



MTA

Production

ARTIST CATALOGUE

2015

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MTA (Music Theatre Art)

MTA Production AB is a production company specialized on creating, producing and booking tours and concerts. Hilda Sandgren started the business back in 2000, after several years of working within the music- and theatre industry. "I was inspired to work with the entirety: Creating the artistic content, working with marketing as well as creating my own corporate culture."

The company has grown into a creative booking agency that now deals with anything that might be necessary to gain artistic success. Today MTA Production has all the requirements to successfully handle tours, marketing and album releases. MTA Production exclusively works with around 80 artists or concepts. The recent years The company has been working hard to work with the Nordic country as the "home territorium", as well as booking concerts in the whole World.

The urge to always deliver high quality under any circumstances has resulted in good business relations between the company and its artists and arrangers.

Together with artist Sofia Karlsson, MTA Production started record label **Sally Viola Records**, and since five years back they have produced the successful Christmas show "**Jul i Folkton**".

The album Jul i Folkton Live and **Jul i Folkton - I Solvändets Tid** has been released on their own label. As well as **Blues Detour** (E.Bibb, A.Möller, K.Reiersrud).

In 2013 MTA became one of two owners and producer of **Stockholm Folk Festival** at Hesselby Castle in Stockholm. The other owner is Tomas Ledin. He has been Sweden's most famous and loved solo artist since the Seventies, and remains so still to this day.

"Inspiration to continue our hard work within music, theatre and art is derived from our applauding, cheering, dancing and crying audience. We will pursue this for a very, very long time."





Louise Holmer (vocal, piano, upright bass), **Rebecka Hjukström** (vocal, guitars, banjo, dobro) and **Sophia Hogman** (vocal, mandolin, cello, key fiddle), have been playing together for over a decade. They released their debut album, *From A Safe Distance*, in 2007. It was met with critical acclaim, as well as a warm welcome from the record buyers, going straight in at number 7 in the Swedish album chart. The record soon made waves across the Atlantic Ocean and four tours during 2008-2011 have given them a great reputation in America. The band's second album, *Traveler*, which was released in 2008, was awarded a Swedish Grammy for Folk Album of the Year in 2009.

Their third album is called *Chocolate & Cigarettes* (2012). Three of Nashville's biggest names appear: Grammy winning mandolin virtuoso Sam Bush (who has played with Garth Brooks, Linda Ronstadt, Dolly Parton, and others). Guitarist and producer Buddy Miller (who has toured with Steve Earle, Robert Plant and Alison Krauss). And, last but not least, producer Steve Fishell (whose name appears on albums by Dixie, Chicks, Emmylou Harris and Willie Nelson). On the song "Regrets", Rebecka sings a duet with legendary Ron Sexsmith.

In the spring of 2015 Abalone Dots released their fourth album, *Red*. It brings them closer to an indie folk genre, and is more political.

Genre: Americana
All-female Swedish bluegrass and country musical group.
Territory: Global, USA and Asia

The members of Ale Möller Band have shifting musical backgrounds and together they create world music not necessarily rooted in each individual member's background, but rather in the strength of their musicianship.

During the last two years, Ale Möller Band have worked intensively, touring the Nordic countries, Portugal and Japan, and released the new album entitled "Argai" (which means "Welcome, come in!" in the West African fula language).

The album was released in the autumn of 2012.

Musically, the album contains each band member's entire spectrum of musical influences. As with earlier album, the material weaves together new and traditional styles from all over the world together.

Ale Möller (various instruments), **Maria Stellas** (vocal), **Mamadou Sene** (Vocal), **Magnus Stinnerbom** (vocal, mandolin, accordion), **Sebastian Dubé** (upright bass) and **Rafael Sida Huizar** (drums)

ALE MÖLLER BAND

Genre: Nordic Folk

Territory: Global, Middle-East, USA and Asia

Thorn Ullberg

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ALE MÖLLER TRIO

Ale Möller, Mats Öberg, and Olle Linder.

Sweden's best, and most constantly present multi instrumentalist, Ale Möller meets Mats Öberg, the pianist and keyboard player who plays whatever occurs to him. Olle Linder (percussion), another great folk musician, makes the trio complete.

The band first saw daylight during some sporadic summer gigs 2012. A mini tour in 2013 was an astounding success.

Genre: Nordic Folk

Territory: Global, Middle-East, USA and Asia



BAZAR BLÅ



Three masterful musicians from Sweden who have spent the last twenty years refining their sound and defining a space of their own in the world music scene.

To celebrate, in 2016 they will release their sixth album, and premiere an entirely new repertoire.

Bazar Blå create new music that manages to be as Swedish as it's globally irresistible.

Using percussion, bass guitars, bass mandola and nyckelharpa – key fiddle, an ancient Swedish folk instrument – this trio has many addictive ways of spellbinding listeners.

