

# Blue Mountain

A CHAMBER OPERA IN ONE ACT

Music by Justin Dello Joio

Libretto by Andrew Boyle

1. Introduction	3:34
2. Scene 1 "Silence" - Grieg alone	8:28
3. Scene 2 - Edvard Grieg, Nina Grieg, Doctor Rossing	7:13
4. Interlude	1:19
5. Scene 3 - Percy Grainger, Nina Grieg, Doctor Rossing	3:44
6. Scene 3 - "Is it true, only a week to live?" Doctor Rossing and Nina Grieg	2:12
7. Interlude and Scene 4 - Grieg and Grainger	6:10
8. Scene 4 - "I'd like to see the mountains, one more time" Grieg and Grainger	2:25
9. Scene 5 - Grieg and Nina Grieg	5:54
10. Scene 6 - Epilogue Grieg, Grainger, Nina Grieg, Doctor Rossing	5:21

Edvard Grieg - Niál Spörbe, bass

Nina Grieg - Marianne Anderson, mezzo-soprano

Doctor Rossing - Torben Grue, baritone

Percy Grainger - Nils Harald Sedal, tenor

The Norwegian Wind Ensemble

Kenneth Jean - conductor

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## Program Note

I was delighted and honored when the director of Det Norske Blåseensemble invited me to write a one-act opera based on the final days of the famous Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg, although I was initially a little hesitant. The director had seen Andrew Boyle's play on the subject and asked him to make an adaptation for a libretto. 2007 commemorated the 100-year anniversary of Grieg's death, and there was great focus on his work with many performances of his music in Norway and throughout the world.

My hesitation about this project had to do with writing an opera about the most revered composer in Norway, for a Norwegian audience, to be premiered in the prestigious Grieg centennial year. As an American, (of Italian and Polish descent), I wondered if there were anything of interest I could bring to this subject, that a Norwegian could not express better. I was also concerned with the challenge of creating an opera with an orchestra only of winds and brass. I quickly came to terms with this as I realized that with a few small additions to the ensemble, (harp, piano, celesta, solo violin and solo bass) I could find ways to create varied timbres that might capture the different emotions and sensations I hoped to express.

What is important to me in many great operas I know and love, beyond the actual music itself, are the elements that transcend the specifics of the characters and plots. The wide range of broader themes underlying the surface of a work, often addressing universal subjects, are what I find valuable. I found many elements in *Blue Mountain* that spoke to me in a personal and meaningful way:

the theme of an artist, close to his death, the struggle to create even in adversity; the artist overcoming his doubts and fears, and the inspiration, the sheer joy in music for its own sake.

I first found my way into *Blue Mountain* with the idea that I would base the beginning of the opera on a fear of silence: Grieg's fear of his own death, and that his music would die with him. This fear of leaving no trace of his existence, coupled with his hallucination about his daughter who had died when she was a year old, provided an entry into the world I hoped might both embrace and transcend the specifics of Grieg himself. *Blue Mountain* was the place where a person might travel, even within his own mind, where one is filled with joy and inspiration, and the inner freedom and strength that comes from courage, resolve, and confidence.

The meeting of Grieg and the young Percy Grainger in the opera is based on fact. Grieg felt that Grainger played his music as no other musician had.

Whenever Grieg or Grainger mention Grieg's music, I wove into my music, references to a number of Grieg's works, including his *Violin Sonata in C minor*, one of his *Lyric Pieces for Piano*, (Evening in the Mountains) a brief snatch of Peer Gynt, and references to his Piano Concerto. Most of these are subtle and buried within the contrapuntal texture. However, the use of Grieg's Piano Concerto was a plot point. Grieg discovers Grainger has come to visit, when he hears a recording of his *Piano Concerto* coming from his studio. In the performance of *Blue Mountain* an actual recording of Percy Grainger's performance of the *Grieg Piano Concerto* is played through speakers in the theater, overlapping with the same music, but in another key.

