

12. **Progg and lagom*

Progg

PROGG is short for ‘PROGRESSIV’, as in ‘*den progressiva musikrörelsen*’, Sweden’s MUSIC MOVEMENT of the 1970s, which was variously qualified as ‘alternative’, ‘non-commercial’ and ‘progressive’.¹ Although pronounced like the English word ‘prog’ [prɔg], PROGG (with two Gs) isn’t the same as ‘prog rock’ (*progressiv rockmusik* in Swedish) but refers to the 1970s alternative music movement as a whole.

PROGG cannot be defined in terms of musical style. Apart from [1] prog rock in the anglophone sense (e.g. Samla Mammas Manna), it also included: [2] *folkmusik*-influenced bands (e.g. Kebnekaise), as well as folk/jazz/psychedelic crossover combos (e.g. Träd Gräs & Stenar); [3] several troubadours and *visa* artists, e.g. Turid, Torgny Björk, Pierre Ström; [4] pop and rock bands singing Swedish-language lyrics with a left-wing political edge, for example Blå Tåget, Hoola Bandoola, Nationalteatern; [5] a wide variety of other styles, genres and artists, including Södra Bergens Balalaikor, who specialised in Russian folk music, and Anton Svedbergs Swängjäng, a music collective from Luleå which could on request appear as a pop band, prog rock band, jazz band, big band, brass band, string quartet or *spelmanslag*.²

In 1978, *progg* was described as follows by Hoola Bandoola’s front man Mikael Wiehe.³

[We were] ‘in agreement about most issues: dislike of the commercial music industry, opposition to US imperialism and a general feeling that we were politically to the left of Social Democracy. We wanted a new music, meaningful lyrics in Swedish, and we tried out new ways of living and working together. Key concepts were ‘Alternative’ and ‘Collective’. And we strongly believed in the possibility of building an independent music movement as part of the new society which we hoped lay just around the corner’.³

1. *Progressiv, alternativ, icke-kommersiell*. If the word *prog* existed in Swedish (it doesn’t) it would be pronounced [pru:g] and rhyme with ‘fugue’ [fju:g], not to mention *drog* [dru:g] (‘pulled’), *nog* [nu:g] (‘enough’), *tog* [tu:g] (‘took’); see <o> in Table 13 p.478.
2. [a] For more on the artists listed in this paragraph and for references to their work, see entries in RefAppx (p. 493 ff.). [b] *Spelmanslag*: see p. 296 ff.
3. Michael Wiehe in interview ‘Om att “nä ut” och “att suga in” — läget i musikrörelsen’, *Musikens Makt*, 4 (1978: 4-5), cited by Karin Eriksson (2005: 23).

Crucial to *progg*'s existence were: [1] *Kontakt nätet*, a national network of local music organisations, festivals and non-profit music venues (e.g. *Uppsala Musikforum*, Gothenburg's *Sprängkullen*); [2] alternative record labels, often locally based (e.g. Stockholm's MNW, Gothenburg's Nacksving, Malmö's Amalthea, Luleå's Manifest); [3] the alternative record distribution networks *SAM-distribution* and *Plattlangarna*. Many *progg* artists worked mainly within this alternative framework but many also gigged at non-*progg* venues, while some were even signed to non-*progg* labels.⁴ Conversely, it's worth noting that Pugh Rogefeldt, pioneer of Swedish-language rock with 'meaningful lyrics' — one of *progg* music's most salient stylistic traits —, distanced himself from 'proggers' because, as he put it, 'they took it all so seriously' (p. 000 ff.).⁵ The point here is that *progg* and the commercial music business were *not* always mutually exclusive areas of activity. That said, the two were in general on a pretty clear collision course in the 1970s. Without insights into that confrontational perspective the reception of Abba, including *Fernando*, in mid-1970s Sweden makes little sense.

Fig. 80. *Progg* anti-Eurovision demo, Malmö (*Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, 1975-03-22)⁶



4. For example, Peps Persson's Blodsband ['blu:sband] were on *Sonet* (1974, 1975), as were two Folk och rackare albums (1974, 1979). 'My own' *progg* band, Röda Kapellet, was on the alternative label Avanti but often played 'non-*progg*' venues like youth centres (*ungdomsgårdar*), political rallies, *folk parks**, etc.
5. '*Proggarna tog så väldigt allvarligt på allting. Det var som en sekt*' ('It was like a sect') (Gradvall *et al* #412). Rogefeldt's 'Här kommer natten' and his reworking of Brecht/Weill's 'Surabaya Johnny' on *Ja, då ä dä* (Rogefeldt, 1969; †† Michael B Tretow) are often cited as trail-blazing examples of Swedish-language rock with 'meaningful lyrics', as opposed to those found in *schlager* (pp. 323-324), *svensktopp* (p.381 ff.) and 'joke rock' (pp. 342-349).
6. Apologies for this scanned photocopy of a rasterised low-resolution newspaper image.

Confrontational perspective

Figure 80 shows *progg* demonstrators in central Malmö on 22 March 1975, the day when, in accordance with EBU[†] rules, Swedish TV had to host the annual Eurovision Song Contest Final following Abba's victory with *Waterloo* at Brighton in 1974. The protesters in Figure 80 strongly disapprove of wasting public funds on such frivolity (pp.257-258) and are probably also miffed because their own efforts to organise musical events in Malmö had been repeatedly thwarted by local government.⁷ One of their banners calls for support for 'progressive culture' ('STÖD DEN PROGRESSIVA KULTUREN'), while another reads: 'Stikkan[†] [Anderson] writes, Abba performs, SR[†] broadcasts, and capitalists pocket the profit'.⁸ Those are very mild objections to the Eurovision Song Contest and to the Swedish music business compared to what the lyrics of the popular *progg* song *Doin' the omoralisk schlagerfestival* had to say (ex.204, pp.376-377). Here are just three extracts from the lyrics to that song, created expressly for the *progg* movement's Alternative Festival.^{9a} [1] In verse 1, scorn is poured on Swedish artists who blithely perform package-holiday paeans to Spanish sunshine without sparing a thought for the countless victims of Spain's fascist régime.^{9b} [2] Verse 2 declares: 'Here come Abba in their plastic clothes'; they're 'as dead as canned herring' and just 'want to make a quick buck'. [3] Verse 5 references Swedish music mogul Stikkan Anderson's celebrated quip that the record-buying public 'aren't as dumb as you think: they're dumber'. Another famous Stikkan aphorism at that time was: 'People don't want songs about single mothers, wars and so on'¹¹ [*text continues at § p. 377*].

7. Malmö's Social Democrat council practised consistent class collaboration with the city's élite capitalist families — the Kockums, Wehtjes and Herslows (Svedberg, 2009: 31-33).
8. Examination of the banner to the right of *Stöd den progressiva kulturen* reveals: '*Stikkan skriver, Abba spelar, SR sänder, kapitalet*' [*plockar vinsten* [?]]). Stikkan Anderson was Abba's manager and 'king' of the Swedish music business during the 1960s and 1970s (see p.382). 'SR' stands for Sveriges Radio (Swedish public radio).
9. [a] *Alternativfestivalen* (11-22 March, 1975); see Glossary and pp. 257-258. [b] Spanish dictator Francisco Franco died in November 1975. The last garotting took place in 1974 but anti-Franco protesters still faced the firing squad in 1975. No artist is named in verse 1 of ex. 204 (p. 376) but Ulf Dageby, the tune's 'herring gutter' vocalist, is having an obvious dig at Franco-friendly Swedish holiday schlagers from the final years of the dictatorship, most markedly at Sylvia Vrethammar's *Viva España* (1973; ex. 131, p. 170; ex. 146, p. 182; Fig.57, p. 270; ¶ W7aPp-4z-uw [190925]) and the twirling of her 'fascist bitch skirt' (*fascistkärring-kjolen*). For *progg* parodies of Spanish package-tour thoughtlessness from the Francoist era, see Røde Mor's *Hotel España* (1973) and *Bingo flamingo* (Röda Kapellet, 1976: 7:50 ff.).

Ex. 204. 'Sillstryparn' (Ulf Dageby et al.): *Doin' the omoralisk schlagerfestival* (1975)¹⁰

Intro, Ritornello, Solo

♩=c.112

1. Em D Em Bm 2. Bm

3. Och värld-ens 1. Det
5. Och Stik-kan

6. Verse E G

8

rass - lar av juv - el - er och glitt - rar av guld Dom
2. här kom - mer Ab - ba i kläd - er av plast lika
mel - o - di, förtryck och slav - er - i Va'
4. upp på allt dom taret smör - igt kallt, ärfasc -
And - er - son han tycker folk är dum, Produ -
6. har det svårt och ni som jobb - ar hårt sjung med i

8 C D

8

sjung - er om den span - ska sol - en Men gar - ott -
död - a som sill - con - serv - er De skit - er
fan rör det våra art - ist - er? Dom gör sin
ist - er - nas fet - a ist - er. Dom ro - ar
cer - ar rom - an - tik. Men kär - lek -
sill - stryp - arns mel - o - di Vi har vår

10 E G

8

er - ing - ar och mord det skit - er dom i Och
ock - så i allt Vill göra snab - ba stål Det
karr - i - är och ler och snäll - a är Dom
oss till döds på våra gramm - o fon Ska vi
en är stark så Stikkan får en spark som
eg - en sång, vi gerväl fan i dem, i deras

12 C 1. D 2. D

8

sväng - er på fasc - ist - kärr - ing - kjol - en 2. Och
pyr i min - a fran - ska nerv - er.
har mång - a kork - a - de brist - er 4. De ställ - er
fast - na i der - as klist - er?
pass - ar ett cyn - niskt svin. 6. Men ni som
ffjöl - ig - a svärm - er - i.

15 Refr. G D C G D C 1. 2. D.C.

8

DO-IN-THE O - MORAL - ISK SCHLAG-ER FEST - I - VAL

10. See/hear at  <https://vimeo.com/283981184> [191207].

Table 9: *Doin' the immoral Eurovision Song Contest Final* : lyrics in English (ex. 204)

v1. Jangling jewels and glittering gold; they sing of Spanish sunshine but don't care about garottings or murder as they twirl their fascist-bitch skirts.

v2. Here come Abba in clothes made of plastic, as dead as canned herring; they don't care either; they just want a quick buck; it makes my blood boil.

DOIN' THE IMMORAL SCHLAGER FESTIVAL

v3. The world melody of oppression and slavery, why should it bother our artists? They have a career, they try to please and have lots of mindless defects.

v4. They agree to anything, they're oily and cold; they're grease for the fascist machine; they amuse us to death on vinyl; will we get stuck in their goo?

DOIN' THE IMMORAL SCHLAGER FESTIVAL

v5. Stikkan Anderson thinks people are stupid, and he produces 'romance'; but love is strong, so give him a kick befitting the cynical pig he is.

v6. If you work hard, if you have troubles, sing the herring gutter's tune; we have our own song; to hell with them and their daft daydreams.

