



Oslo Camerata

Artistic Director: Stephan Barratt-Due

The Oslo Camerata was established in 1998 and is much in demand in Norway and abroad. Regular tours have taken them to prestigious festivals and concert-series in several European countries, India and South America. They have made recordings for Naxos as well as television recordings for the Norwegian National Channel. The repertoire of the ensemble spans from baroque to contemporary music, with commissioned works from both young and established composers. The Oslo Camerata has collaborated with artists such as Mischa Maisky, Julian Rachlin, Truls Mørk, Christian Lindberg, Henning Kraggerud, Lidia Baich and Jeremy Menuhin, and is ensemble-in-residence at the renowned Barratt Due Institute of Music in Oslo. From 2008 the ensemble has, through funding by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, been involved in *Projeto Aprendiz* in Niteroi, Brazil, a music project for children and young people in the *favelas*. The internationally renowned cellist Truls Mørk and violinist Henning Kraggerud are associated with the orchestra as principal guest leaders.

www.oslocamerata.no

1st violin: Stephan Barratt-Due, Camilla Kjøll, Carl Guido Gärtner, Henrik Myreng, Magnhild Skomedal Torvanger, Lina Marie Årnes • *2nd violin:* Bård Monsen, Margrete Pettersen, Eleonore Darmon, Christiane Eidsten Dahl, Miriam Helms Ålien • *Viola:* Soon Mi Chung, Madelene Berg, Maria Syre, Eivind Holtsmark Ringstad
Cello: Øystein Birkeland, Ole Eirik Ree, Tiril Dørum Bengtsson • *Double bass:* Natalie Radzik

Stephan Barratt-Due

Stephan Barratt-Due is a third generation violinist in a family with long musical traditions. Since his début in 1981 he has been active as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestra leader, participating in numerous national and international festivals and in tours in Norway, the Americas, Asia, and Europe. His duo collaboration with violist Soon-Mi Chung has become well known over the years in Norway and many leading Norwegian composers have written for them. In addition to his career as a performer, he has been artistic director of the Barratt Due Institute of Music since 1985, a conservatory in Oslo founded in 1927 by his grandparents and now one of the main educational institutions of music in Norway. Barratt-Due is among the leading violin professors in Scandinavia, and under his leadership the Oslo Camerata has become increasingly in demand both nationally and internationally. In 2002 H.M. King Harald of Norway appointed him Knight First Class of the Royal Order of St Olav. He plays a violin by J. B. Guadagnini from 1751, provided by Dextra Musica.



Photo: Dag Thorenfeldt



Photo: Jørg Wiesner

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GRIEG

String Quartets

Arranged for String Orchestra

NORDHEIM

Rendezvous

Oslo Camerata • Stephan Barratt-Due



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Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)
String Quartets in G minor and F major (arr. Årdal for string orchestra)
Arne Nordheim (1931–2010)
Rendezvous

Edvard Grieg, the greatest of Norwegian composers, was descended on his mother's side from a Norwegian provincial governor who had taken the name of Hagerup from his adoptive father, the Bishop of Trondheim. On his father's side he was of Scottish ancestry. His great-grandfather, Alexander Greig, had left Scotland after the battle of Culloden, when the cause of the Stuart claimants to the thrones of England and Scotland was finally destroyed by the English army under its royal Hanoverian general. In Norway the Greigs became Griegs and during the nineteenth century established themselves comfortably in their new country, Edvard Grieg's father and grandfather both having served as British consuls in Bergen.

The Grieg household provided a musical background for a child. Musicians visited the family and these visitors included the distinguished violinist Ole Bull, who persuaded the Griegs to send their son Edvard to Leipzig Conservatory, an institution he entered at the age of fifteen, there to benefit from the demands of a traditional German musical education. In Leipzig, however, not everything was to Grieg's liking. He objected to the dryness of normal piano instruction, based on the work of Czerny and Clementi, and was able to change to a teacher who was able to instil in him a love of Schumann. He attended concerts by the famous Gewandhaus Orchestra that Mendelssohn had once directed and was present when Clara Schumann, the composer's widow, played her husband's piano concerto there, and at performances of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. At the same time he was able to meet other musicians, including Arthur Sullivan.

After a short period at home again in Norway, where he was unable to obtain a state pension, Grieg moved to Denmark. The capital, Copenhagen, was a cultural centre for both countries, and here he had considerable encouragement from Niels Gade. The principal influence that was to change his life came from a meeting with Rikard Nordraak, a young Norwegian, who fired him with ambition to seek inspiration in the folk-music of Norway. Nordraak was to die tragically young, at the age of 24. Grieg, however, continued to prepare himself for employment in Norway, first of all taking a long holiday which led him to Rome, where he met

the great Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen. It was a concert arranged by Grieg in Christiania (Oslo) and given by him with his cousin and future wife Nina Hagerup and the violinist Wilhelmine Norman-Neruda that secured him a position in Norway and provided support for the projected Norwegian Academy of Music, established in the following year, 1867.

The period that followed saw Grieg's struggle, with the backing of Liszt and the support of his friend, the dramatist and theatre-director Bjørnson, to establish some sort of national musical movement in Norway. He divided his time between concert activities, on tour as conductor and pianist, composition, and periods spent in enjoyment of the Norwegian countryside.

