

# Armstrong Boulevard Brass Quintet



## The music of Edvard Grieg Program Notes

### **The Armstrong Boulevard Brass Quintet Edvard Grieg Project**

Today's recital and this project is funded in part by a grant from the Edvard Grieg Society of the Dakotas. Armstrong Boulevard Brass Quintet is honored to serve as the society's 2022 grant awardee.

The Composer:

EDVARD V. GRIEG (1843 – 1907)

As the son of musical and music-loving parents, six-year-old Edvard discovered the piano, only to realize that piano studies meant boring, time-consuming practice periods. Although he avoided practicing, his instincts and natural aptitude for music prompted the 12-year-old to write a first composition that he kept for the rest of his life. At 15 this natural musician had achieved just enough technical prowess to qualify for admission to the Leipzig Conservatory of Music. As was the case with academic studies, a bored Grieg often avoided dull, pedantic routines until fellow students coaxed the obviously talented student to apply himself to his studies. At the end of the four-year conservatory period, he graduated with honors in piano studies and composition.

To earn a living as a musician, Grieg returned to his native Norway. In Oslo he supported his family as a choir and orchestral conductor, music teacher, and performer. In Norway he jumped enthusiastically into the all-European movement, which stressed nationalism in the new music of each country. In Grieg's case, the goal was to create a "Nordic style" based on the tonal language of Norwegian peasant folk songs, dances and folklore.

The composer's large-scale works (his piano concerto and violin/piano sonatas) date from the early years of his career. As time passed, Grieg concentrated on composing short, lyric forms of songs, dances, and piano pieces known as "miniatures." These made ideal music that found favor with music lovers and instrumentalists, especially amateur musicians and students. For their popularity, Grieg was awarded an annual state grant from the Norwegian government. This stipend allowed him to quit teaching, performing, and conducting and settle down to life as a country composer with only occasional conducting appearances in public.

The composer built an estate, Trollhaugen, and spent his days in a simple hut that held only a piano and a writing desk. Here he wrote his music "miniatures" that blended traditional western music with Nordic cultural heritage. At this rural estate in Bergen, Norway, he remained alongside his native fjords and lush landscapes until his death in 1907 at age 64. Norway's greatest composer was given a state funeral in Oslo

and 400,000 people lined the streets from Oslo to Bergen where the composer's ashes were entombed in the side of a mountain viewed from his music workbench.

-by Steven Errante, Conductor of the Wilmington Symphony Orchestra

## **Recital Program:**

**From Holberg's Time [Holberg Suite] (Fra Holberge tid [Holberg-suiten]) Suite in Olden Style. Piano, (1884) Op. 40.**

*Arranged for Brass Quintet by Leandro Cardoso*

The Holberg Suite was commissioned for the celebration of the bicentennial of the birth of the "Moliere of the North," Norwegian writer Ludvig Baron Holberg (1684-1754). Since Holberg was a contemporary of Bach and Handel, Grieg chose to compose his tribute in the form of a French Baroque period suite. He cast six movements in the musical forms of the 18th century, and filled them with the spirit of his own time and style. A lively, optimistic Praeludium (in miniature sonata-form) is followed by a series of dances. The Sarabande, originally from the Americas, contrasts nicely with its peaceful, meditative mood. It is followed by a quiet, perky, aristocratic dance as befits a Gavotte. A calm, sublime, solemn Air with solo strings comprises the fourth movement, and a lively folk song tribute to violins, a Rigaudon, makes up the last movement of the 30 minute suite. Grieg called this work "my powdered-wig piece"; it is one of strength, gentility, playfulness, and meditation. The suite remains a most frequently performed work for string orchestras.

-by Steven Errante, Conductor of the Wilmington Symphony Orchestra

**Funeral March for Rikard Nordraak (Sørgemarsj over Rikard Nordraak) Piano, (1866).**

*Also arr. for large wind ensemble with percussion, (1867) EG 107. Arr. for Brass Quintet by Robert Sandals*

Edvard Grieg met Richard Nordraak, a fellow Norwegian, in 1863. Together they championed nationalism in their musical activities, a cause that had lain dormant in Grieg's thoughts up until this time. Nordraak already had the Norwegian National Anthem to his credit, composed four years earlier when he was seventeen. From the time of their meeting the two young composers worked closely together until Nordraak's health began to fail three years later. In October of 1865, Nordraak suffered a "violent attack of inflammation of the lungs that developed into galloping consumption". Because Grieg was on his way to Rome, Nordraak did not have the solace of his friend's company during the lonely months of his illness. He died on March 26, 1866, in Berlin. Grieg, then in Rome, was ignorant of his death. The very day he heard of it, April 6, 1866, he wrote The Funeral March in A minor for Richard Nordraak for piano, as a monument to the memory of his dear friend.

