

THE SOUND ENSEMBLE and NORTHWEST EDVARD GRIEG SOCIETY present



NORWEGIAN REINVENTION

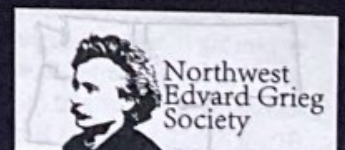


FEATURING STEVEN LUKSAN,
NWEGS COMPOSER IN RESIDENCE

June 8, 2024 at 7pm
Kenworthy Performing Arts Centre

June 9, 2024 at 3pm
The Seasons Performance Hall

June 10, 2024 at 7pm
First Free Methodist Church



Concert Program/Program Notes

Program notes by Laura Loge

Miniatyr-suite - 6'

Anne Marie Ørbeck
US Premiere

Anne-Marie Ørbeck (1911-1996) was one of the more successful women to compose and perform in Norway during the 20th century. Her composition teachers include Darius Milhaud and Nadia Boulanger, giving her a rather prestigious compositional pedigree. She became one of the most prominent solo pianists in Norway during the 1930s, frequently performing her own compositions. In the 1940s she settled in Bergen with her husband. The combined effect of motherhood and World War II limited her ability to perform, allowing her to focus on composition during that decade.

Miniatyr-suite is Ørbeck's own arrangement for sinfoniatta of her suite of piano pieces by the same name. The three short movements include "Vuggeviser" (Lullaby), "Humoreske" and "Stemning" (Atmosphere). This arrangement was commissioned and premiered by NRK, Norway's national radio station, in 1940. However, since the premier, it has not been heard, performed, or published, and after much digging, NRK found the beautifully hand-written manuscript and parts for us in their archives. Ørbeck's son has graciously given us permission to perform his mother's works for this concert.

Isomere - 9'

Anna Berg
US Premiere

Anna Linh Nguyen Berg (b. 1992) is a Norwegian Vietnamese composer from Kolbotn, Norway, based in Paris and Oslo. From her professional biography, "Berg's music has timbre and elegance as central themes. She wants each of her pieces to create their own language and is concerned with how structure, form and layers in music impact the listener's perception of the whole." Isomere, for large ensemble/sinfoniatta, was commissioned and premiered by the Norwegian Academy of Music's Sinfoniatta in October of 2020. It presents us with a divided ensemble, usually between winds and strings, responding to each other through shorter and longer phrases. Two chemical connections are isomere when having the same molecule formula while still having different chemical attributes. In the same way, the material of the musical piece is extracted from the same source, but stretched and turned so that it appears different.

Gjendines Bådenlåt - 3'

Agnes Ida Pettersen
US Premiere
Soloist: Laura Loge

Agnes Ida Pettersen's (b. 1981) Gjendines bådenlåt (Gjendine's lullaby) is a mash-up of a Bach invention with a traditional Norwegian folk song. Grieg, too, explored this folk song in opus 66 in a harmonically daring arrangement for piano after hearing Kaia Gjendine Slaalien from Jotunheimen sing it for him. Pettersen's approach is to superimpose the lullaby in a duple meter over Bach's Invention No. 4 in D Minor, BWV 775 in triple meter. There are a few places where the meters coincide, but surprisingly the two pieces work incredibly well together in spite of their disparate origins. Composed initially for piano and voice, Petterson arranged the work for violin and cello and transcribed it to accommodate our soprano's range, especially for this concert. The text maintains the original dialect from the remote, mountainous region of central Norway.

Syv Sanger Op. 6 - 16'

David Monrad Johansen
Soloist: Laura Loge

David Monrad Johansen (1888-1974) began his career greatly influenced by Edvard Grieg's late-romanticism before exploring more thoroughly French impressionism, as well as nationalistic style – using old Norse literature and stevtoner, ancient Norwegian solo vocal tunes, as inspiration. Rarely did he quote actual melodies, with the exception of several sets of folk songs arranged for piano, as well as in the set presented today, Syv sanger, opus 6, composed in 1920. In 2021 Adam Stern, a Seattle-based conductor and composer, arranged Syv sanger, originally for piano and voice, for

Philharmonia Northwest and soprano Laura Loge.

