

Of Heaven and NC

Ola Hugoson and I don't get together all that often. We both live extremely busy family- and work lives. However, whenever we do have a chance to catch up, I always come away feeling blessed to have this close un-cluttered true friendship, and inspired with new ideas. Some years ago, after such a meeting, I wrote a song based on Ola and his family's close connection to Swedish elite handball team YIF. "*Det Vita Hjärtat*" has now been played and sung along with by crowd, players and coach, at every home game for the past 15 years.

When Ola Hugoson and I got together a couple years ago, he once again told me about his family business' longtime plan to set up shop in North Carolina. Polykemi was the brainchild of Hugo Jönsson - Ola and his brother Lars' dad - in the small southern Swedish town of Ystad in 1968, and now has factories and subsidiaries in many countries. There have been plans for quite some time to venture across the Atlantic and now Ola's son Johan was to spearhead operations over in Gastonia, NC.

A couple of days after Ola's and my meeting, I started mind travelling, as we songwriters tend to do; conjuring thoughts about the fact that Ola has since his teenage years spent a significant amount of time in North America etc.

The first song I wrote upon returning to Sweden, after 17 years in Canada, was the autobiographical "Om himlen och Österlen". It has been recorded by some 25 artists and is one of the most performed at weddings, funerals and other events in Sweden's southernmost region. My song has previously been translated to Slovenian, Danish and Norwegian. Now, in honor of both Ola and his family's amazing journey - and the state of North Carolina, with it's unparalleled beauty - I have written English lyrics.

I was thrilled to attend, sing and play this song at the opening of Polykemi Inc at Gastonia, NC on April 22 this year and now I'm proud to present the recording, where Nashville legend Mike Johnson joins me on the pedal steel guitar on "*Of Heaven and NC*".

One mark of a true friendship for life is your own inability to separate your personal trials, tribulations AND successes from theirs.

Michael Saxell Aug 21,2023 Secret Cove, BC, Canada