DOIN' THE IMMORAL SCHLAGER FESTIVAL

[§→ *cont'd from p. 375*]¹¹ Of course, the single mums symbolised by *Törnrosa* (ex.202, p.365 ff.) weren't stupid, nor were the million or more Swedes opposing the US war in Vietnam (ex. 200; pp.243-246), nor those protesting against state terror in Latin America (pp. 224-225; 248-261), nor the proggers in Figure 80, nor those who grew up in the political climate of postwar Swedish Social Democracy, (Chapter 11). These sizeable populations would have no trouble thinking of Stikkan Anderson as a 'cynical pig' (verse 5). After all, he also said: 'Sure, I write loads of shit but at least it's well paid. People get the lyrics they deserve... I never listen to the stuff. If I did, I'd go nuts'.¹² *Doin' the omoralisk schlagerfestival* let people poke fun at Anderson, at Sweden's commercial music business and at the extravagant Eurovision song contest circus on TV in at least four ways.

1. DOIN' THE... in the song's title drew attention to all those songs of anglo-phone origin exhorting listeners to 'DO' a wackily named dance like the

11. [Anderson's original sayings and their sources] 'Folk är inte så dumma som man tror – folk är dummare' (■ 'Stikkan Anderson, det svenska musikundrets fader'. *Minnenas Journal*, 2018-05-01). 'Folk vill inte ha låtar om ensamma mammor och krig och sånt' (Arvidsson, 2007: 124 quoting Hedlund, 1983: 79-83).

12. 'Visst skriver jag mycket skit men det är åtminstone bra betalt'... 'Folk hör de texter de förtjänar'... 'Själv lyssnar jag aldrig, då skulle jag få spader!' (sources, see fntt 11).

Hokey-Cokey, the *Hully-Gully* or the *Mashed Potato*. ‘DOIN’ the *schlagerfestival*’ simply puts the Eurovision Song Contest on a par with (DOIN’) a brainless dance fad.¹³

2. The hookline *Doin’ the omoralisk schlagerfestival* is set to the rhythm |§ ¼ ¼ ¼ ¼ | ¾ ¼ ¼ ¼ | ¼ ¼ ¼ ¼ | ¼ ¼ ¼ ¼. which cuts across the song’s underlying 4 metre (ex.204, b.15-17). It’s both fun and easy to sing because its cross-rhythmic bounce and simple tetratonic profile (§4, below) are in total sync with the hookline’s prosody.
3. Abba’s ‘plastic fantasy clothes’ (fig.72 p.331; fig. 81a) are contrasted not only with the everyday clothes of example 204’s band members (fig. 81b, right) but, more comically, with the extreme anti-festive attire of the song’s front man, Ulf Dageby, in the guise of ‘The Herring Gutter’ (*Sillystryparn*; fig. 81b, left), complete with cloth cap, rubber boots, dirty beige work coat and an (invisible) over-the-top, working-class Gothenburg accent operating as an urban variant of the backwoods, ‘peasant-humour’ voice (*bondkomikröst*) described on page 347 (esp. ftnt. 103).
4. The tune is tetratonic and bimodal (*verses*: e g a b = $\hat{1} \hat{b} \hat{3} \hat{4} \hat{5}$ in E; *refrain*: $\Delta \hat{6} \hat{1} \hat{2} \Delta \hat{3}$ in G), its harmonies entirely non-dominantal: [*verse*] E G C D = I \flat III \flat VI \flat VII (aeolian), [*refrain*] G D C ($\times 2$) = I V IV (non-dominantal ionian): there are no anticlockwise harmonic steps round the circle of fifths, no V→I cadences.¹⁴ These tonal traits place *Doin’ the omoralisk...*, like *Barn av vår tid*,¹⁵ entirely in the (then) modern rock sphere, on a tonal planet foreign to the dominant world of *Waterloo* and *Fernando*, of Beatles ‘granny music’, of schlager and of hymnal hits.¹⁶ This aspect of the song’s identity distinguishes it just as radically from the (then) contemporary world of Abba and Stikkan Anderson as do its no-frills production values and demonstrative sartorial proletarianism.¹⁷

13. See: DO[ING] THE... *Lambeth Walk* (Lane, 1938); *Loco-motion* (Little Eva, 1962); *Mashed Potatoes* (J Brown, 1962); *Hully-Gully* (Harris & Meehan, 1963); *Hokey Cokey* (Eng. trad., Snowmen, 1981); *Watusi* (Vibrations, 1961). You can also ‘DO THE’ Bartman, Boogaloo, Bunny Hop, Camel Walk, Carioca, Conga, Dog, Funky Chicken, Hustle, Jerk, Limbo, Macarena, Madison, Martian Hop, Pony, Shake, Shimmy, Skate, Stroll, Swim, not to mention the Charleston, Limbo, Turkey Trot, Twist, etc. (NW NOVELTY AND FAD DANCES [191001]).

14. All chords are located flatwards of the main tonic (E). For relevant tonal theory see Tagg (2015: 273 ff.; 419 ff.); about the I-V-IV loop in particular, see Tagg (2017a).

15. Examples 203 (*Barn av vår tid*, p.367) and 204 (*Doin’ the omoralisk schlagerfestival*, p. 376) are both penned and sung by Ulf Dageby, lead figure in Nationalteatern (1974, 1978).

16. For accounts of these popular music styles, see Chapters 9-10.

17. For Eurovision’s sartorial conventions, see in and around Fig. 72, p. 331.

Staying with clothing for the moment – it's so much easier to commit to the page than sound – *progg* artists favoured a no-frills aesthetic,¹⁸ almost always appearing in everyday attire (e.g. fig. 82), never in conspicuous outfits like those worn by Abba (fig. 72 p. 331; fig. 81a) or by the hugely popular Swedish 'dance bands' (*dansband**) that dominated the *svensktopp* charts in the mid 1970s (fig. 83, p. 380). In fact the confrontational perspective under discussion here is perhaps best viewed through the prism of the contrast between *progg* and *svensktopp*.

Fig. 81. Sartorial confrontation: (a) Abba at Brighton, 1974;
(b) 'The Herring Gutter' and band on stage, Stockholm, March 1975.

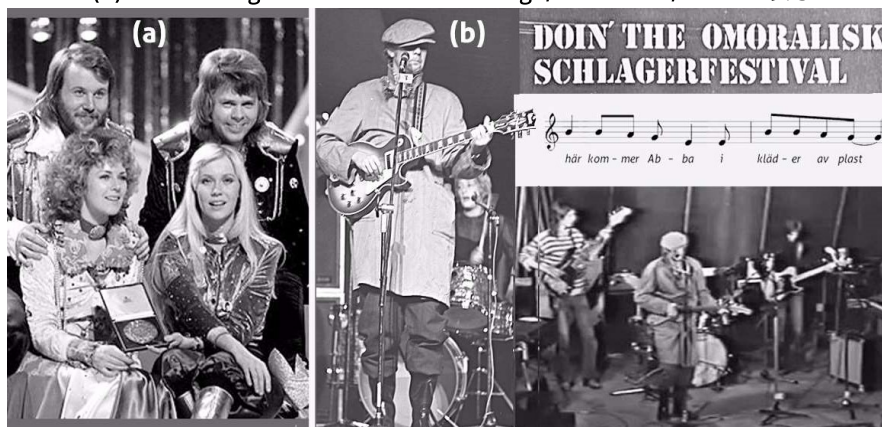


Fig. 82. Progg artists in everyday clothes: Hoola Bandoola Band (Malmö, 1971).¹⁹



18. 'We're just regular guys', so to speak. That aesthetic could also include an archaic attitude to sound engineering and a tendency to confuse amateurism with democracy (see p. 000 ff.). For the troubadour's ideal of an uncontrived production aesthetic, see pp. 302-303.
19. Hoola's band members, sitting below graffiti (cropped) proclaiming KROSSA BYGGMAFFIAN (= 'Smash the construction mafia!') are, from L to R: Björn Afzelius, Mikael Wiehe, Peter Clemmedson, Håkan Skytte, Arne Frank, Povel Randén, Per-Ove Kellgren.

Fig. 83. Six famous *svensktopp* 'dansbands' in stage outfits on record sleeves 1973-77: [a] Ingmar Nordströms: *Saxparty 2* (1975); [b] Flamingokvintetten: *Där näckrosen blommar* ('Where waterlilies bloom'; 1974, ex. 158); [c] Streaplers: *Lady Banana* (1974); [d] Thorleifs: *Gråt inga tårar* ('Cry no tears', 1974); [e] Vikingarna: *Kramgoa låtar 4* ('Nice cuddly tunes vol. 4', 1977); [f] Yngve Forssélls: *Så gick det till när farfar var ung* ('How things were done when grandad was young', 1973). 1970s *dansband* outfits are often explained as a tax deduction ruse —entertainment-specific uniforms and working clothes unusable as everyday attire. The concurrent popularity of glam rock (Bowie, Kiss, etc.) and the uniformed musicians of prewar big bands (Fig. 84) may also have influenced *dansband* stage clothing norms in the 1970s.



Fig. 84. (a) Count Basie Orchestra (c 1941); (b) Håkan von Eichwalds orkester (1938)



Progg and svensktopp

In the late 1960s and early 1970s there were three weekly chart shows on Swedish radio: *svensktopp*, *kvällstopp* and *tio i topp*. *Svensktopp* basically consisted of the allegedly most popular recent recordings of songs with Swedish lyrics, while *Kvällstopp* presented the nation's hits regardless of origin, language or phonogram format. The third show, *tio i topp*, also featured popular songs but with the added excitement of a live audience using mentometers to vote for songs to include in other chart shows.²⁰

Proggers were never keen on hit lists or contests that reduced the values of a song to a simple ordinal on a bipolar scale. That sort of perfunctory quantification feeds off the superstition that numbers never lie and is still (2019) often imagined as signalling credibility, as if commercial music product could be endowed with an aura of objectively proven popularity.²¹ *Svensktopp* was one example of such quantification. It became a key factor in defining and reinforcing a certain aesthetic and community of taste.²² Features of that taste included schlager-style lyrics in Swedish (pp.323-324) set to music compatible with the most popular genres of the 1950s and early 1960s, primarily *schlager* (p.320 ff.), certain types of *visa* (p.300 ff.), pre-Beatles pop/rock (p.338 ff.) and elements of *gammaldans* (p. 283 ff.).²³⁻²⁴ Abba's Swedish-language version of *Fernando* (Lyngstad, 1975) is just one song displaying those features and was voted most popular *svensktopp* song for 1976.²⁵ In general terms, *svensktopp* music, with its forerunners in pre-amplification times, had by the mid-1960s crystalised into a stable production formula for Swedish-language popular songs that either [1] featured a lead vocalist backed by studio musicians or a

20. Inclusion criteria for these chart shows varied but were relatively consistent until the time of *Fernando* (1975): see [X]sv *Kvällstoppen*, *Skivspegeln*, *Svensktoppen*, *Tio i topp* [191102].

21. For issues of charts v. popularity, see, for example, N Strauss (1996) and Hamm (1982).

22. 'Taste' is used in the sense of preferences and shared cultural values.

