



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Silence fills a music room in the cultural hall at Pyramiden, where sounds came alive this month with the first concert in 14 years and two new albums with themes featuring the Russian ghost town.

PYRAMIDEN @ 320 KBS

Review: Two albums inspired by Russian ghost town hit the apex

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

A place few people have heard of is about to be heard – literally – by a bunch of folks.

The Russian ghost town of Pyramiden is the inspiration for two new albums coincidentally being related almost simultaneously. One is Norwegian electronic pop that may appeal more to Svalbard residents, but the other by a Danish alternative rock trio appears likely to get vastly more exposure globally.

The good news is both are considerable successes as music projects accessible enough for a general audience, if less so as audio postcards of Pyramiden itself. Even better, the full



Listen to both albums in full for free

"Piramide" – tinyurl.com/8gbyhksn

"Radiomagnetic" – tinyurl.com/8cavsln

versions of both can be auditioned free via streaming audio.

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City eats bill from grinders

Bydrift won't seek costs of faulty units from company with 'little capital,' alters bidding process

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

A device intended to clear away muck instead continues creating it in Longyearbyen, as city officials are abandoning their efforts to recover the cost of installing faulty food grinders in hundreds of homes from what they say is a financially troubled company.

The units from Activum Consulting, criticized by outside analysts as inferior, plagued residents with problems ranging from sink clogs to nearly catching fire. The city won a two-year legal dispute about whether blame lay with the company, which claimed the problems were due to improper use.

But Bydrift, the city's infrastructure agency, decided during a closed-door board meeting today it was impractical to pursue the matter.

"It appears that the company does not have a good financial situation in any case," wrote Marianne Aasen, Bydrift's general manager.

Activum's total assets dropped from 1.1 million kroner in 2010 to 75,000 kroner in 2011, according to Norway's Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Did the city exercise due diligence before selecting Activum?

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Svalbardposten now a pay site

Circulation drop, PDF piracy called threat to paper's future; debut of new version hits snags

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

The good news is there's vastly more content. The bad news is you have to pay to see it – and even then you might have trouble.

Svalbardposten debuted its new website payroll and copy-protected e-paper Friday, which Editor Birger Amundsen said is critical for the newspaper's financial well-being after

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SVALBARDPOSTEN

People not subscribing to Svalbardposten will see only this when trying to read most articles.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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Icepeople is published weekly (or thereabouts) on Tuesdays (or thereabouts), with printed copies available free on a limited basis in Longyearbyen. Additional printed copies are available locally and by mail upon request. Charges are on an "at cost" basis.

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Corrections policy

When we screw up you'll know about it – on the front page. One of the big complaints about newspapers is they tend to bury corrections and clarifications deep inside where few people who read the original article see them. If we need to fix something, an alert box on the front page will state what story is in error and where the full correction is printed.

Submitting material

Letters, columns, photos and other material are welcome, but we can't offer pay for published items since nobody here is getting paid at the moment. Submissions in electronic form (text, Word documents, JPEGs, etc.) are highly preferred, although typing and/or scanning of items will be considered on a per-case basis. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, clarity, accuracy, libel and other reasons, but we will also make every reasonable effort to contact the author about any changes prior to publication.

Rising from the ashes



SYSSELMANNEN

A mostly rebuilt cabin awaits visitors in Brucebyen after the original structure built in the 1920s burned down following a visit by tourists in August 2010. The cabin is part of a heritage site featuring three barracks, a trolley with rails and other infrastructure. "It was considered important to restore the building environment in Brucebyen to how it appeared around 1920 when The Scottish Spitsbergen Syndicate Ltd (SSS) was looking for coal there," the Svalbard governor's office wrote in a prepared statement released Friday. While some construction work on the cabin remains, it is now available for use through the Red Cross.

New bid process after grinder snafu

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"I think we should have done a better job of relating to the procurement of grinders," Aasen wrote, adding "Bydrift has changed its procedures related to procurement for the future."

The city originally mandated food grinders be installed in all residences by July 1, 2010, in an effort to reduce the volume of waste. Bydrift stated at the time the units were "the most economically advantageous" despite the concerns raised by officials elsewhere.

The misstep comes during a difficult time for Bydrift, which significantly raised water, power and auto registration fees this year due to budget shortfalls and mandatory upgrades to existing infrastructure. Aasen stated the amount the city will lose likely won't be known until next month.

