

Malmsjö Acoustic Grand

MANUAL



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GigaStudio Installation

1. Load the CD into your CD-ROM reader.
2. Double-click the "MAG Giga.exe" icon.
3. In the dialog that opens, click the "browse" button, and choose where to install the sample. The installation will create a folder named "Malmsjo Acoustic Grand", containing the .gig-file and the help-files. The help-files are accessible from within GigaStudio by clicking the "info" button.
4. Click the "Install" button. The installation will take about five minutes.

Kontakt Installation

Below you will find a detailed guide to the procedure of installing the Malmsjo sample for the first time. Even an experienced user may find these instructions useful.

But first, a tip about playing the sample:

If your output level meter on the Kontakt interface goes in the red while playing, and you get distortion: Lower your keyboard's velocity output rather than turning down the volume on the Kontakt console. The patches are calibrated so only the fortississimo will reach this high. The realism, and the tone of the piano, will benefit from playing back the samples at the correct dynamic levels.

1. Load the CD into your CD-ROM reader.
2. Double-click the "MAG 20 Kontakt.exe" icon.
3. In the dialog that opens, click the "browse" button, and choose where to install the sample. The installation will create a folder named "Malmsjo Acoustic Grand", containing the .nki-files. In this folder you will also find the sample folder, named "Malmsjo Acoustic Grand Samples".
4. Click the "Install" button. The installation will take about five minutes.
5. Open Kontakt.
6. In the upper left pane, make sure you are in the "files" view mode, and select the folder created by the self-extracting installation procedure.
7. The lower left pane will now show the available patches for "Malmsjo Acoustic Grand".
8. Double-click the first patch.
9. As soon as the loading is finished, the instrument is ready to play.

Optimizing your keyboard setup for MAG

Malmsjö Acoustic Grand presets include the original "Malmsjö Acoustic Grand", "Malmsjö Acoustic Grand X" (with extended dynamics - ff), and Malmsjö Rock Grand (with ff replacing the f-layer). The Giga version also includes three "Wide" patches. MAG version 2.0 also includes the additional patches: Malmsjö Mozart Grand - Same as MAGX, but with more mezzo-forte dynamics. Malmsjö Midnight Grand - Only the dynamics for playing after midnight. Malmsjö Dream Grand - The piano in micro-cosmos. Just the softest layers, for a dreamy presentation.

If you get a distorted output, lower your keyboard's velocity output rather than turning down the midi volume. The patches are calibrated so only the fortississimo will reach the highest levels. The realism, and the tone of the piano, will benefit from playing back the samples at the correct dynamic levels. To optimize your keyboard response to match that of the original Malmsjö grand piano, follow the instructions below:

Using the parameters for velocity sensitivity and response curves, find a setting where you easily can play the softest layer (vel. value=16-24). Adjust your keyboard so that the touch that would carry a melody line will have velocity values around vel. value=65. If this is done correctly, the softer notes of the melody will trigger the mf-layer giving a rounder tone, while accents within the melody line will trigger the sharper f-layer. The remaining velocity values (up to 127) will give headroom for crescendos and ff's.

The piano was designed using a Kawai MP 9000. The optimal settings for this keyboard are: System Settings/ Touch=Normal, and Setup/ Vel Sense= +40 - +45 . Velo SW=Loud. Velo SW value=16.

A very good way to get a feeling for the correct dynamic levels within the piano, to tune the response of your setup, is to play the keyboard up and down once at each velocity layer. Start with the lowest vel. value=24 (ppp). You can achieve a fixed vel. value output if you route the signal through a midi-sequencer or other midi-processor that has a compressor function, where you can set the midi velocity to a fixed value.

Subsequently play the keyboard at vel. values: 37 (p), 58 (mf), 80 (f), and for MAG X, 105 (ff). By the time you have done the ff-layer you will have a good idea of the dynamic range up to fortissimo.