– Justin Dello Joio

## Synopsis

The opera takes place in September of 1907 in Troidhaugen, Norway, at the foot of the fjords, during the last days of Edvard Grieg's life. Grieg was afflicted with a lifelong case of emphysema and in a morphine-induced state, he is suffering from severe angst, fear and mental anguish. The opera begins with Grieg alone, afraid of silence, and remembering his only child, a daughter who died at one year old. He has a hallucination and imagines he sees her and hears her voice. He becomes increasingly agitated and afraid. As he calls out, Rossing, his doctor, followed by Nina, his wife, enter.

Grieg demands to know where the child is, and the doctor explains that there is no child. He wishes to give Grieg more morphine, but Grieg refuses. Grieg believes it is both silence and morphine that are draining away his life. Grieg wants to be ready for the long-awaited visit of the young famous virtuoso pianist, Percy Grainger, who is expected the next day. Grieg, fearing that his music will die with him, is excited and inspired by the upcoming visit. The thought of the Australian pianist who expressed such love and understanding for Grieg's music when the two met a year before, has consoled and filled him with hope. In an aside, Nina tells Dr. Rossing he had best warn Grieg that Rossing has sent a telegram to Grainger, postponing the visit.

Grieg is furious with the Doctor, demanding to know when Grainger will come. Rossing tries to console Grieg, fearing his health would not stand the excitement such of a visit.

Nina wants Edvard to sign his will and testament, the document they have worked on for two years. The will states that Grieg's estate will be donated to a fund for young musicians in Bergen. Grieg refuses to sign the document until Grainger has visited. The scene culminates in a trio with Greig's demanding to know when Grainger will arrive, Nina's expressions of loving concern, and the Doctor insisting on giving him more morphine.

After a short musical interlude, Grainger arrives at Grieg's home at the appointed time. He had left London early and did not receive the message postponing his visit. At first, Dr. Rossing refuses to let Grainger see Grieg, but Nina intercedes and lets him stay. Grainger goes into the house, and Nina confesses her fears for her husband to Dr. Rossing. Rossing confirms that Grieg is about to die, having only a week or two left to live. He explains that he can care for Grieg and make his final days more restful.

Another short musical interlude follows, and Grieg, outside his studio, hears his piano concerto. He is not sure what it is, and thinks he may be going mad. He enters and sees Grainger at an early old fashioned record player. They embrace and Grainger explains that he never got the telegram postponing his visit. Grieg confesses his doubts that his music will live beyond him, and tells Grainger of his great sorrow, his lost child. Grainger declares his love of Grieg's music. This friendship inspires Grieg, and gives him renewed strength and optimism. Grieg expresses his wish to go one last time to the blue peak, which has been his inspiration

so many times. He imagines going with Grainger. As Grieg becomes more animated and excited at the idea, the Doctor comes in and angrily asks Grainger what he thinks he is doing by exciting Grieg. The scene concludes as Rossing goes to fetch medicine.

Later that afternoon Nina is preparing for a boat trip and Grieg asks if he might come. She refuses saying he must rest. Grieg then suggests to Nina that they adopt Grainger as their own son, as he does not want to die childless. Initially Nina is angry at the idea, but then she sadly explains that she too has lived without a child. She points out that Edvard has been able to live with the sadness of their loss of their daughter for he had the comfort of his music. Grainger enters. Nina asks him to read the will, and she leaves. Grainger congratulates Grieg on his generosity, and the scene ends as Grieg spontaneously exclaims, "Bring brandy and a telescope! I'll show you the blue peak!"

After a brief musical interlude, Grieg and Grainger are at the top of the *Blue Mountain*. Grieg is filled with hope about the tour of England he and Grainger will depart on the next day. From the peak and filled with confidence, Grieg laughs at his fears and his doubts. The music climaxes as he exclaims that from this place, he feels reborn. The scene dissolves to Nina singing that they were on the way to the boat, for the tour to London, but it was not to be. She sings of how on his deathbed, Grieg suddenly sat up, and bowed, as if to his audience, and "then, still" The opera ends with Grieg's voice heard from offstage, singing the opening words, "Silence, Oh Silence".

**Libretto***Grieg, alone.*

GRIEG

O silence, I fear you  
O silence, you deafen me.  
Silence behind scares me to death.  
Silence ahead . . .  
Death, that scares me.

I am on an island of madness and music.  
Ahead is only darkness.  
One wrong step and I'll drown  
in a vast sea of silence.  
Silence, the Silence that washes away my life,  
my struggle, my life.

