

Lyric's pieces op. 65 by Edvard Grieg.

Some personal reflections.

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Introduction

“The most important thing is the truth of feeling”

Edvard Grieg

In my view, the main goal of a true and honest musician is to try to understand the ways in which the composer expresses himself, and the underneath idea of his musical piece; and carry this understanding to the listeners via musical performance. With this approach in mind, I started to work with the music by Edvard Grieg this year. By researching his style and musical form, I found many interesting and novel ideas for me as a pianist performer and a musician. Because I am a Russian pianist, I did not have a lot of experience with music by Edvard Grieg and did not much perform his music in Russia. That is why I decided to study Grieg when I came to Bergen, the town where he was born and lived.

I started with Grieg's Lyric pieces. The whole collection includes sixty-six pieces published in ten volumes; it feels like this music is a diary of Grieg's life, both musical and personal. These short simple pieces are expressed with a sense of freshness and simplicity. The music creates mood, atmosphere, and colour of nature that reaches an impression of the grand life around us. These pictures open up a whole new world of delicacy and intimacy.

For a more detailed study of the composer's piano style, I have chosen opus 65. This opus includes six pieces and contains two of the most splendid of all the Lyric pieces: 'From Early Years', a large fantasia-like piece, the brilliant 'Wedding Day at Troldhaugen', two effective folk-like numbers 'Peasant's Song' and 'Ballad', the somewhat overpowering 'Melancholy', and the light-dancing 'Salon'.

To have a clearer understanding of op. 65, I studied the original manuscript by Edvard Grieg from Bergen Offentlig Bibliotek, the edition of Grieg's *Lyrische Stücke* by Hermann Kretzschmar (C.F. Peters, 1902), and the sources of literature written by pianist-performers of Grieg's music: 'Grieg – the pianist's repertoire' by Eleonor Bailie, 'The Onstage with Grieg' by Einar Steen-Nøkleberg and 'The Lyric pieces of Edvard Grieg' by Sylvia R. Reynolds.

In the process of studying this literature and learning Grieg's score, I have discovered some important aspects about phrasing, voicing, harmony, dynamic, character, structure (culmination point) and pedalling. I would like to share some findings by going through each of the piece and point out my reflections on these elements. In the end, I will present some concluding remarks.

1. Fra Ungdomsdagene. (From early years)

The first piece in this cycle is in D minor in ABA form. It opens with eight notes that form an important figure that will be repeated many times. The G sharp, as a leading tone, helps the A to be emphasized and prolonged¹. The appoggiatura, B flat, is not only an ornament, but part of the melodic line and lyrical character in the opening section. In performance, this appoggiatura B flat should be an expressive part of the melody by taking more time on this note. The opening figure is the main music material of the piece and develops the musical thought throughout.

(ex. 1)

Ex. 1, *From early years*, m. 1.



Six tones in the figure (B flat-A-G sharp-A) are repeated, but two notes are altered by descending intervals. In this way we hear the stepwise line: E-D-C-B-B flat-A. It helps to prolong the line without becoming too static. (ex. 2)

Ex. 2, *From early years*, mm. 1-8.

Allegro moderato e tranquillo.

¹ Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe in his book 'A study of Grieg's harmony', on the page 37 says that "the augmented fourth in minor scale is frequently employed by Grieg. They are used the same way as the church modal scales; in setting of folk-melodies and for coloristic purposes in compositions without folk-musical connotations".

Parallel to the descending line, A is reiterated like a bell. The first eight-measure phrase leads to a cadence of a V chord in minor. The cadence is weak and we feel that the music flows into the next phrase.

The next phrase (ex. 3) is a kind of inversion of the opening figure. The melody gets more energy now by ascending first and then descending several times. (ex. 3)

Ex. 3, *From early years*, mm. 9-12.



This phrase is repeated twice, the first time in G minor and the second time in E flat major, which suggests that the second phrase could be played softer.

