and the conductor at the time, Carl Gentzel, swore that *“Curse me, if there are to be any solemn gatherings with singing, we should be the ones doing the singing.”* His prediction would prove correct; over the years Stockholms Studentsångare has performed at countless Nobel parties, doctoral graduations and, not least, performances related to the Royal Court.

In 1917 Einar Ralf took over and remained the conductor of Stockholms Studentsångare for 50 (!) years. He contributed greatly to the development of the choir through his strong connections in Swedish music life (he was for

instance director of the Royal Academy of Music) and through the many arrangements he wrote for the choir.

Other conductors were to follow (you can read more about them on our homepage) and even though no-one has ever tried to challenge Ralf's track record, they have all contributed in different and important ways in preserving the choir's traditions as well as guiding it into new musical territories.

Today, Stockholms Studentsångare with its 50+ singers in all ages (i.e. 20–60) is one of the foremost academic male choirs in Sweden. The popular Spring and Christmas concerts, where the choir often work with renowned guest artists, form the backbone of the calendar, along with the traditional performances at the Walpurgis celebrations at the open-air museum Skansen and on Sweden's National Day. In addition, our calendar is filled with various types of performances commissioned by, among others, the Stockholm University and the Royal Court.

In 1996 Stockholms Studentsångare were honored with the patronage of His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden.

**The official name of our association is Stockholm Studentsångarförbund, but we are publicly known by our common name Stockholm Studentsångare, and in popular speech sometimes just Studentsångarna.*

JOAKIM ANDERSSON, Conductor

Joakim Andersson was born on January 24, 1990 in Skellefteå County Council in northern Sweden. He has been the regular conductor of Stockholm Studentsångare since the fall of 2024.

However, we and our audience were first introduced to him as early as 2008, when he –just 18 years old!– brought his talents to the choir’s Christmas concerts, then as organist. It was a much-appreciated performance that marked the start of recurring guest appearances that continued for another four years. Much water has flowed under the bridge since then, and in the meantime he has, among other things, been working as an organist and choir conductor in Gävle.

Last fall he moved back to Stockholm and is now a Director of Music in the Engelbrekt Church congregation.

He studied at the Nordiska Musikgymnasiet/Nordic Music High School (where he also taught during the years 2012–2017) and then studied Organ at the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm (KMH).

Alongside his studies at KMH, he also studied composition with the Swedish organist and composer Michael Waldenby.

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& *Vice Conductor Emeritus*
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FOLDER PRODUCTION

Texts and concept:* Tomas Jönsson
Graphic design: Tomas Jönsson
Photos:* Samuel Tylstedt

**(where no one else is credited, with a few exceptions)*

OUR SINCERE THANKS TO:

Bengt Arwén
Jan Hermansson
Oliver Stone
Joshua Rohde
Chris McGinley
Jim Seipel
Bob Wierman
Mollie Stone
Brandon Williams
Chris Wolfe



PHOTO: MATS HÅKANSSON

CHOIR MEMBERS ON TOUR

FIRST TENORS



*Bernhard
Smedberg*



*Carl-Magnus
Lilljedahl*



*Daniel
Andersson*



*Gunnar
Lande*



*Martin
Levenius*



*Mikael
Twengström*



*Mikael
Arlehag*



*Patrik
Ekenbark*



*Paul
Girgensohn*

SECOND TENORS



*Carl
Kloof*



*Christian
Lindeborg*



*Fredrik
Malm*



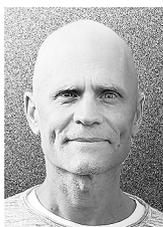
*Jan
Olsson*



*Jesper Holmén
Notander*



*Johan
Svenungsson*



*Jonas
Aldén*



*Nils
Alwall*



*Oskar
Tengberg*



*Winfried
Kretzschmar*

FIRST BASSES



*Erik
Åberg*



*Ivar
Tranvik*



*Jesper
Öhrman*



*Joakim
Svantfelt*



*Jonas
Ekman*



*Johannes
Andrée*



*Kenneth
Ahlberg*



*Mikael
Kördel*



*Petter
Elgh*



*Samuel
Tjylstedt*

SECOND BASSES



*Alexander
Karlsson*



*Alf
Vaernéus*



*Christian
Lund*



*Erik
Skoog*



*Oskar
Olofson*



*Stefan
Åberg*



*Tomas
Jönsson*

THE AMERICAN TOUR OF 1925

On May 23rd, 1925, 42 members of Stockholm Studentsångare and their conductor Einar Ralf boarded the ocean liner *Drottningholm* from Gothenburg, bound for New York. After a at times rocking 10 days out on the Atlantic, they finally got to see the Statue of Liberty and set foot on American soil and thus began their American adventure that would last more than a month.

