

This interview was a part of the afternoon radio show "Lantz i P1" and was broadcasted by Sveriges Radio AB at April 3rd 2007.

Present: Annika Lantz (reporter), Anders G Carlsson (sidekick) and Ola Salo (artist).

(Annika): Ola, please enter, there you are! Anders and Ola, have you met before?

(Anders): Actually we have not.

(Ola): But you have worked with Melodifestivalen, so I've heard. But not this year ...

(Annika): No, you did that instead.

(Anders): No, I missed it this year.

(Annika): I always have someone in the studio who has been in or has worked with Melodifestivalen.

(Ola): Okay, fine. Good.

(Annika): Yes, isn't it so?

(Ola): ... I hear nothing here ...

(Annika): I can help you. Do you hear now? Talk! Do you hear yourself now?

(Ola): Hahaha ... ho, ho ... I don't know, maybe you don't hear ... now I hear!

(Annika): But it is still funny when you say ho ho ho ...

(Ola): *laughs more and more affectedly* ... what an old man's laughter!

(Annika): Recently we talked about Anders being so darn rudis [local Swedish slang] about the Holy Week, but you are aware ...

(Ola): What does rudis mean?

(Annika): That he does not know anything about it.

(Anders): Do you know what Holy Week is?

(Ola): But I dunno what "rudis" is.

(Annika): So what are we going to talk about, do you think – rudis or Holy Week?

laughs

(Anders): That you are totally at a loss, you know, totally gone. Have you never heard it?

(Ola): A Stockholm expression?

(Annika): Well, maybe I made it up myself ...

(Ola): Stockholmish ... Are we broadcasting?!

(Annika): Yes. Oh yes.

(Ola): My God, what a relaxed attitude you have to a live broadcast ...

(Anders): The media ...

(Annika): Yes, it was you who started saying ho ho ho ...

(Ola): Oh well. Okay ... rudis ... What is Holy Week, what did you want to know?

(Annika): I want to know, I really want to know – which is your favourite day in Holy Week? *laughs*

(Ola): Well ... I don't know. Ash Wednesday, maybe?

(Annika): Yes, that is the same as *Dymmel* Wednesday [Holy Wednesday]?

(Anders): Oh, check what experts you are! You knew another name, I did not even know what Ash Wednesday ...

(Ola): No, Ash Wednesday is something else, that is the day after Shrove Tuesday. And that is when Lent starts. Maybe you know that sometimes it is Christmas again [alludes to a famous Swedish Christmas song]? Haha ... not now, but sometimes it is. And then ... you can say it lasts during a certain period of time, some think it ...

(Annika): But in between there is Lent [alludes to the same song].

(Anders): Oh yes, I know, I know about such things.

(Ola): So it lasts until Easter, but some claim there is a pause. In between there is Lent. But some say it ends already at Hilarymas Day, when you throw out the Christmas tree.

(Annika): But why are we talking about Christmas, I want to talk about Easter!

(Ola): But I'll get there, Annika, I'll get there, calm down!

(Anders): You're saying "Ash Wednesday" in an incredibly convincing way.

(Ola): Yeah, I can say Candlemas and Septuagesima with the same relaxed attitude as well ...

(Annika): But I have not heard you mention Sukkoth!

(Ola): No, because that is in Judaism ...

(Annika): It is not a Christian festival ... eh, welcome to "Människor och tro"! ["Man and Faith", another radio show]

(Ola): I have the deepest respect for the Jewish faith, but I was brought up in a Christian home. But we mentioned Shrove Tuesday, then you eat like a pig, that's when you eat semlor [buns filled with cream and almond paste] and stuff ... But the day after, that is like the hangover from Shrove Tuesday, that's when you are supposed to hide your face in your hands, and rub yourself with ash and dress in sackcloth and kick start Lent!

(Annika): You did that???

(Ola): Always. Always. Sometimes it caused problems when you went to school, dressed in sackcloth and with dirt on your face ... no, sorry, but why are we talking about this?

Yes, because we are discussing Holy Week that ...

(Annika): I am heading for something!

(Ola): Well, that is when Lent ends and Easter starts.

(Annika): Palm Sunday!

(Ola): It is the last ... I dunno, Holy Week is the week right before Easter, right?

(Annika): Yes, it starts on Palm Sunday and it's ongoing right now – Sunday, Monday, Tuesday ...

