

EDVARD GRIEG

Musician Who Refused To Surrender To Germany

THE giant of Norwegian music is, of course, Edvard Grieg, who was partly Scottish. It is in fact remarkable that both Grieg and Ibsen, the most prominent men in Norwegian music and letters, traced their descent from Scottish ancestors. Ibsen's remote ancestors came from Fifeshire; Grieg's great-grandfather was an Aberdeen merchant who was concerned in the "bonnie Prince Charlie" business in 1745. As a result he had to flee from Scotland and managed to escape to Bergen in Norway, as other rebels did. He also changed the spelling of his name from GREIG to GRIEG, to suit the local pronunciation, and became a Norwegian merchant. On the maternal side, Grieg descended from Kjeld Stub, who died in 1663. Stub was an adventurous, gifted rascal, a gambler, drinker, rover, swashbuckler, gallant and preacher whose life in full would make most novels dull. Perhaps it is Stub, therefore, rather than the Scottish merchant Grieg, whom we have to thank for Grieg himself.

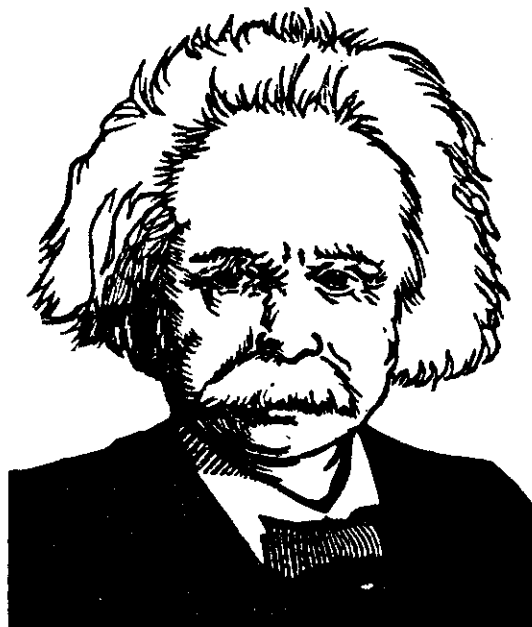
Debt to His Mother

Grieg's mother was a fine musician, a good pianist, and a composer of folk-songs which are still popular in Norway. She was a Bergen girl, but was sent to Hamburg and London to study the piano. Later she gave recitals in Christiania (Oslo) and at home.

Altogether she acquired an outlook so much wider than was usual in those days that the Grieg's home became the centre of intellectual and artistic life in Bergen. Young Edvard thus heard good music well played every day from his babyhood. By the time he was twelve he composed a set of "Variations on a German theme."

Enter — Ole Bull

Then, three years later, one summer's day, says Christen Jul, a very great man stepped into his life, or rather galloped on horseback into the Grieg's courtyard. This was Ole Bull, Norway's first great musical son, the peasant boy who fiddled his folk-tunes all over the world. Having heard young Edvard play *Opus 1*, Bull insisted that the youth must go to Leipzig. So Grieg went. It is a curious fact that he wrote of his German teachers as "rather a dusty crowd." By peaceful penetration and really clever



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organisation the Germans had at that time obtained something like a stranglehold on music almost everywhere. They had the composers, they had the conservatoires, they printed the music, they manufactured the pianos and other instruments. In addition they sent forth an army of teachers, merchants, and salesmen who settled everywhere.

German music and musicians therefore became an all-powerful combination, and it was against this brick wall that young Grieg ran his head. He felt himself outside most of the teaching at Leipzig and escaped into his dreams. But for the inspiration of a group of clever young Englishmen, led by Arthur Sullivan, he might have given up altogether. Their

industrious example was the turning point in his career. He went to work in earnest—and won. But it was only when he returned home that his imagination was released, that he "felt free to sing as he liked."

He settled in the Norwegian capital, "teaching, conducting, visiting quiet fjords in summer, fishing on grey days, playing cards in the long winter nights, hearing the country people sing and dance, composing music to the writings of Ibsen and Bjornsen."

Grieg wrote his music with a lead pencil, erased again and again until he was satisfied. Then he traced it over in ink and sent the original to his publisher.

Triumph Over Pedants

The pedants of Leipzig who frowned on his "dangerous dialect tendencies" lived to hear Hans Von Bulow, Germany's greatest pianist, describe Grieg as "the Chopin of the North." They also learned that Liszt was so pleased with two of Grieg's sonatas that he wrote a letter praising the young composer. Liszt rhapsodized later over Grieg's piano concerto.

