

## WRITERS GROUP MUSINGS

### Norway in September 2018

*Inger Govin*

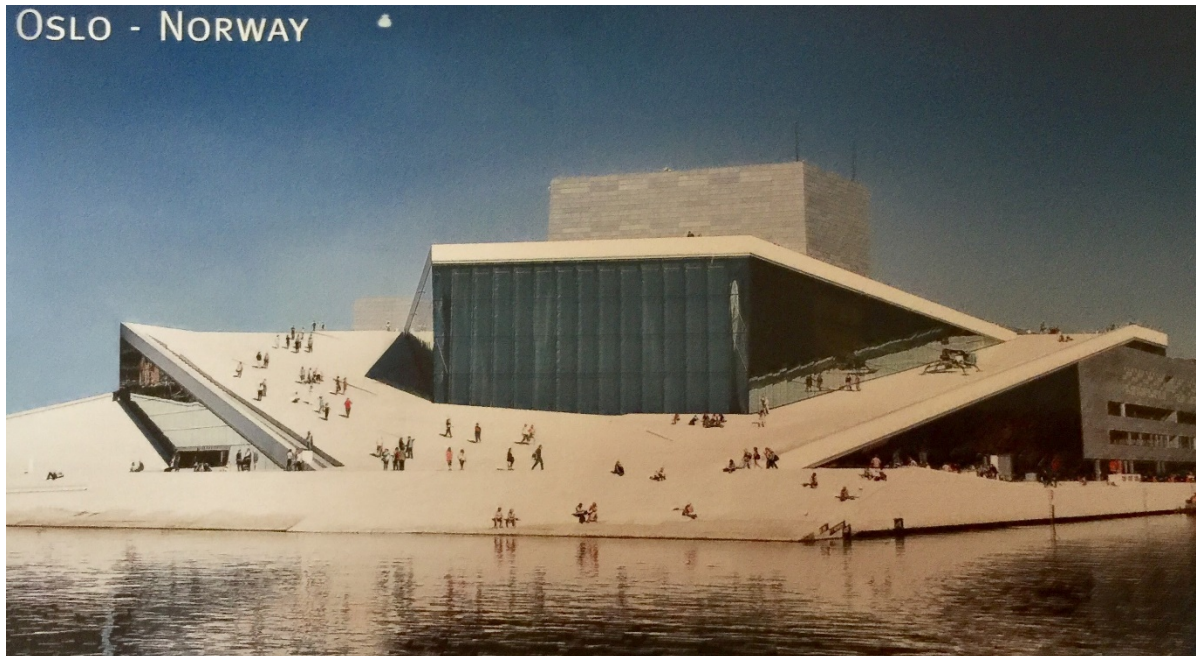


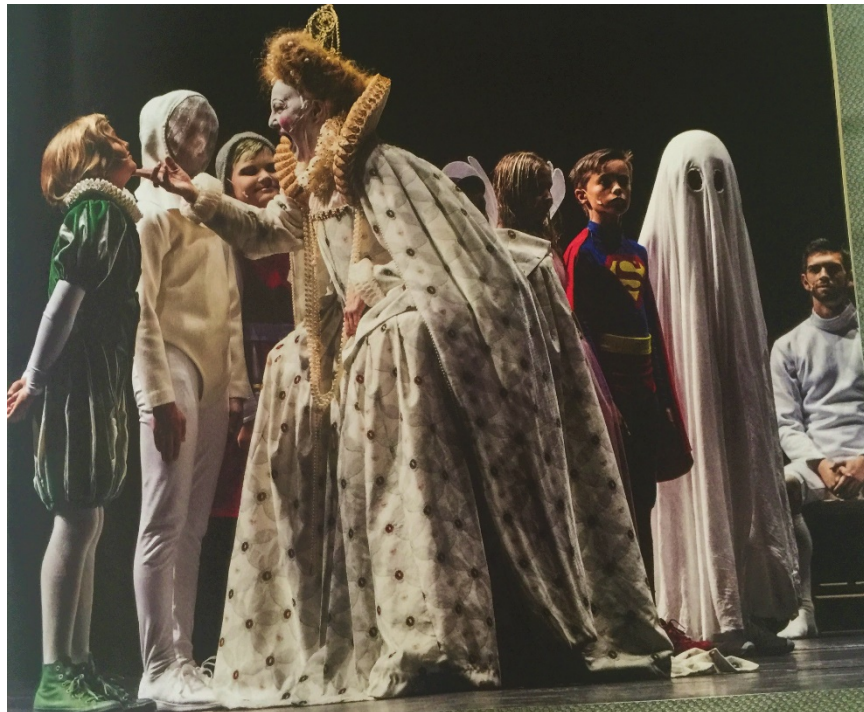
My husband jokes that I have to go to Norway often to get my “yearly injection of Norwegianism”, so off I went last September to spend 2 weeks in Oslo with my siblings. With 2 brothers and 2 sisters, all with big families, the days were carefully planned so I got to meet a lot of relatives ... every day something was happening.

