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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Playing (on) the Classics: Interpreting Grieg's Mozart in Nineteenth-Century London

William Drummond

Oxford University, UK
Email: williamjdrummond@googlemail.com

Abstract

The four *Piano Sonatas by W. A. Mozart with freely composed additional accompaniment for a Second Piano by Edvard Grieg* (EG 113) were first published in 1879–80 but were not heard by English concertgoers until 5 March 1890, when both Agathe Backer-Grøndahl and Anton Hartvigson opened separate recitals in London with Grieg's version of the Fantasy in C minor K475, the latter following it with the Sonata in F major K533/494. This coincidence is noteworthy not only because Grieg's additions appeared to flaunt the prevailing expectation of fidelity to classical works, but also because Mozart's solo keyboard music was rarely included in professional recitals. Focusing on Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's concerts, this article considers Grieg's additions not merely as 'arrangements' but also as a performance practice subject to a range of interpretations by recitalists and different sections of the audience. The article begins by placing the transformation of the additions from teaching aids into concert repertoire in the context of similar supplements to classic works and concurrent attitudes to Mozart's piano music. The next section examines the mixed reception of Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's recitals, situating this within contemporary debates about the role of fidelity in modern performances of historic works and its relationship with dominant conceptions of musical taste. While critics condemned the use of Grieg's additions, several disdainfully noted that they were well received by the rest of the audience. The final section attempts to account for this discrepancy by considering the widespread perception of Grieg's additions as Norwegian 'national music', a popular genre of exoticist parlour music that critics disparagingly associated with a mass audience of young, female players and considered inferior to 'international' classics. The article concludes by reflecting on how these factors might have informed Backer-Grøndahl's decision to perform Mozart's music with Grieg's additions.

At 3 o'clock on 5 March 1890, the music critic of the *Star* newspaper – who signed himself 'Corno di Bassetto' – joined the throng of concertgoers packed into London's Steinway Hall for a recital by the Norwegian pianist and composer Agathe Backer-Grøndahl (1847–1907).[1] Bassetto had enthused about Backer-Grøndahl's talent upon her first visit

I am grateful to Marten Noorduin, Annelies Andries, Frankie Perry, and Rosemary McMahon and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

[1] For a summary of Backer-Grøndahl's biography and career see Cecilie Dahm, 'Agathe Backer Grøndahl (1847–1907)', *Fontes Artis Musicae* 51/2 (2004): 191–8; and Nils Grinde, 'Backer Grøndahl, Agathe' in *Grove Music Online*, www.oxfordmusic.com (accessed 27 March 2020). An early biography of Backer-Grøndahl in English is Inga Hoegsbro Christensen, *Biography of the Late Agathe Backer-Gröndahl* (New York: Roy Press, 1913).

to England the previous season, but the opening item of that afternoon's programme left him in a state of disappointed shock:

> Do you know that noble fantasia in C minor, in which Mozart shewed what Beethoven was to do with the pianoforte sonata …? Imagine my feelings when Madame Backer-Gröndahl, instead of playing this fantasia (which she would have done beautifully), set Madame [Alma] Haas to play it, and then sat down beside her and struck up 'an original part for a second piano', in which every interpolation was an impertinence and every addition a blemish. Shocked and pained as every one who knew and loved the fantasia must have been, there was a certain grim ironic interest in the fact that the man who has had the unspeakable presumption to offer us his improvements on Mozart is the infinitesimal Grieg.[2]

Whilst the four *Piano Sonatas by W. A. Mozart with freely composed additional accompaniment for a Second Piano by Edvard Grieg* (EG113) had been completed over a decade earlier in 1877, Backer-Grøndahl's recital was the first time that any of them had been performed before the English public.[3] Bassetto was evidently concerned that her use of Grieg's pianistic addition to the Fantasy in C minor K475 would endanger her burgeoning artistic reputation, which he had done much to promote. Two days after the recital, the critic repeated his professional opinions in a personal letter, writing to the pianist under the name by which he was soon to become famous as a playwright: George Bernard Shaw.[4]

In his diary, Shaw noted another concert that his presence at Backer-Grøndahl's recital made it impossible for him to attend and that, unusually for the period, also featured solo piano music by Mozart, his favourite composer.[5] Half an hour after the start of Backer-Grøndahl's performance of Mozart's Fantasy and only a few streets away at Princes Hall, the Danish-born Londoner Anton Hartvigson (1845–1911) opened his own recital with the same work followed by the Sonata in F major K533/494.[6] However, had Shaw chosen to attend this recital rather than that given by Backer-Grøndahl he would have been no less appalled: assisted by his more famous brother Fritz (1841–1919), Hartvigson presented both the Fantasy and the Sonata with Grieg's additional piano parts.[7]

[2] Bernard Shaw, 'Bassetto's Destructive Force [*The Star*, 7 March 1890]' in *Shaw's Music: The Complete Musical Criticism*, ed. Dan H. Laurence, 3 vols, vol. 1 (London: Bodley Head, 1981): 944–9, 945–6.

[3] See *Claviersonaten von W. A. Mozart mit frei hinzucomponirter Begleitung eines zweiten Claviers von Edvard Grieg* vols 1–4 (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1890). The four volumes were as follows: 1, Sonata in F major (K533/494); 2, Fantasy and Sonata in C minor (K475, K457); 3, Sonata in C major (K545); and 4, Sonata in G major (K189h). Several critics noted that Backer-Grøndahl's use of Grieg's additional piano part was unprecedented in England; see, for examples, 'Two Pianoforte Recitals', *The Times*,6 March 1890, 10.

[4] Bernard Shaw, *Bernard Shaw: The Diaries, 1855–1897*, ed. Stanley Weintraub, 2 vols, vol. 1 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986): 595. On Shaw as music critic, see Eugene Gates, 'The Music Criticism and Aesthetics of George Bernard Shaw', *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 35/3 (2001): 63–71; and Harry White, '"Making Symphony Articulate": Bernard Shaw's Sense of Music History', in *British Musical Criticism and Intellectual Thought, 1860–1950*, ed. Jeremy Dibble and Julian Horton (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2018): 102–17. On the period's music journalism more generally, see Leanne Langley, 'The Musical Press in Nineteenth-Century England', *Notes* 46/3 (1990): 583–92.

[5] Shaw, *The Diaries*, 595. For a typical example of Shaw's adoration of Mozart, see Bernard Shaw, 'Mozart's Finality [*The World*, 9 Dec. 1891]', in *Shaw's Music*, 2:478–84, at 482–3.

[6] For a summary of Hartvigson's biography and career see 'Hartvigson, Anton' in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 3rd edition, ed. George Grove and H. C. Colles (London: Macmillan, 1927).

[7] Both brothers taught at the Royal Normal College for the Blind, but of the two siblings Fritz Hartvigson was better known as a concert pianist. See 'Hartvigson, Fritz' in ibid.

Shaw was not alone in deploying moralizing language that framed the performance as an act of destruction in implied contrast to the supposed beauty, perfection, and purity of classic works. Reporting on the Princes and Steinway Hall recitals in the *Weekly Dispatch*, for example, the pseudonymous critic 'Baton' called it 'an odd and most unwelcome coincidence that an artistic sin was committed in both places'.[8] 'Grieg's additions', the review concluded, 'are as un-Mozartian as they can well be, and the whole business is a disgusting outrage worthy of condemnation in the strongest language'.[9] This 'coincidence' was equally offensive to the *Referee*, which asked how Grieg had felt justified to 'lay violent hands on the work of one immeasurably superior to himself and torture it out of all recognition'.[10] Much of the press shared this revulsion; the vast majority of reviews of one or both of the recitals denounced the appearance of Grieg's additions in similarly forceful language.

It is hardly surprising that Grieg's additions to works by Mozart, and performers who chose to use them in concert, should suffer almost unanimous condemnation. As William Weber has argued, the nineteenth century witnessed a 'great transformation of musical taste' in which performing an esteemed canon of classical works as faithfully as possible became a widespread ideal.[11] Critics (along with educators, publishers, and impresarios) formed a new 'musical intelligentsia' that promoted this ideal, shaping an authoritative notion of good taste that eschewed the transformative – or, to them, 'unfaithful' – approach to the classics manifested in the use of Grieg's additions. However, some reviews also suggest that the critics' overwhelmingly negative view of these performances was far from universal. The *Musical World*, for instance, suspiciously noted pianists' apparent 'fascination' with Grieg's 'unpleasant arrangements'.[12] Furthermore, the *Glasgow Herald* observed that while the composer's addition to Mozart's Fantasy had been 'heartily abused by the London press' it '[seemed] to have some attraction for both players and public'.[13] Few accounts from those who experienced this 'attraction' first hand survive, but such comments hint at a greater diversity of opinion about Grieg's additions than is initially apparent from the unwavering negativity of reviews of Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's recitals.

This range of attitudes toward performing Mozart's music with additions by Grieg, as well as the remarkable vehemence of the criticism it received in print, raises a number of questions which make the two performances worthy of further scholarly attention. Why, beyond a general concern with fidelity to the classics, did Grieg's additions in particular occasion such acute alarm and invective from critics? Given the likelihood of this negative press reaction, why did Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson risk using the additions in their performances of Mozart's solo piano works, which in any case were seldom heard in professional recitals? What accounted for the appeal these performances appear to have held for many concertgoers despite flouting dominant conceptions of 'good taste'?

This article addresses these interconnected questions by placing Hartvigson and Backer-Grøndahl's use of Grieg's additions on 5 March 1890 in the context of the performance traditions, aesthetic debates, and cultural anxieties that informed their mixed reception by contemporary listeners. In doing so, it takes a different approach to existing

[8] Baton, 'Music', *Weekly Dispatch*, 9 March 1890, 6.

[9] Baton, 'Music', 6.

[10] 'Dramatic & Musical Gossip', *Referee*, 9 March 1890, 2–3, at 3.

[11] William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[12] 'Concerts: London and Suburban', *Musical World* (8 March 1890): 194–195, 195.

[13] 'Pianoforte Recital', *Glasgow Herald*, 7 Apr. 1890, 9. The latter remark was occasioned by another performance using Grieg's addition in a series of education concerts given in Glasgow by C. Hall Woolnoth and Philip Halstead.

scholarly discussions of Grieg's additional piano parts. Although diverse in their arguments, these accounts retain the evaluative aims of nineteenth-century reviews, attempting to deny or, increasingly, to affirm the additions' aesthetic worth.[14] For example, Albrecht Goebel seeks to defend the additions by downplaying their supposedly 'Nordic' inflections, instead arguing that they present a successful unity of Classical and Romantic styles.[15] However, for Peter Jost potential connections to Norwegian folk music are the principle source of the additions' value and Joachim Brügge construes them as a bold exploration of stylistic disunity that anticipates both modernism and postmodernism.[16] These apparently contradictory interpretations share the same fundamental assumption, that Mozart's music and Grieg's additions together form a composite musical work or 'arrangement' that might be appraised largely without reference to the cultural contexts in which they were first devised and performed.

This article takes a different approach. Situating Grieg's additions historically, it asks what the additions meant to specific nineteenth-century pianists and their audiences within performance practice and culture rather than merely as 'arrangements'. Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's near-simultaneous performances provide an especially rewarding focus of enquiry because they generated a wealth of commentary within a single time and place. In contrast to the work-based standpoint of existing accounts, the historical approach of this article entails examination of Grieg's additions through the lens of performance. Crucially, this involves not only considering actual performances of Grieg's 'arrangements' of Mozart's music and their reception but also reconsidering them as performances of works by Mozart that made use of additions by Grieg.[17] This shift in perspective is useful for two reasons. First, it affords greater sensitivity to the particular form of Grieg's adaptive practice, in which he simply added to an existing work rather than comprehensively 're-arranging' it for different instrumental forces. Second, it better reflects the attitudes of those who heard Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's recitals. As this article will argue, these listeners understood the use of Grieg's additions as a performance practice as readily as they interpreted them as composed 'arrangements'.

The present discussion of these themes falls into three sections. The first situates Grieg's additions within an existing tradition of pedagogical accompaniments and traces how they were eventually repurposed as professional concert repertoire. The second section considers how an increasing demand for 'fidelity' to classical works informed the negative reception suffered by Hartvigson and Backer-Grøndahl's use of the additions, and why Grieg's adaptive practice specifically should provoke such ire. From this basis, it examines how criticism of Grieg's additions drew on an emerging association between

[14] The negative assessment of Grieg's additions initiated by nineteenth-century critics persisted for the next century. The most recent comprehensive biography of the composer, for example, calls the additions a 'sad chapter' in Grieg's career and states that it is 'hard to understand' why he chose to supplement Mozart's 'lovely, innocent piano sonatas'; Finn Benestad and Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe, *Edvard Grieg: The Man and the Artist*, trans. William H. Halverson and Leland B. Sateren (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1988): 209.

[15] Albrecht Goebel, 'Die Mozart-Bearbeitungen von Edvard Grieg', *Zeitschrift für Musikpädagogic* 12/42 (1987): 8–14.

[16] Peter Jost, '"Eine Norwegisierung Mozarts"? Zu Edvard Griegs Bearbeitungen Mozartscher Klaviersonaten', in *Im Dienst der Quellen zur Musik: Festschrift Gertraut Haberkamp zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Paul Mai (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2002): 595–607; and Joachim Brügge, 'Edvard Griegs Mozartbearbeitungen: Ein früher Modellfall aus postmoderner Überschreibungsästhetik und Bloomschen Misreading?', in *Musikgeschichte als Verstehensgeschichte: Festschrift für Gernot Gruber zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Joachim Brügge, Franz Födermayr et al. (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2004): 411–20.

[17] The concept of arrangement as both genre and practice is a productive focus of enquiry that has received increasing attention in recent years. It is not, however, the focus of this article. For a critical review of relevant literature see William Drummond, 'Arrangement, Listening, and the Music of Gérard Pesson' (DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 2019), particularly 16–66.

mass culture, poor taste, and femininity, and notes the misogynistic terms in which critics reported the positive response from audiences at Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's recitals.[18] The final section proposes that these gendered conceptions of musical taste were manifested in the implicit influence that Grieg's reputation as a Norwegian 'national' composer had on both the negative and the positive reception of his additions in London.[19]

From Classroom to Concert Hall

Although Hartvigtson and Backer-Grøndahl used Grieg's additions to pieces by Mozart in their public recitals, the composer had initially conceived them as aids to his activities as a piano teacher. The significance of repurposing Grieg's practical classroom tools as professional concert repertoire in this way results in part from the mixed connotations of the works to which the additions were appended. In the late nineteenth century Mozart was widely regarded as one of the greatest classical composers, but this status rested on the renown of the few large-scale works that were regularly performed, notably the later symphonies, the operas *Don Giovanni* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and the Requiem. The composer's solo piano music, by contrast, was widely regarded as aesthetically inferior to these 'masterpieces' and associated primarily with amateur female players of limited technical skill. This reputation was informed by the idea that in composing these pieces Mozart had moderated his genius to suit the lesser capability of his students. 'What could be expected of a master like Mozart even', asked one English critic in 1885, 'when he was compelled to fit a sonata to a lady's ability, as a dressmaker would fit a dress to the lady's form?'[20]

The perceived femininity of Mozart's sonatas was reinforced through unflattering comparisons with those of Beethoven that frequently drew on an implicitly gendered contrast between the sublime and the beautiful which privileged the former category.[21] Frederick Niecks's review of Augner's new edition of Mozart's piano music in 1885, for example, is typical in asserting that the composer 'was not, like Beethoven, a man of sublime thoughts and grand passions' and that his sonatas therefore '[leave] something to be desired if we wish for more than agreeable entertainment; if instead of a caressing of the superficies we long for a stirring of the innermost depths of our being'.[22] While Niecks resisted the widespread belief that Mozart's sonatas were merely nascent examples of a genre that culminated with Beethoven, he conceded their particular suitability for young (that is to say, nascent) players.[23] The perception that Mozart's keyboard works were artistically weak, technically simple, and feminine ensured that they were largely avoided by professional

[18] This discourse was soon to reach is culmination in modernist aesthetics, see Andreas Huyssen, 'Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other', in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, and Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986): 44–62.

