MARCH is more than a military instrument apt to shift groups of troops. Over the hills and far away we find a colourful postcard from the East signed Camille Saint-Saëns, a wild and wonderful chaos in 1776, a warm tribute to a Norwegian valley, a moving memorial to a dear friend, and a source of sheer enjoyment as in Percy Grainger’s *Over the Hills and Far Away* – Vitamin C in musical form for children of all ages!

MARSJ er mer enn et militært verktøy for å flytte mennesker i samlet tropp. Blåne bak blåne finner vi her fargerike postkort fra Østen, et vilt og herlig kaos i 1776, en lys og varm hyllest til et norsk dalføre, et gripende minnesmerke over en nær venn og et spruddende oppkomme av humor i Percy Graingers *Over the Hills and Far Away* – musikalske C-vitaminer for barn i alle aldre!
Over the Hills – and Far Away

1 Marche Militaire Française op. 60 no. 4
Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921) arr. M. L. Lake 4:30

2 Children’s March  Over the Hills and Far Away

3 Militärmarsch op. 57 No. 1

4 Marsj opus 99
Serge Prokofiev (1891–1953) rev. P. Yoder 2:13

5 Marcia
Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826) rev. G. Meerwein 3:16

6 Trauermarsch op. 103
Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809–1847) 9:23

7 Commando March
Samuel Barber (1910–1981) 3:17

8 Orient et Occident Grande Marche op. 25
Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921) rev. T. Reynish & B. Parry 7:35

9 Overture & March “1776”
Charles Ives (1874–1954) arr. J. B. Sinclair 3:31

10 Valdresmarsj
Johannes Hånssen (1874–1967) 3:45

11 Bojarenes inntøgsmarsj
Entry of the Boyares
Johan Halvorsen (1864–1935) arr. L. P. Laurendeau 4:46

12 Grand March To the memory of Washington
Ole Bull (1810–1880) arr. Stig Nordhagen 3:13

13 Sørgemarsj over Rikard Nordraak
Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) 6:27

KRISTIANSAND BLÅSEENSEMBLE | Bjørn Sagstad
MARCHES — Cymbal crashes, screeching clarinets and harsh trombones. But a march comes in many colours — and not necessarily one to be marched to.

... a colourful postcard from the East, Orient et Occident, signed Camille Saint-Saëns — wild and wonderful chaos in Charles Ives’ ‘1776’ — a warm tribute to a valley in Norway with Johannes Hanssen’s Valdres March — a moving memorial to a dear friend in Edvard Grieg’s Funeral March — the source of sheer enjoyment like Percy Grainger’s Over the Hills and Far Away ... This is vitamin C in musical form for children of all ages!

In the following programme notes the term “arrangement” (arr.) is used to designate a re-instrumentation by someone other than the composer; “adaptation” refers to minor changes to an original score, and “orchestration” refers to the orchestration of a piano score.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) Marche Militaire Française from Suite Algérienne, opus 60 (1880) arr. M. L. Lake Camille Saint-Saëns was a French composer with a rich output of music including works for orchestra, operas, and chamber music. Saint-Saëns visited North Africa on many occasions. This is reflected in the titles of some of his works, such as Africa, a fantasia for piano and orchestra, or his fifth piano concerto which is known as “the Egyptian”. The Suite Algérienne is also associated with this region and its culture; one of the movements is entitled Moorish Rhapsody. Saint-Saëns, however, looks to home in the final movement, Marche Militaire Française.


“Such an artist, such a person! Such an idealist, such a child, and at the same, such a highly refined view of life.” Thus reads Edvard Grieg’s characterization of Percy Grainger in his diary; the description of Grainger as “child-like” occurs frequently in references to the Australian-American musician. It would seem only natural, then, that he should write a “children’s” march! Frightened by the outbreak of war in 1914, Percy Grainger emigrated from London to New York. For a time he served as a saxophonist in an American military band, and the Children’s March was written during this period. The piece exists in two versions: for two pianos, and for wind ensemble with percussion and piano. The version for wind ensemble was first performed on June 6th, 1919 at Columbia University, New York, by the Goldman Band under the leadership of the composer. The subtitle Over the Hills and Far Away refers to a British folk song, used by, among others, John Gay in his Beggar’s Opera (1728). Grainger simply uses the title; there are no musical references to the tune. Perhaps it refers to the dedication — my playmate beyond the hills”. Percy Grainger never mentioned who his playmate might have been, but the march itself certainly ends up “far away” — the opening key of F-major is quickly abandoned, and never returned to.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949) Militärmarsch in E-flat, opus 57 no. 1 (1906) Adapted by J.H. Matthey The German composer and conductor Richard Strauss is known particularly for his orchestral music, operas and songs. During the period 1898-1918 Richard Strauss worked as Kapellmeister at the Imperial court in Berlin under Emperor Wilhelm II (1859-1941). The composer and the emperor got on well together, although the emperor was not always as enthusiastic about Strauss’ music. Many of Strauss’ operas were heavy going for contemporary audiences, not least Salome (1905-06) with its grotesque plot and edgy dissonances; it was not one of the emperor’s favourites. Richard Strauss thought it wise from time to time to present his employer with something lighter. From 1905 onwards he wrote several marches, including the two of opus 57 which were dedicated to “His Majesty Emperor Wilhelm II in deepest veneration”. They were written early in 1906 and first performed on March 6th, 1907 under the leadership of the composer. The march in E-flat shows an almost demonstratively happy and well-behaved Strauss – without a doubt paying musical service!

