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CHAPTER TEN

A LIFE-LONG SONG OF RESILIENCE: IN PURSUIT OF ABRAHAM HAGHOLM

PETER BERRY



Photo of Haghholm circa 1860

Introduction

I work at Lund University in Sweden as a librarian who enjoys playing the violin. Many years ago, whilst looking for a repertoire of traditional music from the area of southern Sweden where I lived, I happened to hear a tune that has stayed with me ever since – a waltz in the key of G minor that reminded me of medieval long dances. Later I learned that it had been recorded in a manuscript by a 19th century schoolteacher in a remote parish of the province of Östergötland. This was the first time Haghholm had appeared in my life.

Abraham Haghholm (1811-1890) could not walk. He lost the use of his legs when he was a young boy due to an undefined illness. Years later, as he did some gardening in his little plot by the church, he died suddenly. He fell down, his life ended and one remarkable story received its measuring stick. The local newspapers wrote about him with approval and appreciation – offering the occasional anecdote. There is one word present in the majority of the media accounts: Haghholm was original. The evidence I present in this chapter aims to make a compelling argument that the term “resilient” would have been an equally appropriate description of Haghholm’s character.

I started my study of Haghholm twenty years ago. Through archival research I discovered that he was a poor and disabled man in a society where it was difficult to make ends meet. Haghholm’s whole life is an interesting story of how he established his identity and how music was a central theme in this struggle with adverse circumstances. He sang, played the violin, led a choir, participated in men’s quartet singing, played the *psalmodikon* (a bowed box zither), taught and recorded music in his notebooks. And he survived. My historical analysis of Haghholm and his music denotes that this man sang a life-long song of resilience.

My study of Haghholm would have taken a different turn if I had not met Steve Dillon, a visiting academic at the school where I work, the Malmö Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts. He brought to my attention the “Songs of Resilience” project in his lecture about young underprivileged Australians being helped to find their identity through music (Dillon, n. d.). That music could have such a wholesome effect was a revelation to me. I started thinking of songs of resilience in relation to Haghholm and discovered new and interesting questions to ask.

I am frequently asked the question, what is resilience? Partly this is explained by the fact that there is no single translation of this word into Swedish. Instead, I offer the following brief definition – the ability to survive under difficult circumstances. I add that this ability could be thought of as ranging from a physical condition to aspects of a particular culture. This I tell my friends, is not my own invention, but the research focus of many scholars, some of whom operate within the fields of education, health, and, sometimes, music education with a focus on health.

I describe this study as an historical autoethnography – the study of a culture through an individual’s self-study (Bartleet & Ellis, 2009), where I

use archival records available to myself as a librarian. Using this approach to explore historical records I will address the following questions: In what sense was Haghholm's journey through life a life-long song of resilience? Could Haghholm show us how to foster resilience in others? Could his music be used as a source of creativity and emancipation? Is it possible to study resilience using a historical/biographical approach?

The main challenge for my research was to rearrange my informal and historical knowledge of Haghholm to suit an academic public. I decided to create a serious presentation that would benefit my study without losing touch with my personal objectives. I felt compelled to undertake this study as I was fascinated by the landscape of Godegård, and the music of Haghholm's notebooks. It became clear every time I connected to Godegård – my violin skipped out of its case and prodded me to play at once. My reasons for bringing this tale to the attention of others have to do with resilience: how it sustains others and how my creativity helps to alleviate physical and mental hardship. The recent earthquake in Haiti has reminded me of the need to address motor disabilities therapeutically (Bayard, 2010). In the future could treatment based on movement and rhythm make the victims of these catastrophes become "whole" human beings again?

I have tried to investigate a research territory, which I define as historical and biographical as it concerns an individual and his journey through life in the 19th century. I found studies in many different subject disciplines useful. Magnus Gustafsson (2004) cleverly describes the infrastructure of popular music of the period, whilst Aaron Antonovsky (1987) offers a salutogenic analysis of the human ability to cope, which he defines as *sense of coherence*. Oliver Sacks (2007) provides a neurologist's perspective describing music and the human brain, and Ruud (1997) has written extensively about the building of identity through music. Historically, the study of disability has an action orientation, similar to resilience research. A dissertation on the history of disabled people was recently defended at the University of Umeå (Olsson, 2010), which outlines attempts to improve material and environmental conditions in Sweden. Bredberg (1999) writes about current disability research and calls for less focus on institutional histories and more experiential studies about the micro history of each person. Together these historical and contemporary arguments support studies such as the one I have conducted about Haghholm.