(Ola): Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday ... no, not Ash Wednesday!

(Annika): No, *Dymmel* Wednesday [Holy Wednesday] ...

(Ola): Do you know why it is called *Dymmel* Wednesday, then?

(Annika): Yes, it is about the *dymbel*. This clapper you used to make the church bells more silent, in order to honour ...

(Ola): But the *dymbel* ... oh, that you wrapped the clappers in fabric to make them sound a bit ... like ... less treble-ish. Yes, mmm ... you are very clever, Annika.

(Anders): You are both very clever! I am totally convinced ... I don't think at all that you represent the average knowledge of the Swedish population. I am all impressed.

(Annika): The production team and I suspect that Ola is a genius ...

(Ola): No ... I was just brought up in a minister's family ...

(Annika): Well, not just when it comes to things like these ...

(Ola): But I might just as well be wrong right now.

(Annika): Ola, we'll soon find out! Don't worry. [address removed in this transcript] is the email address. Now we'll learn what is correct.

(Ola): I have hardly understood I'm in this show! Am I in the show now? Are we on air?

(Annika): Do you want me to say you are in? Would you like me to introduce you? Ola S... hey, everybody get that ... You did not hear, but we even played "The Worrying Kind" when you entered.

(Ola): Yeah, right, but usually when people hear my voice I am not talking about *dymblar* and sackcloth or ...

(Annika): But how would you like to be introduced, then?

(Ola): ... Septuagesima or Candlemas ...

(Annika): *giggles* Ooh, please say “Septuagesima” again!

(Ola): *teasingly* You think it is a bit sexy? Then wait until I get to Sexuagesima ...

(Annika): *giggles even more*

(Ola): These are the Church festivities that are a bit ... I dunno ... a bit obscure. It’s like artists. There are alternative artists that are well-known, and there are those who are obscure ...

(Annika): Oh, how exciting. Who are The Ark in the ecclesiastical year?

(Ola): Whitsun, I think!

(Annika): But that is not a festivity anymore, for God’s sake!

(Anders): Not Whitsun, right? It is Whit Monday ...

(Annika): Yup, sorry, it was Whit Monday.

(Ola): Whit Monday, that is more like Mando Diao [Swedish rock band] ... *everybody laughs* No, but Whit Monday is a great day, too ... But so what, well, The Ark is Whitsun because The Ark is all about rapture and the Holy Ghost and ...

(Annika): Yes! This is where I wanted to go!

(Ola): ... trance ... and silliness ...

(Annika): Yes, because somehow I’ve got the feeling that you have a good clue about the Holy Ghost. Anders and I discussed it before, but I have a very bad ... I don’t get ... I have a very tense relation to the Holy Ghost. And then I wanted to hear – what *is* it, to you?

(Ola): Huh? You have a tense relation to the Holy Ghost?

(Annika): Yes, I cannot get a grip of it!

(Ola): But hey, the Holy Ghost is simply the Christian traditional way of talking about a state beyond consciousness.

(Annika): So it is a state, like you said?

(Ola): Yes, it is a state of rapture. But as Christian people believe God is pulling all the strings, they of course also believe that great inspiration, when it comes, also comes from God. And the transmission of this is what you, in Christian tradition, call the Holy Ghost. Really, the Holy Ghost is just the Christian traditional way of talking about rapture,

inspiration ... *flow*, to use a modern, new Swedish word.

(Annika): But, er, you mean it is something crea... are *sure* about that?

(Ola): Well, I am sure about what *I* think. I don't give a d*mn about what other people believe in.

(Annika): But you made it up, or did someone tell you ...?

(Ola): No, but seriously, this is what it's like: The Holy Ghost is something God can infuse in humans, making them a bit extra filled with the strength of the Lord. And that is what Whitsun is about. The disciples were a bit worried, you know, about going out on a mission. They had had this incredibly charismatic leader, Jesus, and suddenly they were on their own and did not know how to do. And Whitsun is celebrated as it was by then the Holy Ghost came to them, and they spoke in tongues and became awfully extroverted and charismatic. A bit like The Ark, you know, extroverted and charismatic ...

(Annika): ... and ran through the market place in Mariestad, in the nude. [refers to an infamous episode in the history of The Ark ...]

