

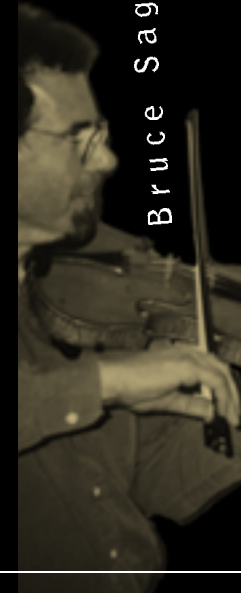
Chris,  
Bruce &  
Nan



Nan Nelson started playing American folk music as a teenager in Urbana-Champaign where she also met Brad's parents before he was even born! She discovered Russian folk music in the late 70s, playing with the University of Illinois Russian Folk Orchestra and the Balalaika Orchestra of Detroit. Nan and Bruce first met in the late 80s through their mutual interest in Klezmer music and in 1998 they started to play together in Veselba. The trio's more recent foray into Scandinavian music has given her a chance to develop her bass playing and connect with her own Swedish heritage. She also plays with the groups Ethnic Connection and Klezmer Fusion.

Chris Rietz and Bruce have been good friends since 1981 and, during the times they've lived within driving distance of each other, have been playing music together all that time. Chris enjoys a certain reputation as a guitarist, often in demand as a session player; but what really brought them together was a long-standing love of Bulgarian music. He has been an ardent player of the Bulgarian kaval (end-blown flute) for more than two decades. Chris has been on the teaching staff of the East European Folklife Center's Balkan Music and Dance Camps, as an instructor for kaval, Bulgarian tambura or directing an ensemble of Bulgarian folk instruments.

Bruce Sagan WITH FRIENDS



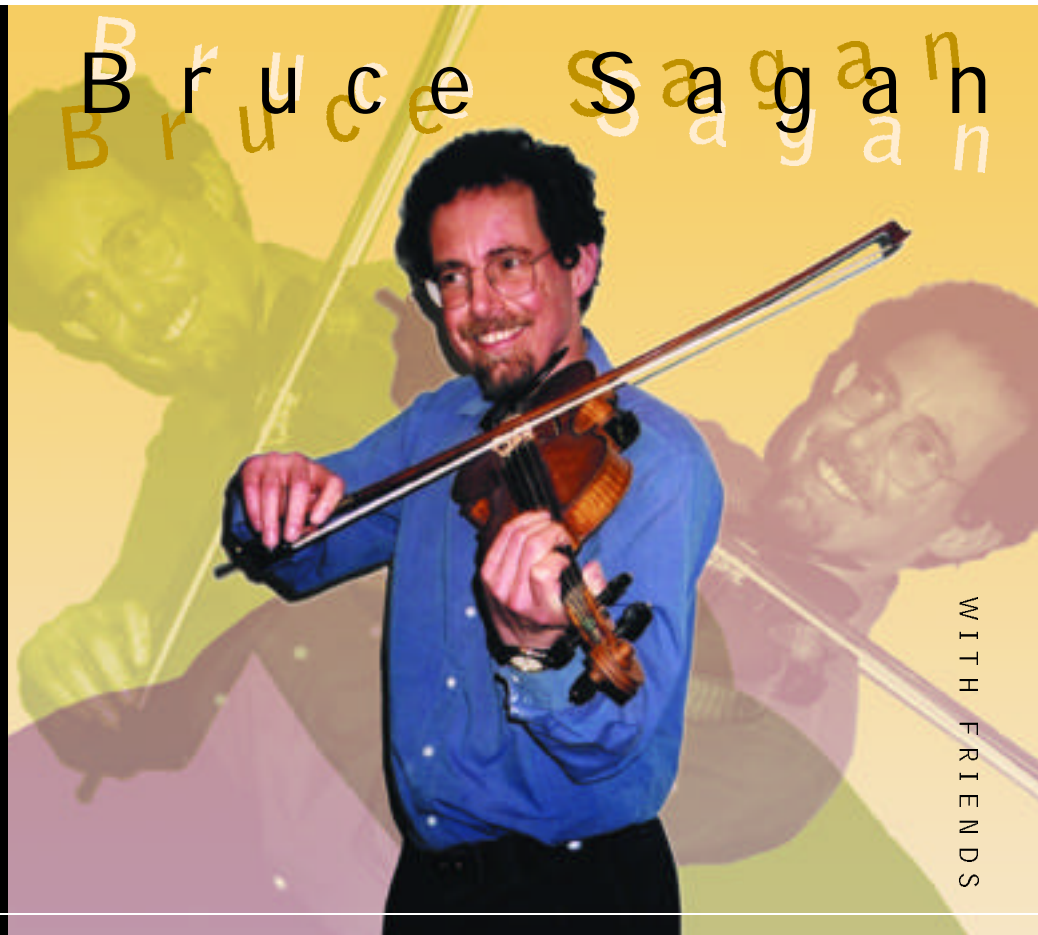
- 1 Bob och Lauras 40-årsvals (©Bruce Sagan) (3:49)
- 2 Freds Festvals (©Bruce Sagan) (3:48)
- 3 David och Sandras Bröllopsmarsch (©Bruce Sagan) (3:32)
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- 7 Balkanpolska (©Ola Backström, STIM)/Dajëovo (trad. Bulgarian)
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- 9 Radomirska Bavna Melodia (trad. Bulgarian)/Kopanitsa (© Atanas Vuleev)
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- 12 Sven och Jorys Bröllopsvals (©Bruce Sagan) (3:01)
- 13 Planxty John and Patty (©Bruce Sagan) (4:44)
- 14 X Hambo (Thomas Thiger, STIM) (2:46)
- 15 Hambo till Sally (©Bruce Sagan) (2:56)

