



The idea for this CD came after an invitation to give a recital in the concert hall next to Grieg's home, Troldhaugen, in Bergen two years ago. I decided to perform his Piano Sonata in that programme, a work which I had played as a young teenager and of which I had fond memories. The view from the Troldsalen stage was enchanting: I could see Grieg's small composing hut perched on the edge of a lake, a view similar to the one Grieg himself would have drawn so much inspiration from. Experiencing the dramatic Norwegian landscape of fjords and mountains first-hand gave me a new perspective on Grieg's music, and I was keen to explore his oeuvre further.

Many of you will be familiar with Grieg's Lyric Pieces: his Butterfly from the third volume is the first piece of his that I learnt to play while still a child. However, apart

from the Piano Concerto and the *Lyric Pieces*, his piano repertoire is rarely heard on the concert platforms outside Scandinavia. On this album, I have sought to present the more familiar *Lyric Pieces* alongside the less well-known works: the Sonata, the *Ballade* (his most substantial solo piano work and a favourite of Brahms), and a selection of the wonderfully intriguing *Slåtter*. The *Slåtter*, Grieg's arrangements of Hardanger fiddle melodies, are for me the most interesting works of all. Written relatively late, they show Grieg experimenting with bold harmonic clashes that foreshadow Bartók's language.

I am delighted to be able to conclude the album with an epilogue, a *Lyric Piece* by the acclaimed composer Cheryl Frances-Hoad. This is the first of a set of four *Lyric Pieces* Cheryl will write for me, each inspired by a composer I feel a close connection to: Grieg, Janáček, Schubert and Ravel. We are grateful to the RVW Trust for their support of this commission.

In preparation for this recording, I decided to visit Norway again. I had the invaluable experience of hearing the *Slåtter* melodies in their original setting, as I was able to listen to and perform to the leading Norwegian Hardanger fiddlers Knut Hamre and Frank Rolland. I am grateful to Eilif Løtveit for his historical insights on Grieg and to the Troldhaugen Museum. None of this would have been possible without Laila Nordø.

I am absolutely honoured to have been able to experience this musical journey, my third disc with Champs Hill Records. I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to David and Mary Bowerman for their continued and unerring support. I am indebted to Leif Ove Andsnes for his time and advice. I am fortunate to have been able to work with my producer, Alexander Van Ingen, who has been a stimulating colleague. A very special thanks also goes to Quentin Huys, Claire Willis and Joanne Fleming.

/vana



TRACK LISTING

01	BALLADE IN G MINOR OP.24	18'48
	LYRIC PIECES	
02	Butterfly Op.43 No.1	01'48
03	Waltz Op.38 No.7	01'03
04	Little Bird Op.43 No.4	02'03
05	Notturno Op.54 No.4	03'57
06	Peasant's Song Op.65 No.2	01'33
07	Wedding Day at Troldhaugen Op.65 No.6	06'29
	SLÅTTER OP.72 (NORWEGIAN PEASANT DANCES)	
08	Tussebrurefæra på Vossevangen - The Goblin's Bridal Procession, No.14	02'25
09	Haugelåt halling - Halling from the Hills, No.4	03'58
10	Kivlemöyerne Gangar - The Girls of Kivledal Folk Dance, No.17	01'44
11	John Vaestafae's Springdans - John Vaestafae's Dance, No.2	02'18
	PIANO SONATA IN E MINOR OP.7	
12	Allegro moderato	04'34
13	Andante molto	03'53
14	Alla Menuetto, ma poco più lento	02'55
15	Finale: Molto allegro	06'14
	CHERYL FRANCES-HOAD, LYRIC PIECE	
16	Contemplation (Lyric Piece in homage to Grieg)	02'18
	Total plani	na time: 66'02

Total playing time: 66'02

Produced & Engineered by Alexander Van Ingen Edited by Claire Hay Mastered by Alexander Van Ingen

Recorded on 14th October, 2012 and 18th - 19th May, 2013 in the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK

Executive Producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen Label Manager for Champs Hill Records: John Dickinson Many budding and amateur pianists have learned at least some of Grieg's vivid and atmospheric Lyric Pieces. Indeed, so familiar and well-loyed is Grieg among listeners today that it has become all too easy to underestimate him. Towards the end of his life in the late-nineteenth century, his diminutive and elfin-like appearance, often in the company of his charming and equally diminutive wife who was a renowned interpreter of his songs, endeared him almost as much as his music to many of the great and mighty musicians of Europe. These included England's Sullivan (with whom he was a fellow student in Leipzig) and Hubert Parry, or those two musical giants of Grieg's era, Johannes Brahms and Pyotr Tchaikovsky: indeed, Grieg was the calming force that helped to forge something of a friendship between the hitherto antagonistic composers. Grieg was also something of a musical father figure to the young Frederick Delius: not only did he give him practical advice, but he also played a vital role in furthering his career by inviting Delius's father to dinner during one of his English tours, during which Grieg persuaded Delius senior not to withdraw his allowance from his son, so allowing him to continue his compositional studies. He was equally a beloved friend of Percy Grainger's.

