

signum
CLASSICS

THROWBACK TO DANCE

IVANA GAVRIČ, PIANO



	HOLBERG SUITE OP 40	EDVARD GRIEG	
1	I. Præludium		[02.46]
2	II. Sarabande		[03.42]
3	III. Gavotte		[02.56]
4	IV. Air		[08.41]
5	V. Rigaudon		[03.57]
	6 PIÈCES HUMORISTIQUES OP 87	CÉCILE CHAMINADE	
6	No. 4, Autrefois		[04.14]
7	No. 6, Norwegienne		[02.23]
	NORWEGIAN DANCE OP 35 NO 2	EDVARD GRIEG	
8	Allegretto tranquillo e grazioso		[02.17]
	LE TOMBEAU DE COUPERIN	MAURICE RAVEL	
9	I. Prélude		[03.17]
10	II. Fugue		[03.55]
11	III. Forlane		[05.51]
12	IV. Rigaudon		[03.22]
13	V. Menuet		[04.59]
14	VI. Toccata		[04.08]
15	REMEMBRANCE OP 24	DORA PEJAČEVIĆ	[03.32]
	DANCE SUITE (2024)*	CHERYL FRANCES-HOAD	
16	I. Prelude		[03.11]
17	II. Allemande		[02.36]
18	III. Courante		[01.09]
19	IV. Sarabande		[02.38]
20	V. Gigue		[01.33]
21	À LA MANIÈRE DE BORODINE (VALSE)	MAURICE RAVEL	[01.47]

*World Premiere Recording

Total Timings: [72 minutes]

FOREWORD

Ravel and Grieg met in Paris in 1894, in an apartment in Montparnasse, and their meeting was centred on dance:

Ravel played Grieg's 'Norwegian Dances' on the piano. Grieg stopped him, saying, "No, young man, not like that at all.... It's a peasant dance." Ravel started to play again and Grieg leaped around the room in an authentic peasant dance, creating a memorable scene of an elfin pianist and a tiny troll dancer

An extract from *Maurice Ravel: A Life* by Benjamin Ivry

The charming description of an encounter between two composers one might not associate together sets the scene for this album, *Throwback to Dance*. I explore the influence of Grieg on Ravel, seldom documented, but also on Pejačević and Chaminade. More specifically, I seek to highlight how composers turn to old dance forms, predominantly court dances, folk dances but also the more 'modern' waltz, to carve out new paths.

Grieg was a visionary. He was highly influential on the younger generation of composers who were searching for their own musical language, away from the Germanic canon. Ravel noted that next to Debussy, there was no other composer whom he felt more related to, than Grieg.

Grieg's *Holberg Suite* is one of the earliest examples of neoclassicism, where Grieg adapts 18th century dances to his own time to celebrate Norwegian culture, specifically the Nordic playwright, Holberg. Thirty years later, Ravel turns to old dances to champion centuries of French music, from *le Grand Siècle* to Saint-Saëns, in his *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, initially named *Suite Française*. Did Ravel have the *Holberg Suite* at the back of his mind when he started work on the Forlane, the earliest movement of *Le Tombeau*?

In addition to the suites by Grieg and Ravel, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, a composer I have collaborated with closely for nearly two decades, uses old dance forms as shapes to hold together her own special harmonic and rhythmic strands in her new *Dance Suite*. Following the throwback theme, Pejačević's *Remembrance* is a meditation through her rich palette, while Chaminade intrigues the listener with her throwback work, *Autrefois*, as we are never quite sure whether we are hearing something from the past or of her own time. Her sprightly dance *Norwegienne* gives a nod to Grieg, but in feminine form.

I have included Grieg's *Norwegian Dance Op 35 No 2*, which is likely to have been one of the dances that Ravel performed to Grieg at their Parisian encounter. As a final *amuse-bouche*, a more modern waltz by Ravel rounds off the album. It reminds us of Ravel's love of dance, and also of his love of watching people dance. He never quite dared join in himself, due to his small stature. Ravel stated that the biggest wish of any composer was to write a great waltz, but that it was near-impossible to do, given that there were so many brilliant examples from the past.