The definite highlight of this trip was my visit to the Norwegian Opera on September 22 when I went to to see the **World Premiere of a new Ballet called *The Hamlet Complex***, creatively based on Shakespeare’s play, with music written by my nephew Henrik Skram.

It was no surprise to the family that Henrik became a composer: both his parents worked at the Norwegian Opera for most of their working years.....my **brother Knut Skram** as the leading baritone, and his wife **Hanne Skram as the Prima Ballerina**. Also, my brother was involved with the building of the new Opera in Oslo, which opened in 2008. My brother had studied Architecture in the US and came home to Norway with a degree in his hand... and a desire to find out if he could make a living as a singer. He gave his debut concert in Oslo in 1964, and the day after the concert he had a call from the Opera offering him the position as their principal baritone. Here he met the promising ballet dancer Hanne, soon to become the Prima Ballerina, and the rest is history. Years later, their son Henrik, after studying music, started composing in various styles, with great success. How fitting that Henrik wrote this monumental music for a new ballet, and dedicated it to his mother, who sadly passed away last year.

Three solid hours of ballet, with two intermissions, making the whole evening a 3 and ½ hour extravaganza. It was a magical performance. The ballet was indescribably fantastical and unforgettable. I will enclose 2 photos: one of the opera building, and one from the program showing a scene with the children’s pre-performance play.





### In closing:

While at the University of Bozeman, Montana, my brother **Knut Skram** got various singing jobs, weddings, funerals etc. to put himself through college.

In the summer of 1962 he painted the **Seattle Highway Bridge**, 3 miles long and 60 meters tall! He could not resist the perfect acoustics and belted out an aria from his highest perch. This resulted in a huge front page picture in **The Seattle Daily Times**.



## Bridge-Painter Sings Opera as He Works

—Times staff photo by Paul Thomas.

**KNUT SKRAM GESTURED WITH BRUSH AND BUCKET AS HE SANG**  
Pausing to listen were, from left, Paul Myers, Jim Jewett and Terry Smith.

**By DON DUNCAN**  
On a windless day, a clear, vibrant baritone wafts across the ship Canal to fall gently on the ears of homeowners below the freeway bridge.

Listen closely. The words are foreign. The song is from opera.

The singer is Knut Skram, 23-year-old Norwegian who is earning money painting the bridge, so he can resume his architectural studies at Montana State University.

Knut, full of laughter, shouts something in Norwegian. A babble of Norwegian echoes over the bridge.

**FOUR OTHER** students from Norway, three of them top sisters, also are painting the bridge. Slap, slosh.

Finn Flugeim, Tor Fage-

raas and Kjell Nielsen, all attend Montana. Chris Selbeck, last year's National Collegiate Athletic Association ski-jumping champion, attends Denver University.

Knut and his buddies came west for the summer to earn big money as painters. They found no help-wanted signs.

**EQUAL TO** adversity, they promoted a nice back yard to sleep in for a week. Then they painted a house. The earnings paid a month's rent on a home at 3835 Evanston Av. N.

None ever had painted in high places before being hired by the bridge-painting contractor. The ski-jumpers took the rarefied air in stride. Knut was shaky at first.

"But now, when I have a brush in my hand and overalls on, I am not afraid," Knut said. "I no longer am fond of green as a color,

though. It is in my eyes and ears and fingernails."

**THE FINE VOICE** that delights housewives won first place last spring in the Inland Empire Metropolitan Opera auditions at Spokane. Knut auditioned, but did not win, in the Northwest finals.

"I will earn a living with architecture and sing for pleasure," Knut said.

With that, he went into an aria from "The Marriage of Figaro." Fellow painters smiled broadly. One shouted: "Give it to 'em, Elvis."

**THE OTHER DAY** a woman clapped loudly from below after a stirring aria.

"Don't clap; just throw money," Knut shouted.

But several hundred feet above the ground is a long way to throw coins, and Knut went back to spreading the green paint to earn his greenbacks.

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CENTURY 21 - SEATTLE WORLDS FAIR - 1962

**SUNSET FINAL**

**DELTA PHI DELTA**  
New officers for Delta Phi Delta, Art and Architecture honorary, have been chosen. Heading the group as President is Knut Skram. Other officers are: Mayge DeWit, vice president; Donna Andrus, recording secretary; Karen Johnson, corresponding secretary; and Eugene Hoover, treasurer.