


taunting and chasing of Peer Gynt after he has refused to marry the daughter of the Mountain King, is perhaps the most famous of these four pieces. The music, built on just one small, repetitive thematic fragment grows wilder and wilder until it seems as though Peer Gynt--and the poor orchestra--can take no more. It is like a whirlwind.

Edvard Grieg composed and published about 60 so-called "Lyric Pieces" for piano over a period of almost 40 years, from the time of his first real creative outpouring to just a few years before his death in 1907. The six Lyric Pieces contained in Opus 54 are considered to be some of his finest products, and it is not surprising that he selected four of them for the charming orchestral Lyric Suite.

As it turns out, the idea to orchestrate some of the Lyric Pieces was not Grieg's at all. In 1903 it came to Grieg's attention that four pieces from the Opus 54 bunch had been orchestrated by the well-known conductor Anton Seidl; though enthusiastic about the idea, Grieg was not altogether satisfied by Seidl's rather Wagnerian approach. After securing the legal rights from Seidl's widow in 1904, Grieg proceeded to adapt the arrangements of three of them to better suit the translucent textures of the original piano ideas; the orchestration of the first piece in the suite is entirely Grieg's own. (It is touching to note that Grieg handed over the 1,000 marks he received from the sale of the Lyric Suite to Seidl's widow.)



**GRIEG**  
**MUSIC FROM PEER GYNT**  
FIEDLER / BOSTON POPS / EILEEN FARRELL  
**LYRIC SUITE**

To most of the concert-going public, Edvard Grieg is only familiar as the composer of two fabulously popular concert works: the Concerto for piano and orchestra, and the first Orchestral Suite extracted from the incidental music to Henrik Ibsen's play, Peer Gynt. Ever since the Peer Gynt Suite No.1, Op.46 appeared in the late 1880s it has been a staple of the orchestral repertory. Indeed, it is safe to say that its four constituent pieces are among the most frequently played and immediately recognizable ever written; yet, in a good performance, they still retain a great deal of their original vitality and freshness.

Ibsen's five-act drama concerns a young Norwegian ruffian named Peer Gynt, who dreams of becoming emperor of the world. His sundry adventures--abducting a bride-to-be during her wedding, abandoning her for another woman, being tormented by gnomes, posturing as a prophet among the Arabs, eloping with and being subsequently double-crossed by an Arab princess, and finally returning to Norway--are the stuff of high drama and adventure, and are rough and isolated in a way that is peculiarly Nordic. Grieg captures this tone perfectly.

Grieg opens the first Peer Gynt suite with a piece called "Morning Mood", originally played at the beginning of the fourth act. A gentle E major theme is announced by the flutes, and then the oboes, against a

static harmonic background that effectively emulates the stillness of the first moments of dawn. This lovely melody--an inverted arch shape--is taken through a sparkling palette of subtle harmonic inflections; bright flute trills join the musical mixture as "Morning Mood" comes to a gentle close. Although "Morning Mood" is only four minutes long, Grieg manages to capture in music something both timeless and universal.

"Aese's Death", which follows, was intended to be played as a prelude to the third act. Peer Gynt has returned home to his mother Aese, only to find that her days on earth have come to an end. "Aese's Death" has but one tiny melodic fragment (set to an absolutely unchanging rhythm), and yet the score never grows tiresome. One late nineteenth-century writer remarked that it was as if Grieg managed to convey not only the passing on of Peer Gynt's mother but also the sad dying away of summer, and with it the sun, in the rustic northland.

After a single, magical E major chord, "Anitra's Dance" begins with a buoyant violin melody over a compelling pizzicato background. Our little theme is taken through several small harmonic adventures during the middle of the dance (including a warm and welcome, albeit brief, pass through D major). During the reprise of the opening section Grieg allows for some melodic imitation by the celli.

"In the Hall of the Mountain King," written to accompany the gnomes'

# GRIEG

## MUSIC FROM PEER GYNT

FIEDLER / BOSTON POPS / EILEEN FARRELL

### LYRIC SUITE

- Peer Gynt - Suite No. 1, Op. 46
  - 1 Morning
  - 2 Ase's Death
  - 3 Anitra's Death
  - 4 In The Hall Of The Mountain King
- Peer Gynt - Suite No. 2, Op. 55
  - 5 Ingrid's Lament
  - 6 Arabian Dance
  - 7 Return Of Peer Gynt
  - 8 Solvejg's Song
  - 9 Dance Of The Mountain King's Daughter
- Lyric Suite, Op. 54
  - 10 Shepherd Boy
  - 11 Norwegian Rustic March
  - 12 Nocturne
  - 13 March Of The Dwarfs

Soprano Vocals - Eileen Farrell Recorded by RCA 1959

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