Serge Prokofiev (1891-1953) Marsj opus 99 (1943-44) Adapted by Paul Yoder Serge Prokofiev was a Russian composer and pianist, renowned for his orchestral works, operas, and chamber and piano music.

On Sunday 30 April 1944 radio audiences in the Soviet Union heard a new work by Serge Prokofiev, a military march to celebrate May 1. The composer later used this march in his opera The Story of a Real Man (1947-48). The opera tells the story of a Soviet fighter pilot who is shot down and seriously wounded. He has one goal: to fly again. With an heroic effort he regains his health and returns once more to the air. The march expresses the people’s tribute to him.

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826) Marcia J. 307 (1801/26) Carl Maria von Weber was a German composer and conductor, known particularly for his opera Der Freischütz and Oberon.

Carl Maria von Weber’s life situation of May 1826 can be described in two words — triumph and resignation. He was at the peak of his artistic career; he had come to London in March with his new opera Oberon, which was premiered at Covent Garden on April 12, and was a tremendous success. But Weber knew his life was ebbing away — fast. He was suffering from tuberculosis at an advanced stage; the purpose of his trip to London, which had taken place against the advice of his doctors — was to provide
his family with financial security. The weather was not on Weber's side; that year the London spring was unusually cool and raw, and Weber's condition worsened. At home in Dresden his wife Caroline and two young sons awaited his return. On Saturday May 13 the Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain held its annual dinner to which Weber had been invited as a guest of honour. He composed a march for the occasion, but did not himself attend.

His son Max Maria wrote in his biography of his father, published in the 1860s, "At that very time Weber entered a new phase of deterioration in his illness, and he was unable to compose anything worthwhile. Much agitated by this thought there occurred to him during the night of May 5, when he could not sleep, the theme of a March - that which was in the Six pièces à quatre mains ... other ideas attached themselves to it, and the result was the fine March ..." We learn that Weber was barely strong enough to write, and the piece was partially written down by a colleague: "Lying back in an armchair in his feebleness he dictated the second and third parts of this March ... including what in his view was proper to the instrumentation." Carl Maria von Weber died a month later on the night of June 4, the day before he was due to return to Germany.

As Max Weber points out, the first part of the march is taken from a piano piece for four hands, written in 1801. While orchestrating it in 1826 the composer exchanged the original trio passage in a-minor for a new one in F-major; this is what his son was referring to by "other ideas". The composing of the march thus has a history, which extends for most of Weber's career. It is up to the individual listener to determine whether it reflects twenty-five years' musical development!

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-74) Trauermarsch opus 103 (1836)

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy was a German composer, pianist and conductor who produced a large amount of music including orchestral works, church music, chamber music and piano pieces. The German composer Norbert Bergmüller (1810-36) had a difficult life. He was very talented and well trained, but something went wrong along the way. Bergmüller's hometown of Düsseldorf from 1833 to 1835. Mendelssohn Bartholdy appreciated Bergmüller's talent, putting on performances of his music, and generally having a calming, encouraging affect on the man. Mendelssohn Bartholdy's move from Düsseldorf after only two years was a disappointment to Bergmüller. Another engagement was called off, apparently due to Bergmüller's lack of decision; the drinking increased.

In the spring of 1836 Norbert Bergmüller travelled to Aachen to take a cure at a spa. He was found dead, drowned in a bathtub, on May 7 – probably the result of an epileptic fit. Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, who in May 1836 had returned to Düsseldorf to conduct his oratorio Paulus, was deeply affected by his friend's death. During a visit to the town's military Kapellmeister he rose abruptly, asked for some manuscript paper, and composed a funeral march there and then. The march was played at Bergmüller's funeral on May 11, 1836.

Samuel Barber (1910-81) Commando March (1943)

Samuel Barber was an American composer, world-famous for his Adagio for Strangles (1936/38); other compositions include the opera Vanessa, choral pieces, songs and chamber music.

The USA joined World War II in December 1941. From September 1942 Samuel Barber served as a "non combatant", stationed in the New York area. His days were spent in training and with menial office work – it was only in the evenings he had the opportunity to compose. Barber wanted to lend his talent to the cause: "It is strange that they do not use us composers more than they do for propaganda, or perhaps I overestimate our potential usefulness and influence" he wrote in a letter. Commando March was completed in February 1943 and was played for the first time on May 23 that same year in Atlantic City, New Jersey, under the leadership of the composer.

