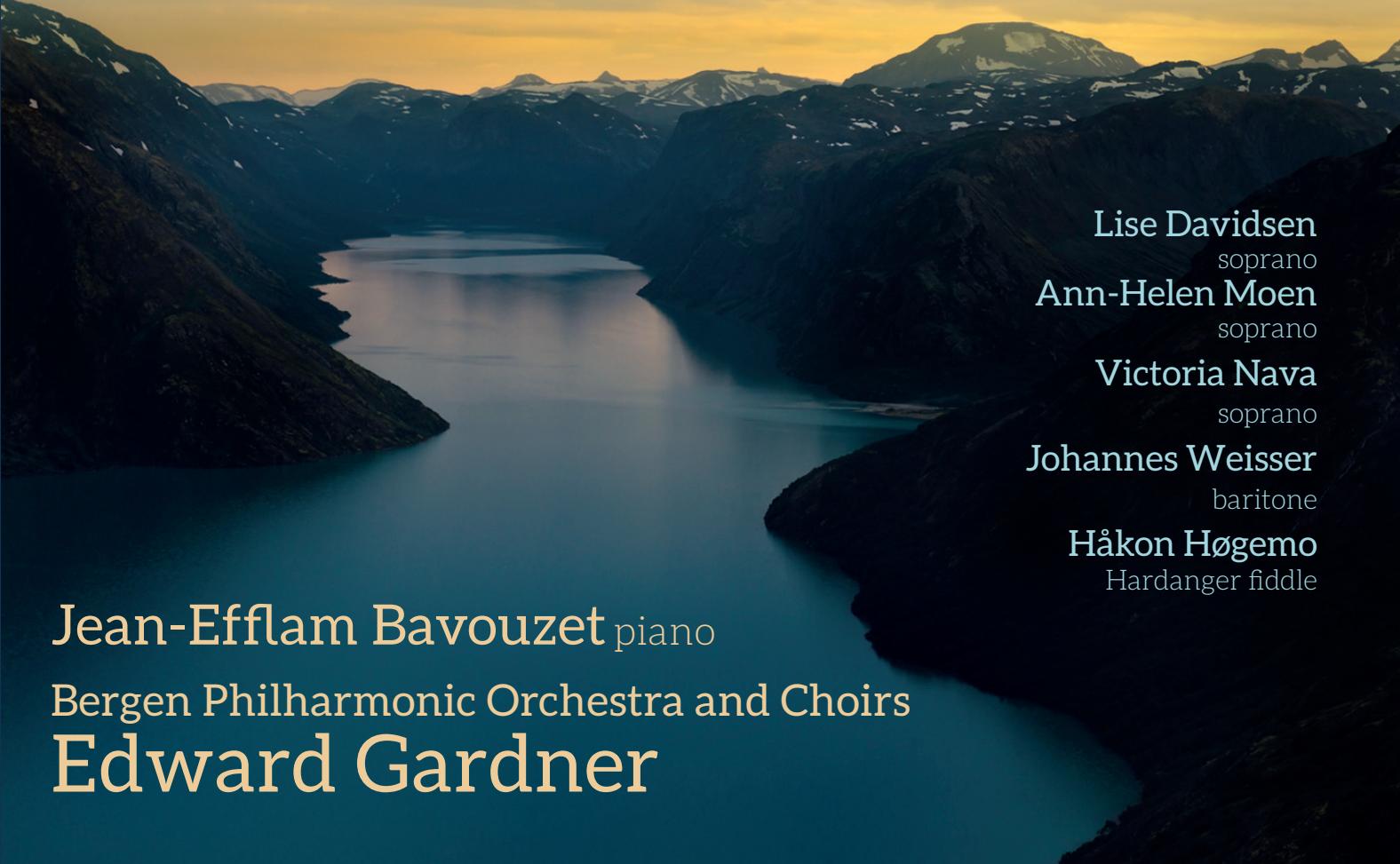




CHANDOS
SUPER AUDIO CD

GRIEG

Piano Concerto · Incidental Music to 'Peer Gynt'



Lise Davidsen

soprano

Ann-Helen Moen

soprano

Victoria Nava

soprano

Johannes Weisser

baritone

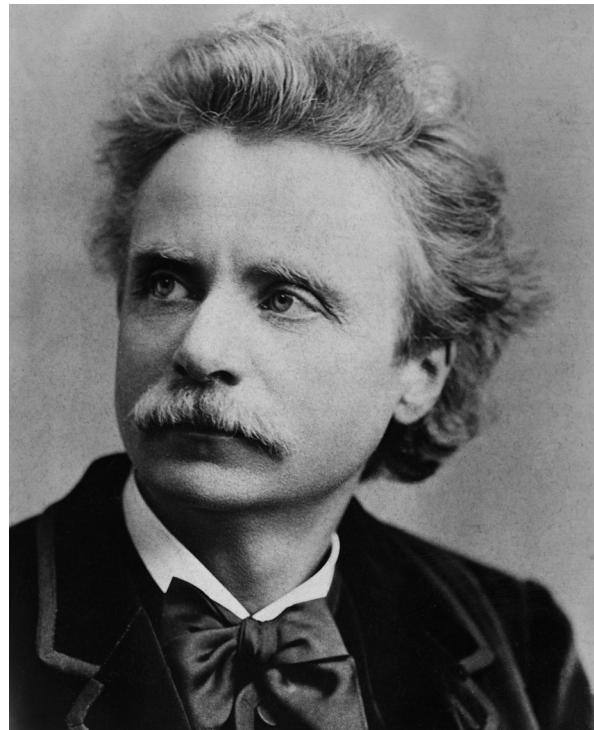
Håkon Högemo

Hardanger fiddle

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet piano

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Choirs

Edward Gardner



Edvard Grieg, c. 1875

Mary Evans Picture Library / Imagno

Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907)

Incidental Music to ‘Peer Gynt’, Op. 23 (1874–75,
revised 1885, 1991–92, and 1902)*
for Solo Voices, Chorus, and Orchestra

54:39

Act I

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ^[1] | 1 I bryllupsgården (At the Wedding). Prelude to Act I. Allegro con brio –
Poco andante – Un poco allegro. Tempo di Halling –
Poco andante – Vivace. Tempo di Springar – Poco andante –
Allegro con brio
<small>Håkon Högemo Hardanger fiddle</small> | 4:56 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ^[2] | 2 Halling. Scenes 2 and 3. Allegretto
<small>Håkon Högemo Hardanger fiddle</small> | 0:42 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ^[3] | 3 Springar. Scene 3. Allegro vivace
<small>Håkon Högemo Hardanger fiddle</small> | 1:08 |

Act II

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | Bruderovet. Ingrids klage (The Abduction of the Bride. Ingrid's Lament). Prelude to Act II. Allegro furioso – Andante – Allegro furioso – Andante doloroso – Allegro furioso – Andante – Allegro furioso – Andante | 4:17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 | Peer Gynt og seterjentene (Peer Gynt and the Herd Girls). Scene 3. Allegro marcato – Molto meno allegro – Poco più allegro – Allegro vivace – Tempo I – Quasi presto | 3:34 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 | I Dovregubbens hall (In the Hall of the Mountain King). Scene 6.
Alla marcia e molto marcato – Più vivo
Bergen Pikekor
Bergen Guttekor
Edvard Grieg Ungdomskor
Edvard Grieg Kor
Bergen Philharmonic Choir
Håkon Matti Skrede chorus master | 2:33 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 9 | Dans av Dovregubbens datter (Dance of the Mountain King's Daughter). Scene 6. Allegretto alla burla –
Presto (Doppio movimento) | 1:51 |

Act III

- [⁸] 12 Åses død (The Death of Åse). Prelude to Act III. Andante doloroso 4:32

Act IV

- [⁹] 13 Morgenstemning (Morning Mood). Prelude to Act IV. Allegretto pastorale 4:21
- [¹⁰] 15 Arabisk dans (Arabian Dance). Scene 6. Allegretto vivace
Edvard Grieg Ungdomskor
Edvard Grieg Kor
Bergen Philharmonic Choir
Håkon Matti Skrede chorus master 4:58
- [¹¹] 16 Anitras dans (Anitra's Dance). Scene 6. Tempo di Mazurka 3:43
- [¹²] 17 Peer Gynts serenade (Peer Gynt's Serenade). Scene 7. Poco andante –
Allegretto – Allegro – Tempo I [Allegretto] – Allegro molto 2:28
- [¹³] 19 Solveigs sang (Solveig's Song). Scene 10. Un poco andante –
Con moto – Allegretto tranquillamente –
Andante. Tempo I – Con moto – Allegretto tranquillamente –
Andante. Tempo I 5:31

Act V

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <p>[14] 21 Peer Gynts hjemfart. Stormfull aften på havet (Peer Gynt's Homecoming. Stormy Evening on the Sea). Prelude to Act V.
Allegro agitato</p> <p>[15] 25 Pinsesalme: 'Velsignede morgen' (Whitsun Hymn: 'Oh Blessed Morning').
Scene 10
Edvard Grieg Ungdomskor
Edvard Grieg Kor
Bergen Philharmonic Choir
Håkon Matti Skrede chorus master</p> <p>[16] 26 Solveigs vuggevisse (Solveig's Cradle Song). Scene 10. Lento
Edvard Grieg Ungdomskor
Edvard Grieg Kor
Bergen Philharmonic Choir
Håkon Matti Skrede chorus master</p> | <p>2:09</p> <p>1:18</p> <p>6:32</p> |
|---|-------------------------------------|