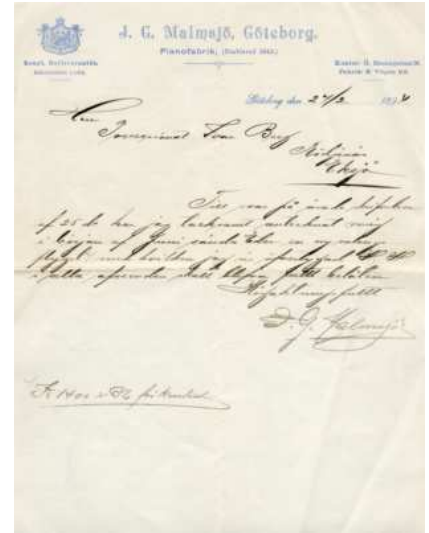
A third way to get some guidance for the setup (as regards to sensitivity, keyboard response curves and volume), is to download a few midi sequences of Chopin piano music played by Valerie Tryon, or Daisuke Inoue from the website: <http://www.classicalmidiconnection.com>

This is a piano from the time when this music was written, and it has a sound very different from a modern Steinway. I hope you will find these instructions helpful, and the piano enjoyable. It is special!

Hans Adamson

Esquire Ivar Berg's 1894 Wedding Gift

In 1894 Esquire Ivar Berg ordered a brand new grand piano. He was arranging for his wedding, and wanted this to be a wedding gift to his bride. As the owner of the Rodjenas estate outside Eksjo, Sweden, he was a wealthy man. It was natural for him to place this order with the leading piano manufacturer in Scandinavia at the time: J.G. Malmsjö. The picture on the right shows the letter of confirmation for his order, signed by J.G. Malmsjö. *Gothenburg the 27/2 1894* "Mr. Esquire Ivar Berg, Rodjenas, Eksjo. In response to your honored letter of the 25th inst. I have gratefully written myself down in the beginning of June to send You a new grand piano* with which I am convinced that Her Highness in every regard will be fully satisfied. Yours faithfully, J. G. Malmsjö *SEK 1400/ 6% down" When the Berg couple passed away the piano was inherited by their daughter. She kept the piano until old age, when she and her husband wanted to move to a smaller apartment, where there would be no space for it. To find a suitable home for the priced possession she contacted the long time Organist and Musical Director of the Mariestad Cathedral: Musikdirektor Gote Persson, a brilliant pianist. I happened to be a piano student of his at the time, and he told my parents about this opportunity. He told us, that at first he had wanted the instrument for himself, or for his sons. On second thought he had changed his mind, and now he offered to arrange the purchase for us.



The piano was in excellent condition. You could tell that it had been loved and played. It had been meticulously cared for by its former owners - waxed and polished by many house maids, and kept in good tuning. It had an impressive bass and a softness to the tone that made it different from contemporary grand pianos. Its keyboard extended only to A7 though, making some pieces impossible to play correctly. We had the tuning pins replaced with a larger size but kept the original strings, which are still on the piano.

The piano made a big difference for our whole family. My younger sister Annika and I were both music students, and my mother is a devoted amateur pianist. To this day she is taking meticulous care of the instrument, daily monitoring the room humidity, scheduling tunings (which are very rarely needed). The picture below shows Annika at age 15, practicing her Bach, Mozart or Chopin.

Today this piano can be heard on sound tracks of many Hollywood feature movies, as well as on numerous television productions. The J.G. Malmsjö Piano Company closed down over 35 years ago, but the sound of this piano lives on and tells stories from a time past. Stories about Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, Stenhammar, Grieg, Alfvén... - It is a time capsule forever preserved.

I hope you will enjoy this classic grand piano as much as I have.