In 1920, these songs served as a representation for something truly Norwegian, utilizing old Norwegian texts, and exploring how impressionism and expressionism might transform and enhance the essence of Norwegian folk music. These works are far removed in time and subject matter from Johansen's later political life, yet he remains a controversial figure in the history of Norwegian music. We would be amiss to not acknowledge that history. During the German occupation of Norway, Johansen was at the top of the musical pyramid and in a political position to direct the Norwegian musical movement. Rather than abdicate his position, he chose to join the Quisling government, maintaining a role in the Nazi-appointed cultural council from 1942-1945. Following the war he was convicted of treason, served four years of forced labor, and was banished from the Norwegian Composers Association in penance for his role. While we cannot condone his actions, we also do not know the complexities of the situation he found himself in. Outright banning valuable music because of a composer's later life choices could eliminate large swaths of our cultural and musical history. That would ultimately relegate these songs to the dustbin of history, rather than opening up important, often difficult discussions about humanity, our shared histories, and how music and culture can help bring us together.

Intermission

Holbergiana Suite, op. 40 - 20'

Edvard Grieg/arr. Steven Luksan

Conductor: Abbie Eads

Holbergiana - Holberg Suite Grieg - From Holberg's Time, opus 40, was composed first for piano in 1884 and then arranged by Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) for string orchestra in 1885. Grieg composed a five movement work consisting of 18th-century dances from the time of Ludvig Holberg (1684-1745), for the jubilee of the bicentennial of his birth. Grieg referred to by Bergen-born Holberg as "the Molière of the north, ...the creator of the newer Danish-Norwegian literature." Grieg felt a connection to Holberg and the universality of his writings and upon being commissioned to produce music for the jubilee, was glad to experiment with giving these old 18th-century French dance tunes a new, modern presentation with a personal touch. The suite is a marriage of French classicism and Romantic musical language, with Grieg at the core.

Because the orchestrated version would have required more strings than we have available, and since the piano version was the original composition, Steven Luksan has combined the two versions to include both piano and strings, allowing us to perform the suite with the current instrumentation available for this concert. It seems that Grieg often referred to this work by different names, *Holberg Suite*, *Fra Holbergs tid (From Holberg's Time)*, *A Suite in Old Style*, and *Holbergiana*. Luksan has dubbed this arrangement *Holbergiana*, after the composer's own title on the piano manuscript.

E mindes væl den Gøng... - (10')

Steven Luksan

World Premiere

Steven Luksan (b. 1988) is Composer-in-Residence for the Northwest Edvard Grieg Society in addition to working as a freelance composer, collaborative pianist, and piano teacher in the Seattle area. He has long been obsessed with Grieg and Norwegian music, language, and culture, and has composed numerous works, including art songs, chamber music, and more, exploring the Norwegian idiom. Commissioned for this concert, Luksan offers a suite of Norwegian folk songs, arranged for various and flexible instrumentation, in light-hearted, sometimes silly presentations, complete with audience participation. (Prepare yourself to join in!) Leaning heavily into Norwegian folk music, and in the spirit of community music making, there are times when the musicians are instructed to improvise and when restrictions of classical notation are relaxed. With the concept of a "village band" in mind, Luksan leaves most movements open to varying instrumentation, and no movement utilizing the whole ensemble, nor does any one instrument play every movement. The title, *E mindes væl den gøng...* (I remember that time well) is taken from the title of the folk song on which the fifth movement is based and pays homage to the collective memories which folk songs can activate. He has written a text from a folksong from Hardanger on the cover of the score which encapsulates the sentiment of the suite, "Oh! If I could, I would sing the most beautiful song on earth for you but my poor little song just won't do." (Freely translated by S. Luksan)

Text Translations

Gjendines bådenlåt

No ska' ein liten få sova så søtt,
Vogga står reie te bånet.