“The role of Swedish musicians and their impact on the world’s music scene is undeniable. Bazar Blå is yet another proof of the thriving and prosperous musical culture of the Nordic countries. The virtuosos of this trio offer a palette of unique sounds and a deep intimacy that no listener can avoid relating to. Although loyal and respectful to their Swedish roots, Bazar Blå humbly shapes their boundary-free musical net so fine that ears become keen to get caught in it!”

Ramin Sadighi – Hermes Records, Iran – Winner of WOMEX 15 Professional Excellence Award.

Johan Hedin – key fiddle / **Björn Meyer** – bass / **Fredrik Gille** - percussion

Genre: Contemporary Swedish Crossover
Territory: Global, Middle-East, USA, Europe and Asia



BJÄRAN

Bjäran's musical paths crossed long before the band was formed. The four members met at a young age through folk music courses, and their musical development began. This shared background has given them a mutual understanding of Northern Swedish folk music traditions, with a particular interest in the vivid harshness and melancholy of the landscape. Those early meetings paved the way for tight musical interaction and right from the first rehearsal, their sound started taking shape.

Their unique soundscape reaches out to audiences and challenges the listener to see things from a new perspective. The dynamic combination of a broad tonal image and progressive foundation of train-like percussion creates the characteristic sound of Bjäran's debut album "Ack ve" (2014), which was well-received by both inside and outside the folk music community.

Magdalena Eriksson – fiddle / **Christian Cuadra** – saxophones / **Peter Bonde** – guitar/mandola/cittern / **Mattias Mårtensson** – percussion

Genre: Nordic Folk
Territory: Global, Europe, USA and Asia

DANIEL KARLSSON TRIO

Since their album debut, *Das Taxibåt*, in September 2013, The Daniel Karlsson Trio have established themselves as one of the most interesting constellations in Swedish jazz. Not least through the magnificent hat trick brought home by their sophomore release, *Fusion for Fish*, released in August 2014. The album ended up winning them the Swedish Radio's jazz group of the year Award 2014 and Swedish jazz magazine OJ's Golden Disc 2015, as well as the Swedish Jazz Grammy of 2015. Ears have been opened abroad, too, their music has been met with press accolades and frequent airplay in Germany, but also in the UK and Ireland.

This does not mean that the trio rest on their laurels. New music has been recorded through the fall of 2014, and the spring of 2015 on the island Runmarö in the Stockholm archipelago, and has been honed to perfection at the brus & knaster studio in Stockholm. The result is now ready to be sent off into the world.

Daniel Karlsson, piano, synthesizers, mellotron / **Christian Spering**, double bass & tar shehnai / **Fredrik Rundqvist**, drums & percussion



Genre: Jazz
Territory: Global, USA and Asia

A portrait of Emilia Amper, a woman with long brown hair, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a dark jacket with white and red patterns. A red fiddle is visible in the lower left corner.

EMILIA AMPER

Key fiddler, composer and singer, Emilia Amper is currently one of the most talked about, and admired, folk musicians in Sweden.

Emilia has performed in many European countries, as well as in China, USA, Canada, Namibia, India and Brazil, both solo and together with several folk music groups. Together with the Trondheim Soloists, Gjermund Larsen and 2. The album “In Folk Style” recieved a Norwegian Spellemannspris in 2010 for the best classical album, as well as being nominated for two US Grammy Awards. The same year she was proclaimed World Champion on the nyckelharpa (key fiddle).

In December 2012, her critically acclaimed solo debut album, “Trollfågeln”, was released at the venerable classical record label BIS Records, with traditional and new composed music by Emilia, for nyckelharpa/key fiddle, voice, folk music ensemble and string quintet. The album was nominated for the Swedish Grammy Awards (Grammis), for the independent Manifest Awards, and for Album of the Year at the Swedish Folk and World Music Awards, where Emilia also won the award Artist of the Year.

Genre: Nordic Folk
Territory: Global, USA and Asia

GJERMUND LARSEN

Gjermund Larsen enjoys a position as one of the most respected and active performers and composers on the contemporary Norwegian folk music scene.

In 2002 he became the youngest fiddler ever to win the Norwegian Championship in traditional folk-fiddling, and in 2011 he was nominated for the Grammy Awards in the category “small ensemble performance” together with the Trondheim Soloists.

Together with double bassist Sondre Meisfjord and pianist/organist Andreas Utnem, Larsen formed the band Gjermund Larsen Trio. The three band members represent a wide range of genres, ranging from classical and contemporary to jazz and pop, as well as traditional folk music.

A diverse background that results in a highly aesthetic and rewarding sonic landscape.

In 2008 they received the Norwegian Grammy for their debut-album “Ankomst”, and their second album “Aurum” (2010), was nominated in two categories.

Their third album “Reise”, was released in March 2013.