I start my research journey commenting on available source material. Since this study is intended for an international audience I present an overview of the time and place that we will be visiting. It is also necessary to include a few words on the history of Swedish popular music. I will then present a summary of events in Haghholm's life-long journey, and offer my analysis that found traces of resilience in Haghholm's life and music. Finally I will discuss Haghholm and his music as possible sources for resilience interventions today.

The historical record of Haghholm

There was no particular source that provided all the information I needed about Haghholm. Making sense of his life was similar to putting together the pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle. Bits and pieces appeared in different documents. The best available biography consists of a few pages in *Svenska låtar*, the national inventory of Swedish folk music (Andersson, 1922-1940). This is also where a large selection of his scores are published. A few years ago Haghholm's notebook was photographed and presented in its entirety on the Internet by the Centre for Swedish Folk Music and Jazz Research (Folkmusikkommissionens, n. d.). The records of The Church of Sweden, which used to be responsible for population data, are an obvious source of pertinent historical research and the minutes of the parish council are another important source – the “sockenstämma.” In addition, collections of notes by A. T. Engholm, one of Haghholm's nephews, have proved helpful. Most of the remaining material I have used helps to paint a broader backdrop of the history, economy, politics and culture, both locally and on a national level. More sources would have made speculation and informed guesswork less necessary. The most impressive source of information, of course, has been the records produced by Haghholm's own hand: his collections of fiddle tunes and songs.

Haghholm spent nearly all his life in the parish of Godegård. It is still a vast and sparsely populated area with woods, lakes and mountains, located far from any larger cities. The closest city is Linköping, the capital of Östergötland. In the 19th century, the local landlord owned the entire parish more or less. He and his family operated a successful manufacturing business. During odd hours and at home, people made nails and scythes from iron produced at the manor forgeries. Most of the small villages were hard to reach on the poor roads that stretched through forests and across mountains.

When I started my study I was stranger in this environment, meeting people and surroundings that although sometimes looked familiar, turned out to be full of surprises. Today I can discern the contours of 19th century Sweden, a country that was recovering from centuries of warfare and political power struggles in Europe – it licked its wounds, turning into a modern state. Sweden was in the process of abandoning a society with roots in the Middle Ages, changing into the country that we are familiar with today. Political and social reform was introduced in the middle of the 19th century, and one outcome of this was the establishment of a national public school system in 1842. Haghholm became one of its first public funded music teachers.

It is necessary to say a few words about popular music in Sweden during the 19th century (Cf. Ling, 1997). The most appreciated popular music instruments of the period were the violin and the clarinet. Music and dance were an important and integrated part of everyday life. Popular music in the countryside was a mixture of influences; it was reported that many people, including court musicians, composed tunes. Most of the tunes were known in several of the Swedish provinces. Academic interest in this music started early in the 19th century with the goal of discovering the roots of Swedish music. Some music collecting did take place and this activity boomed at the end of the century. The academic collectors created a framework for the study of this popular music. They were responsible for defining the music in a way that did not always reflect its multi genre character and the traditions of performance. One possible reason why Haghholm was not well documented in these academic collections was that he did not fit easily into their categories.

Haghholm did not record music belonging to one specific genre and he did not inherit his musicianship as many countryside fiddlers believe they did. The fiddle music that Haghholm collected was that used in communities to which he belonged. This music is today referred to as folk or traditional music. These concepts were unknown to Haghholm and I will avoid them here. I have chosen to use “popular music” as an inclusive term, reflecting the width of Haghholm’s collection as well as the origin of the tunes.