(Ola): It is not mentioned in the Bible, but in the Apochrypha ... *everybody laughs*

(Annika): *whispers* Anders, sometimes he maybe just makes things up ... but I dunno...

(Anders): But it sounds so good! Sounds as if it was true.

(Annika): *laughs* What do you mean? Mariestad? A big, religious event ...

(Ola): It is mentioned in the book of Ezra, 35:20 ... no. But, seriously ...

(Annika): But still I think it sounds a bit, you know ... that it would be at Whitsun as the Holy Ghost is present ...

(Ola): No, no, no. Mother is also present other days than on Mother's Day, isn't she?

(Annika): Yeah ... yes, *good*, I like that type of concrete metaphor!

(Ola): But we have to have a day to celebrate ... mother.

(Annika): Does everybody have the Holy Ghost within themselves?

(Ola): OK, let's split it up like this: To me, as I describe it, it is a Christian image of a state beyond consciousness, a state of inspiration, a state of rapture, a flow state, you know ... And I think this is something very important, my life is very much about this issue.

(Annika): But, on the other hand, flow is something very conscious. You are very

focused, and it all just happens in you.

(Ola): Um, I would say that a state of flow is a state when you don't use your consciousness in the normal way, not thinking that you are thinking. Instead you are in a higher state of mind, it is like something bigger within yourself that makes you do what you do. You know, when you get the flow, when you are sitting here in the studio and suddenly – the words just flow freely and you hardly know what to say next, but still only real good stuff comes out ...

(Annika): So you heard the beginning of this show, huh?

(Ola): No, this was purely hypothetical. I have never, um, listened to a show of yours, I think ... but you must have your moments, too. Even a broken watch shows the right time twice a day.

(Annika): *laughs* But when I'm like that, I feel *very* present, not at all beyond consciousness.

(Ola): But presence and consciousness are two totally different things.

(Annika): Well ... that is what I feel. Maybe I've never had this divine inspiration?

(Ola): This kind of ecstatic, Holy Spirit state of mind, is a state of intense presence.

(Annika): But non-intellectual?

(Ola): But you don't regard yourself from the outside.

(Annika): Can you put yourself in such a state of mind?

(Ola): Wait ... *laughs* No, but my point of view ... when we are becoming people in this society, we develop our consciousness. Consciousness is about comparing yourself with other people. We learn it from our parents, who are telling us "Look at you. Look how the others are doing! Are they doing like you?" and this is what, in a way, creates the foundation of consciousness. You compare yourself with other people, you regard yourself from outside. You develop a kind of a third eye that always inspects yourself from outside.

(Annika): So the superego is a construction? Um, of course it is, how stupid of me.

Please, go on ...

(Ola): Now we are getting a bit too Freudian.

(Annika): Let's go back to religion.

(Ola): So, you look at yourself from outside and this consciousness ... it is very important

when you are about to learn things. Most of the things I think about this topic are inspired by a book called “Märk världen” [Spüre die Welt], written by a man called Tor Nørretranders, and I recommend it very much. It is about intuition and consciousness. Something that inspired me a lot in this book is the thought that our society has a fixation on consciousness. We have got the idea that “consciousness” is, more or less, the same as “soul”. We have equated soul and consciousness. But consciousness is, in fact, just a small part of the soul, a small part of the spiritual activity.

(Annika): But it is a part you can describe in words, and that feels safe ...

(Ola): Yes, but the rest can be described through art, for example.

(Annika): But if you don't have those tools, then?

(Ola): Everybody can do it! But we are getting there later, Annika! In this book he describes consciousness as the desktop in a computer. It is an illusion that we have control, and it is also an illusion that this is the soul. But there are a lot of actions, spiritual actions ...

(Annika): ... behind the screen ...

(Ola): Within us, all the time. And this is about subliminal perception and all that stuff.

(Annika): But who is the service support in the book? If things are messed up?

(Ola): Um, it works quite well by itself, doesn't it? But what I find so interesting in this, is the fact that our society forgets the intuitional part, we forget how many other ways there are of thinking and being, except the way of consciousness, to express yourself with your language.

(Annika): But when you are aware of this, how do you use it then? What does your creativity look like – do you work with your impulses, or do you work against your impulses?

(Ola): Well, if you work in a creative and artistic way, both of these parts must work. You have to put yourself in a state of trance, that presence beyond the language.