The improvisatory nature of the beginning now becomes more expressive. We are now in A major, there are more short slurs and the beats are intensified. The repeated notes give a more agitated character to the melody and create more flow. (ex. 4)

Ex. 4, *From early years*, mm. 17-20.



The musical material is now developed and leads to the culmination point of the A section. The rhythm is foreshortened, with *crescendo* and *stretto* in measures 17-26 (ex. 5). In a short amount of time we get a big musical effect.

Ex. 5, *From early years*, mm. 17-26.

There are some difficulties for the performer. The challenge is here to combine short breaths without losing the longer line (mm. 17-28).

In ex. 6 the composer intensifies the same rhythmic motive (from m. 17 and m. 20 to mm. 29-32), now in *forte* – the lyric character gives way to a more resolute one. The accents are now on the second beat – the last note of the motive. After the accents, the four *staccato* chords should be performed lightly in the *pedal*. The goal is going through to the end of the phrase in m. 32.

Ex. 6, *From early years*, mm. 29-32.

The first three phrases from the opening (mm. 1- 16) now comes back with double octaves in *fortissimo*. (ex. 7)

Ex. 7, *From early years*, mm. 33-34.

The tension is prolonged until what I feel is the culmination on the G-minor chord with *forzando* and arpeggiated left hand. The passages in measures 41-47 can be rapturous by showing the melody in the left hand to avoid being ponderous.

Ex. 8, *From early years*, m. 41.



The B section is more rhythmic in a kind of “springar” - rhythm in the left hand². (ex. 9)

Ex. 9, *From early years*, mm. 59-62



The rhythm in the bass is dominating in this section throughout. It should be performed very accurately, without acceleration or losing the rhythmic control. The bass line (see ex. 10) has an interesting countermelody to the right hand.

Ex. 10, *From early years*, mm. 69-72.



The first four measures are rhythmically varied in the following four measures. This helps to create the flow as opposed to the static rhythm in the left hand. It is possible for the right hand to be more flexible rhythmically than the static left hand.

In ex. 11 in m. 80 the right hand is difficult to make clear and precise and Eleanor Bailie³ recommends the fingering indicated in ex. 11. If the fifth finger on the C sharp is not comfortable, it is possible to use fourth on the first C sharp and third on the second, as in ex. 12.

² «The music of folk dances helps to identify the character of a piece. The rhythmic motive is strong and a distinguishing feature of the Norwegian spring dances which are hearty and rustic outdoor dances”, - Sylvia R. Reynolds, 1971, p.27.

³ Eleanor Bailie, 1993, p.212

Ex. 11, *From early years*, mm. 79-80

Ex. 12, *From early years*, mm. 79-80

This motive also comes in tripled rhythm. Einar Steen-Nøkleberg⁴ recommends the fingering indicated in red in ex. 13. It is safer than Hermann Kretzschmar's from 1902.⁵

Ex. 13, *From early years*, mm. 91-92

The section A returns after a measure of rest (m. 106) and the musical material is repeated except for the ending. In ex. 14, the unresolved ending in the first A section, now resolves into D major in *ppp*.

Ex. 14, *From early years*, mm. 166-168

It sounds as if the music is disappearing into silence. The sixteenths in the right hand should be heard in spite of the *pedal*.

⁴ Einar Steen-Nøkleberg, 1997, p. 313.

⁵ Edvard Grieg: Klavierwerke, 1902, pp.142-71.

After a *fermata* the final coda comes as a dramatic recitative in D minor. (ex. 15) Each note is declaimed. The long A in the melody (ex. 15, mm. 170-171) reminds us of the opening section (see ex. 2).

Ex. 15, *From early years*, mm. 170-173



2. Bondens Sang (Peasant's song)

The melody of this piece has two large phrases: A (mm. 1-8) and B (mm. 8-12). The A section is repeated with some harmonic or melodic variations (mm. 12-15 and mm. 20-24). The form is A, B, A₂ + (B, A₃).

The A section is in A major (ex. 16).

