

The Cursive
Scandinavian
Slave

by Bengt af Klintberg



1967
A Great Bear Pamphlet

ubuclassics

2004

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Seven Forest Events

Number 1 (winter)

Walk out into a forest when it is winter and decorate all the spruces with burning candles, flags, apples, glass balls and tinsel strings.

Number 2

Walk out into a forest and wrap some drab trees, or yourself, in tinsel.

Number 3

Climb up to a treetop with a saw. Saw through the whole tree-trunk from the top right down to the root.

Number 4 (Danger Music for Henning Christiansen)

Climb up into a tree. Saw off the branch you sit upon.

Number 5 (The Lumberjacks' and Pikers' Union)

“Charlotte Moorman exchanged the sandpaper for a wood-saw, but using that sawing technique she would soon have been sacked from the Lumberjacks' and Pikers' Union.”

(Gits Olsson in SE)

Number 6

Walk out of your house. Walk to the forest. Walk into the forest.

Number 7

When you walk into a forest, don't forget to knock.

November 1966

Two Flag Events

1. In Copenhagen (for Ibi)

A big Danish flag is tacked to a wall.

Paint the white cross yellow.

Drink a Tuborg (or a Carlsberg).

Paint the four red squares blue.

*(Premiered
December 11th,
1965, at
POEX 65 in
Copenhagen by
Åke Hodell
and the author.)*

2 Demonstration

Arrange a demonstration march with flags. If it is a sunny day with light blue sky, the flags shall be light blue. If the sky is white, the flags shall be white. Grey sky: grey flags.

(written for "Gärdet")*

December 1965

* Wellknown Swedish place for annual Socialist demonstrations.

from Twenty Five Orange Events

Number 1 (for Kerstin Aurell)

Try to find out which music instrument you would first connect with an orange. Play it, as long as you like. Or pretend to play it for the corresponding time.

Number 3

Peel an orange carefully and arrange pigs in a row. Choose one of the pigs.

Number 4

Peel an orange carefully and place pigs here and there in the apartment. Eat them when you happen to pass.

Number 7

Eat an orange and, at the same time, listen attentively: to sounds of chewing, of sucking, of swallowing and external sounds that may occur.

Number 8 (for Pi Lind)

Eat an orange as if it were an apple. (Hold it, unpeeled, between forefinger, middle finger and thumb, bite big mouthfuls, etc.)

Number 10

Use at the same time an orange and a lemon, an orange and a die, an orange and a bucket, an orange and an apple, an orange and a phonograph, an orange and a shoe, an orange and a tangerine, an orange and an organ, an orange and a ski-track, or an apple and an umbrella.

Number 12 (for Staffan Olzon)

Fill all the drawers of a chest to the brim with oranges and depart for another part of the world.

Number 15

For umbrella, orange and sewing-machine.

Number 16 (for Åke Hodell)

Regard two or three oranges for a long time.

Number 17 (for Folke Heybroek)

Leaning over a bridge parapet, look down into the water whirls of the Stockholm Stream. Between your two hands, roll an orange so that the peel becomes soft and will easily come loose from the orange. Quite often you will hear the rattle of trains, that are passing over the railway bridge in the neighborhood. At certain junctures you will also hear the bells of at least three churches ringing. When these two sounds reach you at the same time, start peeling the orange and let the peels fall down into the water.

Number 20

Paint an orange white and place it together with other oranges in a white bowl.

Number 21

Roll an orange over a floor, covered with hens' feathers.

Number 24

Stay for a long time in a room, in which there is silence. Breathe silently, move silently if you move. At a time that you choose yourself, crack a nut.

Number 25 ("Proposition")

Make a fruit salad of nuts and oranges and serve it.