23. Accordion, essential in *gammaldans*, is unusual in *svensktopp* music, even if *gammaldans* situations are central to the lyrics, as with the old-time 'fun' of the outdoor dance and punch-up in the two-chord hit (G↔V) *Så gick det till när farfar var ung* (Fig. 83f (p.380), 63a-c and 64c (pp. 288-289)). Even if accordion is seldom heard in *svensktopp*, the 'non-jazz', 'non-rock' I↔V tonality and rhythmic articulations of *gammaldans* are often present.

24. Observations are based on annual *svensktopp* listings and on *svensktopp* songs cited as exx. 88-90 (pp.140-141), 105 (p.149), 137-140 (pp.176-177), 146 (p.182), 156-159 (pp.192-193), 186 (p.305), 196c and 196c/d/g (p.327). The repertoire also includes the Swedish covers mentioned on pages 304-305, especially in footnotes 70-71.

25. [X]sverigesradio.se/diverse/appdata/isidor/files/2023/3474.txt [191116].

persistent pursuit of profit and his belligerent populism meant that Stikkan was an easy target to single out as the non-commercial *progg* movement's public enemy #1.³³ And Abba's close association with Anderson (Fig.87 p.387) made it all too easy to tar the band with the same brush, to dismiss them as money-grabbing 'musicians of evil' in silly clothes,³⁴ even though their dealings with Stikkan were not always amicable. Indeed, *Fernando* was one site of contention – and on two counts, both of which resonate with a *progg* agenda. The first of these involves the control and exploitation of the band's songs.

Fig. 85. *Fernando* as ad for National™ products (Abba, 1976d)



[Stikkan] 'Anderson sold use of [*Fernando*] to electronics giant National for \$1 million in 1976. It was adapted with a new lyric... and performed by the band for use in a series of five television commercials... Benny Andersson was disgusted. "That did it for me", he said. "We've never sold another song again.'" (Gradvall *et al*, 2014).³⁵


The second point of contention concerns the lyrics to *Fernando*. Björn Ulvaeus, who wrote the English version (p.219), had the following to say about Stikkan Anderson's Swedish original (p.221):


31. Including *Hej gamla man!* (1970); *Ring, ring* (1973); *Waterloo* (1974); *SOS* (Fältskog, 1975) and *Fernando* (Lyngstad, 1975). Abba released no songs with Swedish lyrics after 1975.
32. See, for example, Hall (2018), [W]EN Stig Anderson [191109] and Hedlund (1983). Abba's sound engineer, Michael B Tretow, was also given the same cognomen; see, for example, 'ABBA:s "femte medlem" släpper pojkrumspop' in *SVT-nyheter*, 2016-04-21 [191109].
33. See quotes on p. 377 and 'cynical pig' in *Doin' the omoralisk schlagerfestival* (ex. 204, p. 376). Stikkan's status as *progg* hate figure was reinforced by the serious threats he repeatedly threw at Hoola Bandoola after their 1971 decision to record with MNW rather than with Polar (Svedberg, 2009: 55-58).
34. 'Then we had this Abba group who were... musicians of evil with commercial music' (self-ironic comment by Mikael Wiehe at 15:18 in $\frac{3}{8}$ *The JOY Of Abba* (2013)). See also *Doin' the omoralisk...* (ex.204), v.2: 'they want a quick buck' (*de vill göra snabba stål*).
35. [a] 'National' (ナショナル) was a brand name used by Panasonic™ in the 1970s. It was never used in the USA and was replaced by Panasonic™ in 1980 (Europe) and in 1988 (Australasia). The 1976 Abba ads promoting National™ were broadcast in Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the Philippines and Thailand ([W] *National (brand)* [191109]). [b] For start of the ad's melodic line in musical notation see ex. 218 (p. 484).

‘That lyric is so banal and I didn’t like it... It was a love lyric... I inherited the word “Fernando” and had to write [another] story line that matched it.’³⁶

Relaxing outdoors in a quiet spot under a starlit sky in the summer of 1975 while thinking about the name ‘Fernando’, Ulvaeus tells us, is how he came up with the English lyrics about two veterans remembering their time as young *Zapatistas* during the Mexican Revolution.³⁷ It was an imaginary backstory to fit the music that was recorded in the studio shortly thereafter (Lyngstad 1975), with the easy *andante* and *a piacere* melodic articulation of its verses (m5) suited to reflection and reminiscence, and with the sounds of m1, m4 and m6 suited to ‘Fernando’ in his Latin American setting. Disregarding the 6,000-km mismatch, already discussed (pp.235-236), between the Mexico of Björn’s backstory and the Andes connoted in *Fernando*’s museme 1, the focus here is on the contradiction between Stikkan’s ‘Long live love!’ and Björn’s reminiscing revolutionaries. The former was a bland Swedish love lyric that conformed to the strict schlager conventions of *svensktopp*;³⁸ the latter was sung in English and included phrases such as ‘a rifle in your hand’ and ‘fight for freedom in this land’, both unthinkable in lyrics to any 1970s *svensktopp* song. In short, when it came to *Fernando*’s lyrics, Abba discarded the Stikkan Anderson view that ‘[p]eople don’t want songs about war and so on’.³⁹ Even more significantly, ‘PEOPLE’ definitely disagreed with Stikkan, at least if worldwide sales of *Fernando* in English—more than ten million— are anything to go by. Viewed from this angle, the restriction of topics acceptable in *svensktopp* lyrics at the time of *Fernando* seems ridiculous, not least from a business viewpoint. But that doesn’t mean those restrictions weren’t severe and real.

For example, as we already saw (pp.303-305), Björn Ulvaeus’s Hootenanny Singers, the most successful *svensktopp* act of the late 1960s and early 1970s, created a body of work whose lyrics consistently steered clear of the politics intrinsic to the genre from which they derived their own band name —‘hootenanny’. Similarly, it’s worth noting that the Swedish-language album *Frida ensam* (Lyngstad 1975) contained not only the #1 *svensktopp* hit

36.  songfacts.com/facts/abba/fernando [191114]. Swedish lyrics: see pp. 221, 235-226, 266-271. .

37. According to an Australian interview with Ulvaeus in December 2008, cited in various online sources, e.g.  xrefs/BjOzlvw2008.htm [191113]. See p.235 for more details.

38. See schlager lyrics types 1-4 on page 323. *Fernando*’s Swedish lyrics are on page 221.

39. ‘Folk vill inte ha låtar om ensamma mammor och krig och sånt’ (Hedlund, 1983: 79-83).

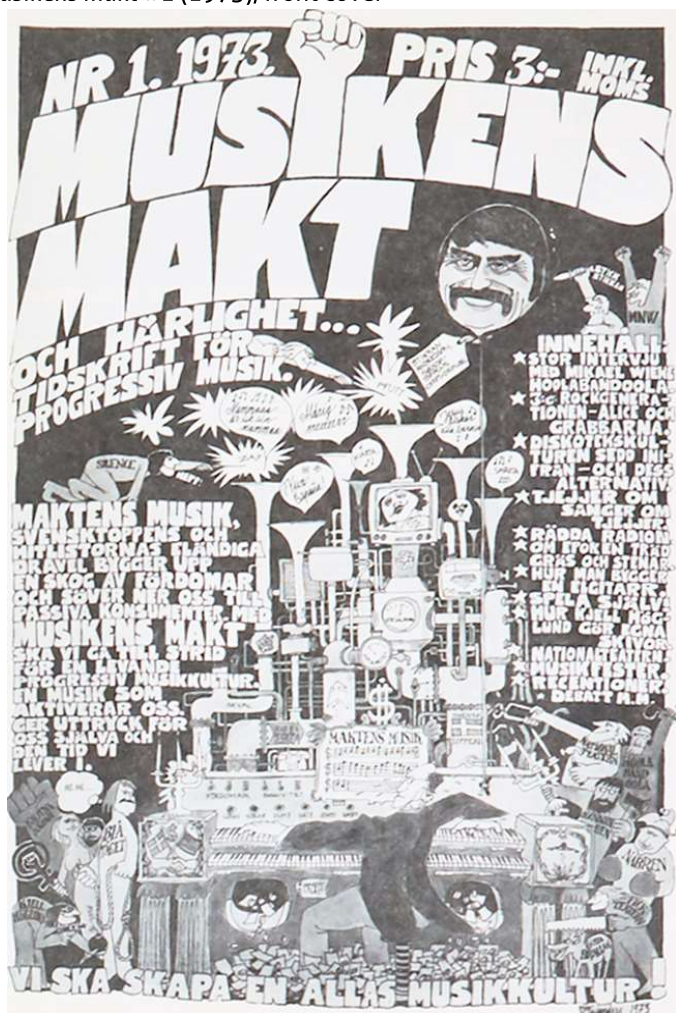
Fernando, with its ‘banal’ love lyric, but also a Swedish version of 10 cc’s (*Do The Wall Street Shuffle* (1975). *Guld och gröna ängar*, as the Swedish version was called, was an outstanding *musical* cover of the 10 cc original, but its *lyrics* had been bowdlerised beyond recognition for a *svensktopp* audience: ‘Bet you’d sell your mother; You can buy another’ became ‘Autumn’s misty places; Winter’s cold white spaces’ in Swedish.⁴⁰ But the full extent of *svensktopp* lyric taboos becomes clearest if you consider UK top-ten hits which, had they but been in Swedish, would, due to their lyrics, never have made it into the *svensktopp* charts. Here are just seven such songs: *House Of The Rising Sun*, *My Generation*, *Eleanor Rigby*, *Hey Joe*, *Bad Moon Rising*, *Brown Sugar*, *I Shot The Sheriff*.⁴¹ You’ll find fourteen more such ‘unsvensktoppable’ hits listed in footnote 41 and dozens more if you trawl through lists of UK hits, testing their words against the schlager lyric norms set out on pages 323–324.⁴¹ These lyric restriction rules, never codified, were a major obstacle to Swedish artists wanting to sing in their mother tongue about experiences other than those of romance tolerated on planet *Svensktopp*. Therefore, unable to reach a Swedish-speaking audience through existing music business channels, such artists needed an alternative system of production and dissemination. That alternative system — *PROGG* — was in obvious conflict with the world of *svensktopp*. In June 1973 the *progg* magazine *Musikens Makt* (= ‘The Power of Mu-

40. The original version’s anti-capitalist edge has been vitiated by vapid ‘nature’ platitudes. ‘Oh, Howard Hughes, did your money make you better? | Are you waiting for the hour when you can screw me?’ ... | Bet you’d sell your mother | You can buy another’ are unctuously neutered into birds at nightfall, flowers in summer meadows, autumn mists, etc. (*Fåglar tystnar; Natten drar fram*; etc. ☞ Owe Junsjö). See comparison example 222, p. 486. Incidentally, the ‘shuffle’ in *Wall Street Shuffle* is another silly dance you can ‘DO’ (|: ‘DOIN’ THE’ |) like the *Omoralsk schlagerfestival* (p. 377 §1): fiddling with finance is also a ridiculous game. But there’s no trace of that thought in the Swedish version.