They have previously performed at Womex as Gjermund Larsen Trio, in 2014.

Genre: Nordic Folk

Territory: Global, Europe, USA and Asia

Geir Dokken

MTA PRODUCTION 2015

HAZELIUS HEDIN

Hazelius Hedin – New folk star duo

Two of Sweden's most established folk musicians make up the duo Hazelius Hedin. They sing and play their Swedish folk music with passion, rare ease and unquestionable presence – it's impossible to remain unaffected.

Esbjörn Hazelius (violin, cittra, guitars) and Johan Hedin (nyckelharpa/key fiddle) both grew up in the south of Sweden, where the traditional couple dance "slängpolska" prevails. But they search all over Sweden for their repertoire, which includes everything from medieval ballads, sailor songs, and love ballads to instrumental dance tunes. Moreover, Hazelius and Hedin also pass on the tradition through their own compositions. They arrange the music carefully, often inspired by Esbjörn's Irish tradition of music arranging, and constantly look for new instrumental harmonies.

They recently released their critically acclaimed new album, "Sunnan".



Genre: Nordic Folk
Territory: Global, Europe, USA and Asia



KOLONIEN

Things have developed quickly for Kolonien.

The band started 2010 when violinist **Anna Möller** joined the brothers **Arvid** (vocals, guitar, bass) & **Erik Rask** (vocals, guitar) and **Mischa Grind** (vocals, percussion), thus adding the final voice in Koloniens characteristic four-part vocals.

During the first year, they were invited to play abroad in Tanzania and Israel/Palestine, where they found inspiration and time to complete their sound, mixing folk music with pop and reggae grooves. Dynamic compositions that enter the twentieth century, but still stay true to their roots. Through this, Kolonien gained attention from audiences throughout Sweden, and in 2011 they received an award for Best Young Folk Act. 2012 saw the release of their debutalbum, "Clockwise", which was followed by an extensive tour throughout Sweden as well as a few concerts in Croatia and Cyprus.

This established Kolonien as one of the more prominent new acts in the folk music scene today, resulting in them becoming "Newcomer of the Year" at the Folk and World Music Awards in Sweden. In 2015, they released their new album, "Drömmarnas land".

Genre: Visionary New Swedish Folk
Territory: Worldwide

Lena Willemark has become a central figure within the Swedish folk music, and is crosses borders between genres in a revolutionary, yet unforced, way.

Lena Willemark bears a unique music treasure from her roots in the Swedish area of Älvdalen. Willemark sings, plays the violin and composes music. Over the years, she has worked with several musicians in many different genres. Frifot, Elise Einarsdotter, Karin Rehnqvist, Anders Jormin, Ale Möller, Marilyn Mazur, Kirsten Bråten Berg, Det Norske Kammerorkester, The Royal Philharmonics and The Gothenburg Symphony, to name but a few. Willemark has been awarded with four Swedish Grammys and nominated for the Nordic Music Prize.

LENA WILLEMARCK



Karin Nakagawa is expressing the spirit, and spreading the soul, of Japan out to the world through her excellence on the 25-string koto, an ancient harp-like instrument rarely seen outside Japan.

Karin Nakagawa's roots lie in the ancient music of Japan; songs of the wind and the rain, and songs of planting the rice. During her university education, Karin studied the traditional 13-string koto, but she is today considered being one of the very few real experts of the 25 string koto. She was inspired and taught by master Keiko Nosaka since the age of twelve.

Lena Willemark, with roots in the area of Älvdalen, has for many years been considered the leading singer and fiddle player in the Swedish folk tradition. Her importance and impact when it comes to spreading and creating understanding for this music, cannot be exaggerated. A great amount of prizes and awards confirm her unique artistic depth, her international recognition and her curiosity and openness to new musical meetings.

Anders Jormin is a composer and celebrated double bassist, internationally highly respected within the fields of contemporary improvised music. Holding a professorship as well as being an honorary doctor in improvisation, Anders has an international working field and remains one of Scandinavia's most in-demand jazz artists.

In the fascinating project **LYÖSTRAINI** (TREES OF LIGHT) Lena, Karin and Anders carefully let the Japanese classical tradition, Lena's strong poems in her native Älvdal tongue and the open fields of improvisation meet and react into a unique musical world where new paths are being created.

Genre: Cross-Over
Territory: Global, Asia and Europe



Genre: Jazz
Territory: Global

MIRIAM AÏDA

Miriam Aïda is one of Sweden's most popular singers with an international career, and has performed all over the world, both as a solo artist as well as with Italian DJ/producer Nicola Conte and the band A Bossa Elétrica. After her time exploring the music traditions of Brazil and her success with the albums "Meu Brasil" and "Letras ao Brasil", she has been seen in several national TV shows. Miriam's extensive talent travels through a number of musical landscapes and since the release of her debut album in 2002, she has released seven albums as a leader.