Ex. 16, *Peasant's song*, mm. 1-2



This melody which is like a folk song line is difficult to perform because of its simplicity. The tension between the notes should be made clear. In ex. 16, the melody has two A flat, two C sharp and two E flat. The question is which tones are to be played more expressive so as not to destroy the whole line. The culmination point in ex. 16 is the second E (fourth beat of measure one). It is the highest tone before the melody descends. The first A is softer then the first C sharp which is softer then the first E. The performer should be very careful with the D as not to stop the ongoing flow. A clear understanding of the structure of this phrase helps to make a *legato* as the composer has indicated.

In A₁ the tenor line has an interesting syncopated rhythm which helps to create motion to the varied melody of A. (Ex. 17).

Ex. 17, *Peasant's song*, mm. 4-5.

The B section starts in measure eight (ex. 18) in F sharp minor and will be repeated again (from m. 16 to m. 20).

Ex. 18, *Peasant's song*, mm. 8-12

The piece uses four voices. The counterpoint creates the motion throughout by polyphonic interaction. C sharp(s) are repeated many times - being intensified in *crescendo* – going to a culmination point F sharp – G sharp – E in *forte*. The chromatic movement in the left hand helps to create movement to the culmination.

In performance is it difficult to determine the main culmination point because sections A and B are repeated. Grieg's autograph is only one page long and the last B₁ and A₂ sections are not written out, but repeated with the repetition sign and using a *seconda volta*⁶. In this case I think that this makes the structure simpler. The high point becomes the B₂, supported by dynamic indications which are very accurate: the only *pianissimo* occurs before the B₂. The B₂ should begin softer to have time to grow from *pianissimo* to *forte*. Thus, the music develops from the beginning to m. 17 in B₂.

The last A major chord sounds as an afterthought where the A major chord is in a higher register (ex.19). In a performance the pause should be respected between the two last chords. In this way the last chord in high register sounds more fresh and pure. By emphasizing C sharp in the last chord the reference to the others C sharp creates a sense of remembrance.

⁶ Bergen offentlige bibliotek, Griegs autograf, op. 65

Ex. 19, *Peasant's song*, m. 24-26.



3. Melancholy (Tungsind)

This piece is characterized by the recitative-like atmosphere, short melodic motives, short breaths and rhythmic variety. The performer needs take care of this rhythmic variety and especially being flexible in the coordination of the hands.

Recitative-like sections (mm. 1-2, mm. 19-20, 24-30, mm. 40-41, mm. 45-49) and the theme (mm. 4-9, mm. 10-15, mm. 16-18, mm. 21-23, mm. 31-36, mm. 37-39, mm. 42-44, 52-58) will interchange throughout in different keys. The opening recitative-like figure sounds harmonically unclear. The melody can sound like D major (A – is the fifth, chromatically emphasizing F sharp which is the third and long D – as tonic). When C sharp comes, it could go on to D (leading tone to D major), or B minor (C sharp falling down melodically to B). The opening has a speech-like character⁷. The B minor comes as surprise in the left hand (m. 3) and creates the moody atmosphere before the theme appears in the right hand. (ex. 20)

Ex. 20, *Melancholy*, mm. 1-3.



The theme (mm. 4-9) is divided into fourth declamatory figures. In ex. 22, each melodic figure begins with the B and ends with A three times. It is important to play each B differently, increasing the dynamic and finally going to *forte* in (m. 7). The accompaniment helps to keep the pulse and play the melody more continually. The eight-note rests are very important to keep in time. (ex. 2)

⁷ «Recitative is a type of vocal writing with the intent of mimicking dramatic speech. (...)It used on the moments of intense dramatic crisis. (...) the impression of a continuing narrative or dialogue”, - The New Grove Dictionary, Volume twenty-one, 2001, p. 1-3.

Ex. 22, *Melancholy*, mm. 5-7

The rhythm in m.6, (ex. 22) might be difficult to coordinate between the two hands. Eleonor Bailie recommends feeling that the right hand is subject to the left hand rhythm⁸. In other words, the left hand holds the rhythmic foundation.

