



Edvard Grieg (15 June 1843 – 4 September 1907) was a Norwegian composer and pianist. He is best known for his Piano Concerto in A minor, for his incidental music to Henrik Ibsen's play *Peer Gynt* (which includes *Morning Mood* and *In the Hall of the Mountain King*), and for his collection of piano miniatures *Lyrical Pieces*. He began piano studies with his mother at the age of six. From 1858-1862 he studied music in Leipzig under the tutelage of Ignaz Moscheles and graduated with honors. From 1863-1866 Grieg lived in Copenhagen, where he continued his music studies with Niels W. Gade. He made progress towards Scandinavian folk music while being an apprentice of Rikard Nordraak. His love of the Norwegian folk culture and traditional melodies became evident in his compositions written after 1866, the year Grieg returned to Norway. He settled in Christiania (now Oslo) and established himself as a music teacher and concert performer. At the same time Grieg became the founder of a concert society *Eutherpe* with a choir and a symphony orchestra. His collection of *Lyrical Pieces* for piano made him a fine reputation among musicians. His famous Piano Concerto in A minor was completed in 1868 and performed in Copenhagen. With a letter of recommendation from Franz Liszt, Grieg received a state stipend for his studies in Italy and spent a winter of 1869-1870 in Rome. There Grieg performed his music and had

meetings with Franz Liszt and other European musicians. His collaboration with Norwegian writer Bjornson also began in Rome. During the 1870's Grieg and Bjornson made several dramatic compositions together. In 1876 Grieg was asked by Henrik Ibsen to write the incidental music to *Peer Gynt*, a play about the Norwegian folk hero. Later Grieg made two *Peer Gynt* Suites for concert performances, which scored international success. In 1872 Grieg was made a member of the Royal Music Society in Stockholm, Sweden. In 1874 Grieg was awarded the state annual grant of 1600 kronen from the Norwegian Storting. He quit teaching and returned to his hometown of Bergen. There he chose a natural environment for his work. Grieg composed much of his music among the picturesque landscape of forest, mountains, and sea at the Hardanger fjord. There he had a cottage with a Steinway small grand piano. Grieg's admiration with serenity and beauty of the Norwegian landscapes was the essential part of his music. Grieg wrote music of a distinguished lyrical quality and emotional depth, which he expressed through refined melody lines and sophisticated harmonic changes. His symphonic *Norwegian dances* and *Norwegian peasant dances* allude to Scandinavian folk melodies. The *Peer Gynt* suites and such pieces as *Solvejg's Song* and *Ein Schwan* are characterized with power for creating pictures in the listener's mind, which made them suitable for many film scores.

The **Piano Concerto in A minor**, Op. 16, is the only concerto Grieg completed. It is one of his most popular works and among the most popular of all piano concertos. The concerto is in three movements: *Allegro molto moderato* (A minor), *Adagio* (D flat major), and *Allegro moderato molto e marcato* (A minor → F major → A major). The concerto was originally scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in A and B flat, 2 bassoons, 2 horns in E and E flat, 2 trumpets in C and B flat, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani and strings (violins, violas, cellos and double basses). He later added 2 horns and changed the tuba to a third trombone. Grieg's concerto is often compared to the Piano Concerto of Robert Schumann — it is in the same key, the opening descending flourish on the piano is similar, and the overall style is considered to be closer to Schumann than any other single composer. Grieg had heard Schumann's concerto played by Clara Schumann in Leipzig in 1858, and was greatly influenced by Schumann's style generally, having been taught the piano by Schumann's friend, Ernst Ferdinand Wenzel. Compact disc recordings often pair the two concertos. Additionally, Grieg's work provides evidence of his interest in Norwegian folk music; the opening flourish is based around the motif of a falling minor second (see interval) followed by a falling major third, which is typical of the folk music of Grieg's native country. This specific motif occurs in other works by Grieg, including the String Quartet. In the last movement of the concerto, similarities to the *halling* (a Norwegian folk dance) and imitations of the Hardanger fiddle (the Norwegian folk fiddle) have also been used.