



SEATTLE SKANDIA SPELMANSLAG

INFORMATION SHEET

A *spelman* in Swedish is a folk musician. *Spelmanslag* translates as “folk musician’s team.”

Membership

We are an “open membership” group. Anyone who shares our interest in playing traditional Scandinavian folkdance music is welcome to join.

In keeping with Scandinavian tradition, beginners are particularly encouraged to participate. All instruments are to be acoustic and include mostly violins and rhythm instruments such as accordion, acoustic bass, and guitar. Other instruments occasionally included are recorders or flutes, nyckelharpa and harmonica. Unusually loud instruments are discouraged as they overpower violins making it difficult to hear the leader and other members during practices and performances. Non-traditional instruments may be approved by consensus of the spelmanslag membership group. Non-traditional instruments may also be featured in a small group situation.

Our room rent arrangement with the Swedish Cultural Center is for all of our spelmanslag members to have service club memberships with the Swedish Cultural Center. The annual membership dues are \$45 per person or \$65 per family. The membership dues for age under 21 are \$15. There will be a free 3 week introduction period for new spelmanslag members to get acquainted with the group, after that the member must join the Swedish Cultural Center. The Seattle Skandia Spelmanslag also values part time or drop-in musicians and welcomes their contributions to the group. Drop-in musicians are encouraged to contribute \$3 per practice session towards the cost of spelmanslag membership maintenance for the SCC. An honor system will be used for payment and no one will be solicited for funds. A marked envelope for payments will be available on the information table.

Rehearsals

We meet at the Swedish Cultural Center, 1920 Dexter Ave. No., Seattle. The group practices most Sunday evenings from 7:00-9:00 p.m., except holiday weekends and summer/winter break periods. Rehearsals will start promptly at 7 pm. Please arrive a few minutes early to perform stretching exercises and to tune your instrument. If you arrive late please tune up outside the practice room. To assist in learning new tunes please bring a recording device to each rehearsal if possible.

Learning the Music

Some of our members learn the music primarily “by ear.” Others learn more efficiently from printed notes.

At the beginning of each year a core List of approximately 60 tunes will be chosen. Performance tune lists generated during the year will draw from this core list. As new tunes are taught throughout the year they will also be added to the core tune list. Music binders containing the notes for the core tune list will be provided free of charge to all members either full or part time. Recordings of many tunes will be available for free download on the spelmanslag's website or can be purchased (Allspel CDs) from the Skandia Folkdance Society. The desire is for all members to be able to play these 60 tunes by memory as the year progresses.

During each Sunday practice approximate 90 minutes will be devoted to skill development in refining old tunes and learning new tunes. The last 30 minutes will be devoted to small group practice and jamming.

While practicing from printed music at rehearsals is OK for learning purposes, The Seattle spelmanslag follows the Scandinavian spelmanslag tradition and plays without printed music at public performances. With a focused small tune list the hope is that it will be easier to commit tunes to memory. However, exceptions can be made on a case by case basis.

Occasionally workshops will be held to focus on particular regional styling or specific dance music. These workshops will be free to full time spelmanslag members, but part time participants will be required to pay the non-member price. Based on the instructors permission CD recordings of the workshops tunes will be available at no cost to spelmanslag members.

Performances

The spelmanslag will play approximately ten to fifteen public performances each year. In past years, performances have consisted of playing for dancers at Skandia Folkdance Society's Third Friday dances, The Swedish Cultural Center pancake breakfasts, and the Nordic Heritage Museums Tivoli and Yulefest. The crown jewels for performances are playing at the Scandinavian dance for Seattle Folklife and at the Skandia Ball.

The Seattle Skandia Spelmanslag is a non-profit organization. Musicians will not be paid for their performances. Proceeds from performances will be placed into the organization's treasury and will be used to pay for such things as the cost of training materials, music instructors and additional costs associated with hosting visiting Scandinavian music groups.

As performance dates become known, a signup sheet for musicians will be available at practice sessions. Members are strongly encouraged to attend practice for at least one of the two previous practice sessions before each performance. If the performance is to be considered "formal" or "of high importance" attendance during designated practice sessions is extremely important and the group leader can consider it mandatory in order to play in that performance.

Due to the spelmanslag membership being "open" and also because many spelmanslag musicians are members of other local groups, attendance at performances will vary, but will usually be 10 to 15 musicians

Additional Information

Visit our website, www.skandia-folkdance.org/spelmanslag, for information about practice schedules, performances, repertoire, printed music and contacts.