New mills from a different vendor are being installed, with work expected to be completed this fall, Aasen wrote.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

We're uncharacteristically kicking this off with hard news which, while weird, also relies on dependable but unnamed sources. **The Norwegian government decided a couple of weeks ago to uphold a ban on allowing visitors into the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, but we're told two film crews toured the facility at roughly the same time.** We're still chasing down an explanation from the powers that be, which is another reason the news is demoted to this space. The ban was enacted in March due to concerns about a lack of an emergency exit, which vault officials say is a virtual impossibility for the facility deep inside a mountain. Two VIP delegations consisting of folks like ministry officials from other Nordic countries have been literally left standing at the door during the past couple of weeks, according to The Local Paper Not Used For Compost. So among our many questions is who besides the tour guide knew about the film crews ... Getting back to our usual gutter-level muck-raking, here's a true "inquiring minds want to know" development: It's been revealed **police and prosecutors staged a huge brothel raid during the international climate summit in June** as part of what's been described as the



THE TELEGRAPH

At least it's easy to stay upright: Ben Stookesberry's historic plunge over a glacier waterfall can be seen at tinyurl.com/cg4tujn.

largest crackdown on prostitution in a generation (the article in *The Atlantic* also notes some were allowed to reopen once the pesky media left town). So we're just wondering (albeit not obsessively) if any of the elite academics who happen to work on our little island happened to witness the action, so to speak ... We've seen lots of videos and pictures of (more) polar bear cannibalism in Svalbard and (more) bears stranded on ice floes in the British press lately but, awful as it is such things might be becoming passé, the image intriguing us is **Ben Stookesberry being the first person to kayak down a glacier waterfall in Svalbard.**



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Line Nagell Ylvisåker, second from left, and Kjersti Kvile, demonstrate *Svalbardposten's* new website and e-paper Friday at Svalbardbutikken. Editor Birger Amundsen said he doesn't expect to recover costs of the new version in the short run, but long-term trends at other papers are positive.

Paywall gets mixed reactions

SVALBARDPOSTEN, from page 1
six years of declining circulation.

The new site features all articles from each week's issue instead of summaries of a few, plus mobile-friendly formats. But some electronic subscribers are complaining the e-paper replacing PDFs previously sent are unreadable and can't be downloaded for offline viewing.

Amundsen said he is working with the company now providing the paper's online content to resolve a list of issues raised during the first few days. He also noted access to the new site and e-edition is free during the first two weeks of their launch – as will be future articles about critical situations – and PDFs will continue to be e-mailed to electronic subscribers until their current subscription expires.

Initial reaction at *Svalbardposten's* Facebook page ranges from "then it soon last time I read it" to "Absolutely great. Have been waiting for (mobile formats)."

Amundsen said the cost of providing online content and resulting loss of subscriptions means he can't worry about complaints from those saying they will no longer visit the site.

"I don't care about people who don't want to pay," he said.

Circulation has dropped from a peak of 3,352 in 2006, when the newspaper first established a significant Web presence, to 2,772 as of June this year. Amundsen said Web ads earn

"peanuts," and newspapers large and small are being similarly forced to charge for access.

"We don't know where the bottom is on this going down," he said, referring to print subscriptions.

The biggest initial glitch appears to be the e-paper, which for at least some users is displayed either as a full page with type too small to read, or zoomed in on a small section that can't be scrolled or resized. Amundsen said the company hosting *Svalbardposten's* content is a new provider and problems need to be addressed accordingly, but they were selected because they offer both Web and e-paper services.

The new website also has some bugs, occasionally clipping off a portion of the left side of pages and logging users out at erratic intervals. On the plus side, foreigners will find it's more friendly with automatic translators such as Google's, although the interpretations by those services remain susceptible to wild and comedic inaccuracies.

Eliminating the PDF issues, another sore point for some readers, was "the most important thing" because of people e-mailing them to others and, in at last one case, selling access to them at a separate site, Amundsen said.

It's possible PDFs will be made available after a long delay, perhaps a month, he said.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Rabies outbreak over, NPI says, but restrictions remain

Svalbard's most serious outbreak of rabies in more than 30 years is over, according to the Norwegian Polar Institute, but the governor is keeping restrictions in place until it receives an evaluation from the Norwegian Food Safety Authority. The outbreak was reported last September, with ten reindeer and five foxes diagnosed with the disease by January. The governor imposed "extraordinary" measures, including requiring dogs to be supervised and leashed when outdoors, and obtaining vaccinations for a majority of residents. But summer observations of both species indicate they are no longer infected, according to the NPI. Espen Stokke, a senior environmental officer for the governor, said opinions were sought from both the NPI and NFSA, and no decision about lifting restrictions will be made until the latter is received.

Full-time veterinarian in Svalbard rejected by ministry

Requests for a veterinarian in Longyearbyen have been rejected by Norway's Ministry of Agriculture and Food, who states people with dogs should know services are limited when they move to Svalbard. A veterinarian currently visits Longyearbyen three times a year to provide rabies vaccinations and other services, but the city and governor lack funds for a full-time position. Among the alternate proposals from the governor and Longyearbyen Hundeklubb were monthly visits by a veterinarian or a part-time position that would also establish a private practice. Members of the dog club said they are continuing to explore options for improving care.