Camille Saint-Saëns Orient et Occident opus 25 (1869)

In western music history we frequently encounter "exotic" elements – Mozart and Beethoven with their "Turkish" marches, Grieg with his "Arabian" dance, and Debussy with his depictions of eastern temples. Saint-Saëns also followed this trend, though with one major difference: he had actually been in the Orient. His health had been frail since childhood and the Parisian winters did not agree with him, so he travelled on several occasions to North Africa and the Middle East. In Orient et Occident oriental elements are juxtaposed with European romantic music. It is entertaining to hear oriental motifs included as part of textbook fugato passage – the belly dancer and Bach dancing together! The piece was first performed on October 21, 1878.
Charles Ives (1874-1954) **Overture and March “1776”** (1903-04, revised c.1909-10) arr: James B. Sinclair

Charles Ives was an American composer known for his original and groundbreaking orchestral music. Around 1903-04 Charles Ives was working on a plan for an opera which was never realized, perhaps because the author of the libretto, Ives’ uncle Lyman Brederwood, died in February 1904. The inspiration for the project was Brewster’s play **Major John Andre**, based on dramatic events during the American fight for independence towards the end of the 18th century. **Overture and March “1776”** was composed as an overture to the planned opera; the year in the title refers to the American Declaration of Independence of July 4, 1776.

The piece is an early example of Ives’ characteristic collage technique – a method he further developed in larger works. In short, the technique consists of presenting different keys, different metres and different tempi simultaneously; one might call it a kind of extreme, “total” polyphony. Another characteristic element is the use of musical quotations, often from popular American tunes. The piece is an early example of Ives’ characteristic collage technique – a method he further developed in larger works. In short, the technique consists of presenting different keys, different metres and different tempi simultaneously; one might call it a kind of extreme, “total” polyphony. Another characteristic element is the use of musical quotations, often from popular American tunes. The piece is an early example of Ives’ characteristic collage technique – a method he further developed in larger works. In short, the technique consists of presenting different keys, different metres and different tempi simultaneously; one might call it a kind of extreme, “total” polyphony. Another characteristic element is the use of musical quotations, often from popular American tunes.

### Johannes Hanssen (1874-1967)

Johannes Hanssen was a Norwegian military musician, composer and conductor; the Norwegian composer, violinist and conductor Johan Halvorsen is particularly renowned for his theatre music, though his output includes three symphonies in addition to many other works. The people of Bergen would have had high expectations when Johan Halvorsen was chosen for the combined post of conductor of the “Musiksekskabet Harmonien” and musical director at Bergen’s theater **Den Nationale Scene**. Halvorsen took up the post in the autumn of 1893, and “scored in the first minute”:

> How much is this going to cost you, Hanssen?

Just as I had finished it, that same afternoon, Edvard Grieg had composed his first quartet. The March was first played in Oslo in 1904, probably in May; no exact record exists. The piece did not attract much attention at first. The composer, who played in the band, recounted: “Two of my friends in the audience ... permitted themselves to applaud modestly, but no-one joined them. Lieutenant Alme, who conducted, received the duet of applause with astonishment and gave me a mischievous look over the top of his glasses and said: How much is this going to cost you, Hanssen? But I was pleased to have had the march played, and played well. It was worse when Johan Halvorsen discarded it after I had orchestrated it for the National Theatre Orchestra. Twenty years later he gave me unconditional credit for my leadership of the military band, but he never mentioned the **Valdres March**. After Halvorsen had condemned it, it was a poor consolation that music salesman Oluf Bye had heard the march from his shop and thought: it was Johan Svendsen who had begun to compose again.”

Oluf Bye bought the rights to the march for 25 kroner, and published it in a version for piano. The instrumental score was published in 1930; in this arrangement the cornet in e-flat plays the opening theme. The final version, which opens with a clarinet solo, was published in 1955.

### Johan Halvorsen (1864-1935) **Bojarenes Innogsmarsj** (1893)

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> The gods give us the first verse for free, but it is we ourselves who must shape the second that it may not be unworthy of its sacred first-born brother.”

With these words the poet Paul Valéry described what it was so often like to work as a creative artist. The **Valdres March** is a good example. Johannes Hanssen said that the first sixteen bars came to him in the space of a few minutes – but then what? It took two more years until the march was finished and orchestrated in 1904.

The inspiration for the piece – the first seven notes of the tunes – are the signal call of the Valdres Battalion. The march was first played in Oslo in 1904, probably in May; no exact record exists. The piece did not attract much attention at first. The composer, who played in the band, recounted: “Two of my friends in the audience ... permitted themselves to applaud modestly, but no-one joined them. Lieutenant Alme, who conducted, received the duet of applause with astonishment and gave me a mischievous look over the top of his glasses and said: How much is this going to cost you, Hanssen? But I was pleased to have had the march played, and played well. It was worse when Johan Halvorsen discarded it after I had orchestrated it for the National Theatre Orchestra. Twenty years later he gave me unconditional credit for my leadership of the military band, but he never mentioned the **Valdres March**. After Halvorsen had condemned it, it was a poor consolation that music salesman Oluf Bye had heard the march from his shop and thought: it was Johan Svendsen who had begun to compose again.”

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Johannes Hanssen (1874-1967) **Valdresmarsj** (1904)

Johannes Hanssen was a Norwegian military musician, composer and conductor; in addition to conducting military bands in Oslo he was a renowned music theory teacher.