41. Here are 21 (14+7) top-ten UK hits which, if they’d been written by Swedes and given Swedish lyrics, would never have made the *svensktopp* charts because they don’t conform to the schlager lyric norms on pages 323–324: *The Times They Are A’Changing* (Dylan, 1964); *House Of The Rising Sun* (Animals, 1964); *Eve Of Destruction* (McGuire, 1964); *There But For Fortune* (Baez, 1965); *My Generation* (Who, 1965); *Dead End Street* (Kinks, 1966); *Shapes Of Things* (Yardbirds, 1966); *Eleanor Rigby* (Beatles, 1966:08); *Hey Joe* (Hendrix, 1967); *Magical Mystery Tour* (Beatles, 1967:12); *Lady Madonna* (Beatles, 1968:03); *Fire* (A Brown, 1968); *All Along The Watchtower* (Dylan / Hendrix, 1968); *I’m The Urban Spaceman* (Bonzo Dog Doodah Band, 1968); *Jumping Jack Flash* (Rolling Stones, 1968); *Pinball Wizard* (Who, 1969); *Bad Moon Rising* (Creedence Clearwater Revival, 1969); *Power To The People* (Lennon, 1970); *Bangla-Desh* (Harrison, 1970); *Brown Sugar* (Rolling Stones, 1971); *No More Mr Nice Guy* (Alice Cooper, 1973); *Rubber Bullets* (10cc, 1973); *I Shot The Sheriff* (Clapton, 1974).

sic') printed its take on that conflict in demagogic manifesto form (translated at top of p.387) on the front cover of its first number (Fig.86).

Fig. 86. *Musikens makt* #1 (1973), front cover ⁴²



42. The original Swedish of the 'manifesto', allegedly by Håkan Sandblad and Tommy Rander, appears just below the middle on the left side of Fig. 86. Cover art is by Kaianders Sempler; original scan: [/pix/FernandoPix/Svenskt/musikens-makt-1973-nr-1-origl.jpg](https://pix/FernandoPix/Svenskt/musikens-makt-1973-nr-1-origl.jpg) [191124]. A larger version of this image is in Figure 97 on page 490.

[MANIFESTO] 'The Music of Power [MAKTENS MUSIK]. The pathetic drivel of chart shows and *svensktopp* gives rise to a forest of prejudices. It puts us to sleep as passive consumers. With the Power of Music [MUSIKENS MAKT] we join the struggle for a living, progressive music culture. Music that activates us. Music that expresses who we are and the times we live in.'⁴²

In Figure 86 the Swedish music industry is depicted as a monstrous machine manipulated by a euroclassical megalomaniac in concert tails, seated at a two-manual organ, his feet in a pool of cash. The machine is being sabotaged from below by prog bands as it generates *svensktopp* tunes⁴³ into balloons being pierced (*PFUTT!*) from the left by two other proggers. The biggest balloon contains the mustachioed face of Stikkan Anderson. His left ear is about to be punctured by someone from MNW, the alternative record label that thwarted his plans to sign Hoola Bandoola to Polar in 1971.⁴⁴ In short, prog's public stance vis-à-vis *svensktopp* was as militant in 1973 as it became in 1975 with *Doin' the omoralisk schlagerfestival*. One main difference for the prog movement after the Eurovision victory of *Waterloo* at Brighton (1974, Fig. 87) and its consequences for Sweden in 1975 was that Abba joined Stikkan Anderson as the foremost music industry villains.

Fig. 87. Stikkan Anderson with Abba just after their *Waterloo* win in Brighton (1974)



The fact that Björn Ulvæus called Stikkan Anderson's *Fernando* lyrics 'banal' and replaced them with a non-*svensktopp* English version mentioning a 'rifle' and some 'fighting for freedom' seems to have made no difference to the prog view of Abba as music industry reactionaries. And Benny's anti-commercial disgust at Stikkan's touting of *Fernando* to help NationalTM sell toasters and kettles in Australia doesn't appear to have nuanced the view either.⁴⁵ Moreover, the fact that Abba's outlandish stage outfits played a positive role

43. Two of the *svensktopp* tunes about to be punctured are: [1] the misogynistic *Mamma är lik sin mamma* (Malmkvist, 1968 ☞ sv S Anderson); [2] the heartless package-holiday hit *Y viva España* (Vrethammar, 1973; pp. 149-150; ex. 131 p. 170; p. 270; ex. 204, v. 1, pp. 375-377).

44. For Stikkan's bullying of MNW and Hoola Bandoola, see Svedberg (2009: 55-58).

45. NationalTM ads: see p. 383, especially footnote 35; and ex. 218, p. 484.

in the creation of a public identity for gay communities in the USA and elsewhere did not lead to the band being associated with emancipation.⁴⁶ In short, despite these rather obvious paradoxes, Abba were, thanks to their commercial success, their association with Stikkan Anderson, their avoidance of openly political topics,⁴⁷ and their lack of public support for the progg movement, automatically regarded, in mid-1970s Sweden, as poster-boys for musical commercialism. It was as if no dynamic contradictions could exist within the music industry, as if Abba could have no progressive part to play in the general development of popular music.⁴⁸ But then, if *Fernando*'s lyrics were non-*svensktopp* and their backstory was about Mexican revolutionaries, why wasn't the song considered 'progressive'? Was such an opinion solely due to progg's blanket dismissal of Abba as 'commercial' or should other factors be taken into account? Perhaps a comparison of Abba's *Fernando* with a contemporary progg song whose lyrics also had some bearing on fighting for freedom in Latin America could shed some light on differences that go beyond the unreflected pigeonholing of artists as 'commercial' or 'progressive'? The next section, a comparison of Abba's *Fernando* (English lyrics) with *Victor Jara* (Hoola Bandoola Band, 1975), tests that hypothesis.

Fernando and Jara

This section starts with a complete transcription of *Victor Jara* (pp. 389-395) and its lyrics, including a metric translation into English (pp. 396-397). (The song and its score can be heard and followed on line, as can *Fernando* [English lyrics]).⁴⁹ There then follows a comparison of lyrics (p.397 ff.) and of general style indicators in the two songs (p.000 ff.),

46. [a] In addition to disagreements about *Fernando* (p.383), there was animosity about Stikkan's non-payment of Abba's royalties (Ivarsson & Brander, 2009). [b] See *Decoding the Queer Appeal of Abba* [\[xrefs/AbbaQueerRef1.html\]](#) [191202]; see also Abba's 2006 auctioning of signed posters in support of gay rights in Poland [\[thelocal.se/20060307/3217\]](#) [191202].

47. For example, see Hootenany Singers and their anti-hootenanny politics (pp.303-305) or the fate of 10cc's *Wall Street Shuffle* on *Frida ensam* (1975) (pp.384-385).

48. Abba's general contribution to the progressive development of popular music is discussed briefly on p.).

49. See [\[v 195141265\]](#) or [\[Clips/Fernando/VictorJaraScore.webm\]](#) [191207] and [\[v 217935492\]](#) or [\[Clips/Fernando/FernandoScoreOnly.mp4\]](#) [191207].

Ex. 205. Hoola Bandoola Band (1975): *Víctor Jara* — Ritornello + v.1 (start) [v2: p.390; v3: p.392; coda: p.395]

Allegro vivace

Allegro vivace $\text{♩} = 160$

Flauto dolce [L-C-F]

Acoustic guitar [6-str. capo 3rd fret. R-C-F]

Lead vocal [C-F]

Bombo

Bass guitar

flute

ac.gt.

voc.

dr.

el.bs.

*v1. Det finns
v2. Men om
v3. Ja, Vic-tor*

TACET

Verse 1 0:20

Verse 1 0:20

7 Cm *ac.gt. comp. pattern* [a] G [b]

voc. *bocca chiusa* *aperta*

mång - a som gör konst - er och krum språng för de som har makten...nnnnn Och det finns

el.bs.

V́ctor Jara — v. 1 (cont'd) + v. 2 (start) [ritornello: p. 389]

11 *G*⁷ [b] Cm [c] *vibr.*
 voc. *m*ång-a som fjåsk-ar för smul-or i-från den hårk-and-es bord. Men du val-de din väg,
 el.bs. 0.36

16 *E*^b [c] *mp* *D*⁷ [a]
 voc. du sjöng för de mång-a. Och du strunt-a' i de måkt-ig - as
 bs.

20 *G* [c] 0.52 Cm [a]
 voc. *mf* löft-en och de hårk-and-es ho - t. Ja, V́ctor Jar - a, du gav ord åt de
 bs.

24 *G* [c] *G*⁷ [a]
 voc. fångs-lad-es lång-tan till fri-he - t, och åt de plåg-ad-es tro på en
 bs.

28 Cm [c] *mp più legato* 1:09 C [a] *C*⁷
 voc. fram-tid där bara folk-ethar makt och du gav styrk-a och mod åt de för trampades
 bs.

33 *F*^m [c] *mf* *G* [a] *f* Cm
 voc. dröm mar, men mot de rik-a och få sjöng du ut ditt för - akt. *gliss.*
 bs. *nasale* *aperto*

► *D.C. ritornello, then verse 2.***Verse 2** rhythm guitar patterns as in verse 1

38 1:42 Cm *G* *mf* *gliss.*
 ac. *nasale* *aperto*
 gt. *gliss.*
 voc. fram-tid - en år som ett träd vi har planter - at i jord-en och i-fall
 bs.

Víctor Jara — v. 2 (cont'd)

42 *rh. gt. follows strum patterns as in verse 1* Cm

gt. *8*

v. *8*

bs. *8*

fri - het - en är som den spröd - ast - e, skör - ast - e ros,

45 *vibr.* Bb 1:58 Eb

gt. *8*

v. *8* *mf sempre*

bs. *8*

måst - e vi väp - na oss väl föratt försvar - a de sva - ga

49 D7

gt. *8*

v. *8*

bs. *8*

Vimåste väm - a oss mot de som vill kross - a det som spir - ar och

52 G 8 2:15 C

gt. *8* *f* *mf* *mp* *f* *sim. sempre v.2*

v. *8*

bs. *8*

gror. Och de för - tvi - ad - e säg - er att död - en är lik - a för

56 G *>*

gt. *8* *Bombo* *sempre come prima* *con espress.*

v. *8* *f*

bs. *8*

all - a *f* mend'é väl sann - a - re att säg - a attmankan

Víctor Jara — v. 2 (end) + v.3 (start) [ritornello p. 389]

57 *rh.gt. follows strum patterns as in verse 1* *Bombo* *sempre come prima* *rh.gt.* *ff* *3*

gt. *Cm* *mf* *vibr.* *2:30 C*

v. *dō påsam masätt som man har lev. Och att dō för förtjänst,*

bs.

61 *C7* *Fm* *G*

gt. *rh.gt.* *mf* *(come prima)*

v. *det väger lätt som en fjäd - er men att dō för sitt folk*

bs.

65 *G7* *Cm* *flute f*

gt. *D.C. ritornello then verse 3*

v. *det väg - er tungt som en sten.*

bs.

Verse 3

67 *3:04 Cm* *G* *mf*

gt. *p*

dr. *Ja - ra, din - a sång - er ska ek - a i gruv - or - nas gång - er, och som*

v. *Ja - ra, din - a sång - er ska ek - a i gruv - or - nas gång - er, och som*

bs.

Víctor Jara — v. 3 (cont'd)⁵⁰

72 **G** **Cm**

gt. *più dolce*

dr.

v. full-mogn-a frukt-er ska de skórdas i-från plantag - ernas träd. Och som

bs.

