



AUDIOPHILE EDITION

GRIEG

Piano Concerto in A minor
Old Norwegian Melody with Variations
Two Lyric Pieces • In Autumn

Grant Johannesen, Piano
Utah Symphony Orchestra • Maurice Abravanel



**Edvard
GRIEG**
(1843–1907)

	Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16 (1868)	28:08
1	I. Allegro molto moderato	12:12
2	II. Adagio	6:10
3	III. Allegro moderato molto e marcato	9:46
	Two Lyric Pieces from Op. 68 (1898–99)	6:19
4	No. 4. Evening in the Mountains	3:34
5	No. 5. At the Cradle	2:45
	Old Norwegian Melody with Variations, Op. 51 (1890; orch. 1900–05)	22:22
6	Poco tranquillo	0:52
7	Tema: andantino espressivo	0:45
8	Poco allegro, ma tranquillo	0:35
9	Energico	0:30
10	Allegro leggiero	0:35
11	Poco andante	1:07
12	Maestoso	1:05
13	Allegro scherzando e leggiero	0:43
14	Andante	1:37
15	Andante molto tranquillo	2:04
16	Presto	0:41
17	Tempo di Menuetto	2:14
18	Allegro marcato	0:36
19	Tempo di Valse	1:09
20	Adagio molto espressivo	2:25
21	Finale: Allegro molto marcato	1:23
22	Pomposo	1:16
23	Prestissimo	0:55
24	Andante molto tranquillo	1:48
25	In Autumn, Op. 11 (1866)	10:32

Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)
Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16
Two Lyric Pieces from Op. 68
Old Norwegian Melody with Variations, Op. 51
In Autumn Overture, Op. 11

In the years preceding the Second World War it was fashionable to speak of Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) in a condescending and even very critical manner. Sometimes his music was even dismissed as being ‘hackneyed’. Yet in the first decades of the 20th century Grieg had enjoyed a tremendous vogue. The great pianists played his concerto, some of his more than 140 songs graced the programmes of the internationally recognised song recitalists, and his string quartet and the third violin sonata were played all over. The *Peer Gynt* suites and the *Lyric Suite, Op. 54*, were favourites in the repertory of popular symphony and Promenade concerts. They were considered indispensable for garden concerts and for what in Germany became stigmatised as ‘Grove and Meadow’ (*Wald und Wiesen Programm*) offerings, in which appeared the overture to Hérold’s *Zampa*, the Strauss waltzes, the *Hungarian Rhapsodies Nos. 1 and 2* by Liszt, and a selection by Richard Wagner.

The Norwegian master was not a musical giant. Yet he was not a dwarf either. Music would be poorer indeed without the creations of the *petits maîtres*. Referred to as ‘minor’ or ‘*petit*’, they were, nevertheless, masters of their craft, thus enabling them to make valuable contributions. In countering the ‘hackneyed’ classification Gerald Abraham referred to Cécile Chaminade, the once enormously popular French composer of salon music, and had this to say: ‘Every schoolgirl knows the Grieg who approximates Chaminade; many a professional musician is ignorant of the Grieg who approximates Bartók.’ Strangely enough, this ‘hackneyed’ music proved itself lucrative in our own day in the cinema and on Broadway. Witness *Song of Norway*.

Technically, Grieg was a product of the Leipzig Conservatory where the Mendelssohn-Schumann tradition held sway during the 19th century. His output of sonatas, chamber and symphonic music is very small indeed, and his contribution to orchestral music in the sonata design amounts to only two works – the overture *In Autumn* and the *Piano Concerto* (he had withdrawn a symphony, composed in 1864). Thus Grieg made not much use of what he had learned in Leipzig. In one respect, however, in the field of harmony, he was completely free of tradition and projected his own individuality. He once said: ‘The realm of harmony was always my dream-world, and my harmonic sense was a mystery even to myself. I found that the sombre depth of our folk-music had its foundation in the unsuspected harmonic possibilities.’ Grieg’s harmony was not only the subject of comprehensive scholarly investigations but also recognised by 20th-century composers.

