

## THE DREAM WEAVER

An essay about Sten Hanson

”To describe space: to name it, to trace it, like those portolano-makers who saturated the coastlines with the names of harbours, the names of capes, the names of inlets, until in the end the land was only separated from the sea by a continuous ribbon of text.”

Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces*

It’s not an unusual story. An artist brought up in the provinces, in the countryside, coming to the big city, confronting the tricks and the blind spots, the enticements and the cul-du-sacs of the cultural establishment, slowly figuring out how to make living as a creative person. A man in opposition getting some kind of position, but all the way through knowing it’s illusionary, all these theatrical behaviours and maintainances of codes and rituals.

But the bildungsroman that makes up the life of the Swedish composer, writer, sound and performance artist Sten Hanson is peculiar and strange, full of incongruities and dark secrets. He’s a country boy and an outsider, but also an inventor and a magus in his own universe, a dream weaver, an escape artist, a deranger. He comes from a special place and a special climate, an old-fashioned and isolated country life in the northern parts of Sweden, but the transformations that will signify his development as an artist, from modernist poetry to electronic compositions, from conceptual writings to wild performance pieces, stand in a particular relation to his background. His childhood life in the woods, in the Swedish wilderness, is to be reflected in his works. The fragmented destructions of the body and the memories of melodies and sentences will be contained and written over.

You can see it on the cover of Sten Hanson’s *Autobiography*, a cd from 2001 on the Firework Edition Records, consisting of a long story in six chapters read by Sten Hanson + field recordings and electronic sounds and an appendix called My Galloping Heart. On the cover is a photograph of a five year old Sten Hanson out skiing on a field, clothed in a warm sweater, mittens and an earflap cap, with high spruces and pines in the background. This very important piece for the understanding of Sten Hanson’s artistry paints an imaginary landscape through the roughness of the story and the specific presence in Sten’s voice, telling his personal version of the Tristram Shandy tale about how an artist’s body comes into the world. It’s told straight and direct, with a certain bleakness in the tone; no sentimentality, no emotional outbursts. But the awkward details, like in chapter 3 where his grandfather goes into the woods with his rifle on a bright day with high and light blue sky and suddenly sees a lonely swan on a small lake, have a dreamlike effect on the listener:

”Without thinking or hesitating he lifted his rifle to shoot at the swan. And then he experienced something that happens to very few people. Mortally wounded the swan was singing its swan song, a vibrating outlet of pure sorrow ending in a long dissolving tone, whereafter the swan dived under the surface and was no more to be seen. My grandfather went homewards with heavy hesitating steps and his hair had turned white. After that day he remained a depressed and silent man and sorrow never left his eyes.”

Later on the text, in chapter 5, Sten Hanson writes about the illness of his mother, and her death in tuberculosis when he was nine years old. ”The last time she came home she was very thin and pale. Her skin was white like the skin of a dead fish. Occasional fever roses bloomed on her cheeks. Her beautiful dark red hair had

become thin and lustreless and was clinging to her head like withered grass. Her breasts had almost disappeared. Because they had taken out her ribs on the left side, her chest was sunken and had caved in so it nearly touched her back. She had been sent home to die. The sanatorium always sent patients home for their last weeks. It looked better in the papers and was less frightening to future patients if people were sent home 'recovered' rather than to die there. Nobody told me anything. I was nine years old and not supposed to understand. But children know. Especially since I overheard my mother's aunt Ebba saying: 'It can't be long now. When you hold her arm marks from your fingers remain, her skin is not smoothing out. The marks stay.'"

Yes, the marks stay. In this particular work, the dialogue with the landscape of Sten Hanson's childhood and the surrounding woods and lakes of the northern parts of Jämtland, where he was born in the village Skålan in the parish of Klövsjö in 1936, creates a long and phantasmagoric timeline. The piece is moving back and forth between dream and reality, in between the memories and the sounds of the forest. The presence of the swan song and the melancholy dimensions of all that's been lost, make the territory of the past a most vivid place. The little kid on a skiing tour in the heavy snow, in front of the high trees and the grey sky, and just a year before he will become aware of his mother's deathly illness: this picture corresponds with the old composer confronting the fact that his own body is failing and falling apart. In the appendix piece, "My Galloping Heart", Sten Hanson has used the sounds from a dramatic visit to the Emergency Room in a hospital, after his heart had started to beat two or three times faster than normal. "Several ultrasonic heart examinations were performed, and they were all recorded on video. I managed to obtain a copy of those videos. The sounds from them are, with the exception of the final electronic choir, the only sources of the sounds in this composition, which tries to depict the positive and negative experience of how fragile man can be and yet how strong the will to live really is."

