Swedish music moments, exhibition text

Instruction for translators

The blue texts in this document are not to be translated. Please use the blue headings in English in your translation so that we can see where the different texts are supposed to be.

Intro-poster

Title: Swedish music moments

Bread: Music makes our hearts sing. What tunes, notes or voices have struck a chord with you? Maybe you share a musical experience with Swedish songwriters, producers or artists? Pop in for a moment and find out!

Long read - poster

Title: -

Bread: The Weeknd, Ariana Grande, Coldplay, Adele, Ed Sheeran, Justin Timberlake, Katy Perry, Taylor Swift, Selena Gomez, One Direction, Maroon 5, Pink, Britney Spears, Madonna, Ellie Goulding, Jonas Brothers. To name a few.

All these famous pop acts have something in common: they collaborate with Swedish songwriters and producers. Since the mid-1990s, Swedes have dominated the charts in the USA, UK and all over the world.

International pop has two capitals today: Stockholm and Los Angeles. That’s where most hits are written and produced. Check out the global pop songwriter elite and you’ll find that around 50 or so are Swedes. It’s an incredible success story. How on earth could a small country of 10 million people partly located inside the Arctic Circle, and with a language unintelligible to non-Scandinavians, become a world leader in pop?

Part of the answer is education. Songwriters Max Martin and Shellback cite the importance of municipal music and arts schools to their development and the free availability of technical equipment at adult education colleges.

Another reason is Sweden’s early advances in digital technology, which have fostered many groundbreaking musical innovations. Spotify is headquartered in Stockholm. Berlin-based

Soundcloud was created by Swedes who still run it today. Swedish programmers helped build Apple Music. (The notorious Pirate Bay hailed from Stockholm too.)

Another factor is the small size of the Swedish market, which drives internationalisation. Being able to speak at least one foreign language is almost a prerequisite. Unlike many European countries, Sweden does not dub English-language TV series and movies. This means Swedes hear English spoken on a daily basis. Swedes are also among the most avid travellers on the planet.

Some things that shape Swedish culture are the long, dark winters and the contrast between city and country. The music is characterised by strong, inspiring melodies with a melancholic undertone – a tradition began by ABBA, who took their cue from Swedish folk music. Tunes once whistled in the depths of a pine forest now echo worldwide.

A personal highlight for me is Seinabo Sey’s ’Younger’ from 2013. I’ve been writing about music for 35 years and I have rarely, if ever, been so bedazzled by a new artist. A voice that sounds 100 years old combined with a spaceship production that could come from the future. Kygo’s remix of ’Younger’ has been streamed 250 million times.

Jan Gradvall, music journalist and curator.

Moments – posters

1. Avicii

Title: Electronic dance music gains a new anthem.

Date: October 2011

Bread: ‘Levels’ by DJ/producer Avicii takes electronic dance music to a new level. The catchy synth and innovative beat drop creates a new type of radio hit and turns Avicii, then only 22, into a megastar. He becomes one of the first DJs to step up from clubs to arenas, erasing the

boundaries between rave and concert.

Photo:

1. Robyn

Title: New York’s subway fills with love and joy.

Date: March 2019

Bread: New York’s 34th Street station transforms into a full-on dance party after singer Robyn’s sold-out concert at Madison Square Garden. Subway riders and passers-by spontaneously bop to the tones of ‘Dancing on My Own’. Rolling Stone magazine ranks the tune as the 20th best song of all time.

Photo:

1. Roxette

Title: Power ballad duo show their muscles.

Date: 16 June 1990

Bread: The anthemic ‘It Must Have Been Love’ by Roxette’s Per Gessle and Marie Fredriksson leads the soundtrack for ‘Pretty Woman’. The blockbuster movie, seen by 42 million people in the US alone, becomes the highest-grossing romantic comedy of all time. The song, the third of Roxette’s four US number one hit singles, remains the duo’s most successful and best-known track.

Photo:

1. Ace of Base

Title: The Sign of things to come.

Date: November 1993

Bread: Gothenburg band Ace of Base officially make it big in America as their debut album ‘The Sign’ tops the US album charts. The album – a meld of reggae and Euro techno – spends six months in the top three and eventually sells 21 million copies worldwide. To date, it’s the second bestselling album from a Swedish act, surpassed only by the ‘ABBA Gold’ hits collection.

