



DET NORSKE  
BLÅSEENSEMBLE  
Anno 1734

### "And God Created Border Towns"

Tom Russell & The Norwegian Wind Ensemble

**Brygga Kultursal, Halden; Thursday May 10th, 19:00**

- A unique multimedia presentation of music and art by Tom Russell and photographs by Raymond Mosken.

With musical arrangements by Mats Holling.

American Tom Russell truly fits the description "renaissance man". Not only does he have some twenty albums of his own songs to his credit, he has also written novels and non-fiction books on music, and in the last decade has established himself as a painter. His art works have recently been documented in the book *Blue Horse, Red Desert: The Art of Tom Russell*.

Throughout his career Tom has collaborated with a vast number of country, rock, jazz, and folk musicians, not least of all for his two folk operas. The first, *The Man from God Knows Where*, was about his ancestors' emigration from Norway to America, while *Hotwalker: A Ballad for Gone America* is centred on the Beat Generation and partly based on his correspondence with author Charles Bukowski. Right now Tom is working on the final part of his "Americana trilogy", which has as its point of departure the cowboy culture of the south western United States. This is a project inspired in part by the great American composer Aaron Copland (1900-1990), famous for his ballets *Appalachian Spring*, *Rodeo* and *Billy the Kid*.

Tom's two most recent albums, *Blood and Candle Smoke* (2009) and *Mesabi* (2011) have been made in collaboration with the well-known rock band Calexico, and the songs are coloured by California, where he grew up, and Texas, where he now has his El Paso home.

In this joint project Tom Russell and The Norwegian Wind Ensemble will be presenting songs from his whole career, but with particular emphasis on the Mexican-influenced music of the recent albums. They are also hoping to be able to showcase excerpts from the new cowboy folk opera.

This unique concert, which takes place in the Brygga Kultursal in the border town of Halden on May 10<sup>th</sup>, has borrowed its title from a song on the new *Mesabi* album: "And God Created Border Towns". Tom Russell has lived for the last decade on a farm outside El Paso, close to the Mexican border. This has also played a part in magnifying the Mexican influences on his music, aided during the last three years by the Calexico musicians Joey Burns, John Convertino, and, not least, their fantastic trumpet player Jacob Valenzuela.

Photographer Raymond Mosken has for many years been documenting the same south western American landscape that has given rise to Tom Russell's music, and both of them have spent time at Pat Russell's ranch in California. Pat is Tom's elder brother and a legendary rodeo cowboy and horse breeder.

During the event in May the finest images from Raymond's large collections will combine with Tom's paintings in a striking pictorial accompaniment to the music.





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Last summer book publishers Aschehoug printed an updated pocket edition of Tom Russell's novel "Bloodsport". As a warm-up to "And God Created Border Towns" a literary dinner will be arranged in the restaurant adjoining the concert venue, with both Russell and his translator attending.

There will also be an exhibition of Russell's art associated with the concert, where among other works the original painting we have chosen for our poster, "Aztec Jazz", will be on show.

