

ART VISTA™

MALMSJÖ
GVI



MANUAL

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MALMSJÖ GVI

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Safety Precautions

The convolution engine in Kontakt is capable of emitting loud sound bursts when loading impulse responses. To avoid this from happening while using Malmsjö GVI, always keep the "Safety Mute" engaged when using the built-in convolution effect. The Safety Mute will mute the playback for four seconds while an impulse response is loaded. The safety mute will always be engaged by default when Malmsjö GVI is loaded.

User Manual

Malmsjö GVI is based on recordings of an 1894 Malmsjö grand piano and offers a unique sound of the most prominent Swedish piano from this time. The original recordings were made to specifically render a truthful representation of the most subtle expressions of this piano. With the GVI version of the instrument, DEF filters were introduced to offer a widened dynamic response and all samples were re-edited for optimal performance. This Malmsjö piano sample has been featured in the music of numerous Hollywood feature films, as well as television shows. This is the most refined version of the Malmsjö sampled piano, and an effort has been made to fulfill the potential of the beauty and uniqueness in the original recordings.

Loading Malmsjö GVI

Open Kontakt's file browser and navigate to the Malmsjö GVI folder. Drag the instrument file "Malmsjö GVI.nki" into Kontakt's main window. You can also load the instrument by dragging it directly from the operating system's file browser into Kontakt.

Interface Controls – Main View



1. **Presets** – selects the Malmsjö preset to be loaded. “Malmsjö DEF” is the most dynamically responsive preset, and it features a sample of the original Malmsjö GVI played back with DEF filters. The other presets are legacy presets from “Malmsjö Acoustic Grand” playing back re-edited refined samples of the original sample library.

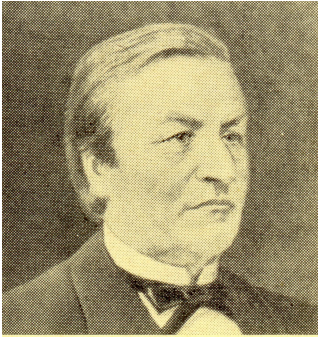
2. **Behavior** – “Natural” setting makes the piano behave like a real piano - with no dampers in the top 1 ½ octaves. The “Hi Dampers” setting provides the behavior of a digital piano – with dampers also on the top octaves.
3. **Keyboard** – calibrated keyboard response settings for most midi keyboards on the market. Generic presets are also included.
4. **Convolution** – when the convolution engine is activated with the on/off switch, the piano sound will be processed with one of the twelve impulse responses to provide specific room acoustics and recording perspectives.
5. **Impulse Selector** – selects the impulse response to be used in the convolution process. A “Safety Mute” function is per default engaged to prevent loud sound bursts from occurring when a new impulse response is loaded. (See also #6.)
6. **Safety Mute** – mutes the audio during the four seconds a new impulse response is loaded, to prevent loud sound bursts. This control is switchable, but should always be engaged (green light) for safety reasons. During the time the sound is automatically muted, the safety mute light will be red. (See also #5.)
7. **Hall** – controls the level of the release sounds and natural ambience from the recording venue. If turned off, the effect will be that of a completely “dry” studio recording.
8. **Pedal** – controls the level of the sound from the sustain pedal and string dampers engaging and releasing.
9. **Reverb** – built in reverb.
10. **Limitter** – increases loudness and lifts subtle passages into a higher dynamic range.
11. **Equalizer** – gain section for the parametric three-band EQ. (See also #13.)
12. **Settings** – toggles between the interface “Main View” and the “Settings View.”

Interface Controls – Settings View



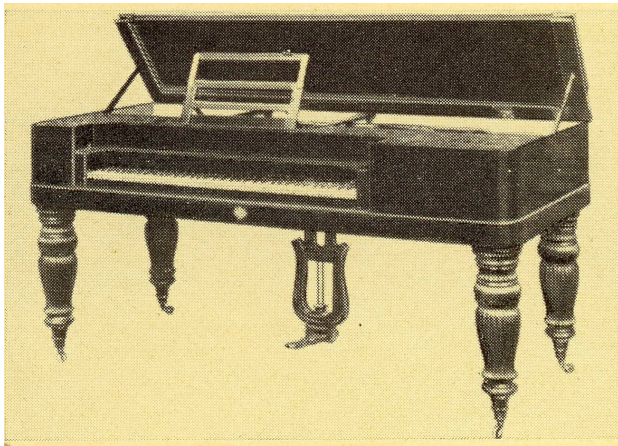
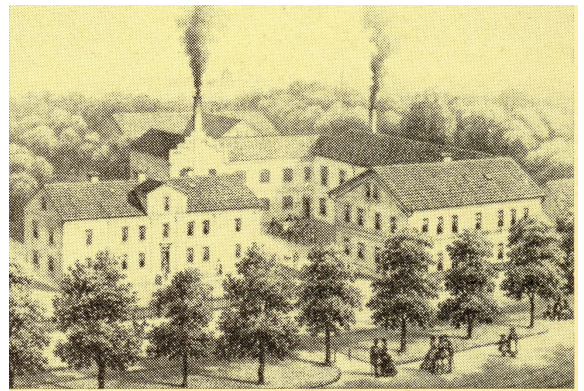
13. **EQ Frequencies** – selects the frequencies for the parametric equalizer.