Hans Adamson
Los Angeles in November 2007

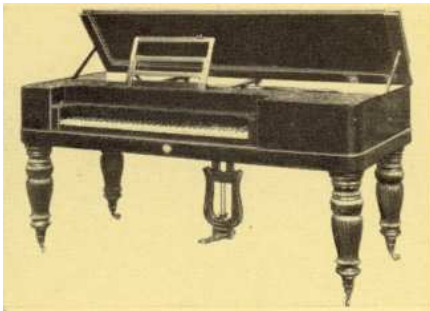


The J.G. Malmsjo Piano Company



Johan Gustav Malmsjo was born and raised in Skane, Sweden. He displayed exceptional musical talent at an early age. After six years of carpentry studies, he decided to combine his craft with music, and started his training to become a piano maker. After initial studies in Malmo, he continued at Marschall in Copenhagen, which was then the largest piano manufacturer in Scandinavia. After seven years he had mastered his craft and returned to Malmo, Sweden, where he built his first two square pianos all by himself. In 1843 he established his piano company in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Square pianos dominated production the first 30 years. The production of Malmsjo grand pianos started in 1849. They soon gained a high reputation, and J.G. Malmsjo became maker to the Swedish Court: "Kongl. Hof-Leverantor". World War I made supplies scarce, and outlets for products were limited for the Swedish piano manufacturing industry. The seven largest companies merged to form 'United Piano & Organ Manufacturers Corp.' (AB Forenade Piano- & Orgelfabriker). J.G. Malmsjo pianos continued to be sold under the "Malmsjo" brand name. The picture to the right shows the Gothenburg factory buildings acquired in 1847 to accommodate the expanding production.



In 1879, the company employed as supervisor, piano maker C. Alf Agren, who returned to Sweden after nine years employment at the Steinway factory in New York. Under his supervision, the production of uprights and grand pianos started to outweigh the square piano production. In the picture to the left is the first piano (a square piano) made by J.G. Malmsjo himself in 1843. This piano was used for performances of older music in the Gothenburg Concert Hall, home of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra. The piano was destroyed in a fire 1928.

Malmsjo piano factory owned forests and sawmills to ensure supply of the finest lumber. The pianos came in either black (French polish), walnut or mahogany. Through the years, Malmsjo received numerous awards for its instruments, among them 28 First Prize and Gold Medals in international piano trade shows. Malmsjo was renowned for its 'salon grand pianos' (of which the sampled piano is an example). The 6ft grand had a tone lacking the 'sharpness' of a concert Steinway so that it would be suitable for a smaller setting than a concert hall, appropriate for a social setting, chamber music etc.

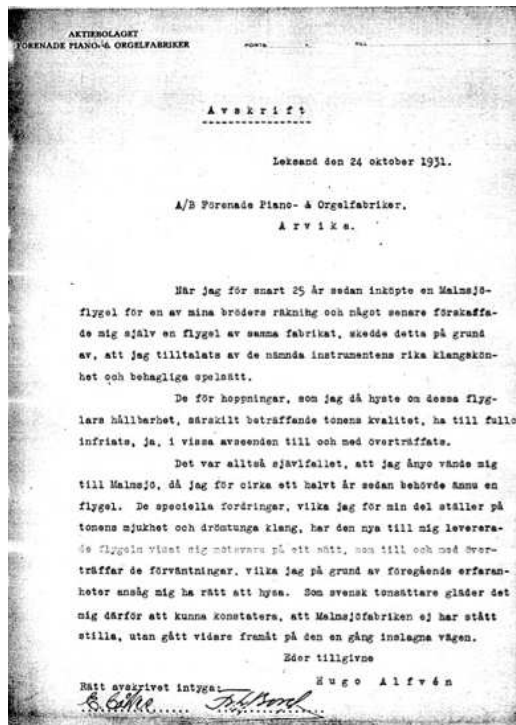
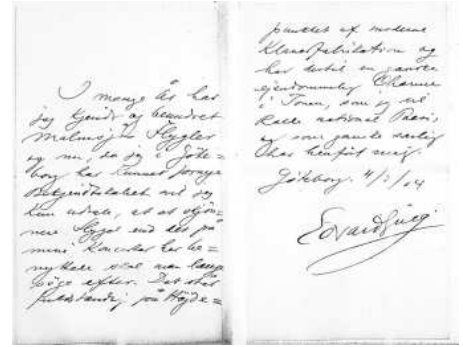
In the early sixties, Malmsjo was facing increased competition. A new CEO without any experience in the piano manufacturing industry took some radical measures. All the forests and sawmills were sold off. The pianos were going to be mass produced, and a new factory was finished in 1966 with state subsidies. The pianos were going to have plastic mechanisms.