The importance of *Autobiography* has to do with its original form. It's completely impossible to categorize; is it literature or music, sound art or some kind of dream poetry? It manipulates with time, puts the end before the beginning, makes the life sequence into a circle. Still it's clearly told, one thing after another,

Sten Hanson started as a poet and a fiction writer, publishing three books in a row, around 1960. His debut was a poetry collection, *Sträv som starren* (Harsh as the Sedge), published in 1959. The year after a book of short stories came out, *Bleksommar* (Bleak Summer), and in 1962 another book of poems, *En ung poet i Stockholm* (A Young Poet in Stockholm). Some of the reviewers were really enthusiastic, like the Nestor among the literary critics, Olof Lagercrantz, who wrote in the main daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* that the debut book was "unusually mature and characterized by an infallible taste and concentration. Sten Hanson has the sullen strength of a mountain birch that impresses. His 'Evil lullabies', slightly related to the macabre nursery rhymes written by Hjalmar Gullberg in his youth, have the right sick enchantment and the suite about death, walking over the moss with the tufts swaying under the heels, is poignantly laconic, just like wilderness in itself."

Most of these texts were written before Sten Hanson turned 20, in the years 1952-55. When the books were printed again, in a new, collected edition in 2007 called *Antediluvianska skrifter* (Antediluvian Writings), Sten Hanson wrote a postscript about his early literary dreams. But he began the text by mentioning the even earlier dreams of becoming a professional skier, getting the triumphal wreath over the shoulders in the national Vasa race by the famous radio profile Farbror Sven (Uncle Sven).

But when his books finally came out, 1959-62, Sten Hanson's interests had turned in other directions. In a meeting with the writers association *Litterära unionen* (The Union of Literature) in Stockholm in October 1960, he held the introductory speech called "The current situation in young Swedish literature", calling for a stronger

engagement among the writers and saying the writers of the 1950s "have distanced themselves from non-literary sections of the society". Sten Hanson had moved to Stockholm in the end of the 1950s, with the goal of studying composition at the Royal Academy of Music. But he soon felt frustrated by the prevailing conservative atmosphere. One of his teachers, the composer Karl-Birger Blomdahl, wrote a recommendation letter so he could become a trainee in the classes of Olivier Messiaen in Paris. But moving there in late 1960, Sten Hanson found that Messiaen's authoritarian way of teaching, with series of admiring students listening devotedly, wasn't that stimulating either. Instead he started socialising with avantgarde artists of different kinds, several of them with a background in letterist circles, like François Dufrène, Wolf Vostell, Gil Wolman and Bernard Heidsieck. He also met people with Fluxus connections, like Daniel Spoerri, and the mysterious painter Yves Klein. The whole scene was changing and in a state of creative turmoil. Poets switched from writing for the printed page to using tape recorders and manipulations with sound. Painters left painting behind, and turned to the ideals of the Happening, letting the performance be the new canvas. Composers started to understand the role of chance and indeterminacy, rejecting the strict and systematized rules of serial music.

An early meeting with John Cage in Paris during these years was to have a decisive influence on Sten Hanson's artistic development. A reference to the conversation can be found in a much later homage poem, "After John", written as a mesostic for a broadcast memorial evening organized by Deutschlandfunk and the magazine Musiktexte, after Cage's death in 1992. It's a short text with many layers.

John  
said to the cOuntry boy  
wHy culminations  
maybe boredom opeNs you up  
Cruelly  
there's A big hole in the world  
the Good days of happy new ears  
are gonE

The boredom mentioned has to do with a particular interest in extreme repetitions, to be found for example in Erik Satie's piano composition *Vexations* from 1893. This one-page score piece, to be played 840 times in a row, got its first public performance in September 1963 in New York, in an event organized by John Cage. Satie's famous sentence "Boredom is deep and mysterious" summarizes the spirit of many of the early Fluxus actions, by artists like George Brecht, Dick Higgins and George Maciunas. In his 1966 essay "Danger and Boredom" Dick Higgins answers the question "Boring?" as follows: "Of course; if one were to ignore the more intense activity ... which took one beyond the level of simple boredom". This state of things Higgins calls "super-boredom", and describes it as a "dialectic between boredom and intensity". One of Higgins' starting-points for this text is a work by the Fluxus-affiliated poet and performance artist Jackson McLow called *Tree Movie*. For McLow's 75th birthday in 1997 Sten Hanson wrote the permutation poem *That Jackson is My Favourite Poet* for his friend, to be read loud and consisting of that single line repeated many, many times, with slight variations.