(Annika): Can you do that, Anders?

(Anders): Yeah ... I think Ola is right. When you say “what a good show we had”, it is because you are in a flow.

(Annika): But I never said that, Anders, for heaven's sake!

(Anders): No, but you could have said it. Because sometimes you are really good.

(Ola): I can say it like this: A good concert with The Ark ... I'm not in trance, or in ecstasy or a rapturous state all the time. Maybe I'm there just a few minutes of the concert. But afterwards I can say that those minutes were what the rest of the concert was about, that they would be created.



(Annika): Do you forget the lyrics during such moments?

(Ola): No, most of the time I do what I'm supposed to do, and I do it very well. But in those moments you can also get the idea of doing things in a totally new way. You get the idea of doing things you've never done before. And that is what I find so exciting.

(Annika): Don't you feel naked after such a moment? That your soul is wide open and everybody sees everything?

(Ola): No, in a way this is what artistry is about. Artistry, creating experiences of art, that is about transmitting something to people, beyond the normal range of language, but still reaching the receptor very clearly. And that is, like ... *pause* ... I think I lost it ...

(Annika): But it does not matter, because I have a lot of questions. That is, I had a lot of questions, but now when I've come to know you in a different way, many of these

questions don't work anymore. It is really exciting! *laughs*

(Ola): Yes, this is what I would like to talk about most of all. But if I am allowed to talk about it, I'm like a kid in a candy store, there is so much I wanted to say about this, and I almost get sad ...

(Annika): Because?

(Ola): Because ... *sighs deeply* ... because there is no radio show in the world where I could get the time to say everything I wanted to say about this.

(Annika): No, because we have only three and a half minutes left now! I feel just like you!

(Anders): Why can Ola not come back and talk? This is incredibly interesting!

(Annika): I know!

(Ola): Because what I find so interesting in this ... to me this is the core of religion. Like this: I know exactly what you mean when you say that you have a problem with the Holy Ghost. But, in fact, it is not the Holy Ghost that is your problem, but the concept of Trinity. And the concept of Trinity is rather weird, that Church has decided that yes, we have one God - but they are also three. And that is a rather strange idea.

(Annika): Can this be changed over the years?

(Ola): Yes, but those who like it may have it, right? But when you start to consider ... the Holy Ghost, as such, is not a bad idea. The Holy Ghost is the part of Christianity, I think, that reminds us the most of exactly all religions that ever have existed.

(Annika): When you talk about the Holy Ghost, it feels like the part of Trinity that works the best with present day, that suddenly was the easy part to understand!

(Ola): Yes, and what many people long for. Because we live in a society where self control is very important, you are supposed to act correctly, say the right things and behave in a correct way. And that creates a very pent-up need of being in a state of rapture. And that makes people do all kinds of crazy things. That they are tempted to go to rock concerts, become football fans or whatever – all this is about our need to take a break from self control and consciousness ...

(Annika): Becoming filled with something ...

(Ola): Yes, something beyond a state of consciousness. And that is what religion, in fact, always has been about.

(Annika): But if you are at a rock concert or at a football game, everybody behaves in a rapturous way. And if you don't fit in such company, if you, for example, are not tall enough to attend a rock concert ...? And if you experience such a rapture in public, people will think you are nuts?

(Ola): Yes, it is like that. Civilisation has, somehow, become a conspiracy against rapture.

(Annika): You mean it is that bad?

(Ola): Yes, a bit, and there is a point in it. When I say things like these, I just sound like a half-woolly civilisation critic. But I'm not, I think civilisation is great ...

(Annika): But somehow you work both in civilisation and rapture, you have found something ...

(Ola): ... I think it is a good thing, but we need valves. We need opportunities when we are allowed to let ourselves go. And we must not forget them, because if we forget, people become mad and depressed. That is what I'm trying to do with my music, then I try to create a forum ... when you listen to this music and go to these concerts, then you get a great opportunity to let yourself go and become filled with something ...

(Annika): Yes, but that is great way of putting it. Anders, we have to start a band. Ola, thank you for coming! Now I'll begin the interview I had prepared: Ola, congratulations to your victory in Melodifestivalen... *laughs*

(Ola): Thank you!

(Annika): *laughs even more* And good luck in Helsinki!

End of show.

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The picture is a public photo from the summer tour 2007.