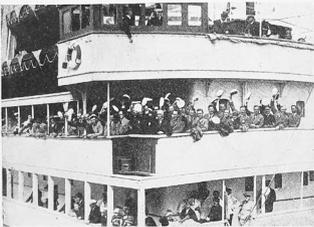
The welcome was worthy of a state visit: a motorcade took them –escorted by motorcycle police– straight through Manhattan, a so-called “*Right of Way*”, up to a reception at the City Hall where they were officially welcomed by The City Mayor Mr Hylan. Afterwards they sang *The Star-Spangled Banner* outside on the steps, in front of an audience of thousands.

Two days later, they sang their first official concert in America at a sold-out concert in Carnegie Hall ... The *New York Times* published a review on June 5th under the headline **STOCKHOLM SINGERS HERE.; Greeted With Enthusiasm at First Concert in America.** The reporter writes: “(...) *The choir, which has excellent material, showed it had undergone fine training. (...) Later the singers showed their capacity to sing in sustained pianissimo and to mold a melodic line to artistic purpose. (...) Enthusiasm ran high throughout the concert.*” One can’t help feeling a bit proud on their behalf.

So... how do you follow up on such an unmatched start? Well, you might just keep going? Some 30 concerts awaited on their tour, not counting performances made on the steps

vifningar, börja hälsningsropen ljuda. Somliga ha släkt eller vänner i staden och återseulets glädje tar sig spontana uttryck.

Man marscherade strax efter förtöjningen i land och



Ankomsten till New York.

fick efter de första hälsningarnas uthytande genomgå tullens ganska lindriga skårseid. Undertecknad höll dock på att av en nitisk tulltjänsteman bli fråntagen den kamera, med vilken jag ämnade föreviga en hel del under resan. Genom en av våra vänners mellankomst bevettes dock mannen, som tydligen ej kunde förstå min behandling av engelska språket.

De första representanterna för Svenskamerika, som bragte oss sin hälsning, voro generalkonsul Gustaf Weidel, dr. Johannes Hoving, redaktör Chas. K. Johansen och ingenjör Emil F. Johnson. I piren's mottagningsrum, där

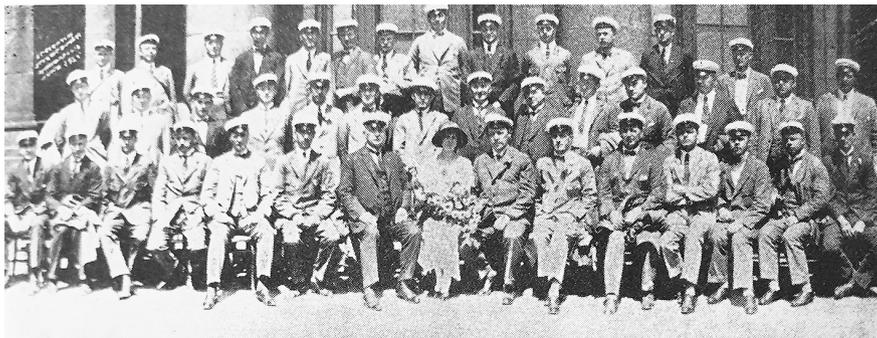
en skara sångare voro oss till möte med sång, frambar den sistnämnde till oss svenskarnas i New York välkomsthälsning. Sedan vår vice ordförande, Erik Liljefors, tackat för det hjärtliga mottagandet, startade vi för att fullgöra vår första plikt i det främmande landet. Denna plikt var uppaktning för New Yorks borgmästare, Mr. Hylan.



I virvlande dans.

Det gick som i en virvlande dans genom gatorna i de 20 automobilerna, som av våra gästfräa vännar ställts till vårt förfogande. Staden visade oss den annars sällsynta honnören, att lämna oss polis eskort och “right of way”. Sex konstablar på motorcyklar renade medelt sina sirner gatorna från trafikanter, som annars skulle hindrat vår hastiga framfart. De böljande massorna av fögångare på de större gatorna, hullret av oräkneliga bilar, spårvagnar, bussar och andra fordon, allt blev till en kakofoni av bilder och ljud, som gjorde en nästan vimmelkantig. — Vilken kontrast mot tystnaden och lugnet på havet under de sista stormfria dagarna!