Grieg’s formative years were affected by his Danish and Norwegian backgrounds. Norway was under Danish rule until 1814 and its capital Christiania (now Oslo) bore the name of a Danish king. Danish influences were still strong in the middle of the 19th century. Grieg’s wife Nina was the daughter of a Danish actress. He occasionally sought the advice of the Danish composer Niels W. Gade, who commanded great respect in the Scandinavian countries. He set words of Danish poets, Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875) in particular, to music, and had many Danish friends. Thus one spoke of his ‘Danish period’.

A decisive turn in his artistic outlook occurred after he had made the acquaintance of Rikard Nordraak (1842–1866), the composer of the Norwegian National Anthem. Nordraak, though Berlin-trained, aimed at the creation of a distinct Norwegian national music, and directed Grieg’s attention to the riches of Norwegian folk music. It was a revelation to

Grieg and the immediate result was the composition of four piano pieces (1865) which were published under the title *Humoresker*, because he did not dare to use the heading *Norwegian Dances*. Yet this was only a minor foray into the Norwegian sphere. He fully freed himself of Danish and German elements after he had become acquainted with the nearly 600 *Older and Newer Norwegian Mountain Melodies*, a three-volume anthology (1853–67) compiled by Ludvig Mathias Lindeman (1812–1887), the founder of the Christiania Conservatory. Grieg used this collection as a melodic source for many a composition, instrumental as well as vocal.

In several instances Grieg's music is a signal, a prediction of things to come. Take for example *Klokkeklang* ('Bell Ringing'), Op. 54, No. 6, composed in 1891. In listening to this little piano piece one recalls Debussy's *La Cathédrale engloutie*, composed 19 years later (1910). Another Debussyan trait is found in the piano piece *Procession of Gnomes*, where one observes a succession of chords in root position, descending from the top of the keyboard to the bottom. Because of the harmonic innovations, Grieg's *Norwegian Peasant Dances*, Op. 72 (1902), were hailed by the young French composers as significant of *le nouveau Grieg*. Ravel stated on a visit to Norway that he had scarcely written anything that was not influenced by Grieg. Even if we interpret that as diplomatic flattery, the fact that Ravel said it indicates that he recognised features of Grieg's music which served as inspirations for him.

We find traces of Grieg in Delius. According to Sir Thomas Beecham, Delius relied less and less on any source of inspiration after 'he had got [Florida and] Norway out of his head'. In this connection it is not beside the point to recall an interesting episode that Grieg told in his essay *in memoriam* of Verdi, published in Copenhagen in 1901. Attending performances of Verdi's *Otello* in Italy, he noticed that he had become the centre of attention during the prelude to Act IV. People were looking at him. When he inquired about this strange behaviour, he was told that it was felt that this particular passage was more Norwegian than Italian. Verdi may or may not have been acquainted with compositions by Grieg, whose works up to Op. 41 had appeared before *Otello* was created; and this pertinent passage in Verdi's score shows some affinity to certain elements of Grieg's music.

At any event Grieg's music can stand on its own and does not need the support of composers of historic consequence. Quite a few of his compositions have successfully withstood the ravages of time. They are eloquent proof against the 'hackneyed' detraction, and testify to the fact that the Norwegian master had something significant to convey to his audience.

Leaving aside Grieg's contributions to stage music, his output of orchestral compositions conceived as such boils down to the overture *In Autumn* and the *Piano Concerto*. A symphony was withdrawn; its middle movements were salvaged in an arrangement for piano duet. All other contributions to the orchestral literature were transcriptions of piano pieces and songs. The case of the *Symphonic Dances*, Op. 64, is in doubt.

Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16

Hans von Bülow, who coined many ingenious metaphors and witty aperçus, was less successful in calling Edvard Grieg the 'Chopin of the North'. In the first place, Grieg shows more affinity to Schumann, particularly in his *Piano Concerto*. Secondly and no less important, Chopin was the piano composer *par excellence* while the work of the Norwegian includes not only music for piano but substantial contributions to song literature (about 120), chamber music and orchestral pieces.

Only two concertos published in the 1870s are in the repertory of the present-day pianist: Tchaikovsky's *Concerto in B flat minor* and Grieg's popular concerto. Both have similarities in their design and triumphant conclusions, as well as an interesting historical parallelism: the concerto of the Norwegian received its first performance in Denmark and the

concerto of the Russian was first played by a German, Hans von Bülow in the United States (Boston, 1875).