Oh, this darkness.  
My child, so far behind me,  
My child's death . . .  
the hush of her absent years..  
My child's death...

No. no. Stop! *Shh* . . .  
listen . . . *Shh* . . .  
There again . . . her tiny voice . . .  
my baby's cry.  
Come closer, I can hear you.  
Come closer, let me hold you.  
Every hour of each day I have listen'd  
for her voice.  
Over my music there hangs a spell,  
a hollow echo to every note I write,  
and only your voice could break the spell.

She's gone again.

My God, this awful night will finish me.  
*Shh* . . . there you are.

I hear you.  
I'm fright'ned . . . I know you're fright'ned.  
I'm fright'ned too,  
Come closer, closer,  
let me hold you my child,  
Let me hold you 'til night is over.

Tomorrow Grainger will be my guest.  
the young man I met in London last year,  
who was kind to my music.  
When I heard Grainger play, it was as  
if he had known my music all his life.

Tomorrow Grainger will be my guest.  
Tomorrow.  
He made my music sing.

Silence.  
Her voice again . . . I thought I heard it.  
I fear you.  
I'm fright'ned.

There, no, no, there.  
I can hold you, I'm fright'ned . . .  
Oh silence . . .

*Rossing enters.*

ROSSING  
Breathe slowly!

GRIEG (agitated)  
Where is she?

ROSSING  
Nina's coming.  
(calling) Nina!

GRIEG  
My child!

ROSSING  
There's no child here.

GRIEG  
Rossing, this morphine of yours . . .  
if it gets any worse,  
I will lose my mind.  
I'm tense because of Grainger's visit . . .  
but I was sure it was day by now.

*Nina enters during the previous lines*

NINA  
No, it's not midnight yet!

ROSSING  
A little more morphine  
will help you over the worst

NINA (to Grieg)  
Is it her again?

ROSSING  
It's just the side effects.

GRIEG  
My child . . .

NINA (concerned)  
No more morphine tonight.  
Each time he wakes,  
he sees this dreadful apparition.  
I'll stay with him.

ROSSING (darkly)  
You need some rest.

NINA  
Doctor, then you must tell him about Grainger.

ROSSING  
He'll not take it well.

(ingratiatingly)  
Grieg . . . my dear Grieg . . .  
I sent Grainger a telegram some time ago.  
Yes, I put his visit off...

GRIEG (interrupting angrily)  
What? How dare you!  
Without consulting me?

ROSSING  
I'm sorry.

GRIEG  
So, how long until he comes . . .  
How long???

ROSSING  
Slowly, slowly . . . breathe slowly . . .  
I'll give you something to sleep on.  
We can talk again . . . tomorrow.

NINA (dreamily)  
There's another storm blowing in  
tonight.  
You'll see . . . tomorrow . . .  
The weather will be fine.  
(focused, resolute)  
There are things we must see to.  
The legacy is ready to sign.

ROSSING (pompous)  
To give your estate to young musicians.  
It is a noble thought.  
Yes, yes . . . the Edvard Grieg legacy . . .

GRIEG (defiantly)  
I can't put my name to a testament!

Not until Grainger has been and left.

NINA (*angrily*)  
Grainger?  
Why should Grainger change a thing?  
We have worked two years on that testament.

GRIEG  
Maybe I would like to choose  
who inherits me.  
A legacy throws my assets to the wind.

NINA (*to Grieg*)  
Edvard . . .

GRIEG (*to no one*)  
Grainger.  
(*to Nina*)  
How long before he comes?

NINA  
Oh, how many times have I lived  
through the night I thought would be  
your last?

ROSSING  
Morphine, a little more morphine.  
You need more morphine.  
It will help you get over the night.

GRIEG  
My pain . . .

NINA  
My love . . .

GRIEG (*to Rossing*)  
Your medicine...

NINA

. . . my Edvard . . .

GRIEG  
. . . is killing me.

ROSSING  
Grieg, you must rest.

GRIEG  
It's killing me, not the pain.

ROSSING  
He needs more morphine.

GRIEG  
If there's any peace for me,  
Grainger will bring it.