Photo:

1. Tensta Gospel Choir

Title: Singing together unearths new talents.

Date: 1996

Bread: Tensta Gospel Choir in Stockholm is founded as a cultural integration project, and quickly becomes a nursery for gifted singers. Artists such as Lykke Li, Mapei and Sabina Ddumba are among the Swedish stars to have taken their fledgling vocal steps in the choir. An estimated 600,000 of Sweden’s 10 million inhabitants sing in choirs. No wonder Swedish pop is known for its sing-along refrains!

Photo:

1. Max Martin

Title: Oops, he did it again – and again.

Date: 2000

Bread: With the hit song 'Oops! ...I Did It Again' Britney Spears reaches the top of the US Billboard charts once again thanks to the extraordinary talents of producer Max Martin. To date, this Swede has written/co-written 27 Billboard number ones, a feat surpassed only by Paul McCartney (32).

1. Europe

Title: ‘The Final Countdown’ begins its eternal journey.

Date: February 1986

Bread: Swedish glam metal band Europe release their glorious anthem. It will roar to number one in 25 countries and, like a comet, it’s blazed a trail ever since. Attend any major sports event and there’s a good chance you’ll hear its rousing beat pumping from the stadium speakers.

Photo:

1. Bathory

Title: The first black metal album sees the light.

Date: 1984

Bread: Bathory’s self-titled debut is released. It is credited as an album that defined the black metal genre. With shrieking tempos, the Stockholm band takes darkness to a whole new depth. This, you could say, is Nordic noir before it became a crime fiction genre.

Photo:

1. ABBA

Title: Mamma Mia, here they go again!

Date: November 2021

Bread: In 1981, ABBA release what everyone –including themselves – assume is their final album. But then 40 years later, almost to the day, ABBA stuns the world with a comeback record – ‘Voyage’. And to fans’ delight, the band is performing as digital ‘Abbatars’ at a purpose-built ABBA Arena in London in 2022. Thank you for the music!

Photo:

1. Jonas Åkerlund

Title: Video directing enters the spotlight.

Date: 22 February 1998

Bread: Madonna releases ‘Ray of Light’, a music video showing scenes from different cities around the world. Swedish music video director Jonas Åkerlund wins a Grammy for it, and the video also scoops five MTV Video Music Awards. Swedish music producers, songwriters and video directors like Åkerlund have played a towering role in the last 30 years of popular culture.

Photo:

1. Polar Music Prize

Title: Pop and classical greats shine together.

Date: 28 August 2012

Bread: Swedish band First Aid Kit perform Paul Simon’s hit ‘America’ song in front of the writer himself when he receives the Polar Music Prize in Stockholm. He gives the band a standing ovation. The award dates back to 1992, and was founded by ABBA ex-manager Stikkan Anderson as a musical equivalent to the Nobel Prize. Two winners – one from pop, the other from classical music – have shared it every year since.

Photo:

1. Yung Lean

Title: Cloud rap sweeps onto the stage.

Date: 2013

Bread: Swedish rapper Yung Lean is just 16 when his cloud rap songs burst into teenage bedrooms across the globe via YouTube and Soundcloud. Lean has since collaborated with the likes of Frank Ocean and Travis Scott, and is today hailed among the world’s most creative artists.

Photo:

1. Ludwig Göransson

Title: Kids’ instrument hits the right note.

Date: November 2019

Bread: Star Wars franchise ‘The Mandalorian’ goes on general release and Swedes smile knowingly at the recorders playing the theme music. Countless Swedish schoolchildren – past and present – have cut their musical teeth on this little flute. As a homage to Swedish music lessons, the Oscar-winning composer Ludwig Göransson uses three recorders in his score.

Photo:

1. Spotify

Title: Listening to music changes forever.

Date: October 2008

Bread: The launch of Swedish streaming service Spotify transforms music listening globally. For years, the industry struggled with slumping record sales as consumers turned to filesharing and illegal downloads. Now anyone can listen legally to any music – anytime, anywhere the service exists.

Photo:

1. Eurovision Song Contest

Title: A country unites in euphoric exuberance.