Committee: Put Hermansen bust in future Mine 3 museum

A bust of former Store Norske leader Robert Hermansen, now serving a prison sentence for gross corruption, should be moved from the municipal building to the Mine 3 museum if and when it opens, the city's memorial committee has unanimously decided. The bust's placement has been an ongoing issue and the museum, which so far lacks funds to proceed, is seen as fitting.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. NE winds to 32 km/h. High 6C (2C wind chill), low 2C (-2C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. NE winds to 22 km/h. High 3C (-1C wind chill), low 1C (-2C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. W winds to 11 km/h. High 2C (-1C wind chill), low -1C (-3C wind chill).	Cloudy. S winds to 11 km/h. High 1C (-2C wind chill), low -1C (-4C wind chill).
Sunrise 6:09a; sunset 7:29p	Sunrise 6:16a; sunset 7:21p	Sunrise 6:23a; sunset 7:13p	Sunrise 6:31a; sunset 7:05p
Extended forecast: Sunday, p. cloudy, 1C (-1C), -2C (-5C), light 12:20h; Monday, p. cloudy, 0C (-3C), -2C (-6C), light 12:05h; Tuesday, cloudy, 3C (-1C), 0C (-4C), light 11:50h; Wednesday, cloudy, 4C (-1C), 3C (-1C), light 11:35h			
Data provided by storm.no			

Stinky end to a grand ballet



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Dancers bearing fish, top, mingle with a capacity crowd for the finale of a three-piece performance by Den Norske Opera & Ballett on Saturday at Kulturhuset. The show concluded a five-city "Septemberdans 2012" tour consisting of new modern compositions with themes ranging from multiple dramatic narratives, bottom left, to subtly complex choreography, bottom right. The company also hosted workshops for local students at Svalbardhallen and received a musical greeting from the Store Norske men's choir during a tour of abandoned mining facilities. "We are full of impressions that I and all participants describe as our best tour experience ever," wrote Ingrid Lorentzen, the ballet company's manger, in an e-mail to the city. The tour was recorded by NRK and will likely be broadcast in November.

A peak pair of Pyramiden albums

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Both bands visited the former mining community, which Russians abandoned in 1998 and are now attempting to revive as a tourist site, during the past year. As with their music, the reasons and subsequent stories they tell are considerably different and intriguing.

"Radiomagnetic" by Frost

The Tromsø duo of Aggie Peterson and Per Martinsen performed Pyramiden's first concert in 14 years earlier this month before releasing their fourth album Sunday. "Radiomagnetic" is more intense than most of their previous work, but local fans – and there seem to be a lot – will find Peterson's heavily processed vocals and the interwoven synth/beat textures unmistakably familiar.

"Something New" deserves kudos for bending and stretching a relatively simple theme over eight minutes. The chipper glissade of "The Woods" seems destined for the kind of single success enjoyed by 2007's "One Hun-

dred Years." And while static and distortion are generally unpleasant on albums, they make perfect sense on a song like "Sex Shooter" since Peterson said her Pyramiden visit was partially inspired by a tape she received of a "ghost radio" broadcast from the area.

"Piramida" by Efterklang

With near universal acclaim coming from alt-rock magazines to London's *The Financial Times*, it's clear this album should appeal to a wide audience. It's also offers a far stronger Pyramiden presence, as the band captured more than 1,000 sounds that are used with great creativity in the mix.

Oil drums and fuel tanks serve as percussion instruments, echoes from abandoned mine shafts add harmonic texture and notes from an ancient grand piano resonate throughout. But the complexity goes beyond those sounds with elements such as a 70-member girls' choir.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

What's up

Sept. 19

6 p.m.: Movie: "Ted," U.S. comedy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 21

8 p.m.: Movie: "90 Minutter," Norwegian drama/thriller, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 23

6 p.m.: Movie: "Skvis" (preview screening), Norwegian drama/family, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "A Royal Affair," Danish drama/romance, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 24

8 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Kulturhuset cafe.

Sept. 25

7 p.m.: Municipal Council meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

7 p.m.: Evening Mass with fireplace gathering. Svalbard Church.

Sept. 26

6 p.m.: Movie: "Magic Mike," U.S. drama/comedy, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Sept. 29

Noon-3 p.m.: Open day at Longyearbyen Fire Station.

Noon-4 p.m.: Open day at Longyearbyen Science and Education Forum. UNIS.

Sept. 30

6 p.m.: Movie: "Tigre & Tatoveringer," Danish animated/children's film, all ages. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Hope Springs," U.S. drama/comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 1

Q3 meter reading due.

Oct. 3

6 p.m.: Movie: "Barbara," German drama, all ages. Kulturhuset.

Oct. 4

Sale of surplus government furniture, time to be announced. Statsbygg.

What's online

Icepeople.net provides daily updates of news about Svalbard and the world's polar regions, plus extras for articles from the print edition. Among the latest news:

- *Arctic ice melt season ends alarmingly*
- *Study: Only 100 adult cod left in N. Sea*
- *Last B-29 crew recalls first N. Pole flight*
- *\$1 quadrillion of diamonds in Siberia?*