The next presentation of the theme (ex. 23) comes in F sharp, the minor dominant. The melody has now moved from the bass clef to the treble clef and sounds lighter than before. (ex. 23)

Ex. 23, *Melancholy*, mm. 10-15.

The following section (ex. 24) opens with the theme once again but is transferred to octaves in the left hand in a distant key area. The musical indications in the melodic line are not as detailed as before (see ex. 22 or 23). The octaves do not have slurs and should be played separately, not heavy without losing the rhythmic pulse. The accompaniment is now in the right hand and should lead the pulse. (ex. 24)

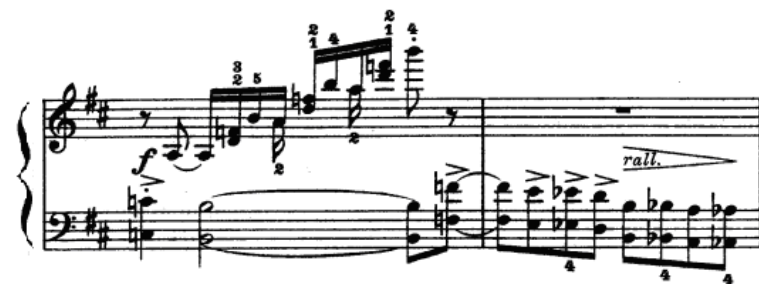
⁸ “Make sure that the hands are perfectly coordinated so that demisemiquavers are clearly timed...”, - Eleonor Bailie, 1993, p.217.

Ex. 24, *Melancholy*, mm. 16-17



Stringendo (m.18) brings the phrase to a shifting of the beat by the syncopated left hand. In my experience, the syncopated B in the left hand (m. 19) can be played too powerfully and lose the effect of syncopation. The H in the left hand should play softer than F with a tendency to strive forward. The syncopation can give the impulse to the sixteenths and F in the left hand (m. 19) will continue the phrase. (ex. 25)

Ex. 25, *Melancholy*, mm. 19-20



The tempo changes to *allegro agitato* when the recitative-like passage comes. (ex. 24) These development sections (mm. 16- 30 and mm. 37-51) reach two culmination points. (m. 27, m. 47)

Ex. 24, *Melancholy*, mm. 25-27



The melody is doubled in octaves. The measures 26-27 should be performed with the left hand as Grieg implies in the score, feeling the phrase with the melody on the top. The clear rhythm and the accents increase the expression and dramatic effect in a contrast to the theme's character.

When the original melody comes back in B minor (ex. 25), - a syncopated rhythm appears in both hands. The texture sounds now more orchestral. This syncopated rhythm sounds as an independent voice. A short *pedal* on each syncopated beat could help to play the chords without being too short. It will give clarity and continuity to the theme. (ex. 25)

Ex. 25, *Melancholy*, mm. 31-32



4. Salon.

The form is ABABA.

This piece has difficulties in rhythmic coordination between the hands. In performing this piece the lightness and *grazioso* character should be played with clear articulation and precise sixteenths. Einar Steen-Nøkleberg comments on the character of this piece: “It is not a waltz in the conventional sense, but it should have the elegance of a fast waltz. The accompaniment moves in a triple rhythm with frequent rests on the first beat, emphasizing the lightness and the rocking character”⁹. (ex. 26)

Ex. 26, *Salon*, mm. 1-2



The musical flow and dance-like character is created by moving from one hand to another. (ex. 26) The lifting and falling of the hands creates this atmosphere.

The long F sharp (in m. 1 and 2) with an accent in the right hand is followed by the figure in the left hand. The E on the fourth beat gives the impulse to the sixteenths, but should not be played too heavy. The sixteenths should sound light, but distinct without rushing so as to not lose the clarity. The performer is required to have rhythmic flexibility. Sylvia Reynolds wrote about the coordination: “The piece helps to develop quick arm movement and coordination of different rhythms in the same hand”¹⁰. (ex. 27)

⁹Einar Steen-Nøkleberg, 1997, p. 316.