But why boredom and repetition? Why did it have such an influence on the evolution of Swedish sound art and text-sound compositions? And what is Sten Hanson's special role in this transformation process? It's interesting

to compare Sten Hanson's development as an artist in the beginning of the 1960s with his colleague and friend Åke Hodell who, rather independently, went through the same kind of transformations, from modernist poetry to sound art and concrete sound poetry. Åke Hodell, born 1919, had published his first book of poetry in 1953, but then got more interested in using technical terms and the giving of orders in military language in a most repetitive way, something that caused him trouble in getting his second poetry collection published (when it finally came out, in 1962, it was in a much more reduced and traditionally looking form than intended). Sten Hanson and Åke Hodell knew each other personally and met several times around 1960, in the beforementioned Union of Literature and also at Tennstopet, a famous drinking place for writers and artists in the Klara district of Stockholm.

When I visited Sten Hanson in 2008, interviewing him for my book about Åke Hodell published in 2009, Sten mentioned the intensities of their discussions. One thing that came up again and again was the writings of the American former fighter pilot Claude Eatherly who had been the pilot of Straight Flush, one of the seven B29s that took part in the Hiroshima mission in 1945. After the war Eatherly had started to correspond with the Austrian philosopher and pacifist Günther Anders, and together they had published the book *Burning Conscience: The Story of the Hiroshima pilot Claude Eatherly, told in his letters to Günther Anders*. "Norman Mailer and Truman Capote often referenced that book, and the subject of the nuclear bomb and nuclear war was very latent. Åke Hodell's commitment to humanistic and anti-militaristic values and his experiences of the second world war, with the plane crash in 1941 that nearly killed him, made him very attentive to these questions. We were both interested in making art more politically and socially more relevant. But we hardly ever mentioned what we were working on. So when Åke published his first concrete poem *igevär* in November 1963 it came as a complete surprise, even to me."

Earlier in the same year, in March 1963, the Fluxus-oriented Swedish writer Bengt af Klintberg had invited Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles for three Fluxus performances in a local theatre. Both Sten Hanson and Åke Hodell visited these concerts, and heard Dick Higgins perform two of La Monte Young's most radical and monotone minimal pieces, *Composition 1960 # 7*, "To be held for a long time" – in this version the single sound of a B and a F sharp was played on a harmonium and held for 45 minutes – and *566 for Henry Flynt*, a piece that asks the performer to play the same sound over and over, without any changes. In Åke Hodell's case the experience had a strong effect on his understanding of form and expression, and pieces like *igevär* (Presentarms) and *General Bussig* (General Buddy-Buddy), finished in the autumn of the same year, applied similar repetitive principles as in the La Monte Young works.

Some weeks after the Higgins and Knowles performances Sten Hanson was on the way to Oslo and met Bengt af Klintberg on the same train. They both decided to do some Fluxus collaborations, and when arriving in Oslo they asked the chairman of the student union to give permission to do performances in the studentrestaurant, "Studentkroa", and also asked some students and friends to take part. Sten Hanson performed his own piece *Composition for piano, human voice, two apples and pencil* and together Hanson & Klintberg did their collaborative work *Composition for Two Heads of Lettuce*, a piece with the following instruction: "The piece requires two performers, a head of lettuce on a music stand, a whistle and a small charge of explosives. Short signal on whistle. Head of lettuce explodes: A green rain. Long signal on whistle."

The provocative character of the Fluxus activities weren't that new to Sten Hanson though. In Paris he had visited several similar concerts and happenings, for example the big happenings arranged by Jean-Jacques Lebel,

like *Pour conjurer l'esprit de catastrophe* in 1962. Soon after arriving in Paris Sten Hanson wrote several pieces exploring the free zone and middle ground between poetry and performance, music and anti-music. Before he left Sweden he had experienced John Cage and David Tudor performing at Fylkingen in Stockholm in 1960, and the year after he saw them again, this time in Paris, at the American Centre. Soon afterwards he composed *Piano Sonata No 1 for DT*, a score that only consists of the text CON TUTTA FORZA, written on top of the score system of treble and bass clefs. In the piece only one sound is played, a forceful cluster chord that finishes it all. The rest consists of the pianist's preparations, inspecting the piano, walking around it, changing clothes etc. Sten Hanson has never seen David Tudor performing the work, he tells in the introduction to his own interpretation of the piece, recorded in 1996 at one of the festivity gatherings at the Royal Swedish Academy of Music in Stockholm, in front of the king and the queen (this wonderful performance is featured on the dvd-collection *Bats & Butterflies*, with Sten Hanson's performance works). Sten Hanson comes on to the stage festively dressed in a tail-coat, but his behaviour is erratic. He is not satisfied with the grand piano, walks around it and shouts into the instrument. Then he takes his clothes off, switches into trainer shorts and underwear and starts to run around the piano, before finally playing that single cluster chord, loudly and majestically. The look of the royal highnesses is very confused.

