

EDVARD GRIEG

The complete works for violin and piano

*A Special Concert by violinist Victoria Martino
and pianist James Lent*

Following their acclaimed performances of the complete works for violin and piano by Brahms and Dvořák, Victoria Martino and James Lent now present their long-awaited tribute to the northern “titan” of Romantic composers for violin and piano, Edvard Grieg.

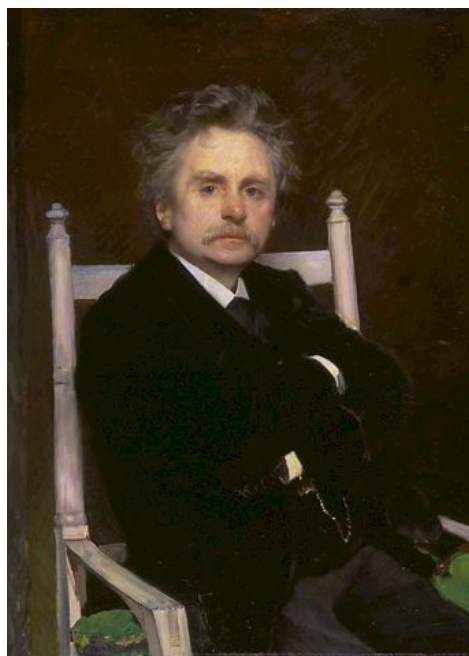
Few composers have the ability to distill landscape and culture into pure musical expression. In an age dominated by the rise of nationalism throughout Europe, Edvard Grieg became the “voice” of Norway, composing musical works that evoked the very essence of his beloved homeland. It was for this reason that the greatest poets and playwrights of Norway asked Grieg to compose incidental music for their literary works. His incidental music to Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt* has become a staple of the orchestral concert repertoire. Yet, like Franz Schubert, Grieg’s largest body of work was focused upon more intimate genres: solo piano works, songs, and chamber music.

In 1900 (at the age of 56), when Edvard Grieg reviewed his entire oeuvre, he stated that he thought his three violin sonatas were among his finest works, each of them representing a stage in his development: “the first naïve, rich in ideas, the second national and the third with a wider horizon.” These three sonatas, in fact, provide an ideal basis for understanding the composer’s evolution.

The first sonata was written when the 22-year-old composer was on summer vacation, and, in the words of his fellow Norwegian composer and biographer, Gerhard Schjelderup, it is “the work of a youth who has known only the sunny side of life.” It contains simulations of the Norwegian folk dance, the *springar*, and the drone of the unique Norwegian folk instrument, the Hardanger fiddle. This sonata was much praised by Franz Liszt, to whom Grieg had sent the score, and for whom he later performed it. Liszt found the work “vigorous, reflective, inventive, and full of excellent material.”

The second sonata followed only two years later, and was composed in a mere three weeks, during the euphoria of Grieg’s honeymoon. Even more overtly dependent upon Norwegian folk elements, it was denounced by Grieg’s teacher and mentor, Niels Gade, as “too Norwegian.” The young composer’s retort was that his next sonata would be “even more Norwegian!”

Twenty years later, Grieg composed his final sonata, which, unlike its two predecessors, took several months to complete. This monumental work, the composer’s own personal favorite, turned out to be the last chamber piece that he wrote. On the title page of the manuscript is written: “Bold and exuberant, the way I like it!” The third violin sonata transcended the boundaries of nationalism to become truly universal, and, in the composer’s own words, present “a wider horizon.”



FRIDAY

15

SEPTEMBER

7:30 PM

TICKETS

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SPECIAL CONCERT

WITH VICTORIA MARTINO

FRIDAY, 7:30 PM
SEPTEMBER 15

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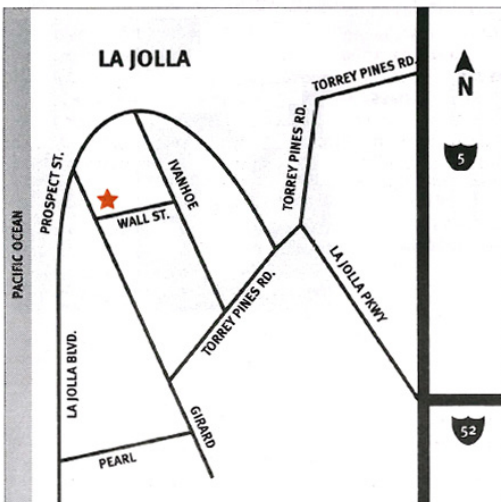
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EVENT INFORMATION

The concert will take place on Friday, September 15, at 7:30 p.m. in the Athenaeum's Joan & Irwin Jacobs Music Room. The doors open at 7 p.m. All seating is on a first-come-first-seated basis with reserved seating for members at the Donor level and above.

TICKETS

\$30 members / \$35 nonmembers

RESERVATIONS

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