¹⁰Sylvia R. Reynolds, 1971, p. 65.

Ex. 27, *Salon*, mm. 2-4.



In measure 3 (ex. 27) the challenge can be to coordinate the hands. The performer should be careful to not be too stiff in the left hand. The slurs in the accompaniment (m. 2-4) should be articulated, because it helps to prolong the F sharp in the melody. In performing this it is necessary to find comfortable movements between the hands: the right hand falls on the F sharp and lifts up together with the slurred left hand.

This material (ex. 26 and 27) will be repeated in ascending sequences (from mm. 5-11). The A section ends in measure 15 in A major, which is the main key.

The B section, “more moving” in *con moto*, starts with syncopated chords (6/8 becomes 3/4) in parallel motion. (Ex. 28)

Ex. 28, *Salon*, mm. 16-19

I find this transition to be difficult. The dancing in the A section is now replaced by a song-like melody. The challenge is to find a good tempo and make a natural forward movement and avoid playing in a static way. In my own performance I try to feel the eight notes (after-beats) in order not to make the syncopated note too short. The whole phrase should lead to measure 19, which is high point of tension in the phrase (marked with *crescendo*).

A sudden change of key to A flat major in *pianissimo* gives a new coloristic effect with syncopated after-beats¹¹. (ex. 29)

¹¹ “...such key-changes are most characteristic of Grieg’s style...sudden key-changes might produce modal effects...obtaining coloristic effects”. - Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe, ‘A study of Grieg’s harmony’, Oslo, 1953, p. 150.

Ex. 29, *Salon*, mm. 20-24



The right hand has to combine the melody and the accompaniment which can be uncomfortable. Eleonara Bailie talks of having a physical sense of the change to an implied $\frac{3}{4}$ here.¹² The melody has slurs from the first to the second beat which indicates that the second beat should be lifted in a light way. The chords should be played softly and quietly as to help prolong the ascending phrase. Eleanor Bailie suggests a very useful advice for practicing with the feeling of $\frac{3}{4}$ in ex. 30¹³.

Ex. 30, *Salon*, m. 20



5. Ballad. (I Balladetone)

This piece has a song-like melody (ex. 31, mm. 1-8) which is varied throughout, creating an atmosphere of continuity. It can be difficult for the performer to create musical flow because of the slow tempo in half notes. It is important to shape the tension between the notes. A clear pulse and precise rhythm can help to achieve a natural flow. “It is important to feel a 2-in-the-measure-flow”,¹⁴ - as Eleanor Bailie recommends in her book. The eight notes goes forward (m.1) to the second beat while the left hand together with right hand holds the half note accompaniment. They should be played with a feeling of forward motion.

¹² Eleanor Bailie, 1993, p. 220.

¹³ Eleanor Bailie, 1993, p. 220.

¹⁴ Eleanor Bailie, 1993, p. 222.

Ex. 31, *Ballad*, mm.1-8

The culmination point of this phrase (mm.1-8) is measure six. The performer should be careful to shape the phrase by not stopping on the half note D in measure two (ex.31), and playing it softer than the second D. The eight notes after the dotted quarter notes should be played *non legato* articulation with energy to go to the next note.

The accompaniment in both hands (ex.31) supports the speaking melody and prolongs it. It should be played more soft than the melody. The composer did not write *legato* slurs in the score, but the character of the song-like melody implies this kind of articulation. Einar Steen-Nøkleberg suggests playing this piece with a free, warm sound and a smooth *legato*. He recommends playing each note with an unhurried intensity and "preferably held – experienced – almost as if it were a part of the next note".¹⁵ In my experience using half pedal for making *legato* in the left hand helps to sustain *legato* in the melody.