NINA  
I want you to find some peace.  
Oh, my Edvard

TRIO

ROSSING  
You must rest . . .

GRIEG  
When will he come?

ROSSING  
Not now!

GRIEG  
But I have a tour with Grainger, a tour to England.

ROSSING (*to Nina*)  
He must not suffer.

GRIEG

Rossing, I must go...

ROSSING  
He needs ...

GRIEG  
...with Grainger

ROSSING  
...not suffer

GRIEG  
So when?  
Yes, when, when will he come?

NINA  
My Edvard, My Edvard, my dear love.

ROSSING  
He must not suffer

GRIEG  
Grainger, when will he come?

INTERLUDE  
*stage visual — map tracking Grainger's boat trip  
from England to Bergen, Norway*

ROSSING  
Who are you, and what do you think  
you're doing?

GRAINGER (*nonchalant*)  
Had a swim in the fjord, quite nice.

ROSSING (*irritated*)  
Do you know where you are?  
The private home of Edvard Grieg.

GRAINGER

Oh really?  
To be quite honest, heard that rumor,  
and to stay quite honest,  
I'm expected here.

ROSSING  
You can trust me to know who comes  
and goes here.  
Please leave.

GRAINGER  
You seem the sort who'd be good at that,  
keeping an eye on other people's business.  
I'm expected . . . but not just yet,  
got a lift a few days early on a steamer  
out of London,  
if I worked (laughs)  
in the boiler room.

ROSSING  
You seem the sort who'd be good at that,  
shoveling coal for your betters.

GRAINGER  
You'll be Rossing . . . I guessed it right.  
Grieg wrote to me 'bout a 'Doc' with a  
pompous bedside manner.  
Grainger! Percy.  
Play the piano.  
Got to practice the Concerto with the  
old man himself,  
then off to England  
on a whirlwind tour.

ROSSING  
Things here are not as they were.  
Grieg's emphysema is much worse,  
he won't live more than a week.  
A week or two.

GRAINGER  
If that were true, he hardly would have invited me.

NINA  
Percy? Are you here?

ROSSING (*ironic*)  
Nina, he left early . . .  
before the telegram arrived.

NINA  
Oh, what a surprise!  
Edvard will be delighted.

ROSSING (*to Grainger*)  
If you can be quiet and not disturb  
Grieg, then you're welcome to stay overnight.  
If he wakes refresh'd tomorrow,  
you can meet him.  
Then, you can leave! (*turns his back to Grainger*)

NINA  
That's settled, then.  
Go in, go in.  
I'll follow in a moment.

(*to Rossing*)  
Is it true? only a week . . .  
Is it true, he just has a week or two?

ROSSING  
I'm sorry, I didn't see you there.

It's time for us to think ahead,  
the whole nation will ask of me  
(*false, as an afterthought*)  
and you!  
How this man's ended,  
All the "Dark Time" lies behind us.  
No one has to suffer,

every pain can be stilled.

NINA  
You must help me be strong

ROSSING  
All pain can be stilled

NINA  
Grieg wants to fight on and on,  
with every last breath.

ROSSING  
Nina, Grieg's fading,  
He can't live for long.  
Not long . . .

INTERLUDE—*Grainger at an old fashioned  
phonograph, hat pulled low on his head, playing  
his new recording of the Piano Concerto – the  
actual Grainger recording as Grieg enters and  
sees him, but does not recognize him.*

GRIEG (*to no one*)  
I hear it!  
Silence,  
the silence is drawing me to madness.  
My music, is it strong enough?  
Strong enough to stand the test of time?  
But who is playing?  
Is it Death himself who's playing?

(*Grieg approaches. Grainger removes his hat*)

GRIEG  
I'll be damned if you're a phantom.

GRAINGER  
I'll be damned if that's a welcome!  
(*laughter, they embrace*)

GRIEG  
What are you doing here?  
Rossing sent you a telegram . . .

GRAINGER (*breaking in*)  
. . . came ahead of schedule.  
Are you well?  
Can we practice for the England tour?

GRIEG  
Can you play my music like last year in London?  
I dream't I heard it.

They said of me,  
he's an artist of the people, this man,  
this man is our greatness.  
(*questioning*)  
'My greatness?'

