

Kristina: Development

“Björn and I had spoken many times about finding a story which could serve as the basis of a new musical after Chess. Something sufficiently light and interesting. But right at that moment when I was returning from the kitchen, it struck me that we shouldn't settle for light and interesting. The search should focus rather on material one is passionately interested in. I prefer to work in such a manner, with a story in which I could personally identify. What's more is that it should preferably incorporate my interest in folk music [...] So there I was, standing in the kitchen, wondering which was my favorite book through the years. The answer was crystal clear: Vilhelm Moberg's *The Emigrants*.”

—Benny Andersson

Kristina från Duvemåla by the ABBA members



Music: Benny Andersson



Lyrics: Björn Ulvæus

The Plot

Karl-Oskar inherits farm & marries Kristina

After years of bad harvest, Karl-Oskar (rational, forward-looking) considers emigrating; Kristina (emotional, backwards-looking) refuses

Kristina's oldest daughter dies & Kristina agrees to emigrate

Karl-Oskar's brother Robert (the dreamer) leaves the farm to look for gold on the California trail; Kristina has a baby boy

They reach New York at Midsummer and head off toward MN

Kristina & Karl-Oskar are separated on the ship; Kristina, pregnant, gets scurvy but survives

A few years later, Kristina still longs for Sweden

Robert returns rich, but the money is discovered to be fake and he & Karl-Oskar fight; Robert dies of yellow fever

Kristina miscarries and is told that if she becomes pregnant again she will die; she doubts the existence of a God who would make her choose between her husband and her life

Karl-Oskar sends his children to safety but stays behind with Kristina; before she dies she promises to wait for him at Duvemåla Hage, their home in Sweden

An Indian uprising strikes Minnesota; Kristina miscarries again and is dying

The Musical

- Premier October 1995, Malmö Musikteater & Opera
- Concerts in Minnesota, October 1996
- Göteborgs opera, Cirkus in Stockholm
- Tour
- Four “Guldmasken”

The Cast



Helen Sjöholm
(Kristina)



Anders Ekborg
(Karl-Oskar)



Problems & Solutions

- New York 2006
 - Translation: Björn Ulvaeus & Herbert Kretzmer
- Copyright dispute ends in favor of Björn and Benny
- Carnegie Hall

The Music: *Du måste finnas* (*You must exist*)

"I don't remember in which order I made the songs for Kristina. But I do know that the melody which came last was "Du måste finnas" (*You must exist*). This is the song where Kristina, after having been subjected to inconceivable suffering and hardship, eventually doubts the existence of God. If He does not exist, then she is unable to persevere. That song is, in essence, the heart of the story, and I realized it at an early stage. I wanted to put all the grief, all the yearning into that song. I had in mind a complex and intricate little 'symphony.' Alas! That wasn't the way it turned out.

If I had written that song first, "Du måste finnas" would certainly have been rather tricky. But when the rest of the music was finished the situation was completely different. At that point it was quite natural to do the song with a standard verse and refrain. To do something pure and super simple in order to emphasize the central importance of the musical. Now I've seen the performance many times and every time I feel that the audience is sincerely captivated right at that point." -- Benny Andersson

Bibliography

- www.duvmala.com/
- www.duvmala.com/eng/
- "Ingen ny rättegång om Kristina." Aftonbladet. March 10, 2008. <
>
- "Abba-duo vann tvisten om Duvmåla". Dagens Nyheter. March 23, 2007. <
<http://www.dagensnyheter.se/abba-duo-vann-tvisten-om-duvmala-1.1111111>>
- "Benny Andersson bjuder upp till dans" Dagens Nyheter. October 28, 2007. <
<http://www.dagensnyheter.se/benny-andersson-bjuder-upp-till-dans-1.1111111>>
- "Andersson and Ulvaeus Win Kristina Court Battle; Musical Broadway-Bound". Broadway.com. March 24, 2007. <
<http://www.broadway.com/showbiz/andersson-and-ulvaeus-win-kristina-court-battle-musical-broadway-bound-1.1111111>>
- Hanson-Stone, JoAnn. "An Author For and Of the Common People" *Utvandrarnas Hus*. <
>. Accessed Sept. 2, 2009
- QUOTES
 - http://www.duvmala.com/eng/musical_benny_1.html
 - http://www.duvmala.com/eng/musical_benny_1.html
- IMAGES
 - http://www.duvmala.com/eng/musical_benny_1.html
 - http://www.duvmala.com/eng/musical_benny_1.html
 - http://www.duvmala.com/eng/musical_benny_1.html
 - http://www.duvmala.com/eng/musical_benny_1.html
 - Benny Andersson photo by Daniel Åhs Karlsson http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benny_Andersson_Av_Daniel_%C3%A5hs.jpg