Haghholm’s journey through life

The best introduction for this section relates to an incident that occurred when I first became interested in Haghholm. At that time, as I learned later, there still existed a sack of personal memorabilia from Haghholm’s home.

When his late relative died, it was all thrown in the garbage since no one appreciated or knew of the value of this material. The fact that I was not able to lay hands on it forced me to broaden my study and learn things that I otherwise would have neglected. Perhaps, what I finally achieved was different and in some respects a better study. Of course, I have wondered about the contents of this sack and what might have been preserved over the years. I do not think scores would have remained in tact, yet some of those originals were saved from other sources, and as I shall explain later in this chapter, they are now being reinterpreted by contemporary fiddlers around the world.

Hagholm was born on the 16th of October 1811. He was the first child of Jan Persson and Magdalena Karlsdotter, crofters and residents of the small village of Hagen. The family income was low and supplemented by their manual manufacturing of nails. This type of cottage industry was common in pre-industrial societies and it involved long, unsocial hours of labour. Hagholm's mother, who eventually reached the age of 94, was born out of wedlock, a stigma at this time. She later married and became the mother of many children of which Hagholm was the oldest. Several of Hagholm's relatives, including his father, reached similar longevity to that of his mother.

There is no evidence of singing or music in the Persson home but Magdalena, as most other women of that time and place, was likely to have known the traditional songs, of which there were many (Ling, 1965). We may also take it for granted that locals heard hymns performed at Hagen at regularly catechetical meetings conducted by the vicar. These songs and hymns were probably the first traces of music in Hagholm's life.

When Hagholm was 10 years old his life took a turn for the worse. Illness reduced his leg movements to crawling. He never regained the ability to walk unaided. The parish council of Godegård regularly sent a small number of patients to the neighboring spa and hospital of Medevi, a half-day's journey from Godegård. Hagholm had the good fortune to receive this help a number of times. This is where Hagholm was taught to walk using crutches, and also where he was likely to have made his first contacts with popular dance musicians.

The spa of Medevi is situated in the northwest corner of Östergötland. It remains a small village, and its function as a health institution ended in the

late 20th century. Medevi is famous for its wells of Middle Age origin, and the health routines focused on the drinking of its wholesome water.

An important part of the health regimen at Haghholm's time was the emphasis on regular movement: not only long walks and parades but also dance and music. The choice of music was decided by "dietary ethics," stating that rhythm was essential and that it should be steady, without jumps or skips (Levertin, 1892). Tempo, melody or key was not mentioned, yet it is possible to discern this even character in the authentic brass band music that is provided at the spa today. Music in Haghholm's era was mostly played on the violin or the clarinet, and the historical record suggests that some of the players appeared at the spa only temporarily, being employed in several different places in the region.

After his "cure" in Medevi, Haghholm sought ways to make himself useful. He was unfit for daily hard work as well as for manufacturing nails. Haghholm found other opportunities, which I learned from the minutes of the parish council. When the local sexton became too old to teach, there was a chance for Haghholm to fill his place. He had already – through his own initiative – gathered children around him after church to teach them how to read. Haghholm accepted the teaching responsibilities of the sexton and was appointed School Master in 1830. He kept his position as a teacher until 1871 when he retired. During this entire period he worked as a so-called ambulatory teacher, travelling to the different small villages, stopping for a few weeks, then returning after a year. This is how Haghholm became well known to generations of Godegård parishioners.

Haghholm continued to visit Medevi as a teacher, but with a considerably higher status than before. He was even allowed to write his name on the back of one of the large sitting room tables, an honor only granted to guests of higher standing. Medevi was not only a hospital where the poor and ailing were allegedly cured; it was also a place where the bourgeoisie mingled. Yet strict class barriers of the time were less guarded at the spa than in the cities (Mansén, 2008), and it was a place where people from different backgrounds could meet and muse. It was a place where Haghholm could be accepted with his new identity as a teacher.