Date: 2020

Bread: The Eurovision Song Contest is Sweden’s Superbowl. Both young and old get involved, and the country has won more times than any nation, except Ireland. Swedes even

wrote the music for the 2020 movie parody ‘Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga’, starring Will Ferrell. The title song ‘Húsavík’, sung by Swede Molly Sandén, was nominated for an Oscar.

Photo:

1. Blue Swede

Title: Swedish pop makes its big splash.

Date: 6 April 1974

Bread: Björn Skifs and his band Blue Swede hit number one in the US Billboard charts with

‘Hooked on a Feeling’. Who can resist a song with an opening line of ‘Ooga chaka, ooga

ooga ooga chaka’? Swedish pop comes of age internationally. The same day, on the other side Atlantic, ABBA win the Eurovision Song Contest with ‘Waterloo’.

Photo:

1. Monica Zetterlund

Title: A jazz icon waltzes to immortality.

Date: 23 August 1964

Bread: It takes just four hours for singer Monica Zetterlund and the Bill Evans Trio to record one of the most critically acclaimed Swedish albums of all time. The jazz masterpiece ‘Waltz

for Debby’ launches a stellar career. The iconic Zetterlund goes on to pave the way for future Swedish female artists like ABBA’s Agnetha Fältskog, Nina Persson of The Cardigans, and Zara Larsson.

Photo:

1. Refused

Title: Foretelling the future of hardcore.

Date: 1998

Bread: Hardcore rockers Refused foretell the future of punk music with their prophetic album ‘The Shape of Punk to Come’. The band help popularise the straight edge punk subculture, turning their home town of Umeå into an unlikely global music hotspot. Fans from near and far take musical and cultural cues from their heroes’ birthplace.

Photo:

1. Neneh Cherry

Title: Feminism finds a new voice.

Date: December 1988

Bread: A pregnant Neneh Cherry raps and rocks her hit ‘Buffalo Stance’ on BBC’s Top of the Pops, inspiring countless young female fans to make their own music. Cherry’s blend of hiphop, house and feminism has influenced many, not least Swedish acts such as Leila K and Robyn. In 2022, Robyn and rapper Mapei paid homage to Cherry with a re-imagined, swaggering version of the groundbreaking hit.

Photo:

1. Greta Thunberg

Title: Cranking up the volume on climate.

Date: 2019

Bread: The opening song of UK group The 1975’s new album features a young Swedish activist whom lead singer Matty Healy dubs ‘the most punk, the most badass person I’ve ever met’. Greta Thunberg’s address to the United Nations inspires a remix by Fatboy Slim. Björk projects Thunberg’s climate-change message live on stage. Coldplay then cancel a tour after Thunberg criticises air travel carbon dioxide emissions.

Photo:

Module - ‘Join the band’ table:

Big title: Join the band!

Preamble: Take a moment and make music the soundtrack of our lives. Sweden is a hotbed of international music talent – and home to an array of instruments, speakers and other tools to explore musical creativity. Artists and producers worldwide are already in the know. Now it’s your turn. We want to hear your musical expression. Let’s play together!

Innovations:

Brand: Teenage Engineering

Title: A portable wonder synthesiser

Bread: Light, bright and incredibly handy. OP-1 is an all-in-one portable synthesizer, sampler and controller. With features like USB audio, a built-in FM radio and an assignable G-force sensor for motion-controlled effects, there’s nothing quite like it. Little wonder it’s turning heads among the cognoscenti. In the words of electronic music icon Jean-Michel Jarre, “It’s been a long time since I’ve seen something as interesting, flexible and creative as this.”

Brand: Reason Studios

Title: A complete suite of music-making tools

Bread: Graduate from music dreamer into music maker! Unleash your creative potential with Reason 12 – a wide-ranging sound design playground that’s a whole new way of interacting with sounds. The 12’s combinator and creative sampler come with state-of-the-art audio technologies and high-resolution graphics. Together they create a compact studio that’s expandable, customisable and, above all, fun to use. Come and try it – and bring your groovy tunes to life.