The second time this first phrase (mm. 1-8) appears the melody is doubled in octaves in the right hand. The performer should be attentive concerning the pedal here. In order for the melody in octaves to be played clearly at the same time with rich in sound, using half-pedal can help. The melodic G (m. 14) becomes more expressive by being *arpeggiated* and it is natural to take more time on this chord. (Ex. 32)

Ex. 32, *Ballad*, mm. 13-14.

The next section (mm. 17-24) contains the same musical material with some variations. A lighter character is now achieved through modal coloring in *pianissimo* and the imitation in

¹⁵Einar Steen-Nøkleberg, 1992, p. 318

eighth-notes (ex. 33) between the hands. In my experience the *poco mosso* can evolve gradually through the imitation. In this way *poco mosso* becomes organic in my opinion.

Ex. 33, *Ballad*, mm. 17-19



This section (mm. 17-25) will be repeated in mm. 33-40, again with octaves as mm. 13-14 in low register in the left hand, creating a darker atmosphere (ex. 34). In this register the performer should be careful with the pedal playing this piece on modern pianos¹⁶. The low register in the left hand can easily sound too loud and *the pedal* should be used discreetly in order not to overpower the melodic line in the right hand. (ex. 34)

Ex. 34, *Ballad*, mm. 33-36



Tempo I (mm. 25-32) contains similar musical material as in mm. 17-24 and the opening mm. 1-8. This section will be repeated in octaves in mm. 41-48, now with a more pathetic expression. The culmination point of the whole piece is clearly in mm. 44-45 and created by the expanded bass line with accents in *fortissimo*. (ex. 35) The bass line speaks as a declamation especially if played with *portato* articulation. Eleanor Balie recommends to play the bass *acciaccatura* in measures 44 and 45 (ex. 35) by catching the G and B flat clearly in the pedal on the first beat. She adds, that the one can take time in measure 45 and “expand ever more grandly from measure 44 towards the climatic chord on the second beat of measure 45”,¹⁷ thus creating a big culminating effect.

¹⁶ “In Grieg’s day a relatively thick style of pedaling appears to have been accepted, whereas today in general we have been schooled to prefer a cleaner overall sound. Sometimes, therefore, Grieg’s pedal indications seem somewhat thick or heavy to our modern ears, and in such cases I have suggested degrees of lightening, according to individual taste”, - Eleanor Bailie, 1993, p. 64

¹⁷ Eleanor Bailie, 1993, p. 223.

Ex. 35, *Ballad*, mm. 43-45



In my experience shaping the form of this piece depends on thinking about the final culmination point (mm. 44-45) already from the beginning and implies carefully building up the dynamics and saving the expression until the final statement of the theme.

6. Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen (Bryllupsdag på Trolldhaugen)

The overall form is ABA. The A section (mm. 1-56) is characterized by a marching rhythm with precise articulations and short motives. The B section (mm. 57- 106) is based on a syncopated rhythm and more prolonged phrases.

The first section opens with rhythmic fragments which will be repeated throughout (mm. 1-2). Einar-Steen Nøkleberg comments that the main tempo applies to the half note. As the composer does not write *alla breve*, he uses an accent on the third beat. (ex. 36)

Ex. 36, *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, mm. 1-2



The accented third beat, with *staccato* in the left hand, creates a feeling of motion. The dancing rhythm in the accompaniment helps the right hand to play more articulated - the hands falling on the slurs and lightly lifted with the *staccato* (ex 37). These synchronous movements between the hands make the articulation more precise. In my experience the feeling of going forward to the first and third beats help me to create flow despite the marching rhythm.

Ex. 37, *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, mm. 2-4

The pedal indications (mm.2-4) can be challenging for the performer playing on modern pianos. Using the half-pedal can help the *staccato* and *legato* to sound more clearly as the composer wrote.

