



## ***Beethoven and Banjos - An Annual Musical Celebration for the UP***

***Beethoven and Banjos 2018*** festival is bringing Nordic folk music and some very unique instruments to the Finnish American Heritage Center in Hancock, Michigan. Along with the musicians from Decoda (Carnegie Hall's resident chamber group) we are presenting Norwegian Hardanger fiddler **Guro Kvifte Nesheim** and Swedish Nyckelharpist **Anna Gustavsson**.

**Guro Kvifte Nesheim** grew up in Oslo, Norway, and started playing the Hardanger fiddle when she was seven years old. She has learned to play the traditional music of Norway from many great Hardanger fiddle players and has received prizes for her playing in national competitions for folk music. In 2013 she began her folk music education in Sweden at the Academy of Music and Drama in Gothenburg. Guro is composing a lot of music, and has a great interest and love for the old music traditions of Norway and Sweden. In 2011 she went to the world music camp Ethno and was bit by the "Ethno-bug". Since then she has attended many Ethno Camps as a participant and leader, and setup Ethno Norway with a team of fellow musicians. In spring 2015 she worked at the Opera House of Gothenburg with the dance piece "Shadowland".

The **Hardanger fiddle** is a traditional instrument from Norway. It is called the Hardanger Fiddle because the oldest known Hardanger Fiddle, made in 1651, was found in the area Hardanger. The instrument has beautiful decorations, traditional rose painting, mother-of-pearl inlays and often a lion's head. The main characteristic of the Hardanger Fiddle is the sympathetic strings that makes the sound very special – it's like an old version of a speaker that amplifies the sound. In comparison to a normal fiddle its bridge is flatter, making it possible to play on two or three strings simultaneously, allowing one to make chords and harmonies which is also very typical for Hardanger Fiddle music.

**Anna Gustavsson** grew up in the countryside outside of Uppsala, and started playing nyckelharpa at the age of ten. After leaving school she studied at the Eric Sahlström Institute, Framnäs Folkhögskola, Ethnofonik (artistic leadership course in Paris) and is currently a student at the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm. She has been teaching nyckelharpa to students at the study center "Sensus" in Stockholm and also at longer intensive courses in Sweden and USA. Her repertoire is from all over Sweden, specializing in tunes from Uppland and Småland. She also writes her own music and enjoys experimenting with improvisation. Anna's time traveling around the world with her nyckelharpa has given her an interest in folk music traditions from many other cultures and she loves exchanging tunes and knowledge about other traditions with the people she meets. Being a teacher and performer and in the board of Sweden's institute for traditional music and dance, she has a good overview of what the Swedish folk scene looks like today. Laurel Premo and Anna Gustavsson have collaborated on a project of music together <http://premogustavsson.com/> called "I Walked Abroad" which blends Swedish and American fiddle traditions, and features new compositions based on these rich roots.

The **Nyckelharpa** ('keyed fiddle') is a type of fiddle that uses 'keys' to shorten the strings and thus create different notes. As well as the strings that are bowed, there are sympathetic strings which are set in motion by the vibrations in the body of the instrument. These features and the design of the body all contribute to the characteristic silvery, yet warm and resonant tone of the nyckelharpa. With its roots stretching back to medieval Europe, the nyckelharpa that we know today was most common in Swedish Uppland, north of Stockholm. It developed from a simple modal instrument, with a single melodic string and two drone strings, and with twelve keys and an arched bow, into models with several melodic strings and a single drone or no drone at all, but with sympathetic strings and a straighter bow. Created in 1929 by August Bohlin, the modern chromatic nyckelharpa began to be widely accepted thanks to the efforts of master nyckelharpa player, builder and composer Eric Sahlström. It has four bowed strings and twelve sympathetic strings – one for each semitone of the chromatic scale.

Members of Decoda along with Evan and Laurel Premo and Anna and Guro will bring their collaborative interpretations and the unique instruments of traditional Nordic music to the Finnish American Heritage Center in Hancock, Michigan.

### **Student Workshops**

"Beethoven and Banjos" music student workshop will be held on Saturday afternoon, October 6 at the Finnish American Heritage Center at 2:00 p.m.. This program is designed for middle school, high school music students and college students to introduce them to unusual instruments and musical ideas and genres that they may not be familiar with in other contexts. During September we will send emails to all local schools and programs with reminders about the program and with links to the **Beethoven and Banjos** facebook site and website that will aim to communicate with anyone regarding the musicians that will be presenting, their instruments and particular listening and reading assignments that are given. Those students who have instruments and who would like to learn traditional tunes will be provided music and a listening tutorial so that they can be prepared prior to the workshop. Students will be encouraged to visit the website and come up with some questions ahead of time that can be used to fashion the workshop toward their inquiries. During the workshop students will be split up into groups of those who want to learn the tunes while others who want to learn other aspects of traditional folk music.

### **Evening Community Concert**

At 7:30 p.m., on October 6, an evening community concert will be held at the Finnish American Heritage Center. Students and adults who never have been to a live performance of traditional music will be able to participate. The community concert will be provided in a "come as you are, pay what you can" atmosphere. Often people will not go to expensive live performances because of the cost for a family. Our goal is to provide these concerts to anyone so that all have the experience of being inspired by these world class musicians and the opportunity for exposure to Nordic folk music tradition.

Guro Kvifte Nesheim and her Hardanger fiddle



Anna Gustavsson and her Nyckelharpa