1963-1966

Party Event

Send invitations to all your friends - except one - with the following:

green party green clothes

And to one person:

red party red clothes

(Done in April, 1967 by Hans af Klintberg and Beatrice Heybroek)

Streetcar Random
(music for any number of participants)

One used streetcar ticket is given to each participant. On the cross-ruled ticket there are squares for day and hour, each of which indicates one beat. The length of the beats is decided by each participant, who also determines how he wants to read the ticket: horizontally or vertically, to the right or to the left. It is expedient that he keep to the chosen reading during the whole performance. The uncut squares indicate pauses, the squares where the streetcar conductor has cut a round hole indicate one beat of sound. The source of the sound is optional. The piece is over when the last participant has become tired.

Suggested sources of sound: symphony orchestra; car horns.

September, 1965

Three Magic Events

Number 1 (to make a couple enemies)

Take an egg and boil it hard and write both a couple's names on it. Then cut the egg in two pieces and give one of the halves to a dog and the other half to a cat.

Number 2 (against rats in the barn)

When the first load of grain is carted in, those who are standing in the barn ask:

— What are you bringing here?

— We are bringing here a load of cats!

Now they ask what the rats shall have to eat.

— Stone and bone and henbane-root.

Then the first load is brought in during a dead silence.

During the following loads one talks about cats all the time.

Number 3 (for white washes)

At the washing a person who comes in shall say:

— I saw a swan.

Then the clothes will be clean and white. On the other hand the whole wash will be spoiled if he says:

— I saw a raven.

from Bengt af Klintberg's *Svenska trollformler*, 1965

Five Swedish Folk-Riddles Collected by Fredrik Ström*The Bear*

Blueberryeater
and lingberryshitter,
God's word's flouter
and poor-man's old-cow-slaughter.

The Nettles

Ten gray hags
stand outside the door.
If you lift their skirts
you get fire on your hands.

The Waves at the Sea

Who are those women,
who go mourning after their father's edict,
they have bleached hair and wear white head-cloths
and do not take heed of anything.

The Sour-Milk Eaters

Two men are a-sitting,
each at one side of the river,
flaying white calves.

The Slate

On a big black field
there goes a white plow.

from Fredrik Ström: Svenska Folkgåtor, 1939

2 Exhibitions

1. *Ice*

Some days after the break-up of the ice, one can find large ice sheets floating in the northern creeks of the lakes. Lifted up in the air, these half-melted ice sheets will often show an extraordinary beauty. There are holes in most of them, which makes it possible to hang them on dry spruce-branches.

Go up one morning and decorate the forest with ice and let the opening start soon after. There should be a number for each piece of ice. The opening guests are served sherry.

(Premiered April 29th, 1965, in a forest adjoining Lake Uttran, 30 kilometers SW of Stockholm.)

2. *Mould*

The hot summer is the best season. At various times one puts old pieces of bread into a number of bread boxes in gay colours. Let them stand with closed lids for some time. Now and then one checks how the mould is developing. At an interesting and beautiful phase one makes an exhibition. Have a number for each box. Instead of sherry, serve vin rosé.

(Summer 1963 in the studio of the author.)

Event for an Unknown Person

A loveletter on a bicycle carrier.

April, 1967

Lettuce Music (for Sten Hanson)

(Premiered March 28th, 1963, in Oslo by Sten Hanson and the author.)

The piece requires two performers, a head of lettuce on a music rack, a whistle and a small charge of explosive.

Short signals on whistle.

Head of lettuce explodes:

A green rain. Long signal on whistle.

Plan Against Loneliness

Some yellow seats in all parks, squares and subway trains, where people who want to be talked to can sit down.

In every city all over the world.

May, 1967

Theatre

Act One

The stage represents a room, that once was a hen-house, as can still be seen from some equipment, hens, eggs, and hen-shit. The room is furnished in heavy Empire style. In one corner are a shit-covered plastic bust of Bismarck with one moustache tip broken off and a tremendously dry, brown Christmas tree in the other corner, decorated with one coloured glass ball and some cardboard angels. Behind a sofa an organ is vaguely visible, incessantly attacked by a boy with a healthy, even rubicund look. In the middle of the floor a big ice block is slowly melting.

Act Two

Soft-boiled eggs and paper plates.

