



# Scanpix

Anyone who's had to organise (or be close to anyone organising) a wedding will know that it takes a degree of military precision to get it right. So when Sweden saw it's first royal wedding since 1976, the largest news agency in Sweden needed a foolproof plan.

**T**he wedding of Victoria, Crown Princess of Sweden, Duchess of Västergötland and her long time boyfriend Daniel Westling, took place on the 19th June at the

Storkyrkan Cathedral in Stockholm— exactly 34 years after Victoria's parents, King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia married there.

Obviously, a lot has changed in the passing three decades. Where media interest in the royals has stayed relatively the same, the ways and speeds of reporting have increased tenfold. Scanpix is the largest picture agency in Sweden and they have an interesting agreement with the Royal Court, as Tobias Röstlund, Production Manager of Scanpix explains.

'We cover almost everything with the royals that's official.' he says. 'We don't sit in the bushes like paparazzi, for this special occasion we had a mutual agreement regarding the coverage.'

Röstlund started out as a photographer himself so this puts him in the ideal position to tackle the main part of his job – taking care of the needs of the Scanpix photographers. His other duties include budget, equipment and technical planning and managing the other content Scanpix produce.

The royal engagement was announced back in March of 2009, but rather than wait for the invitation, Röstlund started planning his strategy almost

immediately. He began by contacting the newspaper association in Sweden, enquiring about the photography pools and stating Scanpix's interest. He also spoke with the foreign department so they knew Scanpix would be involved.

'I also had a lot of meetings with the Royal Court' he says, 'and that started a long negotiation process. It went pretty slow in the beginning, even though we had a long relationship. They had new contacts at the court so they were very careful what they gave permission for. We couldn't wait to see which pool positions we had, so we had to make sure we had the best positions first. I walked the route that the royal couple would take so I knew all the best spots. Then I got blueprints of the church and marked out where we'd like to have the photographers.'

'I didn't know at that point what access we'd be granted so we had to try to cover all the bases. We were talking about cherry pickers and balloons and some kind of extendable poles and stuff, but that didn't work out. As the royal couple would be travelling by boat for part of the journey, we asked to put a camera onboard – the Royal Court said no. We thought maybe we'd put a camera inside the royal carriage, but they weren't very keen on that either. We wanted a photographer to stand in front of them in the church, otherwise we'd just get backs of heads, and again they said no. So I thought okay, we have this really new equipment so we

**Left: The royal families of Europe gather for the wedding of Victoria, Crown Princess of Sweden, Duchess of Västergötland and his Royal Highness Prince Daniel. The photographer, Jonas Ekströmer (below) who was asked by the Royal Court to take the official pictures, had to find a space for the group picture, which was very difficult to do. It was the whole of the European royal family, I think it's 73 people. He took this picture, then we went downstairs, which took a long time because the dress was so long, and took pictures of just the royal couple. We did everything in less than 40 minutes.'**





Right: Röstlund adapted a flight case to hold the D3X, WT4 and remote unit. A hole was cut in the front and the whole unit was placed behind a screen at the front of the cathedral. 'During the rehearsals we realised that we needed an AC power supply. The WT-4 was using most of the battery power because I had to put everything in the case an hour before the wedding. I managed to borrow one power cable from a freelancer and get one sent from Nikon HQ just in time. 'The equipment got quite warm in there but they worked perfectly.'

Left: One of the remote images taken from behind the screen.

can do it remotely. Our D3 cameras are very quiet and by using Nikon Camera Control Pro 2, we could get some nice results, without the cameras being seen.'

The next headache for Röstlund was how to get the pictures to the picture desk and then around the world. Every photographer along the route and in the cathedral had a WT-4 wireless transmitter fitted to their camera, but on a day when 500,000 people would be on their phones looking at news footage of the wedding, live – it was touch and go whether the wireless network would hold up.

'Well we didn't use 3G in the end for

that exact reason,' he says. 'We got in touch with Telia (broadband supplier in Sweden) and we borrowed ten 4G modems to use on the day. However, to get coverage in the cathedral we used 1800 metres of cable, which all had to be hidden. We spent a couple of days planning how to do this and we found different pipes that ran under the floor, so we took a chance and used these. We just pushed the cables through and waited to see where they came out.'