Grieg wrote the concerto in 1868 when he was vacationing in the Danish village of Søllerød. He had strong ties to Denmark. After he left the Leipzig conservatory, he lived for three years in Copenhagen. There he became engaged to his cousin Nina Hagerup, a fine singer (her mother was a famous Danish actress who contended that no one cared to listen to Grieg's music). The marriage took place in 1867. Nina Grieg was acknowledged as a superb interpreter of her husband's songs.

Edmund Neupert (1842–1888) who gave the first performance of Grieg's concerto, was born in Christiania (now Oslo). He was the son of a German music teacher. Educated in Germany, he joined the conservatory in Copenhagen as a piano teacher at the age of 26. In 1883 he settled in New York, highly esteemed as a teacher and author of study works for the piano. But when Neupert played Grieg's concerto in Copenhagen on 3 April 1869, he showed resolute trust in the artistic quality of the piece. Until then, the name of the composer was known only through small piano compositions, songs, and two violin sonatas; Grieg now appeared with a large-scale orchestral work. Neupert's confidence was confirmed by the enthusiastic reception the concerto was given by an audience that included Anton Rubinstein. Grieg could not attend, and Neupert wrote to him: 'I am glad to send you greetings from Rubinstein and say that he is astounded to have heard a composition of such genius. He would like to make your acquaintance.' Liszt expressed himself in a similar manner when Grieg visited him in Rome to show him the manuscript of the concerto at a gathering at Liszt's place of students and several other people. In a letter of 9 April 1870, to his parents, Grieg describes how Liszt played the concerto at sight:

I admit that he took the first part of the concerto too fast, and the beginning consequently sounded helter-skelter; but later on, when I had a chance to indicate the tempo, he played as only he can play. It is significant that he played the cadenza, the most difficult part, best of all. Not content with merely playing, he at the same time converses and makes comments, addressing a bright remark now to one, now to another of the assembled guests, nodding significantly to the right or left, particularly when something pleases him. In the *Adagio*, and still more in the finale, he reached a climax both as to his playing and the praise he had to bestow.

The concerto was published by E.W. Fritsch (who also published the theoretical essays of Wagner and the works of Nietzsche) in Leipzig in 1872, with a dedication to Neupert. Grieg had accepted several of Liszt's suggestions before publication – as for instance the announcement of the gentle second theme of the first movement by the trumpet instead of the cellos. Later on, realising that the orchestration was marred by crudities, Grieg determined to subject the work to a substantial revision, and this occupied him during the last years of his life (1906/07). Gerald Abraham lists more than 40 various changes pertaining to scoring, layout of chords and tempo markings. The original setting for two horns was considerably altered by adding a second pair of horns, and it was the revised version which became popular. Viewed biographically and stylistically the concerto marks the highpoint of Grieg's early period, in which the national element is not as paramount or significant as it was to be in his later creations. Nevertheless the piece shows the unmistakable imprint of what we recognise as Grieg's proper musical language. This is a truly Romantic concerto. Structurally Grieg did not adopt the examples of Mozart and Beethoven – i.e. the concept of the symphonic commonwealth in which the solo instrument plays a prominent part. His concerto shows parallels to Schumann and Rubinstein in the design of the movements, the absence of the extended orchestral exposition in the first movement, the prominence of the piano at the beginning and in the thematic development (mostly carried out by the piano). It is a concerto without contrapuntal passages, a work which emphatically stresses the melodic line.

Grieg began as a miniaturist with little piano pieces and songs. He ventured into the orchestral realm with a symphony which he never submitted to publication. It seems that the piano concerto was intended as a contrast to his smaller works – i.e. a composition which showed passages of heroic quality – witness the cadenza of the first movement. Moreover, the lyrical D flat melody, which opens the deftly orchestrated *Adagio* with muted strings (no trumpets and kettledrums), assumes quite a different aspect later. Such a startling change occurs again in the finale, where a melody that was introduced gently in the first part (exposition) is turned into an heroic pronouncement at the end.

In 1883 Grieg sketched two movements of a concerto in B minor, but he abandoned the project. Thus the *A minor concerto* remains his only large-scale orchestral composition in the three-movement sonata design.