Concerto, Op. 16 (1868, revised 1907)†

in A minor • in a-Moll • en la mineur
for Piano and Orchestra

[17]	I	Allegro molto moderato – Animato – Più lento – Animato – Tranquillo – Tempo I – Animato – Più lento – Cadenza. Adagio – Presto – Lento – Tempo I – Tempo I – Poco più allegro	12:09
[18]	II	Adagio – Lento –	6:15
[19]	III	Allegro moderato molto e marcato – Poco animato – Poco più tranquillo – Tempo I animato – Meno allegro – Tempo I – Quasi presto – Andante maestoso	9:54
TT 83:12			

Lise Davidsen soprano (Første seterjente, Anitra)*

Ann-Helen Moen soprano (Anden seterjente, Solveig)*

Victoria Nava soprano (Tredje seterjente)*

Johannes Weisser baritone (Peer Gynt)*

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet piano†

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra

Melina Mandozzi leader

Edward Gardner



Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, at Grieg's home, Troldhaugen, in Bergen

Oddlev Apneseth

Grieg: Piano Concerto / Incidental Music to 'Peer Gynt'

Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16
A single work – a single thought
One of the works of Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907) has always been deemed to be in a class of its own, both in Grieg's day and today. That is the Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16. It will always stand out as a shining example of a single great thought captured and expressed in music. From start to finish the concerto contains one single idea that is constantly expanded upon and given new colour and nuance. Whichever part of the concerto you listen to there can never be any doubt that it is the Piano Concerto in A minor that is being played.

Grieg chose the most daring of openings for the work. As the first chord sounds, in some magical way it contains the entire concerto, with all its intensity of colour and shading. It is like seeing a painting or a sculpture. In a flash you see it all, but you can use hours and days to discover every detail. Great art has an enormous overflow of information, so you can come back time after time, and every time you will discover something new – conceive new ideas and gain deeper insight.

The A minor Concerto has these qualities. Grieg presents the whole 'picture' in the first chord. Then – as in the case of a Christmas calendar – he opens the windows one by one, and at the end we have the complete picture, in all its details, and we can listen to it again and again.

The opening notes of the Piano Concerto in A minor (A – A – G sharp – E) have become the archetypal Grieg motif. We find this motif in a number of his pieces, but it is used to greatest effect in the opening of the Piano Concerto. He spans several octaves with this motif, linking its recurrences with a minor triad (E – C – A). The leitmotif is just like Grieg himself: neither major nor minor, or perhaps both at the same time. Grieg's most youthful and brilliant work is actually in minor – but with many themes in major – nearly to the end.

After the majestic opening, Grieg presents the first theme in the orchestra in characteristic fashion. The first two bars are in A minor, then these bars are repeated almost exactly, but transposed up to C major. In the exposition the theme is presented concisely,

with rhythmic suppleness, before it is set free in long billowing phrases.

The tension mounts towards the end of the first movement, culminating in the soloist's embellishment of the material in the Cadenza. And then, quite unexpectedly, Grieg makes the piano leap over the edge of a harmonic abyss. The jump, the falling through empty space, and the landing are all so masterfully crafted that it is easy to understand why the audience at the first performance broke out in spontaneous applause.

In the second movement, *Adagio*, this unbroken stream of inspired thought continues. Beauty, tranquillity, cessation of time and gravity – everything just *is* in this beautiful space. Grieg was so confident of the inherent quality of the material that he had the courage to stick to a single tempo throughout the entire movement, creating a musical still life.

The last movement, *Allegro moderato molto e marcato*, is heralded quietly but rhythmically by the wind section, before the piano enters with its playful dancing main theme, a *halling*; in the very romantic second theme the flute seems to anticipate 'Morgenstemning' (Morning Mood) in *Peer Gynt*. The melody floats for a moment and then vanishes into thin air. The recapitulation brings the theme

back in full force, and the movement draws to a grandiose conclusion.

In a letter to his parents, Grieg described the reaction of Franz Liszt when the latter played through the concerto for the first time, during Grieg's trip to Rome in the spring of 1870:

There is one perfectly divine episode that I should not forget. Towards the end of the Finale, as you will remember, the second theme is repeated in a great fortissimo. In the very last bars, where the first note of the first triplet of the theme – G sharp – is changed to G in the orchestra, while the piano in a tremendous scale passage traverses the entire keyboard, he suddenly stopped, rose to his full height, left the piano, and with mighty theatrical steps and raised arms strode through the great monastery hall, literally roaring out the theme. When he got to the above-mentioned G, he gestured imperiously with his arm and cried: 'G, G, nicht Giss! Famos! Das ist so echter schwedischer Banco!' He then went back to the piano, repeated the whole phrase, and concluded.

The concerto's composition

Edvard Grieg had studied in Leipzig in 1858–62, and there he heard Clara

Schumann playing Robert Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor. Grieg wrote in his diary many years later:

When you are young, your brain is like
wax, – every impression is imprinted
and stays forever.

When Grieg left for Copenhagen in the summer of 1868 to visit Nina Grieg's family and present the new-born child, Alexandra, he also had the intention and idea of composing a piano concerto. His friends secured a room with piano at Mothgaard in Søllerød – some thirty km north of Copenhagen. There he managed to fulfil the idea of the concerto, and he even had the possibility to discuss the work, as it progressed, with congenial colleagues such as Emil Horneman and the well-known pianist Edmund Neupert.

The premiere took place in April 1869 in Casino's Grand Hall with Neupert as soloist and Holger Simon Paulli conducting the Orchestra of The Royal Theatre. The Russian pianist Anton Rubinstein also attended the concert, and Neupert was allowed to borrow his grand piano for the occasion. The concerto was an immediate success, and has remained popular ever since.

Incidental music to 'Peer Gynt'
The idea of working together started in Rome

Edvard Grieg went to Rome for the first time in 1865, and there he came into contact with artists and scientists at the Scandinavian Society in that city.

It was here that Grieg first met Henrik Ibsen (1828 – 1906), and the talented young musician soon caught Ibsen's attention. Although the two only met face to face a few times, in Rome and later on, Ibsen (though he knew little about music) was convinced that Grieg was the man to tackle the greatest challenges in the field of music.

An invitation

In January 1874 Ibsen wrote a long letter to Grieg from Dresden, inviting him to compose incidental music to his famous dramatic poem *Peer Gynt*. The director of the Christiania Theatre, Ludvig Josephson, had asked Ibsen to adapt *Peer Gynt* for a stage production. He had promised Ibsen the sum of 400 *spesiedaler* for this undertaking. Ibsen replied to an enthusiastic Josephson that he would

arrange *Peer Gynt* as a musical drama.
The music will be composed this
summer.

In his letter to Grieg, Ibsen proposed that they divide the fee equally between them. Ibsen had many ideas about the music, but he

concluded by saying that Grieg would be free to decide himself what the music should be.

Grieg started work on the music in 1874, but it was only finished in late autumn 1875 and it premiered at a performance of the play in Christiania (as Oslo was then named) on 24 February 1876.

'The most unmusical of all subjects'
Grieg struggled a lot with the material. In a letter to his friend Frants Beyer he writes:

The work on *Peer Gynt* goes very slowly, and to finish this autumn is impossible. It is the most unmusical of all subjects, except for a few places such as where Solveig is singing. And I have made something for The Hall of the Mountain King, and I cannot bear to listen to it because of the smell of cow-dung, the Norwegianism x 2, and the Selfishness.

There are altogether twenty-six numbers of incidental music, some of them accompanying speech or song. For some performances Grieg would add other compositions, such as 'Brudefølget drager forbi' (The Bridal Procession) from the piano pieces Op. 19, as orchestrated by Johan Halvorsen (1864–1935) (available with the download version of this album). Grieg himself selected eight of the numbers to produce two orchestral

Suites (Op. 46 and Op. 55). The suites do not follow the sequence of events in the drama, while the more numerous excerpts here do.

The music

Grieg was rooted in the Norwegian folk music tradition, but also in the Western European tradition, as he was brought up in the only European city in Norway, Bergen, and because he was trained as a German composer.

Some critics say that Grieg's music is 'wrong' in the context of the more expressive drama of Ibsen, but we must be aware of what Grieg actually set out to do.

Ibsen wanted him to write music that 'followed' the drama, but gave Grieg full freedom. Grieg took a different course for some of the pieces. 'Morgenstemning' is a good example: it sounds romantic and pure as a Norwegian landscape.

At the opening of Act IV, Peer Gynt has lost his fortune, and is abandoned in the desert of North Africa. Then, from the pit, comes the melody of 'Morgenstemning'. The sound is as far removed from the dramatic situation as could be imagined. The melody is pentatonic, a pattern well known in folk music from all over the world. We shall find this melody sounding from the sympathetic strings (*understrenger*) of a Hardanger fiddle.

A few strings of memory resonated, as it were, in the spine of Peer Gynt, and Grieg is ‘playing’ on these strings of the subconscious, reminding Peer of the woman – far away in time – who had promised to wait for him.

The music does not represent what we see on stage, but what is in the mind of Peer Gynt.

Grieg adopts the same principle in ‘Anitras dans’ (Anitra’s Dance). It is the loveliest melody that Grieg wrote, but Anitra is only lovely in the mind and eyes of Peer Gynt. She is a dirty desert girl, of ‘untraditional forms’, and she steals the only fortune left to him – an emerald ring.