In the 1830s Haghholm decided to learn to play the violin. He probably learned this with the support of the sexton's son, who also learned to play violin at this time, and who was a collector of fiddle tunes. His teacher was the organist in a neighboring village. Assuming that Haghholm had the

same teacher as the sexton's son, one might deduce that his approach to musicianship and reliance on scores was reminiscent of classical training, as it differed from the training of village fiddlers who mostly, but not always, learned by ear rather than by reading scores. Hagholm later on played at weddings and dances, but it is not clear how often and how well he played. He was at the very least a gifted amateur.

Hagholm started to assemble his collection of popular dance tunes for the violin in the middle of the 1830s. He continued adding to his collection till the 1850s until eventually his collection consisted of close to 400 tunes. Hagholm's is one of several fiddlers' notebooks that were saved in a national inventory conducted at the end of the 19th century. These notebooks consist of popular dance music scores. During this period there seems to have been an accepted practice of copying from other fiddlers' notebooks. Some of Hagholm's tunes probably entered his notebook in this way. There has been a debate concerning the extent to which the fiddlers' notebooks reflected the actual repertoires of the fiddlers. It has been argued that one did not transcribe the music with which one was familiar. In terms of Hagholm's use of his notebook, this remains an open question. I believe that some of the tunes were indeed part of his playing repertoire and that at least four were his own.

Let us take a look inside Hagholm's collection of fiddle tunes. His collection is one of the largest at this time from southern Sweden. It also appears to be one of the most accurate. Unfortunately, Hagholm added very few comments to his scores. He described all the tunes in the first part of his collection as "polonaises." It seems that he used this as a catchall phrase for all tunes except waltzes and quadrilles, which belonged to a pre-19th century tradition. Instead of polonaises, I call them "polskas" which is the common way to describe them today. Many of the polskas have an 18th century baroque flavour. The second half of the collection consists of more waltzes similar to music composed in a classical 19th century style. Inserted between these collections are a few quadrilles that probably belong to the first half of the 19th century.

The polskas constitute the core of the collection and were amongst the first tunes Hagholm collected. They dominate the collection in terms of quality transcription. They are in 3/4 time signature, mostly in major keys and typically consist of phrases of sixteenth notes suggesting an even rhythm. According to Hagholm's own comments, he composed four major pieces that appear in his collection. One of them is a polska in the smooth

sixteenth note tradition; the three remaining compositions are waltzes in a classical style.

The historical records show that most tunes in Haghholm's collection were played in other parts of Sweden as well. Their use in the area of Godegård and Medevi reflect two local repertoires. The polskas appear to belong primarily to the parish repertoire, particularly in the keys of A and D major. The waltzes, the quadrilles, and the polskas in the keys of F, Bb and E (probably played on the clarinet) are likely to have belonged to the Medevi repertoire. Judging from the scarce comments in his notebook, I can only assume Haghholm collected his tunes both at the spa and during travels in his own parish. At Medevi Haghholm was likely to have made friends with travelling musicians from different parts of Sweden. In his own parish he almost certainly met musicians primarily of local origin. In this collection Haghholm mentions only one of these local musicians, the blind fiddler Nyberg. In the minutes of the parish council we can read how Haghholm rose above his standing, obtaining a stable position as a school teacher and, as mandated by liberal reforms in parliament concerning education in 1842, attended the new teacher training college in the regional capital of Linköping. He became one of the first accredited public school teachers in Sweden.

As a schoolteacher Haghholm was responsible for teaching music, and he did this with more energy and imagination than was common at this time. In the 1850s he became even more involved in singing, at which time he and his school choir received a compliment from the bishop of Linköping. In school Haghholm taught different vocal parts of the hymns using *psalmodikons*. With the aid of this bowed, single-string instrument, it was possible to rehearse different vocal parts before singing them in church. Haghholm also sang in men's quartets, probably with the other guests he met in Medevi. Haghholm sang second tenor, "accurately but not beautifully" (Andersson, 1936).