Following the success of the Swedish Grammy, Manifest and World Music Awards nominated albums "Letras ao Brasil" (2009) and "Visans väsen" (2011), mixing Swedish traditional songs with Brazilian rhythms, her latest album "É de Lei!" honours the Brazilian legend and founder of Afro Samba, Baden Powell, and it is intimate, melancholic, full of energy, mysterious, happy and is a journey deep into the heart of the afro-Brazilian music. The album was recorded in Sweden and Rio de Janeiro in collaboration with the Brazilian arranger Jayme Vignoli, and also features one of Rio's greatest singers, Marcos Sacramento, who joins Miriam in a beautiful duet on "Samba em Prelúdio".

NEW TIDE ORQUESTA

(former New Tango Orquesta)

Genre: Cross-Over

Territory: Global, Middle-East, USA and Asia



New Tide Orquesta are one of the most appreciated live acts in Sweden. During 16 years of international touring, they have found their very own identity as constant outsiders. This fall sees the release their eighth album.

Whether they perform in a rock club in Moscow, at a jazz festival in Istanbul, a tango club in Buenos Aires or a concert hall in Beijing. NTO always take the audience by storm and continue to prove that “genre” is only a word.

With the composer Per Störby in lead, New Tide Orquesta have, over the course of their six albums, created a unique sound and style; the miscellaneous mix of modern chamber music, minimalism, baroque, free improvisation, and still, a hint of new tango, with an intense dynamic. The album “Bestiario” was nominated for a Swedish Grammy award, and “Vesper” won the Experimental of the Year award at the Swedish Manifest gala for independent music, and in 2010, they were awarded “Group Of The Year” at the Swedish Folk and World Music Awards. Their music has been used in several movies, and they have also made music for several theatre plays, dance performances and art installations.

New Tide Orquesta have a big and loyal audience, and concerts with NTO always promise a touch of magic: intense, concentrated, intimate and thrilling.

Per Störby – composer, bandoneon / **Livet Nord** – violin / **Peter Gran** – guitars /
Thomas Gustafsson – piano / **Josef Kallerdahl** – upright bass / **Johanna Dahl** - cello



ODE

ODE are a band with a sound full of rhythmic influences from Sweden, West Africa, Brazil and the Middle East, and focuses on groove.

ODE are a new band, consisting of three glimmering stars in the Swedish folk music sky: Olle Linder (percussion, guitar, vocals), Dan Svensson (percussion, vocals, guitar) and Emilia Amper (nyckelharpa/key fiddle and vocals). Their chemistry, both as people and musicians, is extraordinary and they build their repertoire solely on original, newly composed, material. The lyrics have a contemporary feel, and are inspired by things that concern us here and now, touching on subjects ranging from love and equality, to folk music's current status. Their debut album was released in June 2013 and ODE have been touring since then. They are currently working on new material due to be released later in 2015.

Genre: Nordic Folk
Territory: Global, USA, Europe, Middle-East and Asia



RAMY ESSAM

Ramy Essam is an Egyptian musician and activist. He's best known for his appearances in Tahrir Square in Cairo in front of hundreds of thousands of people during the Egyptian Revolution in 2011, where he quickly became one of the most important voices of the Arab Spring.

His song *Irhal*, in which Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak was urged to resign, gained great popularity among the demonstrators. It became internationally known through YouTube, and is referred to as the anthem of the revolution. It was selected by the magazine *Time Out* as the third most world-changing song of all time, being one of the most influential songs of the modern age.

Although Ramy was arrested and brutally tortured because of his music, at the time of his release he was even more determined to speak out against tyranny and corruption.

At the moment living in Sweden on a scholarship, he's still a strong voice for the young generation and its struggle for democracy, human rights and freedom of speech. He truly personifies that music is the strongest peaceful weapon for change.

2016 is the year for the rest of the world to discover Ramy Essam. Together with music producer, Andreas Unge (Searching for Sugarman, Cheikh Lo, Salif Keita, Oumou Sangaré etcetera), he's now making his first real international album. An album that combines his melodic singer-songwriter style with his love for hard rock. A global sound packed with rough guitars and oriental sounds, together with explosive lyrics about human rights, democracy and the freedom of expression. Egyptian rock at its finest loaded with the word of the streets. For tours he has put together a band featuring some of the best musicians Sweden has to offer.

Genre: Political rock / Singer songwriter
Territory: Scandinavia, Europe, Middle-East, USA



RIGMOR GUSTAFSSON

Rigmor just released her critically acclaimed "When You Make Me Smile", together with Dalasinfoniettan. This is her tenth album.

UK newspaper The Guardian has called Rigmor Gustafsson "penetratingly delicate, and subtle," and she continues to establish herself as one of the leading jazz vocalists in Scandinavia.