[19] The potentially 'Norwegian' character of Grieg's additions has been a focus of debate since the nineteenth century. In 1886, for example, the Swedish music critic Adolf Lindgren called Grieg's version of the Fantasy in C minor 'a bungling and in part a Norwegianizing of Mozart, for whom a true musician ought to have more respect' (quoted in Benestad and Schjelderup-Ebbe, *Edvard Grieg*, 209). More recently, scholars have attempted to defend the additions by arguing both for and against the view they display in influence of Norwegian folk music; see Goebel, 'Die Mozart-Bearbeitungen von Edvard Grieg' and Jost, '"Eine Norwegisierung Mozarts"?'.

[20] 'Mozart's Works for Piano Alone', *Orchestra Musical Review*, 21 Nov. 1885, 400–401, at 400.

[21] For insightful discussion of comparable gendering of repertoire in France, see Katherine Ellis, 'Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50/2–3 (1997): 353–85, especially 363–6.

[22] Fr. Niecks, 'Mozart's Piano Sonatas', *Monthly Musical Record*, 1 Jan. 1889, 3–6, at 4. This implicitly gendered contrast is developed throughout Niecks's review.

[23] For an example of this belief, see 'Mozart's Works for Piano Alone', *Orchestra Musical Review*, 21 Nov. 1885, 400–401. The more favoured piano works by Mozart (including the Fantasy in C minor and Sonata in F major

pianists, notwithstanding the composer's canonical status. As well as being predominantly male, professional recitalists were expected to present virtuosic modern repertoire that distinguished them from the amateur female players with whom Mozart's piano music had become so strongly associated.[24] The growing number of female recitalists in London in this period generally followed their male counterparts in avoiding Mozart's solo piano works.

In this context, it is not surprising that Grieg's additions to piano works by Mozart were initially conceived for teaching purposes rather than public performance. The additions also developed an existing tradition of pedagogical accompaniments that can be traced back at least as far as the keyboard method produced by François-Joseph Fétis and Ignaz Moscheles, who later became Grieg's piano professor at the Leipzig Conservatoire. This manual included exercises in which 'the master' could accompany 'the pupil' on the same instrument in order to 'teach the division of time in the bar and develop in the student a sense of harmony' as well as introducing some musicality into otherwise dull and repetitious technical drills.[25] Adolf Henselt, who also contributed to Fétis and Moscheles's treatise, elaborated on this idea by adding a new piano part to fifty existing Études by Johann Baptist Cramer.[26] In his *Melodic-Contrapuntal Studies* Op. 137b Moscheles went further, providing an 'additionally composed concertante part for a second piano' not for didactic compositions but rather for canonical repertoire commonly encountered by piano students: a selection of ten preludes from J. S Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*.[27] Published in 1863, only a year after Grieg completed his studies with Moscheles in Leipzig, this collection may have served as a model for the younger musician's 'freely composed additional accompaniments' to pieces by Mozart. Like Moscheles's *Melodic-Contrapuntal Studies*, Grieg's additions are instructive on two levels, allowing teachers to nurture their pupil's technique while simultaneously exposing them to the work of 'great' composers from music history.

Grieg's second piano parts also paralleled those of Moscheles in being as satisfying to hear as they were instructive to play, and soon proved effective as concert repertoire. During work on the additions in 1877, the composer wrote to his friend Max Abraham, a partner of Leipzig's Edition Peters, to request publication of the complete set once it was ready. 'The task', Grieg explained, 'was initially intended for teaching purposes, but by chance ended up in the concert hall, where Mrs. Lie-Nissen performed my part for the first Sonata (in F) quite masterfully'.[28] Adding that 'the Mozartian part was played

augmented by Grieg) were valued for the extent to which they anticipated the music of Beethoven, as Shaw's comments about the Fantasy in his review of Backer-Grøndahl's recital attest.

[24] Over the course of the century the focus of English piano recitals had shifted from classical to bravura repertoires, albeit retaining the music of Beethoven. See Janet Ritterman and William Weber, 'Origins of the Piano Recital in England, 1830–1870', in *The Piano in Nineteenth-Century British Culture: Instruments, Performers and Repertoire*, ed. Therese Ellsworth and Susan Wollenberg (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007): 171–91. In this context, 'classical' and 'virtuoso' repertoire functioned as indistinct and sometimes overlapping concepts in reception rather than clear-cut classifications based on formal characteristics. As critical labels, 'classical' generally situated greater artistic significance in the work, 'virtuoso' in the performance.

[25] F. J. Fétis and J. Moscheles, *Méthode des Méthodes de Piano, ou Traité de l'Art de jouer de cet Instrument* (Paris: Maurice Schlesinger, 1840): 78, (accessed via gallica.bnf.fr, 29 January 2020). See also 78–84. This and subsequent translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

[26] Adolphe Henselt, *50 Études célèbres de J. B. Cramer pour deux pianos* (Berlin: Ad. Mt. Schlesinger, [no date]).

[27] J. Moscheles, *Melodisch-contrapunktische Studien. Eine Auswahl von 10 Präludien aus J. S. Bach's wohltemperirtem Clavier mit einem hinzu componirten concertirendem Zweiten Clavier von J. Moscheles* (Leipzig: Fr. Kistner, 1863). Op. 137a is a version of the same arrangements for cello and piano.

[28] Edvard Grieg, *Briefwechsel mit dem Musikverlag C. F. Peters, 1863–1907*, eds. Finn Benestad und Hella Brock (Frankfurt: C. F. Peters, 1997): 55. Grieg's arrangement of K533/494 is the only addition for which a manuscript survives, see Ohran Noh, 'Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Piano Sonata in F Major, KV 533/494 in the Arrangement

by Miss Rytterager (pupil of the Leipzig Conservatory)', he recounts that 'the narrative sounded so well that the ladies were twice recalled' for applause. Although this early performance in Christiania (now Oslo) was received enthusiastically by a concert audience, it also retained traces of the addition's initial didactic purpose. The differing professional status of the recent graduate Johanne Rytterager (1849–1924) and Erika Lie-Nissen (1845–1903), who had already established a performing career, mirrored the hierarchical relationship between student and teacher.[29] This significant asymmetry later fed into ambiguity about which piano part the principle recitalist ought to play, as discussed below. Grieg's letter also signals his continuing commitment to the educational potential of the additions by stating his intention to dedicate them to the famed piano teacher Theodor Kullak, at whose Academy in Berlin both Rytterager and Lie-Nissen had begun spells of study in Germany.

Nevertheless, the success of Grieg's version of Mozart's Sonata in F major as concert repertoire paved the way for numerous further public performances using his additions. In 1884 Grieg performed the Sonata with Julius Rontgen at a chamber music concert in Amsterdam, and had played his version of the Fantasy in C minor with Backer-Grøndahl at a private subscription recital in Christiania four years previously.[30] With Lie-Nissen, Backer-Grøndahl performed the Sonata once and Fantasy four times between 1881 and 1886.[31] Significantly, while studying at Kullak's Academy in the 1860s both women had lodged with the family of their fellow student Alma Haas (then Holländer, 1847–1932), with whom Backer-Grøndahl performed the Fantasy in London over two decades later.[32] Far from being an anomaly, that performance built upon a broader reconception of Grieg's initially pedagogical additions as concert repertoire that had begun in Christiania in 1877 and in which Backer-Grøndahl herself had played a central role.

The extent to which professional pianists usually avoided Mozart's solo keyboard works makes it especially significant that Grieg's additions to them should be heard in public recitals such as those given by Hartvigson and Backer-Grøndahl in 1890. In a season that London critics noted for its 'epidemic' of piano recitals, the *Musical Times* reported only one at which a solo piano piece by Mozart was heard without an added part by Grieg.[33] Conversely, Mozart's music was heard with Grieg's additions not only at

by Edvard Grieg: A Critical Examination of the Musical Text in the Context of the Primary Sources' (PhD diss., University of Saskatchewan, 2009): 6.

[29] Lie-Nissen was a longstanding friend and musical collaborator of Grieg, who in 1871 had played the solo part in the first performance of his Piano Concerto. Rytterager completed her studies at the Leipzig Conservatory in 1875, making various public performances (including as a duo with Backer-Grøndahl) from then until her marriage in 1881. See 'Lie, Erika' and 'Rytterager, Johanne' at sophie-drinker-institut.de (accessed 29 January 2020).

[30] These performances took place on 12 January 1884 and 21 March 1880. See Hella Brock, *Edvard Grieg als Musikschriftsteller* (Altenmedingen: Hildegard-Junker-Verlag, 1999): 199.

[31] The performances of the Fantasy took place on 11 May 1881 (Christiania), 11 and 12 May 1882 (Hamar and Lillehammer), and 11 May 1886 (Stockholm), and the Sonata on 28 April 1885 (Christiania). This information is drawn from Camilla Hambro's invaluable database of Backer-Grøndahl's concerts, which includes programmes and press reactions. See 'Agathe Backer Grøndahls konserter 1867–1903', https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/10036 (accessed 31 Jan 2021).

[32] In 1872 Haas had married and settled in London, and became head of music at the Women's Department of King's College in 1886. For biographical information see 'Haas, Alma' in *Grove's Dictionary*, 3rd edition; 'Alma Haas-Holländer' at mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de (accessed 29 January 2020), and 'Haas, Alma' at sophie-drinker-institut.de (accessed 29 January 2020). On Haas's roles at Bedford College and later King's College, see Brian Trowell, 'Music' in *The University of London and the World of Learning, 1836–1986*, ed. F.M.L. Thompson (London: Hambledon, 1990): 183–207, at 186–7.

[33] The single conventional performance of a piano work by Mozart that season was Clotilde Kleeberg's rendition of the Rondo in A minor K511 at Princes' Hall on 7 June. Interestingly, the epidemiological metaphors that critics used to describe the surfeit of piano recitals that season appear to have been inspired by the ongoing

Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's recitals on 5 March but also at an educational duo recital in Glasgow on 5 April and a concert by students of London's Trinity College of Music on 9 July.[34]

Although Shaw protested that he would rather hear Mozart's solo keyboard music without Grieg's additions, it appears that it was only the use of these additions that enabled professional pianists to include this repertoire in their recitals at all. Elsewhere, the critic complained that recitalists avoided the composer's music because it seemed 'easy' but actually demanded 'the finest execution': 'You cannot "make an effect" with Mozart'.[35] The prevalence of this idea is corroborated by a satirical guide to formulating 'a really acceptable, up to date recital programme' penned by E. M. Trevenen Dawson in 1897.[36] Dawson sarcastically remarks that 'Haydn, Hummel, and Weber, who, as is now at last recognized, wrote solely for schoolgirls, must be rigidly excluded, as also Mozart, whose sonatas it is well known are only fit for Local Examination syllabuses'.[37] Continuing in this ironic vein, he advocates modern transcriptions as a way for pianists to namecheck historical composers whose work was 'too ridiculously simple and old-fogeyish' to be played without alteration. Construed more positively, Grieg's additions enabled pianists such as Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson to present classical repertoire that would otherwise not have been accepted within the performance culture of the time. While Mozart's solo keyboard music had long been popular among educators and their students, these supplementary piano parts sparked its fleeting 'rediscovery' as viable concert repertoire. This noteworthy consequence of Grieg's additions was ignored by contemporary critics, and therefore offers a productive counterpoint to the hostile reception to which we now turn.

The Critics and the Classics

The critical attacks suffered by Grieg's additions in London in 1890 resulted largely from the 'great transformation of musical taste' described by Weber, by which fidelity to a canon of classic works became the highest ideal of the new 'musical intelligentsia'. This ideal rewards attention because, although widespread, it was not monolithic; in practice musicians and critics took a range of approaches to fidelity, as the use and reception of Grieg's additions attests. However, textual literalism was an influential strand of the 'great transformation' in taste as it developed in musical centres such as Leipzig, where it found paradigmatic expression in the first complete and 'critically revised' edition of Mozart's works.[38] This edition was issued by Breitkopf & Härtel in a series of volumes from 1877, the same year that Grieg wrote to Abraham in the city to request publication of his additions, and was intended to oppose just the kind of 'unfaithful' approach to

global pandemic of 'Russian' flu. See 'Pianoforte Recitals', *Musical Times*, 1 Jul. 1890, 407–8, at 407; 'The London Musical Season', *Musical Times*, 1 Aug. 1890, 457–9, at 459; and Sidney R. Thompson, 'Music Notes', *Time*, 1 Jul. 1890, 777–81, and 1 Sep. 1890, 1001–4.

[34] See 'Pianoforte Recital', *Glasgow Herald*, 7 April 1890, 9 and 'Concerts &c.: London and Suburban', *Musical World*,12 July 1890): 554–57, 556. Shaw and other commentators regarded the College's failure to prevent this performance as a dereliction of their educational duties, indicating that critics were largely unaware of the additions' pedagogical origins. See Bernard Shaw, 'Balderdash and Esmeralda [*The World*, 16 July 1890]', in *Shaw's Music*, 2:120–26, at 122, and *Musical World*, 12 July 1890, 556.

[35] Shaw, 'Mozart's Finality', 482–3.

[36] E. M. Trevenen Dawson, 'How to Draw Up a Recital Programme', *Monthly Musical Record*, 1 Dec. 1897, 268.

[37] In this period the overwhelming majority of music examination candidates were girls, see Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985): 118–19.

[38] This edition, completed in 1883, is now known as the *Alte Mozart Ausgabe*. See Cliff Eisen, 'The Old and New Mozart Editions', *Early Music* 19/4 (1991): 513–32.

Mozart's music that they represented. For its promoters, the complete edition's authority derived from the fidelity of its approach, which used 'comparison with the autographs' to correct the 'transgressions' of 'dangerous editors' who had 'dared to introduce textual alterations and supplementary instrumentation'.[39] Given the increasing imperative of fidelity to the classics in Leipzig and elsewhere, it is hardly surprising that Abraham refused to publish Grieg's additions, advising that they would threaten his burgeoning reputation as a 'respectable' composer of 'significant original compositions'.[40] Grieg ignored this advice, instead taking his additions to another Leipzig publisher, E. W. Fritzsch, which issued the full set of four additions between 1879 and 1880.[41]

By 1890 Abraham must have felt that Grieg's reputation was secure enough for Edition Peters to publish their own edition of his second piano parts, an event that appears to have prompted the cluster of performances in England that year. However, the commitment to fidelity that had informed Abraham's initial suspicion had only become more widespread, ensuring that the additions prompted controversy in England as soon as Hartvigson announced his intention to use them at his Princes Hall recital. The *Telegraph* questioned the wisdom of Hartvigson's decision on the same day it first advertised his programme, 24 January, and soon even the *South Wales Echo* chimed in, warily anticipating the hostility with which the performance would be received by critics in London.[42] The debate gained further momentum when it emerged that Backer-Grøndahl also planned to employ one of Grieg's additions in her recital. However 'clever' or 'effective' these additions were, the *Telegraph* claimed, the 'peculiar mental obliquity which permits one composer thus to deal with another' was difficult to comprehend, if potentially justifiable in this case given the 'infantile' nature of Mozart's music.[43] The columnist asserted the ideal of fidelity more explicitly a week later, however, condemning Grieg's 'altogether inexcusable and entirely impudent addition to one of [Mozart's] finest works'.[44] This more emphatic denunciation was provoked by a correspondent who remarked that the additions did not 'venture on "improving" Mozart by the alteration of a single note'.[45] That the correspondent defended Grieg by affirming rather than challenging the imperative of fidelity indicates its largely unquestioned status as an axiom of good musical taste.

It is worth noting that Grieg himself later made the same defence of his additions in an article on Mozart that he wrote in 1896 and which first appeared the following year in the *Century Illustrated Magazine*, an American periodical.[46] In this article, he argued that the

[39] Paul Graf Waldersee quoted in Eisen, 'The Old and New Mozart Editions', 527.