Last Days

On a happy day for both of them Grieg had married his cousin, Nina Hagerup, who sang his songs in public and helped to make his music better known. Because he was delicate in body he lived a quiet life in his own country home, "Troldhaugen." There, on the lovely Hardanger Fjord, near Bergen, during the last twenty years of his life, he wrote most of his music. On the gate half-a-mile down the road was a board announcing that "Edvard Grieg regrets he is unable to see any visitors before 4 a.m.!" Grieg needed solitude and seclusion when he worked. If he felt that anyone—even his own wife—was listening, he would close up the piano and stop.

At sixty-four, he died from heart failure. His wife saw his ashes laid in the spot he had chosen, a grotto in the cliff below "Troldhaugen," overlooking the fjord. A plain granite slab was carved roughly, "Edvard Grieg." The landing place below was filled with broken stones. He was left alone as he wanted, in the heart of the country he loved. Even the guns of the invader cannot disturb him.

BROADCASTING IN NORWAY

Under Control of the State

This article must be read in the light of recent developments arising from the war in Norway. According to latest news at the time of going to press, the main Norwegian stations were in the hands of the Germans, and Norway's radio service was being carried on by the BBC and through a station in Finland.

IN Norway, radio has passed, relatively lately, from private exploitation to national control. Although the State always exercised its right of control, it had for a long time conceded the stations to several private enterprises. But since 1933, the service has been assumed by the State itself through an intermediary official organisation.

In 1925, one station (at Oslo) inaugurated the broadcasts, soon followed by other stations in provincial districts. Several private societies, at Oslo, Bergen, Aalesund and Tromsø, ran the stations, striving as well as they could to overcome difficulties, both technical and financial. In 1933, a new law was issued, bringing about complete re-organisation. Following this change, the State became proprietor of all the stations; the private societies were replaced by a national body, *Norsk Rikskringkasting* (Radio of the Norwegian Kingdom). It possesses a monopoly and assumes all responsibility for the artistic and intellectual sides, while the technical side is in the care of the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs.

At the head of the service is a council of five members, nominated for a period of four years by the King. Under their orders, three departments function: Programme, Business Management, and the Secretariat of Administration, each under the direction of a competent chief. An advisory council of 15 members, of whom 11 are appointed by the King and four led by Parliament, assists in the formation of programmes. Eight of them form a working committee, meeting at least once a month.

Financial Affairs

The revenue of the official society is provided from several sources:

1. Licence fees of 20 kronas (about £1 2/3) per annum.
 2. Stamp duty (10% ad valorem on the sale of radio equipment).
 3. Advertising, limited to 15 minutes each day, outside the principal hours of broadcasting.
 4. Sale of the journal of programmes.
- Sixteen stations, of which one is shortwave, give radio to the whole country. These were the most important:

Oslo	-	-	-	60 kw/s.
Troendelag (Trondheim)	-	-	-	20 kw/s.
Kristiansand	-	-	-	20 kw/s.
Tromsø	-	-	-	10 kw/s.
Aalesund	-	-	-	10 kw/s.
Finnmark (Vadso)	-	-	-	10 kw/s.

Bergen	-	-	-	1 kw.
Fredrikstad	-	-	-	1 kw.
Porsgrunn	-	-	-	1 kw.
Jeløy LKJI (Shortwave)	-	-	-	1 kw.

The principal centre of broadcasts is the Broadcasting House, situated in the capital.

Programmes

The composition of the programmes for 1934/35 indicates the way the broadcasting time is divided.

Music	-	-	-	43.9%
Dramatic broadcasts	-	-	-	1.85%
Conferences	-	-	-	14.1%
Education broadcasts (radio teaching, foreign languages)	-	-	-	3.85%
News	-	-	-	17.85%
Religious broadcasts	-	-	-	7.35%
Children's Hour	-	-	-	2.05%
Various (advertising, questions, intervals)	-	-	-	9.05%

Total - - - 100%

Two types of programmes are favoured above all popular music, and, since 1932, school broadcasts.

Worthy of note is the particular ruling in regard to Norwegian authors; the radio gives 1.80 kronen per minute to the reader of their works, or 100 kronen per half hour if these works are read by the authors themselves.

Although the number of receiving sets mounts rather slowly, the increase—which for eight years has been very regular—is from ten to twenty thousand each year. At the beginning of 1936, the number of licenses had reached 191,378, or 66.68 per thousand inhabitants.