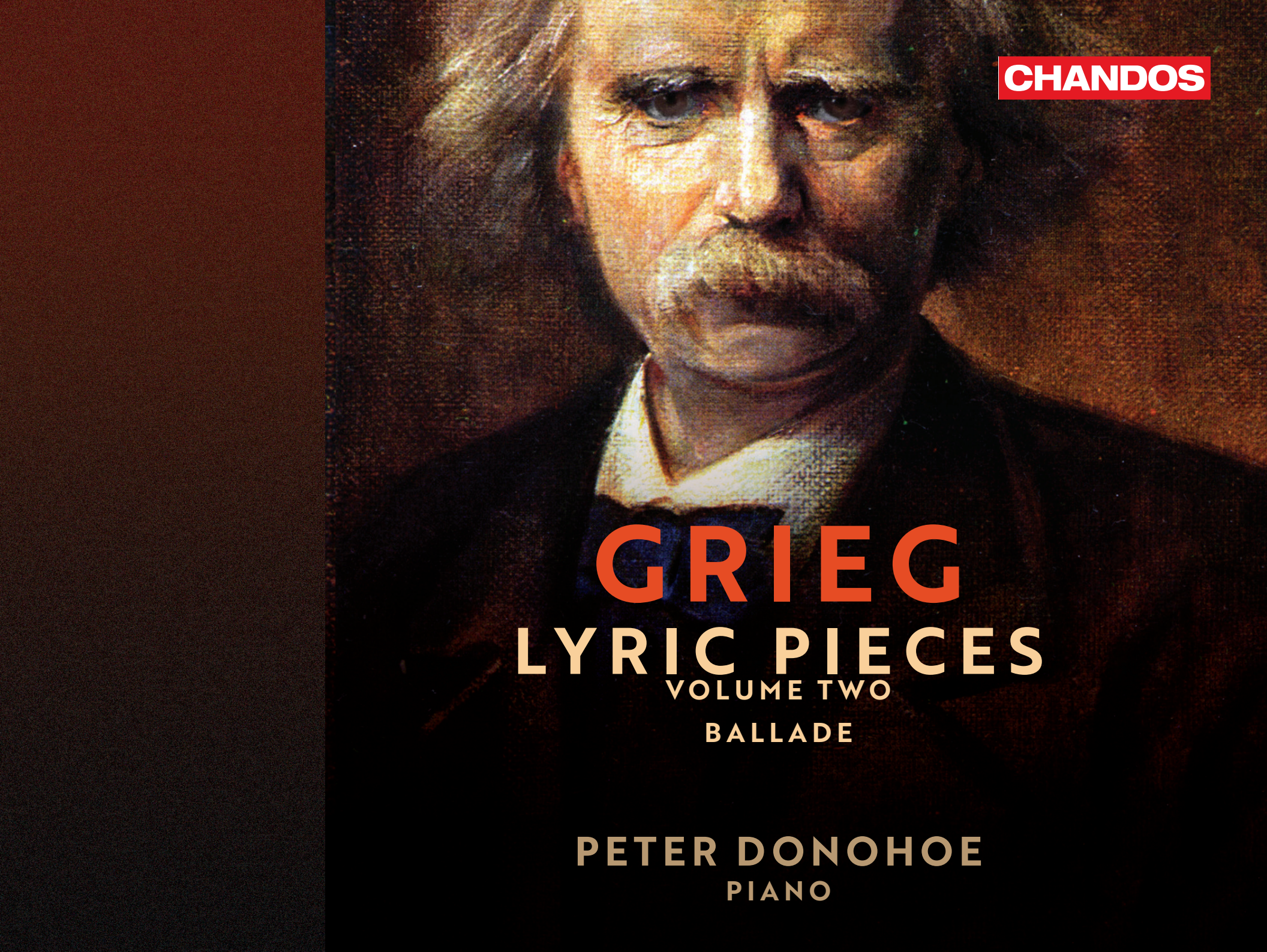


A close-up, high-contrast portrait of Edvard Grieg, showing his face and upper torso. He has a mustache and is looking directly at the camera. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on his face and deep shadows in the background.

CHANDOS

GRIEG
LYRIC PIECES
VOLUME TWO
BALLADE

PETER DONOHOE
PIANO

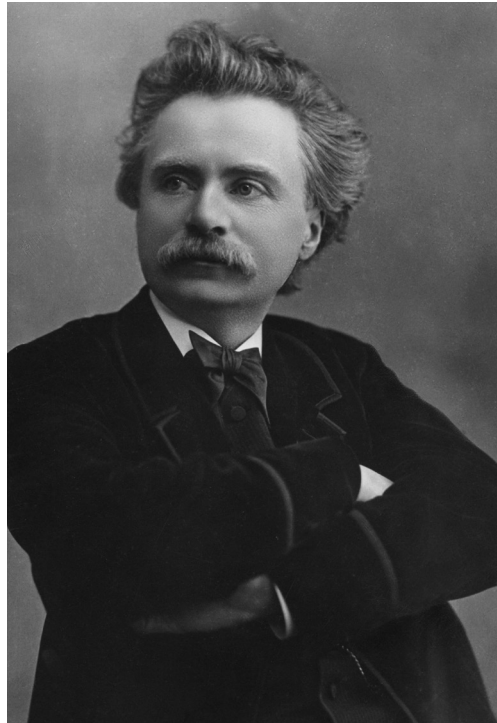


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Edvard Grieg, 1885

Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907)