Two other similar works, created during the same year in Paris, are the performance piece *Somnabulistic Fugue* – a score with figures showing where the six participants should be standing and moving in the room and a foot note saying "The piece should be performed on a stage with white background. Lights on the background only. The movements must be very slow but continuous. 50 hz sine tone. Duration around 10 minutes." – and the concrete poem *La Destruction de votre code génétique par drogues, toxines et irradiation*, a piece that will later get electroacoustic realisations, one in 1969 and 32 years later, in 2001, in a digital version.

The uniting factor, binding these works together and working as a bridge both to the works of Åke Hodell and to similar tendencies in American minimal music and art during the same time, is the simplicity of means and the directness in expression. The confrontations with the sounding materials at hand are both rough and refined, but the instigating force behind the transformative actions seems, in an awkward way, related to the former poetic writings. Interestingly enough this was the same for John Cage, some 30 years earlier, when he came to Paris with the idea of becoming a poet. Cage was passionately interested in the avantgarde writings of Gertrude Stein and James Joyce, but the way to realise his visions came with the use of percussion instruments, getting eastern and western influences together, accepting the sounds of the city, the noises and the non-intended sound combinations. "Percussion music is a contemporary transition from keyboard-influenced music to the all-sound music of the future. Any sound is acceptable to the composer of percussion music; he explores the academically forbidden 'non-musical' field of sound insofar as is manually possible." (from Cage's lecture in Seattle 1937, "The Future of Music: Credo").

For Sten Hanson the meetings with "nouveau realists" like François Dufrène, Yves Klein and Daniel Spoerri in Paris will have a similar effect. He finds a new artistic language, realising the potentials of using the tape recorder and working with sounds, instead of writing down words on paper. He's still not aware of the parallel work done by Henri Chopin, their collaboration will happen in the end of the 1960s when Sten Hanson initiated and organized the first Text-Sound Festivals in Stockholm and invited Chopin together with Dufrène, Bob Cobbing, Bernard Heidsieck, and his Swedish colleagues Åke Hodell, Bengt Emil Johnson, Lars Gunnar Bodin and Ilmar Laaban.

But the fruitful climate is there. In a text called "The phenomenon Henri Chopin", printed in the Revue Ou-box (*Henri Chopin's Revue Ou, Cinquième Saison*, Alga Marghen 2002), Sten Hanson paints the background: "In 1961, when I first decided to work in the field of text-sound-composition, not only the french poésie sonore was completely unknown to me, but also my knowledge of the roots in dada, if not totally lacking, was at least very small and occasional. My starting point was quite different. As a beginner I was quickly disappointed of the status of both poetry and music. They were overintellectualized and lost contact with their origin. The modernistic (metaphoric/symbolistic) poetry, however sophisticated, had become a fairly bloodless handicraft for the study chamber, where nothing significant had changed since the days of Baudelaire and published in exclusive thin books and magazines with limited circulation totally ignored by the general public. And the experiments in concrete and visual poetry did not seem to offer any promising way for the future ... On the other hand, bringing back the parameter of orality, ignored in poetry since the middle ages, with the help of the new electroacoustic means, seemed to be a good starting point. That would also allow the successful use of simultaneity, that futurists, simultaneists and concrete poets in turned had failed to achieve."