[40] The relevant section of Abraham's letter, dated 4 September 1877, reads: 'Through your [piano] concerto, the two violin sonatas, and individual piano works you have already made a respectable name [for yourself] in the musical world; however, you may neither rest on your laurels nor waste your time on lessons or distractions, which are not lacking here in Leipzig. The world expects significant original compositions from you and not, if you will permit me the remark, a second piano to Mozart's sonatas! Clever and ingenious though it may be, if I were you I would not publish such work, at least not in the next few years.'. Grieg, *Briefwechsel*, 56. Although Abraham did not explicitly accuse Grieg of infidelity to Mozart, perhaps to spare his feelings, the imperative of fidelity implicitly informs his negative opinion of the additions.

[41] *Claviersonaten von Mozart mit frei hinzucomponirter Begleitung eines zweiten Claviers von Edvard Grieg. No. 1–4* (Leipzig: E. W. Fritzsch, 1879–1880).

[42] See 'Dramatic and Musical', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 Jan. 1890, 8; 'Musical Mems'., *South Wales Echo*, 25 Jan. 1890, 3.

[43] 'Dramatic and Musical', *Daily Telegraph*, 28 Feb. 1890, 3.

[44] 'Dramatic and Musical', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 March 1890, 3.

[45] 'Dramatic and Musical', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 March 1890, 3.

[46] See Edvard Grieg, 'Mozart', *Century Illustrated Magazine*, Nov. 1897, 140–46. This article was soon reprinted and discussed at length in the British musical press. Quotations in this article are drawn from a recent translation of the original Norwegian version of the article, which first appeared in *Samtiden* in 1898, Edvard Grieg, 'Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1896)', in *Edvard Grieg: Diaries, Articles, Speeches*, ed. and trans. Finn Benestad and William

'Wagnerites' and other advocates of modern music were wrong to regard Mozart's works as old-fashioned, not only because they possessed an 'eternal' beauty but also because they anticipated the chromaticism of modern music, notably that of Wagner. Grieg also promoted fidelity to Mozart's musical text, lamenting the 'irreverence' of many contemporary performances and warning against the 'arbitrary alterations' made by Hummel in his chamber arrangement of the Piano Concerto in D minor (K466).[47] In this context Grieg contrasted his additions to other, 'dangerous' attempts at modernization, characterizing them as expressing rather than violating the principle of fidelity to Mozart:

> The author of this article has himself tried, through the use of a second piano, to give some of Mozart's piano sonatas a sonority that appeals to modern ears; and in his own defense he wants to add that he did not change a single one of Mozart's notes, thus showing the master the reverence that we owe to him.[48]

Crucially, the unusual format of Grieg's modernization allowed him to exonorate it according to the imperative of fidelity in a way that a more comprehensive re-arrangement for two pianos, however stylistically conservative, would not have done. No matter how 'freely composed' his additions were, Grieg could claim fidelity to Mozart's musical text as this was incorporated within the new 'arrangement' without alteration.[49]

For London critics anticipating Hartvigson and Backer-Grøndahl's performances in 1890, the instrumental format produced by Grieg's additions also drew them into more specific debates about performing the classics faithfully. These critics understood Grieg's supplementary piano parts as akin to the widespread but controversial practice of using 'additional accompaniments' to bolster the limited instrumental forces of vocal works by Bach and Handel, which were particularly popular among England's choral societies. 'Surely Grieg has not joined the company of "additional accompaniment" writers?', questioned an incredulous *Musical Standard* when Hartvigson's programme was announced.[50] Such comments interpreted Grieg's additions through the longstanding debate, outlined in Ebenezer Prout's 1879 *Grove* entry on the subject, between 'purists' who opposed supplementary instrumentation entirely and commentators who defended respectful accompaniment 'in unison with the spirit ... of the original'.[51] When discussing

H. Halverson (Columbus: Peer Gynt Press, 2001): 225–39. In 1906 Grieg prepared a shorter, revised version of the article, see 'Mozart and His Significance for Contemporary Music' in ibid.: 240–45.

[47] Grieg, 'Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1896)', 232, 236. See J.N. Hummel, *Mozart's Twelve Grand Concertos arranged for the piano forte, and accompaniments of flute, violin & violoncello, including cadences and ornaments written expressly for them by the celebrated J.N. Hummel* (London: Chapel, 1830).

[48] Grieg, 'Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1896)', 234. Interestingly, the original English translation by Henry T. Finck (who wrote a monograph on Grieg published in 1905) more strongly suggested that Grieg now rejected his Mozart arrangements. Finck adds an exclamation mark to Grieg's reference to modernization as a 'dangerous undertaking', and records the composer's comments on his additions as an 'apology' rather than a 'defence' (143–4).

[49] While Grieg retained Mozart's pitches, he did make changes to the earlier composer's dynamic markings to account for the addition of the second piano. For an exhaustive list of differences see Noh, 'Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Piano Sonata in F Major', 77–99.

[50] 'Passing Events', *Musical Standard*, 1 Feb. 1890, 110.

[51] Ebenezer Prout, 'Additional Accompaniments', *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. George Grove, 5 vols, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1879–1890): 30–37, 37. For representative interventions in this debate see 'Additional Accompaniments', *Musical World*, 11 Dec. 1869, 852–3, which scripts a discussion between 'Mr Purist' and 'Mr Expediency'; Fr. Niecks, 'Additional Accompaniments: A Study of the Art of Accompaniment in the 17th and 18th Centuries' parts 1–3, *Musical World*, 1 Aug., 1 Sep., 1 Oct. 1888, 169–72, 193–6, 215–19; and the controversy triggered by Prout's defence of Robert Franz's additions to *Messiah*: Joseph Bennett, 'Mr Prout and the

Grieg's second piano parts several critics referred to Mozart's own additions to Handel's *Messiah*, which were particularly contentious because they were created by a composer revered in his own right.[52] For example, the *Daily Graphic*'s suggestion that Grieg was justified in adding to Mozart because Mozart himself had added to Handel prompted a stern rebuttal from the *Musical Times*: 'it used to be accepted as an axiom that no number of wrongs can make one right'.[53] The supposed 'wrong' in both cases was a lack of fidelity to an existing work.

Commentators continued to associate Grieg's second piano parts and the additional accompaniments used to supplement choral works in their reviews of Hartvigson and Backer-Grøndahl's recitals.[54] Crucially, this association is only one of many strands by which Grieg's additions became entangled in a broader debate about the role of fidelity in contemporary performances of classic works that erupted later that season. The perceived relevance of Grieg's additions to this debate suggests that many listeners understood them through ideas about performance practice as much as the composer-centred concept of arrangement. This inference constitutes a central claim of this article that also informs its focus on performance, which offers a historically appropriate alternative to the exclusively arrangement-oriented perspective adopted in existing scholarly discussions about Grieg's additions. It is therefore useful to consider the evidence for this claim in the season's longer-term debates about fidelity before using it as a lens through which to read more immediate critical responses to the performances given by Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson.

In July 1890, the *Musical World* printed an anonymous article on 'Modern Pianism' that explicitly framed the recent use of Grieg's additions as an example of contemporary performance practice.[55] The article begins by remarking on the 'unprecedented' number of recitals given that season by a long list of pianists, including Backer-Grøndahl and the Hartvigson brothers, before arguing that the intense competition produced by this surplus of performers resulted in an attention-seeking emphasis on 'muscular' virtuosity and 'passionate' utterance.[56] While necessary for when playing modern repertoire, the author suggests, such qualities were unsuited to music by 'old masters', who consequently found themselves 'grotesquely clothed in modern expression'.[57] The critic complains that Mozart's music had been a notable victim of this approach, drawing on the gendered connotations of this repertoire in troubling language that implicitly characterizes modern performance as a libertine violation of a virtuous classical works. 'How often has not his delicate refinement and quaint artificial grace been lost in rough phrasing and exaggerated expression?', the critic laments, 'Mozart, it is true, has his moments of passion and deep pathos, but it is the passion and pathos of a beautiful woman who never forgets that she is beautiful'.[58] While this comment initially

Critics', *Musical Times*, 1 May 1891, 265–7; Ebenezer Prout, 'Mr Joseph Bennett Versus Robert Franz', *Monthly Musical Record*, 1 June 1891, 121–5; William H. Cummings, 'Additional Accompaniments to Handel', *Musical Times*, 1 June 1891, 329; and E.H. Turpin, 'The Additional Accompaniments' [*sic*] Question', *Musical News*, 26 June 1891, 345–6.

[52] Prout, for example, stated that 'Mozart's additions … have always been considered models of the way in which such a task should be performed', but was uncomfortable about the composer's introduction of 'new matter … for which no warrant can be found in the original'. Prout, 'Additional Accompaniments', 31, 36.

[53] 'Facts, Rumours, and Remarks', *Musical Times*, 1 March 1890, 147–50, at 149.

[54] See Shaw, 'Bassetto's Destructive Force', 946; and 'Current Notes', *Lute*, 1 April 1890, 102–4, at 102.

[55] 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 5 and 12 July 1890, 529–30 and 548–9.

[56] 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 5 and 12 July 1890, 529.

[57] 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 5 and 12 July 1890, 529.

[58] 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 5 and 12 July 1890, 530.

appears to refer to performance style alone, the article proceeds to connect Grieg's additions to the same trend:

> The chaste and unaffected beauty of the old masters is regarded as dullness, and apparently, in the opinion of many artists, needs to be ornamented and dressed out with modern sensational effects to arouse and sustain the jaded interest of modern audiences. … This season Mozart's Fantasia in C minor has been attacked by the disease, and we have been asked to listen to an 'added part for second piano', and this by Grieg![59]

In this way, the article presents the use of Grieg's additions as a response to the Darwinian 'struggle for life' among the crowd of pianists in London, with the result that '[r]ealism is pursued beyond the verge of extravagance, and the beautiful is often sacrificed in the desire to "bring down the house"'.[60]

'Modern Pianism' sparked a controversy that raged among numerous correspondents in the pages of the *Musical World* for the rest of July and into August.[61] Although almost all of the responses to the initial article follow its author in upholding the imperative of fidelity, they vary in their tolerance towards altering aspects of classic works in performance. While some correspondents opposed any change to the 'authentic' text whatsoever, others considered changes permissible if they served to 'keep the original intention of the composer … in touch with the ever-changing perceptions of successive generations of musical hearers'.[62] Only one correspondent rejected the 'composer's intention' as the primary yardstick by which a performance should be judged, arguing that a performer's primary task was the pursuit of beauty rather than fidelity.[63] The differing arguments made by each interlocutor are, however, less significant than their shared assumptions about the range of practices that were relevant to the topic at hand. This discussion of 'modern pianism', that is to say *performance* practice, addresses not only contemporary playing styles, improvised embellishments, and pedagogical editions, but also texts that might otherwise appear primarily *compositional* in nature: additional accompaniments, supplementary instrumentation, and even arrangements ranging from 'strict' piano reductions to 'extension by fantasia'.[64] Furthermore, the debate construed such practices as means by which performers tried to gain attention in an overcrowded market rather than as motivated by compositional concerns.

This contemporary performance-oriented understanding of Grieg's additions is also evident in press reviews of Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's recitals and stands in marked contrast to the exclusively composition-focused approach of recent scholarly accounts.[65] Recall, for example, that Baton reported that an 'artistic sin' had been committed at Princes and Steinway Halls, an allegation which locates wrongdoing in unfaithful performances of Mozart's music using additions by Grieg as much as the composition of the additions themselves.[66] While some critics did take a composition- rather than

[59] 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 5 and 12 July 1890, 530.

[60] 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 5 and 12 July 1890, 458. The negative connotations of the term 'realism' are discussed below.

[61] See 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 26 July and 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Aug. 1890, 586–7, 609, 625–8, 648–50, 668–70, 686–9. This debate also drew comment in Sidney R. Thompson, 'Music Notes', *Time*, 1 Oct. 1890, 1113–16.

[62] 'A Reverent Radical' in 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 26 July and 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Aug. 1890, 628.

[63] See contributions from 'Norfolk Broad' in 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 627, 648–9, 688–9.

[64] A similar horizon of reference is also evident in another journalistic response to the recitals on 5 March: E.H. Turpin, 'Arrangements and Improvements', *Musical Standard*, 15 March 1890, 246.

[65] See Goebel, 'Die Mozart-Bearbeitungen von Edvard Grieg'; Jost, '"Eine Norwegisierung Mozarts"?'; and Brügge, 'Edvard Griegs Mozartbearbeitungen'.

[66] See also 'Music: The Week', *Athenaeum*, 8 March 1890, 314–15, at 314.

performance-oriented perspective, in many reviews the two merge or overlap.[67] Reporting on Backer-Grøndahl's performance of Grieg's version of the Fantasy, the *Musical World* urged her never again to 'deface her concerts with a work which is best forgotten', a comment that presents performer and composer as equally guilty of infidelity to Mozart.[68]

An understanding of this potentially dual conception of Grieg's additions (as both arrangement and performance practice) facilitates a more nuanced and historically informed reading of the negative reception of Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's performances. On the one hand, the unfavourable response to these performances is unremarkable due to the ubiquitous imperative of fidelity. On the other hand, however, the ways critics brought this general imperative to bear on the specific instrumental configuration of performances that used Grieg's additions fomented more particular meanings and associations which are worthy of historical attention and to which this article now turns.

Performing Mozart's music with Grieg's additions maintains a spatial (if not sonic) separation between the old musical material in one piano part and the new material in the other. As we have already noted, this approach allowed some commentators, including Grieg himself, to defend the additions as faithful to Mozart's music on the grounds that it is retained unaltered as one of the two piano parts. This argument would have been difficult to sustain had Grieg created a more conventional arrangement for two pianos that synthesized old and new material across both instruments. By the same token, however, Grieg's instrumental configuration was particularly vulnerable to accusations that it failed to embody the organic unity that critics widely considered essential to any successful musical work. For reviewers of Hartvigson and Backer-Grøndahl's performances, this configuration juxtaposed music by Mozart and Grieg in what J.S. Shedlock called an 'inartistic mixture of styles' rather than combining these elements into a coherent whole.[69] The *Lute*, for example, speculated that Grieg might have escaped criticism had he simply recast the 'thoughts of Mozart … in his own language', an assessment that values unity above even fidelity.[70] The unquestionable status of both unity and fidelity as criteria of musical value ensured that the few critics who wished to affirm the worth of the additions felt bound to deny the evident contrast between them and Mozart's music rather than attempting to defend it.[71]

Most critics, however, were unable to ignore the stylistic contrast between the two piano parts, particularly in performances of the Fantasy in C minor. Grieg's addition, the *Athenaeum* claimed, was 'utterly out of keeping in style, harmony, and phraseology with the original work'.[72] The added part's opening bars certainly dispel any expectation of conservative pastiche, featuring extreme exaggerations of Mozart's dynamics and a rumbling tonic pedal that supplement the Fantasy's comparatively thin texture to create an expansive Romantic soundscape (Example 1). Furthermore, this pedal and the ascending chromatic phrases also furnished by Grieg introduce stark dissonances within his addition

[67] A composer-oriented perspective is evident, for example, in the *Musical Times*'s assertion that '[s]ome evil spirit' had 'tempted' Grieg to produce 'a piece of vandalism more than usually atrocious'. 'Pianoforte Recitals', *Musical Times*, 1 April 1890, 215–16, at 216. See also 'Madm. Backer-Grondahl's Recital', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 6 March 1890, 6. This view persisted into the twentieth century; see John Horton, *Grieg* (London: Duckworth, 1950): 49.