Lyric Pieces, Volume 2 (Lyriske Stykker)

COMPACT DISC ONE

1

Ballade, Op. 24 (1875 – 76)

16:27

in G minor • in g-Moll • en sol mineur

i form av variasjoner over en norsk folketone

(in Form von Variationen über eine norwegische Melodie /

in the Form of Variations on a Norwegian Folk Melody)

for Piano

[Tema.] Andante espressivo – Poco animato – Tempo I –

[Variazione I.] Poco meno Andante, ma molto tranquillo –

Poco animato –

[Variazione II.] Allegro agitato –

[Variazione III.] Adagio (la sopra melodia molto tenuta) –

[Variazione IV.] Allegro capriccioso –

[Variazione V.] Più lento –

[Variazione VI.] Allegro scherzando –
 [Variazione VII.] [L'istesso tempo] –
 [Variazione VIII.] Lento –
 [Variazione IX.] Un poco Andante – Più lento –
 [Variazione X.] Un poco allegro e alla burla –
 [Variazione XI.] Più animato –
 [Variazione XII.] Meno allegro e maestoso –
 [Variazione XIII.] Allegro furioso –
 [Variazione XIV.] Prestissimo –
 Andante espressivo

A Selection of Pieces from

Lyriske småstykker (Book I, 1866 – 67), Op. 12 (Copenhagen, 1867).

Til Frøken Betty Egeberg – Fräulein Betty Egeberg gewidmet

Neue lyrische Stückchen (Book II, 1866 – 83), Op. 38 (Leipzig, 1883)

Lyrische Stückchen (Book III, 1886), Op. 43 (Leipzig, 1886). Herrn Professor

Isidor Seiss gewidmet

Lyrische Stückchen (Book IV, 1872 – 88), Op. 47 (Leipzig, 1888). Fräulein

Elisabeth Hornemann zugeeignet

Lyrische Stücke (Book V, 1889 – 91), Op. 54 (Leipzig, 1891). Seinem Freunde

Julius Röntgen in Amsterdam gewidmet

Lyrische Stücke (Book VI, 1890 – 93), Op. 57 (Leipzig, 1893). Herrn Herrmann

Scholtz gewidmet

Lyrische Stücke (Book VII, 1893 – 95), Op. 62 (Leipzig, 1895)

Lyrische Stücke (Book VIII, 1896), Op. 65 (Leipzig, 1897)

Lyrische Stücke (Book IX, 1898 – 99), Op. 68 (Leipzig, 1899)

Lyrische Stücke (Book X, 1901), Op. 71 (Leipzig, 1901). Frau Mien Röntgen in

Amsterdam

2	Arietta, Op. 12 No. 1 (1866 – 67) in E flat major • in Es-Dur • en mi bémol majeur Poco Andante e sostenuto	1:06
3	Fedrelandssang, Op. 12 No. 8 (1866 – 67) in E flat major • in Es-Dur • en mi bémol majeur (Vaterländisches Lied / National Song) Maestoso	1:04
4	I balladetone, Op. 65 No. 5 (1896) in C minor • in c-Moll • en ut mineur (Im Balladenton / In the Spirit of Ballad) Lento lugubre – Un poco mosso – Tempo I – Un poco mosso – Tempo I	2:40
5	Halling, Op. 38 No. 4 (1883) in G minor • in g-Moll • en sol mineur (Norwegischer Tanz / Norwegian Dance) Allegro marcato	0:48
6	Hun danser, Op. 57 No. 5 (1890 – 93) in C major • in C-Dur • en ut majeur (Sie tanzt / She Dances) Tempo di Valse – Cantabile – Animato – [Tempo I] – Cantabile – Animato – [Tempo I] – Più vivo	2:49

- | | |
|----|--|
| 7 | <p>Melodi, Op. 47 No. 3 (1886–88) 2:10</p> <p>in A minor • in a-Moll • en la mineur
 (Melodie / Melody)</p> <p>Allegretto – Più mosso – Tempo I – Più mosso – Tempo I</p> |
| 8 | <p>Hjemve, Op. 57 No. 6 (1890–93) 4:01</p> <p>in E minor • in e-Moll • en mi mineur
 (Heimweh / Home-sickness)</p> <p>Andante – Molto più vivo – Tempo I – Poco a poco più lento al Fine</p> |
| 9 | <p>Springdans, Op. 47 No. 6 (1886–88) 1:18</p> <p>in G major • in G-Dur • en sol majeur
 (Springar)
 (Springtanz / Spring Dance)</p> <p>Allegro vivace</p> |
| 10 | <p>Aften på høytjellet, Op. 68 No. 4 (1898–99) 2:25</p> <p>in E minor • in e-Moll • en mi mineur
 (Abend im Hochgebirge / Evening in the Mountains)</p> <p>Allegretto – Andante espressivo – Tempo I</p> |
| 11 | <p>Folkevis, Op. 38 No. 2 (1883) 1:23</p> <p>in E minor • in e-Moll • en mi mineur
 (Volkweise / Folksong)</p> <p>Allegro con moto</p> |