I have been championing the music of Grieg for many years now, and this album includes the final large-scale solo piano work I have not yet recorded: the *Holberg Suite*. I learnt the *Suite* in deepest, darkest lockdown, in January 2021, when the work's lightness, positivity and prayer-like *Air* gave me great comfort. By contrast, I have known Ravel's *Le Tombeau* since I can remember – my mother performed it a lot when I was a child, and one of my earliest vivid childhood memories is of her fast flying fingers playing the repeated notes in the *Toccata*.

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IVANA GAVRIĆ THROWBACK TO DANCE

'Before the mirror's dance of shadows
She dances in a dream,
And she and they together seem
A dance of shadows;
Alike the shadows of a dream'
~ Arthur Symons, *London Nights*, 1895 ~

'The musicians of our time have for some years past shown a distaste for melody, and now they seem desirous of getting rid of it altogether. Their great object seems to be to render music as dissonant, as noisy, and as difficult, as possible ... Music and harmony are coexistent; if the latter be banished, the former cannot subsist without it.'¹ Apostle of the Scandinavian Enlightenment, Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754), the 'Molière of the North', was born in Norway but spent most of his life in Denmark. **Grieg's** *From Holberg's Time: Suite in the Olden Style* (1884) was commissioned to mark his bicentenary. An early example of romantic neo-classicism, its five movements, in G major or minor, parody the *clavéciniste style* and Bachian dance-suite forms of Holberg's century. Its composer's personality, nevertheless, remains immutable. As his biographer David Monrad-Johansen says (1934), assuming 'the garments of the rococo period', he 'simply placed himself in the same milieu in which the great satirist lived and worked. He looks at the present through the spectacles of the past'. Grieg himself gave the first performance, 7 December 1884, in Bergen - his own and Holberg's birthplace. Of the music's period dances, the Iberian *Sarabande*, fast and lascivious in Philip II's time (hell was its 'breeding place' fancied Cervantes), grave and stately by Bach's day, supposedly had the capacity to 'exalt the soul to a remarkable degree' (Christoph Nichelmann). French ancestry lies behind the *Gavotte* with its Arcadian *musette de cour* middle section, purportedly from the Pays de Gap,

¹ *Memoirs of Lewis Holberg*, posthumous translation from the Latin, Hunt & Clarke, Covent Garden 1827.

Dauphiné; similarly behind the *Rigaudon*, drawing on lively Provençal dance-types from the Louis XIII/Sun King era. The opening *Präludium* is toccata rather than fantasia based. The *Air*, scaled and climaxed, conceivably imagines the *minore* ayres of northern Europe and the *Ancien Régime*.

‘Mon amour, c’est la musique, j’en suis la religieuse, la vestale.’ Born in Batignolles, then on the outskirts of Paris at the foot of Montmartre Hill, growing up in a privileged, artistic environment, **Cécile Chaminade** forged a singular destiny despite the opposition of her father, Pierre Hippolyte, the affluent director of Gresham Life Assurance Society’s Paris office: ‘in the bourgeoisie girls are destined to be wives and mothers’. The first woman composer to be admitted to the Légion d’Honneur, 14 July 1913 (an elevation Ravel declined seven years later), her catalogue of nearly four hundred works included ambitious canvasses for stage and concert platform. However, following her father’s death in 1887, the need to support herself and her mother through concertising, travel and meeting a burgeoning sheet-music demand reduced her time and creativity to songs and an abundance of skilled, pianistically artful salon miniatures. Either side of *La Grande Guerre*, repending to new technologies and opportunities, she cut piano rolls for the American Aeolian company which had opened an agency in Paris, her Duo-Arts appearing between 1920 and 1927. Earlier, in November 1901, she was in London with Fred Gaisberg recording for the Gramophone & Typewriter Limited. In 1925, retiring from a public life that had seen her play for Queen Victoria and take lunch with Theodore Roosevelt she vacated the Second Empire family villa and grounds in Le Vésinet (a *commune* ‘graceful and picturesque [in] details of shade, light, flowers, grass and water’ [Comte de Choulot, *L’Art des Jardins*, 1863], she located to Monaco in the 1930s. Decalified ... bedridden ... deprived of royalties (her publisher Daniel Enoch, his Paris apartments and 1891 Érard commandeered in a ‘coordinated assault on Jewish homes and personal possessions’, perishing in Auschwitz-Birkenau)² ... she died

