

Lydia Hedberg

Uno Myggan Ericson

“Exclusively for Bergslagsmor” was written above “En kar ska jag ha mej” (I’ll get myself a man), a song with lyrics by Ragnar Åkerblom that was sung by Bergslagsmor during her American tours. Her musical evenings in the United States were dedicated to the preservation of Swedish culture. She thought carefully about which songs to include in her programs. In addition to songs from every part of Sweden she contributed her own patriotic songs with greetings from the countryside.

Bergslagsmor made three tours of the United States, one of them lasting two years. She got the idea for her first American tour in 1920 when a Swedish-American choir came to Sweden. If it could perform in Sweden, then she could do the same over there. And so she set out off for America. At first there were problems in scheduling her musical evenings, but eventually she became quite popular in both the United States and Canada. During her longest tour she gave fifty performances in eighty-one days, maintaining a hectic pace and overcoming challenges of transportation and communication. In 1925 she published a book entitled "Souvenirs from the United States". During her tours she also made a number of records that were technically more advanced than those being produced in Sweden.

Bergslagsmor (Mother of the Mining District) was the stage name of Lydia Hedberg. She was born in Falun, Dalarna in 1878. After training as a physiotherapist she worked in Germany. She later had her own institute for facials and pedicures in Falun and Sundsvall.

Her debut as a singer and dialect storyteller was in Lindesberg in 1908. Two years later she made her first appearance at Stockholm’s open-air museum Skansen. She was on the radio frequently in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1936 she moved to Sundsvall. The following summer she was a hostess at Furuvik zoo near Gävle and responsible for the entertainment there. At Björngård Villa in Gothenburg’s Slottsskogen Park she always had a large and appreciative audience.

Bergslagsmor was a talented vocalist with a repertoire that ranged from Gustaf Fröding and Jeremias i Tröstlösa to Svarta Masken and Ragnar Åkerblom. Nor was she a stranger to the popular lyrics of Karl-Ewert — if they fit into the rural part of her program." Her singing demonstrated a sensitivity for the text, melody and origin of each song.

Lydia Hedberg did not perform in her later years. She died in Sundsvall in 1964.