Yet Grieg, for all the apparent approachability of both the man and his music, had had to struggle hard to define himself as a composer. He was very much in the first generation of Norwegian composers to come to prominence, nearly all of them trained at the Leipzig Conservatory, and even then within the accepted tradition of Mendelssohn, Schumann and – rather less accepted – of Chopin. But what truly galvanised Grieg, and revealed to him his destiny to create a new national style of Norwegian music, was meeting fellow Norwegian composer Rikard Nordraak in 1864. This was in Copenhagen, where Grieg had moved shortly after his graduation from Leipzig (where he had studied composition and piano) in the hope of furthering his career there. Nordraak was just a year older, and a budding

composer himself, but had already in the winter of 1863-64 written what was destined to be Norway's national anthem, 'Ja, vi elsker dette landet'. His faith that an indigenous Norwegian music could draw inspiration not only from the nation's folk music but also its mythology, landscape and fjords, fired Grieg with a new sense of purpose. It was not long after their meeting that Grieg composed his Piano Sonata in the summer of 1865. Relative to the rest of his oeuvre, it is an unusually large-scale work, for which he yet retained a great affection: towards the end of his life, in 1904, he performed the two inner movements to Kaiser Wilhelm II, together with his popular 'Wedding Day at Troldhaugen'.

In its opening Allegro moderato one may hear traces of Schumann's lyricism, but expressed through Grieg's idiosyncratic pianism with phraseology and textures recognizably from the same world as the Piano Concerto composed just three years later. The following slow Andante molto movement initially starts as if, again, anticipating the Piano Concerto with its gentle lyricism. However, the music soon becomes more eventful with dramatic dynamic contrasts and increasingly varied thematic material, eventually introducing a brief yet lively dance-like episode. Perhaps those dance rhythms represent the germinating influence of indigenous Norwegian folk music, since this appears to be a catalyst for a yet grander statement of the opening lyrical theme, as if representing Grieg's aspiration to create a Norwegian national style of music. After a touch of almost storm-like chromaticism, the movement winds down in a reflective coda. The third movement, though nominally a minuet, is a rather stern processional, rather too gruff to sound like a courtly dance. This frames a sweet-toned trio - very much a Grieg speciality. The finale is a suitably rousing showpiece, starting with a driven theme, which is then contrasted with a more chorale-like second subject into which the distinctive dotted rhythm of the first subject initially interjects, but over which the chorale theme ultimately triumphs.

The English composer Cheryl Frances-Hoad (an album of whose music, *The Glory Tree* (CHRCD021), has been released previously on Champs Hill) has composed for Ivana Gavrić a short 'Contemplation' on four bars from Grieg's Sonata – specifically those which introduce the short dance-like idea in the slow movement. Frances-Hoad herself explains: "I was very taken by these bars, which to me seemed typically 'Griegian': the E minor chord with the added C sharp, and I simply elaborated upon Grieg's chords, feeling my way on the piano as I wrote."

By the 1870s Grieg had composed his celebrated Piano Concerto and his first book of Lyric Pieces (published in Copenhagen in 1867). His fame was not only well established in his own country, but his music had also earned the approbation of Franz Liszt. Yet Grieg in that decade went through some emotional turmoil, suffering at times from almost crippling self-doubt which was only worsened by the death of his parents. Something of his state of mind is perhaps reflected in the Ballade, composed in the winter of 1875-76 while he was putting the finishing touches on his incidental music for *Peer Gynt*. Certainly the *Ballade* is one of his darkest and most impressive extended pieces for piano. Although Grieg, perhaps significantly, never performed the work himself in concert, it was widely acclaimed, the German critic Walter Niemann describing the Ballade as "the most perfect embodiment of Norway and the Norwegian people, of its agonized longing for light and sun, and at the same time the most perfect embodiment in music of Grieg the man." Rather than taking the free rhapsodic form of a Chopin Ballade, Grieg's is in a form of a set of 14 variations on a plaintive Norwegian folksong 'Den nordlandske bondestand' ('The Northland Peasantry').

In 1883 Grieg's self-dissatisfaction had reached such a pitch that it strained his marriage. In the summer of 1883 he walked out on his wife, Nina, and went alone to Bayreuth to attend a performance of Wagner's opera *Parsifal*. He then

embarked on a long concert tour, performing in many of the major German cities and across the Netherlands. Meanwhile Nina moved in with friends Marie and Frantz Beyer, who persuaded her to attempt a reconciliation with her husband. She and the Beyers travelled to Leipzig where early in 1884 she met with her husband; subsequently they travelled together to Rome where they spent four months. It was during that year that the *Second Book of Lyric Pieces* was published in Leipzig, from which the *Waltz*, Op.38, is taken.