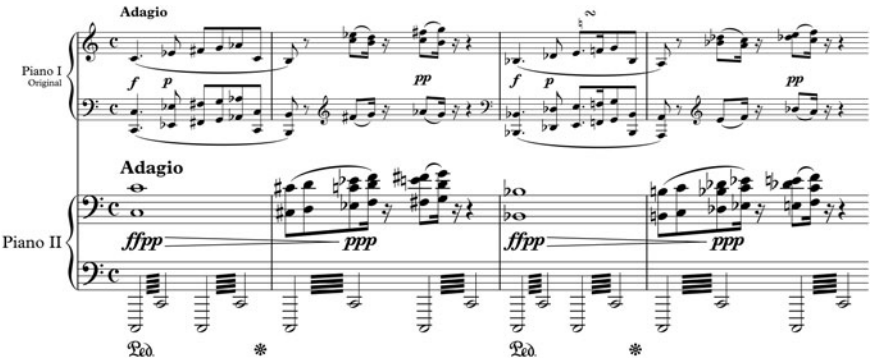
[68] 'Concerts: London and Suburban', *Musical World*, 8 March 1890, 195.

[69] Shedlock, 'Music: Recent Concerts', *Academy*, 8 March 1890, 177–8.

[70] 'Current Notes', *Lute*, 1 April 1890, 102. A similar view is implicit in J.B.K., 'Agathe Backer-Gröndahl's Pianoforte Recital', *Monthly Musical Record*, 1 April 1890, 89.

[71] See 'Mr Anton Hartvigson's Recital', *Era*, 8 March 1890, 15. Grieg himself later claimed to have maintained 'stylistic unity'; see Grieg, 'Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1896)', 235.

[72] Music: The Week', *Athenaeum*, 8 March 1890, 314.



Example 1. Opening bars of Mozart's Fantasy in C minor with Grieg's 'freely composed additional accompaniment' (Edition Peters, 1890)

and, more crucially, against Mozart's winding melody. Critics found such moments of 'discord and extravagance' particularly shocking, declaring that they 'would have made [Mozart's] hair stand on end' and were 'utterly alien to the spirit of the original music'.[73] These comments indicate that reviewers heard this dissonance in metaphorical as well as harmonic terms as a sonic representation of the aesthetic incompatibility of the two piano parts. Several critics characterized this coupling as 'monstrous', a biological metaphor that inverts the notion of organic unity, and called Grieg's additions 'useless', as if they were alien limbs grafted onto bodies that were already complete.[74]

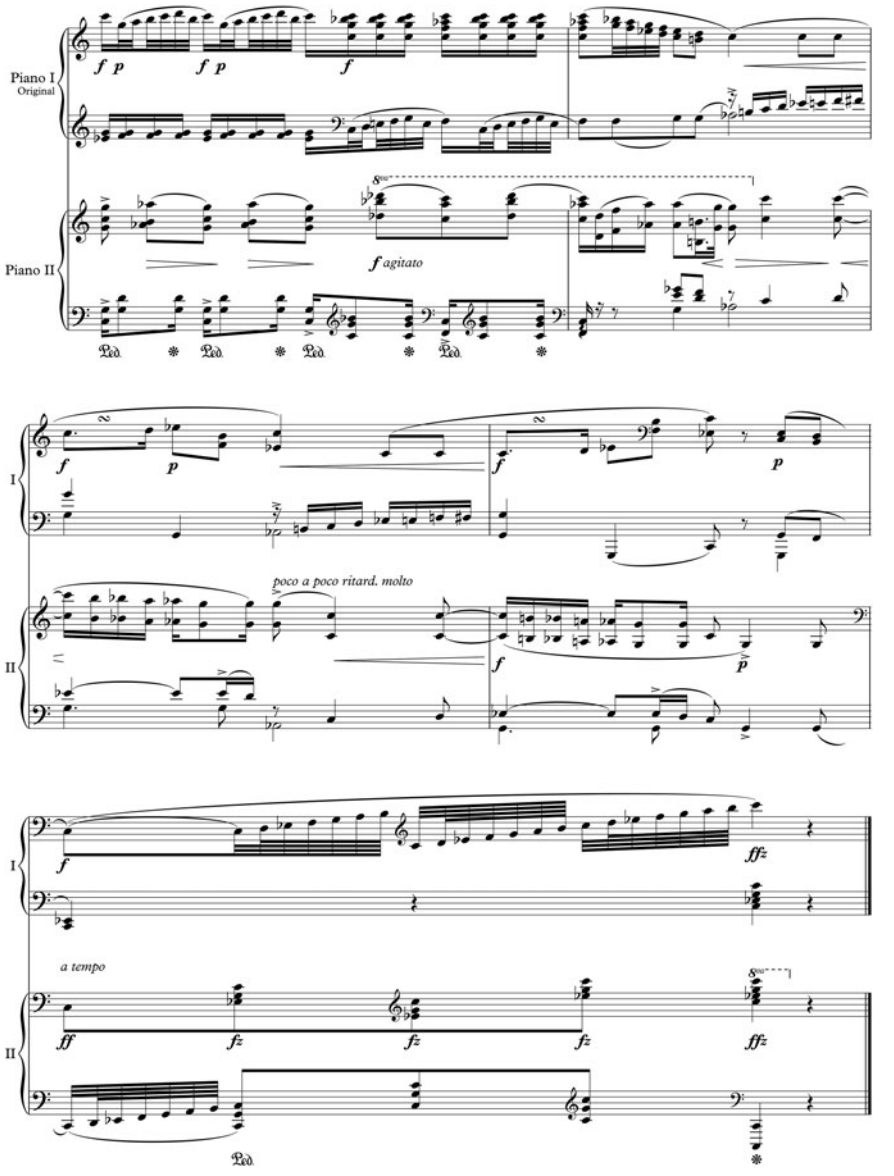
The unusual instrumental format of Grieg's 'arrangements' appeared to challenge the expected primacy of Mozart's music over Grieg's ostensible accompaniment. By 'coolly placing his music side by side with that of the elder master', claimed the *Lute*, Grieg implied an unwarranted 'assertion of equality with Mozart' that would not have arisen in the case of a more conventional arrangement.[75] Such concerns were intensified by the prominence of Grieg's additions within the compound musical texture. The *Telegraph* complained that the 'impertinent second piano' not only 'fills up Mozart's rests with commonplace echoings' but also 'imposes upon his music new themes which Mozart has to accompany'.[76] As this comment suggests, the additions frequently introduce contrapuntal lines, overpoweringly thick textures, and even novel melodic material that belie their stated role as mere accompaniments and question the primacy of Mozart's music despite its canonical status. In the final bars of the Fantasy, for example, Grieg's addition introduces melodies doubled in octaves that almost overwhelm Mozart's material, concealing it in the middle of the texture (Example 2). In this context, it is worth recalling that Grieg only described his additions as 'accompaniments' upon publication; his letter to Abraham, by contrast, refers simply to a 'free second piano'.

[73] 'Dramatic & Musical Gossip', *Referee*, 9 March 1890, 3; 'Pianoforte Recitals', *Musical Times*, 1 April 1890, 216.

[74] For references to monstrosity, see 'Dramatic & Musical Gossip', *Referee*, 9 March 1890, 3; 'Concerts: London and Suburban', *Musical World*, 8 March 1890, 195; 'Pianoforte Recitals', *Musical Times*, 1 April 1890, 216; 'Music', *Weekly Dispatch*, 9 March 1890, 6. For descriptions of Grieg's additions as useless, see 'Music: The Week', *Athenaeum*, 8 March 1890, 314; Shedlock, 'Music: Recent Concerts', *Academy*, 8 March 1890, 177–8, at 177; 'Modern Pianism', 548.

[75] 'Current Notes', *Lute*, 1 April 1890, 102. For a similar view see J.B.K., 'Agathe Backer-Gröndahl's Pianoforte Recital', *Monthly Musical Record*, 1 April 1890, 89.

[76] 'Dramatic and Musical', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 March 1890, 3. The *Era*'s positive review of the same recital is at pains to point out that the brothers 'took care not to make the second piano part obtrusive'. 'Mr Anton Hartvigson's Recital', *Era*, 8 March 1890, 15.



Example 2. Final bars of Mozart's Fantasy in C minor with Grieg's 'freely composed additional accompaniment' (Edition Peters, 1890)

This tension between the textural prominence of Grieg's additions and the canonical status of Mozart's music results in part from their initial pedagogical function. In the context of teaching, the more skilled musician took the secondary part, supporting their student's rendition of a classic work. While the simple textures of Mozart's keyboard pieces made them ideal for teaching purposes, Grieg's additions are more technically demanding, making extensive use of doublings, frequent changes of hand position, and rapid shifts in register. However, this disparity presented professional recitalists who wished to use the additions with a dilemma: should they perform Mozart's original work, the most

artistically esteemed of the two parts, or Grieg's addition, which employed a more up-to-date and technically impressive pianistic idiom?

It is difficult to determine with complete certainty how Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson responded to this question. Some reviews specify that in each concert the principal recitalist performed Mozart's music and left Grieg's additional part to their assistant, but at least as many reports suggest the reverse.[77] Whichever configuration really was used in each case, this contradictory collection of accounts indicates the extent to which either piano part could be plausibly considered the more important of the two.[78] Although it is not possible to identify conclusively who performed which part at each concert, reviews reporting that the lead performers themselves played Grieg's additions frequently offer telling details that suggest they may be more reliable.[79] For example, Shaw's outrage that Backer-Grøndahl did not play Mozart's Fantasy, instead 'striking up' a second part while Haas performed it, seems too specific to be misremembered. It therefore appears likely that both of the principal recitalists chose to forgo Mozart's original music in order to play the additions provided by Grieg. If this was the case, the resulting performances can only have reinforced the perception that the additions challenged and even inverted the expected primacy of Mozart's music over the supplementary parts.[80]

In this context, it is revealing that for some London critics Grieg's additions to works by Mozart invited immediate comparison with the melody that Charles Gounod layered over the music of another canonical composer in his *Meditation on the First Prelude by J.S. Bach* (1853).[81] Although the *Meditation* enjoyed great popularity, particularly in its guise as a vocal 'Ave Maria' (1859), it was inevitably attacked by those who upheld fidelity to classic works. Critics used the similarity between Grieg's additive procedure and that used in Gounod's more famous – and, to many, infamous – adaptation as a means to attack his supplementary piano parts for their perceived infidelity to Mozart.[82] The *Times* for example, pronounced it 'scarcely fitting that the name of Edward Grieg should be added to the ignoble army of "meditators" and improvers of the masterpieces of classical music'.[83] The potential aptness of this designation, and its negative implications, are indicated by the vehemence with which Grieg felt compelled to deny any kinship between his additions and Gounod's *Meditation* in his later article on Mozart. Grieg claimed that while his own 'modernization' expressed 'admiration for an old master', he 'thoroughly

[77] Significantly, all of the reviews which discuss both concerts report either that both principal recitalists played Mozart's music or that they both played Grieg's additions; they never suggest an inconsistent allocation of parts across the two concerts. For reports suggesting that the principal recitalist played Mozart's music rather than Grieg's addition, see 'Music', *Illustrated London News*, 15 March 1890, 334; *Observer*, 9 March 1890, 6; 'Mr Anton Hartvigson's Recital', *Era*, 8 March 1890, 15.

[78] This ambiguity must have been compounded at Anton Hartvigson's recital, given that of the two Fritz was the better known as a concert pianist.

[79] For reports suggesting that the principal recitalist played Grieg's addition see 'Music and Musicians', *Sunday Times*, 9 March 1890, 7; 'Musical Jottings', *Daily Graphic*, 7 March 1890, 6.

[80] Hartvigson's brother Fritz was acting as his assistant on this occasion but was the more widely known of the two as a concert pianist, which adds an additional layer of complexity in this respect.

[81] Charles Gounod, *Méditation sur le 1er Prélude de Piano de S. Bach* (Mainz: B. Schott, [1854]).

[82] The publication of a second *Meditation* by Gounod in London the previous year may have brought this mode of adaptation into critics' minds as they reviewed Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's recitals in 1890. See Charles Gounod *Meditation, adapted to a 2nd prelude of J.S. Bach* (London, [1889]) Later imitations included an '*Ave Maria* on a Prelude by Schumann' by John Francis Barratt (1890) and a 'Meditation' for violin on the Adagio from Beethoven's 'Moonlight' sonata by A. Wullnöfer (1899). See 'Reviews', *Lute*, 1 Dec. 1890, 136; and 'Reviews', *Musical News*, 23 Dec. 1899, 570.

[83] 'Two Pianoforte Recitals', *The Times*, 6 March 1890, 10. See also 'Concerts: London and Suburban', *Musical World*, 8 March 1890, 195. The 'army of meditators' mentioned in the *Times* is a rhetorical exaggeration; it appears that most imitations of Gounod were produced later in the decade (see note 81).

disapprove[d]' of the way Gounod had 'transformed a Bach prelude into a modern, sentimental and trivial piece'.[84] Crucially, Grieg objected to the *Meditation* not on the grounds that it was unfaithful to the text of Bach's prelude but rather that Gounod had altered its genre and therefore its cultural status, re-presenting this classic work as a parlour piece fit for mass consumption.

That critics in London derided Grieg's additions as 'meditations' suggests that they believed he had effected a comparable trivialization of classic works, even if their reviews are more overtly preoccupied with the narrower issue of textual fidelity. This label carried an implicit accusation of poor musical taste that found open expression in the *Observer*, that by adding to Mozart's Fantasy Grieg had 'vulgarised' a 'masterpiece'.[85] From this standpoint, the vehemence with which critics attacked the supposed infidelity of Grieg's additions appears to have been motivated in part by further reaching (but less easily articulated) anxieties about the threat they might pose to dominant conceptions of good musical taste.

That critics called Grieg's additions 'meditations' also suggests that they interpreted them against the backdrop of an emerging concern with overlapping notions of mass culture, poor taste, and femininity, of which the *Meditation* was emblematic.[86] For example, in 1897 Franklin Peterson lamented the 'dreadful fate is overtaking … Bach's First Prelude, which is seldom or never heard in public, unless it be as the blind and degraded Samson chained to his task, turning the organ-handle for Gounod's pretty tune!'[87] Peterson's scriptural allusion (to Judges 16) suggests that the attractive melody emasculates this classic work by forcing it to serve as an accompaniment, just as the beautiful Philistine Delilah subordinated the mighty Samson by seducing him and shaving his hair.[88] This characterization also hints that the *Meditation* had likewise seduced and weakened a mass public, which now consumed Bach's prelude as entertainment rather than contemplating it as a work of art. The self-considered guardians of good taste were apparently not immune: 'even musical purists', noted another critic, 'have been known to listen [to the *Meditation*] (much against the grain) with pleasure'.[89] This supposedly feminine and feminizing quality of Gounod's piece was reinforced by its mass appeal as parlour music, a genre predominantly performed by young women in their family homes.[90] Numerous commentators of the period complained that the attraction this melodious and often sentimental repertoire held for an army of 'piano girls' placed the classical music they valued under siege.[91]

[84] Grieg, 'Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1896)', 234–5.

[85] *Observer*, 9 March 1890, 6. See also *Musical World*, 12 July 1890, 556.

[86] This association was to become a notable strand in Modernism, see Andreas Huyssen, 'Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other', in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, and Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986): 44–62.

[87] Franklin Peterson, 'Musical Extravagance', *Monthly Musical Record*, 1 Sep. 1897, 196–7, at 196.

[88] A German satirical music dictionary, much quoted in the British press at the time, quipped that Bach was famous chiefly for composing an accompaniment to a famous melody by Gounod, noting that as a separate prelude it was appreciated by an entirely different audience. See 'Abroad', *Violin Times*, Sept. 1894, 163–4.

[89] 'Reviews', *Musical News*, 23 Dec. 1899, 570.

[90] See Susan Key, 'Parlor Music', in *Grove Music Online*, www.oxfordmusic.com (accessed 19 March 2020); and Ruth A. Solie, '"Girling" at the Parlor Piano', in *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004): 85–117. Interestingly, Backer-Grøndahl accompanied the violinist Alexander Bull (son of the famed Norwegian virtuoso Ole Bull) in a rendition of Gounod's *Meditation* at a semi-private gathering a few days after her Steinway Hall recital, see 'Facts and Comments', *Musical World*, 15 March 1890, 203–5, at 204.