Two Lyric Pieces from Op. 68

The orchestral treatment of these two miniatures (90 and 52 measures respectively) of the six-item album *Op. 68*, published in 1898, was probably not the outcome of second thoughts. The orchestral setting of these pieces was probably in the composer's mind at the time of their conception. He then contemplated the employment of a small instrumental body, chiefly strings, as he had used in the *Two Elegiac Melodies, Op. 34* (1881). *Evening in the Mountains (Andantino, E minor, 2/4)* calls for oboe, horn, and strings, while in *At the Cradle (Allegretto con moto, E major, 4/4)* only strings are employed. Both pieces are typical mood pictures and the composer left it to the player and listener to connect the musical impressions with scenic images.

The first item evokes the figure of a herdsman blowing an indigenous instrument, perhaps a willow-pipe, to gather his flock at sunset. The piece is first dominated by an oboe solo which enters after a brief introduction and moves within the compass of a twelfth (an octave plus a fifth), yet avoids the natural *F*. The word solo must be taken at its essential meaning, because the oboe plays through 36 measures alone. This calls to mind the solo passage of the English horn in the third act of *Tristan und Isolde* which, although twice as long and of a larger compass (an octave plus a seventh), nonetheless served Grieg as a model. The oboe passage is repeated by the strings whose sections, save the double bass, are sub-divided. This procedure results in a sonorous nine-part setting, a device also applied in *At the Cradle*.

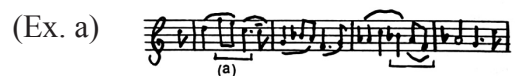
There is a distinct relationship between these two pieces harmonically and metrically. They are set in parallel keys (E minor and E major), both are in duple time (2/4 and 4/4); both commence gently and end '*morendo*'. The conclusion of *At the Cradle*, a fine achievement of a delicate string setting, evokes the gentle mood which the composer must have imagined. Commencing in 1864 with the *Lullaby* of *Op. 9*, Grieg treated this topic ten times, either in song (including *Solveig's Lullaby*), piano transcriptions of songs or instrumental pieces. *At the Cradle* is the last composition of this series.

Old Norwegian Melody with Variations, Op. 51

Thus reads the title of the orchestral version, whose original for two pianos bears the heading *Old Norwegian Melody with Variations*. This version appeared in 1891 and is based on a melody which is included in a group of *Six Norwegian Mountain Melodies* assembled not later than 1875. The melody under consideration bears the number four (*Sigurd and the Troll-Bride*). The orchestration was made in 1900. The complacency on the part of the concert organisations was detrimental to the popularisation of *Op. 51*. The conductors preferred the international favourites that secured success.

The Norwegian, German, British and American Grieg biographies furnish scarce performance dates. The orchestral version was performed *in memoriam* of Edvard Grieg on 16 October 1907, in London under Henry Wood and in Berlin on 28 October 1907, by Arthur Nikisch. (Grieg died on 4 September 1907).

The work is a companion piece to the variation series of the *Ballade, Op. 24*, which is also based on a folk song. *Op. 51* is a large-scale work of 636 measures, scored for a large orchestra with four horns, three trombones, tuba, triangle, bass drum, cymbal, three kettledrums, and strings with harp. The short melody (eight measures) (Ex. a) consists of two strains and an annexed three measures. It shows two significant traits: the characteristic three descending notes (a) in the first three measures: F–E–C and B flat–A–F, which English writers termed Grieg’s melodic ‘hallmark’, and the flattening of the third (A–A flat) which recalls Bartók’s observation that the third of the Hungarian scale is ‘variable’ and the ‘natural’ and ‘flat’ variant may even appear in the same melody. This phenomenon of the interchangeable third is characteristic of Norwegian folk music, and Grieg’s ‘Norwegian Romance’ testifies to it.



Grieg’s variations are not figurative and ornamental. They do not stick closely to the length of the theme or its metrical and rhythmical structure. There are variations of 20, 22, 23, 27, 32, 36, 44 and 56 measures. They are, in short, character variations in which the emotional, melodic and rhythmical qualities always change. The statement of the theme is prefaced by an introductory passage (*Poco tranquillo*, 2/4) and there are 13 variations and a substantial coda (223 measures). The following chart describes the characteristics of the variations.

