

Music History and Cosmopolitanism / abstract & bio  
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### **Edvard Stjernström's music theatre in Stockholm and Finland in the 1850s**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century private theatres were established in Stockholm. They put on a popular repertoire and competed with the Royal theatre for a growing audience. An important theatre director in the middle of the 1800s was Edvard Stjernström. He owned a theatre in Stockholm and also made many tours to other cities in Sweden and Finland. Stjernström and his activities are the focus of this study. What was his role in deploying a repertoire to cities in Sweden and Finland? How did he choose the repertoire and the music? What relation did the plays and the music have to the debate about national identity? These questions will be discussed from a perspective of “public sphere” (Habermas) and national identity, but also from theories of distribution of a common European repertoire. Despite the national connection, the repertoire was to a great extent international. It is an interesting question how the repertoire was spread and a hypothesis is that individuals were of great importance in this respect. Stjernström is an example of such a person.

For the study it is important to problematize the concept of “opera” and to show the great variety in music dramatic genres and performances, due to different interests and possibilities at different theatres. Light opera, with spoken dialogue was very popular and possible to perform with a smaller orchestra. This kind of repertoire was performed not only at the Royal theatre but also at several theatres in cities around Sweden and by travelling theatre companies.

The theatre activities of Stjernström will in this article be compared to relevant theatres from other European countries. Not least will his tours to Finland be compared with his activities in Stockholm. The main sources for the study are play texts, music, posters from performances, accounts, and reviews and articles from contemporary papers.

**Karin Hallgren** is associate professor in musicology at Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden. She got her doctoral degree 2000 with a dissertation on the establishment of the Nya Teatern in Stockholm in the 1840's, with special interest in the repertoire and the musicians at the theatre. Her main research interest is Swedish music history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this area she has published articles on music theatre and opera in Stockholm in comparison with other European cities.