Total time: ?



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Bruce Sagan WITH FRIENDS



Bruce &  
Brad



Bruce Sagan started playing classical violin under his mother's influence when he was a kid. He fell in love with international folk dancing in college and then started to play the music, eventually concentrating on traditions from Scandinavia and the Balkans. Bruce makes regular trips to Europe to work with musicians there and is much sought after as a teacher and performer throughout the US, both on fiddle and g'dulka (Bulgarian rebec). His recording with Andrea Hoag, Spelstundarna, has found critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. Bruce has been music director for various events, including Nordic Fiddles and Feet

(formerly Scandinavian Week at Buffalo Gap) and Stockton Folk Dance Camp. Together with Nan and Chris, Bruce is part of the trio Veselba, which means "merriment" in Bulgarian.

Brad Battey started Scandinavian fiddling with Bruce when he was a wee young thing of 12 years old. Now he's taller than Bruce is, but still loves those wonderful Swedish duos. He is also sought after as a contra dance musician, playing with many of the bands in Southeast Michigan, and has just recorded another album with the Ruffwater String Band.

**1 Bob och Lauras 40-årsvals (©Bruce Sagan) 3:49**

I composed this waltz for my good friends Bob and Laura Stein on the occasion of their 40th anniversary. I was at the dance in their honor when Brian Bishop, a fiddler playing in the group before I was to perform, announced that they were going to play a tune that he had composed for their 25th anniversary. Thus inspired, I went into a back room where I wouldn't be disturbed, and this piece flowed out of me.

**2 Freds Festvals (©Bruce Sagan) 3:48**

This waltz is a celebration of the birthday of my fiddling partner from the Berkeley Bay Area, Fred Bialy. Fred and I play Scandinavian music together, but this tune came out sounding more Scottish than anything else. In any event, I hope I captured some of Fred's sweetness in it. The title is also a pun since "fred" means "peace" in Swedish.

**3 David och Sandras Bröllopsmarsch (©Bruce Sagan) 3:32**

Ever since David Billides and I lived together while we were both in the Boston area, we have been fast friends. So naturally I wrote a bridal march for his marriage to Sandra Dean. When Joe Finn (another of my favorite fiddlers) and I got together to practice it for the wedding, Joe made some crucial suggestions. In

particular, he noted that if we sped the piece up then it would also make a nice schottis, and that is the version you hear here.

**4 William and Lucy (©Bruce Sagan) 2:54**

This schottis also started its life out as something different, namely as the tune for a Morris dance that I wrote in honor of the pair named in the title. Lucy and I dance together on Ann Arbor Morris and her husband William was a math postdoc with me. Again, the title is a bit of a play on words since William and Nancy is a traditional Morris dance.

**5 Inspirationen (©Bruce Sagan) 2:09**

This is one of the few pieces I've written based on pure emotion rather than for friends. The title means "the inspiration" and I was inspired by a beautiful day one year during Scandinavian Week at Buffalo Gap. The tune is in the style of a Bingsj' polska (polska being the most popular traditional dance form in Sweden) although at a speed that is meant more for listening than for dancing.