Brand: Digital Mellotron

Title: Handmade digital musical keyboard

Bread: Who hasn’t heard the unique Mellotron sound, immortalised on smash 1960s hits like the Beatles’ ”Strawberry Fields Forever” and the Moody Blues’ ”Nights In White Satin”? Stockholmer Markus Resch loved it so much he invented a contemporary digital version. Each unit is handmade, with an aesthetic look to match the sonic experience. Digital Mellotron aficionados range from artists like Kanye West, Swedish House Mafia and the Smashing Pumpkins to producers like Max Martin, Shellback and Rick Nowels (Lana del Rey).

Brand: Nord Keyboards

Title: Piano keyboard and drum machine with built-in synthesiser

Bread: Strike a chord and crack a snare using keyboards and drum kits with integrated synths. Nord Keyboards’ mission is to create exceptional sound and a unique playing experience – for happy amateurs and big-name artists alike. Bands from Noah And The Whale to Nine Inch Nails, and Mumford & Sons to Steely Dan have used Nord’s equipment to make and play platinum-selling records. Now’s your chance to rock the room. Loosen those hands and fingers and let your music play!

iPad

Title: Explore this musical playground!

Bread: Put on the headphones to listen to the instruments and musical tools on the table. Learn more about all the features and functions by watching the movie. Above all, enjoy!

Brand: Elektron

Title: Drum machines, synths and samplers

Bread: What makes great music? In the eyes of Elektron, it’s the symbiosis of instrument and user. The electronic instrument developer makes drum machines, synths and samplers that

empower users to make extraordinary sound. They’re designed so each user can apply his or her own unique touch. The instruments help producers, artists and DJs both well-known and underground to perfect their craft. Walk in their footsteps and experiment for yourself. Hover over the buttons, crank up the volume and compose your own sweet song!

Recorder

Title: Recorder

Preamble: Classic wind instrument beloved by children

Bread: It dates as far back as the 14th century, but this flute-like instrument of German origin has never been more popular than it is today. Tens of thousands of children learn to play it annually at local music schools across Sweden. Remember the classic setup of whistle

mouthpiece, seven finger-holes and upper thumb hole from your own school days? If not,

here’s your chance to fresh your memory. Inhale, exhale and let those fluty mellow notes flow!

Company: Milab

Title: Handcrafted microphones for studio use

Bread: Great music demands stellar sound. When recording acoustic instruments, microphone quality is paramount. Milab’s microphones are handmade with a simple mission: to be the very best, regardless of budget. Designed by ear, not by numbers, they set the gold standard for studios worldwide. As Richard Perry, producer of Ray Charles, Rod Stewart and Barbara Streisand, says, ”I can’t remember being so impressed with a microphone.” Want to croon like the next Michael Jackson, Drake or Chaka Khan?

Brand: Sundberg Guitars

Title: Handmade, superior quality acoustic guitars

Bread: Keith Richards has played one. Ryan Adams strums one. And Swedish band First Aid Kit’s singer Klara Söderberg owns two. Sundberg Guitars have plenty of admiring friends in high places. The popularity comes from making the guitars from the finest-grade wood – and

building them lovingly by hand. The guitars come in baritone, tenor and 12-string models,

some with 12, 13 or 14 fret necks. True music to the ears of the connoisseur. Have a listen

and hear the resonance!

Module - Listening station:

Title: Music is made for sharing!

Preamble: Sweden is a technical wonderland when it comes to innovative distribution of music and sound. The many successful entrepreneurs, unicorns, artists and producers are driven by the same vision:The more music made available, the better for everyone.

Brand: Spotify

Title: The world’s biggest streaming service

Bread: When launched in 2006, Spotify offered a unique way to stream music legally and ensure royalty payments to artists. A digital library where you simply borrow music and audio content. Today, Spotify has hundreds of millions of monthly users worldwide.

Brand: SoundCloud

Title: Audio platform connecting artists and fans

Bread: SoundCloud’s open platform connects music and audio creators with fans across the globe. Founded in 2008, it has attracted millions with its breakthrough tracks, raw demos, podcasts and more. Soundcloud actively supports sharing on platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

Brand: Epidemic Sounds

Title: Royalty-free soundtracks for all

Bread: Epidemic Sound is a soundtrack provider established in 2009 that sells music subscriptions to YouTubers, Netflix and other content creators. Users pay for access to a royalty-free library of more than 35,000 music tracks and many more sound effects.