On the other hand, Grieg is fully capable of writing dramatic music, both in the Wagnerian-like ‘Stormfull aften på havet’ (Stormy Evening on the Sea) and in his masterpiece, ‘I Dovregubbens hall’ (In the Hall of the Mountain King) – the very first, and still the best, piece of rock ‘n’ roll made in Norway.

Late in life, Grieg hoped to have time and strength to revise the complete music to *Peer Gynt*, but he could not manage to do it. His friend Johan Halvorsen prepared a revised version, which was published by Peters Verlag in Leipzig. Later, The Grieg Commission, led by professor Finn Benestad, produced

a complete edition of Grieg’s works (1993), and it is from this edition that the excerpts on this recording have been taken. They are performed by Grieg’s own orchestra, the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, which is the orchestra of the music society ‘Harmonien’, established in 1765, which Grieg directed from 1880 till 1882.

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A superb talent, the Norwegian soprano Lise Davidsen shot to prominence in summer 2015 when she won the First Prize, the Birgit Nilsson Award, and the Audience Prize at the Operalia competition in London, and the prize for best performance of Norwegian music and the Ingrid Bjoner Scholarship at the Queen Sonja International Music Competition. The recipient of countless other awards and prizes, she made her debuts at Opernhaus Zürich as Agathe (*Der Freischütz*), Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires as Isabella (*Das Liebesverbot*), Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Wiener Staatsoper, and Festival d’Aix-en-Provence as Ariadne (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), and the Wexford Festival in the title role of Cherubini’s *Médée*. She recently appeared as Freia (*Das Rheingold*) with the Odense Symphony

Orchestra, Ortlinde (*Die Walküre*) at Bayerische Staatsoper, and Freia and Third Norn (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) at Oper Frankfurt. She has sung Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Strauss's *Vier Lieder*, Op. 27 with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Verdi's *Messa da requiem* with the Deutsch-Skandinavisches Jugend-Philharmonie (at the Berlin Philharmonie), Philharmonia Orchestra, and Danish National Symphony Orchestra, and Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder* at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam and in Bucharest. During the 2017 / 18 season Lise Davidsen is Artist in Residence at the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra with which she is a frequent collaborator, having given a summer concert at Torgallmenningen with Edward Gardner, *Lied* and opera recitals with the pianist James Baillieu, Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, and Verdi's Requiem.

A lyric soprano known for her clarity and beauty of tone as well as for the focus of her delivery, **Ann-Helen Moen** has performed with some of the most distinguished ensembles and companies in the world, from the Bach Collegium Japan and

MDR Sinfonieorchester Leipzig to the opera houses of Zürich and Hannover. While widely recognised as a significant interpreter of Mozart, she has also sung Handel's Semele, Almirena (*Rinaldo*), and Dorinda (*Orlando*), as well as Micaëla (*Carmen*), Tatjana (*Eugene Onegin*), Madama Butterfly, Antonia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*), and Mimi (*La bohème*). Born in Molde, Norway, trained at the Grieg Academy in Bergen and Royal Opera Academy in Copenhagen, and a winner of Norway's most prestigious singing prize, the Esso Award, she began her career as a company member at Oper Graz, and has appeared at Staatsoper Hannover, Opernhaus Zürich, Danish National Opera, Théâtre Paris-Villette, Teatro Verdi Trieste, and at companies in Germany, Sweden, and Ireland. As a sought-after concert artist she enjoys a particularly close relationship with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, with which she has recorded and toured extensively. Ann-Helen Moen has sung repertoire from Bach to Korngold with all the major Scandinavian orchestras and worked with conductors such as Masaaki Suzuki, Rinaldo Alessandrini, William Christie, Harry Christophers, Sir Andrew Davis, Eivind Gullberg Jensen,

Philippe Jordan, Kristjan Järvi, Andrew Litton, Susanna Mälkki, and Juanjo Mena.

The brilliant spinto soprano of Victoria Nava is well rooted in the Italian vocal tradition, having the stamina for Wagner, and a flair for English as well as French opera. Having grown up in Trondheim, Norway, this British-Italian singer also has a strong affinity for the Scandinavian repertoire. She studied at the Conservatorio G. Rossini in Pesaro and Royal Opera Academy in Copenhagen, and also has a degree in Speech-Language Pathology from the University of Bergen. In 2003 she made her professional opera debut as Mimi (*La bohème*) in Cesena, Italy, and spent the following two years in the prestigious Vilar Young Artist Programme of The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where she made her debut as the High Priestess (*Aida*), and also covered or sang a repertoire ranging from Mozart to Shostakovich and Britten. In opera houses across Europe she has performed Elisabetta (*Don Carlo*), Tosca, Aida, Manon (*Manon Lescaut*), Antonia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), and Margherita (*Mefistofele*). Her international concert repertoire includes Verdi's *Messa da requiem*, Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder*, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Henning Sommerro's cantata *The Iceberg*,

and Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs*. She has worked with conductors such as Sir Antonio Pappano, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Edward Downes, Maurizio Barbacini, Juanjo Mena, Andrew Litton, Thomas Dausgaard, Marc Soustrot, Giordano Bellincampi, and Edward Gardner. Victoria Nava currently lives on the island of Askøy, outside Bergen.

The baritone Johannes Weisser has appeared at venues such as the Salzburger Festspiele, Staatsoper Berlin, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, Theater an der Wien, Théâtre royal de La Monnaie in Brussels, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Teatro Real in Madrid, Canadian Opera Company, Megaron in Athens, Den Norske Opera in Oslo, Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen, Edinburgh International Festival, and Innsbrucker Festwochen der alten Musik. His operatic repertoire includes the title roles in *Eugene Onegin* and *Don Giovanni*, Leporello (*Don Giovanni*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*), Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Schaunard (*La bohème*), Dr Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Mr Flint (*Billy Budd*), and Agamemnon (Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide*), as well as a large number of roles in baroque and contemporary operas. He is a much-sought-after concert and oratorio singer, appearing throughout

Europe, Asia, and North America with many of today's leading orchestras and conductors. He is an exceptionally communicative *Lieder* singer whose recitals have attracted much attention, most especially his concerts with the pianist Leif Ove Andsnes. Johannes Weisser may be heard in a number of recordings, notably as Don Giovanni and on a highly acclaimed CD of songs by Grieg.

His multi-award-winning recordings and dazzling concert performances have long established Jean-Efflam Bavouzet as one of the most outstanding pianists of his generation. Considered as Sir Georg Solti's last discovery, he works regularly with orchestras such as The Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, NHK Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, and London Philharmonic Orchestra with which he has undertaken a major tour of the US that culminated at Carnegie Hall, and collaborates with conductors such as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Vladimir Jurowski, Gianandrea Noseda, François-Xavier Roth, Charles Dutoit, Vasily Petrenko, Daniele Gatti, Gábor Takács-Nagy, and Sir Andrew Davis, amongst others.

An equally active recitalist and chamber musician, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet regularly performs at the Southbank Centre and

Wigmore Hall in London, Cité de la musique in Paris, Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw in Amsterdam, BOZAR in Brussels, Schwetzinger SWR Festspiele, P.I. Tchaikovsky State Conservatory in Moscow, and Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing.

Particularly celebrated for his work in the recording studio, he has won *Gramophone* Awards for his recording of works by Debussy and Ravel with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Yan Pascal Tortelier, and for the fourth volume of his complete survey of Debussy's works for piano. His interpretations of works by Debussy and Ravel have also earned him two *BBC Music Magazine* Awards and a Diapason d'Or, whilst the first volume of his series devoted to Haydn's piano sonatas received a Choc de l'année by the magazine *Classica*. He has just completed a major project to record all Beethoven's piano sonatas, winning exceptional critical acclaim for Volume 3, which was named CD of the Month in *Gramophone*. He received another *Gramophone* Award for his recent recording of Prokofiev's five piano concertos with the BBC Philharmonic under Gianandrea Noseda. Jean-Efflam Bavouzet records exclusively for Chandos.

A former student of Pierre Sancan at the Paris Conservatoire, he made his American

debut, in 1987, through Young Concert Artists, in New York. As well as directing concertos from the keyboard, he has prepared a transcription for two pianos of Debussy's *Jeux*, published by Durand with a foreword by Pierre Boulez. www.Bavouzet.com

Bergen Guttekor (established in 2008), **Bergen Pikekor** (established in 2010), and **Edvard Grieg Ungdomskor** (established in 2013) are choirs associated with the Edvard Grieg Kor by means of a common development strategy. Together these choirs provide dynamic and flexible training of members from as early as the age of six years, who are employed by both the Bergen Philharmonic Choir and Bergen Nasjonale Opera.

The Norwegian vocal ensemble **Edvard Grieg Kor**, founded and based in Bergen, is the resident *a cappella* ensemble at Troldhaugen, the home of Edvard Grieg. Displaying versatility across all musical genres, it performs regularly with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and also forms the heart of the Chorus of Bergen Nasjonale Opera. It is rapidly gaining a reputation as a leading eight-part *a cappella* ensemble, giving more than fifty performances annually

throughout Norway and abroad. Leading composers have written numerous works and arrangements specially for the choir, including an eight-part arrangement of Grieg's 'Holberg' Suite and a setting of *Våren* by David Lang. In addition to its busy performing schedule, the choir manages a comprehensive development and education programme, dedicated to encouraging *a cappella* singing to the highest level; it includes five children's choirs in Bergen, and Edvard Grieg Ungdomskor (members aged sixteen to twenty-four), whose eclectic work has included an appearance in concert with the Rolling Stones. The Edvard Grieg Kor has recently participated in performances of Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* with the Berliner Philharmoniker conducted by Sir Simon Rattle, as well as Britten's *War Requiem*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Haydn's *Die Schöpfung*, and Britten's *Peter Grimes*. In 2017 the choir's recording of Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra was nominated for a Grammy award in the category Best Choral Performance.