in obscurity, her legacy not to be de-footnoted or re-evaluated for decades. The six *Pièces humoristiques* Op 87 (1897) tell tales couched in elegance and layers of touch, delicately balanced in design, never outstaying their welcome. The art of grammar and cadence. In the form and tempo scheme but reversed modalities of Grieg’s second Norwegian Dance, *Autrefois* (*Once upon a time*) looks to the 18th century – on the one hand Couperin *le grand* and French *clavecin* ornament (A minor, *Andante*, ruminating), on the other Scarlatti in *manera española* dress (A major, *Allegro vivo*, robust). Three of its five rolled F major chords are paused, the last achingly longer. Sighs of nameless dream. Grieg appeared a number of times in Paris, Fauré identifying him as the favoured composer of *la belle époque* (along, Delius quipped, with the third act of *Tristan*). If *Norvégienne* was intended to be a homage, its 6/8 *allegro marcato* dotted rhythms and harmonic piquancy (venturing among crushed notes) seem more readily to suggest Ravel and the *Forlane* from *Le Tombeau de Couperin* twenty years on. Chaminade dedicated it to Lucien Wurmser (1877-1967), a Third Republic Parisian *musicus* in ascendance remembered for touring with Pavlova in the nineteen-twenties and writing comedy film scores in the thirties.

‘Grieg belonged to a race living in a remote and peculiar land, with rugged mountains and romantic valleys ... [Abandoning himself] to the joy of life [he would play] a Norwegian *springar* [couple’s dance] or a *halling* [men’s fling] as was the custom of the ancient inhabitants of Norway’ (Marius Moaritz Ulfrstad, 1929). Picturing a *halling* from Åmot to the east of the country, the second of his four *Norwegian Dances* Op 35 (Copenhagen/Hardanger fjord 1880-81), originally for piano duet but here in the composer’s solo arrangement (1887), juxtaposes (drone-based) ‘caressing tenderness’ in the major key (A) with (cross-accented) rural vibrancy in the minor (F#), the brisk central section allegedly paraphrasing the earliest documented terpsichore of Northern Europe. Grieg’s ‘folk’ outings borrowed freely from Ludvig Mathias Lindeman’s mid-19th century collection *Ældre og nyere norske Fjeldmelodier* (*Older and newer Norwegian mountain melodies*). But in letters to Gerhard Schjelderup, he claimed that the Norwegian Dances contained no folk melodies, only his own themes (11 May

² Shannon L. Fogg, Missouri University of Science and Technology, ‘A Landscape of Loss. The Furniture Operation and the Geography of Looting and Restitution in Paris, 1942-1946’, *Histoire urbaine* No 62, December 2021; Carla Shapreau, Institute of European Studies, University of California, Berkeley, ‘Lost Music Project: The Looted Enoch Érard Piano Serial No 68037’, <https://www.carlshapreau.com/looted-enoch-erard-piano, 2025>.

1904). And that in them 'folk song merges with one's own individuality' (26 October 1905).