- I (F major, 4/4) less melodic and centred on the harmony of the *Romance*
- II (F major, 6/8) based on the dactylic rhythm
- III (F major, 4/4) of light quality
- IV (F major, 6/8) lyrical, woodwinds dominating
- V (F major, 4/4) marked *Maestoso*, syncopated (Horn Call!)
- VI (F major, 4/4) corresponds to Var. III
- VII (F minor, 4/4) Funeral music
- VIII (F major, 4/4) New melody with prominent harp accompaniment
- IX (*Presto*, F major, 4/4), dactylic
- X (*Tempo di Minuetto*, F major, 3/4) of gentle quality
- XI (F major, 2/4) march-like
- XII (*Tempo di Valse*, F major, 3/4)
- XIII (*Adagio*, F major, 4/4) Return to the theme announced first by the lower strings, violins, then by the horns and finally by the trumpets and finale

- a) *Allegro* (F major to D major, 4/4)
- b) *Pomposo* (F major, 5/4) Theme in enlarged note values
- c) *Prestissimo* (F minor, 6/8) Theme in reduced note values manipulated in a tarantella-like fashion
- d) *Andante* (F major, 4/4) resumption of the theme

Thus it appears that Grieg the miniaturist attempted to create a mosaic of mood pictures within the framework of a variation cycle. Yet he refrained from furnishing titles for the individual variations. The gentle ending (*morendo*) truly corresponds to the *Old Norwegian Romance*.

In Autumn, Op. 11

This composition has a curious history. It grew out of the song *Autumn Storm*, set to lines by the Danish poet Christian Richardt (1831–1892). In a letter of 6 January 1897, addressed to the Norwegian composer, conductor and writer Iver Holter (1850–1941), Grieg tells the following:

The song *Autumn Storm*... I used during the winter in Rome [1865–66] as the basis for the overture *In Autumn*. When I brought it to Copenhagen and showed it to Gade, he said: ‘This is trash, Grieg; go home and write something better.’ I went home – and with respect be it said, wept. The overture was not well orchestrated – that I remember. So, from sheer want of courage, I let it lie, arranged it as a [piano] duet and played it at home with Nina. In this form I sent it to a competition arranged by the Swedish Academy. The judges were Rietz in Dresden, Söderman in Stockholm, and – Gade in Copenhagen. The overture won the prize, was printed and published as a duet in Stockholm. (Obviously Gade had forgotten all about it). Such is the way of the world!

Grieg had his revenge. That he won the prize should not surprise us in view of the names of the judges which carried much weight. Julius Rietz (1812–1877), court conductor at Dresden, friend of Mendelssohn, supervised the complete edition of Mendelssohn’s works. August Söderman (1832–1876) enjoyed, as composer and editor of a music periodical, great prestige in Sweden. Niels W. Gade (1817–1890), Mendelssohn’s student who was also deputised by his teacher as conductor of the Gewandhaus Concerts in Leipzig, spoke with undisputed authority in Denmark. The version for piano duet appeared with the heading *Fantaisie* in 1867 and the re-orchestrated version of the original was declared a concert overture, a term coined by Mendelssohn. It was first played at a music festival in Birmingham in 1888. Thus six diverse countries share in the history of this Norwegian work: Denmark (poem and the Gade incident), Rome (composition), Sweden (publication of the piano version), England, and Germany (publication of the orchestral version in Leipzig). When Grieg conducted the overture in Paris on 19 April 1903, the presentation was billed as *1er audition*, which can mean only the first performance in Paris.

The piece, which is scored for piccolo and pairs of woodwinds, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, bass tuba, triangle, bass drum, cymbals, and three kettledrums and strings, represents the type of Mendelssohnian concert

overture that, patterned after the first *Allegro* movement of a symphony, clearly defined its programmatic descriptive and poetic notions. The scoring of the overture became more or less the standard for Grieg's later orchestral works. The song *Autumn Storm*, which formed the basis of the overture, appeared only in 1869 in a group of *Romances*. It furnished the general mood and only one musical idea for the overture, namely the dactylic phrase (Ex. b) which was used for the principal idea of the main body of the overture. Yet the important motif (Ex. c) heard in the opening *Andante* (D major, 3/4) and at the other critical points, namely in the development section, then after the recapitulation and finally in the conclusion, is new; and so also is the second theme (*tranquillo*) introduced by the oboe. The *Allegro* follows the sonata pattern exactly, which duly befits a Leipzig-trained composer. For the manipulation of the dactylic motif in the development section, the Beethoven of the *Seventh Symphony* was undoubtedly the Godfather, and some of the agitated passages call to mind the overture to Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* (in the same key).



