

# Sørgemarsch over Rikard Nordraak

## Funeral March for Rikard Nordraak (1842 - 1866)

**Composed by Edvard Grieg (1843 - 1907)**

**Arranged by Klaus Smedegaard Bjerre 2017**

**for a small romantic era orchestral brass section (4231) with timpani & cymbals - optional parts for piccolo trumpet in A, 5th horn, & Glockenspiel.**

**Addendum: Rikard Nordraaks original version of the Norwegian national hymn with optional extra parts by Klaus Smedegaard Bjerre**

This present editor only in 2004 became aware of the existence of this composition by the young Edvard Grieg. This version, like my other older or upcoming versions, is based solely on the circa 1888 piano score by the C. F. Peters Edition, now available from IMSPL. The piano score is very well written and takes a very good pianist to play it. The episodic form spans a wide spectre of sentiments including deep sadness, wild despair, and even hope. The music is tonal, but with a lot of straying from the basis tonality of A.

Piano settings offers wide scopes of interpretations for arrangers. This piece is very orchestral in its outlay. No surprise that Halvorsen made an orchestration played at Grieg's own funeral. A version for military ensemble, transposed up a semitone, also is known. This edition supports Grieg's original choice of key.

This present editor back in 2004 found this piece obvious for an expansion of the repertory for the 10-piece brass format. During the fall of 2017 an American orchestral tubist asked whether that version might be changed to fit the brass and percussion sections of a smaller regional orchestra. It came out that this format fitted the music even better because of the stronger representation of the horn.

The tempo suggestion of the quarter note equalling 42 beats per minute is slower than what I suggested in 2004. Grieg was not specific, so the performing ensembles are free to set their own tempi. The suggestion of (*a tempo*) at the recapitulation of the A minor section is by this present editor.

The setting without the optional parts is fully self-carrying, harmony- and balancewise. The optional parts were added for a fit with some slightly larger ROPA orchestras. The piccolo trumpet has no unique material, but doubles the 1st trumpet and/or the 1st horn in unison or at the octave. It is muted throughout the funeral march with the purpose of adding a piercing colour (and mute juggling would challenge the pitch). The 5th horn adds depth to the horn section and is not used as a bumper for the 1st horn. It actually has one unique note, the fifth of the given chord, which had to be omitted in the 4-horn setting for reasons of good voicing. As the 5th horn in some passages goes lower than the 4th horn, its part comes as a playing score for these two horns, which allows for part swapping, where balance, blend, and/or player comfort tells to do so. Firm pencilled-in agreements on the swapping is recommended.

The Glockenspiel like the piccolo trumpet adds chime and overtones. It adds rhythmic elements to a more dancing passage of the A major section.

All horns use hand stopping. Where hand stopping would be inefficient in the 4th horn in bars #6 & #42, a stopping mute may be employed with a straight mute as an optional alternative.

Grieg uses enharmonic spelling to avoid cluttered stacks of notes. Here the spelling has been changed for a better fit with the actual tonality. Where double accidentals or not so usual notes (B# or Fb) would come into play, an alternative spelling has been chosen so that the Glockensoiel part has a visually not so happy chord sequence of Ab major followed by C# minor.

The beaming of the original piano score in some places follows older practices. Here the beaming has been changed to make clear where the notes are placed relative to the beat.

Grieg strongly suggests timpani through his octave tremolos in the bass range. Not being a pianist this arranger still enjoys doing chorale style improvisations at a good grand piano with its resonating overtones upwards and its difference notes (resulting pitches) downwards. This is reflected in the timpani part, which is tightly knitted into the representation of the chord structure. The part is not playable by one player alone, so the cymbal part in several places is marked 'Go to timpani', where the cymbal player has to play the 3rd and even the 4th note of the timpani chords or doing one of the double rolls. If the Glockenspiel part is manned, its player will play one of the triple rolls at the ending. A minor is the home key of this piece. With ideal balance the timpani should produce an audible very low A in the opening and at the ending. Which player plays which notes is left to local planning. Only one retuning forth and back has been asked for. Many more would be wanted, but have been considered impractical. The timpani in some places have been used more like a bass drum, but any note written fits into the given chord. This approach leaves the timpani with a problem in bars ##10 through 12 plus ##46 through 48, where their dramatic effect is very much needed. The solution suggested is about suspending one or more cymbals within the reach of the timpanist. By choosing cymbal and the point of strike he/she will know how to fit in with the bass melody on the notes not available from the timpani. No exact pitches are to be expected from the suspended cymbals, yet the said bass melody has been notated at pitch for the timpanist to know what to adapt to. Only the cymbal notes have had their notehead replaced by an x. Hardly a correct notation, but the best this arranger could come up with. To support the collective efforts the percussion players are given a 3-stave section score to play from.

Grieg and Nordraak both are inscribed in historical contexts of national emancipation. The very young Nordraak wrote the Norwegian national anthem in use today. A tune of immense beauty, which has its simplicity forming its strength. It has been added in its original key of E major. Horns, trombones, and tuba play the TTBB-lines of Nordraak's own setting for male voices. Optional parts for the remaining instruments have been added by this editor. These may be omitted partially or in toto. The trumpet parts should not be played without the timpani playing. The bare 4-part performance will start at letter A.

As Nordraak's original parts are represented verbatim with no respelling of accidentals double sharps and odd notes like B# may occur. For the reason of a cleaner reading the horn parts will have a version for Horn(-s) in E added after the version for Horn(-s) in F.

Aside from their strong national affiliations both Grieg and Nordraak were cosmopolitans in the then available European sense. Grieg studied in Leipzig and worked for an extended period of time north of

Copenhagen. Nordraak studied in Berlin, where he died shortly after a visit by Grieg, who was en route to Rome. There is a wealth of information available on the web. One possible search would be:

<https://www.google.dk/search?client=safari&rls=en&dcr=0&ei=Jp1AWqLFI8GZsAf14oCABg&q=edvard+grieg+rikard+nordraak+funeral+march&oq=edvard+grieg+rikard+nordraak+funeral+march>

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These present arrangements do NOT constitute source texts of musicological value. They merely represent interpretations of Grieg's piano Urtext and of Nordraak's vocal ditto. Re-arrangements are NOT allowed. If you want alternative parts, then contact this arranger. Due to the complexity of the Grieg setting a lot of resources have been allocated to the proofing process. This does not ensure that no faults or inconsistencies of notation have passed through the mesh. Serious comments are most welcome. If necessary this edition will be updated. Please check.

Korsør on the 26th of December 2017

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