The J.G. Malmsjö Piano Company



Johan Gustav Malmsjö was born and raised in Skåne, Sweden. He showed exceptional musical talent at an early age. After six years of carpentry studies, he decided to combine his craft with music, and started training to become a piano maker. After initial studies in Malmö, he continued in Copenhagen at Marschall, the largest piano manufacturer in Scandinavia at this time. After seven years, he had mastered the craft and returned to Malmö, Sweden, where he built his first two square pianos all by himself. In 1843, he established the J.G. Malmsjö Piano Company in Gothenburg, Sweden.

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



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

The Malmsjö 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 Malmsjö received numerous awards for its instruments - among them, 28 First Prize and gold medals in international piano trade shows. Malmsjö was renowned for its "salon grand pianos." The tone of the 6ft grand lacked the "harshness" of a concert Steinway and was suitable also for smaller settings such as social gatherings and chamber music.

In the early sixties as Malmsjö was facing increased competition, a new CEO without experience in the piano manufacturing industry, initiated radical changes. All forests and sawmills were sold off, and in 1966, with government subsidies, a new factory was finished where pianos with plastic mechanisms would be mass-produced.

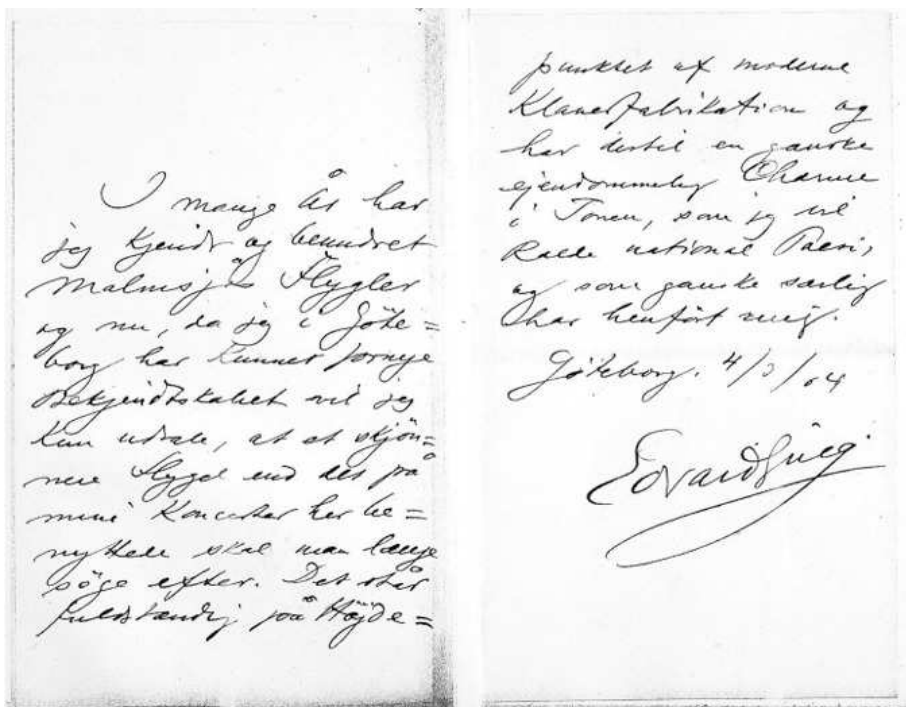
The new pianos were a failure. The company went bankrupt in 1968 and was restructured under new ownership by Sthen Hammar. The new owners returned to wood mechanism and aimed at producing high quality pianos on a small scale. Unfortunately, the new factory was not suitable for this production, and in 1970 all manufacturing was moved to Arvika. Eventually, the Malmsjö piano factory closed down completely in 1973.