> “The gods give us the first verse for free, but it is we ourselves who must shape the second that it may not be unworthy of its sacred first-born brother.”

With these words the poet Paul Valéry described what it was so often like to work as a creative artist. The **Valdres March** is a good example. Johannes Hanssen said that the first sixteen bars came to him in the space of a few minutes – but then what? It took two more years until the march was finished and orchestrated in 1904.
Ole Bull (1810-80) Grand March to the Memory of Washington (1844-45) Orchestration: Stig Nordhagen Ole Bull was a Norwegian violin virtuoso and composer, and played an important part in the building of the nation in the 19th century.

It is no secret that Ole Bull’s greatest talent lay in his violin playing – although perhaps his talent for PR was almost as great? Bull constantly sought to satisfy his audiences, and America was no exception.

He spent his first period there from 1843 to 1845. He improvised on American melodies and produced “tailor-made” works such as Memories of Havana, Niagara, Solitude of the Prairie and In Memory of Washington. This last work is a “tone painting” in the form of a potpourri depicting the American struggle for liberation at the end of the 18th century. Bull performed the piece for the first time in New York on October 16, 1845. The work was intended as a tribute to America, and in particular to the first president of the United States, George Washington (1732-1799). In a speech Bull declared that all Norwegians shared his devotion: “The cause for which this people drew their swords and spilled their blood filled the Norwegian people with enthusiasm and fortified them in their fight for independence.” This tribute was genuinely intended, though perhaps somewhat opportunistic, and coloured by his vivid imagination – on a later occasion Bull claimed that George Washington must have been of Norwegian descent!

A programme for this work survives. It tells us that one section of the work represented a battle scene, in which God Save the King and Yankee Doodle are played simultaneously, a procedure similar to that used by Beethoven in his “battle symphony” The Victory of Wellington (1813), and by Tchaikovsky in his 1812 Overture (1880). How Bull actually solved this we do not know; all that remains of the work is the Grand March to the Memory of Washington, published for piano in 1845.

Stig Nordhagen orchestrated the march especially for this recording. He has the following to say about the process: “Even though the title of the piece is Grand March, I chose to see it as a musical term and not an expression of quantity. I decided use the type of ensemble that was popular at the time the music was composed. Serenades for winds were in vogue, and ensembles were often based on the wind section of an orchestra. Therefore I chose to score the piece for piccolo, flute, two oboes, two clarinets, bassoon, double bassoon, and three horns. After Beethoven’s Fifth the double bassoon had become a full member of the orchestra, often used as the bass instruments in smaller groups. Thus from the double bassoon’s B-flat three octave below middle C to the piccolo’s B-flat nearly four above, the woodwinds had a full range of pitches in which to operate.”

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) Sørgemarsj over Rikard Nordraak (1866) The Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg is best known for his A-minor piano concerto, his music to Ibsen’s play Peer Gynt, and for his piano pieces and songs. Rikard Nordraak (1842-66) was a Norwegian composer; he wrote the tune to the Norwegian national anthem Ja, vi elsker.

“At long last, we two great men shall really meet!” These were the words of Rikard Nordraak when he and Edvard Grieg met for the first time in the summer of 1863; at the time they were 21 and 20 respectively.

... he displayed such naivety and kindness that I was bowled over by him”, said Grieg, who did not consider himself “great” at all: “I was a student, nothing more. Shy, and unwell. But this belief in greatness was true medicine for me. From that moment it was as if our friendship had lasted forever,” Nordraak had a decisive influence on Grieg. Building the nation’s culture was a topic very much in the wind, and for Grieg, the most important task was: “We hated everything that existed at that time and dreamt of a new, Norwegian-Norwegian-Norwegian-Norwegian future.” Nordraak was perhaps the most in earnest of the two, Grieg said many years later: “At once it was as if a mist had lifted from my eyes and I knew what I wanted to do. It was not exactly what Nordraak wanted, but I believe that the path to myself led through him.”
In the autumn of 1865 the two friends planned to travel together to Rome. They were to leave from Berlin, where Nordraak was studying, but when Grieg arrived in Berlin in October, Nordraak lay ill “with the most acute pneumonia.” Grieg had agreed to perform some of his own music in Leipzig that November and travelled on there – without Nordraak, but promising to return to Berlin. Nordraak received reports of Grieg’s success in Leipzig and was very happy on his friend’s behalf, impatiently awaiting his return: “You must come now, Grieg. Don’t delay any more, I need you here. Write to me at once ...” Grieg never returned to Nordraak. On November 30 Grieg wrote that he intended to travel directly to Italy with a new companion. This hurt Nordraak deeply and he sent Grieg a long, bitter letter: “... After having been deceived for a whole month, I have ... finally come to realize that you will not come here ... which is and will always remain to me a mystery, the way you have treated me ... which I find at the very least a mean way to treat someone you call a best friend ... of all, I must confess, you were the last of whom I could have imagined such behaviour ...” The tone of the letter brightens somewhat, ending on a touching note of melancholy: “... and finally, my dear friend, I wish you good luck and all success on your journey. You have received a letter today full of good and bad together, but may it be the good from my heart that accompanies you southwards!”