76 **Bb** **Eb** *con urgenza*

gt.

dr.

v. * vaj-and-e sed ska de bölj-a öv - er fält - en *mf* Och som

bs.

80 **D7** **G** *mf*

gt.

dr.

v. fisk - ar i vattn - et ska de hamn - a i fisk - ar - nas nät.

bs.

83 **G7** **Cm** 3:36

gt.

dr.

v. *falsetti* *mf* *2 backing voc.* *lead* Ja, Vic-tor Ja - ra, Vic-tor Jar - a, din-a sång - er ska int - e bli

bs.

50. * Wrong bass note (not **b♭**) played in recording at 3:20 (bar 76).

Víctor Jara — v. 3 (end)

86 *G* *mf*
 gt. *rh. gt. follows strum patterns as in verse 1*
 dr. */*
 v. *glóm - da* *mf* *f* *Frångit - arr* *till git - arr* *ska de*
 bs. *s*

89 *Cm*
 gt. */*
 dr. */*
 v. *sprid - as öv - er stad* *och land.* *De ska*
 bs. *s*

92 *3:52* *C* *C7* *Fm*
 gt. */*
 dr. */*
 v. *vagg - a oss* *till sömns* *när vår - a nätt - er blir* *lång - a*
 bs. *s*

95 *Fm* *G* *Cm*
 gt. *con anima, cresc.* *→ outro*
 dr. *→ outro*
 v. *f* *De ska marsch - er - a* *med oss* *när dag - en är här.* *→ outro*
 bs. *s*

Víctor Jara — Coda

Coda
4:06

99

Ab Bb Eb Cm G7 Cm Ab Bb Eb

fl. *f*

ac. *f*

gt. *f*

dr. *f*

el. *f*

bs. *f*

102 1. 2. 4:27

fl. *reverb*

ac. *ff* *L.v. + reverb*

gt. *ff* *reverb*

dr. *ff* *L.v. + reverb*

el. *ff*

bs. *ff*

Fig. 88. *Víctor Jara* b/w *Stoppa matchen* (Hoola Bandoola Band, 1975): sleeve art



*Victor Jar: lyrics*Table 10: *Victor Jara*: lyrics with translation

Original Swedish	Metric translation by Roger Hinchliffe
verse 1	
Det finns många som gör konster och krumsprång för dem som har makten,	<i>There are too many jesters and fools who flatter the mighty</i>
Och det finns många som fjäskar för smulor ifrån den härskandes bord;	<i>And too many dandies who'll dance for the crumbs from their feasts.</i>
Men du valde din väg, du sjöng för de många,	<i>But you chose to sing to the hearts of your people,</i>
Och du struntade i de mäktigas löften och de härskandes hot.	<i>Regardless of money or the threats from your patrons and priests.</i>
Ja, Víctor Jara, du gavord åt de fängslades längtan till frihet;	<i>Víctor Jara, you asserted the prisoners' yearning for freedom</i>
Och åt de plågades tro på en framtid där bara folken har makt;	<i>And the victims' belief in a world where justice belongs.</i>
Och du gav styrka och mod et de förtrampades drömmar;	<i>You gave courage and strength to the downtrodden dreamers</i>
Men mot de rika och få sjöng du ut din förakt.	<i>But the governing few you scorned in your songs.</i>
verse 2	
Men om framtiden är som ett träd vi har planterat i jorden	<i>But if the future is like a young tree we have lovingly planted</i>
Och ifall friheten är som den spädaste sköraste ros,	<i>And if liberty is like a fragile and delicate rose</i>
Måste vi väpna oss väl för att försvara det svaga:	<i>We must arm ourselves well to defend the defenceless,</i>
Vi måste värna det mot dem som vill krossa det som spirar och gror.	<i>We must shield them from those who trample what's struggling to grow.</i>
Och de förtvivlade säger att döden är lika för alla,	<i>The desperate will tell you that death is the same to us all</i>
Men det är väl sannare att säga att man kan dö på samma sätt som man har levt;	<i>But to tell the truth you can die in the same way you live.</i>
Och att dö för förtjänst, det väger lätt som en fjäder,	<i>If you die getting rich, your fate's as light as a feather,</i>
Men att dö för sitt folk, det väger tungt som en sten.	<i>But if you die for the poor, what more can your life give?</i>

verse 3

Ja, Víctor Jara, dina sånger ska eka i gruvornas gångar,	<i>Victor Jara, your songs will ring out in the echoing mine shafts;</i>
Och som fullmogna frukter ska de skördas ifrån plantagernas träd;	<i>Like ripe fruit they'll be gathered on farms as the autumn sun sets;</i>
Och som vajande sed ska de bölja över fälten,	<i>They will drift with the wind over billowing wheat fields </i>
Och som fiskar i vattnet ska de fastna i fiskarnas nät.	<i>And like fish in the ocean they will fasten in the fishermen's nets.</i>
Ja, Víctor Jara, dina sånger ska inte bli glömda,	<i>Victor Jara, your songs will be sung, they will not be forgotten:</i>
Från gitarr till gitarr ska de spridas över stad och land.	<i>From guitar to guitar 'round the world they will ramble and roam.</i>
De ska vagga oss till sömns när våra nätter blir långa,	<i>They will lull us to sleep when our nights are uneasy,</i>
De ska marschera med oss när dagen är här.	<i>They'll be marching with us in the morning to come.</i>

*Paramusical comparison**Lyrics*

Both Fernando and Victor Jara are the main characters in the lyrics whose song titles bear their names. Both men are Latin American and both connected to fighting for freedom —Fernando because the lyrics tell us so, Victor Jara because we know from the real world about his dreadful fate in Santiago's *Estadio Chile* in 1973 (p.251). Fernando, still alive in the Abba song, is a fictitious comrade-in-arms from a long time ago, maybe in Mexico or wherever else they have a 'Rio Grande'.⁵¹ Victor Jara, on the other hand, is at the time of 'his' song (1975) a real comrade who has recently been brutally murdered in a real place. He has a concrete presence in *Victor Jara* thanks to the way its lyrics 'talk' about his songs and thanks to whatever knowledge we may have of his life and times. Fernando has no such real identity: even his flute has only a fleeting presenece in the recording (p.271 ff.). Moreover, Fernando doesn't even appear on the record sleeve (pp.265-267) of 'his' song, while Victor Jara occupies one whole side of 'his' record sleeve, the

51. For Fernando's whereabouts in *Fernando*, see 'Where is "there"?', pp. 234-261.

other side showing the sort of fascist violence that killed him and thousands of others (Fig. 88, p.395). Victor Jara needs no 'Rio Grande' or other vague location prop to situate listeners in a Latin American narrative because we already know where he is: important parts of his 'backstory' — real history from real places — have already been reported from Chile by the likes of Jan Sandquist and Leonardo Henrichsen, then broadcast on Swedish TV (pp.249-250). Instead of *Fernando's* shared personal reminiscences — singing round the fire, being scared, wanting to cry, etc. — the lyrics of *Victor Jara* take the form of a eulogy to the martyred singer-songwriter, celebrating the egalitarian spirit of his work, reflecting on its poetic and ethical dimensions, and suggesting how it can encourage us in the struggle ahead.

Both songs mention fighting, liberty and its synonym, freedom. The fighting in *Fernando* seems to involve military activity (guns, crossing the Rio Grande, etc.) aimed at securing 'freedom in this land' but without saying which land 'this land' is or declaring for which type of freedom or in whose interests the fight is being fought. Fighting and freedom/liberty are clearer in *Victor Jara* because they're bound up with justice, with arming the defenceless, empowering the downtrodden, giving power to the people and with the everyday struggle of the poor against the rich, of the oppressed against the oppressors, etc. There are consequently similar differences between 'dying' in the two songs. In *Victor Jara* it's about dying for a better world while in *Fernando* it's just something that is feared.⁵² This contrast of vagueness versus clarity of purpose also links to the outcome of the struggle in each song: in *Fernando* the singer's side loses (... 'we never thought that we could lose') while in *Victor Jara* 'we' have a good chance of winning because Victor's songs 'will march with us when the day comes'.⁵³ This statement raises the question of who 'we'/'us' are.

In *Fernando* 'we' is mostly the dual 'you and me' of Fernando and his first-person vocalist-interlocutor (e.g. 'we were young', 'we're old and grey', etc.) supplemented by unidentified comrades (e.g. 'none of *us* prepared to die'). There's no first-person singular in *Victor Jara*. The lead vocalist persona is in-

52. 'The stars...shining...for liberty' and 'proud to fight for freedom in this land' (F) v. Prisoners yearning for freedom and liberty as a rose we plant that needs our care (VJ);

53. *De ska marschera med oss när dagen är här*: NB *när* (=when), not *om* (=if). *Venceremos* (= we will win) is the name of the *Unidad Popular* anthem.

stead subsumed into a 'we' that includes us listeners as comrades or sympathisers: he's not 'talking privately' to a personal 'you' that is Victor Jara but delivering a public eulogy to him on behalf of us all. We, the listeners, aren't included in the *Fernando* 'we': we are outside observers, so to speak. In *Victor Jara* the song's 'we' involves the real 'us'.

drums, guns, cannons, a rifle, death

genre transgression

s on the other hand, assumes our engagement as listeners with the vocalist in paying respect to Victor Jara. Both Fernando and Victor Jara are the 'you' addressed in each song but while Frida (Abba) is a first person singular ('I')

as listeners in

the listener is on the same side as the singer who never presents himself as 'I' or 'me'. He speaks on our behalf

Sw v Eng

Like *Fernando*, *Victor Jara* contains three verses alternating with a different section that recurs identically each time. In *Fernando* that section is the 37-second REFRAIN; in *Victor Jara* it's the wordless 19-second RITORNELLO.⁵⁴ Words and music in the *Fernando* refrain represent, as we saw in Chapter 6, a HERE-AND-NOW in contrast to the THERE-AND-THEN of the verses. There is, as we shall see, no contrast of either time or place in *Victor Jara*: it is all *in one place and at one time: NOW* (p. 000).

The lyrics of *Victor Jara* go far beyond the vagaries of concepts like 'liberty' and 'freedom': they talk about the Chilean troubadour's songs expressing the hopes of miners, of the oppressed, imprisoned, and downtrodden. The lyrics describe Jara's songs 'lulling us to sleep when nights are long' and

54. 19" is the total duration of the ritornello's 2×4 bars of ♩.

‘marching with us when day breaks’.