The opening rhythmic fragments appear in the A major section (mm. 21-31). The character becomes more emphatic; the accents in the accompaniment (ex. 38, m. 21) are not marked with *staccato* and the first and third beat sound heavier and brighter. It is important not to lose the feeling of going forward. The middle voice in the right hand (m. 22) gives an interesting color and energy in relation to the *soprano* and the *bass*. These sixteenth-notes should be played articulated in the pedal (ex. 38).

Ex. 38, *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, mm. 21-22

The right hand (mm. 24-25) has a similar rhythm as in the opening, (m. 3) but the accompaniment is now changed (ex. 39).

Ex. 39, *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, mm. 24-25

The *pianissimo* and *dolce* indications can be demanding to realize in the left hand now. The performer should play the sixteenths clearly (m.25). The synchronous falling on the slurs can help the hands to be more secure with clear articulation.

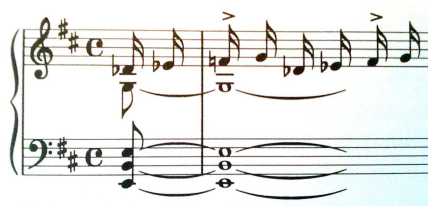
The middle part in A section (mm. 31-56) contains sixteenth-note passages “that sound like a frantic race between the hands”¹⁸ (ex. 40).

Ex. 40, *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, mm. 31-33



It is good to bring out the melody in the top voice. Eleonor Bailie suggests to practice as shown in example 41. To avoid of choppy feeling of alternating chords and rests, the accents emphasize the first and third beats, which helps to feel the pulse that builds up the four phrases in this part (from m. 41 to m. 51). The performer should be attentive to the long *pedal* here (mm. 31-33). Grieg’s pedaling was intended for pianos at his time and should be used carefully on modern pianos (see footnotes on page 19).

Ex. 41, *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, mm. 31-32



From measures 41-44 the melodic line moves from the upper voice to the left hand. (ex. 42)

¹⁸ Einar Steen-Nøkleberg, 1992, p. 320

Ex. 42, *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, mm. 41-43

The music now becomes more expressive and strives towards a culmination point. The performer should intonate the upper voice *staccato* in the left hand as a melody (mm. 41-43).

The four measures (mm. 45-48) before the culmination point of the A section contain the descending bass line (G – G-sharp – F - E) which leads to D major (ex. 43). The sound should be balanced between the bass line and chords in the treble (mm. 45-48). The full sound of the chords with *pedal* can easily cover the descending bass line. It can help to play the whole note in the right hand also more loudly than the low octaves in the base. The last chord of each measure can be played louder for more brilliance.

Ex. 43, *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, mm. 45-48

The B section (mm. 57-106) can be characterized as a contrasting character to the A section. The dancing character is now replaced by a *cantabile* atmosphere. Einar Seen-Nøkleberg suggests performing this section as a duet between the hands.¹⁹(ex. 44)

¹⁹ Einar Steen-Nøkleberg, 1992, p. 320

Ex. 44, *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, mm. 59-60



He adds that the performer should “think about the syncopation accent in relation to the usual accent on the first beat”.²⁰ The syncopated motive - repeated between the hands - create the movement despite the organ point in the left hand. (ex. 44)

The A section is repeated without changes with the addition of a coda. The coda (ex. 45) continues the rhythmical character of the A section.

Ex. 45, *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, mm. 162-164



The very interesting is the ending of this piece. The composer uses the big dynamic contrast between two last measures. (ex. 46) The performer should change his sound from *ppp* to *fff* only by a rest.

Ex. 46, *Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen*, mm. 181-182



²⁰ Einar Steen-Nøkleberg, 1992, p. 321

Concluding remarks

After carefully analyzing Edvard Grieg's opus 65, studying its musical scores, and practicing it, I have discovered how beautiful and original these pieces are; they are full of visual images, clarity, freshness of musical writing, with the color of modal scales. These unique qualities are what made Grieg's music so different from other composers of the Romantic Period. These pieces carry a certain sense of lightness. Even the most low and minor tunes do not have any tragic feel in them.