12	Matrosenes oppsang, Op. 68 No. 1 (1898 – 99) in C major • in C-Dur • en ut majeur (Matrosenlied / Sailors' Song) Allegro vivace e marcato	1:22
13	Illusjon, Op. 57 No. 3 (1890 – 93) in A minor • in a-Moll • en la mineur (Illusion) Allegretto serio	3:05
14	Drømmesyn, Op. 62 No. 5 (1893 – 95) in A major • in A-Dur • en la majeur (Traumgesicht / Phantom) Poco Andante ed espressivo	2:49
15	Salong, Op. 65 No. 4 (1896) in A major • in A-Dur • en la majeur (Salon) Allegretto con grazia	2:15
16	Troldtog, Op. 54 No. 3 (1889 – 91) in D minor • in d-Moll • en ré mineur (Zug der Zwerge / March of the Trolls) Allegro moderato – Cantabile – [Tempo I]	2:53
		TT 48:45

COMPACT DISC TWO

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">1</div> | <p>Bestemors menuett, Op. 68 No. 2 (1898 – 99)
in G major • in G-Dur • en sol majeur
(Großmutter's Menuett / Grandmother's Minuet)
Allegretto grazioso e leggierrissimo – Con moto –
Tempo I – Con moto – Tempo I</p> | <p>2:08</p> |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">2</div> | <p>For dine føtter, Op. 68 No. 3 (1898 – 99)
in D major • in D-Dur • en ré majeur
(Zu deinen Füßen / At Your Feet)
Poco Andante e molto espressivo – Più mosso –
A tempo, ma agitato – Tempo I</p> | <p>2:31</p> |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">3</div> | <p>Sylfide, Op. 62 No. 1 (1893 – 95)
in B minor • in h-Moll • en si mineur
(Sylphe / Sylph)
Allegretto con moto – Allegro – Tempo I</p> | <p>1:38</p> |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">4</div> | <p>Elegi, Op. 47 No. 7 (1886 – 88)
in B minor • in h-Moll • en si mineur
(Elegie / Elegy)
Poco Andante – Poco mosso – Tempo I – Poco mosso – Tempo I</p> | <p>2:47</p> |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">5</div> | <p>Halling, Op. 47 No. 4 (1886 – 88)
in D major • in D-Dur • en ré majeur
(Norwegischer Tanz / Norwegian Dance)
Allegro</p> | <p>1:20</p> |

6	Fra ungdomsdagene, Op. 65 No. 1 (1896) in D minor • in d-Moll • en ré mineur (Aus jungen Tagen / From the Days of Youth) Allegro moderato e tranquillo – Molto più vivo – Tempo I	4:20
7	Småfugl, Op. 43 No. 4 (1886) in D minor • in d-Moll • en ré mineur (Vöglein / Little Bird) Allegro leggiero	1:59
8	Elegi, Op. 38 No. 6 (1883) in A minor • in a-Moll • en la mineur (Elegie / Elegy) Allegretto semplice	2:18
9	Valse-Impromptu, Op. 47 No. 1 (1886 – 88) in A minor / E minor • in a-Moll / e-Moll • en la mineur / mi mineur Allegro con moto – Molto più lento – Tempo I – Molto più lento – Tempo I – Molto più lento	3:18
10	Det var en gang, Op. 71 No. 1 (1901) in E minor • in e-Moll • en mi mineur (Es war einmal / Once upon a Time) Andante con moto (Im schwedischen Volkston) – Animato – Allegro brioso (Im norwegischen Springtanzton) – Andante (Wie zu Anfang)	3:20

- | | | |
|------|---|------|
| [11] | <p>Springdans, Op. 38 No. 5 (1883)</p> <p>in G major • in G-Dur • en sol majeur</p> <p>(Springar)</p> <p>(Springtanz / Spring Dance)</p> <p>Allegro giocoso</p> | 1:20 |
| | | |
| [12] | <p>Vektersang, Op. 12 No. 3 (1866–67)</p> <p>in E major • in E-Dur • en mi majeur</p> <p>(Wächterlied / Watchman's Song)</p> <p><i>(Nach einer Aufführung von Shakespeare's Macbeth komponiert / Composed after a Performance of Shakespeare's Macbeth)</i></p> <p>Molto Andante e semplice – Intermezzo (Geister der Nacht) – [Tempo I]</p> | 2:10 |
| | | |
| [13] | <p>Sommerfugl, Op. 43 No. 1 (1886)</p> <p>in A major • in A-Dur • en la majeur</p> <p>(Schmetterling / Butterfly)</p> <p>Allegro grazioso</p> | 1:50 |
| | | |
| [14] | <p>Folkevis, Op. 12 No. 5 (1866–67)</p> <p>in F sharp minor • in fis-Moll • en fa dièse mineur</p> <p>(Volkweise / Folksong)</p> <p>Con moto</p> | 1:11 |
| | | |
| [15] | <p>Fransk serenade, Op. 62 No. 3 (1893–95)</p> <p>in A major • in A-Dur • en la majeur</p> <p>(Französische Serenade / French Serenade)</p> <p>Andantino grazioso</p> | 2:18 |