There is no doubt what the song is ‘talking about’ musematically either. The quena flute sound of *Víctor Jara* is much nearer the centre front of the stereo panorama, mixed up as loud as the singer, slightly to his left, with the solo acoustic guitar immediately to his right so that the ‘dialogue’ is equal and unified between, on the one hand, ‘Víctor Jara’ as flute and decorative-interpretative-melodic solo acoustic guitar fills and, on the other, the vocalist (Michael Wiehe). Both ‘individuals’ are accompanied in a dynamic 3/4-6/8 hemiola/cueca sort of rhythm played at a determined and urgent pace of 160 bpm accompanied by a *bombo* drum and by crisp Hispanic attacks and syncopations on acoustic rhythm guitar (see example 205, p. 389 ff.). Afro-North American and Euro-North American style indicators found in the refrain of *Fernando* (m9, m10) are conspicuously absent in *Víctor Jara* and even the electric bass keeps to simple onbeat oom-pah dotted minims. The excitement and drive of the accompaniment is created by Latin-American and European, *not* North American means. These ‘non-U.S.’ traits are further emphasised by the harmonies used in the song which, although traditionally European and tertial (‘functional’), have neither the same regular periodicity nor the same narrow tonal limits as *Fernando*: *Víctor Jara* includes full cadences not only in the tonic (C minor) but also modulates (via A♭ and B♭) to E♭, (via C minor) to F minor and (via D7) to G. All this makes for less harmonic and stereophonic monocentricity and less Euro-North American musical ethnocentricity.

The vocal delivery of *Víctor Jara* also differs radically from that of *Fernando*. In *Víctor Jara* we find a much higher melodic pitch than in *Fernando*. Moreover, the former song contains a whole series of bold rising intervals conspicuously absent from the former. Both these points demand a greater degree of physical and mental effort from the singer (more tension of the vocal chords, great care to ‘hit’ the high notes in tune without forcing them). In addition, although the name ‘Víctor Jara’ corresponds exactly with the rhythms of ‘yo te quiero’, ‘Bossa Nova’ or ‘mi Fernando’, there is not one single appoggiatura expressing the ‘graceful pleading’ of m5 or m6, in the whole of *Víctor Jara*. Apart from the sinuous but fast ‘fishing net’ word-painting fill by solo acoustic guitar in the middle of verse 3, we are led straight into onbeat melodic-harmonic consonances, not into the ‘mini-dissonances’ tinting the sim-

ple scale-like passages in the verse of *Fernando* and their veneer of sincerity and emotional involvement.

This single by Hoola Bandoola Band sold well in alternative bookstores and at Chile solidarity rallies (outlets not counted in the compilation of Swedish charts).⁵⁵ Moreover, the album including *Víctor Jara (Fri Information)*, though also mainly distributed through similar alternative outlets, managed to sell enough through the normal commercial outlets to reach #6 on the Swedish charts (*Skivspegeln*) in October 1975. One month later *Fernando* entered the Swedish charts for the first time (on Anni-Frid Lyngstad's album).

There is absolutely nothing to suggest that Abba have stolen anything deliberately from anyone, not even from Osvaldo Farrés, the composer of *Quizás*, when writing or recording *Fernando*. With *Quizás*, *Víctor Jara* and *Fernando* we are witnessing the sort of process in which musical ideas are produced, reshaped, incorporated into new (or old) contexts.⁵⁶ *Fernando* is rather the result of a large number of specific and interrelated historical factors. Its widespread success may be in part attributable to the special conditions of popular music in Sweden during the 1960s and around 1970, as well as to the variety of popular musical backgrounds brought together in Abba as a group and to the modest but not working class origins of its members. It should also be clear that Latin America and, more specifically, the fascist coup in Chile were, by the time *Fernando* was issued, well-established spheres of reference in the minds of most Swedes who were visibly shaken by TV and refugees' eye-witness reports from Chile (later also from Argentina) about torture, terror and oppression. The non-verbal sounding symbol of injustice in South America in the mind's ear of the Swedish population gradually (between 1968 and 1975) came to be that of quena flutes, charangos and the bombo. The success of both Hoola Bandoola's *Víctor Jara* and of Abba's *Fernando* would have been unthinkable without such a process of politico-musical semiosis. Therefore, when Abba issued *Fernando* they met a

55. In fact all proceeds from the sale of the *Víctor Jara* b/w *Stoppa matchen* went to the Swedish Chile solidarity campaign.

56. 'Even the most conscientious composer now and then inadvertently uses a fragment of a melody that has stuck in his subconscious. But deliberately lifting phrases from the compositions of others if not only musical bankruptcy but incompetent craftsman ship'... 'it is easier to write original music than to bother recalling music written in the past' (Tiomkin, 1951: 18).

musically and ideologically competent audience, in the sense that the musical codes and their connotations had been well prepared in advance. It should also be clear that music understood by Swedes as South American or Indian-Andean which appeared during the two years separating the fascist coup in Chile from the issue of *Fernando* would be far more likely to be directly associated with explicit political events and the deep feelings these aroused than by the 'South American' references of *Fernando*, either because that music was performed by South Americans (often Chileans) or because the lyrics referred directly to events from that continent. However, none of this means that the reception of the song was as homogeneous as the argument thus far may seem to imply. We have only discussed the English lyrics from a certain part of the Swedish horizon. We have not dealt with the reception of the song elsewhere, nor with the obvious differences between the three verbal renderings of the song.

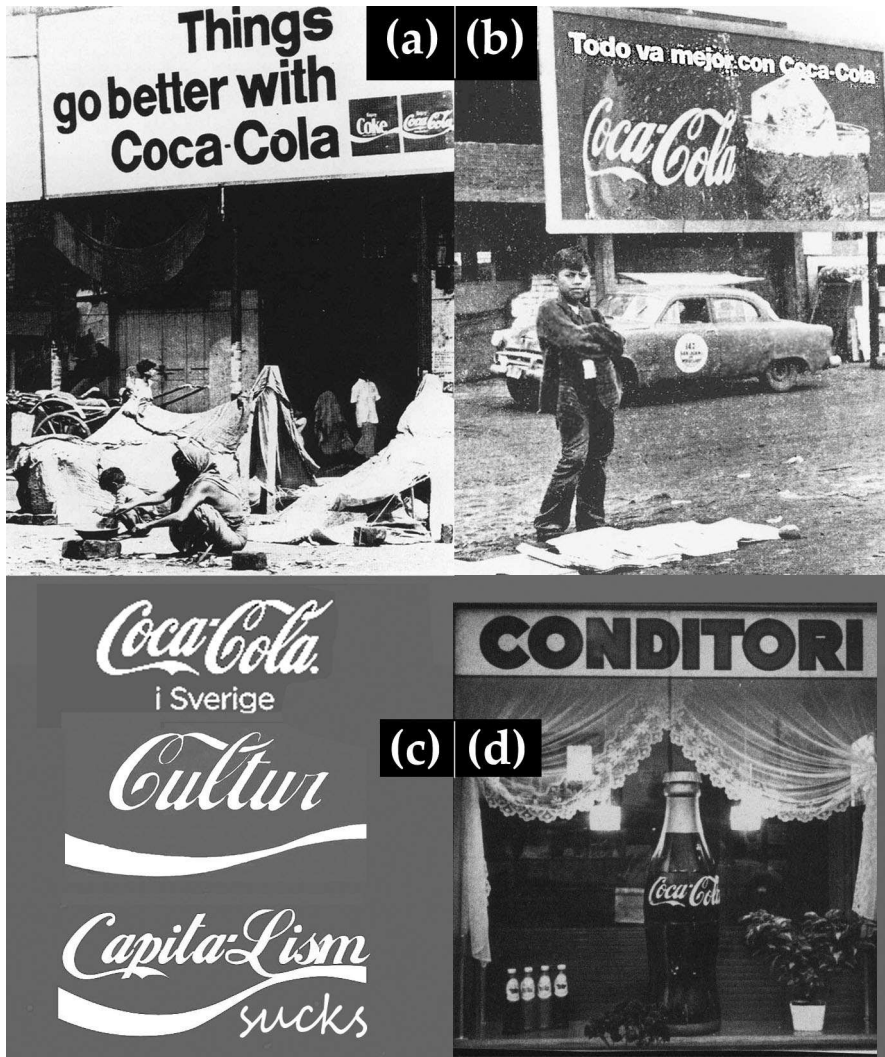
Stikkan remained intransigent in his attacks on 'left-wingers' whom he saw as threats to the (his?) entertainment business and to freedom of enterprise in general.⁵⁷

ALT FESTIVAL ch 7 'From Waterloo to Fernando via Båstad', p. 257.

57. [a] Stikkan was not fond of *vänsterytterna*, meaning 'the left wingers' (as in football). It's not a bad double pun because *yttre* means 'outside, outer', *att yttra* 'to utter' and *ryttare* 'horseman'. Hence *vänsterytterna* can be 'left-wing extremists' ('outside lefts') while *vänsteryttrarna* would be 'left (-wing) utterers' of statements from the political left and *vänsterryttarna* horsemen on the left. [b] One of Stikkan's later campaigns was explicitly anti-socialist: the 1982 *Gala mot löntagarfonder* (gala against the [Social-Democrat] Employee Funds (p.358 ff.)), backed by Anderson and SAF (*Svenska Arbetsgivareföreningen* = Swedish Confederation of Employers).

The Coca-Cola Culture Debate

Fig. 89. Coca-Cola. (a) Kolkata (1972); (b) Lima (1972); (d) Swedish café (1950s).⁵⁸



Bubbles burst, organisational structure changes. Genres, functions and audiences change. What you can sing about changes. Existing boundaries are

58. Fig. 89 (a) and (b); photos by Paul Rimmerfors in political monthly *Kommentar* (1968-97)..

transgressed. But svensktopp and tio i topp live on as established categories.

<https://lyricstranslate.com/en/fria-proteatern-balladen-om-olsson-lyrics.html>

"Jag ska skära strupen av dig, din jävel! Jag ska släppa luften ur dig, din fan!"
NJA-Gruppen Balladen om Olsson *Hör upp allt folk* MNWL-2P 1970

Awareness US horrors ch 7 243-257.

recap $b\hat{7}$ and no $\Delta\hat{7}$ rock and blues not compatible with gammaldans-type tonal idiom in *folkhemssverige*

Leif 'Smoke Rings' Anderson (Malmö) 39 years 1960-1999 (swing & sweet) jazz from 20s-40s.

P3 eclecticism, Hawaiiklubben, kristen pop, på estraden

Stikkan as musical populist. Tivedshambo () criticised as cultural threat (kulturfara by Ny Tid (s: ", Arvidsson (2007: 84) [pdf +11=93] rural burlesque (corny) in 1950s, a time when jazz was trendy.

Han startade därför musikförlaget Sweden Music 1960 och skivbolaget Polar 1963.

Fig. 90.