Haghholm's singing was of a secondary interest to me for a long time, but was brought to my closer attention by a friendly villager of Godegård who asked me if I wanted to see some notebooks by Haghholm's own hand. Naturally, I was taken aback since there is so little left directly attributable to him. Answering "yes please," I then received eight small books of carefully printed notes and texts, scores for men's quartet divided into parts. These scores were copies of published songs that were composed in the early 19th century. They were popular among university students and

since the 1840s, also among the upper and middle class. The texts consist of much praise for history and nature. The first date Haghholm provided in his collection of songs is 1858, indicating that they were written after Haghholm finished his collection of dance music. This second set of songbooks included work after 1858. The collection ends suddenly without any explanation in the middle of the latter set of notebooks. The last few entries were clearly made by somebody else's hand. Hand written collections of songs, similar to Haghholm's, are known from many areas of Sweden. Haghholm's notebooks stand out because they appear relatively early in the 19th century and because they constitute a representative selection.

In the late 1850s Haghholm became a clerk at the newly founded library of the Godegård parish. This was the time when several such libraries were established in Sweden as mandated by the public school reform. The Godegård library was a mid-sized library with book collections consisting of all genres, even popular. These books, including the library catalog, were recently discovered in a shed belonging to the church in Godegård.

Haghholm devoted his last years to his job as the new parish librarian. He is said to have appeared punctually, regardless of weather. If it snowed, and crutches were useless, he crawled from his house to the library. He took a keen interest in practical matters such as keeping the books neat and in order. He appears to have advised people about good reading, in the manner of a modern librarian. It does not seem that his interests were above his community, which is clearly evident in the library catalogue where he noted the books he had donated to the library himself. Among the titles he donated were serious items such as *Excerpts of Swedish history*, but also more frivolous such as *The mysteries of Russia revealed by an old diplomat*, and *The ridiculous babble mouth or funny anecdotes*. Haghholm worked in the library well past his pension age until his sudden death in 1890. A second stroke may have caused his death.

In what sense is Haghholm's journey through life a life-long song of resilience?

I have found traces of resilience in Haghholm's life, which I have tried to connect to his music. I am now going to investigate areas pertaining to the workings of the brain, the establishment of identity and the impact of different environments, which is the most concrete assertion I can offer about how these areas of resilience complement each other.

Sacks (2007) studied the relationship between the functioning of the brain and music, and in particular rhythm. He suggests that people with motor disabilities, such as those who suffer from Huntington's disease, "may benefit from dancing – and, indeed from any activity or sport with a regular rhythm or kinetic melody" (Sacks, 2007, p. 281). Sacks points out the therapeutic value of music for patients suffering from Parkinson's disease, noting that this music should be of an even character in order to induce relief in these patients (2007, pp. 270-283). The key words are dance, rhythm and evenness, which are reminiscent of the music that Haghholm heard in Medevi, where the orderly and even structure of dance music was emphasised therapeutically. In terms of musical treatment for patients with motor disabilities, Sacks further suggests that the simple act of listening to music also stimulates motor centers in the brain (2007, p. 262). Is it too far-fetched to apply this to Haghholm? Maybe he could not dance due to his condition, but the aspect of motor disabilities research concerned with the loss of movement and the feeling of "phantom" movement comes to my mind. Sacks argues that the brain can compensate for a disability such as blindness by stimulating other sensory abilities (p. 175). Is it possible that people with impaired movement could be compensated neurologically by extra sensory stimulation? Does Haghholm provide a case in point? I will leave these questions to the scientific experts.

I also interpret Haghholm's struggle to establish his identity as an expression of resilience. He was a poor and disabled man for whom it was critical to make an impact on his communities in order to survive. I believe his identity was intimately tied to his music. In his home parish, coming into close contact with many people in the small isolated villages, his capacities and capabilities as a travelling teacher grew. It must have become part of his work as well as leisure, i.e., music and dance that took place frequently. Fiddlers were sought after entertainers of the period and there is reason to believe that Haghholm was a welcome patron, particularly because of his familiarity with a large repertoire of dance music originating both locally and in the spa of Medevi, where new music from other parishes and provinces probably made its way into the local areas. It is plausible that Haghholm was accepted at these local dances also because of his status as a disabled man, who by adding a few *kronor* to his limited earnings, made it less necessary for the villagers to pay collectively for his upkeep.