[91] See, for example, A Musical Man, 'Women and the Piano', *Musical Opinion*, Oct. 1892, 37; and A.B.C., 'Music Versus Noise', *Musical Opinion*, April 1903, 531–2.

By characterizing Grieg's additions as 'meditations', critics exploited their formal similarity with Gounod's arrangement to disparagingly associate them with the bourgeois domestic taste of which it had become musically iconic: an upwardly aspiring nod to the classics that was ultimately 'vulgarized' by its mass appeal. Significantly, the author of 'Modern Pianism' considered Grieg's additions typical of a 'premeditated portrayal of the ugly' continuous with the garish accoutrements of middle-class domesticity.[92] In this context, the reader is invited to consider Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson presenting Grieg's additions in concert as a public, musical analogue to the 'yellow piano faced with aggressive green or crimson silk' that had graced countless parlours a generation previously.[93] Such remarks identify the additions with a popular, domestic, and feminine musical taste that critics believed was eroding the appreciation for classic works that they advocated, of which textual fidelity was but one facet.

An implicitly feminized conception of poor musical taste inevitably affected how critics, who would have been almost exclusively male, described the way audiences responded to Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's use of additions by Grieg. As Weber has shown, nineteenth-century critics generally adopted the values of the emerging 'musical intelligentsia' in order to reinforce their newfound and otherwise precarious professional status.[94] Reviewers had a strong incentive to differentiate themselves from other listeners by asserting the superiority of their own musical taste and, ingratiatingly, that of their readers. It is therefore unsurprising that several London critics expressed their own disdain for Grieg's additions by characterizing their fellow concertgoers as an undiscerning majority who responded to the performances given by Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson with misplaced enthusiasm. 'That a thoughtless assemblage should loudly applaud [Backer-Grøndahl's] performance was only to be expected', declared the *Athenaeum*: 'It seems useless to look for the manifestation of true artistic feeling in an ordinary English audience'.[95] The *Referee* expressed the same sentiment in explicitly gendered terms, reporting that this 'caricature' of Mozart's Fantasy was 'applauded by a crowded assemblage, mostly composed of unintelligent beings in petticoats'.[96] This disparaging association between Grieg's additions and femininity is also evident in the *Telegraph*'s review of Hartvigson's recital. Characterizing the additions as both frivolously ornamental and primly didactic, the critic claimed that they comprised 'scales, arpeggios, and decorative passages calculated to delight the young ladies of Miss Pilkington's Academy'.[97] In this way, critics swiftly dismissed any positive response to Grieg's additions by attributing them to women whose musical taste was supposedly unsophisticated.

These reviews of Hartvigson and Backer-Grøndahl's recitals suggest that reactions to their use of Grieg's additions were at the very least more varied than the uniform negativity of critics might initially suggest.[98] Positive reports of these performances were

[92] in 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 548.

[93] in 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 548.

[94] See Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, 106.

[95] 'Music: The Week', *Athenaeum*, 8 March 1890, 314. The *Musical Times* likewise branded the audience 'thoughtless' for applauding the performance, see 'Pianoforte Recitals', *Musical Times*, 1 April 1890, 216.

[96] 'Dramatic & Musical Gossip', *Referee*, 9 March 1890, 3.

[97] 'Dramatic and Musical', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 March 1890, 3. Mary Pilkington (1761–1839) wrote numerous morally instructive books for use in the education of girls. See, for example, *A Mirror for the Female Sex: Historical Beauties for Young Ladies, Intended to Lead the Female Mind to the Love and Practice of Moral Goodness, Designed Principally for the Use of Ladies' Schools* (London: Vernor and Hood, 1798).

[98] The extent of the positive reaction is difficult to discern; while some reviews criticized audiences for applauding the additions, others praised the same audiences for snubbing them. See Shedlock, 'Music: Recent Concerts', *Academy*, 8 March 1890, 177; C.L.G., 'Concerts of the Week', *Guardian*, 12 March 1890, 443; 'Music and Musicians', *Sunday Times*, 9 March 1890, 7; 'Current Notes', *Lute*, 1 April 1890, 102. This contradiction between

simply not recorded at first hand; anyone able to publicly disseminate their views about music was unlikely to dissent from the authoritative ideal of fidelity to the classics.[99] However, if critics sought to differentiate themselves from those who applauded Grieg's additions, then their particular objections may indicate what it was about them that other listeners enjoyed. Most obviously, such listeners did not place the strong emphasis on fidelity to classic works that caused critics to reject the additions. It is possible that they regarded Grieg's 'modernization' of Mozart's music as investing old-fashioned and potentially dull classics with new charm to suit musical tastes cultivated by performing pieces such as Gounod's *Meditation* in the home.

Grieg's Additions as 'National' Music

The apparent polarization of opinion about Grieg's additions mirrors a similar divergence of taste concerning the supposedly 'national' character of his music more generally. Among English audiences, the idea that Grieg's work was essentially Norwegian was central to both its popular appeal and the criticism it suffered from detractors. Shaw was a particularly vocal critic of Grieg's compositions, characterizing such 'national' music as parochial and therefore of less value than classical repertoire whose relevance was ostensibly universal. This insistence on the primacy of the classics over 'national' music permeates Shaw's critical engagement with Backer-Grøndahl's performances in London in 1889 and 1890, not least the juxtaposition of these two categories implicit in her presentation of Mozart's Fantasy with an additional piano part by Grieg.

Although the letter Shaw wrote to Backer-Grøndahl after this performance is not extant, her surviving reply suggests that it evinced the same objection to 'national' music that informed his published criticism. The pianist's reply, which subtly resists Shaw's dismissive attitude toward 'national' music in general and Grieg's additions in particular, offers a rare and historically informative contrast to the widespread condemnation the additions suffered in press reviews. Before examining this important source in further detail, however, it is necessary to consider the context provided by Shaw's engagement with Grieg's music, Backer-Grøndahl's performances in London, and the concept of 'national' music.

For late-nineteenth century audiences, Grieg's fame as a representative of the contemporary flowering of Norwegian artistic culture was matched only by the dramatist Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906).[100] Perhaps inevitably, Ibsen's reputation often informed how critics interpreted Grieg's music, including the additional piano parts used by Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson. The author of 'Modern Pianism', for instance, echoed a common criticism of Ibsen's plays when complaining that such reworkings pursued an ugly 'realism' over traditional artifice.[101] Referring to Ibsen in order to ascribe a national motivation to the composer's actions, Shaw quipped that 'Grieg's appendage to Mozart's fantasia must be Norway's revenge for Mr Walter Besant's appendage to Ibsen's Doll's House'.[102] This allusion was highly topical: the social and aesthetic debates sparked by the first London production of *A Doll's House* (1879) at the Novelty Theatre the previous

accounts probably results from critics employing different rhetorical strategies to denigrate the additions after observing mixed audience reactions.

[99] The *Era* was exceptional in this respect, approvingly reporting that the audience 'evidently enjoyed' the use of Grieg's additions at Hartvigson's recital. 'Mr Anton Hartvigson's Recital', *Era*, 8 March 1890, 15.

[100] See Lionel Carley, *Edvard Grieg in England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006): xiii–xiv.

[101] 'Modern Pianism', *Musical World*, 5 and 12 July 1890, 530. One typical essay described Ibsen as a 'sternly professed realist' and decried the 'repulsive realism' of his plays. R. Farquharson Sharp, 'Henrik Ibsen's Dramatic Experiment', *Theatre*, 1 Feb. 1889, 73–81, at 81, 79.

[102] Shaw, 'Bassetto's Destructive Force', 947.

season had secured Ibsen's fame in England, and Besant's prose continuation of the play, 'The Doll's House – And After', was published the following January.[103] Shaw, an enthusiastic supporter of Ibsen's play, had sought his own 'revenge' on Besant by penning a further continuation, 'Still After a Doll's House', published only weeks before his review of Backer-Grøndahl's recital.[104]

Shaw's facetious characterization of Grieg's additions as 'Norway's revenge' on Besant is more revealing than it initially appears.[105] The analogy is founded upon Grieg and Ibsen's shared Norwegian identity, and so emphasizes the importance of nationality, but ultimately serves to denigrate the composer by likening him with Besant rather than his compatriot. Suggesting that Grieg, like Besant, had used an 'appendage' to subvert an existing masterpiece allowed Shaw to rank Ibsen alongside Mozart, presenting both as great artists wronged by lesser ones. However, Shaw's own willingness to add to Ibsen's plot (albeit mediated by Besant) indicates that his literary analogy constitutes more than a mere condemnation of artistic infidelity, and instead bears more detailed scrutiny.

A Doll's House ends with Nora Helmer literally slamming the door on her restrictive domestic existence in order to pursue personal freedom, a socially radical decision that Besant attempts to undermine by imagining its negative consequences two decades later. In Besant's story, Nora's abandoned family live in misery and disgrace, and her daughter, Emmy, kills herself when this stigma prevents her escaping to America with the son of Nora's original antagonist, Krogstad. In his continuation, Shaw aimed to challenge Besant's 'middle class evangelical verdict on the play' by inventing a subsequent conversation between Nora and Krogstad Senior that reveals his culpability for Emmy's suicide.[106] Besant's use of picturesque references to fjords and the midnight sun exoticized the play's Norwegian setting, an approach consistent with that of conservative critics who sought to dismiss Ibsen's work as 'parochial' or 'provincial'.[107] In contrast, Shaw's continuation treated the setting of *A Doll's House* as incidental to its action, encouraging English readers to regard the play as presenting a widely applicable social message that was as relevant to them as audiences in Oslo.[108]

The low esteem in which Shaw held Grieg's music was influenced by the same suspicion that national specificity necessarily compromised an artwork's international relevance. 'Hitherto I have not been a great admirer of Edvard Grieg', he admitted during the composer's visit to London in 1889, 'He is a "national" composer; and I am not to be imposed

[103] Walter Besant, 'The Doll's House – And After', *English Illustrated Magazine*, Jan. 1890, 315–25. On the Novelty Theatre production and its reception see Tore Rem, 'Introduction', in Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House and Other Plays*, trans. Deborah Dawkin and Erik Skuggevik, ed. Tore Rem (London: Penguin, 2016): xv–xliii, xxx-xxxi; Michael Egan,ed., *Henrik Ibsen: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1972): 101–25; and Mary Christian, 'Performing Marriage: "A Doll's House" and its Reconstructions in Fin-de-Siècle London', *Theatre Survey* 57/1 (2016): 43–62.

[104] G. Bernard Shaw, 'Still After the Doll's House: A Sequel to Mr. Walter Besant's Sequel to Henrik Ibsen's Play', *Time*, Feb. 1890, 197–208. Shaw's book-length defence of Ibsen was published the following year; see G. Bernard Shaw, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (London: W. Scott, 1891).

[105] Grieg's additions were published long before Besant's story, so Shaw's description should be understood as purely rhetorical rather than casting any light on the composer's actual motivations.

[106] Shaw offered this view of Besant's story in a letter to Charles Charrington, who had played Dr Rank in the Novelty Theatre production of Ibsen's play. See Bernard Shaw, *Collected Letters, 1874–1897*, ed. Dan H. Laurence (London: Max Reinhardt, 1972): 239.

[107] Characteristically, Shaw reinterpreted this alleged weakness of Ibsen's plays as a strength, arguing that their provincial or 'suburban' bourgeois settings addressed an international condition of European society that ensured their relevance beyond Norway. See Tore Rem, '"The Provincial of Provincials": Ibsen's Strangeness and the Process of Canonisation', *Ibsen Studies* 4/2 (2004): 205–26, especially 211–14.

[108] For an insightful discussion of Besant and Shaw's contrasting approaches to Ibsen's play see Mary Christian, '"A Doll's House Conquered Europe": Ibsen, His English Parodists, and the Debate over World Drama', *Humanities* 8/2 (2019): article 82.

on by that sort of thing'.[109] Shaw characterized 'national' music as reliant on evocations of folk idioms that were of little significance to listeners outside the composer's own country. 'I do not cry out "How Norwegian!" whenever I hear an augmented triad', he protested, claiming that Grieg's music did not remind him of Norway because he had never been there.[110] For Shaw, Grieg's music used these allusions to Norwegian folk music to celebrate national peculiarity rather than striving for the broader significance he valued in art, particularly the classical canon. 'All good "folk music"', the critic insisted, 'is as international as ... the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven'.[111] The comparison that Shaw drew a year later between Grieg's addition to Mozart's Fantasy and Besant's continuation of *A Doll's House* exhibits similar concerns; from his perspective, both 'appendages' undermined works of international importance by pigeonholing them within a particular national context.

While Shaw's impatience with nationalism in art was undoubtedly informed by the internationalism of his socialist political beliefs, the contradictions inherent to his case against Grieg betray its additional concern with issues of musical taste.[112] The critic's claim that the national specificity of Grieg's music reduced its significance to listeners outside Norway was belied by its popularity in Britain and elsewhere. As Carl Dahlhaus argued, nationalist evocations of folk music satisfied a 'craving for the exotic' that was widespread among the middle classes in nineteenth-century Europe.[113] The features most commonly heard as expressions of particular national characters – which included pounding 'bare' fifths, drones, and modality – actually constituted a generalized folk topic that was tied to particular countries only by its discursive context and the nationality of its composer.[114] In apparent contradiction with his own argument, Shaw implicitly conceded that 'national' music could be internationally appreciated as such by ridiculing the widespread identification of augmented chords in Grieg's music with his Norwegian homeland.

Addressing a Norwegian readership, Shaw tellingly attributed this response to the same young, female audience of domestic pianists that other critics later rebuked for applauding Grieg's additions. Noting that, through his popular lyric pieces, the composer had 'visited England, parlor by parlor, before he called on us in person', Shaw claimed that Grieg's music was particularly popular among 'young women': 'When they hear that augmented triad for which he shews such a preference, they sigh "How Norwegian! How fitting for one who hails from the land of the fjords and the midnight sun! What local

[109] Bernard Shaw, 'Bassetto's Uncle and Peer Gynt [*Star*, 16 March 1899]' in *Shaw's Music*, 1:576–80, at 577.

[110] Shaw, 'Bassetto's Uncle', 577–8.

[111] Shaw, 'Bassetto's Uncle', 578. In this context Shaw presented the classical repertoire as international rather than Austro-German. Later, he offered a more explicitly acknowledged the extent to which German culture in particular, and especially German music, informed his concept of culture in general. '[M]y pretention to being an educated man and the heir of a high culture, is founded ... on that extraordinary body of German art which began with Johann Sebastian Bach and is still alive in the hands of Richard Strauss'. Bernard Shaw, 'What I Owe to German Culture' [1910], *ADAM International Review* 337–339 (1970): 5–16, 12.

[112] For an insightful discussion of Shaw's internationalism, see Tore Rem, 'Ibsen and Shakespeare: Insularity and Internationalism in Early British Ibsen Reception', in *Internationalism and the Arts in Britain and Europe at the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Grace Brockington (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009): 205–22. As Rem argues, 'Shaw resisted a hollow universalism and insisted on specificity: his was a contemporary internationalism, a synchronic rather than diachronic universalism' (209).

[113] Carl Dahlhaus, 'Music and Nationalism', in *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980): 79–101, at 100. For further discussion of the relationship between nationalism and exoticism in music, see Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 72–84.

