

SCANDINAVIAN PROGRAM



Stina Fagertun

has coastal Sámi and Kven (Finnish) ancestry and comes from the fiords of Arctic Norway. She has written and collected ancient, unique fairytales from the Sámi, Kven and Arctic storyteller tradition, and her stories have been published as books and CDs in Norway. Stina is the winner of the 2003 Northern Norway Cultural Award and won best storyteller at the 2011 International Storyteller Festival in Oslo.

Ross Sutter

sings Scandinavian and American traditional and popular songs. He accompanies himself on guitar, dulcimer and button accordion. Ross is a frequent performer at Scandinavian festivals across the country including the Scandinavian Festival in Thousand Oaks. Ross has received grants to teach and perform in Sweden and Norway and in 2012 he received the Sally Ordway Irvine Award for his work in music education in Minnesota. He also appeared on the Prairie Home Companion Radio Show.



Scandinavian Festival Outreach Programs

For the past four years the Scandinavian Festival has sponsored outreach programs to schools in Thousand Oaks and Moorpark to encourage students and families to attend the festival and to better understand Scandinavian culture. Ross was on his own for the first two years and for the last two years Stina has joined him in these programs adding her unique storytelling talent to the performances. Together they present programs of Scandinavian music, songs, games and stories to student groups of up to three hundred. Often Ross and Stina will arrive early and work with a class or two teaching them a song, story or singing game and later ask them up on stage when they do the show for the rest of the school.

Ross and Stina have both worked as teachers and as professional artists for over thirty years and are comfortable with audiences of any age but usually focus on grades Pre-K through six with these programs. The variety of material that they have gives them the flexibility to adapt the show on the spot to the age of the students and needs of the school.

A typical show starts with Ross playing his grandmother's favorite Swedish dance tune on the accordion and the students all clap the special beat of the tune with Stina's help. Then Ross tells a story about visiting his Swedish grandma and all the delicious and sometimes strange food she would feed him and ends the story by singing a funny song about eating until you get thick and fat that his grandma taught him. The students act out the song again with Stina's help. Following that tune Ross might invite a student on stage to play the accordion with him (a trick he learned in Sweden). Then Stina will come on stage and talk about arctic Norway where she lives where it often is light or dark twenty-four hours a day. She also shows the students some artifacts from her Sámi culture, including items made of reindeer or even fish skins. Then Stina teaches a familiar song—Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes—in Norwegian with a funny twist on the end. Following this activity Stina will tell a story, usually about a troll or some other funny creature or perhaps a story about a lazy boy who manages to marry a princess. The show ends with everyone up singing and dancing to another one of Ross's song games.

Often students in the audience are not Scandinavian but all through the program Ross and Stina encourage the students to think about their own heritage, family traditions, stories and songs. They also encourage students to come to the festival and help with the show and to participate in the many activities, games and crafts that the festival presents. The point is to come and experience Scandinavian culture whether you have Scandinavian heritage or not. Everyone is welcome and anyone can enjoy this unique and fun festival.