6. Dansbandsmusik and svensktoppen

At height in 1970s, pre-disco. Yngve Forsells Skellefteå; sven Ingvars, Vikingarna Värmland. Sten och Stanley, Karlskoga, Bernt Karlsson, Stikkan Anderson Västergötland, Matz Bladh's Falkenberg, Cool Candys Lidköping, , | Wizex Osby, Ingmar Nordström, Växjö; Thorleifs Norrhult (Småland); Lasse Stefanz, Kristianstad; Flamingokvintetten Partille, Schytts Göteborg; Streaplers Kungälv;

dansbandsmusik pushed out a bit by disco (incl Abba) but back in 1990s on popular shows like Bingolotto

Proletarian hymns, Arbetets söner, o s v arr åt RK (eg Världsongdomssången)

Of course, Abba's tonal palette became more varied in later recordings. For example, *Under Attack* (1982) contained some quartal harmony ($B\hat{4}$), while *The Visitors* (1981) had verses resembling mid-sixties rāga-inspired Beatles


tracks and short, urgently insistent vocal phrases following a repeated mixolydian rock loop (I-♭VII-IV-I) over which Frida stretches out the last line of the verse *legato* in quasi-cantus-firmus fashion. Even the ionian I-vi-ii-V loop of *The Winner Takes It All* (1980) is expanded to I-III^{aug}₃-vi-VI₃-ii-V and treated to onbeat suspensions and dissonances.⁵⁹

Abba members' musical pre-history

Agnetha

Fältskog was raised in Jönköping which, as touring musicians in the early 1970s, we often called 'Sweden's Jerusalem' because low-church places of worship so resoundingly outnumbered bars. Growing up in a town like that and, as a youngster, singing solo in front of the congregation, Fältskog was part of the eclectic, popular music tradition (including the 'hymnal hits' [p. 307 ff.]) that flourished in those churches.⁶⁰ Moreover, she had since the age of fifteen been a professional singer and songwriter, touring first with Bengt Egerhardt's band, then recording mainly schlager-style songs solo in both Sweden and Germany (1965-73).⁶¹

public debut, at the age of 13, seems to have taken place in one of Jönköping's many churches (Borg 1977: 58). She had also been female vocalist in a local dance band playing the Swedish variant of rather Germanic pop (very onbeat, tertial-functional-harmonic and melodically heavy — *Tanzkapellemusik*) since the age of 15. Lyngstad, on the other hand, although also active as a successful vocalist since her early teens, had considerable

59. See Lennon's *Tomorrow Never Knows* (Beatles, 1966) and Harrison's *Within You Without You* (Beatles, 1967) for similarities with verses in *The Visitors*. Transcriptions of relevant passages from *Under Attack*, *The Winner Takes It All* and *The Visitors* are at  tagg.org/pix/MusExx/MusExxidx.htm#A [170601]. The basic 8-bar I-vi-ii-V vamp sequence in *The Winner Takes It All* (I=G♭) (G♭-E♭m-A♭m-D♭) is tonally expanded to become | G♭sus4-G♭ | G♭sus9 -B♭^{aug}/₃ B♭/₃ | E♭sus-E♭m | E♭sus9- E♭⁷/₉ | A♭sus4-A♭m | A♭sus9-A♭m | D♭sus4-D♭ | D♭sus9-D♭ |.

60. In the region around and south of Jönköping (Småland) there was a thriving and eclectic tradition of popular music in low-church worship. Indeed, the county of Jönköping supplied the Göteborg College of Music (*Musikhögskolan*), where I worked 1971-1990, with more students than any other region in Sweden.

61. See examples 90 (p. 141) and 105 (p. 149); see also footnotes 6 and 7 (p. 320).

experience from the styles of dramatic ballads, cabaret, swing and mainstream jazz (Borg 1977: 88-90).

At the same time, the other male Abba member and songwriter, Benny Andersson, played Farfisa organ⁶² in a highly popular but pretty rudimentary Swedish rock group known as The Hep Stars. Andersson also had a solid background in older forms of popular music in the Central European and Scandinavian tradition,⁶³ his father, a janitor, being an accomplished amateur accordionist. Much of Andersson's post-Abba work treats Swedish folk traditions with a similar combination of sensitivity and innovation as that practised by Ry Cooder (1971-1978) in his adaptations of R&B and Chicano music.

The first popular Swedish musicians of the post-war pop/rock era to use their mother tongue in lyrics dealing with anything outside the spheres of love and comic 'novelty' were those from the alternative music movement.⁶⁴ In the early-to-mid 1970s, as soon as anybody opened their mouth in Swedish accompanied by drumkit, electric bass and guitar, they would, it was imagined at that time, have something critical to say about some holy cow of Swedish or international capitalism. In fact, singing rock in Swedish *was* at that time itself an expression of protest. If Abba had translated the English lyrics of *Fernando* into Swedish they would have automatically expressed to the Swedish public that they had either been influenced by artists of the alternative music movement or that they had actually taken a step in that political direction. Had they done that they would have risked losing their *svensktopp* audience. To succeed in a *svensktopp* context at that time, you just didn't 'mix music and politics'.

"We were the white knights. We fought for the right ideals. We said the right things. We played the right music. And we looked like the bad should look

62. Maybe it was a Philips organ. I don't think it was a Vox and it was definitely not a Hammond. It sounded, like most electric combo organs of the time, a bit like a vacuum cleaner.

63. See chapter 00 and *gammaldans* style examples xx-xx (pp. 00-00).

64. See: [1] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progg>; [2] 'Alternativt eller progressivt? (Om Musikrörelsens framtid)', <http://www.mikaelwiehe.se/ordovisor5.htm>.

with long hair, big beards and military outfits. And then we had this Abba group who were ..., musicians of evil with commercial music. We were the upset generation. We were upset about the apartheid system. We were upset about the dictatorships in Europe... about the military coups in Latin America, ... about the wars in Southeast Asia,... and we were upset that Abba weren't upset." Michael Wiehe 15:18 in 🎧 The Joy of Abba (dir Ben Whalley, BBC, 2013), BBC4 08 MAY 2017.

Sweden has a small and widely scattered population: less than nine million people (about the population of London) occupy about twice the area of Britain. This makes it hard to work as a highly specialised musician in the popular field because the market is just not big enough to support large minorities of musical taste. There has therefore been a tendency to mix popular musical styles in a way which visiting North Americans and Britons find hard to accept. Many Swedish dance bands from the fifties and sixties would mix hootenanny, Swedish old time (*gammaldans*), twist, pop ballads and rock numbers without batting an eyelid.⁶⁵ The 'light music' channel on Swedish radio (P3) was in 1991 still supposed to cater for all tastes, and broadcast everything from 'Hawaii Club' to hip-hop, from house music to operetta, from a special brand of local low-church soft pop ('IKEA gospel') to blues and soul, from the Swedish troubadour tradition to big-band swing, from folk rock to the Eurovision song contest. It is possible that this situation may make for rather a bland mixture but on the other hand it leaves a lot more room for eclectic acculturation than does format radio. This may be one important reason for Abba's successful mixture of styles.

Remembering the various Abba members' musical background sketched above, it should also be borne in mind that they also all have, including their manager Stig Anderson, modest social origins, their parents being from the lower middle couches and employed either as *petits commerçants* or in the less prestigious sort of positions found in the service sector. All four Abba members left school at the minimum leaving age (16), except for Ulvaeus who nevertheless spent far more time with his music than with his studies

65. Information confirmed by Göran Josefsson (guitarist) who toured extensively from Dalarna to Northern Sweden and Finnish Lapland in the sixties and by Sölve Olofsson (also guitarist) from *svensktopp* band Sten och Stanley.

(Borg 1977: 78). Including Abba manager Stig Anderson, some fifteen years older than the others, this means that none of the group came into any real first-hand contact with either the Swedish working movement or the student movement of the late sixties and early seventies. Abba's musical and social origins and position, neither working class, upper class nor intellectual, may thus perhaps be considered in some way closer to those of an increasing number of people in the changing class structure of state-corporatist society, culturally dominated by the Anglo-American media,⁶⁶ than those of the out-and-out rock artist, classical musician, jazz performer or musician from the (then) 'new left'.

Particularly noticeable in the official and somewhat obsequious Abba monograph *Fenomenet Abba* (Borg 1977) is Stig Anderson's concern with critique from what he called 'outside lefts'.⁶⁷ The critique levelled at Abba from this direction may have sprung from a deep concern with the commercialisation of culture but it was as seldom well-reasoned as pertinent. Moreover, such criticism seemed more often than not to imply contempt towards Abba's fans and listeners. There is no room here to go into any detail about the petit-bourgeois radical movement of Swedish students and intellectuals in the early seventies, nor to analyse the flaws in the arguments then used to criticise Abba. However, two particularly important offshoots or side-effects of the movement are worthy of mention in this context.

One important influence of the radical movement among intellectuals in Sweden was its effects on the formation of the Swedish state's cultural policy, thereby contributing to the parliamentary adoption of perhaps the most progressive goals to be put forward, though not necessarily pursued, by the government of any capitalist nation.⁶⁸ However, some of this legitimately anti-commercial zeal degenerated into ignorant attacks on individual artists, the prime target being of course the most successful figureheads of the commercial Swedish culture industry at the time: Abba.⁶⁹

66. For more on Anglo-American media domination at that time see Tunstall, 1977.

67. The Swedish expression is quite a good pun: *vänsteryttrarna* means either 'the left wingers' (as in football) or 'the left-wing extremists' (i.e. 'the outside lefts') as well as 'the left (-wing) utterers' of statements from the political left (*yttre* = outer, outside *att yttra* = to utter).

68. Referred to at the time as 'the cultural-political intentions' (*de kulturpolitiska intentionerna*).

The result was, of course, an unhealthy polarisation of opinion between those supporting democratic forms of cultural production under capitalism (see below) and those requiring more immediate entertainment and consolation for and relief from alienation caused by undemocratic forms of production and government. Of course, the vast majority of working and middle class Swedes belonged (and belong) to the latter of these two groups. Nor was there any doubt as to which political corner Abba — especially their manager — were being pushed by the vulgar Marxist attacks referred to above. Such polarisation obliged Abba (and large sections of the Swedish populace), whether it suited them or not, to take up a political position on the far right, at least as far as cultural policy was concerned. This strange confrontation was all part of what was referred to at the time as 'The Coca-Cola Culture Debate'.

The other important offshoot of Swedish student radicalism was the Swedish 'progressive' or 'alternative' music movement. Although this movement's best-selling record⁷⁰ only sold half the amount of Anni-Frid Lyngstad's solo album, its influence on the musical life of Sweden cannot be underestimated. At its best, the music of this movement was as eclectically disrespectful as that of Abba, the main difference being that the alternative music movement's lyrics were (a) in Swedish (the native language of people in that country) and (b) far less generalised, less quasi-personal than those of Abba. At their best, the music movement's lyrics combined political clarity and involvement with a deep sense of poetry. At their worst they descended to mere pamphleteering or suffered from the *Rote Schlager* syndrome.⁷¹ Perhaps even more important than its use of lyrics treating other matters than love between one man and one woman and its establishment of the nation's own language as a legitimate vehicle for carrying the verbal message of songs in the rock vein, the alternative music movement's major contribution to Swedish cultural life should be considered at an even more concrete level.

69. They became the target of hard-hitting songs like Nationalteatern's anti-Eurovision song festival hit *Doing the omralisk schlagerfestival* (1975).

70. Nationalteatern's *Livet är en fest* (= 'Life is a Party', 1975) sold 55,00 copies, the Hoola Bandoola album *Fri information* ('Free Information', 1974) slightly less.

71. The expression *Rote Schlager* emanates from Hanns Eisler and means sloganeering lyrics set to the easiest type of pop of the day.