16	Hjemad, Op. 62 No. 6 (1893 – 95) in E major • in E-Dur • en mi majeur (Heimwärts / Homeward) Allegro giocoso alla marcia – Molto Allegro – Tempo I – Molto Allegro	2:31
17	Bådnåt, Op. 68 No. 5 (1898 – 99) in E major • in E-Dur • en mi majeur (An der Wiege / At the Cradle) Allegretto tranquillamente	2:47
18	Vals, Op. 38 No. 7 (1866, revised 1883) in E minor • in e-Moll • en mi mineur (Walzer / Waltz) Poco Allegro – Presto – Tempo I – Lento	0:59
19	Ensom vandrer, Op. 43 No. 2 (1886) in B minor • in b-Moll • en si mineur (Einsamer Wanderer / Solitary Wanderer) Allegretto semplice	1:28
20	Forbi, Op. 71 No. 6 (1901) in E minor • in e-Moll • en mi mineur (In Memoriam) (Vorüber / Gone) Andante doloroso	2:38

21	Berceuse, Op. 38 No. 1 (1883) in G major • in G-Dur • en sol majeur (Vuggevisse / Lullaby) Allegretto tranquillo – Con moto – A tempo	2:27
22	Gangar, Op. 54 No. 2 (1889 – 91) in C major • in C-Dur • en ut majeur (Norwegischer Bauernmarsch / Norwegian March) Allegretto marcato	2:45
23	Takk, Op. 62 No. 2 (1893 – 95) in G major • in G-Dur • en sol majeur (Dank / Gratitude) Allegretto semplice	3:59
24	Efterklang, Op. 71 No. 7 (1901) in E flat major • in Es-Dur • en mi bémol majeur (Nachklänge / Remembrances) Tempo di Valse	2:03
		TT 56:15

Peter Donohoe piano



Peter Donohoe

Grieg: Lyric Pieces, Volume 2

Edvard Grieg

Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907) was born in Bergen. At an early age he demonstrated his talent for music, and because his mother had trained as a pianist at the Conservatory in Hamburg and his father entertained a strong interest in music, Edvard received a musical education and was given freedom to cultivate his exceptional musical gifts.

He was removed from his middle school at the age of fifteen and sent to the Leipzig Music Conservatory (founded by Felix Mendelssohn, in 1843) to study piano and composition.

His earliest efforts were piano pieces and songs.

Having composed his first Piano Sonata (Op. 7, 1865) and Violin Sonata (Op. 8, 1865), Grieg began to plan and to envision larger works, such as the Piano Concerto in A minor (Op. 16, 1868, revised 1907). From that point onwards his choice of compositions grew more varied. He wrote songs, composed incidental music for the theatre (Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and Henrik Ibsen), and in between appeared what would become his trademark

in the field of composition for the piano – the *Lyriske stykker* (Lyric Pieces).

The first Book, Op. 12, appeared in 1867. Then many years passed before the publication of the second, in 1883.

Thereafter the books arrived, one after another, at regular intervals – also during times when Grieg struggled against a creative block to produce other works. In time there would be ten books altogether, containing a total of sixty-six individual Lyric Pieces, and this series of short pieces serves as an illuminating portrait of the composer, as well: his life and development, his love of folk music and ‘the Norwegian’, his ability to shape each book into a self-contained entity, and the fact that the books as a whole constitute a larger form (the ‘Arietta’, Op. 12 No. 1, is recalled in ‘Efterklang’ [Remembrances], Op. 71 No. 7).

The pianist Peter Donohoe who has previously recorded twenty-seven of the Lyric Pieces (CHAN 20254) here completes his survey with the remaining thirty-nine, adding the *Ballade* in G minor, Op. 24 (1875 – 76).

The Lyric Pieces: A frieze of life

Ever since early childhood, Edvard Grieg occupied himself above all with the piano. It was at the keyboard that his imagination conjured its first sounds and pieces, and it was as a pianist and a composer for the piano that he achieved his few successes as a student in Leipzig.

When, on completing his studies, he had become, as he wrote in his diary, 'a master magician in the world of musical tones',¹ he continued to compose for the piano. His *Fire klaverstykker* (Four Piano Pieces), Op. 1 (1861), and *Poetiske tonebilder* (Poetical Tone Pictures), Op. 3 (1863 – 64), stand squarely in the Leipzig tradition. In *Humoresker* (Humoresques), Op. 6 (1865), the true Edvard Grieg steps into the light.