[114] On folklorism as a topic in nineteenth-century music, see Janice Dickensheets, 'The Topical Vocabulary of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Musicological Research* 31/2–3 (2012): 97–137, at 128–31.

color!'".[115] For Shaw, 'national' music such as Grieg's relied on an exoticist pictorialism that appealed to women and that was necessarily inferior to the ideal of internationalist, absolute music represented by his own (implicitly masculine) taste for the classics. Furthermore, Shaw derisively characterized those who thronged to hear Grieg's performances as 'young ladies, who, loving [Grieg's] sweet stuff, were eager to see and adore the confectioner', sarcastically relating that he forbore one concert altogether 'lest occupying [his] seat should be the means of turning away even one enthusiastic worshiper'.[116] By contrast, Shaw claims to 'despise' Grieg's 'sweet' and 'pretty' music, preferring instead 'a good, solid, long-winded, classical lump of composition'.[117]

Reporting on Backer-Grøndahl's first performances in London in the same season, Shaw strove to distance her from both her compatriot Grieg and the supposedly unsophisticated young women who played his music on parlour pianos around the country. In a scene laden with fortuitous significance, the critic first met Backer-Grøndahl on the set of *A Doll's House*: both had been invited to a dinner at the Novelty Theatre on 16 June to celebrate the play's London opening the previous week. Shaw recounted this occasion in the *Star*, describing the various turns performed to entertain those gathered on stage amongst the furniture of the Helmer family parlour, in which all the play's action unfolds. Last of all, he wrote, a 'quiet lady, neglected and unknown' agreed to play the onstage piano used to accompany the tarantella Nora dances at a crucial moment in Ibsen's drama.[118] Shaw describes preparing himself for 'the worst', expecting an amateur rendition of a parlour favourite such as *The Maiden's Prayer*, only to be taken aback by the lady's performance of a piece she had composed herself.[119] After pronouncing her 'one of the greatest pianists in Europe', Shaw claims that the lady invited him to hear her play Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto with the London Philharmonic Society orchestra.[120] Finally introducing Backer-Grøndahl to his readers by name, Shaw describes her as a 'great artist – a serious artist – a beautiful, incomparable, unique artist' who 'played upon Helmer's pianoforte as it was never played upon before, and perhaps never will be again'.[121]

Shaw's surprise at the quality of Backer-Grøndahl's playing was, revealingly, contrived for deliberate rhetorical effect; he had actually heard her play Beethoven's concerto ten days previously, praising her performance in an unsigned review.[122] The critic's account of the *Doll's House* party cannily uses its theatrical setting to dramatize Backer-Grøndahl's status as a great artist: she turns the Helmers' parlour back into a public stage, transcending the role of domestic amateur just as Nora transcends the role of domestic wife at the end of Ibsen's play.[123] From this perspective, Shaw's anecdote anticipated and challenged the association with amateur playing that so often prevented professional female pianists from being accorded the same artistic status as their male counterparts. The following

[115] Bernard Shaw, 'The Performance of Grieg's Peer Gynt in London [*Dagbladet* 18 March 1889]' in *Shaw's Music*, 1:581–4, at 582, 581.

[116] Bernard Shaw, 'An Embarrassment of Riches [*Star* 1 March 1889]' in *Shaw's Music*, 1:566–71, at 566–7.

[117] Shaw, 'Bassetto's Uncle', 578.

[118] Bernard Shaw, 'An Angry Critic and a Very Quiet Lady [*Star*, 21 June 1889]' in *Shaw's Music*, 1:673–80, at 679. On the role of the parlour piano in Ibsen's work, and Nora's tarantella in particular, see Sofija Christensen, 'Dances in the Drawing-room: Musical Elements in Ibsen's Dramas', *Nordlit* 34 (2015): 105–14.

[119] Shaw, 'An Angry Critic', 679.

[120] Shaw, 'An Angry Critic', 679.

[121] Shaw, 'An Angry Critic', 679.

[122] Shaw characterized her playing as 'great in strength and feeling'. Bernard Shaw, 'Thunder and Lightning at the Philharmonic [*Star*, 7 June 1889]' in *Shaw's Music*, 1:654–5, at 654.

[123] On the significance of the domestic stage setting of Backer-Grøndahl's impromptu performance, see Camilla Hambro, *Det ulmer under overflaten: Agathe Backer Grøndahl, genus, sjanger og norskhet* (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 2008): 528.

year, for example, one critic listed Backer-Grøndahl among what they patronizingly considered a 'goodly show of "petticoat" pianists' able to 'charm the eye as well as the ear'.[124] Shaw was not alone in resisting such a pejoratively feminized characterization of Backer-Grøndahl. Hildegard Werner's article promoting the pianist's London debut describes how her playing and compositions had eventually impressed even Hans von Bülow, whose sexism was (even then) widely mocked in the British press.[125] Tellingly, however, Werner countered the idea Backer-Grøndahl was a mere 'petticoat pianist' by explicitly praising the 'manliness' of her playing.[126] This compliment reveals the extent to which Backer-Grøndahl's supporters affirmed her artistic credibility by suggesting that she fulfilled the expectations set by her male colleagues rather than by challenging the negative stereotypes so frequently applied to female pianists.[127]

To Shaw's frustration, however, Backer-Grøndahl's choice of repertoire often flouted his conception of pianistic merit and good taste, featuring Grieg's 'national' music as well as the 'international' classics he preferred. In a profile of the pianist published a month after they first met, Shaw offered her performance of Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto as conclusive evidence that she was an 'artist of genius' but conceded that he found her admiration for Grieg 'infuriating'.[128] Unfortunately for Shaw, Grieg's music featured prominently in Backer-Grøndahl's repertoire during her time in London. She had first appeared in the city on 28 March 1889 with a highly acclaimed performance of Grieg's Piano Concerto under the baton of the composer himself, whom she had asked to facilitate her introduction to the British public.[129] After giving the performance of Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto that Shaw so admired on 6 June, Backer-Grøndahl returned to Grieg, opening her recital at Princes Hall on 13 July with his Third Violin Sonata.[130] While the programme also included works by Schumann, Chopin, and the pianist herself, Shaw insisted that she 'should have played a Beethoven sonata instead of Grieg's violin sonata'.[131] The critic nonetheless declared that Backer-Grøndahl had justly ended the season with a reputation as 'a great Beethoven player, a great Schumann player, a great Chopin player, and, consequently, a great pianoforte player'.[132] Despite the centrality of Grieg to Backer-Grøndahl's repertoire, Shaw believed that pianistic greatness could only be achieved by performing the classics (a category he conceived broadly as older, canonical music).

Shaw may have hoped that Backer-Grøndahl planned to use her national association with Norway's most famous composer to make her name in London before focusing on classical repertoire when she returned the following season. However, the programmes the pianist devised for her concerts in 1890 displayed an even greater emphasis on 'national' music from Norway and other Scandinavian countries, most notably works by Grieg. It was Grieg's concerto rather than Beethoven's that Backer-Grøndahl chose to

[124] J.B.K., 'Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts', *Musical Opinion*, 1 April 1890, 315.

[125] Hildegard Werner, 'Agathe Backer-Gröndahl', *Musical Standard*, 9 March 1889, 195–6, at 196. One cartoon typifies the ridicule to which Bülow's prejudice against female pianists was subjected: 'The Petticoat Pianists Across Hans von Bülow', *Musical World*, 5 Jan. 1878, 17.

[126] Werner, 'Agathe Backer-Gröndahl', 195.

[127] For an insightful analysis of gendered conceptions of pianism in the nineteenth century, see Ellis, 'Female Pianists and Their Male Critics'.

[128] Bernard Shaw, 'Agathe Backer-Gröndahl [*Star*, 13 July 1889]' in *Shaw's Music*, 1:699–703, at 700, 702.

[129] See Camilla Hambro, 'Agathe Backer Grøndahl: "A Perfectly Plain Woman?"', *Kapralova Society Journal* 7/1 (2009): 1–7, at 4. Grieg had to go to considerable lengths to persuade the London Philharmonic Society to engage Backer-Grøndahl as a soloist; see Carley, *Edvard Grieg in England*, 146 and 180–82.

[130] Backer-Grøndahl had also given a private concert on 13 June that included several of Grieg's characteristically 'national' piano pieces and one of his violin sonatas. 'Music in Society', *Musical World*, 22 June 1889, 399.

[131] Bernard Shaw, 'Exploiting Children and Critics [*Star*, 19 July 1889]' in *Shaw's Music*, 1:707–11, at 709.

[132] Shaw, 'Exploiting Children and Critics'.

reprise in her first concert of the season at the Crystal Palace on 1 March, following it with Chopin's Fantasy in F minor Op. 49. 'Madame Gröndahl's powers of interpretation are wasted on a scrappy work like Grieg's', Shaw grumbled, complaining that 'when you are longing for Mozart in D minor or Beethoven in G, or the E flat over again, then Grieg is an impertinence'.[133] Contrary to the critic's hopes, it seems that Backer-Grøndahl had planned to gain esteem by playing familiar classics before shifting the public's attention to her performances of 'national' music rather than the other way around.

The simmering conflict between Backer-Grøndahl's probable creative intentions and Shaw's critical expectations finally boiled over in his response to her Steinway Hall recital on 5 March, which opened with Grieg's version of Mozart's Fantasy. '[I]f the [Crystal Palace] concert left me discontented', the critic explained, 'the recital threw me into a perfect frenzy of exasperation'.[134] Although horrified by the unusual treatment of Mozart's Fantasy, Shaw's broader complaint was that the programme consisted primarily of 'drawing-room music' rather than 'the classics of the pianoforte' (Table 1).[135] The critic was not alone: the *Musical Times*, for instance, considered the programme 'miscellaneous and peculiar, the names of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Mendelssohn being conspicuous by their absence'.[136] Shaw attributed Backer-Grøndahl's partiality for music he considered trivial to the provincial tastes of audiences in her native country, suggesting while it might be necessary to 'extenuate the crime of playing serious music' in Norway this was not the case in England.[137]

It is significant that much of the music in Backer-Grøndahl's programme that Shaw and other critics dismissed as trivial was in some way connected with her native country. Of the eight composers featured in the recital, half were Norwegian (Grieg, Edmund Neupert, Ole Olsen, and Backer-Grøndahl herself) and, including Grieg's additions to Mozart's Fantasy, they were responsible for 14 of its 18 items. Some of these works were explicitly 'national' in the sense disparaged by Shaw, using exoticized stylistic features along with descriptive titles to evoke folk culture within a picturesque Norwegian setting.[138] Backer-Grøndahl's own composition *Huldreslaat* (1887), with which she concluded her recital, is typical of this genre. Advertised as 'The Dance of the Mountain Spirits', the piece's modal (principally mixolydian) inflections and pounding 'bare' fifths – especially prominent in its final bars – are typical of the conventionalized folk topics that Shaw associated with 'national' music (Example 3).[139] The green and gold fjord scene that appeared on the cover of *Huldreslaat* when it was published in Britain three years later as *Danse Norvégienne* resembles the images of Norwegian landscape that the critic had suggested

[133] Bernard Shaw, 'Concerts [Star, 3 March 1890]' in *Shaw's Music*, 1: 940–42, at 941.

[134] Shaw, 'Bassetto's Destructive Force', 945.

[135] Shaw, 'Bassetto's Destructive Force', 947, 946.

[136] 'Pianoforte Recitals', *Musical Times*, 1 April 1890, 216. Another critic noted the lack of works by Beethoven and Schumann, stating that two works by Chopin were 'the only pieces of importance' in a recital 'mainly composed of trifles'. 'Music: The Week', *Athenaeum*, 8 March 1890, 314.

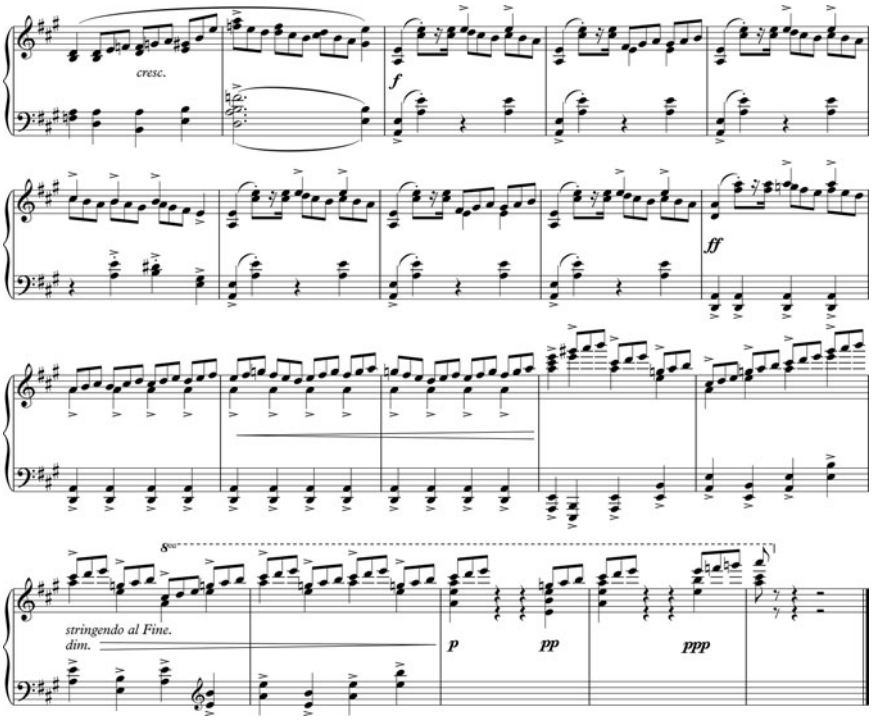
[137] Shaw, 'Bassetto's Destructive Force', 947.

[138] Although most commonly associated with the visual arts a century earlier, in the late nineteenth century the term 'picturesque' was occasionally applied to music of a loosely programmatic nature, see 'Picturesque Music', *Musical Standard*, 7 April 1888, 220; and 'The Picturesque in Music', *Musical Standard*, 17 July 1897, 43–4.

[139] This subtitle is given in 'Mdme. Backer-Grondahl's Recital', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 6 March 1890, 6. The piece's Norwegian title refers to the dance of the huldra, a seductive female creature from Norwegian folklore whom Christian men can evade only by holding her cow's tail. Contemporary Scandinavian reviewers of the *Huldreslaat* drew comparisons between the huldra and Backer-Grøndahl herself, but there is no evidence British critics were made aware of the details of the legend beyond the descriptive title on the advertised programme. For discussion of *Huldreslaat* and its Scandinavian reception, see Hambro, *Agathe Backer Grøndahl*, 532–3. For insightful discussion of the theme of mountain enchantment in Grieg's music, see Daniel M. Grimley, *Grieg: Music, Landscape, and Norwegian Identity* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006): 79–92.

Table 1. The programme of Backer-Grøndahl's recital at Steinway Hall, 5 March 1890, reconstructed from an advertisement in the *Morning Post* (4 March 1890): 1

Composer	Country of origin	Work	Additional performer
Mozart–Grieg	Austria and Norway	Fantasy in C minor for Two Pianos	Alma Haas (pf)
Agathe Backer-Grøndahl	Norway	Song (?) ['Nu brister Isen om Lande' Op. 18/5]	Agnes Jansen (voice)
Edmund Neupert (1842–1888)	Norway	Concert Etude (?)	
Eduard Lassen (1830–1904)	Denmark	Crescendo (?)	
Ole Olsen (1850–1927)	Norway	*Fanitull* Op. 23/3	
Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)	Norway	'An den Frühling' Op. 43/6	
		'Erotik' Op. 43/5	
		'Wedding March of the Peasants Passing-by' [Bridal Procession] Op. 19/2	
Agathe Backer-Grøndahl	Norway	Song (?)	Agnes Jansen (voice)
Frédéric Chopin (1810–49)	Poland/France	Nocturne in C minor Op. 48/1	
		Ballade in A flat [?] major	
Agathe Backer-Grøndahl	Norway	Romanzes [Op. 19/4?]	
		Song (?)	Agnes Jansen (voice)
Eduard Schütt (1853–1933)	Russia	Two Bluettes en Forme de Valse [op. 25]	
Agathe Backer-Grøndahl	Norway	Concert Etude in B [flat] minor Op. 11/1	
		Concert Etude in A major Op. 11/6	
		Skizze in A [flat] major [Op. 19/2?]	
		Huldreslaat (The Dance of the Mountain Spirits)	



Example 3. Final bars of Backer-Grøndahl, *Danse Norvégienne (Huldreslaat)* (London and Leipzig: Lucas, Weber, Pitt, & Hatzfeld, 1893)

Grieg's augmented chords conjured in the minds of sighing female listeners (Figure 1).[140] While Shaw may have mocked such picturesque associations, this edition of *Huldreslaat* and its inclusion as an insert in the *Strand* Magazine in 1895 attest to the exotic appeal that such 'national' compositions held for many domestic amateur pianists.[141]

Backer-Grøndahl's recital included several 'national' pieces of this kind, which were particularly popular with the audience at large even if critics remained unconvinced. The 'Bridal Procession' from Grieg's *Scenes from Country Life* Op. 19 received an encore, as did Ole Olsen's *Fanitull*, which the *Musical Times* described as a 'weird Scandinavian dance' that had 'roused the audience to enthusiasm'.[142] Although most critics were sceptical of this music's artistic worth, the *Pall Mall Gazette* noted such 'Scandinavian national airs' as an unusual and interesting feature of the programme.[143] The Swedish newspaper *Stockholms Dagblad*, moreover, published a telling riposte to Shaw's complaint that Backer-Grøndahl had performed 'national' music rather than the classics, claiming that

[140] Werner deployed similar imagery in her 1889 profile of Backer-Grøndahl, suggesting that her 'dreamy romance' resulted from the 'wild, beautiful sceneries' of the Christiania fjord where she grew up. Werner, 'Agathe Backer-Gröndahl', 195.

