

Smörgåsbballad – Songs and Tales from the Land of the Midnight Sun
Vicki Swan & Jonny Dyer
Press Release

Nordic novels are all the rage at the moment with the likes of Stieg Larsson and Henning Mankell's Kurt Wallander books dominating the bestseller lists. But what happens when you combine dark Swedish tales with brooding folk music performed by the international touring duo Vicki Swan & Jonny Dyer?

Smörgåsbballad is an evening of music and tales from the Sweden. Vicki Swan & Jonny Dyer take you on a journey where you find out about the tradition of the Easter Witches, what happens if you pick seven different wild flowers and put them under your pillow at Midsummer, the real meaning of the midsummer majstång and participate in some traditional drinking songs in celebration of the crayfish. A visual treat for the eyes and the ears be transported to the land of the midnight sun and enjoy some "nordic noir tales" and fall in love with the heroes and heroines.

And this is where the hint of Nordic noir creeps in with the chilling stories of Easter Witches, a Swedish version of the Pied Piper and feuding magicians. Plus a murder ballad that might be considered too grim even for an episode of Wallander.

The Smörgåsbballad is brought to life with accompaniment of traditional Scandinavian music on the Swedish nyckelharpa (keyed fiddle), Swedish säckpipa (bagpipes), willow flute kohorn (cow horn), accordion and guitar.

Vicki Swan is the UK's leading expert in the Swedish nyckelharpa* and a second-generation piper, holding the prestigious Zorn Brons award for the traditional playing of the säckpipa (Swedish bagpipes). A Royal College of Music postgraduate, she is now bringing the nyckelharpa to a wider audience in the UK with her nyckelharpa UK project. As a fluent Swedish speaker and brought up surrounded by Swedish traditions Vicki is perfectly placed to perform Swedish music.

Jonny Dyer; a performer, arranger and composer whose outstanding technical ability, coupled with a wide-ranging musical taste has made him a tireless and forceful musical innovator. He has become critically renowned for his contemporary interpretations of traditional song. He also plays bouzouki, accordion and kohorn. He is probably the UK's leading exponent of this ancient Viking instrument holding the Zorn Diplom award for the traditional playing of the kohorn.

* What on earth is a Swedish nyckelharpa? The nyckelharpa is a traditional Swedish instrument that has been played, in one form, for more than 600 years. It is a keyed fiddle, slung around the neck and played with a bow. The nyckelharpa is, without doubt, one of the most ethereal of instruments you will ever meet with its fabulous chromatic sympathetic resonating strings creating its unique otherworld sound.

Vicki Swan & Jonny Dyer
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