After his encounter with the young Norwegian composer Rikard Nordraak, in Copenhagen, he became convinced that if he were to succeed as a composer – and as a Norwegian composer, nothing less – all the ideas put into his head in Leipzig had to be thrown overboard. He had to seek inspiration in and tap the source of genuine Norwegian folk music. He received comparable support also from the already famous violinist Ole

Bull, who in a letter assured him that there lay his future!

When, in 1867, Grieg issued his first book of *Lyriske (små)stykker* (Lyrical [Little] Pieces), Op. 12, he had found a style and a form that were entirely of his own making. In time, books of such pieces would pour from Grieg's musical-poetical vein. In due course they received the label *Lyriske stykker*, and this genre has become his own.

The ten books of *Lyriske stykker* are not simply a collection of free-standing musical poems. Edvard Grieg had a peculiar ability to assemble the little pieces in a natural and musical sequence in each book, and together they constitute a whole.

The first book contained eight Lyrical Pieces. Grieg allows the first of these, 'Arietta', to culminate in an open, unresolved harmony. It was already his intention that this journey of Lyrical Pieces should continue.

And so it did. The sixty-six pieces distributed across the ten albums which Grieg produced in the course of his lifetime describe his life, his engagement with and love for people and nature, in a concentrated and harmonically exciting way, using these elements of form and harmony to clothe the beautiful melodies which in turn inspired them.

¹ en heksemester i tonenes verden

In Op. 12, which Grieg composed in the latter part of the 1860s, we find 'Vektersang' (Watchman's Song), No. 3, 'Folkeviser' (Folksong), No. 5, and, to conclude, 'Fedrelandssang' (National Song), No. 8. This last Lyric Piece so filled Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson with enthusiasm that in a very short time he wrote a text to the piece, giving it the title 'Fremad!' (Advance!).

Then some years would pass before Grieg again collected eight compositions into a set of *Lyriske stykker* (Book II, Op. 38), published in 1883. Here he has devoted most of his attention to folk music. He did not borrow melodies from well-known folk-tunes, but he drew inspiration from authentic rhythms, melodies, and harmonies.

After 'Berceuse' (Lullaby), No. 1, follow 'Folkeviser' (Folksong), No. 2, 'Halling' (a Norwegian folkdance), No. 4, 'Springdans' (another Norwegian folkdance), No. 5, before the present selection from the opus concludes with 'Elegi' (Elegy), No. 6, and 'Vals' (Waltz), No. 7.

The album caused excitement, consequently little time passed before *Lyriske stykker*, Book III, Op. 43, appeared, in 1886. This is often called the 'House Opus' because it was composed around the time that Grieg and his wife, Nina, planned and built

Troldhaugen – the first and only home they could call entirely their own.

From this book, Peter Donohoe has chosen 'Sommerfugl' (Butterfly), No. 1, 'Ensom vandrer' (Solitary Wanderer), No. 2, and 'Småfugl' (Little Bird), No. 4. Two cheerful descriptions of nature frame the contemplative lonely traveller. Grieg often thought of himself as a lonely wanderer in a barren Norwegian cultural landscape. It is well worth noting the alternation between minor and major, which is a characteristic of his compositions – and of his personality. In a letter to his friend Frants Beyer – on his mind were both lives and Norwegian folk-tunes – he said: 'It is impossible to know whether they are conceived in major or minor.'²

Also in Book IV, Op. 47, Grieg has jotted down scenes from daily life and Troldhaugen. It offers a juxtaposition of pieces inspired by folk-tunes – 'Halling', No. 4, and 'Springdans', No. 6 – and reflective compositions such as 'Melodi' (Melody), No. 3, and 'Elegi', No. 7. The book is introduced by a 'Valse-Impromptu' in which Grieg, according to a newspaper

² Man kan ikke vite om de er tenkt i dur eller moll.

article, demonstrates that he also masters 'the European forms'.³

In Book V, Op. 54, he shows himself to be a consummate composer for the piano. 'Gangar' (a Norwegian marching dance), No. 2, follows a Norwegian folk-tune tradition, but is in every respect Grieg's original work. From the simple, firm opening note the piece wells forward from the softest *piano* to the most powerful, pedal-enhanced *forte*. At the end it sinks slowly back into nothing.

The other piece is 'Trolldtog' (March of the Trolls), No. 3. This is one among three 'Troll Pieces'⁴ by Grieg. The largest trolls we find 'I Dovregubbens Hall' (In the Hall of the Mountain King) (*Peer Gynt*), and the smallest, 'Småtroll' (Puck), No. 3, in Op. 71.

'Trolldtog' describes the marching trolls who emerge out of the mountain at sunset and who spend the night making mischief and frightening people. But they must succeed in returning to the mountain before the sun rises – otherwise they will crack and turn to stone. (There must have been many 'late-comers', for Norway is a rocky kingdom. That our large oil resources today have made

us 'stone-rich', as the expression goes, that they have turned *us* into trolls, is perhaps an analogy to the folktale.) The piece describes two nights separated by a bright summer's day of glittering sunshine. Whether all the trolls manage to get inside at the end of the second night is revealed at the conclusion of the piece.