**6 Brad och Beths Bröllopspolska (©Bruce Sagan) 3:19**

Brad Battey is the fiddler that I play with most these days. So it was my pleasure to write a polska on the occasion of his marriage to Beth. This one is in the

style of the music from Rottvik with its majestic lines. And it seemed fitting that Brad and I play it as a duo on the album.

**7 Balkanpolska (©Ola Backström, STIM)/Dajëovo (trad.Bulgarian)**

Ola Backström hails from the town of Ore in the province of Dalarna and is one of the great Swedish fiddlers and tunesmiths. There are many polskas that are in almost the same rhythm as a Bulgarian dajëovo and this one has a particularly eastern feel. We medley it with a traditional Bulgarian tune that I learned from my fellow g'dulka player and teacher, Nikolay Kolev. Note the lovely tambura solo by Nan.

**8 Ruenitsa (©Atanas Vuleev)**

This is a composition of Atanas Vuleev's, my primary g'dulka teacher. It is in the florid new school style for which he is famous. Bulgarian rhythms are best counted in quicks (Q) and slows (S), worth two and three beats, respectively. So a ruenitsa is in 7, broken down as QQS.

**9 Radomirska Bavna Melodia (trad. Bulgarian)/Kopanitsa (© Atanas Vuleev)**

Here is another pair of tunes I learned from Atanas when I lived and studied with him at his apartment in

Sofia. Both the slow song and the Kopanitsa (QQSQQ) are in Shope style. And the former gives the g'dulka a chance to take an extended solo.

**10 Pravo (©Atanas Vuleev)**

Many pravos have an initial melody with 10 bars. Atanas, being fond of playing with the listeners' ears, uses an unusual first ending to make things even more interesting.

**11 Lale Li Si (trad.Bulgaria)/Pajduokos (©Atanas Vuleev/©Todor Praonenov)**

In this slow song, Chris gets to shine on his kaval while Nan and I tremolo along. It is a song from Dobrudzha, popularized by the great singer, Verka Siderova. The dance part is actually medley of two pajduokos, the first from Atanas and the other coming from a g'dulka tutor book written by Todor Praonenov.

**12 Sven och Jorys Bröllopsvals (©Bruce Sagan) 3:01**

Tom (Sven) Roby and Marjorie (Jory) Nugent are friends who are interested in both Scandinavian and Balkan dancing. So when they got married, I decided to write them a "Balkan waltz." I thought that if I wrote it in 5 like the previous pajduoko, then there wouldn't be many couples at the wedding able to dance to it. So instead I wrote a tune with 5-bar phrases.



**13 Planxty John and Patty (©Bruce Sagan) (4:44)**

This one I actually set out to write in Irish style since John Masterson, my colleague in the mathematics department at Michigan State University, has ancestors from Ireland. That's a mandocello which Chris is playing for the first solo.

**14 X Hambo (Thomas Thiger, STIM) (2:46)**

I have been fond of Thomas Thiger's tunes ever since I first heard them in his native province of Hålsingland, Sweden. Thomas is an avid birder and names many of his pieces after birds and birding activities. (See his composition "Dubbelbeckasinen," meaning "The Great Snipe," on my previous album Spelstundarna.) This one got its moniker after those little x's one puts beside the names of birds one has sighted.

**15 Hambo till Sally (©Bruce Sagan) (2:56)**

I met my beloved Sally when I gave a workshop in dancing hambo, the national dance of Sweden. So when our first year anniversary rolled around, I couldn't resist composing her one. The only problem was that we couldn't dance it together if I were playing. Now that has been fixed.

Thanks to Sally, Beth, and Deb for love and support; to Ola Backström, Thomas Thiger, Atanas Vuleev, and all our teachers for tunes and encouragement; to Bengt Jonsson for help with Swedish as well as fiddling; and to Glenn Brown for being so easy to work with during the recording process.

Thank you for not copying this album. By buying it instead, you are supporting independent musicians and record labels. For bookings or more copies of this recording or my previous one, Spelstundarna, contact Bruce Sagan at 2110 Fulmer Ct., Ann Arbor, MI 48103-2459, 734-327-3636, sagan@math.msu.edu.

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