Richardt's poem concludes with the allusion to the coming spring and welcomes 'the first of buds in the last of snows'. Grieg, however, did not go that far. On the contrary, dwelling on the gay side of autumn, he did not think of the coming winter and spring. He expressed himself definitely in this respect in a letter to a Swiss friend: 'There is no suggestion of the coming spring in the overture; but there is of a union of the serious and merry elements which characterise autumn'. The happy ending of Grieg's overture, with its merry harvester's song, reflects more a Danish autumn than the fall which descends on the Norwegian mountain villages. Later Grieg took several occasions to deal with spring on a small scale, in songs and in the well-known piece *To the Spring*, *Op. 43, No. 6* (1888), which triggered the international favourite *Rustle of Spring* by his Norwegian confrère Christian Sinding.

Dr Joseph Braunstein

Booklet notes reprinted from the original LP release

Grant Johannesen

Grant Johannesen (1921–2005) was one of America’s most important and admired pianists. In a long and wide-ranging career he attained international status of the highest order. Engagements with the great American orchestras, together with annual appearances with distinguished European symphonic organisations and recitals on the national and international festival circuit, elicited the highest critical praise.

Known for his expansive and eclectic repertoire, Johannesen collaborated with most of the important conductors of the 20th century, including George Szell (1897–1970), Sir Georg Solti (1912–1997), Lorin Maazel (1930–2014), Erich Leinsdorf (1912–1993), Seiji Ozawa (1935–2024), Rafael Kubelík (1914–1996), Wolfgang Sawallisch (1923–2013) and Klaus Tennstedt (1926–1998).

A recipient of many honorary Doctoral degrees, Johannesen served as a panellist with the NEA in Washington, D.C., and judged many international piano competitions. In addition to his performing career, he served as president of the Cleveland Institute of Music for ten years. In November 1985, Johannesen was nominated to the rank of ‘Chevalier des Arts et Lettres’ by the French government for his substantial contribution in the area of the performance and recording of French music, and in 1993 was awarded an honorary Doctorate from The Hartt School, University of Hartford. He died on 27 March 2005.

Maurice Abravanel

The Utah Symphony’s reputation as one of America’s high ranking orchestras is the result of the dedicated work of Maurice Abravanel, who was its conductor and musical director from 1947 to 1979. Under his baton, the orchestra received ovations throughout the United States and in the music capitals of Europe for its concerts, and critical acclaim throughout the world for its impressive list of recordings on several labels including Vox.

An American citizen of Spanish–Portuguese ancestry, Abravanel was born in Salonika, Greece in 1903, and raised in Lausanne, Switzerland, where he first conducted at the age of 16. He studied in Berlin with Kurt Weill and received his first professional experience in Neustrelitz, Altenburg and Kassel, while serving as guest conductor of the Berlin Opera. Following his 1932 symphonic debut in Paris, he became guest conductor of the Paris National Opera and musical director of the Balanchine ballet company in both Paris and London. A three-month engagement as guest conductor in Sydney and Melbourne was extended to two years, a time during which he led many first Australian performances in opera and concert.

When the Metropolitan Opera engaged Abravanel in 1936, he was the youngest conductor to ever step to its podium. He was also the most controversial – both praised to the skies for bringing a much needed ‘new spirit’ into that august establishment, and criticised for the same reason. In addition, he was the busiest – at one time conducting seven performances of five different operas in nine days.

After two years he left to conduct several works of Kurt Weill in New York and on tour, and conducted many leading orchestras as well as the Chicago Civic Opera, the Mexico National Opera and another season of concerts in Sydney, Australia.

