



NAMES

John Bergsagel & Harald Herresthal

TITLE OF JOINT PRESENTATION

From isolation to recognition – music's rôle in promoting a nation

John Bergsagel:

“The Kingdom of Norway begins at the 58th degree of latitude and ends with the North Cape at 71° 10° North...” (review of Ole Bull's debut concert in Paris, 1835)

Harald Herresthal:

“Norway is tuned in A minor” - the search for a national music

ABSTRACT OF PRESENTATION

After more than 500 years in successive unions with her Scandinavian neighbours – from 1380 dynastically with Denmark, sharing monarch and administration, then from 1814 with Sweden as spoil of war – Norway achieved independence in 1905. Though never in all that time having been occupied by force or suffered at the hands of an enemy, the fact that the seat of government had been respectively in Copenhagen and Stockholm caused Norway nevertheless to feel herself the disadvantaged partner in these unions. Long before independence in 1905, therefore, especially during the rising wave of nationalism in the 19th century, the need for developing and asserting a national identity made itself strongly felt. This was a mission that the nation's artists took willingly upon themselves: painters such as J. C. Dahl, Adolph Tideman and Erik Werenskjold, and writers such as Henrik Wergeland, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and Jonas Lie, taught Norwegians about themselves, while some, such as Edvard Munch, Henrik Ibsen and Knut Hamsun also made Norway known in the outside world. In this respect, none were more successful than the two Bergen-born musicians, Ole Bull (1810-1880) and Edvard Grieg (1843-1907), whose tireless activity as composers and performers combined dedication to their art and to their nation and brought fame and honour to both.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE - John Bergsagel

John Bergsagel is Emeritus Professor of Musicology at the University of Copenhagen. Born in Canada of Norwegian parents, he was educated in Canada, USA and England, where he taught at Oxford and Manchester Universities before moving to Denmark. He has done research and published on a wide range of subjects with especial emphasis on medieval and renaissance music and on music in the late romantic/early modern period. He is a member of the Royal Academies of both Denmark and Norway and of Academia Europaea.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE - Harald Herresthal

Harald Herresthal (1944) is organist and professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo. Writing in French, German and Norwegian, he has published many books and articles on Norwegian music in the 19th and 20th century, most recently a biography in four volumes of the Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull (1810-1880). Through his worldwide research Herresthal discovered many of Bull's lost compositions, which gives a new understanding of style and virtuosity of „the Scandinavian Paganini“.