The establishment of his personal identity was conceivably an important part of Haghholm's visits to Medevi. It is possible that he was considered

an asset at Medevi because of his talents as a fiddler, as dances were an important part of the health regimen and amusements. I have shown that the nature of Haghholm's involvement in music changed as he became an accredited teacher and an established visitor at the spa. It was likely that he chose to become engaged in music such as the men's quartet repertoire because it better represented the more distinguished visitors.

I believe that Haghholm also experienced the impact of different resilient cultures. The system of treatments offered in Medevi represent such a cultural resource. One might also consider the generally held view of disabled people in 19th century society, and in the culture of social and political development, as expressions of resilient cultures. When I first thought about health in connection to Medevi I admit that I did not find this particularly relevant. Who believes in a treatment consisting of drinking water that tastes bad? Since then I have realised that one could conceive of Medevi as a locale for resilient cultural resources. The spa treatments there are somewhat akin to modern music therapy with its emphasis on movement (not only for the disabled) in the shape of music and dance.

The view of disabled people at the time was heavily influenced by a rational conception of man represented by 18th century Enlightenment, which emphasised people's usefulness and function. In terms of disability, it was a matter of disabled people being used to serve society as efficiently as possible. Thus, people with disabilities were encouraged to make a living in any way they could, as there were few resources available, and their access to them was also problematic. Some might then end up in professions where their disabilities did not stop them, as was the case within the teaching profession. It may also have meant a privileged access to certain ways of making a living, such as playing at dances in the small villages in the countryside. One might interpret all this as a general positive attitude in 19th Century Sweden to disabled people who displayed an individualist or self-reliant approach towards resilience.

In significant ways I believe the social and political developments of the 19th century implied a culture that emphasised belief in the individual, thus supporting an enterprise approach towards resilience. This is reflected in a central tenet of liberalism, which was to offer poor people betterment through education. Schools were established and teachers received professional training, and so a person's identity was increasingly defined in terms of profession. Music might have been recognised as a professional

pursuit, but from what we know about Haghholm's case, it was first and foremost his personal interest.

Resilience in Haghholm's old age is evidenced primarily by his work in the library as someone who encouraged wider access to public resources. But what happened to his music? I believe two things happened. First of all it became less important for Haghholm to manifest his identity as he became older. He had already achieved what he wanted in this sense. He did not need music to confirm his status anymore. My other thought is to interpret Haghholm's songs of resilience as an expression of an intellectual process, a theoretical preference, where music eventually became less important to him. The theoretical aspect of Haghholm's relationship to music early in his life is reflected in his collection of fiddle tunes, which show how he learned music informally by reading scores and was later taught the classical method of playing the violin. His musical interest then changed and he became more interested in scores, as witnessed by his large collection of songs. This can be considered as an increased interest in an institutional aspect of music that had less to do with melody than the intellectual status of the songs. Haghholm's last scholarly effort was a collection that consisted of no music at all - the catalogue of books in the parish library. Is it possible to interpret this collection as the final stage of a development where music, to some extent, represents his intellectual position? Haghholm experienced disability and turned to music in an environment that acknowledged his personal struggle and his resilience. I found that his journey through life ended in relative comfort. His community appreciated him and he was no longer a poor man. He certainly experienced personal, social and cultural meaning through music making (Dillon, 2007).

What can we learn from Haghholm?

If I were to use Haghholm in a project to stimulate and replicate resilience, I would concentrate on him as an agent, a person who selected music in a special way, and show how his activities might guide action today. I would then examine Haghholm's music in a search for elements that one might consider of particular importance to the latest resilience research findings, and use these to inspire people. Permit me to present an outline of the important parts of such an undertaking with a short reflection on my own resilience project.

Lessons from Haghholm as a resilient agent

Lesson 1: inclusive not exclusive.

Most significant is the populist characteristics of Haghholm's music - he did not address an exclusive public but involved everybody surrounding him who were in the habit of "using" music at dances and at celebrations.

Lesson 2: personal involvement

Haghholm's success as a musician would not have been possible without his very personal investment.

Lesson 3: awareness of your community

Music also served Haghholm's purpose, establishing him on the social map, but he arrived there well aware of the importance of a nurturing community.