Its musicians often explicitly expressed the wish to find alternatives to the homogenising effects of the capitalist commodification of music.⁷² This aspect of the alternative music movement was both concrete and practical. It had far more tangible effects on large sections of the Swedish population than the theoretical cultural debate mentioned above, not least because many young people found an opportunity to play, sing and speak their minds inside the performance venues, record companies and distribution facilities developed by the alternative music movement. These opportunities did not and do not exist within the framework of the capitalist music business. Such groups were obviously hostile to what Abba represented as a highly successful commercial group inside the traditional framework of capitalist music production. Abba were seen to perpetuate this system which seemed to give these young and less comfortable musicians little room for expressing what they thought was important. So, once again, cultural opinion was polarised, this time less unequally. Nevertheless, the vast majority of Swedes continued to like Abba and to hum their tunes.

Summarising this section of the presentation, we could say that Abba's social and musical origins place them fair and square in the mainstream of Swedish popular culture and ideology. We should also add that the eclectic nature of Swedish popular music and its innately Central European character, combined with the diversity of popular music environments from which the Abba members came, serve as a basis for the acculturated style which became so popular in the Anglo-American, European (*both* South and North) and Latin American 'markets'.

Another important event immediately preceding the release of *Fernando* was the Davis Cup tennis match between Sweden and Chile, scheduled to be played at Båstad (Sweden) on the 18 September, 1975. Ten thousand people collected in this village in the south-west of the country to express their disapproval of the event. The demonstration, which successfully used noise to stop the match, was well prepared, not least by the release of Hoola Bandoola Band's single *Victor Jara b/w Stoppa Matchen* (= 'Stop The Match') on the alternative music movement label MNW. Hoola Bandoola were the only

72. For more about relations between "free" competition, maximising of turnover speed leading to the "love-at-first-listening syndrome", etc., see Thorsén 1977.

left wing artists for whom Abba publicly expressed appreciation, so much so that they had even discussed a recording contract with Abba manager Stikkan Anderson before finally signing with the independent MNW (Borg, 1977: 83, 107). A comparison of Hoola Bandoola's *Victor Jara* and Abba's *Fernando* will give a much clearer picture of the musical/ ideological conditions in Sweden under which the latter was produced.

Ex. 206. Hoola Bandoola Band: *Man måste veta vad man önskar sig* (1972).⁷³

J=120 E [D shapes, capo on fret 2] B [A] C#m [Bm]
 v.1 Det är nån - ting jag vill säg - a dig; jag hop - pas du hör p;
 v.2 Men nu står du lik - som mång-lar - na på Ver - on - as grön saks - to.
 v.4 Nu står vi här och vän - tar medan regn - et ös - er ne
 A [G] etc. E B C#m
 Om du öpp - nar båg - ge ör - on - en så kan - ske du för
 och låt - sas säl - ja din - a var - ror från en flät - ad vid - e
 Och fast det reg - nar små - spik så blir vi bar - a fler och
 A C#m E C#m
 står Det är svårt att var - a hed - er - lig när drömm - ar - na blir
 korg. Och du köp - slår så för - slag - et och du tar så pass bra bet -
 fler Och snart ska tåg - et start - a Du har ju sagt du vill va'
 E E B₃ A₃ E₅ F#m C#m
 av. Man mås - te vet - a vad man önsk - ar sig för att få det man vill ha.
 alt att hur än kund - en för - öd - mjuk - ar sig blir af - fär - en ald - rig av.
 med Men om du in - te kom - mer nu så kom - mer du för sent.
 1. A 12. C#m D₉ C#m
 v.2 Men nu BRIDGE Ja, det är svårt att va' sjuk när med ic - in - entars slut — å det vet väl d
 D₉ C#m B D.

73. Includes only vv. 1, 2 and 4 plus bridge; no guitar intro, interlude or outro. Eb, E \sharp and F are usual keys for Hoola renditions of the song. D shapes are used on guitar with capo on fret 2. Transcription source (on LP *Vem kan man lita på?*), see [\[audio/FmExtras/Audio/HoolaOnska.mp3 \[170504\]](#) (in E). NB. Note values (and even some pitches) apply to verse 1 only. Lyrics to v. 3 (chords in D): "Du [D] säger att du [A] älskar djur, för att de [Bm] är precis som [G] barn och se'n [D] skriker du hyst[A]eriskt, när vi [Bm] skickar dej en [G] gam. Och du [Bm] säger att du [D] älskar oss och du vill [Bm] lindra världens [D] nöd. Men du [D] ger din [A₃] kärlek [G₃] liksom [D₅] när du ger en [Em] fattig gammalt [Bm] bröd."

Fernando's listeners

The Swedish audience

We have already seen some statistical evidence of the widespread popularity enjoyed by *Fernando* in 1975-6. We have also described the situation in which it was produced, accounted for some of the factors which may have contributed to its popularity and told how a large section of the Swedish public were well-prepared for musematic understanding of its symbols (those who had heard either Los Calchakis or Simon and Garfunkel, who had watched TV news in September and October 1973, perhaps seen Quilapayún or some other Chilean group on TV and who had possibly also heard Hoola Bandoola Band's *Víctor Jara* on the radio). When summarising the main points of this discussion we shall use this Swedish audience as a sort of reference point in our discussion of the receiving end of the one-way communication model.

I have not carried out any empirical-statistical studies into audience perception (*Rezeption*) of *Fernando*. The methodological problems of music reception tests, enumerated elsewhere (Tagg 1979a: 52 ff.) would have been quite severe in the case of *Fernando*. Any statistically worthwhile results would not only have entailed the necessity of constructing test tapes which convincingly isolated individual musemes and musemes blocks, the arrangement of viable test situations and the usual counting of figures seldom expressing what the researcher really wants to know; it would also have been necessary to arrange these tests and test situations, complemented by interviews of course, in a representative selection of the hundreds of cultures and subcultures where *Fernando* was often played, heard, sung, whistled and hummed. Obviously wishing to avoid this gargantuan methodological issue but at the same time dissatisfied at presenting only one perspective of *Fernando's* reception, I have taken the liberty of making some interpretative observations during the course of travels both in Sweden and abroad on occasions when analysing popular music has been the subject of a seminar, a lecture or of ordinary conversation. A visit to Sweden's southern neighbour, what was once the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR), was enough to show how differently *Fernando* can be interpreted between one society and another.

Fernando in East Berlin

During the course of discussions following two lectures given at the Humboldt University of Berlin, DDR (May 1983), I gained the following impression from students. To their ears *Fernando* might be using musical exoticism in rather a 'kitschy' way but it seemed nevertheless to be a progressive song, more likely to be expressing sympathy for the cause of the Chilean people rather than a song 'sweeping the problem under the carpet'. This reaction, coming from, amongst others, the sort of young communists who were later to bring about radical changes in their own country, was quite the opposite of opinions held by the cultural left-wingers of Sweden. We have already seen what Abba and songs like *Fernando* must quite naturally have represented to radical young Swedes in their particular cultural environment of the mid seventies. It would obviously be absurd to expect the progressive youth of the DDR to understand the same song in the same way in a radically different cultural, social and political environment.

Abba represented very little or nothing at all in the national context of the DDR: they were merely viewed as competent and successful pop artists of the type any citizen could see any day on West or East German television. Abba were also available on the DDR pop label Amiga. Moreover, Abba's very general lyrical treatment of what seemed to the students like a clearly particular political subject (Chile) conformed well with the character of a special sort of super-melodious ballad genre with similar lyrics, frequently as vague as Abba's, which was already well-established in the DDR.⁷⁴

It should also be noted in this context that anti-fascist solidarity with the Chilean people was state policy in the DDR: unions and management often agreed (or had to agree) to work overtime for such solidarity purposes.⁷⁵ Chile solidarity had in this way official backing, whether those contributing

74. I recall for example a sentimental DDR *Politschlager* from 1974 entitled *Die rose von Chile*.

75. The workings of such mandatory solidarity are further illustrated by the fact that, after playing East German TV in 1975, I had to deposit my earnings from the gig, in non-exportable DDR currency, at the border bank in Saßnitz. I was assured that I could reclaim this money when I returned. I did not visit the DDR again until 1981, by which time there was no money in the account. I was told that money unclaimed after two years in such a bureau de change automatically 'went to solidarity'. If it did, I would not object at all. However, perhaps it lined the pocket of a party *apparachik* or went to the Staatbank der DDR. I doubt I will ever know!

mandatorily to such a worthy cause liked it or not. In the 'free' world, on the other hand, we contribute mandatorily to the bank balances of shareholders of companies we work for or supermarkets where we shop, and actions of solidarity are voluntary, relegated to the position of having to rely solely on publicly and commercially unsupported and unendowed extraparliamentary activity on the part of dedicated individuals and their financially struggling organisations. Viewed from this perspective it is not surprising that the young DDR citizens were just as able to interpret quena flutes, references to the Rio Grande and fighting for liberty, etc. according to the dominant ideology of their society as we were bound to interpret the same musical and verbal references through our experience of the dominant ideology here.

The young radical in capitalist Sweden of the seventies instinctively felt that prominent artists from inside the system would automatically be trying to smooth things over (we were used to that), whereas the young DDR citizen would more likely take it for granted that Abba were really singing for the liberty of the peoples of Latin America, however halfhearted they might sound, because they were just as used to artists pandering to middle-of-the-road taste in order to gain official recognition as we were used to successful artists avoiding political issues as part of their mainstream entertainment credibility in our part of the world. It was just that the official ideologies of the two socio-economic systems were diametrically opposed.

Fernando at Tatuí

While teaching popular music analysis at the 12th *Cursos latinoamericanos de música contemporânea* at Tatuí (State of São Paulo, Brazil) in 1984, I had the opportunity of discussing *Fernando* with students and teachers from various Latin American countries. The words of the English version, with their references to 'liberty' and the 'Rio Grande', caused some mirth. Many students found them naïve and 'gringo touristic', revealing a lack of real acquaintance with the South American continent and the political conditions and feelings of its peoples. The quena flute exoticism was qualified by some of the young popular musicians from Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Bolivia as 'third or fourth hand latinness'.⁷⁶

more difficult to contextualise historically and politically, with the consequence that 'how proud you were to fight for freedom in this land' (English version, verse 3) becomes 'aún orgullo que refleja tu valor' (pride that reflects your courage). There is in other words no direct allusion to the liberation struggle in Latin America. Nor should readers expect such allusions, bearing in mind that Abba's translators in Buenos Aires (the McCluskeys) were Mr. and Mrs. *Billboard* of Latin America and that they produced their Spanish rendering of *Fernando's* lyrics during the anarchistic last days of the Isabellita Perón period, just before the Videla regime's introduction of legalised terror.⁷⁷

There were even a few associations to those Chilean artists who, recognised by the Pinochet regime, offered *folklore commercial* variations on the Parra-Jara theme.

--- destined for Latin Americans. (Please note that Abba use the 's' sounds of Latin American pronunciation, not the Castilian 'th' for 'azul', 'protección', etc. 'Fernando' (the flute) is no longer a picturesque ingredient of the backdrop.

76. I noted the expression 'latinoamerinidade terceira ou quarta mão' in this context. Second hand latinness in music was exemplified by artists like Santana, Sergio Mendes and Los Calchakis, third hand by Simon and Garfunkel and Herb Alpert.

77. Thanks to Catharine Boyle (London) for this observation.