Snart stannade man utanför City Hall. Vi togade in i mottagningsrummet och hälsades där av President of the Board of Aldermen, Mr. Collins, som förklarade, att Mr Hylan blivit fördröjd. Genom den förre bragtes oss så-



The choir (and an unidentified woman) in front of the Minneapolis train station.

to City Halls etc. The tour took them onwards to Philadelphia (*Bryn Athyn Cathedral and Lulu Temple*); Pittsburgh (*Soldier's Memorial Auditorium*); Chicago (*Auditorium Theatre*); Rock Island (*Augustana College Auditorium*); Kansas City (*Ivanhoe Temple*); Lindsborg (*Salemsborg Lutheran Church*); Omaha (*Orpheum Theatre*); Sioux City (a high school auditorium); Sioux Falls (*Coliseum*), St. Peter (*Gustavus Adolphus Auditorium*); Minneapolis (*Kenwood Armory*); St. Paul (an unnamed auditorium); Rockford (*Tebala Shrine temple*); Chicago (*Chicago University*); Gary (an unnamed church); back to Chicago (*Municipal Pier Hall*); Detroit (*Orchestra Hall*); Jamestown (*First Lutheran Church*); Bridgeport (a high school auditorium); New Haven (*Woolsey Hall, Yale College*); Providence (*Infantry Hall*); Worcester (*Mechanics Hall*); Boston (*Symphony Hall*); New Britain (*Palace Theatre*) and finally back to New York (*Carnegie Hall* – again sold out!).

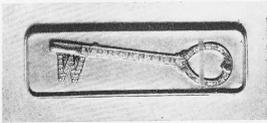
Many of these smalltowns and big cities of course lay in regions where the Swedish-American populations were both quite substantial, and these emigrants' (and their descendants') bonds to the old country and its culture were still very strong. There seemed to be a Swedish choir at every stop of the tour, and these choirs –and Swedish-American organisations– excelled in their ambition to make this tour a memorable experience for

both the choir, the hosts and their audiences.

As an example, the local organizers weren't afraid of booking huge venues. We can only speculate about whether they were *so* certain in their belief that the audience would show up if they just gave them a chance? If so, they were arguably right in their assumption. In Chicago, an enthusiastic reporter wrote in his review: *"If there was anyone who feared that the huge music hall on Municipal Pier was too large for the Stockholm University Singers concert on Thursday evening, his fears were completely put to rest long before the concert began, for not only was the house packed with seats, but standing room was being sold as if it were the Swedish State's security papers. How many thousands managed to squeeze into the hall is not yet known, but it is certain that when the singers looked out over the huge hall, they saw a billowing sea of friendly faces, eagerly waiting to hear the first notes of the admirable singing, which no other choir has yet been able to execute as well as the Stockholm University Singers."*

Well... that review was published in a local Swedish-language newspaper, but still? Attracting audiences by offering a well-known choir from the old country to nostalgic emigrants may not be the most difficult challenge, but it wasn't just Swedish-Americans who were enthusiastic; in Worcester, Massachusetts, the City Mayor was so impressed by the choir's performance of *The Star-Spangled*

Tillagningen försiggick så, att stora stenar glöddes och övertäcktes med havstång, ovanpå denna vräktes ut tusentals clams (små ostron) och humrar. Det hela höljdes med havstång samt tjocka presseningar. Efter 20 min. voro skaldjuren färdiga.



Staden Worcester's nyckel.

Att anrättningen, som omedelbart därefter serverades i ett väldingtält, var en nyhet för oss, är obestridligt, men att den på samma gång var en angenäm sådan, torde kunna sättas i fråga. Hummer är en utmärkt rätt, men inte i varmt tillstånd, och musslor, i sig själva läckra, hade, då de anrättats enligt beskrivningen, en doft, som betog oss apåten. Vi ha ju surströmming, som äminstone i Frankrike här anses otjänlig till människofädan, men detta var ett strå vassare. Samliga slöko dock en hel del av sin portion, och överlevde det utan vidare, och stämningen var ej att klaga på. En "Badweisser" och en "Heilboru" kunde man få utan svårighet. Utflykten var i alla händelser intressant. Den efterföljdes av ett besök vid en i närheten liggande bana för polomatcher till häst. En dylik match hade för detta tillfälle anordnats av den svenske

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Worcester's Key to the City that was presented to the choir.