Grieg's ambitions for Norwegian music were very largely realised. At home he came to occupy a position of honour, and his collaboration with Bjørnson and Ibsen further identified him with the culture of his homeland. He died in 1907, as he was about to undertake one more concert tour. For years he had suffered from lung trouble, the result of an illness in his student days. It was this that was to bring about his death at the age of 64.

Grieg later admitted that there was an autobiographical element in his first surviving and only complete string quartet, the *Quartet in G minor, Op. 27*. This was written in 1877–78 in the work-hut he had built for himself at Lofthus, during a period when he was not accompanied by his country retreat by his wife, with whom his relationship had not always been easy. The quartet makes use of a setting of words by Ibsen that reflect the thoughts of a musician separated from his beloved, meditating, as he walks on a summer evening by a stream, on the possibility of some water spirit bringing his beloved to him again. The melody of the song provides the characteristic motto theme that is first heard in the slow introduction to the first movement, and then, later, transformed as the second theme in an *Allegro molto*. This Grieg motif, familiar from the opening of his *Piano Concerto*, recurs throughout the quartet, ensuring an element of cyclic unity. The tranquil second movement *Romanze* is interrupted by this motif and the third movement *Intermezzo* starts with it and continues in the same vein, relaxing into a central trio section in what is, in fact, a scherzo. The last movement

opens with a slow introduction, where the motto theme is heard again, before the final rapid dance, which ends with optimism in G major. Grieg's publisher at first rejected the quartet, taking objection to what seemed a certain thickness of texture and to the frequent use of double or multiple stopping that suggested the need for a piano. This feature of the work makes a string orchestra arrangement, with its contrasts of texture, a viable possibility. The quartet was taken up in 1878 by the Heckmann Quartet, who gave the first performances in Cologne and in Leipzig, and later won the approval of Liszt and publication first by Fritsch rather than his usual publisher, Peters. Grieg had discussed many of the details of the composition with Robert Heckmann, while deploring the fact that he himself had acquired no knowledge of string-playing while he was a student in Leipzig.

Grieg had first attempted the form of the string quartet in 1862, with a work now lost. His third attempt remained unfinished. The two movements of the *Quartet in F major* were written in 1891. Once more the work starts with a slow introduction, originally calling for violin triple-stopping, later edited out by Grieg's friend Julius Röntgen, who made other minor changes and provided completed versions of the third and fourth movements of the quartet. The *Allegro vivace* that follows is in tripartite sonata form, with an exposition fertile in musical ideas, a short central development and a recapitulation in which the exposition is largely repeated. The second movement, a *Scherzo* derived from a Norwegian dance-form, like the first has passages of cross-rhythm, both in its D minor opening and, particularly, in its D major central section.

Arrangement of Grieg's Quartets for String Orchestra

My initial idea for these arrangements was to base them on Grieg's own arrangements for string orchestra of his songs and piano pieces, but this turned out to be fruitless, as my first approaches had a "grand style" of string-writing that was too far removed from the original mood of the pieces. A closer study of Mahler's similar arrangement of Beethoven's *Quartet, Op. 95*, was an eye-opener and inspiration. The added double-bass (in octaves or in unison with the cello-line) is the cornerstone, as this alone provides the orchestral element, enriching the ensemble with new depth and power.

So the main question is where to let the double-bass play, how to use it (*arco* or *pizzicato*) and in which octave to put it. This in its turn also affects the cello part. Should

Arne Nordheim, the leading Norwegian composer of his generation, was born in 1931 at Larvik on the Oslofjord. He studied first at the conservatory in Oslo with Bjarne Brustad before moving to Copenhagen, where the composer Vagn Holmboe introduced him to the compositional techniques of Bartók. A visit to Paris in 1955 brought experience of electronic music, with which, after further study in Bilthoven and Warsaw, and in Stockholm, where he met György Ligeti, he was able to pioneer new techniques in Norway, a country that musically had remained generally conservative in taste. With a wide range of compositions for the theatre, television and cinema, Nordheim went on to play a leading part in contemporary music in Norway. His *Rendezvous*, originally a string quartet written in 1956, was revised by its composer for string orchestra in 1986, with the new title suggesting a meeting with his younger self. In 1975 he had already arranged the third movement for string orchestra, at first under the title *Epitaffio*, later used for another work, hence the title *Nachruf* (Obituary) in the 1986 version, largely in memory of what has gone before, and not intended to suggest mourning for any particular person. Nordheim was initially influenced by Sibelius and, still more, by Mahler, and then by Bartók's string quartets, and these influences are reflected in *Rendezvous*. The first movement, *Praeambulum (quasi una fantasia)* is ominous and dramatic in its opening and, while imbued with melancholy, has elements that are strongly lyrical in feeling. The *Intermezzo* offers a contrast of mood and tempo, while the final deeply felt *Nachruf* may now be heard as a solemn epitaph for the composer himself.

Keith Anderson

the cellos remain in the original register, move up an octave, or play in parallel octaves within the group to provide the most satisfactory sound? These challenges had to be considered for every actual phrase. In short, how much influence should be given to the added double bass? I have tried, here and there, as delicately and unobtrusively as possible, to introduce romantic orchestral octave scoring to enrich the orchestral colour and power. In very intimate passages I felt that the original quartet sound with four solo players could provide an effective contrast to the arranged material. The final solution is, of course, unattainable – the original quartets as they left the hand of the composer are alone the "truth".

Alf Årdal

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