But what,  
but what do I hear?  
What do I hear?  
A music that will die  
and soon disappear?  
An alpine rose that clings to a slope,  
so soon gone?  
Music that withers in the October wind?

GRAINGER  
How can you say that?

GRIEG  
The weaker my health,  
the stronger my doubt.  
I'm so afraid.  
I fear my music will die with me.  
There are ghosts who say this every day.

GRAINGER  
Ghosts?

GRIEG  
My own private phantoms.  
Don't worry, it's only the morphine.  
It brings on visions.

GRAINGER  
What visions?

GRIEG  
Do you know that Nina and I,  
we lost our child, she died . . .  
only one year old, my child.

GRAINGER  
I'm sorry.  
You have lived a lifetime of illness,  
but your music is like an alpine rose;  
it blooms against all odds,  
its beauty in defiance,  
your music sings.  
It sings for all who hear.

GRIEG  
You play my music like no one else.  
Before, it felt cold and dead,  
but you make it sound so bold, so fresh,  
If only I had the strength.

GRAINGER  
The strength?  
The strength for what?

GRIEG  
I'd like to see the mountains.  
I'd like to see the mountains  
one more time.

GRAINGER  
Why not?  
You can manage that with

help from me.  
How far is it?

GRIEG

The nearest mountain is the Blue Peak.  
From there you can see all of Bergen.

GRAINGER

We'd make it, not a doubt.  
To the mountains  
We climb and climb,  
from every blade of grass there comes  
a melody by Grieg.  
How splendid, what a view!  
What do you see there?

GRIEG

From this place  
I can laugh at my doubts,  
from here my fears disappear.  
Here, I'm a pilgrim.  
and from here . . .

ROSSING (*enters, interrupts angrily*)

What in God's name have you done to  
him?

GRAINGER

Just training for a trip to the Blue Peak.

GRIEG (*loud coughs, weakly*)

No, I'm alright.

ROSSING

There, see what you've done.  
I'll fetch some medicine.

INTERLUDE

GRIEG

Where are you going?

NINA

A boat trip, and on such a day.  
I'm nearly ready to go.

GRIEG

Yes, it's a fine day.  
I would like to come with you.

NINA

No, Rossing would never agree.  
You're too tired.  
Let him arrange for a room in his clinic.  
There you can rest in his care.

GRIEG

Yes, but Grainger has given me  
(*searching for it*)  
new hope.  
Nina, I've been thinking,  
let's adopt him.  
Let's adopt him as a son . . .

NINA

What, what do you mean?

GRAINGER

. . . adopt him.  
Life without our child was so hard,  
but to face death without a child . . .

NINA (*interrupting angrily*)

Enough! What are you thinking?  
If this is difficult for you,  
think of me,  
how hard it is, for we . . . both of us, are  
childless now.  
You had the joy of your music.  
Your struggles have always been mine.  
How many times I've lived through the night  
that I thought might be your last.  
You are my life, my joy.  
But many times I have lived through a night

A night I thought would be your last.

And everything you need from him  
you already have,  
so please, please,  
don't ask me this.  
How hard it is for me,  
we both are childless,  
but you had the joy of your music,  
your music, your joy.

(*to Grainger*)

Percy, read this document.  
Look after him.

(*Nina exits*)

GRIEG

Percy, let me hear this document.

GRAINGER (*reading from document*)

"The Edvard Grieg Foundation will  
only be used in development and  
production of music in Bergen."  
Bravo Grieg!

GRIEG

Bring a telescope and brandy!  
I'll show you the Blue Peak!

INTERLUDE—*arrival at summit of the Blue Peak*

This is the place where my fears seem foolish,  
from here, I'm a pilgrim.  
I laugh at my doubt.  
You gave me the strength I need to  
climb this mountain.  
Before I heard you play,  
I felt cold and dead.  
You play my music like no one else.

GRAINGER

Yes, and in London soon they will hear  
your music played again.

GRIEG

From this place I laugh at my doubt,  
from here, my fears disappear.  
Here, I'm a pilgrim,  
and from here I feel reborn.  
*With the word "reborn," Grieg and Grainger  
disappear from view*

NINA

We were all on the way to the boat  
for the concert tour in London. That hope is  
what kept him alive.

