

EDITORIAL

From 8-14 August 2004, IAML and IASA members will be welcomed to Norway for a joint congress in its capital, Oslo. The first time these organizations met in a joint conference in Norway was in August 1976¹. This event took place in Bergen, the town where Edvard Grieg was born. The fact that composers can be connected to the places where they lived and worked is also proof that music can be regarded as a greeting from one place to another: the music can easily be exported, but the country itself has to be sought out. Norway is well known for its variety of nature and the changing of its seasons, which culminates in cold winters and warm summers. The arctic circle, which passes through the north of the country, marks the beginning of the Arctic zone, where in winter the sun is totally absent for a while. On the other hand the sun does not set in these areas for part of the summer. These circumstances may characterize the Norwegian mood, and give a context for the expression “the Nordic light”. Those who listen to Norwegian music can discover how these conditions are reflected in the music that is performed.

One of the articles in this special issue of *Fontes* deals with Norwegian music traditions in the Middle Ages. When the Archbishopric in Nidaros (today Trondheim) was established in 1153, Norway was a member of the Catholic European community. The Reformation stopped this tradition. Music continued to play a significant role in the religious context, but it was not possible for Norway to participate in the musical developments of the Renaissance and Baroque periods because of the lack of a separate royal court in Norway in those times. The important position that folk music has in Norway may be related to these issues.

Of great importance to Norway was the establishment of its National Library in 1999: one of its main tasks is to enforce the Norwegian Legal Deposit Act of 1989. This Act covers more media than the previous Act of 1882, prior to which legal deposit was imposed by royal decree. Some of the articles in this issue deal with the new possibilities offered by the establishment of the National Library concerning music materials of different kinds.

Ella Arntsen (1924-2000), President of the Bergen Arrangements Committee for the 1976 conference, recalled the expectations towards the Opening Session with these words: “When this day arrived, we felt an enormous appetite for meeting our guests. And as they began to appear, familiar faces side by side with faces not seen before, and as everyone seemed glad to meet the events of the week together with us, then we really enjoyed the moment and dared to anticipate that the week to come would give delight to all of us”.² It is my hope that this Norwegian issue of *Fontes artis musicae* will whet the appetite of participants in the forthcoming congress in Oslo, while for those who want to combine their participation in the congress with a further stay in Norway, or visit the country separately, we have added a Norwegian Festival Calendar at the end of this issue.

Berit Holth³

¹ *The papers from the 1976 conference were published in Fontes artis musicae 24 (1977): 13-43.*

² *Fontes artis musicae 24 (1977): 17.*

³ *Berit Holth has been a professional librarian since 1974. Having worked for many years in Norway's National Music Collection she was central in establishing the Norwegian Union Catalogue of Printed Music (1990) and the Norwegian ISMN Agency (1996). She is still working on these projects, as well as on the Norwegian National Bibliography of Printed Music, in the Bibliographic Services Department of the National Library of Norway.*