The Paris-Scandinavian axis, that in the end of the 1960s will result in several Swedish text-sound-works for Henri Chopin's ten-inches-series of vinyl editions Revue Ou, is related to the simultaneity Sten Hanson is writing about. A parallel phenomenon to the evolution of the text-sound-compositions-field is the marriage between avantgarde ideas and subversive political actions called the Situationist Internationale, started by French filmmaker Guy Debord and Danish Cobra painter Asger Jorn 1956-57, and bringing psychogeographical investigations of the urban landscape in contact with the Swedish art scene of the sixties, for example via the 5th congress of the Situationist Internationale, held in Gothenburg in August 1961. A similar connection is to be found in Daniel Spoerri's wonderful book *An Anecdoted Topography of Chance*, co-written with Robert Filliou, Emmett Williams and Dieter Roth. It was originally published as a catalogue for Spoerri's exhibition at the Galerie Lawrence in Paris in 1962 and then later translated and further annotated through its English and German editions. It's an encyclopedia and alternative map of everyday things, found by coincidence or through conceptual methods, like a jar of mild paprika bought at Irma's in Copenhagen, "to be used before July 1962", or an alarm clock bought in January 1961 after its glued to the snare-picture, "this new clock, trademarked Alouette Japy, got its face smashed and was repaired three times by the repairman at Place de la Contrescarpe; then the face got smashed again".

Sten Hanson was inside this turmoil, in the midts of the anarchic reformulations, confronting the rules and regulations connected with doing art. He's moving in between the genres, with an openness towards the instrumental theatre and the new minimal dance explored by artists like Yvonne Rainer and Ann Helprin. You can hear it in one of his first experiments with text-sound composition, the piece *Dance Figure (for EP)*, recorded on primitive equipment in his Stockholm home in the winter 1964-65. The phrase "there is none like thee among the dancers", taken from a poem by Ezra Pound, is repeated rhythmically over and over, as in Steve Reich's earliest pieces or in Åke Hodell's works from the same time. The minimalism is of a special and personal kind, rough and simple, but the result is complex and refined. The relation to dance movements is emphasized in the video version for Swedish Television, done in 1975 together with the dancer Hermine von Essen and featured on the dvd *Bats & Butterflies*, and here the sublime dimensions in Sten Hanson's early sound pieces really come through. The dialogue taking place, with the other person addressed in the piece, has to do with a democratic dimension signifying the experimental dance and theatre worlds. The same transformations, that would bring

Sten Hanson to the front of the contemporary sound poetry and electronic music scene, characterize the evolution of Swedish composer Folke Rabe's personal minimalism. In his case the meeting with Ann Helprin's Dancer's Workshop, during a visit to San Francisco 1964-65, was crucial for the way he would write pieces like *Va? Was? What?* in 1967 and *Joe's Harp* in 1970.

The combination of political and personal dimensions in Sten Hanson's early text-sound compositions, come through in the four pieces he released on Revue Ou nr 36-37 (*Don't Hesitate, Do It, Do It Right Now* and *The Glorious Desertion*, from 1969) and nr 38-39 (*Revolution* and *Railroad Poem*, from 1970). The energy level is strong and direct and the revolutionary aspirations and requests come right in your face, like quotations from contemporary strikes and demonstrations. Sten Hanson had worked in the same way already in 1965, in a performance piece for the experimental Pistol Theatre in Stockholm, called *Åt alla lyckas bär*, which used fragments from radio transmissions, newspaper clips and demonstration placards (the title was a quote from the Swedish translation of *The Internationale*, in the English version the same phrase, from the end of the chorus, goes "The Internationale unites the human race").

But the personal experiences, the irregular moments and the dream patterns are there as well, combined with the political statements, and result is a most original and awkward form of sound poetry and sound art. One of Sten Hanson's early masterpieces is *Kaffe i Hackås* (Railroad Poem), an evocation of his childhood in northern Jämtland and the slow steam train ride with heated boiler, going south with frequent fuel and water stops. The ticket controller was walking through the train taking orders for coffee at the station named Hackås, and when they reached this village stop the passengers got off and fetched baskets from a nearby café. Everyone was longing for this particular moment on the ride. The daydreaming made the engine and the wheels of the train sing the phrase Coffee in Hackås, and the particular quality of the piece has to do with the transformation. An old world coming alive again. A psychogeographical landscape, recreated by the electronic sounds. A mundane, sleepy and inward-looking country universe, so dreamy it paints the past in occult colours. Through the simple sounds you somehow hear the passengers talking, the old-fashioned words, the rhythm of the sentences.

In the essay "Text-sound Composition During the Sixties, The Evolution of a Genre", for the anthology *Literally Speaking* (Bo Ejeby förlag, Gothenburg, 1993), Sten Hanson writes about this interest in the vernacular aspects of ordinary language and human communication. "The rhythmic aspect of language was certainly an important stylistic element in text-sound-composition, but it was augmented by an insistence on the expressive elements of oral language, i.e. the fact that the sound and mode of an utterance are also significant. That this is the case is easily demonstrated if we consider that a person who can hardly write a letter to mother can nonetheless, in conversation, give expression to complex, half-unconscious concepts. The text-sound-composers set out to discover and cultivate such signifying elements in speech sounds so as to be able to integrate them into a meaningful poetic context. This can be achieved either by making use of the atoms of utterance – phonemes or prelinguistic voice sounds, or by electronic manipulations, filtering and modulation, which obliterate the words' semantic intelligibility, leaving only the voice as sound."

