

The Uppsala Chronicle Pageant
 "From Time's Night-enshrouded Past ..."



*From Time's night-enshrouded past
 Towards a goal concealed from thee,
 Oh, humankind, thou walkest*

Victor Rydberg (1828-1895)

Procession in the Mist: To the words by the Swedish poet, Victor Rydberg, cited above, the people of Uppsala's distant past move across the open space in front of the cathedral as if in a dream.

King Frej and Disa: The country is overpopulated and King Frej and his council come to Uppsala to collect taxes. The people are poor and cannot pay. King Frej then decides to kill the old and the feeble, the sick and the blind so that they will not be a burden on the country. However, Disa, the daughter of one of his councillors is irate at this decision and demands an audience. Frej will only listen to her advice if she comes "neither in a carriage not on horseback, neither on foot nor in a boat, neither dressed nor undressed, neither by day or by night, the moon neither waxing or waning", which explains the strange manner of her arrival. Frej promises to make Disa his queen if she can find a way out of his dilemma. She does so by casting lots to determine who should live and who should die. Those who are condemned are allowed to live if they cultivate new ground in the north.

The Disting Market: People come to market to sell their wares and meet each other. A company of jesters arrive and put on a show. A king has locked his daughter in a tower to keep suitors away from her. A dragon attacks the king, who sends the various suitors to try to kill the dragon. One is finally successful. The company disperses and the people laugh at this fine bit of entertainment. Night is falling and the night watchman tells the people that it is time to go home.

The Death of King Erik Jedvardson: The year is 1160 and King Erik is attending religious services in East Aros. Outside the church, armed men gather. They are the followers of the Danish prince, Magnus Henriksson, who wants to capture the Swedish throne. A battle ensues in which King Erik and his brave soldiers are killed. But there is a miracle! A spring of clear, pure water erupts from the spot where King Erik was killed. King Erik is made a saint and the spring will henceforth be known as St Erik's spring.

King Erik's remains are buried in the church in Old Uppsala, but now a hundred years later, it is decided that they be removed to the new cathedral in East Aros. On January 24, 1273, a solemn procession takes place to move the remains.

Magnus Ladulås. It is a lovely day in May 1286. King Magnus Ladulås has sent an emissary to East Aros to make an important announcement. The town musicians call the curious townspeople together. The proclamation is in Latin, which the townspeople of course don't understand. However the bishop's scribe translates the text and announces that name of the town is going to be changed from East Aros to UPPSALA! The people can't believe this, but it is true.

A New Cathedral is Planned: Under the guidance of Archbishop Folke Johansson a new cathedral is being planned. Suddenly a company of jesters bursts upon the scene. They provide their own solution to the architectural problem.

Saint Birgitta: It is now the beginning of the 14th century. Judge Birger and his wife Ingeborg visit the new cathedral, which is still under construction. With them they have their little daughter, Birgitta, who will grow up to be a spiritual model for millions of people. She tarries in front of the cathedral and has a heavenly vision of herself as the wife of Christ.

It is now 1435. A ceremonial procession approaches the cathedral. The times are unsettled, but now the foremost cathedral in the land is finally consecrated.

Jacob Ulfsson: It is now October 7, 1477. Bishop Ulfsson leaves the cathedral to make an important announcement. A papal bull has been issued calling for a "studium generale" to be set up in Uppsala. This marks the beginning of the Uppsala University.

Gustaf Wasa: A spring day in 1526, the mighty King Gustaf Wasa attends a service in the cathedral. Outside his soldiers chase a monk through the streets. The king orders the monk to be taken to prison and the monasteries to be abolished. There is a popular outcry against this and the king is forced - for now - to go along with the wishes of his people, who want to keep to the old ways.

King Erik XIV's Coronation: The year is 1561 and an elaborate and expensive coronation ceremony is about to take place to make Erik XIV king. Royalty and wealthy members of the town feast upon exquisite cuisine. Even the common people are allowed to join in the festivities and they are treated to roast ox and other delicacies. The wine that is conveyed through a long lead pipe from Trinity Church is much appreciated by many of the common people. A group of noblemen's sons perform for the king.