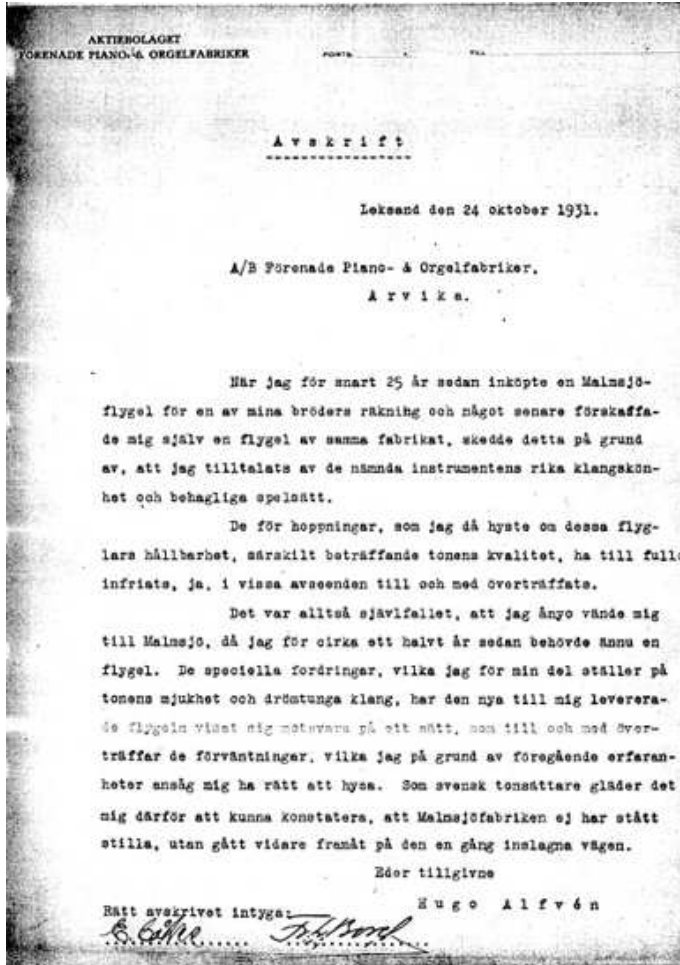
Sthen Hammar, the last owner of Malmsjö piano factory provided me with a few anecdotes regarding the company: - In the late sixties, Malmsjö made a sensation at the Frankfurt trade show with pianos in all different colors, also pianos in two tone colors. This led to an attempt to get into the American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

Norwegian composer Edward Grieg writes a letter to J.G. Malmsjö in March 4, 1904:

For many years I have known and admired Malmsjö's grand pianos, and now when I in Gothenburg have been able 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 4/3/04,
Edward Grieg





Swedish composer Hugo Alfvén praises Malmsjö pianos in a letter 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 Malmsjö 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 hopes, 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 once again turned to Malmsjö, 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 Malmsjö factory has not stood still, but proceeded forward on the path once entered.

Yours Sincerely,
Hugo Alfvén

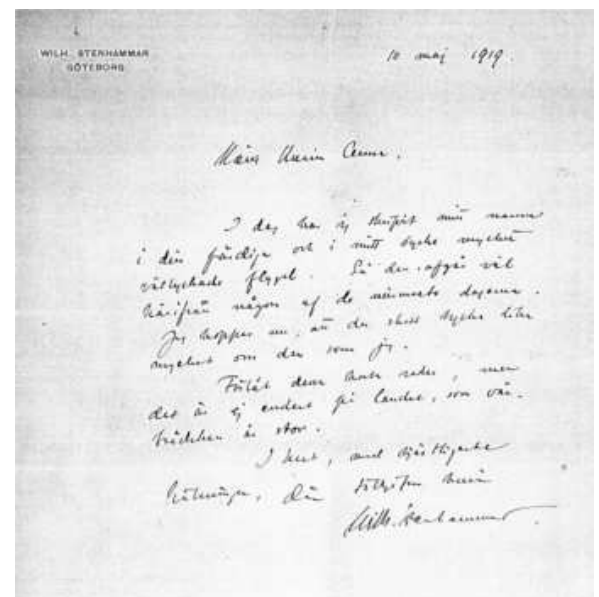
In a letter to his cousin Anna, Swedish composer Wilhelm Stenhammar writes about the new Malmsjö grand piano he is shipping to her.