'I don't have ideas. A note at random, then a second one and, sometimes, a third. I then see what results I get by contrasting, combining and separating them ... [ranging and ordering] like a mason building a wall.' Envisaged as a *Suite française*, **Ravel's** *Le tombeau de Couperin* (July 1914-June/November 1917) salutes companions lost in war. It enwrathes his mother, 'the only true focus and sustenance of his sentient being' (Bill Hopkins), whose death in January 1917 stupefied him. Afflicted with depression and feelings of failure, he was to be found wandering the streets of Paris, a desolate figure. Drawing on the sensibilities of the baroque suite, it invokes Couperin *le grand* and better ages past, paying tribute, according to his *Autobiographical Sketch* (1928), to 'eighteenth century French music generally'. Dedicated to comrades fallen at the front maybe, yet in its pages, as the late Marcel Marnat essentialised, 'there is no sadness ... no funeral march: for Ravel France will survive itself in art and its serenity'. *Le tombeau's* austerity, poetry and preoccupation with line, layered timbres and particularities of register, its exactly structured forms and procedures, embellishments and precision articulations, make it a high water swansong. Its premiere (Société de Musique Indépendante, Salle Gaveau, 11 April 1919, given by Marguerite Long, widow of Joseph de Marliave, the musicologist and Beethoven quartet authority, killed in August 1914, commemorated in the closing *Toccata*) was lauded. The *Prélude and Forlane* - the latter (first of the six movements to be written) alluding to the courtship dances of Venetian gondoliers and 'street people' elevated subsequently by the French - are both in modal E minor (domain, no coincidence, of the *Forlane* from Couperin's fourth *Concert royal* which Ravel had transcribed in anticipation). Similarly the finely honed three-voice *Fugue*, a pliant Aeolian essay dealing in textures otherwise associated with Ravel's failed Prix de Rome submissions from earlier in life. *The Menuet* in G, treading the measured etiquette of a favourite Ravel (and *belle époque*) genre, the *Rigaudon* in C, and the E-centric closing pages of the tensile, double-escapement *Toccata* emphasise the major key.

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'Neither forms nor traditions nor genealogies can throw sand in my eyes.' Born to the Croatian/Hungarian aristocracy - her father, Teodor, a future *ban* (viceroy) of Croatia-Slavonia, her mother, Elisabeth, a singer, pianist, painter and philanthropist, countess of the salon *soirée* - **Dora Pejačević** died in Munich in her late thirties, from complications in childbirth. Schooled by an English governess, she studied in Budapest and Zagreb, later Germany, but was mainly self-taught as a composer. Compassionate and principled, a committed humanist, philosophically, politically and socially aware, she was at her most comfortable and natural mixing in literary and artistic circles, numbering among her friends Rainer Maria Rilke. Crowned by a Symphony written during the First World War (a time when, like Chaminade, she was nursing wounded soldiers, life-changingly), her output, forgotten until the 1980s, comprised chamber works, songs, and a discerningly endowed piano catalogue. In her confiding smaller pieces - drenched subliminally in as much the surroundings of her childhood ('the gold of ripe wheat, the blue of waving flax, the marble Pan among the leaves of birches and pines, the spectrally coloured drops of a fountain' [Mira Radej, 1944]) as the velveteen glow and action of a Leipzig Blüthner (her boudoir instrument in the family castle in Našica) - her gracious heritage and pianistic affinity is crystallised in pages of engraved lyricism. She had a jewelled feeling for statement and syntax. 'In some deep and beautiful infinity I see the mirror of my feelings in the form of beloved beings, and thousands of memories emerge like water lilies on the smooth surface of a lake.' *Erinnerung* (Remembrance), from 1908, was inscribed to Countess Marie Therese Schall Riauacour, daughter of a noble Rhenish dynasty, in whose Dresden home Pejačević was living. Published in 1911, it's a nocturnal dreamscape, Schumann's hazy A-flat 'moods of reverence and dedication' grained into the fabric. Pejačević didn't meet with Rilke until the spring of 1916, nor, pre-1914, did she list any of his writings in her English-titled/German-annotated 'Books I have Read' diary (1902-21). Yet his own *Erinnerung* oddly resonates. 'Now duskily in the bookcase/gleam the volumes in brown and gold;/you remember lands you have wandered through,/the pictures and the