The new pianos were a failure. The company went bankrupt in 1968 and was restructured under new ownership (Sthen Hammar). The new owners went back to wood mechanism and aimed at producing high quality pianos in a small scale. The new factory was not suitable for this purpose and all production was moved to Arvika, 1970. The Malmsjo piano factory eventually closed down completely in 1973.

Sthen Hammar the last owner of Malmsjo piano factory has provided me with a few anecdotes regarding the company: - In the late sixties, they made a sensation at the Frankfurt trade show with pianos in all different colors, also pianos in two tone colors. This led to an attempt to get into the American market. One idea that was never realized was to have Dean Martin sing on a television show, accompanied by a colorful Malmsjo piano. For each song a new piano of a different color would be used. Only two pianos were sold to U.S. customers.

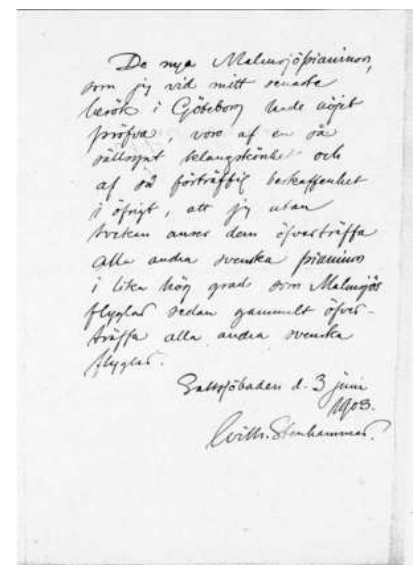
The tone of the Malmsjo pianos has been commented on by among others: Edward Grieg, Hugo Alfvén and Wilhelm Stenhammar, all famous Scandinavian composers from the romantic era at the turn of the century.

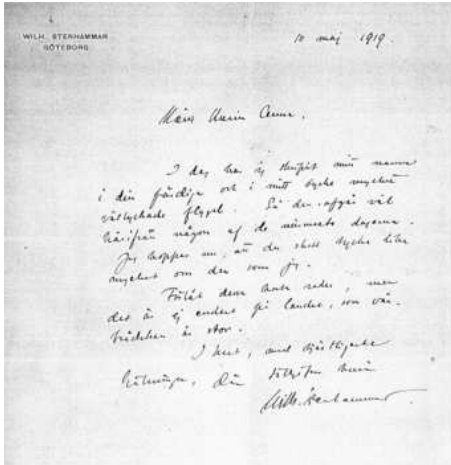
Letter from Edward Grieg to J.G. Malmsjo, March 3 1904: For many years I have known and admired Malmsjo's grand pianos, and now as I in Gothenburg have had the opportunity to renew the acquaintance I just want to say, that a more beautiful grand piano than the one I used at my concerts here one must search a long time to find. It stands completely at the Peak of modern Piano manufacturing and has furthermore a rather peculiar Charm in the Tone, which I want to characterize as national Poetry, and which rather particularly has enchanted me. Gothenburg 3/4/04, Edward Grieg



Certified copy of Letter from the Swedish composer Hugo Alfvén to 'United Piano & Organ Factories Corp.' Leksand the 24th of October 1931. United piano- & Organ Factories Corp. Arvika
Nearly 25 years ago when I bought a Malmsjo grand piano for one of my brothers, and somewhat later when I bought myself a grand piano of the same brand, I did so because I was attracted to this instrument's rich sonority and pleasant way of playing. The anticipation, which I then had regarding these grand pianos' durability, particularly regarding the tone quality, has been completely fulfilled. Yes, in some aspects even surpassed. It was thus self-evident, that I anew turned to Malmsjo, when I, about half a year ago, needed another grand piano. The special requirements, which I personally have, as to softness of tone and dream-like sonority, has in this new grand piano been fulfilled in a way, which even surpasses the expectations, that I considered myself entitled to have. As a Swedish composer I am delighted to conclude, that the Malmsjo factory has not stood still, but proceeded forward on the path once entered.
Yours Sincerely, Hugo Alfvén