The Murder of the Nils Sture and his Family: The renaissance splendour of the coronation scene fades. A horseman arrives telling of the murder of Nils Sture and his family by King Erik. "The King is mad!" The people watch subdued as the widow of Sten Sture bears a chest with her husband's bloodied garments into the cathedral.

The rule of Erik comes to an end. His successor, Johan III is busy with plans for a new royal castle. His wife, Queen Gunilla Bielke has a bell cast, which is called 'Gunilla's Bell*'. It is heard ringing in the distance.

Meeting of the Clergy: In February 1593 groups of clergymen meet to safeguard the Lutheran faith and the Augsburg Confession. From the Middle Ages until the mid-19th century, the Cathedral School was situated in the immediate vicinity of the Cathedral. Much of the education of the schoolboys was in the form of singing pious songs, so called "piae cantiones".

King Gustaf Adolf: The year is 1620 and two important men appear: King Gustav II Adolf and Johan Skytte, the first chancellor of Uppsala University. The king has ordered the construction of a new building to house the university. It is suitably to be called 'Gustavianum'. A ceremony takes place to mark the important occasion. The university musicians - chorus musicus - play, and two young, fortunate students are introduced to the king.

It is now 1652 and Queen Christina is visiting Uppsala. She has heard of Olof Rudbeck's revolutionary medical discoveries and his dissections of animals. Olaf Rudbeck confides in Queen Christina his dream of erecting an anatomical theatre on top of Gustavianum, where even dissections on human bodies will be performed! We witness his vision of what an autopsy might look like.

It is now the night between the 15th and the 16th of May 1702. A strong northerly wind blows through the city. Suddenly flames erupt! The town is burning and people run around in panic. People freeze in their places as a young girl sinks to the ground and silently pays for her small wooden dwelling to be spared. Panic breaks out again. But look - who is standing at the top of Gustavianum directing the fire fighting efforts? It is the 72 year old Olof Rudbeck. "Save the church treasures! Get Water!", shouts the aged Rudbeck.

The people follow his exhortation and rush towards the church, but the church spires come crashing down. Finally the fire subsides. Gustavianum - and the young girl's wooden dwelling - are saved.

Linnae: Half a century has passed and Uppsala has risen from the destruction of the fire. Uppsala is becoming famous throughout Europe, not least due to the discoveries of a poor clergyman's son, Carolus Linnaeus, in the field of botany. We see him surrounded by enthusiastic and admiring students as he delicately examines a flower.

Uppsala has many skilled craftsmen. **We see one of them, the goldsmith, Erik Ernander.** The burghers of the town enjoy a stroll through the marketplace. But it is interrupted by the advent of one - no, many - pigs! These terrorise the poor town's people before they are finally herded off by a town's appointed swineherd.

Town and Gown: Nights unfortunately are not always quiet in Uppsala. Fights between students and apprentices are a recurring part of life in Uppsala.

Malla Silfwerstolpe and Geijer: Four students appear wearing white caps, which is something new in the 1840s. They are expectantly waiting for the Swedish author, Erik Gustaf Geijer, who is a very popular lecturer. Today he is going to talk about contemporary social wrongs. Accompanying Geijer from his lecture is Malla Silfwerstolpe, who heads a very influential literary salon in Uppsala. The four students sing one of Geijer's own songs to him in praise.

The song cycle, "Gluntarne": Uppsala is filled with singing in the 1840s and 50s. A leading songwriter is Gunnar Wennerberg, whose song cycle, "Gluntarne" is still an important part of Uppsala student and cultural life. As we listen to one of these songs, we see a present-day student couple planning to have a picnic in the green. They will not be alone for long.....

The New Uppsala Newspaper

On Dec 3, 1890 a new newspaper is started in Uppsala. Unlike the three conservative newspapers that already exist in the town, this one has a liberal point of point, which at that time, was really quite radical.

As the newspaper vendors swirl away, figures from the past emerge from the shadows and our young, student couple find themselves no longer alone.

Procession in the Mist: Once again, to the words of the Swedish poet, Victor Rydberg's cantata, the people of Uppsala past wander across the open space in front of the cathedral. Their journey ends within the cathedral itself.