Der ska' ein liggja så vart og så bløtt,
trygt kan det sova det bånet.

Ro, ro, sova søtt, sova søtt,
trygt kan det sova det bånet.

Min mor ho tok meg på sitt fang,
dansa med meg frem og tilbake.

Danse så, med de små,
så skal borna danse.

Gjendine's Lullaby

tr. Laura Loge

Now a little one shall sweetly sleep,
The cradle stands ready for the child.

There one shall lie so still and so gentle,
the child can sleep safely.

Peace, peace, sleep sweetly, sleep sweetly,
the child can sleep safely.

My mother took me on her lap,
danced with me back and forth.

Dance so, with the little one,
this is how the child shall dance.

Syv sanger op. 6

Old Norwegian Texts

Den varande fugl

Der kom ein fugl af annad land,
– det synger i skog,
forgylte fjødrir saa hadde han.
– Den eine gjeng aldri utaf din hug.

Forgylte fjødrir saa hadde han,
– det synger i skog,
han sette seg paa jomfrubur og song.

<<Aa høyre du fugl, eg vil deg frega,
kvi maa 'ki folkid um notti sova?>>

<<Aa høyre du jomfru, du tar meg 'ki frega,
det er deg baade til sorg og trega,
aa du skal eiga dei boni ni,
din yngste broder er fader til di.>>

Sant hjelpe meg Gud og den Helligaand,
– det synger i skog,
saa vist det var sant som fuglen song!

Nordan fra Thrandheim

Nordan for Thrandheim der stende ei lind,
hon lyser dei femten milir omkring.
– Samtasudelu, samtaseia!

Og nordan for Thrandheim der stende eit hus,
der site min kjærrest og brenner voksljos.
– Samtasudelu, samtaseia!

Og tvo hennes ternur dei fletter hennes haar,
den treda helde gullspegillen for.
– Samtasudelu, samtaseia!

Seven Songs

tr. Laura Loge

The Warning Bird

A bird came from a foreign land,
– it sings in the forest,
he had golden feathers.
– That one song never leaves your mind.

He had golden feathers,
– it sings in the forest,
he sat on the maiden-bower and sang.

“Listen, bird, I have a question for you,
Why won't you let the people sleep at night?”

“Oh, listen, young lady, you ought not ask me,
as it will bring you both sorrow and regret,
you shall have nine children,
and your youngest brother will be their father.”

So help me God and the Holy Spirit,
– it sings in the forest,
what the bird sang came true!

North of Trondheim

North of Trondheim there stands a linden tree,
she shines for fifteen miles in every directions.

And north of Trondheim stands a house,
where my love sits and burns waxen candles.

And two of her servants braid her hair,
and the third holds the golden mirror for her.

Hjuringen

Eg tok meg salt i handi
og lokkad paa min saud,
eg tenkte han ha' silt svara meg
um han ha' vorid daud.

Eg la meg ned i holti
eg la meg ned og lo,
eg tenkte han ha' silt svara meg
um berre eit ljod hell' tvo.

Eg tikjer saa vont um sauden
han traskar og han gjeng,
og heile sumarsavlen min
er berre fire pund; hell' fem.

Um morgonen

Hanen sit paa burshella
og bonden gjev en konn,
rakkin skvakkar i bakko nord
og hjuringen blæs i honn!

Hjuringen site paa bergi
ser imote sol,
saa gleder han seg aat kveldi
som boni gjer mot jol.

Soli skine i nord og ned
ivir Bjaalands fjøs,
Statt upp Mari Bjaaland
no er dagin ljøs.

I Ulaavadi

Austan reke, skyi skeke
og den kalde mjølli driv,
bedre var det heime vera
skjemte seg med sit viv!

Austan reke, skyi skeke
det drive so kalt i heide,
bedre var det heima sita
dei frosne tæ'ne tøy!