Banner that he presented them with the Key to the city! One or two professionals were also impressed. A well respected music journalist of the time, Glenn Dillard Gunn, reviewed the choir's first concert in Chicago: "*The Stockholm University Singers are one the finest male choirs that have visited us. (...) There is a fine balance in their tone, the baritones and second tenors being for the most part tactfully subdued. The tenors and second basses bearing the lyric burden, a practice which seems peculiarly their own. One noticed too their habit of restraint in the matter of volume. There were no earfilling fortissimos, but there was always a rich and satisfying euphony. Encores were numerous.*" (Huh!? Was he really writing about *us*, Stockholms Studentsångare; the choir who just *loves* to sing in forte fortissimo? A lot have changed in a century...)

This was a time when the importance of nurturing the strong links between Swedish-Americans and the old country obviously

could not be emphasized enough, and the choir was, on behalf of the Swedish Royal family, tasked with handing over flags to some Swedish-American associations.

The joy over having a Swedish male choir visiting was proven again and again by the string of endless generous lunches, receptions and dinners hosted by Swedish-American (and Scandinavian-American) choirs and organizations. On these occasions numerous speeches were held like there was no tomorrow: passionate, grateful, witty ... and sometimes maybe just a bit too wordy. In the travelogue published in 1926, the editor comments about a –in his opinion– exemplary speech that only lasted for 20 seconds! For this extensive travelogue, named *I Västerled Under Sångarfanan* (= *Westbound Under The Singers' Flag*), the editor Anders Elgenberg had collected and edited stories from the whole tour, including the Swedish tour that preceded the American one, as well as the journeys over the Atlantic. (Unfortunately there's no space for these parts of the tour in this short text).

The tour schedule was arguably very ambitious, at times even hectic, but it still had head room for detours: visiting facilities like car factories and other examples of the impressive technical progress in the U.S. at the time. Everything appeared huge and fascinating to the interested Swedes, a few of them engineers, but several professions were represented in the group – incidentally only a handful of the members were professional singers. This makes the fact that they were away for two months even more inapprehensible

Today it's difficult to imagine the impact they made during that month, and what amazing memories they brought with them back home, but in the end, it's the people you meet that make up the most precious memories. At a reception in Minneapolis an old man patted Elgenberg on his back and said "*Don't laugh at us if we should act like children, we are so happy to have you with us!*"

PROGRAM – TO BE SELECTED FROM:

Fridolins Dårskap JEAN SIBELIUS
Lyrics: ERIK AXEL KARL FELDT

Glemselshejren VAGN HOLMBOE
Lyrics: From HÁVAMÁL interpreted by MARTIN LARSEN

Jungman Jansson SARA WENNERBERG-REUTER
Lyrics: DAN ANDERSSON

Morgon EJNAR EKLÖF
Lyrics: KARL GUSTAV OSSIANILSSON

Norrländ WILHELM STENHAMMAR
Lyrics: DANIEL FALLSTRÖM

Sverige WILHELM STENHAMMAR
Lyrics: VERNER VON HEIDENSTAM

Tidigt i Den Gröna Hagen SELIM PALMGREN
Tenor solo: BERNHARD SMEDBERG Lyrics: KYÖSTI KALLIO
Baritone solo: CHRISTIAN LUND Swedish translation: C. G. SANTESSON

Till Stockholm KURT ATTERBERG
Lyrics: GERHARD MAGNUSSON

Uti Vår Hage FOLK BALLAD FROM GOTLAND
Arrangement: HUGO ALFVÉN

Vagabundus SARA WENNERBERG-REUTER
Lyrics: HUGO REUTER

Vid Båven TURE RANGSTRÖM
(from "Sörmlanadsidyller") Lyrics: HUGO TIGERSCHIÖLD

Vuojnha Bieggä JAN SANDSTRÖM
Tenor solo: OSKAR TENGBERG Based on a yoik by JOHAN MÄRAK

Värmlandsvisan SWEDISH FOLK SONG
Arrangement: JAN-ÅKE HILLERUD
Lyrics: ANDERS FRYXELL and F.A DAHLGREN

Ångbåtssång OTTO LINDBLAD

Program, lyrics and translations
can be found on our website
www.sssf.se/ustour2025/program





U.S. TOUR DATES



OCT. 3 – First Baptist Church, Worcester, MA
With WPI GLEE CLUB

OCT. 5 – American Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, MI
With THE APOLLO CLUB

OCT. 6 – Gantner Concert Hall, Eau Claire, WI
With EAU CLAIRE MALE CHORUS

OCT. 7 – Nordic Cultural Center, Rockford, IL

OCT. 10 – Church of Sweden, New York, NY

OCT. 11 – Nicholas Music Centre, New Brunswick, NJ
With RUTGERS UNIVERSITY GLEE CLUB

TBD – Carnegie Hall, New York, NY



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