Act Three

Same as act one, but in the evening. The whole stage seems to have turned slightly to the left. Moonlight strains in through branchholes and keyholes. On the Christmas tree a dying candle is dripping. Some springs have shot up through the sofa cover, the broken-off moustache tip is clumsily mended with blue modelling clay. In the distance we hear an eighteen-shot salute, but on the stage nothing happens.

1960

Calls, Cantos 1-6

Canto 1 (*If You Catch Sight of a Friend in the Distance*)

If you catch sight of a friend in the distance: go towards him calling out loudly.

Let the calls ring out.

Answer his calls.

Develop the structures of his calls.

Desirable development: from simple calls to very complex calls.

(Can be performed in public libraries and lecture halls, churches, central stations, civil service departments and in outdoor places under an immense blue sky.)

Canto 2 (*Stage version of 1*)

At the beginning of the piece one performer stands in the left back corner, the other in the right back corner of the hall.

Calling out loudly to each other they slowly advance towards the stage.

Desirable development: from simple calls to very complex calls.

The piece is over when they meet on the stage.

(Premiered December 11th, 1965, at POEX 65 in Copenhagen by Åke Hodell and the author.)

Canto 3 (*Riddarfjärden*)*

Two persons, one of them standing on Norr Mälärstrand and the other one on Söder Mälärstrand, talk to each other.

Canto 4 (*Hello-Core*)

A party of about 100 persons walk out into a forest at sunrise, climb up to the treetops and call and sing: Hello-Core!

* The places named in this piece are about one kilometer apart on opposite sides of the Riddarfjärden section of Lake Mälaren which lies between the Södermalm and Kungsholmen districts of Stockholm (Ed.).

Canto 5 (Telephone Call)

Make a telephone call in a bathtub, talking with your lower lip under the water surface and your upper lip over it. The piece requires a long telephone cord.

Canto 6 (Letter)

Open an empty envelope with both hands and talk loudly into it. Then close the envelope quickly and post it to anyone whom it may concern.

December 1965-June 1966

Untitled Event

Smear yourself and a blue satin umbrella with ashes and apricot jam;
embrace a sleeping person.

Premiered January 12, 1967 by Dan af Klintberg

Bengt af Klintberg

the Swedish poet and folklorist, was born in Stockholm on Christmas Day 1938, a Sunday. In 1962 he became interested in Happenings and was one of the first to perform them in Sweden, at the Athena Theatre in Stockholm. Later the same year he met the Fluxus group in Copenhagen and contributed, in 1963, to Flux-Concerts in Düsseldorf and Stockholm. The same year he composed his “Orangerimusik 1963” for such instruments as buckets, wooden boxes, lettuce and carbonic-acid snow tube. In April 1965 he exhibited ice in a forest, and in December he contributed a Christmas Calendar to POEX 65 at Copenhagen. During the Autumn his play “Lidner” (later awarded as the best private theatre play of the year) was shown at the Pistol Theatre in Stockholm.

Since 1963 he has performed events in Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen and other Scandinavian cities, and since 1964 he also has produced folklore programs for the Swedish Radio. Together with his wife Katarina and son Dan he lives in a big red wooden house, surrounded by the forests and fields that appear in these events, and are situated by a lake 30 kilometers from Stockholm.

The closeness of the relationship between Bengt af Klintberg’s events and the Swedish folklore which is his chosen field of professional study is highlighted by the two extracts, printed at his suggestion on pages 8 and 9, from works on folklore, the first extract from a book of magic formulas and processes published by af Klintberg himself, the second from a famous collection of Swedish folk riddles.

Publications

1959 Stigar (= Paths), poems, Norstedts, Stockholm.

1961 Ormkungens krona (= The Crown of the Snake-King), poems, Norstedts, Stockholm.

1965 Svenska trollformler (= Swedish Magic Spells), anthology with introduction and commentary, W&W paperbacks, Stockholm.

1966 Stockholmsspelet (= The Stockholm Game), poems - diary - events, Norstedts, Stockholm.

Sju röster om Almqvist (= Seven Voices on Almqvist), play, Nordiska museet, Stockholm.