garments/of women lost of old'.³

Entering **Cheryl Frances-Hoad's** world is to tumble into a hall of mirrors, embracing genres from theatre to cathedral to concert room. Alumna of the Yehudi Menuhin School (winning the BBC Young Composers' Competition in 1996), Cambridge University and King's College London, she's a pragmatic realist, charismatically her own person, receptive to diverse styles and motivations (literature, painting and dance in particular), unbothered if she's 'in or out of fashion musically'. 'Orchestrated' in its precision articulations and dynamics, her eleven-minute neo-baroque *Dance Suite* (March 2024) was premiered by Annie Yim at the 2024 Presteigne Festival. 'Basically it's inspired by Handel's keyboard suites'⁴ - the Great Eight printed in London in 1720. Certainly so in design, and in the clarity of texture and liveness of part-writing. Other allusions, though, let loose intriguing spectres pre/post George I. Within the luxuriating, harmonically tanged arpeggiations of the *largo/glorioso* 'fantasia' Prelude we meet with a theorbo and ayre somewhere in the distance. Ravel ghosts the *scherzando* section. Elsewhere too, the tonal biasing of *Le tombeau* underpinning all five movements (E - shades of green in Frances-Hoad's perception). The Allemande (*eleganza/leggiere*) - this recording observing the first section's optional ornamented repeat (Rameau-tinged?) - takes its impetus (and four lead-notes) from Handel's Fifth Suite: an *esquisse* in neatly parodied Hanoverian sobriety, delineating, as Bach's Hamburg contemporary Johann Mattheson put it, 'a contented or happy nature that takes pleasure in repose and orderliness'. A limpid 'lesson', the Courante follows the 17th century Italian 3/4 model - *giocoso* rather than Gallic *serioso*. With segmented transpositions playing off note-for-note sequences, the written-out repetitions distinctively revitalise pitch-exact options. The Sarabande (*mesto*) acknowledges Handel's Seventh Suite, plaintive more than plutonic chords yielding a restrained processional. In Frances-Hoad's music interspersed meters prolonging or shortening momentum, tripping expectations, are commonplace. Here, in a triple crotchet context, the stark

silences of the 7/8 bars spell breathing/phrasing caesuras, unrushed places to recumb and reflect before remarking energy. Nine bars from the end, wraith-like, Schumann's *Papillons* 'fade-out' flickers, morphed into a pair of 'fade-in' sextals. The renaissance Irish/English gig and athletic 12/8 Italian precedent of Handel's First, Sixth and Seventh Suites drive the closing Gigue (*giocoso*) - cellular and buoyant, lightly developmental, allowing classical devices to understatedly surface (tonic/dominant relationships for instance).

The Romantic-Impressionist *hommage* legacy - Schumann's 'Chopin' and 'Paganini' from *Carnaval*, Grieg's *Hommage à Chopin* onwards - comprises 'testimonies of gratitude ... returning what once may have been borrowed' (Guy Sacre, 1998). The genre endures, one recent English example being Frances-Hoad's eight *Homages* (2009-15, Book I commissioned and recorded by Ivana Gavrić) incorporating 'Grieg' and 'Ravel' as well as 'Schubert' and 'Janáček'. From apprentice exercises to mature vignettes, **Ravel's** harvest included tributes to Grieg (an unfinished set of variations on 'Åse's Death' from *Peer Gynt*), Schumann, Haydn, Chabrier and (indirectly) Schubert. Grieg was always special, down to learning and playing the Piano Concerto. 'Through him,' he told Manuel Rosenthal, 'we could perceive the mountains and the sea, gnomes and giants, a world that the city had made us forget.' Far from the *Valses nobles et sentimentales* or the 'whirling' halls of *La valse, À la manière de Borodine* (c 1912-13) is a whisp of D-flat waltz, less than a hundred bars long, premiered by Alfredo Casella (whose idea it was) at the Salle Pleyel, 10 December 1913. Borodin's *Petite Suite (Sérénade)* and the *meno mosso* from the scherzo of his Second String Quartet echo in the background. Not though the obsessive opening unisons of the Second Symphony which (at Ravel's suggestion) were the call-to-arms of the anti-Establishment Les Apaches *société*, women forbidden, formed in 1902 the year of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Stravinsky joining in 1910 the year of *L'Oiseau de feu*.