One year later, Grieg arranged the work for military band, transposing it to g minor. He included the piece in a Philharmonic Society concert in Christiania (Oslo) later that year. In 1878, Grieg made yet another version of the work, this time for brass choir. The existence of this third score went unnoticed until Geoffrey Emerson obtained a microfilm of it from Oslo University. -Program note from the conductor's score

## **The Edvard Grieg Suite for Brass**

*Arr. by Alan Civil for the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble*

Sarabande, Opus 40, mvmnt. 2

Bridal Song (Brurelåt), Opus 17, no. 24

Lullaby, (Gjendines bådnlåt), Opus 66, no. 19

Ballade, ((Det var i min ungdom), Opus 65, no. 5

Wedding Song at Trolldhaugen (Bryllupsdag på Trolldhaugen), Opus 65, no. 6

**Hail Star of the Sea (Ave maris stella). Voice/piano (1893), EG 150.**

*Arranged for brass quintet by Robert Rainford*

Grieg composed his Ave Maris Stella or Hail Star of the Sea for mixed choir in 1898. It is based on an 8th century plainsong Vespers hymn to the Virgin Mary. The title Star of the Sea is one of the oldest and most widespread for Mary and this prayer is regularly used to bless travelers. Grieg's talent for lyricism is well displayed in this beloved choral piece. -David J. Stordalen

## **Solveig's Song from Peer Gynt Incidental music to H. Ibsen's play (1876). Opus 23, Act IV, #19.**

*Arranged by Tierelles*

Solveig sings her Song as she patiently waits for the errant and absent Peer to return from his adventuring. She sings:

The winter may pass and the spring disappear,  
the summer too will vanish and then the year.  
But this I know for certain: thou'lt come back again;  
And e'en as I promised, thou'lt find me waiting then.  
God help thee, when wand'ring thy way all alone,  
God grant thee his strength as thou kneel'st at his throne.  
If thou now art waiting in heav'n for me,  
O there we'll meet again love and never parted be!  
*English Translation © E. M. Smyth*

## **Homage March (Hyldningsmarsj) from Sigurd Jorsalflar Orchestral Suite (1892), Opus 56, mvmnt. 3.**

*Arr. by Gordon Mathie*

The Hyldningsmarsch or Homage March was the fifth of nine movements written for the 1872 Bjornsterne Bjornson play Sigurd Jorsalflar. Twenty years later, Grieg revised and combined three of the incidental pieces from the play into an orchestral suite which enjoyed an October premiere in Oslo. Therefore, Homage March has been, and still is, most often heard as the third movement of the younger work: Sigurd Jorsalflar Orchestral Suite, Opus 56.

### **The Arrangers:**

#### **Leandro Cardoso**

Leandro Cardoso is a Brazilian conductor currently based in Lawrence, where he is pursuing his master's degree in orchestral conducting at the University of Kansas under the tutelage of Dr. Carolyn Watson. He is the Co-Director of the Kansas University Orchestra and also serves as the assistant conductor at the University of Kansas Symphony Orchestra. In the United States, he has also served as a cover conductor at the Philharmonia of Greater Kansas City.

He is the Athos Chamber Orchestra's founder and principal conductor, a group dedicated to premiering contemporary works by Brazilian composers. The group held its first concert in April 2018 - Containers: Multidimensional Paths, with an acclaimed reception at the Palace of Arts in Belo Horizonte. Leandro also develops a solid work as an arranger, writing for everything from chamber groups to the symphony orchestra.

Leandro previously studied with renowned Brazilian conductor Marcos Arakaki and with professors Lincoln Andrade, Arnon Oliveira, and Iara Fricke Matte in the Orchestral Conducting Course at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). He always sought to improve. He took workshops and masterclasses in orchestral direction with internationally acclaimed conductors, such as Cristian Măcelaru, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Sarah Ioannides, and Kenneth Kiesler.

#### **Richard Sandals**

Since 2001, he has played alongside Ray as principal trumpet of the National Ballet Orchestra. He is also co-principal cornet of the Hannaford Street Silver Band, and has been a frequent soloist with the band. Richard has performed extensively in and around Toronto with ensembles including the Canadian Opera Orchestra, the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra, and the Esprit Orchestra.

Born and raised in Guelph, Ontario, Richard holds degrees from the University of Western Ontario and Indiana University.

#### **Alan Civil (1929-1989)**

Alan Civil was larger than life, both as a horn player and as a personality. He was known for spectacular playing ("beautifully focused"), huge horn choir arrangements, and quick wit and bonhomie. He wasn't afraid to express his less-than-respectful opinions of conductors. He was perhaps most famous for his high obbligato solo on the Beatles song "For No One."

Alan was born in 1929 in Northampton, England to a family of brass instrument players. He started playing horn at age nine; on leaving school during wartime, he joined the Royal Artillery Band. During this time,

showing the kind of initiative that characterized his career, he persuaded Aubrey Brain to give him lessons, which required a 120-mile round-trip journey. Later he traveled to Hamburg, Germany to study with Willy von Stemm.