Although formally founded in 1919, the **Bergen Philharmonic Choir** may date back to 1765 when the Music Society Harmonien

was established for the purpose of organising orchestral concerts. The Choir flourished during the tenure of Edvard Grieg as Music Director, his choral works still holding a special place in its repertoire. In the past decade, under its current director, Håkon Matti Skrede, it has reached a new summit of excellence, appearing regularly with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra in standard symphonic repertoire, from Mozart to Britten, while also championing more unusual repertoire and contemporary works. Highlights of its recent calendar include performances of Britten's *Peter Grimes* and *War Requiem*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, Arne Nordheim's *Wirklicher Wald*, and Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder*, some of these in collaboration with other local choirs. Many discs have received excellent reviews both near and afar, the recording of the *Glagolitic Mass* even earning a Grammy nomination for Best Choral Performance.

Håkon Matti Skrede trained as a violinist and singer at The Grieg Academy in Bergen. As a chorister and student choirmaster of the Drakensberg Boys Choir in South Africa, he decided to develop his skills as a choral conductor. He has participated

in master-classes by Peter Schreier, Paul Hillier, Kiri Te Kanawa, Bob Chilcott, Njál Sparbo, and Robert Levine, appeared as a soloist in numerous sacred works, and taken part in several operatic productions. He founded the Edvard Grieg Kor (formerly KorVest) in 2002, Bergen Guttekor in 2008, Bergen Pikekor in 2010, and Edvard Grieg Ungdomskor in 2013. He is currently chorus master for Bergen Nasjonale Opera and Bergen Philharmonic Choir and conductor of Collegiúm Músicúm. Håkon Matti Skrede has conducted a number of operas with children and youths, such as Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Weill's *Der Jasager*, and Bock and Harnick's *Fiddler on the Roof*, as well as many large-scale sacred works for chorus and orchestra, including Handel's *Messiah*, the Requiems of Mozart, Duruflé, Fauré, and Brahms, and Britten's *The Company of Heaven*.

One of the world's oldest orchestras, the **Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra** dates back to 1765 and thus in 2015 celebrated its 250th anniversary. Edvard Grieg had a close relationship with the Orchestra, serving as its artistic director during the years 1880–82. Numbering one-hundred-and-one musicians,

the Orchestra has achieved the status of a Norwegian National Orchestra. Edward Gardner, the acclaimed Music Director of English National Opera, was appointed Chief Conductor for a three-year tenure from October 2015, a contract which has been extended until 2021. The Orchestra enjoys a high international reputation through recordings, extensive touring, and international commissions.

During the last few seasons it has played in the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, at the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall, in the Wiener Musikverein and Konzerthaus, in Carnegie Hall, New York, and in the Philharmonie, Berlin. In 2015 it revisited the Concertgebouw and the BBC Proms and toured Germany, Sweden, and Ireland. Together with Edward Gardner, it toured Germany in 2016, visited England and the Concertgebouw in spring 2017, and appeared at the Edinburgh International Festival in August 2017.

In 2015 the Orchestra established its own Digital Concert Hall which offers a fine selection of works performed by the Orchestra and a range of conductors and soloists. A youth symphony orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, has also been established, which gives four to six concerts per year.

The Orchestra has an active recording schedule, at the moment releasing four CDs every year. Critics worldwide applaud its energetic playing style and full-bodied string sound. Recent and ongoing recording projects include Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*, ballets by Stravinsky, the symphonies, ballet suites, and concertos by Prokofiev, and the complete orchestral music of Edvard Grieg. Enjoying long-standing artistic partnerships with some of the finest musicians in the world, the Orchestra has recorded with Leif Ove Andsnes, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, James Ehnes, Gerald Finley, Alban Gerhardt, Vadim Gluzman, Stephen Hough, Freddy Kempf, Truls Mørk, Steven Osborne, Lawrence Power, and Stuart Skelton, among others.

The Orchestra has recorded Tchaikovsky's three great ballets and critically acclaimed series of works by Johan Halvorsen and Johan Svendsen with Neeme Järvi, orchestral works by Rimsky-Korsakov with Dmitri Kitayenko, and music by Berlioz, Delius, Elgar, Sibelius, and Vaughan Williams with Sir Andrew Davis.

The first collaboration on disc between Edward Gardner and the Orchestra was a recording of orchestral realisations by Luciano Berio. A critically acclaimed series devoted to orchestral works by Janáček,

including a Grammy-nominated recording of his *Glagolitic Mass*, has been completed, and Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* was released in 2016. 2017 has seen the release of a CD of orchestral songs by Sibelius, with Gerald Finley as soloist. www.harmonien.no

Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra since October 2015, **Edward Gardner** OBE has already led the orchestra on multiple international tours, including acclaimed performances in London, Berlin, Munich, and Amsterdam. Their semi-staged *Peter Grimes* at the 2017 Edinburgh International Festival was described as 'the best I've ever seen' by Alexandra Coghall in *The Spectator*, receiving five-star reviews in *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Scotsman*, and *The Herald*. In demand as a guest conductor, he enjoys longstanding collaborations with the Philharmonia Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, where he was Principal Guest Conductor 2010–16, and BBC Symphony Orchestra, which he has conducted at both the First and Last Nights of the BBC Proms. He has also conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Washington, Seattle Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra,

Orchestre national de France, Filarmonica della Scala, and NHK Symphony Orchestra. During the 2017 / 18 season he will return to the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, London Philharmonic Orchestra, and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, and make his debut with the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, and Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Music Director of English National Opera for ten years, from 2006 to 2015, Edward Gardner continues to work with the world's major opera companies, maintaining ongoing relationships with Teatro alla Scala, Milan and Opéra national de Paris, and with The Metropolitan Opera, New York, where he has conducted productions of *Carmen*, *Don Giovanni*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *Werther*. He is soon to return to De Nationale Opera, The Netherlands and make his debut at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden. A passionate supporter of young talent, he founded the Hallé Youth Orchestra in 2002 and regularly conducts the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. He has a close relationship with the Juilliard School of Music, and with the Royal Academy of Music which appointed him the inaugural Sir Charles Mackerras Conducting Chair in 2014.

He is an exclusive Chandos artist, whose award-winning discography includes

recordings of works by Janáček, Elgar, Mendelssohn, Walton, Lutoslawski, Britten, Berio, and Schoenberg. His recent recording of orchestral songs by Sibelius with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra was shortlisted for a 2017 *Gramophone* Award. Born in Gloucester in 1974, he was educated at the University of Cambridge and Royal Academy of Music. On graduating he assisted Sir Mark Elder

at The Hallé, and went on to spend three years as Music Director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera. Edward Gardner was named Conductor of the Year by the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2008, received an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera in 2009, and was made an OBE for Services to Music in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2012.



Lise Davidsen



Ann-Helen Moen



Jean-Efflam Bavouzet

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Grieg: Klavierkonzert / Schauspielmusik für "Peer Gynt"

Klavierkonzert in a-Moll op. 16 Ein einzigartiges Werk – ein einzigartiger Gedanke

Eines der Werke von Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907) ist sowohl zu Griegs Lebzeiten als auch heute als etwas Besonderes angesehen worden. Dabei handelt es sich um das Klavierkonzert in a-Moll op. 16. Es wird immer hervorstechen als Paradebeispiel für einen einzigartigen großen Gedanken, eingefangen und zum Ausdruck gebracht in Musik. Von Anfang bis Ende enthält das Konzert ein bestimmendes Motiv, das stetig entwickelt und mit neuer Klangfarbe und Nuancierung erfüllt wird. Welchem Teil des Konzerts man auch zuhört, nie kann ein Zweifel daran bestehen, dass es sich um das Klavierkonzert in a-Moll handelt.

Grieg wählte für das Werk die kühnste mögliche Eröffnung. Wenn der erste Akkord erklingt, enthält er auf magische Weise das ganze Konzert mit aller Intensität seiner Klangfarben und Schattierungen. Es ist, als betrachte man ein Gemälde oder eine Skulptur. Unmittelbar kann man das Ganze sehen, doch es kann Stunden oder Tage

dauern, bis man jedes Detail aufgenommen hat. Große Kunst enthält einen enormen Überfluss an Information, sodass man ein ums andere Mal wiederkommen kann, um jedes Mal etwas Neues zu entdecken – neue Ideen zu entwickeln und tiefere Einsichten zu erlangen.

Das a-Moll-Konzert hat diese Qualitäten. Grieg präsentiert das ganze "Bild" im ersten Akkord. Dann öffnet er – gewissermaßen wie bei einem Adventskalender – ein Fenster nach dem anderen, und am Schluss haben wir das vollständige Bild mit all seinen Details, und wir können ihm immer wieder zuhören.

Die einleitenden Töne des Klavierkonzerts in a-Moll (A – A – Gis – E) sind zum archetypischen Griegschen Motiv geworden. Wir finden dieses Motiv in mehreren seiner Stücke, aber es kommt am Anfang des Klavierkonzerts am eindrucksvollsten zum Einsatz. Er überspannt mit diesem Motiv mehrere Oktaven und verbindet seine Wiederkehr jeweils mit einem Molldreiklang (E – C – A). Das Leitmotiv entspricht genau Grieg selbst: weder Dur noch Moll, oder vielleicht beides zusammen. Griegs

jugendlichstes und glanzvollstes Werk steht fast bis zum Ende in Moll – aber mit vielen Themen in Dur.