After his arrival in Rome Grieg received another letter, this time from Rikard’s father; Rikard had become too ill to write. His father wrote: “His desperation at your abandonment of him – you, who were his only solace ... was so great that he could do nothing but use the little strength left in him to accuse you of the treachery he believed you had committed in leaving him without telling him. It must surely have been a struggle for him to accuse and blame his best and dearest friend for all that he had done.”

The two letters deeply affected Grieg, who suffered feelings of guilt. It was probably the fear of infection that kept Grieg from going back to Berlin; he himself was chronically weakened from a chest infection and doubtless recognized his friend’s symptoms of tuberculosis.

On April 6, 1866 the devastating news arrived from a mutual friend: Rikard Nordraak had died on March 20. Grieg wrote in his diary: “The most tragic information I could have received ... he, my only friend, my only hope for our Norwegian art! ... let me take refuge in music, it never fails in times of grief!”

In the course of two days Grieg wrote the funeral march, first in a version for piano. The following year he arranged it for brass instruments, the version in which it was first performed in Christiania on December 12, 1867. The version for wind band, probably written in the 1880s, was published in 1899.

Kristiansand Blåseensemble

You can name all kinds of music, and of course there is much music in the world which is of interest — you can name some of the great canons, certainly they are interesting! But all other music is reduced to nothing compared with a good military march ...

With these words the writer Agnar Mykle pays tribute to military music. Whether one agrees or not, it is impossible not to be swept away by Mykle’s enthusiasm – bracing marching rhythms played by a decent band are intoxication enough for anyone. And the writer’s words certainly bear witness to the cultural importance of military music – whether they are marches or any other kind of music.

Military music was introduced in Kristiansand not long after the town was founded. Local historian Karl Leewy recounts that in 1643, two years after the town was founded, the feudal overlord was ordered to “let it be with a drummer and pipes, since one wished to see how sufficient the taxes and tolls were ...” After a few years, however, each company was allotted two drummers, though nothing more was done for a long time.” (Lieutenant-Colonel Karl Leewy: Kristiansands bebyggelse og befolkning i eldre tider (Kristiansand’s buildings and population in old times), volume 3, (Kristiansand 1980)).

Later “pipers” were added: “When a particular company was marching, music was provided by a drummer and a piper. The latter played piccolo flute and the drummer kept the beat.” Does this sound somewhat insubstantial?

Insubstantial it was to be for a long time, in more ways than one: “The drummers were poorly paid, and often drank heavily.” It was not until the introduction of the modern organization of the army, effective as from January 1, 1818, that Kristiansand had a proper military band. The Wind Band of the 3rd Brigade was founded, consisting of nineteen musicians: wind players and drummers. There were some teething problems, however: the instruments that had first been acquired were too old, and new ones had to be obtained from Copenhagen. The pay was low, so the musicians had to find additional work. Purely musical ambitions were not always the most important to begin with; Leewy tells the curious story of major Tobiesen, who led the band during the 1830s and 40s: “He had seen an orchestra in Copenhagen in which the bows of the first violinists moved completely in unison. This pleased him greatly. On his
return to Kristiansand he insisted that the trombone players in front should move their slides in unison, since it would look very “military”. But as the instruments were tuned in different keys, it was impossible for the trombone players to satisfy the demands of their instructor.”

The quality of the music improved, and at a concert in Kristiansand on February 6, 1862 the band played Carl Maria von Weber’s Jubelouverture, a fairly demanding piece of music. Musical requirements were formalized in 1872 when a test was introduced to test “knowledge and ability in order to obtain the degree of music sergeant.”

A number of talented musicians have been associated with the band, such as the trombone player Adolf Hansen, who in one particular source is described thus: “Towards the end of the 1890s a music festival was held in Kristiansand, at which the conductor Johan Halvorsen was present. I heard, on that occasion, from Mr. Halvorsen himself that he had heard many good trombone players, though none could match Adolf Hansen.” In 1918 the term “brigade band” was replaced by “division band” – though this had no practical consequences.

The German occupation in 1940 brought a temporary end to the activities of the band; at the armistice in 1945 the numbers were reduced and the band was not operational. The situation did not change until 1953 when the Government decided to retain all six division bands. From 1954 the official name of the band was Forsvarets Distriktsmusikkorps Sørlandet – “The Norwegian Army Band Kristiansand”.

The Norwegian Army disbanded the ensemble on December 31, 2002, and all the musician posts were transferred to the Norwegian Army Band Bergen. For the season 1998–99 he was principal conductor of the Norwegian Army Band Bergen. One of the greatest challenges – and highlights – of his career so far was an engagement at the Hong Kong Ballet in 2003. Through his teacher Tsung Yeh, Sagstad was chosen to conduct a production of
Tchaikovsky’s *Swan Lake*. Sagstad rose to the occasion, giving the Hong Kong Ballet’s artistic director Stephen Jeffries cause to say: “It is easy to hear that the Hong Kong Orchestra loves him!”