ROSSING

He almost boarded a steamer,  
but it was not to be.

NINA

That night . . .  
I knew his life was at an end.  
He fell asleep,  
but suddenly, he sat up.  
He made a bow.  
There was no doubt.  
He bowed an artist  
to his audience.  
And then . . . and then . . . and then . . .  
Still.

*From offstage*

GRIEG

Silence, Oh silence.



**Justin Dello Joio**, born in New York City, is descended from many generations of composers in the Dello Joio family. He began piano at age 5, and started composing at 6, and by age 11, had composed and had performed a woodwind quintet, a brass quintet, and much incidental piano music. As a child, he studied piano with Constance Keene and Mieczyslaw Munz, and composition with Ellen Taafe Zwilich and Hall Overton. He later attended the Juilliard School, where he received Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral degrees in composition, studying with Vincent Persichetti, Roger Sessions, and David Diamond. He received numerous awards from Juilliard including the Mitroupolis Award, the Richard Rodgers Scholarship, the Rodgers and Hammerstein Scholarship, the Freschl Award, and Gretchaninoff award. Mr. Dello Joio's catalog includes solo, chamber, and orchestral music, and he has written for modern dance and ballet, as well as opera. His music is published by Theodore Presser Co. and G. Schirmer.

Justin Dello Joio's compositions have been performed in the US, Europe and in Asia. He has been the recipient of awards including the American Academy of Arts and Letters Academy Award in Music, their Lakond Award, and their Charles Ives Scholarship. He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, as well as grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, The Theodore Presser Foundation, three Meet the Composer grants, and a CAPS Award. In addition to being commissioned by Det Norske Blaseensemble, to write "Blue Mountain", he collaborated with novelist John Gardner on an opera based on Thomas Mann's "The Holy Sinner." Upcoming commissions include a Barlow Endowment Commission for NY Philharmonic cellist Carter Brey, a work for brass quintet and organ for the American Brass Quintet and organist Timothy Smith, and a piano concerto for Garrick Ohlsson and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Myung Whun Chung, conductor. Justin Dello Joio's music can be heard on BRIDGE 9220, performed by Garrick Ohlsson, Ani Kavafian, Carter Brey and Jeremy Denk. Mr. Dello Joio is currently the Faculty Composer in Residence at New York University's Steinhardt School of Music and Music Professions, and he resides in New York City with his wife Marianne Bachmann and their daughter, Chiara.



**Kenneth Jean** was born in New York City and raised in Hong Kong, returning to the United States in 1967. After violin studies at San Francisco State University, he entered the Juilliard School at the age of 19 and was accepted into the conducting class of Jean Morel. The following year he made his Carnegie Hall debut with the Youth Symphony Orchestra of New York and was immediately engaged as the orchestra's music director. In addition, he has served on the staffs of the Aspen Music Festival and Blossom Festival School.

Mr. Jean won the Leopold Stokowski Conducting Award sponsored by the American Symphony Orchestra, which led to a performance with that orchestra and many subsequent re-engagements. He has served as Resident Conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Conducting Assistant of the Cleveland Orchestra. Mr. Jean has been a recipient of the prestigious Seaver/National Endowment for the Arts Conductor Award, which is given biannually to exceptional American conductors. He has

been Music Director of the Florida Symphony Orchestra, Associate Conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Hong Kong Philharmonic.

He made his European debut in 1980 at the International Festival of Youth Orchestras in Aberdeen, Scotland and has returned there regularly. He has appeared as guest conductor in major European centers including Basel, Stockholm, Belgrade, Baden-Baden and Bratislava among others. Mr. Jean has also guest conducted the Orquesta Filarmonica de la Universidad Nacional de Mexico in Mexico City.

In addition to his performances with the orchestras of Cleveland, Chicago and Detroit, Mr. Jean's North American activities have included the orchestras of Minnesota, Philadelphia, Saint Paul, Buffalo, Rochester, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Saint Louis, Indianapolis, Oregon, Phoenix, San Jose, Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Calgary. Opera productions have included *La Boheme* at the Orlando Opera and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at the Hong Kong Festival. In June 1994, Sir Georg Solti selected Mr. Jean to assist him with his "Orchestral Project" at Carnegie Hall.