Nach der majestätischen Eröffnung präsentiert Grieg das erste Thema im Orchester auf charakteristische Weise. Die ersten beiden Takte stehen in a-Moll, dann werden diese Takte fast genauso wiederholt, doch nach C-Dur hinauftransponiert. In der Exposition wird das Thema verknüpft mit rhythmischer Geschmeidigkeit präsentiert, ehe es in langen wogenden Phrasen freigesetzt wird.

Die Spannung steigt gegen Ende des Kopfsatzes und gipfelt in der Ausschmückung des Materials in der Kadenz durch den Solisten. Und dann lässt Grieg das Klavier ganz unerwartet über den Rand eines harmonischen Abgrunds springen. Der Sprung, der Fall in den leeren Raum und die Landung sind alle so meisterhaft gestaltet, dass ohne weiteres zu verstehen ist, warum das Publikum bei der Uraufführung in spontanen Applaus ausbrach.

Im zweiten, *Adagio* bezeichneten Satz setzt sich dieser ungebrochene Strom inspirierter Einfälle fort. Schönheit, Gelassenheit, die Aufhebung von Zeit und Schwerkraft – all das ist in diesem wunderbaren Raum einfach vorhanden. Grieg vertraute so sehr auf die

innwohnende Qualität des Materials, dass er den Mut aufbrachte, den ganzen Satz hindurch ein einziges Tempo durchzuhalten und so ein musikalisches Stillleben zu schaffen.

Der abschließende Satz, *Allegro moderato molto e marcato*, wird leise, aber rhythmisch von den Bläsern angekündigt, ehe das Klavier mit seinem spielerisch tanzenden Hauptthema, einem *Halling*, einsetzt. Im äußerst romantischen Seitenthema scheint die Flöte die “Morgenstemning” (Morgenstimmung) in *Peer Gynt* vorwegzunehmen. Die Melodie schwebt einen Moment lang dahin und löst sich dann in Luft auf. Die Reprise bringt das Thema mit aller Kraft zurück, und der Satz strebt einem grandiosen Schluss zu.

In einem Brief an seine Eltern beschrieb Grieg die Reaktion von Franz Liszt, als dieser das Konzert während Griegs Reise nach Rom im Frühjahr 1870 zum ersten Mal durchspielte:

Es ist da eine ganz göttliche Episode, die ich nicht vergessen sollte. Gegen Ende des Finales wird, wie du dich erinnern wirst, das Seitenthema in einem großen Fortissimo wiederholt. In den allerletzten Takten, wo die erste Note der ersten Triole des Themas – Gis – im

Orchester zu G abgewandelt wird, während das Klavier in einer gewaltigen Tonleiterpassage die ganze Tastatur überspannt, hielt er plötzlich inne und erhob sich, verließ das Klavier und ging mit gewaltigen theatralischen Schritten und erhobenem Arm durch die große Klosterhalle und sang nahezu brüllend das Thema. Beim oben erwähnten Fortissimo streckte er wie ein Imperator seinen Arm aus und rief: g, g, nicht gis! Famos!! Das ist so echter schwedischer Banco! Dann kehrte er zum Klavier zurück und wiederholte die ganze Phrase, che er abschloss.

Die Komposition des Konzerts
Edvard Grieg hatte 1858 – 1862 in Leipzig studiert, und dort hörte er, wie Clara Schumann Robert Schumanns Klavierkonzert in a-Moll spielte. Viele Jahre später schrieb Grieg in sein Tagebuch:
Wenn man jung ist, hat man ein Gehirn wie Wachs, – jeder Eindruck prägt sich ein und bleibt für immer.
Als Grieg im Sommer 1868 nach Kopenhagen aufbrach, um Nina Griegs Familie zu besuchen und ihr das neugeborene Kind Alexandra vorzustellen, hatte er auch den Gedanken und die Absicht, ein

Klavierkonzert zu komponieren. Seine Freunde fanden ihm ein Zimmer mit Klavier im Landhaus Mothgaard in Søllerød – etwa dreißig Kilometer nördlich von Kopenhagen. Dort gelang ihm die Erfüllung der Idee des Konzerts, und er hatte sogar die Möglichkeit, das Werk mit geistesverwandten Kollegen wie Emil Horneman und dem bekannten Pianisten Edmund Neupert zu besprechen.

Die Uraufführung fand im April 1869 im Großen Saal des Casinos statt, mit Neupert als Solist und dem Orchester des Königlichen Theaters unter der Leitung von Holger Simon Paulli. Der russische Pianist Anton Rubinstein war auch zugegen und gestattete Neupert, für die Veranstaltung seinen Konzertflügel zu benutzen. Das Konzert war ein unmittelbarer Erfolg und ist seither stets populär geblieben.

Schauspielmusik für "Peer Gynt"
Der Gedanke für eine Zusammenarbeit begann in Rom
Edvard Grieg reiste 1865 erstmals nach Rom, und dort nahm er Kontakt auf mit Künstlern und Wissenschaftlern im Skandinavischen Verein der Stadt.
Dort lernte Grieg erstmals Henrik Ibsen (1828 – 1906) kennen, und der talentierte junge Musiker erregte bald Ibsens

Aufmerksamkeit. Obwohl sich die beiden in Rom und auch später nur wenige Male von Angesicht trafen, war Ibsen überzeugt, obwohl er wenig von Musik verstand, dass Grieg der Richtige war, die größten Herausforderungen auf dem Gebiet der Musik in Angriff zu nehmen.

Eine Einladung

Im Januar 1874 schrieb Ibsen aus Dresden einen langen Brief an Grieg, mit dem er ihn einlud, Schauspielmusik für seine berühmte dramatische Dichtung *Peer Gynt* zu schreiben. Der Direktor des Christiania-Theaters, Ludvig Josephson, hatte Ibsen gebeten, *Peer Gynt* für eine Bühneninszenierung zu bearbeiten. Er hatte Ibsen die Summe von 400 *spesiedaler* für dieses Unterfangen versprochen. Ibsen erwiderte dem enthusiastischen Josephson, er werde

Peer Gynt als Musikdrama arrangieren.

Die Musik wird diesen Sommer komponiert.

In seinem Brief an Grieg schlug Ibsen vor, das Honorar zu gleichen Teilen auf sie zu verteilen. Ibsen hatte viele Ideen zur Musik, doch er meinte abschließend, Grieg werde frei über die Musik entscheiden können.

Grieg begann 1874 mit der Arbeit an der Musik, doch sie wurde erst im Spätherbst

1875 fertig und war erstmals am 24. Februar 1876 bei einer Aufführung des Theaterstücks in Christiania (wie Oslo damals hieß) zu hören.

“Der unmusikalischste aller Stoffe”

Grieg hatte erhebliche Probleme mit dem Material. In einem Brief an seinen Freund Frants Beyer schrieb er:

Die Arbeit an *Peer Gynt* geht sehr langsam voran, und es ist mir nicht möglich, sie bis zum Herbst abzuschließen. Es ist der unmusikalischste aller Stoffe, außer an einigen Stellen, beispielsweise wenn Solveig singt. Und für die Halle des Bergkönigs habe ich etwas geschaffen, das ich mir nicht anhören kann vor lauter Gestank von Kuhmist, dem Norwegianismus x 2 und der Selbstsucht.

Die Bühnenmusik besteht aus insgesamt sechsundzwanzig Nummern, von denen einige Sprache oder Gesang begleiten. Für manche Aufführungen sollte Grieg andere Kompositionen hinzufügen, z.B. “Brudefolget drager forbi” (Die Brautprozession) aus den Klavierstücken op. 19, in der Orchestrierung von Johan Halvorsen (1864 – 1935) (erhältlich mit der Download-Version des Albums).

Grieg selbst wählte acht Nummern aus, um zwei Orchestersuiten zu erstellen (op. 46 und op. 55). Die Suiten halten sich nicht an die Abfolge des Geschehens im Drama, im Gegensatz zu den hier vorliegenden zahlreicheren Auszügen.

Die Musik

Grieg war in der Tradition norwegischer Volksmusik verankert, aber auch in der westeuropäischen Tradition, denn er war in Bergen, der einzigen europäischen Stadt in Norwegen, aufgewachsen und als deutscher Komponist ausgebildet.

Manche Kritiker behaupten, Griegs Musik sei „falsch“ im Kontext von Ibsens eher ausdrucksvoollen Drama, doch wir müssen uns darüber im Klaren sein, was Grieg eigentlich vorhatte.

Ibsen wollte, dass er Musik verfasste, die dem Drama „folgte“, ließ Grieg aber alle Freiheiten. Grieg entschied sich für manche Stücke für einen anderen Kurs. „Morgenstemning“ ist dafür ein gutes Beispiel: Es klingt romantisch und rein wie eine norwegische Landschaft.

Am Beginn des 4. Akts hat Peer Gynt sein Vermögen verloren und befindet sich einsam und verlassen in der nordafrikanischen Wüste. Da erklingt aus dem Orchestergraben

die Melodie der „Morgenstemning“. Der Klang ist so weit entfernt von der Situation im Drama, wie man sich nur vorstellen kann. Die Melodie ist pentatonisch, eine Form, die in den Volksmusiken aller Welt üblich ist. Wir werden diese Melodie hören, wie sie in den Resonanzsaiten (*understrenger*) einer Hardanger-Fiedel erklingt.