Since 1997, she has released nine CD's of which three have gone gold in Sweden, the first jazz artist to have that honor since Monica Zetterlund's 1991 classic "Varsamt". Rigmor's "Alone with You" (2008) won a Swedish Grammy, and "I Will Wait for You" (2003) received The Jazz Award in Germany.

In November 2013, Rigmor received the most prestigious jazz award in Sweden, "The Royal Musical Academy's Jazz Award". Her new album, "When You Make Me Smile" featuring a piano trio and orchestra, was released in August 2014.

Through the years, Rigmor has toured around the globe, mostly with her own trio, but she has also featured in other constellations, (Radio String Quartet Vienna, Danish Radio Big Band, Swedish Radio Jazz Orchestra), and has appeared on a number of TV shows. She has performed twice at celebrations for Sweden's Crown Princess, Victoria: at Her Royal Highness' birthday and the 2010 Royal wedding concert, both performances were live broadcasts on Swedish National TV.

Rigmor also performed at the 2003 Nobel Prize Ceremony, also on National Television in Sweden. In 2002, she signed with the German record company, ACT.

Genre: Jazz
Territory: Golbal, not GAS

In Sweden, Råfven is known as the country's wildest, and possibly best, live act. On stage, these eight "oddball gypsy punks" turn into one single organism, delivering their frenetic and untamed mix of music that sends people silly. This spring, they will release a new album.

During the last years, Råfven have gained crowds from overseas and had great success at the Glastonbury Festival and were voted as "best act" at Fuji Rock 2009 by Tower Records, the biggest record store in Japan.

Having its roots in the streets, as a busking band, no stage is too small or too big for Råfven. They never lose contact with the crowd, sending out such joy that no one stays unaffected. The party is overwhelming, but there is always an underlying seriousness.

In 2011 they are releasing their fourth album, "Svensk kultur", which embraces folk music and highlights the dangers of nationalistic thinking. It received massive media recognition during the release tour, and made one of the strongest political statements in Swedish music this year. In the spring of 2015 their new album, "Bring back the Dinos", was released.

Rasmus Blanck – upright bass / **Johan Dahlkvist** – accordion / **David Fraenckel** – trombone / **Jonas Lundberg** – guitar / **Martin Nurmi** – saxophone / **Loke Nyberg** – violin / **Per Svenner** - drums / **Daniel Wejdin** - tambura



RÅFVEN

Genre: Cross-Over
Territory: Global, Middle-East, USA and Asia

SALLYSWAG



Sallyswag is a new, young and challenging world music band oozing energy, artistry and attitude. Combined, the different members' backgrounds in various cultures and musical genres create something entirely new. Driven musicians with roots in dance hall, rap, Afro, Balkan and Swedish folk music, and newly written lyrics in Swedish, result in a vital and important music that fills a void that has previously existed on the Swedish music scene.

The band's front woman is **Aurelia Dey**, a raggazonto queen from Gothenburg and Ghana. Already an established name on the reggae and dancehall scene, she is currently studying world music at the Academy of Music and Drama at the University of Gothenburg. **Sanna Eriksson** alternates between and backing vocals. Originally hailing from the Jämtland region, she has a voice that's smooth as silk, and a love of latin flow with cool lyrics in Spanish and Swedish. **Erika Risinger** handles violin and backing vocals. She is a freelance "riksspelman" (national folk musician) with one foot in the region of Dalarna, one foot in the region of Skåne, and "a hand" i Bulgaria. Freelance bass guitarist **Nadina Pundins** has spent a lot of time learning about the music of Mali and Cuba. **Susanna Risberg** is a young, but renowned electric guitarist who has currently an album out by her own jazz trio. In 2011, she received the prestigious Jimi Hendrix Award.

Ebba Wigren is an accomplished drummer and percussionist also studying world music in Gothenburg. The band also features an impressive brass section, featuring freelance trombone player **Paulina Moberg** (also a member of Daniel Radich Big Band), and trumpet player/multi instrumentalist **Nadia Hamouchi** from Malmö, who has studied improvisational music, and has also played a lot of hip hop and R&B. The final member of the brass section is **Anna Malmström** on clarinet and bass clarinet. She's active on the folk music scene and has released an album with Kvara Kvartett.

The music that we play has evolved from the identities of the different members of the band. Our aim was to create a whole new organism. A hot, living, cooking melting pot of newly written material, as well as older stuff. We create, and borrow lyrics and sounds influenced by roots music from Mali, Kuba, Haiti, Bolivia, Chile, Bulgaria, Sweden, and other places, and build our own music from that. We want our music to be an enjoyable punch in the face. We shake things up, take a lot of space, and grab a hold.