Lesson 4: openness to different genres

Haghholm's music was characterised by a certain degree of openness to genre. Whatever was available seems to have been considered and re-used.

Lesson 5: select "quality" music

Haghholm made careful choices with his music.

Lesson 6: : Knowing how music fits into your life

Haghholm's involvement in music had an intellectual and spiritual emancipation overtone that tied all of his musical activities together.

Lessons from Haghholm's musical record

It is possible to dismiss Haghholm's collection of music as mere trivia as the melodies are neither complex nor spectacular. The notation is correct but not pretty. There is little of the favoured minor tone in his music, supposedly so typical of Swedish folk music, and valued highly by many. Yet what looks so ordinary has the potential to stir deeper feelings. The characteristics of Haghholm's music show that a man who spent his life

overcoming difficulties in some sense has the imprint of resilience. The emphasis on rhythm with a pumping even pulse. The emphasis on dance, “an ideal combination of music and movement” (Sacks, 2007, p. 279); an evenness and predictability of structure, the key to the whole tune seems to be located in the first bar and; a preference for major keys, for a relatively slow tempo for the polskas, and a faster tempo for the waltzes.

Lessons from Haghholm enacted today

My feeling that there are rich possibilities to express resilience in Haghholm’s music prompted me to start my own “Songs of Resilience” project. My goal is to collect interpretations of Haghholm’s music that will support and spread the use of his music to promote resilience. So far it has taken the shape of an interactive project on Wikispaces. I have selected what one might consider Haghholm’s most obvious contributions to resilience, his own compositions. I have made scores and midi files available on my online forum and have invited the public, some people by personal invitation, to play these tunes and then share their interpretations. I ask contributors to explain how they have arrived at their interpretation and what part resilience played. I have now received a small, but interesting, number of replies.

I would like to share some of the responses I have received so far. I was surprised to see the appearance of a multicultural angle, showing a keen understanding resilience globally. A “world music” interpretation was one of the first contributions. Then followed Peruvian and Greek versions. There were clear indications of different music languages in these interpretations. Besides the flavours of different musical languages and different instruments, including the Quena flute, I was made aware of the importance of musical ornaments and how they colour these interpretations. One of the contributors pointed out the orderly structure of these pieces, comparing them to children’s building blocks that one might put together in different patterns. He even suggested playing these “blocs” backwards, which interestingly enough, had guided my own interpretations some months earlier. It seems as if my Wikispace has slowly taken on a life of its own. I now follow it with great interest. At the same time I make use of Haghholm’s music at festivals and in my own band. Making sense of resilience in Haghholm’s music is now a long-term commitment for me.

What can historical cases add to the current resilience debate?

Since this is a study of history it is not possible to measure or analyse it in a laboratory to decide whether it is resilient or not. We are looking at a place and a person, distant in time and locality. Life then was different in so many ways. A study of people in this seemingly remote world is a question of interpretation and imagination. Because of my subjectivity as the author and researcher, I have felt a concern that the experiences of Haghholm are so unique that they lack relevance as a source of understanding anything, except for Haghholm's few living relatives and myself. In spite of all this, I believe that a study of an individual's life, be it distant in time and locality, add to our current understanding of resilience and help us to figure out efficient ways to share resources focused on resilience.

Let me end by returning to a more imaginative way of describing my study. I started this chapter describing my research as a journey in the company of Haghholm. At this point we are both exhausted by the extensive probing that has been necessary when subjecting Haghholm's historical record to examination. I believe we are reasonably happy about the way things turned out, although our conversation sometimes tended to become disconnected and abstract. We will now go on with our less demanding ramblings and I am sure we will play some music.

Sources and literature

Stockholm

Musik- och teatermuseet:

Pollonesser och vals-bok primo för violen sammanskrifven af A. Haghholm Vadstena

Landsarkivet i Vadstena:

Godegårds socken: sockenstämmoprotokoll.

Medevi brunns arkiv

Svenska kyrkan: folkbokföringsarkiv; husförhörslängder.

Private collections

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