In Book VI, Op. 57, Grieg has entered a more fantastical and mystical terrain. 'Illusjon' (Illusion), No. 3, describes the imagined, 'Hundanser' (She Dances), No. 5, the sense-filled, and 'Hjemve' (Home-sickness), No. 6, the longing for home and Trolldhaugen.

At the end of Book VII, Op. 62, we hear the contrast to 'Hjemve'. 'Hjemad' (Homeward), No. 6, is a bold and optimistic piece – even if Grieg cannot fail to indulge some thoughts in minor mode in the middle section, by means of a deeply felt folk-like tune. The rest of the pieces in Op. 62 – 'Sylfide' (Sylph), No. 1, 'Takk' (Gratitude), No. 2, 'Fransk serenade' (French Serenade), No. 3, and 'Drømmesyn' (Phantom), No. 5 – are romantic pearls in which Grieg pours from his rich reservoir of music in this style, even if he at the same time insists that he really 'did nothing',⁵ as he told Frants Beyer. In a letter of 1885, he explained

³ de europeiske former

⁴ Trolld-stykker

⁵ intet gjorde

to his friend that it was simply that these lyric pieces 'swarmed round me like fleas and lice'.⁶

Nonetheless, these 'fleas and lice' came calling at regular intervals through the 1890s.

Book VIII, Op. 65, was composed in 1896, and from this opus we hear the nostalgic piece 'Fra ungdomsdagene' (From the Days of Youth), No. 1, and two pieces that fully express the reigning romantic spirit of that time. 'Salong' (Salon), No. 4, and 'I balladetone' (In the Spirit of Ballad), No. 5, are outstanding examples demonstrating that Grieg was not solely pre-occupied with folk-tunes and nature descriptions. He was also deeply involved in his own time – both stylistically and artistically.

In his penultimate book, IX, Op. 68, of 1898 – 99, the summation of this frieze of experiences of life and art commences. He composes 'Matrosenes oppsang' (Sailors' Song), No. 1, as well as its opposite, 'Bestemors menuett' (Grandmother's Minuet), No. 2. Then follows the heartfelt 'For dine føtter' (At Your Feet), No. 3, after which he presents his 'Alpine Symphony': 'Aften på høyfjellet' (Evening in the Mountains), No. 4. While Richard Strauss allows the cascades of sound produced by his large orchestra to tumble down the mountainsides, Grieg creates a

powerful atmosphere by means of a simple melody that sings across the mountainous landscape before rich harmonies generate an illusion of the mighty summits and crags of Jotunheimen. Then the present selection from this book is rounded off with a simple lullaby, 'Bådnåt' (At the Cradle), No. 5.

In Book X, Op. 71, these collections arrive at their conclusion. In his elegant manner and with an assured sense of form, Grieg begins the book with 'Det var en gang' (Once upon a Time). Next on this album comes 'Forbi (In Memoriam)' (Gone), No. 6, before Grieg rounds off the entire musical journey with 'Efterklang', No. 7. It is the same piece as the one that opened the series – 'Arietta' – but now manifesting far more advanced harmonic colours and more sophisticated progressions, despite maintaining the original key, E flat major, and adopting waltz measure. In that way Grieg raised the 'Arietta' to another level. Between the first, 'Arietta', in Op. 12 (1867), and the last, 'Efterklang', in Op. 71 (1891), came sixty-four lyrical pieces which, taken together, show us the full spectrum of Grieg's personality and in which Grieg's life experience and compositional development find ultimate expression. These romantic pieces occupy a position far above the traditional album leaves and popular character pieces of the time.

⁶ svermet rundt meg som lopper og lus

Ballade in G minor, Op. 24: 'with the blood of the heart in days of sorrow and despair'⁷

The decade between 1875 and 1885 represented years of upheaval in Grieg's life. But even though Grieg was not especially productive, he composed works which came to constitute milestones in his creative output. In key position stand two works, the *Ballade*, Op. 24 (1875–76), and String Quartet, Op. 27 (1877–78). Both works are in G minor, the tonality which Grieg, like many other composers, adopts in order to express his most powerful emotions.

Through intense artistic effort, he managed to fight his way out of both sorrow and marital difficulties as well as a feeling of artistic stagnation. The emotions associated with the loss of his parents he channelled into work on what would prove to be his greatest piece for solo piano, *Ballade* in G minor, Op. 24 – *Ballade i form av variasjoner over en norsk folketone* (Ballad in the Form of Variations on a Norwegian Folk Melody).

Once again, he delved into the world of folk-tunes, and in the collection *Ældre og nyere norske fjeldmelodier* (Older and More Recent Norwegian Mountain Melodies),

collected and published by Ludvig Mathias Lindeman (1812–1887) in twelve volumes between 1853 and 1863, he found the folksong known as 'Den nordlandske Bondestand' (The Peasantry of Northern Norway), from Valdres, in south-central Norway. This melody possessed all the characteristics that Grieg sought. In particular, a tendency towards the minor and an emphasis on the leading note. This offered opportunities for bold and imaginative harmonising, possibilities which Grieg exploited to the full.