Einige Saiten der Erinnerung klingen gewissermaßen im Rückgrat von Peer Gynt nach, und Grieg „spielt“ auf diesen Saiten des Unterbewussten, um Peer an die Frau zu erinnern, die – in weit entfernter Zeit – versprochen hatte, auf ihn zu warten.

Die Musik repräsentiert nicht, was wir auf der Bühne sehen, sondern das, was sich im Kopf von Peer Gynt abspielt.

Das gleiche Prinzip bringt Grieg in „Anitras dans“ (Anitras Tanz) zur Anwendung. Es ist die lieblichste Melodie, die Grieg je geschrieben hat, auch wenn Anita nur im Kopf und in den Augen von Peer Gynt so lieblich ist. Sie ist ein schmutziges Wüstenmädchen von „untraditioneller Gestalt“, und sie stiehlt die einzige Wertsache, die ihm noch verblieben ist – ein Smaragdring.

Andererseits ist Grieg durchaus imstande, dramatische Musik zu schreiben, sowohl in dem an Wagner gemahnenden „Stormfull aften på havet“ (Stürmischer Abend auf

dem Meer) als auch in seinem Meisterstück, "I Dovregubbens hall" (In der Halle des Bergkönigs) – dem allerersten und immer noch besten Rock'n'Roll-Stück aus Norwegen.

Spät in seinem Leben hoffte Grieg, die Zeit und die Kraft zu haben, die vollständige *Peer-Gynt*-Musik zu überarbeiten, aber es gelang ihm nicht. Sein Freund Johan Halvorsen bereitete eine revidierte Fassung vor, die vom Peters Verlag in Leipzig herausgegeben wurde. Die Grieg-Kommission unter der Leitung von Professor Finn Benestad hat

später eine vollständige Ausgabe von Griegs Werken herausgebracht (1993), und dieser sind die Auszüge der vorliegenden Einspielung entnommen. Dargeboten werden sie von Griegs eigenem Orchester, dem Bergen Filharmoniske Orkester, bei dem es sich um das Orchester der Musikgesellschaft "Harmonien" handelt, 1765 gegründet und von 1880 bis 1882 von Grieg geleitet.

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Übersetzung: Bernd Müller

Ralph Couzens



Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, centre, with Edward Gardner, right, and the producer, Brian Pidgeon, during playback of Grieg's Piano Concerto

Grieg: Concerto pour piano / Musique de scène de “Peer Gynt”

Concerto pour piano en la mineur, op. 16 Une œuvre unique – une pensée unique

Le Concerto pour piano en la mineur, op. 16 d'Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907) est une œuvre dont la destinée a toujours été de se trouver dans une catégorie à part, que ce soit à l'époque de Grieg ou de nos jours. Elle fera de tout temps figure d'exemple brillant d'une pensée grandiose, unique en son genre, captée et exprimée en musique. Le concerto est centré de bout en bout sur une seule idée qui est constamment développée, et parée de couleurs et de nuances nouvelles. Quelle que soit la partie du concerto que l'on écoute, jamais on ne doute qu'il s'agit du Concerto pour piano en la mineur.

Pour cette œuvre, Grieg choisit l'introduction la plus audacieuse qui soit. Lorsque retentit le premier accord, l'entièreté du concerto nous est révélée, comme par magie, avec toute l'intensité de ses coloris et de ses nuances. L'expérience est semblable à la découverte d'une peinture ou d'une sculpture. En un éclair, nous la voyons dans son intégralité, mais des heures ou des jours sont parfois nécessaires pour en découvrir

chaque détail. Il y a dans le grand art un foisonnement d'informations, ce qui permet d'y revenir sans cesse et d'y découvrir du neuf à chaque fois, d'avoir des pensées nouvelles qui nous viennent à l'esprit et de pénétrer l'œuvre en profondeur.

Le Concerto en la mineur a ces qualités. Grieg présente le “tableau” tout entier dans le premier accord. Puis – comme avec un calendrier de l'Avent –, il ouvre les fenêtres une à une, nous laissant découvrir à la fin l'image complète, dans tous ses détails, une description musicale que nous pouvons écouter encore et encore.

Les notes introductives du Concerto pour piano en la mineur (la – la – sol dièse – mi) sont devenues le motif archétypal de Grieg. Nous le retrouvons dans un certain nombre de ses compositions, mais c'est dans l'introduction du Concerto pour piano qu'il est utilisé avec le plus d'effet. Grieg couvre plusieurs octaves avec ce motif, couplant ses reprises avec une triade mineure (mi – ut – la). Le leitmotiv est exactement à l'image de Grieg: ni majeur, ni mineur, ou peut-être les deux à la fois. L'œuvre la plus précoce et brillante de Grieg est en

fait en mineur – mais avec de nombreux thèmes en majeur – presque jusqu'à la fin.

Après la majestueuse introduction, Grieg présente le premier thème à l'orchestre de manière caractéristique. Les deux premières mesures sont en la mineur, puis ces mesures sont répétées pour ainsi dire identiquement, mais transposées en ut majeur. Dans l'exposition, le thème est présenté avec concision, en un rythme souple, avant d'être traité librement en longues phrases ondulantes.

La tension monte vers la fin du premier mouvement, culminant dans la mise en valeur du matériau par le soliste dans la Cadence. Puis, de manière tout à fait inattendue, Grieg fait courir le piano le long du bord d'un abîme harmonique. Le saut, la chute dans le vide et la réception sont travaillés avec tant de génie qu'il est facile de comprendre pourquoi cet épisode a déclenché des applaudissements spontanés du public lors de la création de l'œuvre.

Dans le deuxième mouvement, *Adagio*, ce flux ininterrompu de pensée inspirée se poursuit. La beauté, la tranquillité, la suspension du temps et de la gravité – tout *est* en réalité au cœur de cet espace magnifique. Grieg avait tellement confiance en la qualité propre du matériau qu'il eut le courage de

s'en tenir à un tempo unique tout au long du mouvement, créant ainsi une nature morte musicale.

Le dernier mouvement, *Allegro moderato molto e marcato*, est annoncé paisiblement, mais rythmiquement, par la section des vents, avant que le piano fasse son entrée avec son thème principal, un thème de danse enjoué, un *halling* (danse folklorique traditionnelle en Norvège rurale); dans le second thème très romantique, la flûte semble anticiper l'épisode intitulé "Morgenstemning" (Au matin) dans *Peer Gynt*. La mélodie flotte pendant un moment, puis s'estompe et devient aérienne. La réexposition réintroduit le thème en force, et le mouvement s'achemine vers une conclusion grandiose.

Dans une lettre à ses parents, Grieg décrit la réaction de Franz Liszt quand celui-ci joua tout le concerto pour la première fois – c'était pendant le séjour à Rome de son compositeur au printemps de 1870:

Il y a eu un épisode parfaitement divin que je n'oublierai pas. Vers la fin du Finale, comme vous vous en souviendrez, le second thème est répété en un grand fortissimo. Dans les toutes dernières mesures, là où la première note du premier triolet du thème – sol dièse – devient un sol à

l'orchestre, tandis que le piano dans un épisode de gammes extraordinaire parcourt tout le clavier, il s'arrête soudain, se dressa, quitta le piano, et d'un pas puissamment théâtral et les bras levés, traversa la grande salle du monastère, rugissant littéralement le thème. Quand il arriva au sol dont il est question ci-dessus, il agita le bras de manière impérieuse et s'écria: "G, G, nicht Giss! Famos! Das ist so echter schwedischer Banco!" Il retourna alors au piano, répéta toute la phrase, et conclut.

La composition du concerto

Edvard Grieg avait étudié à Leipzig de 1858 à 1862 et y avait entendu Clara Schumann jouer le Concerto pour piano en la mineur de Robert Schumann. Plusieurs années plus tard, Grieg écrivit dans son journal:

Quand on est jeune, on a un cerveau comme de la cire – chaque impression y laisse une empreinte définitive.

Lorsque Grieg partit pour Copenhague pendant l'été de 1868 pour rendre visite à la famille de Nina Grieg et présenter leur fille Alexandra qui venait de naître, il avait l'intention aussi de mettre en œuvre son idée de composer un concerto pour piano.

Ses amis lui trouvèrent une chambre avec piano à Mothgaard dans la localité de Søllerød – à quelque trente kilomètres au nord de Copenhague. Là il réussit à mettre sur le métier son projet de concerto, et il eut même l'occasion d'en discuter, au cours de sa composition, avec des confrères amis, tels Emil Horneman et le célèbre pianiste Edmund Neupert.

La création du concerto eut lieu en avril 1869 dans la grande salle du Casino à Copenhague avec Neupert au piano et Holger Simon Pauli dirigeant l'Orchestre du Théâtre royal. Le pianiste russe Anton Rubinstein assistait aussi au concert, et Neupert put jouer pour l'occasion sur son grand piano. Le concerto connut un succès immédiat et il est resté depuis une œuvre populaire.

Musique de scène pour "Peer Gynt"

L'idée de travailler ensemble naquit à Rome Edvard Grieg alla à Rome pour la première fois en 1865, et il y rencontra, à la Société scandinave de la ville, des artistes et des hommes de science.