Grieg now determined to build a new home near Bergen, which he named Troldhaugen. This was finished in 1885, and may still be seen: a handsome detached house approached through a small wood, with Grieg's composing hut, overlooking Nordås Lake, situated down steep steps some distance below. Grieg spent every summer there composing, and then would spend the autumn and winter months touring as a pianist and conductor. Among his first compositions in Troldhaugen was his *Third Book of Lyric Pieces*. Published in 1886, this is a remarkably inspired collection which includes 'Butterfly' and 'Little Bird' – rhythmically supple and with effective and novel piano textures which vividly bring their subjects to life: Grieg himself later recorded both those works, once on disc in 1903, and once on piano rolls in 1906.

Book Five, published in 1891, includes the 'Notturno', which very much reflects the darkened harmonic world opened by Wagner's music and being explored at around this time by the Frenchman Gabriel Fauré. There is even some reminiscence of Debussy's 'Clair de lune' – uncanny, since neither composer could possibly have been aware of the other's work when composing their respective pieces. Still, it has been suggested that Debussy – who famously described Grieg's music as "pink bonbons filled with snow" – generally took more inspiration from Grieg's music than he cared to admit.

Five years later, Grieg composed *Book Eight*, which includes the 'Peasant's Song', a typically late-nineteenth-century exaltation of a noble yet simple folk-like melody. Then, best-known of all the *Lyric Pieces*, there is 'Wedding Day at Troldhaugen', an upbeat and unforgettable march with a tender-hearted trio.

A more remarkable manifestation of Grieg's interest in Norwegian folk melody is to be heard in his collection of *Slåtter* (Norwegian peasant dances) of 1902. These are arrangements for piano of traditional dances typically played on a Hardanger fiddle – a violin with resonating strings. The resonant bare fifths with which these modal tunes are accompanied, and the clashing seconds to be heard between the principal and subsidiary melodies are all unapologetically transcribed into these pieces, several of them sounding like precursors of Bartók's own folk arrangements. (One may suspect, too, that at least one of Grieg's pieces, the gentle piping of No. 14, may also have inspired Debussy's 'The Little Shepherd' in *Children's Corner!*) Yet there is a surprising touch of sophistication to be heard in the central section of No. 4, with chromaticism spiced with some particularly bitter dissonances.

Daniel Jaffé





BIOGRAPHY

Pianist Ivana Gavrić created a sensation with her debut disc *In the Mists*, winning *BBC Music Magazine* Newcomer of the Year 2011 for 'playing of an altogether extraordinary calibre'. Her 'superlative' (*International Record Review*) and 'hypnotically compelling' (*BBC Music Magazine*) second disc *From the Street* again enchanted critics and audiences worldwide. This album is her third collaboration with Champs Hill Records.

Named *Gramophone*'s 'One to Watch' and *BBC Music Magazine*'s 'Rising Star', Ivana has performed on the major concert platforms in the UK including the Wigmore Hall, Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall, as well as across Europe, in Canada, Japan and Russia. Attracting considerable praise for her interpretations of Janáček's music in particular, Ivana performed his Concertino and *LH-concerto Capriccio* with the RPS Award-winning Aurora Orchestra, conducted by Nicholas Collon. Ivana has also curated festivals dedicated to Janáček's solo and chamber works.

With a broadening international solo career, Ivana's 'beautiful sound, musical integrity' (*Gramophone*) are often heard in regular live performances on BBC Radio 3 and 4. Also a dedicated chamber musician, Ivana performed with violinist Maxim Vengerov in 2007 as part of Live Music Now, the outreach scheme established by the late Lord Menuhin. She has partnered colleagues on the concert platform in festivals in the UK and Europe, taken part in the IMS Prussia Cove Open Chamber Music Sessions and is an alumna of the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme. Outside the concert hall she 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*.

Born into a musical family in Sarajevo, Ivana was initially taught by her mother. Following her move to the UK, she studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Junior Department, University of Cambridge and the Royal College of Music. Her teachers include Niel Immelman, Peter Bithell and James Gibb. Additionally, Ivana has had the opportunity to study with esteemed musicians such as Menahem

Pressler, Ferenc Rados, Dmitry Bashkirov, Boris Berman, Stephen Kovacevich and Leif Ove Andsnes.

Ivana is indebted to the support of many trusts, including the Frankopan Fund (Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts), the MBF, The Solti Foundation, The Nicholas Boas Trust, The Richard Carne Trust and the RVW Trust.

www.ivanagavric.com



CHRCD009

Ivana Gavric - In The Mists

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Gramophone Magazine

"Hugely impressive CD debut... This is very high-class Schubert playing indeed."

The Guardian ****

"...There is no doubt in my mind that this CD could well mark the beginning of an outstanding international recording career: playing of this quality does not come along every day."

"A velvety touch, unerring sense of tempo and phrasing... a compelling recital"

Classical Music Magazine ****

Taking its title from the haunting Janáček work *In The Mists*, Gavric constructs her programme on this début disc around Schubert's A minor Sonata, and includes Liszt's stunning *Petrarch Sonnets*, along with Rachmaninov's Preludes (D & G major) and *Moments Musicaux* (B & E minor).