After his military service, in 1953 Alan joined Dennis Brain in the Royal Philharmonic as second horn and took over as principal when Dennis moved to the Philharmonia. In 1955, Alan joined the Philharmonia on tour and then stayed on as co-principal to Dennis. When Dennis died in 1957, Alan took over as principal. In 1964, he was the first non-German to be approached by the Berlin Philharmonic, but he decided to stay with the Philharmonia, which was reorganizing as a self-governing entity. In 1966, he left to join the BBC Symphony Orchestra, where he stayed until retirement in 1988. During this time, he also became a professor at the Royal College of Music, played with several chamber ensembles (including the Alan Civil Trio), and toured as a soloist.

He played an Alexander double horn for orchestral work, an Alexander single B-flat horn for solos, and had a collection of natural horns for early music (a special interest).

Alan's compositions include a symphony for brass and percussion, a wind quintet and octet, a horn trio, a suite for two horns, and innumerable arrangements and transcriptions for horn ensembles (some now lost). Many horn players have thrilled to his transcription of Beethoven's Egmont Overture at horn workshops.

Alan recorded most of the major horn works, including three recordings of the Mozart concertos: Otto Klemperer and the Philharmonia Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. The last recording, with a lighter orchestra and brighter tempos, shows off a variety of tone, attacks, and phrasing and Alan's own cadenzas. His recording of the Britten Serenade with tenor Robert Tear and the Northern Sinfonia is particularly well-regarded.

Known for his quick wit, Alan once metaphorically quipped that you "really have to be sitting on the edge of your seat for pretty well all your life, otherwise you won't be able to play the horn." He had many stories to tell, and was the subject of many more. He enjoyed good food and wine and pubs, radio dance bands and comedy shows. He often tried to dissuade students from making a career of the horn, telling them about the nitty-gritty of the profession.

Alan was a frequent artist at horn workshops. He served on the IHS Advisory Council (1974-81) and as first president of the British Horn Society from 1979. He was awarded an OBE in 1985 and elected an IHS Honorary Member in 1989.

-International Horn Society

### **Robert Rainford**

Robert Rainford studied music at Durham University before embarking on a career as a freelance musician and music teacher in the North West of England. Playing and teaching wind instruments, as well as piano and double bass, has given him an invaluable insight into the technical issues of the different wind instruments. A member of the National Flute Orchestra, Preston Flute Group and Casual Sax Quartet, Robert is an active musician, and his arrangements have been played worldwide by a variety of different ensembles. Rapidly gaining a reputation for his low flute playing, the picture shows Rob with his Subcontrabass flute

-Stretta Music

### **In Memoriam: Gordon Mathie (1924-2019)**

The International Trumpet Guild has learned of the passing of Gordon Mathie, Professor Emeritus at the Crane School of Music at the State University of New York College at Potsdam. Gordon was very active in the International Trumpet Guild, where he served as its first Treasurer, then Vice President and member of the Board of Directors.

Mathie was born in Toronto, Ontario, in 1924 and moved to Detroit, Michigan when he was five years old. He attended the University of Michigan for a year, playing solo cornet in the band (and studying that instrument) with William Ravelli. He joined the Navy in 1943 and played with various Navy bands until 1946. After his service he enrolled at Wayne State University where he studied music education, trumpet with Leonard B. Smith, and student teaching at Cass Technical high school under Harry Begian. While at Wayne State he met Clara, who was playing horn in the marching band, and they married in 1949.

In 1951, Mathie became the Third/Assistant Principal trumpet position in the Detroit Symphony and spent his summers as solo cornet in the Leonard Smith Concert Band. He continued performing in Detroit as a member of the orchestra, and maintained a significant role as a freelancer, until taking a public school band position in Oxford, MI; he remained there until 1959. At that time he joined the trumpet faculty at the National Music Camp, Interlochen, where he returned every summer until 1966.

In 1959 he and his family moved from Michigan to Potsdam, NY after being offered a position at the Crane School of Music by Dean Helen Hosmer. Although he began by teaching euphonium, tuba, instrumental music and conducting one of the college's bands, his work duties soon became studio trumpet and music

education. He obtained a sabbatical in 1966 to pursue his EdD degree at the University of Illinois and was one of the country's first studio trumpet professors to hold a doctorate.

An active performer during his teaching career, Gordon was a founding member of the Potsdam Brass Quintet and also performed with the Vermont Symphony. He retired from Crane in 1982 as a Professor Emeritus and was given the Chancellor's award for excellence in teaching. His former students number in the hundreds and are in teaching and playing positions throughout the world.

After his retirement he wrote the textbook *The Trumpet Teacher's Guide*, now in its third edition, the method book *My Trumpet Week*, and numerous transcriptions and arrangements for trumpet and brass.

Mathie and Clara left Potsdam in 1999 to move to Waverly, OH. Mathie played the trumpet until a week before his death.

Mathie passed away on December 20, 2019 in Waverly, OH. He was 95 and was preceded in death by his wife Clara in 2013.

-International Trumpet Guild