Across fourteen variations, he leads us through a wide span of emotions and expression.

He contrasts dark and sombre variations (nos 1, 3, 5, and 8) with agitated and energetic ones (nos 2, 6, and 7) and with folk-like dances (nos 4 and 10).

After the slow and contemplative variation no. 9, Grieg interrupts the strict pattern of variations. The movements are expanded and the tension is raised. The whole culminates in a frenetic unfurling of power, which can bring to mind the style, barbarism, that gained prominence in the twentieth century in the music of composers such as Béla Bartók (1881–1945).

In a wild tempo, and throwing off a thousand notes, he fights his way up to

⁷ med hjerterblod i dager av sorg og fortvilelse (letter to Frants Beyer)

reach the very highest register – executes a giant leap downward and lands with a crash on a low E flat. This note lingers for an eternity before gliding, *pianissimo*, down to the dominant, D – and the eight first bars of the simple folk-tune bring the battle to an end, dying away in a mood of resignation.

The *Ballade* is highly demanding of the executor as well. Grieg never played it in public, but that had above all to do with the fact that his emotional engagement with this work was so powerful that he could not bear the thought of having to perform it in the presence of an audience. He did, however, once perform it to his publisher, in Leipzig, Dr Max Abraham, at Edition Peters. The Norwegian composer Iver Holter was also present, and in a letter, he left an account of the occasion:

Grieg invested his entire soul in the interpretation, and when he had finished, not only was he so bodily exhausted that he sat bathed in sweat, but he was also so shaken and emotionally torn that for a long time he could not say a word.⁸

⁸ Grieg la hele sin sjel i tolkningen, og da han var ferdig, var han ikke alene så legemlig anstrengt at han var badet i svette; han var dessuten så opprevet og rystet at han ikke på lenge kunne si et ord.

Grieg was convinced that the *Ballade* would not suit his publisher's taste but was most pleasantly surprised when Dr Max Abraham said that he would print it. It would, as Dr Abraham expressed it in a letter, make his name 'resound even more widely'.⁹

When Grieg attended a concert in the Gewandhaus, in Leipzig, in 1898, Eugène d'Albert played the *Ballade*

...so marvellously that it took people by storm. Imagine all that played a part in this! He satisfies nearly all the requirements, both delicacy of touch and the grand style, the powerful intensification to the point of outright fury. And so, after this you should have heard the daringly long fermata on the low E flat. I think he held it for half a minute. But the effect was colossal. And then he concluded the old mournful tune so slowly, quietly, and simply that I myself was completely captivated...¹⁰
(Letter to Frants Beyer, 27 March 1898)

⁹ enda større klang

¹⁰ ...så glimrende at den tok folk med storm. Tenk, hva dertil hører! Han har omtrent alle betingelser, både finhet og den store stil, den mektige stigning inntil det rene raseri. Og så etter dette skulle du hørt den vovede lange fermate på den dype Ess. Jeg tror han holdt den 1 / 2 minutt. Men virkningen var kolossal. Og så avsluttet han den gamle, sørgelige vise så langsomt, stille og enkelt at jeg selv ble helt betatt...

More recently there has been debate about the quality of the *Ballade*, but impressive research and publications by Professor Einar Röttingen on the subject make us listen to the work once more (at least) and it is difficult not to agree with him – and with Dr Abraham, at Edition Peters, Leipzig – that the *Ballade* is a masterpiece in G minor.

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Author of, among others, *Min Grieg*, 2007
(published in English translation as *My Grieg*, 2014);

Fra Motgang til Seier [From Adversity to
Victory], 2018, and *Opus 16*, 2019

Translation: Chandos Records Ltd

Born in Manchester in 1953, **Peter Donohoe** studied at Chetham's School of Music for seven years, graduated in music from Leeds University, and went on to study at the Royal Northern College of Music with Derek Wyndham, and then in Paris with Olivier Messiaen and Yvonne Loriod. He is acclaimed as one of the foremost pianists of our time, for his musicianship, stylistic versatility, and commanding technique, a critic concluding in *Musical Opinion* that 'I cannot imagine a living pianist capable of improving upon Donohoe's outstanding artistry'. In recent seasons he has appeared with the Dresdner

Philharmonie, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, and RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra. He has undertaken a UK tour with the Russian State Philharmonic Orchestra and given concerts in many South American and European countries as well as China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Russia, and the USA. In high demand as a jury member for international competitions, he has recently served on the juries at the Concours de Genève (2018), International Piano Competition 'Cidade de Ferrol' (2022), and Hong Kong International Piano Competition (2022), along with many national competitions both within the UK and abroad. His most recent discs include Volume 2 of the Orchestral Works of Grażyna Bacewicz, an exploration of Busoni's works for solo piano, and an album devoted to solo piano works by Granados and Albéniz (all for Chandos Records), as well as Piano Quintets by Taneyev and Schumann and a selection of waltzes by Ravel, Schumann, Debussy, and Chopin. He has performed with all the major London orchestras and, across the European continent, with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Münchner Philharmoniker, and Berliner Philharmoniker. In the United States, he has appeared with the