Swedish composer Wilhelm Stenhammar about Malmsjo pianos, June 3, 1903: The new Malmsjo uprights, which I at my last visit to Gothenburg had the pleasure to try out, were of such a rare beauty of sonority and of such an excellent quality in all, that I without doubt consider them superior to all other Swedish uprights to the same degree that Malmsjo grand pianos since long times are superior to all other Swedish grand pianos. since long times are superior to all other Swedish grand pianos. Saltsjobaden the 3rd of June 1903. Wilh. Stenhammar





Letter from Swedish composer Wilhelm Stenhammar to his cousin Anna regarding a new Malmsjö grand piano he is sending her.
10th of May 1919 Dear Cousin Anna, Today I have written my name in the finished, and in my opinion, very successfully made grand piano. So it will be shipped from here one of the next days. I now hope, that you will like it as much as I do. Forgive me these brief lines, but it is not only in the countryside, that our haste is great. Shortly, with my most heartfelt greetings, your affectionate cousin. Wilh. Stenhammar

You can find more information about these composers at the following links:

Stenhammar: <http://inkpot.com/classical/stenpfwk.html>

Alfvén: <http://inkpot.com/classical/alfvenorch1.html>

Grieg: <http://inkpot.com/classical/griegsongsba.html>

The following links bear witness to the craftsmanship at the Malmsjö piano company - Musikmuseet ("Museum of Music"), is part of the Swedish National Collections of Music. The museum owns this rare Malmsjö "Banana Grand", built 1934 (unfortunately painted blue by a previous owner):

<http://www.musikmuseet.se/samlingar/detalj.php?l=sv&iid=250&v=2005-03-14%2011:16:17&str=malmsjo>

Musikmuseet's Malmsjö collections:

1853 <http://www.musikmuseet.se/samlingar/detalj.php?l=sv&iid=358&v=2004-12-01%2010:07:39&str=Malmsjo>

1854 <http://www.musikmuseet.se/samlingar/detalj.php?l=sv&iid=356&v=2004-12-01%2010:06:13&str=Malmsjo>

1859 <http://www.musikmuseet.se/samlingar/detalj.php?l=sv&iid=357&v=2004-12-01%2010:07:03&str=Malmsjo>

1862 <http://www.musikmuseet.se/samlingar/detalj.php?l=sv&iid=474&v=2004-12-14%2017:46:15&str=Malmsjo>

1872 <http://www.musikmuseet.se/samlingar/detalj.php?l=sv&iid=355&v=2004-12-01%2010:04:32&str=Malmsjo>

1874 <http://www.musikmuseet.se/samlingar/detalj.php?l=sv&iid=855&v=2005-10-27%2008:55:07&str=Malmsjo>

<http://www.musikmuseet.se/samlingar/detalj.php?l=sv&iid=937&v=2007-03-16%2009:53:29&str=Malmsjo>

<http://www.musikmuseet.se/samlingar/detalj.php?l=sv&iid=498&v=2004-12-15%2010:04:07&str=malmsjo>

1917 Malmsjö intarsia grand piano:

<http://www.hallandsposten.se/artikel.asp?oid=201176>

Many thanks to Sthen Hammar for his assistance in supplying information and material. The Grieg, Alfvén, and Stenhammar letters are all from his collections, as well as the old Malmsjö brochure from which pictures of Johan Gustav Malmsjö, the Malmsjö piano factory, and the first square piano made by J.G. Malmsjö is taken.

Los Angeles, May 16, 2001
Hans Adamson

Sources: Sthen Hammar (The last owner of the Malmsjö piano company)
Malmsjö promotional brochure from around 1960
Svensk Uppslagsbok ("Swedish Encyclopedia")