C'est là qu'il fit la connaissance d'Henrik Ibsen (1828 – 1906) qui fut très vite impressionné par le jeune et talentueux musicien. Bien que les deux hommes ne se

fussent rencontrés que quelques fois, à Rome et plus tard, Ibsen (alors qu'il ne connaissait pas grand-chose en musique) était convaincu que Grieg était une personnalité capable de relever les plus importants défis en musique.

Une invitation

En janvier 1874, Ibsen qui était à Dresde écrivit une longue lettre à Grieg l'invitant à composer de la musique de scène pour son célèbre poème dramatique *Peer Gynt*. Le directeur du Théâtre Christiania, Ludvig Josephson, avait demandé à Ibsen d'adapter *Peer Gynt* pour le théâtre. Pour ce travail, il lui promit la somme de 400 *spesiedaler*. Ibsen répondit à l'enthousiaste Josephson :

J'arrangerai *Peer Gynt* et en ferai un drame musical. La musique sera composée cet été.

Dans sa lettre à Grieg, Ibsen lui proposa de partager les honoraires à parts égales. Ibsen avait de nombreuses idées au sujet de cette mise en musique, mais il conclut en disant que Grieg aurait carte blanche et serait libre de décider seul de ce qu'elle devrait être.

Grieg commença à travailler sur le projet en 1874, mais il n'y mit le point final qu'à l'automne de 1875 et la première eut lieu à Christiania (l'ancien nom d'Oslo) le 24 février 1876.

“Le sujet le plus non-musical qui soit”
Grieg lutta pour maîtriser le matériau. Dans une lettre à son ami Frants Beyer, il écrit :

Le travail sur *Peer Gynt* avance très lentement, et terminer cet automne est impossible. C'est le sujet le plus non-musical qui soit, sauf en de rares moments, comme lorsque Solveig chante. Et j'ai écrit quelque chose pour L'antre du roi de la montagne, mais je ne supporte pas de l'écouter à cause de l'odeur de bouse de vache, du Norvégisme x 2 et de l'égocentrisme qui l'imprègne.

Il y a en tout vingt-six numéros de musique de scène, dont quelques-uns accompagnent paroles ou chants. Pour certaines représentations, Grieg ajoutait d'autres compositions, telles “*Brudefølget drager forbî*” (Le Cortège nuptial) faisant partie des pièces pour piano, op. 19, dans l'orchestration de Johan Halvorsen (1864 – 1935) (disponible dans la version à télécharger de cet album). Grieg lui-même choisit huit numéros pour créer deux Suites (op. 46 et 55). Les suites ne suivent pas la succession des événements dans le drame, alors que les extraits plus nombreux ici le font.

La musique

Grieg était enraciné dans la tradition de la

musique folklorique norvégienne, mais aussi dans la tradition européenne occidentale du fait qu'il grandit dans la seule ville européenne de Norvège, Bergen, et qu'il reçut sa formation de compositeur en Allemagne.

Certains critiques prétendent que la musique de Grieg sonne "faux" dans le contexte du drame plus expressif d'Ibsen, mais nous devons être conscients de ce que Grieg entreprend réellement de faire.

Ibsen voulait qu'il compose de la musique qui "suive" le drame, mais il laissa toute liberté à Grieg. Grieg emprunta une autre voie pour certaines pièces, et "Morgenstemning" en est un bon exemple: cet épisode est romantique et pur comme un paysage norvégien.

Quand commence l'Acte IV, Peer Gynt a perdu sa fortune et se trouve abandonné dans le désert nord-africain. Alors, de la fosse, résonne la mélodie de "Morgenstemning". Les notes sont aussi éloignées du drame de cette situation qu'on puisse l'imaginer. La mélodie est pentatonique, un schéma bien connu dans la musique folklorique du monde entier. Nous entendons cette mélodie qui jaillit des cordes sympathiques (*understrenger*) d'un violon Hardanger.

Quelques bribes de souvenir résonnent, en quelque sorte, dans la tête de Peer Gynt,

et Grieg "joue" sur ces cordes subconscientes qui rappellent à Peer la femme qui – il y a bien longtemps – lui avait promis de l'attendre.

La musique ne représente pas ce que nous voyons sur scène, mais ce qui se joue dans l'esprit de Peer Gynt.

Grieg adopte le même principe dans "Anitras dans" (La Danse d'Anitra). C'est la plus belle mélodie que Grieg ait écrite, mais Anitra n'est belle que dans la pensée et aux yeux de Peer Gynt. C'est une fille du désert peu soignée, aux "formes non traditionnelles", et elle lui vole le peu de fortune qu'il lui reste – une bague montée d'une émeraude.

Grieg est, par ailleurs, tout à fait capable d'écrire de la musique dramatique, que ce soit dans "Stormfull aften på havet" (Soirée tempêteuse en mer) qui rappelle Wagner ou dans son chef-d'œuvre, "I Dovregubbens hall" (Dans l'antre du roi de la montagne) – la toute première et cependant la meilleure pièce de rock 'n' roll écrite en Norvège.

À la fin de sa vie, Grieg espéra avoir le temps et la force de revoir entièrement la musique de *Peer Gynt*, mais il ne réussit pas à le faire. Son ami Johan Halvorsen en fournit une version révisée qui fut éditée par Peters Verlag à Leipzig. Plus tard, la

Commission Grieg, dirigée par le professeur Finn Benestad, sortit une édition complète des œuvres de Grieg (1993), et c'est de cette édition que proviennent les extraits repris sur ce CD. Ils sont exécutés par le propre orchestre de Grieg, l'Orchestre

philharmonique de Bergen, qui est l'orchestre de la société musicale "Harmonien", créé en 1765, et que Grieg dirigea de 1880 à 1882.

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Traduction: Marie-Françoise de Meeûs



Victoria Nava



Johannes Weisser

Yann Bougatran

Scenemusikk til “Peer Gynt”

5. Peer Gynt og seterjentene
Tre seterjenter
Trond i Valfjeldet! Bård og Kåre!
Troldpak! vil I sove i Armene vore?

Peer Gynt (*taler*)
Hvem skriger I efter?

Jentene
Efter trold! Efter trold!

Første jente
Trond! far med Lempe!

Anden jente
Bård! far med Vold!

Tredje jente
I Sælet står alle Koverne tomme!

Første jente
Vold er Lempe.

Anden jente
Og Lempe er Vold!

Tredje jente
Fattes der Gutter, en leger med Trold!

Alle tre
Fattes der Gutter, en leger med Trold!

Incidental Music to ‘Peer Gynt’

5. Peer Gynt and the Herd Girls
Three Herd Girls
Trond of Valfjeld! Baard and Kaare!
Listen, trolls! Would you sleep in our arms?

Peer Gynt (*speaking*)
Who are you shouting for?

The Girls
Trolls! Trolls! Trolls!

First Girl
Trond, come lovingly!

Second Girl
Come, lusty Baard!

Third Girl
All the beds in our hut are empty!

First Girl
Love is lusty!

Second Girl
And lustiness love!

Third Girl
When boys are lacking one plays with trolls!

All three
When boys are lacking one plays with trolls!

Peer Gynt (*taler*)
Hvor er Gutterne da?

Alle tre (*skoggerleende*)
De kan ikke komme!

Forste jente
Min kaldte mig både for Kjærest og Frenke.
Nu er han gift med en halvgammel Enke.

Anden jente
Min mødte en Tatertös nord i Lien.
Nu traver de To på Fantestien.

Tredje jente
Min tog Lösungen vor afdage.
Nu står hans Hoved og griner på en Stage.

Alle tre
Trond i Valfjeldet! Bård og Kåre!
Troldpak! vil I sove i Armene vore?

Peer Gynt (*taler*)
Jeg er tre Hoders Trold, og tre Jenters Gut!

(*står med et Spring imellem dem*)

Jentene
Er du slug Kar, du?

Peer Gynt (*taler*)
I får dömmme tilslut!

Peer Gynt (*speaking*)
Where are your boys, then?

All Three (*with a burst of laughter*)
They can't come!

First Girl
Mine called me dearest and sweetheart too,
Now he is wed to an elderly widow.

Second Girl
Mine met a gipsy wench up along the hill,
Now they are both on the road together.

Third Girl
Mine made an end of our bastard brat,
Now on a stake his head is grinning.

All Three
Trond of Valfjeld! Baard and Kaare!
Listen, trolls! Would you sleep in our arms?

Peer Gynt (*speaking*)
I'm a three-headed troll, and the boy for three girls!

(*leaping suddenly amongst them*)

The Girls
Can you tackle the job?

Peer Gynt (*speaking*)
You shall see if I can!

Første jente
Til Sælet!

Anden jente
Til Sælet!

Tredje jente
Vi har Mjod!

Peer Gynt (*taler*)
Lad den flomme!

Alle tre
Denne Lørdagsnat skal ingen Kover stå tomme!

Anden jente (*kysser ham*)
Han gnistrer og sprutter som glohede Jernet!

Tredje jente (*ligeså*)
Som Barneøjé fra Svarteste Tjernet!

(Peer Gynt danser i flokken.)

Jentene (*gjør lange Næser mod Bergnuterne, skriger og synger*)
Trond i Valfjeldet! Bård og Kåre!
Troldpak! fik I sove i Armene vore?

Peer Gynt (*taler*)
Hugen sturen og Tanken kåd,
i Öjet Latter, i Halsen Gråd!

First Girl
To the hut!

Second Girl
To the hut!

Third Girl
We have mead!

Peer Gynt (*speaking*)
Let it flow!