Genre: Folk rock
Territory: Global, USA and Asia

Genre: Folk rock
Territory: Global, Europe, USA and Asia



SKENET

Skenet is a band consisting of four young and fearless Swedes, who grew up together in the vibrant Nordic folk music scene that provides the roots of their sound. As kids, playing the violin together, they became fast friends, while exploring the language of music. Today, the collaboration – like their friendship – continues to grow.

In Skenet, that violin still creates the melody and voice, but adding drums, electric guitar, bass, and Moog makes for a unique combination of Nordic roots music and electric rock. While some of the melodies date from the 1800s, most are original compositions by siblings Lena and Staffan Jonsson. The themes may be inspired by a rich tradition, but the end result is something entirely new: instrumental, folk rocking, and psychedelic!

Lena Jonsson - violin / **Niklas “Nicke” Bertilsson** - drums / **Johan Mörk** - bass /
Staffan Jonsson - guitars



Formed in 2008, Tarabband, a pun on Tarab and Band, is a six-member band composed of the Iraqi Egyptian Nadin Al khalidi and five other musicians from Sweden and France. A cross-cultural attempt at creating Tarab (“ecstasy through music”) when emotions and music merge and become one.

The group’s leading figure and charismatic vocalist Nadin Al Khalidi, fled from Iraq in 2001 arriving to Sweden as a refugee. Settled in southern Sweden, Malmö which she now calls home. Whether it’s Iraqi, Egyptian, or Swedish, Nadin celebrates her triple identity, a mix that is culturally rich.

Tarabband’s music embrace Nadin’s lyrics that narrates her journey of survival, exile and life. Weaving the personal element into the songs allows Nadin to talk about “people we never hear of. The least we could do is share their story.”

Tarabband’s debut album “Ya Sidi” – “(My Master)” was released in 2013 and contains 10 original compositions. The music and words, as Tarabband’s members, travels between sufism, folk, flamenco and jazz, and settles in Tarab – the common denominator.

Widely spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa, the album’s first track “Baghdad Choby” is the group’s “visa” to the Middle East’s music scene. (Choby is an Iraqi rhythm).

The group’s second album, “Ashofak Ba’den” (We’ll meet again someday), will be released in February 2016. The record will unfold stories behind “the very last photo of a couple who was separated by the force of war and terror in Northern Iraq. The couple’s destiny remains unknown”.

Earlier in 2015, Tarabband held successful sold out concerts in Egypt and Jordan, in addition to participating at festivals in Malaysia, Zanzibar, Sweden and Europe. They played Womex in 2014.

Nadin Al khalidi - vocals, saz, guitar / **Gabriel Hermansson** - oud, guitar, vocals /
Dan Svensson - percussion, flute, vocals / **Filip Runesson** - violin / **Romain Coutama** - bass /
Stephan Jarl - percussion, vocals

Genre: Cross-Over
Territory: Global, Middle-East, USA and Asia

BLÅ FERDI

Lena Willemark's latest recording project, Blå Ferdi, took place during October 2015, and has been scheduled for release in March 2016.

Says Lena, "I have composed this music both during daylight, and the darkest night, straight storytelling as well as dreamy blue. I wrote the music for a dream constellation of fantastic folk musicians and have been inspired by some very powerful lines from Siri Hustvedt's book "The Shaking Woman":

"Around and under the island that is the self-conscious storyteller is a wide ranging ocean of unawareness of all that we don't know, never will know, or have forgotten."



Blå Ferdi, the band, consists of:

- ***Lena Willemark:** violin, alt violin, vocals
- ***Emma Reed:** violin
- ***Micke Marin:** violin and string instruments
- ***Mia Marin:** violin
- ***Tina Quartey:** percussion
- ***Leo Svensson:** cello

Genre: Nordic Folk
Territory: Europe
 Blå Ferdi was written for EBU, summer 2013.



stockholm folk festival

HESSELBY SLOTT

12-13 AUGUST 2016



For 2016 the theme will be India and USA, and we also focus on the Nordic cooperation.

Read more at: <http://stockholmfolkfestival.se/>



Stockholm Folk Festival happens at the beautiful park of Hesselby Castle. Always the second week-end in august.

This is where folk music meets chants, folk rock, classical music, blues and many other styles and genres. The festival will be teeming with dancing, courses, jamming and sing-a-longs. The theme for 2015 was the Middle East and Scotland and we also focused on the mix of all the world's music and Nordic cooperation.



AWARD - HILDA SANDGREN

MTA and Hilda Sandgren recently received the award Musikörat at the Live At Heart festival, for their contribution to the Swedish live scene. A growing contribution from a company that works a little outside the industry giants. MI met with Hilda Sandgren.