Lots of activities in the end of the 1960s. Sten Hanson became an important figure with an expansive mind, organizing the groundbreaking and pioneering Text-Sound-Compositions-festivals at the Modern Museum in Stockholm, starting in April 1968 and then a yearly event, bringing the international scene of experimental sound poetry together. This also resulted in a highly-valued LP series consisting of 8 LPs, released 1968-1977, documenting many of the pieces performed. Three decades later all the material, transferred from analog to digital

and mastered by Sten Hanson, was released in a CD-boxset called *Text-Sound Compositions A Stockholm Festival* by Fylkingen Records.

But the inner territory explored in his own works during this time is strangely mysterious and dark, for example in the trilogy *Fnarp (e)*, *Oips!* and *Ouhm* from 1970-73. The pieces become longer, create a sense of dizziness, brush out the dividing lines between the external reality and the internal labyrinths. In an important study on Sten Hanson's poetry and sound works, the essay "Sten Hanson. Ett slags flykt" (Sten Hanson. Some kind of Escape) – a part of his dissertation *Hur låter dikten? Att bli ved II* (What is the Sound of the Poem? Becoming Firewood II, Autor Gothenburg, 2013) – the poet Fredrik Nyberg describes these three works, "The Trilogy of Vocal Energy", as a *mise-en-scène* of the different parameters of text-sound-composition. "Here Hanson's textwork is once again close to the limits, or even beyond the conventional exchanges of meaning. With Hugo Ball you could describe the three parts in terms of 'verse ohne worte'. The different electro-acoustic devices take a reserved place and instead the different vocal sounds and strategies have the leading role. The language exposed sounds familiar – it sounds like language normally does – but it seems to be formed by for us unknown codifications /.../ The many important moorings of language are cut off and different transformations and processes take over. Layerings of sound are put on top of each other and new linguistic dominants and choreographies arise and disappear. We are in several places simultaneously."

In one of his strongest and strangest pieces from these years, *L'Inferno de Strindberg* from 1970, Sten Hanson reshapes, reconfigures and remodels the unlimited inner world of the Swedish writer August Strindberg during his mental crisis in the Hotel Orfila in Paris 1895-96. Strindberg is having secret conversations with Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg and tries to make gold in the fireplace with primitive equipments. In the piece Strindberg becomes a contemporary figure, an experimental artist exploring the borderlines of his own language systems, trying out the words and the sounds as if they had alchemical meanings. It's a wonderful work, just like Strindberg's *Inferno* in itself, a piece that manipulates time and place and juxtaposes the rough and the subtle.

During the same time Sten Hanson publishes a little artist book called *Four Unplayable Games*, dedicated to his four friends Åke Hodell, Bengt Emil Johnson, Lars-Gunnar Bodin and Henri Chopin and written 1967-72. The fourth of these games, for Henri Chopin, expresses an outspoken anger about the injustices of the world and suggests direct action.

*"Played by anyone who feels able.*

Write a statement not more than a hundred words long and send it to Sten Hanson, Kocksgatan 1, SE-116 24 Stockholm, who is the sole judge of this competition.

The statement has to explain:

What makes man – year in and year out – to expose himself to exploitation, imprisonment, torture and death...

What makes man go against his nature and fight and kill his fellow man, with whom he has a lot more in common than with his corrupt leaders...

What makes man submit to spiritual and ideological oppression and to stupid and inhuman moral rules...

What makes man a blind whorshipper of degenerated and useless religions, the one more absurd than the other...

What makes man work the hell out of himself against his best interests...

What makes man go with open eyes stright into one disaster efter the other and finally into the destruction of all mankind...



What makes...

The winner takes the world.”

It's still a most valid text, with all its Abba reverberations, written some eight years before Benny Andersson & Benny Ulvaeus wrote their massive hit. It says a lot about why the art of Sten Hanson matters, and how it connects with the world. It has a straightforward quality, doesn't compromise with its means, creates new spaces, for the words and the sounds, and makes us dream of other territories, other mental regions, with free passages for all kinds of thoughts and fantasies.