Bjørn Sagstad has made several CD recordings, including *Sketches of Norway* with music by Trygve Madsen, *Tuba Carnival* with Øystein Baadsvik/Musica Viva, and *Graffiti* – a recording of works by six Norwegian contemporary composers. He has participated successfully in several competitions, including winning the Nordic Conductors’ Competition in Sweden in 1997. He is currently engaged by “Operaen i Kristiansund”, and since the autumn of 2004 he has been artistic director of the Kristiansand Wind Ensemble as a part of the Kristiansund Symphony Orchestra foundation.

... et fargerikt postkort fra Østen, Orient et Occident, signert Camille Saint-Saëns – vilt og herlig kaos i Charles Ives’ 1776 – en lys og varm hyllest til et norsk dalføre med Hansens Valdresmarsj – et gripende minnesmerke over en nær venn i Edward Griegs Sangemarsj – et sprakende oppkome av humør som Percy Graingers Over the Hills and Far Away .... Dette er musikalske C-vitaminer for barn i alle aldre!

I følgende verkomtale brukes betegnelsen "arrangement" ("arr.") når stykket er reinstrumentert av annen person enn komponisten; ordet "bearbeidelse" ("bearb.") betegner mindre justeringer av originalpartituret; "instrumentasjon" vil si instrumentering av klaversats.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) Marche Militaire Française fra Suite Algérienne, opus 60 (1880); arr: M. L. Lake Camille Saint-Saëns, fransk komponist med rik produksjon av blant annet orkesterverker, operaer og kammermusikk.


"Hvilken Kunstner, hvilket Menneske! Hvilken høi Idealist, hvilket Barn, og på samme Tid, hvilket stort ··· Kunstner, hvilket Menneske! Hvilken høi Idealist, hvilket Barn, og på samme Tid, hvilket stort ··· Kunstner, hvilket Menneske! Hvilken høi Idealist, hvilket Barn, og på samme Tid, hvilket stort ...

Undertittelen Over the Hills and Far Away er lånt fra en britisk folkevis, blant annet anvist i John Gays The Beggar’s Opera – "Tiggeroperanen" (1728). Det er snakk om et rent tekststatis, Grainger bruker ikke melodien. Sittet henspiller kanskje på at Children’s March er tilegnet "my playmate beyond the hills" – "min lekekamerat bakom åsene". Percy Grainger fortalte aldri hvem lekekameraten var, men marsjen havner i hvert fall "far away"; utgangsteenarten F-dur forlates ganske snart, og dukker ikke opp mer.


I perioden 1898-1918 virket Richard Strauss som hoffkapellmester i Berlin, under keiser Wilhelm II. (1895-1941). Komponist og keiser kom stort sett godt overens, selv om keiseren av og til kunne styre sin begeistring. Flere av Strausses’ operaer var hard kost for samtiden, ikke minst Salome (1905-06), med sitt groteske handling og krasse klinger; den havnet da også i majestetens "vrangtrupe".

Richard Strauss fant det saktens klokt, fra tid til annen å traktere arbeidsgiveren med "lettere føde". Fra 1905 av skrev han noen marsjer, blant annet to marsjer opus 57, tilegnet "Hans Majestet Keiser Wilhelm II. i dypteste Årefrykt". De ble komponert tidlig i 1906, og uroppført 6. mars 1907 i Berlin, under komponistens ledelse. Ess-durmarsjen viser en nærmest demonstrativt blid og veloppdraget Strauss – bent frem en musikalsk "øyentjener"!


Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826) Marcia J. 307 (1801/26) Carl Maria von Weber; tysk komponist og dirigent; særlig kjent for operener, "Oberon".

Carl Maria von Webers livssituasjon i mai 1826 kan skisseres med to ord: Triumf – og resignasjon. Kunstnerisk og karrieremessig står han på høyeste tinde; han var kommet til London i mars, med sin nye opera Oberon i bagasjen, og hadde seiret stort ved uroppførelsen på Covent Garden 12. april. Men Weber vet at livet er i ferd med å ebbe ut – meget raskt. Han lider av langt fremskreden lunge-
Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847)

Traumarsch
opus 103 (1838)

Six pièces à quatre mains
Trauermarsch
opus 103 (1836)

Dagene gikk med til opplæring og trivielt kontorarbeid – det var stort sett bare på kveldstid han kunne komponere. Barber ønsket å sette sitt talent inn i kampen: “Det er merkelig at de ikke bruker oss komponister mer enn de gjør i propagandaen, eller kanskje jeg overvurderer vår potensielle nytte og innflytelse” skriver han i et brev.

Commando March var ferdig i februar 1943, og ble spilt for første gang 23. mai samme år i Atlantic City, New Jersey, under koniskostens ledelse. Camille Saint-Saëns Orient et Occident opus 25 (1869)


Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy - i mai 1836 atter i Düsseldorf, nå for å dirigere sitt oratorium Orient et Occident.

Charles Ives, amerikansk komponist, særlig kjent for original og banebrytende orkestermusikk.