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³ *Das Buch der Bilder* (1902 edition), translated C F MacIntyre (1940).

⁴ *Cf Katharsis* for cello and ensemble (2013) 'inspired variously by the cello suites [and forms] of Bach and Britten' (CF-H).

IVANA GAVRIČ

BIOGRAPHY

Ivana Gavrić has attracted international acclaim for her interpretations of a broad range of repertoire and storytelling programming, her playing described as 'electrifying' (BBC Music Magazine) and 'impressive, insightful...ravishing' (Washington Post).

Ivana is drawn to composers like Janáček, Grieg and Chopin, who each take features of their respective homelands to create a distinctive musical voice. A long-standing collaboration with the award-winning composer, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, has led to solo works and more recently a concerto, entitled *Between the Skies, the River and the Hills*, written for Ivana.

Equally at home with core repertoire, Ivana's recent performances include Grieg and Rachmaninov Concerti with the Philharmonia Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, and Beethoven's *Emperor* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall. She has performed with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, South Denmark Philharmonic and Southbank Sinfonia, and collaborated with conductors including Rafael Payare, Nicholas Collon, Christian Kluxen, Karin Hendrickson and Ben Gernon. She especially enjoys working with chamber orchestras, and highlights have been collaborations with Trondheim Soloists, Aurora Orchestra, Camerata Zürich and City of London Sinfonia.

As a recitalist, Ivana has performed at the Wigmore Hall, KKL Lucerne and the Gilmore Piano Festival in USA, as well as across China, in Canada and recently in Peru. A dedicated chamber musician, Ivana plays in a two-piano duo with Tim Horton and has partnered colleagues including Maxim Vengerov, Matthew Barley and Thomas Gould. Outside the concert hall, Ivana is featured playing Chopin and Beethoven in BBC2's adaptation of *The Line of Beauty*, and Bach in

Anthony Minghella's film *Breaking and Entering*.

Ivana created a sensation with her debut album *In the Mists*, winning BBC Music Magazine Newcomer of the Year, her playing hailed as 'altogether of an extraordinary calibre' (BBC Music Magazine). Her recording of *Grieg: Piano Works* was selected as Gramophone Editor's Choice and the Grieg Society's Recording of the Year, while her *Chopin* album was chosen as Classic FM's CD of the week.

Born into a musical family in Sarajevo and raised in the UK, Ivana studied at the University of Cambridge and at the Royal College of Music. Ivana is proud to be an Ambassador for charity Music Action International.





I would like to thank Steve Long and the Signum team for embracing the programme idea for this album and for giving me complete artistic freedom. I would like to thank my recording team, Matthew Bennett and Dave Rowell, for being fantastic colleagues, as always. I would like to thank Peter Bithell for his long standing mentorship and support, and to Mary Bowerman for allowing me to record a part of this album in Champs Hill. Most of all, I would like to thank my dear family for enabling me to bring this programme and recording to life, and to my children, who have spent much time watching my own fingers practice those repeated notes in the *Toccata!*

I would like to dedicate this album to my late professor, Niel Immelman.

Recorded at Champs Hill Music Rooms, 19 July 2023 (Grieg *Holberg Suite*, Chaminade *Autrefois*) and at All Saints Church, East Finchley 10 and 11 October 2024 with Steinway Model D supplied by Steinways & Sons.

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