The opus consists of six lyric miniatures in a particular order:

1. 'From early years' – D minor. Allegro moderato e tranquillo.
2. 'Peasant's song' – A major. Andante simplice.
3. 'Melancholy' – B minor. Andante espressivo.
4. 'Salon' – A major. Allegretto con grazia.
5. 'Ballad' – C minor. Lento lugubre.
6. 'Wedding-day' – D major. Tempo di Marcia un poco vivace.

I think that the order of these pieces was chosen on purpose. Although each piece has different characters and lengths, all are part of a continuous story. The longest works, 'From yearly years' and 'Wedding-day', are located at the beginning and at the end of the cycle. The fantasy-like piece 'From yearly years' creates an atmosphere of introduction and keeps us waiting for the next event. The saddest pieces, 'Melancholy' and 'Ballad', are placed around 'Salon', which adds inspiration from French elegance and delicacy. The shortest, 'Peasant's song', makes the light connection between 'From early years' and the expressive 'Melancholy' in minor. The most joyful and virtuous 'Wedding-day' contrasts all previous impressions.

I have found some connections between selected keys of the pieces. The first piece and the last piece of the cycle are in both in D and differ only in that of major and minor. At the same time, the A section of 'From yearly years' is in D minor, but the B section is in D major, which, in turn, is also connected to 'Wedding-day' with its D major. The two light pieces of the cycle, 'Peasant's song' and 'Salon', are in A major. Thus, the B minor of 'Melancholy' and C minor of 'Ballad' - being between the A major pieces - express more intensity of expression.

The understanding of the structure of opus 65 helps me to perform the cycle as whole. The idea of introduction, transitions, emphasizing the most expressive moment and the final resolution helps me to create one complete story to the listeners. I feel that the culmination point in this cycle is 'Melancholy'. This can be supported by the fact that in this piece Grieg

uses minor coloring in dark B minor and F sharp minor. The other ‘minor’ pieces have middle sections in major. Also, ‘From yearly years’ has a B section in D major and ‘Ballad’ has F major as a light contrast. Moreover, the composer wrote the marking *espressivo* only in ‘Melancholy’. The most interesting moment for me is the recitative-like figures that give this piece a very expressive character. To show this expressivity during my performance, I want to focus on both the tempo and the sound.

The first piece, ‘From yearly years’ with its nostalgic character, I try to play it in such a way as if I am starting a story with a natural flow and a not too fast tempo. ‘Peasant’s song’ and ‘Salon’ are transition-like pieces and the resolution, ‘Wedding day at Troldhaugen’, I try to play like a brilliant, final march.

The composer did not place metronome markings in the score, only traditional Italian terminology. Understanding the character of each piece helps me to find the tempos and to make natural connections between them. ‘Ballad’, marked *lento*, should not be played too slow, keeping the feeling of continuity towards the final piece and thus keeping the narration line of the cycle. If I would play this piece alone, I would choose a slower tempo and not have to think about this connection. ‘Peasant’s song’ and ‘Melancholy’ have the term *andante*, but have very different characters and *andante* has to be interpreted in different ways. As it is clear from the context, ‘Peasant’s song’ creates a lighter image compared to the surroundings of the two expressive pieces and it thus creates a continuation to ‘Melancholy’, with the related tempo to ‘Peasant’s song’. ‘Melancholy’ has recitative-like figures in *allegro agitato* and *meno allegro*. It can be good to contrast these tempo changes more and show the different characters of the main theme and recitative-like figures. Therefore, *andante* in ‘Peasant’s song’ could be performed faster than *andante* in ‘Melancholy’. The choice of a good tempo in ‘Wedding day at Troldhaugen’ can also help articulate the rhythm. There is a known recording of Grieg playing this piece and the tempo chosen is very fast but the articulation is very precise. The pianos in Grieg’s time had a lighter sound compared to modern pianos, so the fast tempo still has clarity. Performing this piece on modern pianos, I try to play slower than Grieg, so that the marching rhythm can remain clear.

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