"No, no, I will act more, I've got plans..." Hilda Sandgren from MTA Production is not hovering on the target when asked if she has given up on the acting vision that once made her first start aiming for stage work. But in 2015, this is a hobby. Sandgren has been more than fully occupied with running a production company in the shadow of giants like Live Nation, United Stage, Luger and Blixten & co, establishing itself as something just between large and small in the live context. Not least is MTA an option for many of acts who don't quite fit into the rock or pop categories. "Try Hilda, she knows the folk scene" has become a common suggestion when artists try stages and scenes other than the most familiar ones. One might as well say "blues, world, or jazz". MTA also handle productions for bigger names, and with the now 80-something artists in their roster, they have passed the 20 million mark in sales.

That explains the a high pace and cramped rooms when MI meets Sandgren in MTA's premises in downtown Stockholm. MTA shares office space with the record company Playground, and in three rooms at the back of a corridor we find the half a dozen employees that during the course of one year are involved in over a thousand productions. Moreover, there is a small branch elsewhere in town, a sponsor contributing to the office where the new pet project Stockholm Folk Festival is taking shape. SFF was founded by, among others, Tomas Ledin in 2012, but now MTA takes care of the day-to-day operations, and the planning of next year's festival is already underway.

MTA has emerged as something of a "complement" to the major and more niche booking companies – how would you describe your position?

– As an outsider – and from the beginning we were a resistance movement to the preconceptions of what an agent, booking company and production company can be. In recent times, we are a complement to the large and more niche companies. Not as small and independent anymore. The important thing for us is not to get "stuck", but move forward in line with the times. We produce about 1.100 gigs per year. Previously, our market was the Nordic region but for 2016-2017, we will also do international events.

MTA turns 15 this year. What is the biggest difference, when you consider what you had in mind back in 2000 and what it has become in 2015?

– The early years: 2000-2003 I had employment – both within restaurant, booking agency and management. I created a network for myself, and learned the business. I picked up as much as I could, while writing my business plan. I didn't think there was a great need for MTA, nor that we could such a big slice of the market. I've put a lot of passion and heart into this and I still didn't think it would work out as a primary source of income, while still having fun doing it. That's the biggest difference. How well I did surprised me. Later on, I realised that this requires a great deal of strategy and patience. I really got to learn the hard way by consulting under my own name, through many ups and downs. After 2006, I realised that everything I wanted to do, MTA was able to. I started hiring staff, at first in the form of projects and, later on, full time. I enjoy creating teams. It's fun to create new opportunities for many! It's still a pleasant surprise that there are so many fun and important things to do in our industry! I get a kick out of experiencing the development and growth of us, the artists and organisers. I like to move forward. So, all in all, I've been pleasantly surprised. The most important thing that I've learnt, is that you have to create a good environment to perform, for both artists and employees. The efficiency of all digital platforms and new means of communication has surpassed all expectations I had in 2000.

What did you do before MTA?

– I worked as a photographer's assistant and had quite a few bands and musical projects, while dreaming of becoming an actress. I applied for drama school a couple of times but wasn't accepted. I also had a lot of energy which I put into a theatre group of my own, where we set up plays. That way I learned the hard way, and got a stage to play on regardless. Once I was up and running there, I discovered how to produce an event from start to finish. Alongside this, I worked with local TV in Täby, took drama classes and started producing anything and everything. At this point, MTA was born.

I built a studio and started recording artists. That way, I ended up at United Stage as a coordinator. I learned a lot during those years. I then worked with Marie Dimberg at D & D Management and that's where I had an "A-ha" moment and learned the importance of artist management. I then went on to work with commercials for TV4. One day Joe Labero called to tell me he was looking for a Production Manager for his company. I decided to join, and became a freelance consultant. I got back both to the stage floor, doing props and assisting the magician, but also to the technical crew with tasks like spotlighting, sound engineer, film maker and so on. Above all, I got to plan everything that needed to be done! I went to Russia and the USA, as well as Norway, Denmark and Latvia. A lot of the events were for Christmas shows and openings, as well as small dinners. The job challenging in many ways. More than anything else, it made me fearless.

From our perspective it seems like MTA established itself definitely with Sofia Karlsson and the show Jul i folkton? Would that be a correct assumption?

– Joe Labero taught me to recognise unique niches. When Sofia called me, I felt immediately that MTA could find its niche by getting a "magical commercial grip" on folk music! It was like a trampoline. She had tremendous energy and talent. I identified Jul i Folkton as a dream project after working with Julgalan in various sports arenas. I could see the contrasts between these worlds and realised that there was a need for an event like Jul i Folkton. I like finding new paths, so I did, exemplified by these two projects. One could say that it was the start of a virtuous cycle of opportunities coming my way. Most of which I took advantage of.

When considering the number of employees today, turnover, number of artists, etc – how big is MTA, and how big can MTA get, realistically?