10th of May 1919

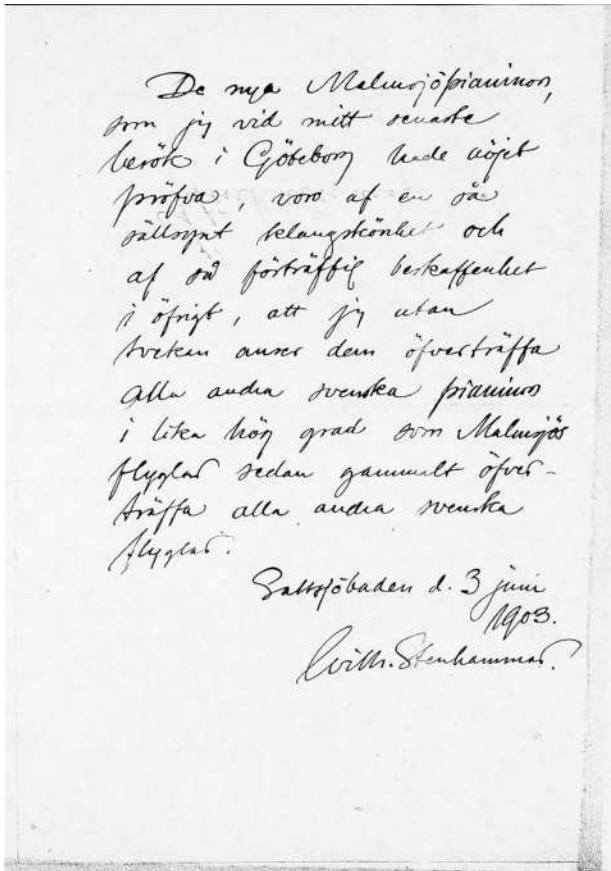
Dear Cousin Anna, Today I have written my name in the finished, and in my opinion, very successfully made grand piano. So it will be shipped from here in the next few days. I now hope, that you will like it as much as I do. Forgive me these brief lines, but it is not only in the countryside, that our haste is great.

In haste, with my most heartfelt greetings, your affectionate cousin.

Wilh. Stenhammar



Swedish composer Wilhelm Stenhammar wrote about Malmsjö pianos in June 3, 1903:



The new Malmsjö uprights, which I during 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 Malmsjö grand pianos for a long time have been superior to all other Swedish grand pianos.

Saltsjöbaden the 3rd of June 1903.
Wilh. Stenhammar

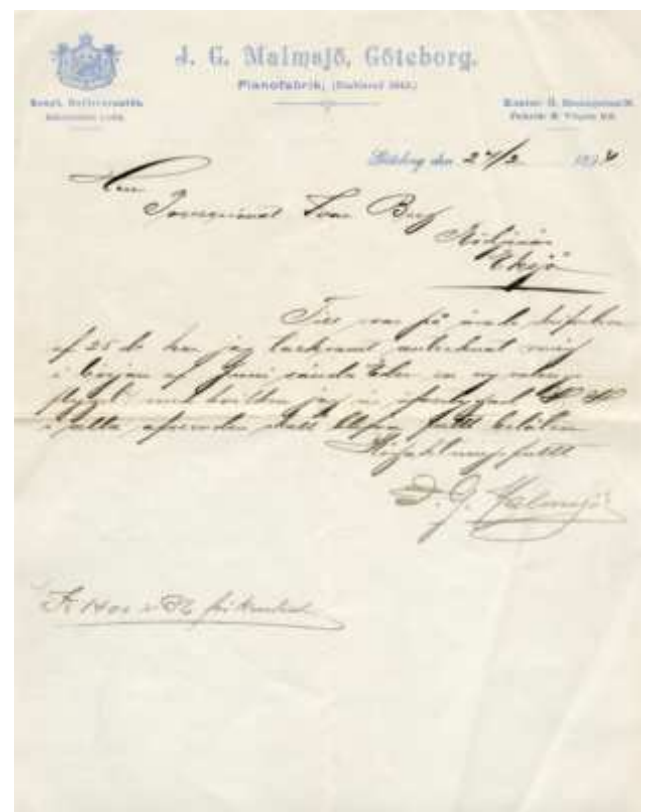
Esquire Ivar Berg's 1894 Wedding Gift

In 1894, Esquire Ivar Berg ordered a brand new grand piano as a wedding gift for his bride. Being the owner of the Rödjenäs estate outside Eksjö, Sweden, he was a wealthy man and it was natural for him to place the order with the leading piano manufacturer in Scandinavia at the time: J.G. Malmsjö. The picture on the right shows the letter of confirmation of his order. Malmsjö wrote:

Gothenburg the 27/2 1894

Mr. Esquire Ivar Berg, Rödjenäs, Eksjö. 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 Esquire Ivar Berg and his wife passed away, the piano was inherited by their daughter, who owned the piano until old age. Eventually, when she and her husband moved to a smaller apartment, they no longer had room to keep it. To find a suitable home for the prized possession she contacted the long time Organist and Musical Director of the Mariestad Cathedral: Musikdirektör Göte Persson, a brilliant pianist. I was a piano student of his at the time, and he let my parents know about this opportunity. He had been enchanted by the piano and initially wanted to purchase 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, played and meticulously cared for by its former owners - waxed and polished by many house maids, and always 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, 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 takes 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 historic grand piano as much as I have.

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 were taken.

Hans Adamson
Los Angeles in November 2007