Under the baton of Maurice Abravanel, the Utah Symphony Orchestra became one of America’s most respected orchestras. Abravanel taught conducting at Tanglewood and was the recipient of many honours including the Gold Baton of the American Symphony Orchestra League. He died on 22 September 1993 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Utah Symphony Orchestra

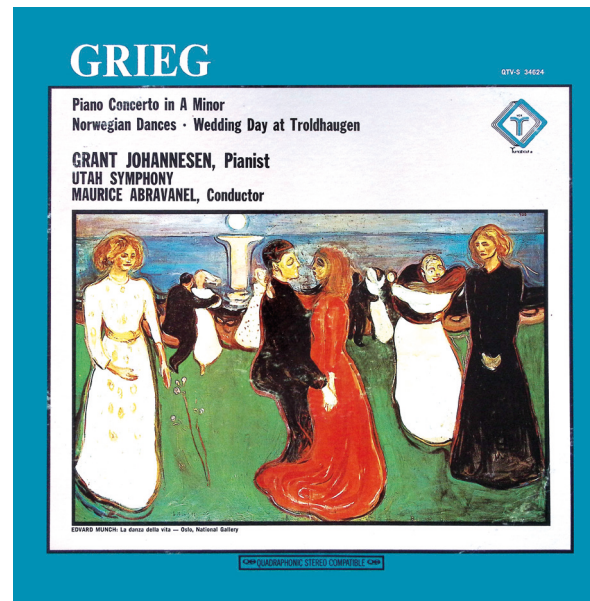
Founded in 1940, the Utah Symphony is one of America's major symphony orchestras, known internationally for its distinctive performances and recording legacy. A leading cultural organisation in the Intermountain West, the Utah Symphony has a rich history of international and domestic tours, award-winning recordings, and in-depth educational programmes. Today, the orchestra's 85 full-time professional musicians perform over 175 concerts each season.

The Utah Symphony became recognised as a leading American ensemble largely through the efforts of Maurice Abravanel, its music director from 1947 to 1979. During his tenure, the orchestra undertook four international tours, released over 100 recordings and developed an extensive music education programme. Abravanel's tenure was followed by Varujan Kojian (1979–83), Joseph Silverstein (1983–98), Keith Lockhart (1998–2009) and Thierry Fischer (2009–23).

The orchestra has been nominated for GRAMMY Awards for recordings with both Maurice Abravanel: Honegger *Le Roi David* (1963), Bloch *Sacred Service* (1979), Stravinsky *Symphony of Psalms* (1980), and with Michael Tilson Thomas: Copland *Old American Songs* (1988). The Utah Symphony has recorded extensively for Albany, Angel (EMI), CBS Masterworks (Sony), Dorian, Harmonia Mundi, Hyperion, London (Decca), CRI/ New World Records, Nonesuch, Pro Arte, RCA Red Seal (BMG), Reference, Telarc, Vanguard (Philips), Varèse Sarabande, Vox and Westminster (DG).

For over three decades, the Utah Symphony performed at the Mormon Tabernacle in the heart of Salt Lake City. The orchestra moved to its current home at Abravanel Hall in the fall of 1979. By the 1970s, the Utah Symphony's summer season had grown to include concerts held at ski venues and at local and national parks across the state. The orchestra's season grew to a 52-week schedule in 1980, and since 2003, its permanent summer home is the Deer Valley® Music Festival in Park City, Utah.

www.utahsymphony.org



First Released in 1976 as QSVBX 5140 and QTV-S 34624

The massive popularity of Grieg's *Piano Concerto* contributed significantly to his renown, marking a high point in his early period. This is a truly Romantic concerto with parallels to Schumann in its emphasis on melodic lines. The overture *In Autumn* has an air of Mendelssohn in its sense of drama combined with a 'union of merry and serious elements' that characterise the season. The *Two Lyric Pieces* and the *Old Norwegian Melody with Variations* provide an attractive mosaic of Norwegian mood pictures.

The Elite Recordings for Vox by legendary producers Marc Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz are considered by audiophiles to be amongst the finest sounding examples of orchestral recordings

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(1843–1907)

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Grant Johannesen, Piano 1–3
Utah Symphony Orchestra • Maurice Abravanel

New 192 kHz / 24-bit high definition transfers of the original Elite Recordings analogue master tapes

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

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Booklet notes: Dr Joseph Braunstein

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