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Rundt 1903-04 sysslet Charles Ives med en operaplan som aldri ble realisert, kanske fordi librettisten, Ives’ onkel Lyman Brewster, døde i februar 1904. Utgangspunkt for prosjektet var Brewsters skuespill


I Bergens Annen-Tidende omtales marsjen etter utropførelsen i teateret, der stykket ble spilt som mellomaktamsmusikk: "Det var en glimrende og pompøs Komposisjon, der paahørtes i aandeløs Stilhed og..." fremkalde en saa tordnende og vedholdende Applaus, at Hr. Halvorsen tilsidst maatte bøie sig for Publikums Forlangende om å gi den da capo."

Edvard Griegs ros kom fra hjertet fikk Halvorsen erfare til å gjøre. Groven engasjerte seg aktivt i utgivelser av marsjen; han fryktet at forleggeren ville snyte den unge og uerfarne Halvorsen, og påtok seg å forhandle på hans vegne. Til Halvorsen skrev han: "... som jeg er bleven behandlet i min Ungdom, er bevart av selve verket, er denne hyldningsmarsjen, gitt ut for klaver i 1845 som komposisjon, for fiolinspill – men mon ikke PR-talentet var nesten like stort? Bull slet ikke følte seg "stor": "Jeg var elev, intet annet. Dertil fryktsom, menneskesky og sykelig. Men denne seierssikkerhet var just medicin for meg. Og fra det øyeblikk var vennskapet som hadde det vart evig."
Grieg kom aldri tilbake til Nordraak. Den 30. november meldte Grieg at han aktet å reise direkte til Italia, han hadde fått nytt reisefølge. Dette såret Nordraak inderlig, og han sendte Grieg et langt, bittert brev:

"... Efter å være holdt for narr nu her en hel måned, har jeg da ... endelig erholt visshet for at du ikke kommer hit ... hva der er og altid vil bli meg en gåte, det er den måte hvorpå du behandlet meg ... og som jeg midlertid talt finner sjofel mot en man kaller sin beste venn ... av alle, det må jeg tilstå, var du den siste, hvem jeg hadde kunnem tiltro en sådan fremgangsmåte ... Da du reiste, skulle du, etter utsagn blitt noen dager. Følgen var naturligvis det at jeg lå og ventet dag etter dag på ditt komme ...". Tonen i brevet lysner etter hvert, og det ender rørende og vemodig: "... til slutning, kjære venn, lykkelig reise og godt utbytte. Du har fått et brev i dag, fullt av ondt og godt mellom hverandre, men må det gode kun fra mitt hjerte følge deg sydover!"

Vel fremme i Roma fikk Grieg nok et brev, nå fra Rikards far; Rikard selv var blitt for svak til å skrive. Faren forteller: "Hans Fortvivlelse over Deres Afreise fra ham, De, der var hans eneste Trøst ... var saa stor, at han intet annet havde det bruge de sidste Kræfter han formaaede til afgjøre, at det var ikke begge som han ville se hvor langt skatten og tollen ville forløse ... Etter noen års forløp fikk dog hvert enkelt et par trommeslagere, men mer ble det ikke på lang tid." (Oberstløytnant Karl Leewy: Kristiansands bebyggelse og befolkning i eldre tider, bind 3 (Kristiansand 1980)). Senere kom "piperne" til: "Når et kompani var på marsj, besørgedes musikken av en trommeslager og en piber. Den sistnevnte spilte piccolofløyte og tamburen slo takten."

I Kristiansand startet den militærmusikalske aktivitet da byen ble grunnlagt. Ikke riktig med en gang, forresten; Kristiansands klassiske byhistoriker Karl Leewy beretter at lensherren i 1643, to år etter byens grunnleggelse, fikk beskjed om at "la det bero med "trumbslager og piber", da man først ville se hvor langt skatten og tollen ville forløse ... Etter noen års forløp fikk dog hvert enkelt et par trommeslagere, men mer ble det ikke på lang tid." (Oberstløytnant Karl Leewy: Kristiansands bebyggelse og befolkning i eldre tider, bind 3 (Kristiansand 1980)). Senere kom "piperne" til: "Når et kompani var på marsj, besørgedes musikken av en trommeslager og en piber. Det sistnevnte spilte piccolofløyte og tamburen slo takten." Hørtes dette "tynt" ut?

Tynt skulle det bli lenge fremover, i mer enn én forstand: "Tamburene og piberne var dårlig lønnet, og sank ofte dypt ned ved drikk." Først med den nye hærordenen av 1817, som trådte i kraft 1. januar 1818, fikk Kristiansand militærmusikk i moderne forstand; "3. Brigades Musikkorps" ble opprettet, det besto av 19 musikere: Blåsere og slagverkere. Korpset fomlet litt i "startgropa": De instrumentene man først hadde kjøpt inn var for gamle, og nye ble skaffet fra København. Lønnen var lav, musikerne måtte drive håndverk ved siden av.