All Three
This Saturday night not a bed shall be empty!

Second Girl (*kissing Peer*)
He gleams and glitters like glowing iron!

Third Girl (*also kissing Peer*)
Like a baby's eyes from the blackest tarn!

(Peer Gynt dances with them.)

The Girls (*making long noses at the mountain-tops, shouting and singing*)
Trond of Valfeld! Baard and Kaare!
Listen, trolls! Did you sleep in our arms?

Peer Gynt (*speaking*)
Dismal bodings and wanton thoughts,
Laughter in eyes and tears in throat!

[6] 8. I Dovregubbens hall

Kor af Trolde

Slagt ham! Kristenmands Søn har dåret
Dovregubbens veneste Mø!

En troldunge (*taler*)
Må jeg skjære ham i Fingeren?

En anden troldunge (*taler*)
Må jeg rive ham i Håret?

En troldjomfru (*taler*)
Hu, hei, lad mig bide ham i Låret?

En troldheks (*med en Slev*) (*taler*)
Skal han lages til Sodd og Sö?

En anden troldheks (*med en Retterkniv*)
(*taler*)
Skal han steges på Spid eller brunnes i Gryde?

[10] 15. Arabisk dans

Pigerne kor

Profeten er kommen!
Rör Flöjten og Trommen!
Profeten, Herren, den Alting vidende,
til os er han kommen over Sandhavet ridende.
Profeten, Herren, den aldrig fejlende,
til os er han kommen gjennem Sandhavet
sejlende.
Rör Flöjten og Trommen!
Profeten, Profeten er kommen!

8. In the Hall of the Mountain King

Chorus of Trolls

Slay him! The Christian's son has tempted
The fairest daughter of our King!

A Troll Imp (*speaking*)
Let me slash him on the finger!

Another Troll Imp (*speaking*)
May I tear his hair out for him?

A Troll Maiden (*speaking*)
Let me bite him on the buttocks!

A Troll Witch (*with a ladle*) (*speaking*)
Let me boil him down for broth!

Another Troll Witch (*holding a chopper*)
(*speaking*)
Shall he toast on a spit or be browned in a kettle?

15. Arabian Dance

Chorus of Girls

The Prophet is come!
Blow flute! Sound drum!
The Prophet, the Lord, the All-Wise One,
To us he has come, riding over the sea of sand.
The Prophet, the Lord, the Infallible,
To us he has come, sailing across the sea of sand.
Blow flute! Sound drum!
The Prophet, the Prophet is come!

Anitra (danser)

Hans Ganger er melken, den hvide,
som strömmar i Paradisets Floder.
Bøj Eders Knæ, sæk Eders Hoder,
hans Öyne er Stjerner, blinkende, blide,
intet Jordbarn tåler
Glansens Glans af de Stjerners Stråler.

Gjennem Örken han kom,
Guld og Perler sprang frem på hans Bryst,
hvor han red, blev det lyst,
bag ham før Mørke,
Samum og Törke.
Han, den Herlige, kom,
gjennem Örken han kom
som en Jordsön pyntet.
Kaba, Kaba står tom.
Han har selv forkynkt det.

Pigernes kor

Profeten er kommen...

[12] 17. Peer Gynts serenade

Jeg stängte för mit Paradis
Og tog ders Nögle med.
Det bar tilhavs for nordlig Bris,
Mens skjöne Kvinder sit Forlis
På Havsens Rand begræd.

Mod Syd, mod Syd skar Kjödens Flugt
De salte Strömmes Vand.
Hvor Palmen svær stolt og smukt,
I Krans om Oceanets Bugt,
Jeg stak mit Skib i Brand.

Anitra (dances)

His charger is white as milk
In the streams of Paradise.
Bend the knee, bow low,
His eyes are stars that flash and yet are full of love.
No earth-born child can face
The flashing of those stars!

Across the desert he came,
Decked with gold and pearls,
Where he rode it was light;
Behind him all was dark,
Drought and the dread simoom.
The Mighty One has come;
Over the desert he came,
Clothed in mortal shape.
Kaaba is empty now!
He himself has told us.

Chorus of Girls

The Prophet is come...

17. Peer Gynt's Serenade

I double-locked my Paradise,
and took its key with me.
The north-wind bore me seaward ho!
while lovely women all forlorn
wept on the ocean rim.

Still southward, southward clove my keel
the salt sea-currents through.
Where palms were swaying proud and fair,
a garland round the ocean-bight,
I set my ship afire.

Ombord jeg steg på Slettens Skib,
Et Skib på fire Ben.
Det skummed under Piskens Hieb,
Jeg er en flygtig Fugl, o Grib,
Jeg kviddrer på en Gren!

Anitra, du er Palmens Most,
Det må jeg sande nu...!
Ja, selv Angoragiedens Ost
Er neppe halvt så sôd en Kost,
Anitra, ak, som du!

13 19. Solveigs sang
Solveig

Kanske vil der gå både Vinter og Vår,
og næste Sommer med, og det hele År,
men engang vil du komme, det ved jeg vist,
og jeg skal nok vente, for det lovte jeg sidst.

Gud styrke dig, hvor du i Verden går,
Gud glæde dig, hvis du for hans Fodskammel står.
Her skal jeg vente til du kommer igjen;
og venter du hist oppe, vi træffes der, min Ven!

15 25. Pinsesalme: "Velsignede morgen"
Kirkefolk (*singer pa Skogstien*)
Velsignede morgen
da Gudsrigets Tunger
traf Jorden som flammende Stål.

I climbed aboard the desert ship,
a ship on four stout legs.
It foamed beneath the lashing whip –
oh, catch me; I'm a flitting bird; –
I'm twittering on a bough!

Anitra, thou'rt the palm-tree's must;
that know I now full well...!
Ay, even the Angora goat-milk cheese
is scarcely half such dainty fare,
Anitra, ah, as thou!

19. Solveig's Song
Solveig

Maybe both the winter and spring will pass by,
and the next summer too, and the whole of the
year; –
but thou wilt come one day, that know I full well;
and I will await thee, as I promised of old.

God strengthen thee, whereso thou goest in the
world!
God gladden thee, if at his footstool thou stand!
Here will I await thee till thou comest again;
and if thou wait up yonder, then there we'll
meet, my friend!

25. Whitsun Hymn: 'Blessed Day'
Church Folk (*singing on the forest road*)
Oh, blessed day
When the Gift of Tongues
Descended on earth in rays of fire!

Fra Jorden mod Borgen
nu Arvingen sjunger
på Gudsrigets Tungemål.

[16] 26. Solveigs vuggevise
Solveig
Sov du, dyreste Gutten min!
Jeg skal vugge dig, jeg skal våge.

Gutten har siddet på sin Moders Fang.
De to har leget hele Livsdagen lang.

Gutten har hvilet ved sin Moders Bryst
hele Livsdagen lang. Gud signe dig, min Lyst!

Gutten har ligget til mit Hjerte tæt
hele Livsdagen lang. Nu er han så træt.

Sov du, dyreste Gutten min!
Jeg skal vugge dig, jeg skal våge.

Kirkefolk
Velsignede morgen...

Solveig
Jeg skal vugge dig, jeg skal våge.
Sov og drøm, du Gutten min!

Henrik Ibsen (1828 – 1906)

O'er all the world
Creation sings
The language of the heavenly quire!

26. Solveig's Cradle Song
Solveig
Sleep thou, dearest boy of mine!
I will cradle thee, I will watch thee –

The boy has been sitting on his mother's lap.
They two have been playing all the life-day long.

The boy has been resting at his mother's breast
all the life-day long. God's blessing on my joy!

The boy has been lying close in to my heart
all the life-day long. He is weary now.

Sleep thou, dearest boy of mine!
I will cradle thee, I will watch thee.

Church Folk
Oh, blessed day...

Solveig
I will cradle thee, I will watch thee –
Sleep and dream, thou boy of mine!

William Archer (1856 – 1924)
and Charles Archer (1861 – 1941)

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This recording was made with support from



Many thanks also to the Assistant Conductor, Lars-Thomas Holm

Recording producer Brian Pidgeon

Sound engineer Ralph Couzens

Assistant engineer Gunnar Herleif Nilsen, Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK)

Editor Jonathan Cooper

A & R administrator Sue Shortridge

Recording venue Grieghallen, Bergen, Norway; 16 and 17 June 2016 (Incidental Music to *Peer Gynt*) & 22 and 23 June 2017 (Piano Concerto)

Front cover 'Jotunheimen National Park', photograph © kurkul/istockphoto

Back cover Photograph of Edward Gardner © Benjamin Ealovega Photography

Design and typesetting Cap & Anchor Design Co. (www.capandanchor.com)

Booklet editor Finn S. Gundersen

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Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, England

Country of origin UK

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GRIEG: PEER GYNT/PIANO CONCERTO

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EDWARD GRIEG

(1843–1907)

- 1-16 **Incidental Music to 'Peer Gynt', Op. 23** (1874–75,
revised 1885, 1991–92, and 1902)* 54:39
for Solo Voices, Chorus, and Orchestra
- Håkon Høgemo Hardanger fiddle
Bergen Pikekor • Bergen Guttekor • Edvard Grieg Ungdomskor
Edvard Grieg Kor • Bergen Philharmonic Choir
Håkon Matti Skrede chorus master
- 17-19 **Concerto, Op. 16** (1868, revised 1907)† 28:21
in A minor • en a-Moll • en la mineur
for Piano and Orchestra
- TT 83:12



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