[141] On the *Strand* publication, see Carley, *Edvard Grieg in England*, 243.

[142] J.B.K., 'Agathe Backer-Gröndahl's Pianoforte Recital', 89; 'Pianoforte Recitals', *Musical Times*, 1 April 1890, 216. Other critics eagerly repeated the evocative description of Olsen's piece that was evidently supplied in their programme booklets, explaining that according to an 'old Norwegian tradition' the *Fanitull* was 'a wild, furious dance at one time played by his Satanic Majesty, and which later descended to the village musician'. 'Mdme. Gröndahl's Concert', *Musical Standard*, 1 Feb. 1890, 218.

[143] 'Madm. Backer-Grondahl's Recital', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 6 March 1890, 6.

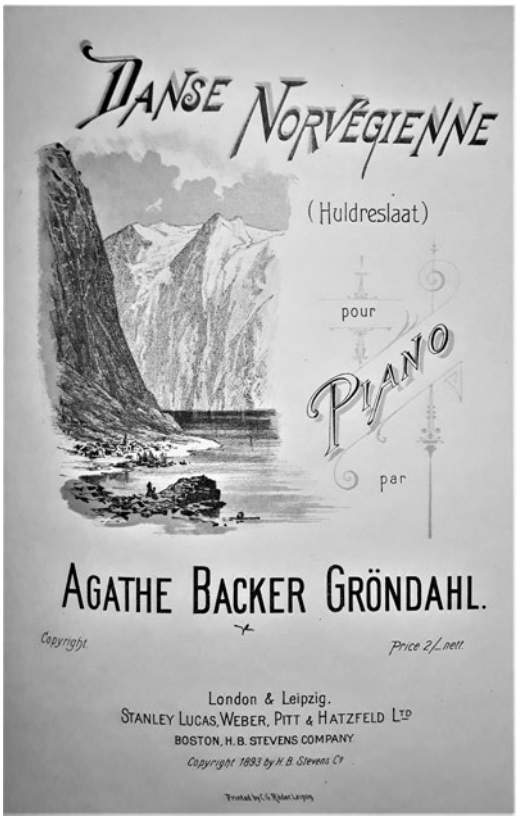


Figure 1. The cover of Backer-Grøndahl, *Danse Norvégienne (Huldreslaat)* (London and Leipzig: Lucas, Weber, Pitt, & Hatzfeld, 1893)

he ignored the tastes and interests of the audience while the pianist did not.[144] The paper argued that the pianist's largely female English audience were particularly fond of character pieces and she felt a duty to nurture their appreciation of works in this genre by her compatriot Grieg. Backer-Grøndahl's programme also featured music by Norwegian composers that were not overtly 'national' in character, such as her own concert études. However, the focus provided by evocative pieces such as *Huldreslaat*, *Fanitull*, and the 'Bridal Procession' ensured that critics perceived a distinctly 'national' flavour in the recital as a whole. The *Daily News*, for example, stated that the concert 'relied chiefly on Scandinavian music', while the *Times* claimed that 'the influence of Grieg was felt on nearly every piece'.[145]

Unlike the picturesque character pieces in Backer-Grøndahl's programme, the additional piano part that Grieg composed for Mozart's Fantasy lacks the descriptive title and explicit use of folk topics most commonly associated with 'national' music. However, Grieg's reputation as a 'national' composer has led some scholars to argue that the addition is distinctively Norwegian in character and to hear echoes of the country's

[144] *Stockholms Dagblad*, March 1890, quoted at 'Agathe Backer Grøndahls konserter 1867–1903', https://users.abo.fi/chambro/Konserter/18900305/ (accessed 10 February 2025).

[145] 'Music', *Daily News*, 8 March 1890, 6; 'Two Pianoforte Recitals', *The Times*, 6 March 1890, 10. See also 'Steinway Hall', *Morning Post*, 7 March 1890, 5. Critics even appear to have detected a hint of the exotic in Backer-Grøndahl's approach to more conventional repertoire, noting the 'dominant individuality' of her 'untraditional' approach. Sidney R. Thompson, 'Music Notes', *Time*, April 1890, 439–44, at 444; 'Concerts: London and Suburban', *Musical World*, 8 March 1890, 195.

folk music in its apparently commonplace dynamic contrasts.[146] The idea that Grieg's addition was particularly Norwegian was probably even more compelling to those who heard it as part of Backer-Grøndahl's recital, in which explicitly 'national' music played so prominent a role. The addition certainly allowed Mozart's Fantasy to blend in with such repertoire rather than remaining distinct from it. The *Magazine of Music* noted that as 'the one classical piece of the afternoon' the Fantasy 'would have afforded a striking contrast to the rest of the music, but for the fact it was presented in a strange form'.[147] In this context, critics such as Shaw might well have interpreted Backer-Grøndahl's use of the addition as an undesirable 'national' appropriation of an 'international' classic. For example, this sentiment appears to inform the way that the *Athenaeum* drew attention to Grieg's nationality when condemning his additions: 'it has pleased Grieg, the Scandinavian composer, to whom we are indebted for much charming music, to lay violent hands upon Mozart's familiar Fantasia'.[148] Conversely, however, the perceived Norwegian character of the addition might have contributed to the applause it reportedly received from other concertgoers, for many of whom Grieg's more explicitly 'national' pieces would have held an exotic appeal.

It is worth noting that Grieg himself appears to have intended his additions to situate Mozart's music within an ongoing Austro-German tradition rather than adapting to Norwegianize them. In his essay on the composer, Grieg claimed that Mozart's 'splendid chromaticism' anticipated 'modern' music, specifically that of Wagner.[149] It may have been this conviction that drew Grieg to the Fantasy in C minor; his addition intensifies the work's already striking level of chromaticism and dissonance as if to highlight its progressive credentials.[150] This understanding of Grieg's addition as a response to the history of Austro-German music was not necessarily incompatible with the potentially Norwegian character emphasized by Backer-Grøndahl's recital programme. As Daniel Grimley has argued, the cultural nationalism of Grieg's music was potentially 'progressive', looking forward to Norway's future international significance as much as back to the idealized image of the past evoked by folklorism.[151] From this perspective, Grieg's addition negotiates the relationship between Norwegian music and the developing Austro-German tradition from Mozart to Wagner rather than merely celebrating national particularity and isolation. It is possible that Backer-Grøndahl's decision to use the addition was influenced by this more complex form of cultural nationalism, even if listeners in London simplistically perceived the Norwegian theme of her recital (positively or negatively) as exotic.

Before addressing Backer-Grøndahl's own account of her motivations in her letter to Shaw, however, it is fruitful to revisit Hartvigson's concurrent use of Grieg's additions with their potentially 'national' connotations in mind. Hartvigson was an early advocate of Grieg's works in England and, although Danish rather than Norwegian, he may have included the composer's additions in his recital in order to promote the music of a fellow Scandinavian.[152] In any case, it is significant that Hartvigson, like Backer-Grøndahl, used Grieg's additions to music by Mozart to open a recital in which the Austro-German classics

[146] See note 18.

[147] 'Musical Life in London', *Magazine of Music*, April 1890, 63.

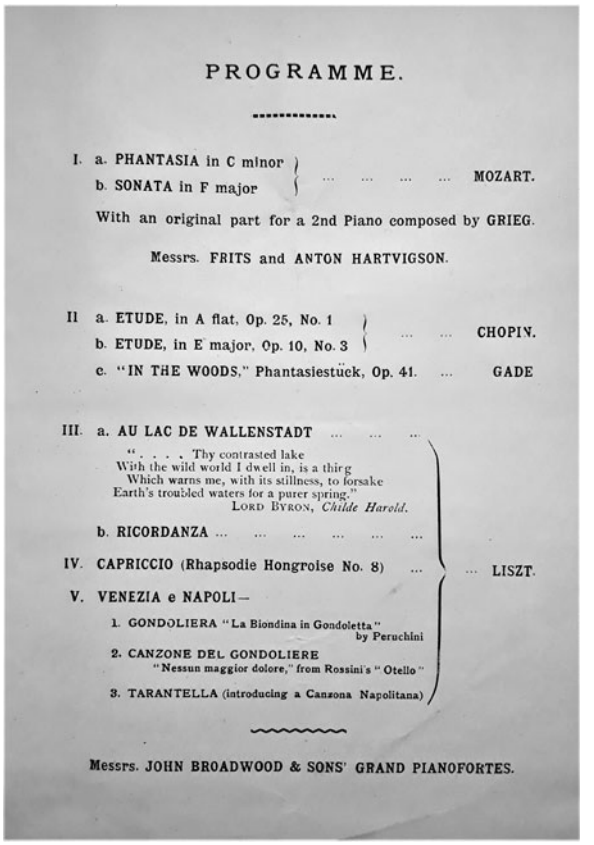
[148] 'Music: The Week', *Athenaeum*, 8 March 1890, 314.

[149] Grieg, 'Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1896)', 235–6.

[150] In this context, it is difficult not to hear Grieg's contribution to the end of the Fantasy's cadenza as a pertinent allusion to the opening motif of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. Grieg had reported on the first complete performance of the *Ring* cycle in Bayreuth in *Bergensposten* only a few months before creating his additional piano parts to Mozart's piano piece, so he may have been especially preoccupied with Wagner's music at the time. See Edvard Grieg, 'Richard Wagner and the Ring of the Nibelung (1876)' in *Edvard Grieg: Diaries, Articles, Speeches*, 290–318.

[151] See Grimley, *Grieg*, 11–54.

[152] On Hartivigson as a promoter of Grieg's music, see Carley, *Edvard Grieg in England*, 25, 76.



PROGRAMME.

I. a. PHANTASIA in C minor
b. SONATA in F major ... ... MOZART.

With an original part for a 2nd Piano composed by GRIEG.

Messrs. FRITS and ANTON HARTVIGSON.

II a. ETUDE, in A flat, Op. 25, No. 1
b. ETUDE, in E major, Op. 10, No. 3 ... ... CHOPIN.
c. "IN THE WOODS," Phantasiestück, Op. 41. ... GADE

III. a. AU LAC DE WALLENSTADT ... ...
". . . . Thy contrasted lake
With the wild world I dwell in, is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring."
LORD BYRON, *Childe Harold*.
b. RICORDANZA ... ...
IV. CAPRICCIO (Rhapsodie Hongroise No. 8) ... ... LISZT.
V. VENEZIA e NAPOLI—
1. GONDOLIERA "La Biondina in Gondoletta" by Peruchini
2. CANZONE DEL GONDOLIERE "Nessun maggior dolore," from Rossini's "Otello"
3. TARANTELLA (introducing a Canzona Napolitana)

Messrs. JOHN BROADWOOD & SONS' GRAND PIANOFORTES.

Figure 2. Programme booklet from Anton Hartvigson's recital at Princes' Hall, 5 March 1890

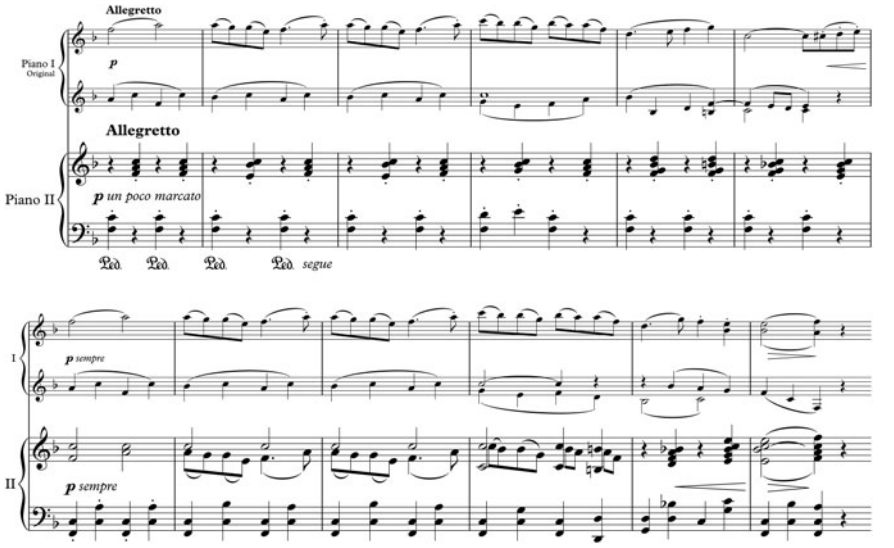
were otherwise absent, instead featuring several picturesque works that evoked exotic locales (Figure 2).[153] Hartvigson's selections from Liszt's *Années de Pèlerinage* variously summon images of the composer's native Hungary, the Italian cities of Venice and Naples, and Lake Wallenstadt in the Swiss Alps. Similarly, one critic heard the composer's 'native Danish beech woods' in Hartvigson's 'excellent' performance of *In the Woods* by his compatriot Niels Gade, an assessment that attests the kinship between exotic and 'national' music.[154]

In this context, Hartvigson's decision to perform Mozart's Sonata in F major as well as the Fantasy in C minor is worthy of note. Unlike his second piano part for the Fantasy, Grieg's addition to the Sonata introduces the stylized folk topics typically associated with 'national' music, particularly in the concluding rondo. Grieg supplements each of the refrain's five appearances with an 'oom-cha' accompaniment that sustains a 'bare' fifth under Mozart's changing harmonies, transforming it into a rustic dance (Example 4). This impression is enhanced by the countermelody Grieg introduces upon the refrain's second appearance, derived from the D–E–C motif in the left hand of the fourth bar of the first refrain, whose marked articulation and repeated resolution of the leading tone down a major third grants it a folk-like character (Example 5).[155] In the third refrain Grieg

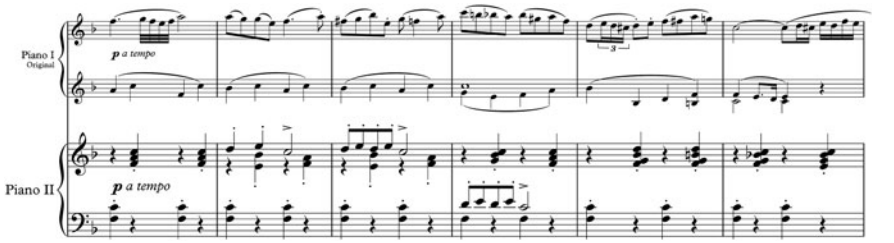
[153] Other than the Mozart items, two études by Chopin are the only pieces on Hartvigson's programme that would have been considered 'classic'.

[154] 'Mr Anton Hartvigson's Recital', *Era*, 8 March 1890, 15.