Kenneth Jean records regularly with the Slovak Philharmonic of Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, and the partnership includes two CDs of the works of Ravel as well as a CD of Spanish music. He also has recorded a Berlioz disc with the Polish State Philharmonic. With the Hong Kong Philharmonic he has made a number of recordings, including his debut recording, *Colourful Clouds - The Hong Kong Philharmonic Plays Chinese Classics* which was an instant best seller in the Orient and was twice awarded a platinum record. Other recordings with the HK Philharmonic include an album of works by Chinese composer Du Ming-Xin and a disc of rare Massenet orchestral works.





**Nils Harald Sødal** is a Norwegian tenor. Since his debut at the Norwegian National Opera in 1992, Sødal has performed roles like Camille de Rossillon in *The Merry Widow*, Alfred in *The Bat*, Pilatus in *Barrabas*, David in *Den fjerde nattevakt*, Alfredo in *La Traviata* and don José in *Carmen*.

In 2008, the opening season at the new opera house in Oslo, he sings Alfred in *The Bat*, Apollo in *L'Orfeo* and the tenor role in the world premiere of *Et moderne sted*.

Tours abroad includes concerts in Sweden, Denmark, Germany and USA, and in 2004 Sødal was internationally acclaimed for the title role in *Albert Herring* (OpernWelt, April 2004).

Sødal is a frequent performer of contemporary music. He has recorded several CDs, which includes a number of world premiere recordings.



**Njål Sparbo** (b. 1964) is one of Norway's most active and versatile singers. He has had more than 120 Lieder recitals together with Norway's leading pianists. His recordings of Grieg & Schubert: *Songs*, and Schubert's *Winterreise*, have been highly praised. He is currently working on a CD-anthology of Norwegian songs, and first volume has been released: *Norge, mitt Norge!*

Njål Sparbo is a merited oratorio singer with more than 50 major oratorios on his repertoire, and he has sung leading parts in numerous opera productions. He is an advocate of contemporary music and has taken part in fifty-two world premiere performances, including ten contemporary opera productions in Norway and Germany.

He performs regularly at festivals and on television/radio, and has appeared as soloist on twenty-seven CD recordings. In 2007 Sparbo performed all of Edvard Greig's one-hundred-seventy-two songs in a series of seventh concerts in Bergen in conjunction with Grieg's 100<sup>th</sup> year commemoration.

Among his performances abroad are Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrendes Gesellen* with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields in London, Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Drottningholm's Baroque Orchestra in Uppsala, Rossini's *Petite Messe Solenne* in Köln Philharmonie, Kverno's *St. Matthew passion* in New York and Handel's *Esther*, *Samson* and *Solomon* with London Handel Orchestra at the London Handel Festival.



**Marianne Andersen**, born in Oslo, studied in London at the Royal Academy of Music where she graduated with highest honors, and at the National Opera Studio. She has since studied with Ileana Cotrubas in France and Vera Rozsa in London.

Marianne made her debut in the Oslo University Hall in 1995 and quickly established herself as one of the leading mezzos in Norway. She has a large repertoire, also within the contemporary music, and has performed in many world-premiere performances. She is also a sought-after baroque singer.

She has appeared with the national orchestras of Norway and sings frequently abroad, most recently in Berlin and Slovenia. Last year she sang in Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde* with Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra.

Her recordings include the acclaimed *St Matthew Passion* by Trond Kverno;

the newly released *Requiem* of Iver Kleive and in Grieg's *Foran Sydens Kloster* which will be released on Naxos later this year.

Marianne Andersen has visited the Edinburgh International Festival, the Israel Festival in Jerusalem, the Festival in Bergen, the Ultima festival for contemporary music in Oslo as well as most of the other festivals in Norway. Also in England she has performed at numerous festivals. Last summer she sang the role of Anitra in Grieg's *Peer Gynt* in The Bridgewater Hall in Manchester and at the Litchfield Festival. She also sang the song cycle *Haugtussa* in a Grieg's Birthday Gala concert in Manchester.