'Obviously, they'd made a lot of effort to make the cathedral look nice and there were fragile decorations throughout the

place, so we had to be very careful. We even had cable running outside the church across to the opposite street to ensure we had the coverage we needed. We ended up with a pretty good capacity, but at the peak I think we used 96 per cent of the available bandwidth, which was really on the edge due to our eight photographers all pushing pictures at the same time.'

In all, Scanpix had 26 photographers along the procession route and inside the cathedral, with Röstlund himself stationed in the cathedral's cleaning room, taking remote pictures and coordinating the small team. All the pictures were

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sent direct from each photographer, via the WT-4, direct to the Scanpix picture desk on the other side of town.

All the Scanpix team inside the cathedral had to wear full morning dress so they wouldn't stand out if a television camera should catch them in shot. Despite the television camera's presence, the light in the cathedral was still quite low, but of course with the D3S this wasn't really a problem.

'I put D3X cameras in front of the bride and groom on remote, and you can only use 1600 ISO on those so it was right on the edge, but the other guys with the D3S cameras were working at about 5000 ISO to be sure. We couldn't risk a blurred picture because we only had one chance to get the shot. All the photographers had their own prefix on the files they were sending, set in camera, so we knew which pictures had been taken by whom. We had separate people in the office taking care of their own photographers and images, so everyone had their own specific role to play.'

Somewhere between 1000 and 1100 pictures were taken on the day, which at first doesn't sound like a great deal but given the guys at Scanpix were shooting a moving target that had to stick to a rigid timeframe for every stage of the event, that's not bad going.

'Everything worked out perfectly,' says Röstlund. 'But if the broadband had gone down, that would have been a total catastrophe. That was my main worry. I didn't really have a solid plan B, we could have taken all the cards to the computers and downloaded them that way – and we even had a bike courier standing by – but still it wouldn't have been a very good plan B because of the crowded streets.'

The reward for all Röstlund's endeavours was a stack of international publications half a metre tall and a seal of approval from the couple themselves, proving that when it comes to photography – whatever the scale – it pays to be prepared. To see the full range of Scanpix work, visit [www.scanpix.se](http://www.scanpix.se)

Below: Röstlund used Nikon Camera Control Pro 2 to capture shots of the couple from his position in the cleaning room at the back of the cathedral. 'The reason we used the hidden D3X was that the couple didn't want any photographers in front of them in the church. The remote operation also had to be quiet so as not to interrupt proceedings.'





'They'd made a lot of effort to make the cathedral look nice and there were fragile decorations throughout the place, so we had to be very careful.'

Left and below: Under the watchful gaze of the Royal Court, Scanpix technician, Moritz hides the 1800m of cable around the intricate decorations in the cathedral. 'We spent a couple of days planning how to do this and we found different pipes that ran under the floor so we took a chance and used these. We just pushed the cables through and waited to see where they came out.'



**SCANPIX**  
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**CLIENTS**

About 100 Swedish daily newspapers and all Swedish magazine and book publishers. We also provide big newsagencies such as AP, AFP, EPA and Reuters with pictures of Swedish events that are of international interest.

**WHAT'S IN THE BAG?**

For this event we used D3S, D3 and D3X cameras and lenses with focal lengths ranging from 16 mm to 600mm with teleconverters. We used WT-4s to transmit the images and Nikon Camera Control 2 to capture the shots.

**WHY NIKON?**

Because Nikon cameras produce extremely good picture quality, even in situations where the lighting is poor and they have a fast and reliable autofocus. The WT-4 wireless transmitter works well and we have used it a lot to transmit pictures from the cameras straight to the picture desk during all kind of news events. Nikon batteries work without having to be charged every single day and, working as an agency photographer, the 200-400mm lens is a blessing.

**YOUR NEXT ITEM OF NIKON EQUIPMENT?**

We are planning to equip photographers who are using a D3S already with a second body and upgrade all our photographers to a D3S.

Below: Jonas Ekströmer, in full morning dress, chooses the official picture of the couple for the Bernadotte Library in The Royal Palace while colleague Pontus Lundahl works opposite.