[155] This voice leading not only contrasts with that of Mozart's music, but is closely related to what Jost calls the 'Grieg formula' or 'Grieg motif' (^8-^7-^5). See Jost, '"Eine Norwegisierung Mozarts"?', 603–4. Surprisingly,



Example 4. Opening of the first refrain from Mozart's Sonata in F major, iii Rondo, with Grieg's 'freely composed additional accompaniment' (Edition Peters, 1890)

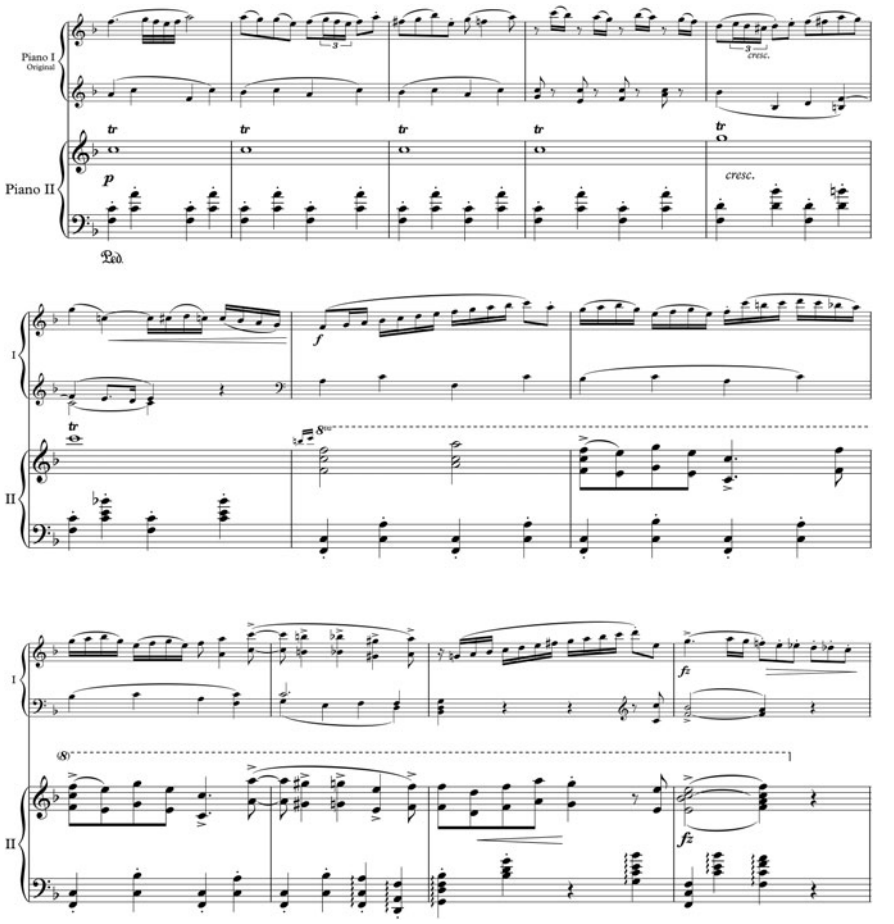


Example 5. Opening of the second refrain from Mozart's Sonata in F major, iii Rondo, with Grieg's 'freely composed additional accompaniment' (Edition Peters, 1890)

expands the register upwards and decorates alternating beats with glistening acciaccaturas. This glittering effect is maintained at the start of the fourth refrain through a trill on the dominant that continues against Mozart's theme, eventually ascending an octave during a crescendo into a climax (Example 6). At this point Mozart replaces his theme with a series of decorative runs, but Grieg prominently retains a variation of the theme which strongly resembles the folk-like countermelody of the second refrain (Example 7). In this passage, the classical tradition and Norwegian 'national' music appear to be refracted through one another in a mutual apotheosis rather than being placed in opposition. Grieg matches the low two-part counterpoint of Mozart's fifth and final refrain by expanding his 'oom-cha' accompaniment into the low and high registers and instructing both pianists to steadily fade into quietness.[156]

the final movement of the Sonata in F major has been ignored by those who have argued that Grieg's additions are distinctively Norwegian. Grieg's additional part for the Sonata in C major K545 introduces a similar folk quality to its final movement.

[156] This passage is marked '*più tranquillo poco a poco e sempre dim*'.

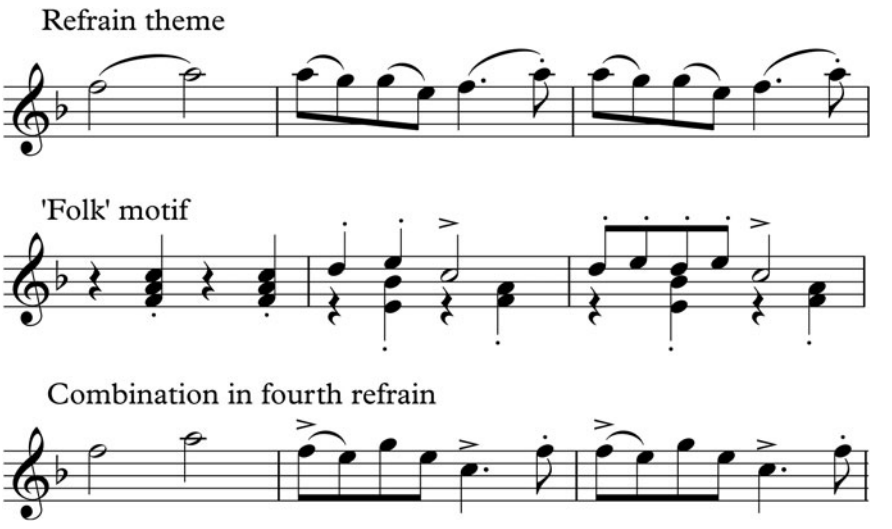


Example 6. Fourth refrain from Mozart's Sonata in F major, iii Rondo, with Grieg's 'freely composed additional accompaniment' (Edition Peters, 1890)

In moving from a quiet beginning to a boisterous climax and then dying away, Grieg's version of the movement traces the same spatially evocative dynamic contour as his popular 'Bridal Procession'.[157] Grieg's transformation of Mozart's rondo evokes a similar movement of folk subjects through a musical landscape, first toward the listener and then receding into the distance. Heard after the fusion of Mozart and the folk topic in the fourth refrain, the final diminuendo could suggest not a retreat into an idealized national past, but progression towards a future in which Norway realizes its potential by both drawing on and contributing to a broader 'international' culture. It is possible this or a similar interpretation of the movement's dynamic and thematic arc constituted the 'narrative' (*Geschichte*) that Grieg reports so enthused the audience when Lie-Nissen and Rytterager premiered his version of the Sonata in Christiania in 1877.

A nationally inspired 'narrative' of this kind may also have informed Backer-Grøndahl's decision to perform Grieg's version of Mozart's Fantasy, even if its musical material was less explicitly 'national' in character. At the very least, the pianist's personal response to

[157] Backer-Grøndahl presented under the more vivid title 'Wedding March of the Peasants Passing-by', a more direct translation of the original Norwegian *Brudefølget drar forbi* that better captures its evocation of both folk culture and relational movement.



Example 7. Motivic connection between Mozart's refrain theme, Grieg's 'folk' motif, and Grieg's combination of the two in the fourth refrain

Shaw's criticisms of her recital suggests that her use of Grieg's additions arose from a conscious effort to balance critical expectation that she should perform classic works with a desire to delight London audiences with less familiar repertoire from her own country. It is worth reading her entire reply to Shaw with this tension in mind.

> Dear Sir,
>
> I thank you heartily for your letter, and understand thoroughly, that you meant very well in giving me your advices. I am very obliged to you for the kindness, you always have shown me![158]

Although the rest of Backer-Grøndahl's letter remains similarly tactful and polite, she subtly resists Shaw's criticisms of her chosen repertoire. The pianist goes on to contextualize her decision to use Grieg's additions as an attempt to refresh a performance culture fixated on a small canon of classics.

> I know, of course, that when I choose the composers you mention, there is no doubt about the musical worth [of their works], so the artist may be quiet about that; but everything classical is so much played and repeated here, that one might suppose the public to be interested in something new. As a novelty and as an experiment I think the Fantasia might interest, but in ... reality I am myself of your opinion, if not in the same degree.[159]

If Backer-Grøndahl really did share Shaw's view of the Fantasy, it is unlikely she would have chosen to perform it; in any case, she evidently understood its novelty value as an asset in the 'struggle for life' among pianists in the overcrowded London market.

[158] Letter from Agathe Backer-Grøndahl to Bernard Shaw (8 March 1890), British Library Add MS 50512, vol. v, f.218.

[159] Letter from Agathe Backer-Grøndahl to Bernard Shaw (8 March 1890).

Further, behind her apparent deference to Shaw the pianist implies that he should be less narrow-minded in his artistic tastes:

> I reverence Beethoven and Schumann as my musical gods but there are so many different kinds of beauties in ... art as in the world; I think the mind ought to be open to and able to accept every sort of it. Your bad opinion of this Fantasia I understand, but not of [Grieg's] concerto, which for me contains great beauties.[160]

In contrast to Shaw's stubborn demand for familiar Austro-German works, Backer-Grøndahl espouses a pluralistic conception of artistic value that embraces 'national' music such as Grieg's Piano Concerto as well as the supposedly 'international' classics. The pianist rounds off by promising to present more traditional repertoire in future, but hints that she will not stop promoting the work of her countryman Grieg.

> But, if ever I come to London again, I will try to be only classical, except perhaps in Grieg.
>
> Yours very truly,
>
> Agathe Backer Gröndahl [*sic*][161]

Overall, the pianist's letter suggests that her decision to perform Mozart's music with the additional piano part by Grieg was part of both a personal artistic project and a prudent commercial strategy. In this respect, Backer-Grøndahl's note offers a telling foil to the numerous press reviews that simply criticized her for being unfaithful to a classical work.

Perhaps in response to Shaw's complaints, Backer-Grøndahl adopted a more balanced repertoire for the rest of the season. Appearing in the Popular Concerts series on 15 March, she played Grieg's Third Violin Sonata with Wilma Neruda, but was sure to follow it with pieces by Schumann, Chopin, and Mendelssohn.[162] Shaw welcomed this turn to traditional repertoire, but having his own way proved a hollow experience: the critic admitted feeling 'snubbed' by Backer-Grøndahl's more 'reserved' and 'severe' playing in the concert.[163] 'Last year' he lamented, 'she played so as to let us into all her secrets. This time, having no doubt found out how unworthy a horde of Philistines we are, she has kept us at a certain distance'.[164] Backer-Grøndahl's letter, however, suggests that this distance resulted from disappointed resignation that she would have to satisfy conservative tastes rather than discontent at the reception of her performances of classical works. Shaw presents himself as one of the few listeners to have comprehended the pianist's talents, but, ironically, the listeners that he and other critics regarded as 'Philistines' for applauding Grieg's version of the Fantasy may have better appreciated her artistic intentions. It must have been a great disappointment to Backer-Grøndahl

[160] Letter from Agathe Backer-Grøndahl to Bernard Shaw (8 March 1890). Given Backer-Grøndahl's stated admiration of Schumann it is worth noting that he, like Grieg, composed piano accompaniments to earlier works (notably Bach's cello suites and solo violin sonatas and partitas and Paganini's caprices for solo violin).

[161] Letter from Agathe Backer-Grøndahl to Bernard Shaw (8 March 1890).

[162] She performed Schumann's Novelette in F major Op. 21 No. 1, Chopin's Prelude in D flat major ('Raindrop') Op. 28 No. 15, and Mendelssohn's Étude in B flat minor Op. 104b No. 1. The last of these was encored. See 'Concerts: London and Suburban', *Musical World*, 22 March 1890, 234–6, at 235; J.S. Shedlock, 'Music: Recent Concerts', *Academy*, 22 March 1890, 213.

[163] Shaw, 'Everybody Played Well [*Star*, 17 March 1890]' in *Shaw's Music*, 1: 957–8, at 957, 958.

[164] Shaw, 'Everybody Played Well [*Star*, 17 March 1890]', 957.

that critics like Shaw received her efforts to promote Norwegian music without enthusiasm. She took part in one further concert that season, after which she never performed in London again.[165]

Conclusion

The controversy sparked by Hartvigson and Backer-Grøndahl's decision to perform Mozart's music with additions by Grieg would scarcely be worthy of notice if it simply manifested the pervasive belief that classical works were of supreme value and should be played as 'faithfully' as possible. However, this article has argued that the polarized reception of these performances rewards closer attention for two related reasons. Firstly, their peculiar instrumental format resulted in an unusually complex relationship with notions of fidelity. Secondly, fidelity was only the most explicit in a range of aesthetic and social concerns that informed the differing responses of contemporary listeners.

Unlike a more conventional 'arrangement', the use of Grieg's additions in performance involved departing from the style of Mozart's music while simultaneously preserving it without alteration, causing listeners to interpret them variously as either upholding or brazenly flouting the ideal of fidelity. This seeming contradiction provoked both particularly intense criticism from detractors and the intense (if ultimately short-lived) flurry of interest in Grieg's additions in London in 1890. To their detractors, the additions were especially offensive because they appeared to subvert classical works while pretending to the artistic respectability associated with this esteemed repertoire. To pianists in an increasingly crowded market, by contrast, they were a potential means to satisfy the demand for classical works while piquing the interest of an audience who heard such music (if not Mozart's solo keyboard works specifically) on a regular basis. Moreover, the instrumental configuration produced by Grieg's additions ensured that listeners heard them not only as composed arrangements but also as a pianistic choice, drawing them into broader debates about the role and nature of fidelity in contemporary performances of classical music. This configuration also resulted in a complex and contradictory array of generic connotations that linked the additions to pedagogical obligatos such as those produced by Moscheles, 'additional accompaniments' to Baroque choral works, and Gounod's *Meditation*. All of these genres operated in tension with the imperative of fidelity to classical works, but they carried different nuances of meaning and evaluative charges when used to interpret performances that used Grieg's additions.

Although critics who heard these performances were most overtly preoccupied with the issue of fidelity, closer attention to press reviews indicates that the use of Grieg's additions engaged less explicit (but further reaching) cultural anxieties, aesthetic concerns, and modes of enjoyment. As well as their obvious deviation from Mozart's text, the additions infringed dominant conceptions of good taste because they blurred distinctions between genres with different cultural associations and levels of artistic prestige, particularly in the context of Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's entire recital programmes. As Shaw's remarks attest, Grieg's additions appeared to compromise the status of Mozart's keyboard works as 'international' classics – which was already precarious – by associating them with a commercially popular form of exoticist 'national' music enjoyed by young women. Unfortunately, the appeal that this novel approach to performing classical works apparently held for many, and perhaps the majority, of concertgoers can only be inferred

[165] On 17 March Backer-Grøndahl participated in Giovanni Sgambati's Second Piano Quintet and played Chopin's Fantasy in F minor and Schumann's *Nachtstücke*. See 'Music: Recent Concerts', *Academy*, 22 March 1890, 213 and 'Concerts: London and Suburban', *Musical World*, 22 March 1890, 234–6, at 235.

from the disdainful comments it provoked in negative press reviews. As a result, the insights that Backer-Grøndahl's letter to Shaw provides into her own motivations for using Grieg's addition to the Fantasy in C minor are especially valuable. Against the backdrop of Shaw's ongoing critique of the pianist's repertoire, the letter suggests that her use of Grieg's addition formed part of a broader project of cultural nationalism that aimed to offer a more rounded impression of Norwegian music than existing stereotypes allowed.

Sustained consideration of Backer-Grøndahl and Hartvigson's performances of Mozart's keyboard music with additions by Grieg not only provides telling insights into their immediate cultural context, but also addresses several issues of broader relevance to the study of musical arrangement. The particularity of the meanings generated by these performances indicates what can be lost when 'arrangement' is theorized as a single critical category without attending to the important differences between the many and varied forms of adaptive endeavour. The relevance of these other practices and genres reveals the pitfalls of an exclusively work-based conception of musical adaptation (as 'arrangement') and the scope offered by a perspective that considers the meaningful continuities between performing adaptations and adaptive performance. Finally, this article has attempted to demonstrate the ways in which it might be possible to draw insights about particular adaptive performances of classical works from the apparently undifferentiated discourse of fidelity in which they are inevitably shrouded.

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