Her operatic roles includes Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*) and Grimgerde (*die Walküre*) for the Norwegian State Opera; Penelope (Monteverdi's *Ulisse*) conducted by Alan Curtis for the Oslo Chamber Music Festival; Wellgunde (*das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*) in the acclaimed Ring cycle production by Tim Albury performed at the Edinburgh Festival, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lady (*the Magic Flute*) for Scottish Opera; Mercedes (*Carmen*), Hansel (*Hansel and Gretel*) and Bradamante (*Alcina*) in Darmstadt and Wiesbaden. She has performed, in world premiere performances, the roles of Hulda (Glenn Haugland's *Garborg*), Hedda Gabler (Eivind Buene's *September*) and Nina Grieg in Justin Dello Joio's opera *Blue Mountain*.

Her future engagements includes Beethoven 9<sup>th</sup> symphony with the Oslo Philharmonic orchestra and Florence Pike in Benjamin Britten's opera *Albert Herring*.



Torbin Grue has sung lead roles at several major opera houses in Norway including The Norwegian Opera in Oslo, Opera West in Bergen, The Music Theater in Trondheim and Opera South in Kristiansand. He has sung several lead roles in opera houses in Norway, including the high baritone role Alfio, in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and the bass role of Daland in Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*. Mr. Grue studied with Marit Storaekre, Mirjana Danou and Jan Sodal in Norway, and Peter Berne in Vienna. He graduated from the Oslo National Academy of Arts in 2000, with a 'best student' scholarship.

The Norwegian Wind Ensemble



The **Norwegian Wind Ensemble** is the premier nordic wind ensemble of today, as well as one of the world's oldest orchestral institutions of any kind. Dating back to 1734 as a professional military music corps at Fredriksten Fortress in Halden, Norway, this orchestra has gone through more transformations than most. Today this civic trust cultivates a dualistic profile where historically informed performance practice on various period instruments, goes hand in hand with leading edge contemporary performance. The Norwegian Wind Ensemble regularly commissions new original music for its instrumentation, and Justin Dello Joio's commission for *Blue Mountain*, in context of the 2007 Edvard Grieg centennial observation, is a vivid example of just that. [www.dnbe.no](http://www.dnbe.no)

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Managing Director Det Norske Blåseensemble: Mattias Lundqvist  
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Raw mix: Thomas Wolden, Lawo, (Oslo Norway)  
Mix and Mastering Engineer: Adam Abeshouse  
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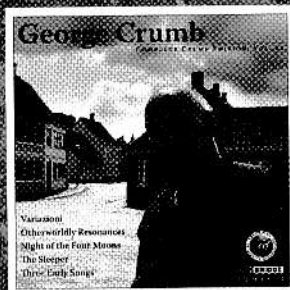
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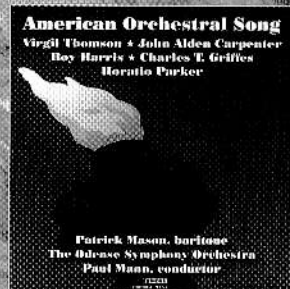
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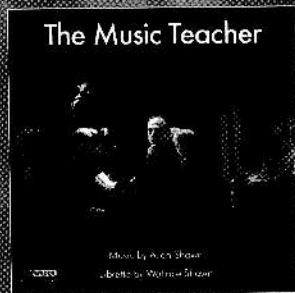
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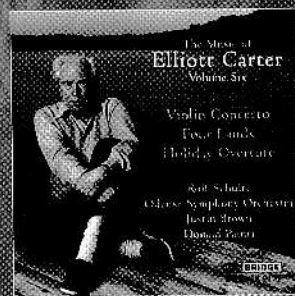
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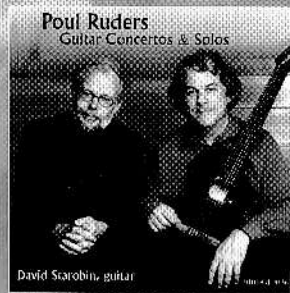
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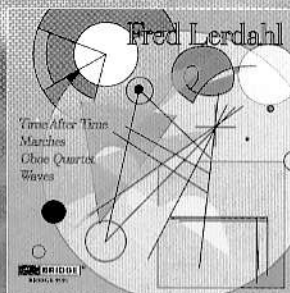
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