– We are now five full time employees, one part-time and three consultants. Our annual turnover is about 20 millions per year. The number of artists is around 80. I think we'll aim to be around 10 full-time employees and 100 artists. Moving forward, I think we are going to work more with export, which in turn means that we need to work with more artists. There are a lot of venues around the world and the need for live music is great. Last year we had a total of 1100 gigs and I think that number will increase to 1500 for 2016.

A few years ago, MTA started a record label together with Sofia Karlsson. Was it a coincidence or do you have other similar plans?

– We started it because we wanted to be the ones in charge, we wanted to decide everything ourselves. It was no coincidence, but even an important step. We plan to – to an even greater degree – release many different artists on this label in the future.

2012 was the start of Stockholm Folk Festival. How did it happen? How was Tomas Ledin involved?

– The festival was initiated by Tomas, Esbjörn Hazelius and Esbjörn Mårtensson. I signed up a lot of the artists that I represented at the time, and Tomas wanted me to be part of the festival. In 2013, I joined him and became a co-owner. It's both a folk and world music festival and it's the only one of its kind in Mälardalen. Hesselby slott is a unique place with a perfect palace park for the festival. Our goal is that the festival will take root and become a tradition over time. We want to shed light on the music, culture, dance, and such that may not get a lot of attention in the media otherwise.

Describe the feelings when you won the prize Musikörat recently during Live At Heart...

– I think it's extremely important to be made visible and awarded by getting "Musikörat". It's proof that what we do is really needed. The goal of the festival is to create a musical oasis of diversity and equality, for all of us. We aim for the festival to be as inclusive as possible. But there is still a lot to be done here and to get confirmation by receiving this award is like a pat on the back for all of us. There are a lot of people involved in the festival, about 100 volunteers, ten in the management team, six novices and nine summer workers, then there's the whole castle with their organization, and the cooperation between them and us is very important. Everyone who works with the festival shares the award.

Any other festival plans?

– We plan to make another festival at the castle during the winter. A chamber festival called Hesselby Chamber Music Festival, planned for March 1-6, as early as next year.

Within the music companies and publishing industries a lot is overshadowed by the paradigm shift to streaming. Do you have any corresponding shift in your industry?

– Yes, there are more ticket providers than ever before. It's about winning the consumer in every possible way and try to find new needs to meet. We want to reach out to both the loyal and the new audiences. Now, more than ever, is it important to touch people and work with passion and creativity to create desire and curiosity. This is something we in the live industry try to package in many different ways in order to reach an audience. This is something that we see a lot more of today than we have previously done.

From the standpoint of a novice, I constantly hear opinions about the ticket portion of your industry – is the ticket market a question mark as you see it?

– Not a question mark, but I think we will see a lot of innovations to meet new needs. Needs that we have created and taught the consumer, all in line with the changing times.

Do you find that there is some players missing in your industry – for example, in any genre?

– I think we need more management, as well as more venues and organizers.

What are the future plans?

– Recently, we have become a multi-cultural team. Staff from both Norway, Portugal and Finland. This helps the company to better handle the cultural and linguistic codes. The culture within the company is more creative and fun. One thing I've focused on is hiring every other girl and guy, I think it's a very good way to keep things balanced. We have become increasingly more digitalized, which has made us both more efficient and better at seeing the possibilities in the deals. That's why we have so much energy to put into working with export. We work with trade fairs and have showcases abroad. This week we attend Folkelarm Oslo to showcase three of our artists: Hazelius/Hedin, Skenet and the Sami band Ára. Our goal is increased cooperation with Norway and the Nordic region. We will also attend Womex and Visa for Music in Morocco, aiming for a better cooperation globally. In 2016 the focus will shift towards the United States and Canada by attending Folk Alliance in Kansas, etcetera. MTA will be the perfect partner for all genres. I also aim to further develop Stockholm Folk Festival and I will try to establish Hesselby slott as a venue and arena.

Silvia Sardeira is a Portuguese based in Sweden with 12 years of experience in International Tour Management, Concert Production and Logistics.

She founded and programmed one of the most emblematic and international stages in Lisbon “Santiago Alquimista” in the 2000’s and worked with the Swedish Percussion ensemble Kroumata touring Asia, Australia, South America, US and most of Europe.

Silvia joined MTA Production since the beginning of the year as international project manager where she has booked and coordinated tours to Asia, USA/Canada and Middle-East.

She will join the international program team for Stockholm Folk Festival 2016 next summer.



Bjørn Bunes is from Norway, he started his music career in the band “Poor Rich Ones”. After the band dissolved in 2003 he continued to collaborate with the lead singer William Hut, as a musician, producer and composer. During the same period he started to tour and work in studio with artists such as Magnet, Morten Abel and David Mead etc.

Bjørn moved from Bergen/Norway to Stockholm in 2010 and continued to work as a freelance producer and musician. In the end of 2014 Bjørn started a new career at MTA Production as a booking & export manager with focus on the Nordic territory. He now works with the company’s export strategies and international booking.

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