Det rent musikalske sto kanskje ikke alltid i fokus til å begynne med; Leewy forteller en besynderlig historie om major Tobiesen, som ledet korpset på 1830/40-tallet: "Han hadde i et københavnsk strykeorkester sett at alle førstefiolinistenes buestrøk gikk helt samtidig i takt. Og dette tilfalte ham sterkt. Etter hjemkomsten til Kristiansand, forlangte han at alle basunistene som gikk i téten og blåste dragbasuner, skulle trekke..."
sine instrumenter ut og inn samtidig, da dette ville se meget "militært" ut. Da imidlertid instrumentene var forskjellig avstemt, var det umulig for musikantene å etterkomme instruktørens forlangende ...

Den musikalske kvaliteten økte nok etter hvert; på en konsert i Kristiansand teater 6. februar 1862 spilte korpset et såpass avansert verk som Carl Maria von Webers Jubelouverture. Kravene til musikerne ble formalisert i 1872, da fastsatte man en prøve "i kunnskaper og ferdigheter for å oppnå musikkersjants grad."

En rekke dyktige musikere var gjennom årene knyttet til korpset, her skal nevnes basunisten Adolf Hansen, som en kilde omtaler slik: "I slutten av 1890-årene holdtes et musikkstevne i Kristiansand, hvor blant andre kapellmester Johan Halvorsen var til stede. Jeg hørte ved den anledningen av hr. Halvorsens egen munn munn at han hadde hørt mange flinke basunister, men ingen som kunne måle seg med Adolf Hansen." I 1918 ble betegnelsen "brigademusikk" skiftet ut med "divisjonsmusikk" – uten at dette fikk praktisk betydning.


De skrانتende "pipere" er for lengst erstattet med fremragende kunstnere – vel rustet til å gi seg i kast med Agnar Mykles svimlende utfordring!

Bjørn Sagstad

... vi mangler her Sansen for Alt undtagen Politik og – Sport!

Slik skriver Edvard Grieg til Percy Grainger i 1907, og sukket gjelder nordmenns lave kulturelle nivå i forhold til verden ellers. Har situasjonen bedret seg? Spørsmålet får stå åpent – siden Griegs dager er det i hvertfall vokst frem én frogdig norsk kulturradiskjon som andre land har grunn til å misunne oss: korpsbevegelsen. Mange talenter fra hele landet har fått sin første inspirasjon og opplæring gjennom denne, og la oss gjenta det ofte: Korpsbevegelsens betydning for norsk musikkliv, på alle plan, må vurderes meget høyt!


I 1997 vant Bjørn Sagstad Nordisk Dirigentkonkurranse i Sverige, og siden er han blitt engasjert ved bl.a. Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Hong Kong-balletten, Oulu Symphonic Orchestra (Finland), Musica Vitae (Sverige), Collegium Musicum i Bergen, Bergen Filharmoniske Orkester, Trondheim Symfoniorkester, Trønderoperaen, Operaen i Kristiansund, Trøndelag teater, og alle de norske, svenske og danske militærkoerpes. I sesongen 1998-99 var han sjefsdirigent ved Divisjonssymfoniene i Bergen. I 2003 ble Sagstad engasjert til oppsetningen av Tsjajkovskijss Susnesjøen ved Hong Kong-balletten. Kunstnerisk leder for ensembleset, Stephen Jefferys, sa ganske entusistisk: "I very much would like to work with Mr. Sagstad again. It is easy to hear that the Hong Kong Orchestra loves him!"

Bjørn Sagstad har flere CD-innspillinger bak seg, vi kan nevne Sketches of Norway med musikk av Trygve Madsen, Tuba Carnival med Øystein Baadsvik/Musica Vitae, og Graffiti, med verker av seks norske samtidskomponister. Han er fast engasjert ved Operaen i Kristiansund, og har fra høsten 2004 virket som kunstnerisk leder for Kristiansand Blåseensemble i stiftelsen Kristiansand Symfoniorkester.
Where MONO was black and white and STEREO is a polaroid snapshot, SURROUND is the real flesh

The music business is undergoing a period of major change. The CD format, launched in the early eighties, no longer satisfies listeners’ expectations of spectacular audio experiences. DVD-audio and SACD (Super Audio CD) are two new digital formats which support high resolution sound to the domestic audience. This compact disc looks like a normal CD and plays on all standard players and computers. A hybrid product offers all possibilities on one and the same CD, which consists of three layers: stereo and 5.1 surround with wide dynamic range and frequency spectrum, while the traditional CD layer renders the product compatible with conventional CD players.

Quadruphonic sound systems were launched in the 1970s but never really caught on. But when sound and vision are combined, the visual element dominates. Now the film industry has paved the way in private homes for DVD players and multi-channels-audio.

Presence and participation are the magic words for future listeners. Surround products bring the listener to the very centre of the audio experience. The best seat in the concert hall is one that is not for sale – but the centre of the orchestra’s attention, the conductor, is paid a lot to occupy this very position. Now the audience themselves can occupy this exclusive place right in their own living-rooms. Giovanni Gabrieli did it with groups of brass instruments in renaissance Venice; one hundred years after Edison introduced his phonograph, Lindberg Lyd adds new dimensions to Norwegian music publishing and audio products.

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