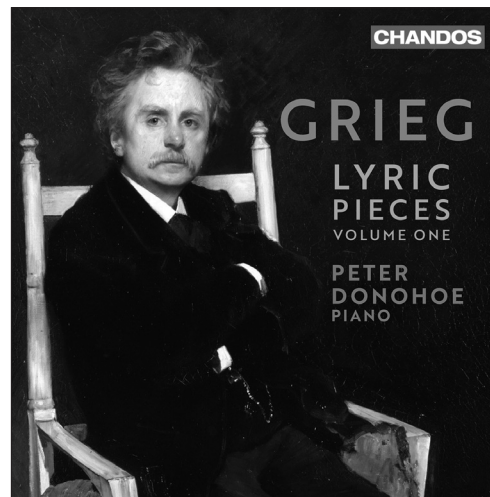
Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and more. In the 2024/25 season Peter Donohoe gave notable performances with the Symphony Orchestra of India, Filarmonica George Enescu, in Bucharest, Vox Ama Deus, in Philadelphia, and Royal Philharmonic

Orchestra, at Cadogan Hall. The season also featured recitals at the Fundación Juan March, in Madrid, Chopin Piano FEST, in Prishtina, Kosovo, and at such UK events as the Ludlow Piano Festival, Newbury Spring Festival, and Ulverston International Music Festival.



Peter Donohoe, with the BBC Concert Orchestra at the BBC Proms

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A & R administrator Karen Marchlik

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EDVARD GRIEG (1843 – 1907)

LYRIC PIECES, VOLUME TWO

(LYRISKE STYKKER)

COMPACT DISC ONE

1	BALLADE, OP. 24 (1875–76)	16:27
2	ARIETTA, OP. 12 NO. 1 (1866–67)	1:06
3	FEDRELANDSSANG, OP. 12 NO. 8 (1866–67)	1:04
4	I BALLADETONE, OP. 65 NO. 5 (1896)	2:40
5	HALLING, OP. 38 NO. 4 (1883)	0:48
6	HUN DANSER, OP. 57 NO. 5 (1890–93)	2:49
7	MELODI, OP. 47 NO. 3 (1886–88)	2:10
8	HJEMVE, OP. 57 NO. 6 (1890–93)	4:01
9	SPRINGDANS, OP. 47 NO. 6 (1886–88)	1:18
10	AFTEN PÅ HØYFJELLET, OP. 68 NO. 4 (1898–99)	2:25
11	FOLKEVISE, OP. 38 NO. 2 (1883)	1:23
12	MATROSENE OPPSANG, OP. 68 NO. 1 (1898–99)	1:22
13	ILLUSJON, OP. 57 NO. 3 (1890–93)	3:05
14	DRØMMESYN, OP. 62 NO. 5 (1893–95)	2:49
15	SALONG, OP. 65 NO. 4 (1896)	2:15
16	TROLDTOG, OP. 54 NO. 3 (1889–91)	2:53
		TT 48:45

COMPACT DISC TWO

1	BESTEMORS MENUETT, OP. 68 NO. 2 (1898–99)	2:08
2	FOR DINE FØTTER, OP. 68 NO. 3 (1898–99)	2:31
3	SYLFIDE, OP. 62 NO. 1 (1893–95)	1:38
4	ELEGI, OP. 47 NO. 7 (1886–88)	2:47
5	HALLING, OP. 47 NO. 4 (1886–88)	1:20
6	FRA UNGDOMSDAGENE, OP. 65 NO. 1 (1896)	4:20
7	SMÅFUGL, OP. 43 NO. 4 (1886)	1:59
8	ELEGI, OP. 38 NO. 6 (1883)	2:18
9	VALSE-IMPROMPTU, OP. 47 NO. 1 (1886–88)	3:18
10	DET VAR EN GANG, OP. 71 NO. 1 (1901)	3:20
11	SPRINGDANS, OP. 38 NO. 5 (1883)	1:20
12	VEKTERSANG, OP. 12 NO. 3 (1866–67)	2:10
13	SOMMERFUGL, OP. 43 NO. 1 (1886)	1:50

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14	FOLKEVISE, OP. 12 NO. 5 (1866–67)	1:11
15	FRANSK SERENADE, OP. 62 NO. 3 (1893–95)	2:18
16	HJEMAD, OP. 62 NO. 6 (1893–95)	2:31
17	BÅDNLÅT, OP. 68 NO. 5 (1898–99)	2:47
18	VALS, OP. 38 NO. 7 (1866, REVISED 1883)	0:59
19	ENSOM VANDRER, OP. 43 NO. 2 (1886)	1:28
20	FORBI, OP. 71 NO. 6 (1901)	2:38
21	BERCEUSE, OP. 38 NO. 1 (1883)	2:27
22	GANGAR, OP. 54 NO. 2 (1889–91)	2:45
23	TAKK, OP. 62 NO. 2 (1893–95)	3:59
24	EFTERKLANG, OP. 71 NO. 7 (1901)	2:03
		TT 56:15

PETER DONOHUE
PIANO

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