Bedre var det heime vera
skjemte seg med sin hest,
hell vera i Ulaavadi
nær det blæse af nordvest.

Reven og bonden

Bonden gjekk aat skogin stad,
reven sat i dalen og kvad.
Han vilde hava ei gaasesteik,
og den som sill vera retteleg feit.

«Du ska faa ei gjøde gaas,
femten vikur stadin paa baas,
men maa eg daa faa hudi di
til fòr op under luva mi?»

The Shepherd

I took salt in my hand
and called to my sheep,
I thought he would have answered
even if he had been dead.

I laid down in the grove
I laid down and laughed,
I thought he would have answered
if only with a sound or two.

I feel so sorry for my sheep
he tramples and he walks about,
and my entire summer harvest
is only four pounds; rather five.

In the Morning

The rooster sits on his roost
and the farmer gives him grain,
the fox yelps in the northern woods
and the shepherd blows his horn!

The shepherd sits on the mountain side
looking toward the sun,
He looks forward to the evening
like children look forward to Christmas.

The sun shines in the north and down
over Bjåland's barn,
Wake up Mari Bjåland
the day is now light.

In Ulåvadi

The eastern storms arrive, the clouds tremble
and the cold snow drifts,
it is better to be home
spending time with one's wife!

The eastern storms arrive, the clouds tremble
it drifts so cold in the highlands,
it is better to sit at home
warming your frozen toes!

It is better to be home
spending time with one's horse,
than to be in Ulåvadi
when it is blowing out of the northwest.

The Fox and the Farmer

The farmer went into the forest,
the fox sat in the valley and sang.
He wanted to have a goose steak,
and the one that was really fat.

“You shall have a fattened goose,
fed heartily for fifteen weeks,
but then I must have your hide
to use as lining for my hat?”

Inn kom revens syster,
vilde med reven viskre.
«Aa er du no galen i dit sinn
og vil du selje hudi di!

Aa vil du selje hudi di
til før op under luva si?»
«Hudi er vond at misse,
men maten lyt vera visse.»

Saa lengi helt bonden reven med snak
til han fekk si byrse ladd.
Reven lakkad ivir ein dam,
bonden stod att, og slapp inkje fram.

Reven han slog si rove i ring,
saa flaug han alle haugan ikring.

I Vaagelidann

Der tykkje me so vent at vera
der drottin dansar med drengjo,
gaukin gæl i grønne lid
og fuglanne skaka vengjo.

Sakte sill' eg svara deg
var eg i djupan dalar,
nykillen syng og løva spring
og fagraste gaukanne gala.

Fenoren gjeng under Elkansnuten
det er saa vent at sjaa,
hesten hoppar i Krykkjokleivann
og han heve bjølla paa.

Vent det er i Vaagelidann
nær lauvid og grasid gror,
men endaa venar paa Kvamsfjorden
nær Gunnar og Kari ror.
No skuggar soli i Øyfjell
og burt ivir Raudsidnuten,
no skuggar soli i Øyfjell.

In came the fox's sister,
wanting to whisper to the fox.
"Oh have you gone crazy
that you want to sell your hide!

So you want to sell your hide
to be used as a lining for his hat?"
"My hide is painful to lose,
but the food sounds certain."

The farmer kept the fox talking
until he loaded his rifle.
The fox scampered over a dam,
the farmer stood there, and could not follow.

The fox wagged his tail in a circle,
and fled into the surrounding hills.

In Vågelidann

It is so nice to be
where land owners dance with hired men,
cuckoos call in the green hills
and birds shake their wings.

Slowly I will answer you
from were I was in the deep valleys,
newborn kids sing and leaves burst out
and the most beautiful cuckoos call.

The sheep went under Elkan-peak
it is so beautiful to see,
the horse hops on the Krykkjo-trail
and he has bells on.

It is beautiful in Vågelidann
where leaves and grass grow,
but even more beautiful in Kvam-fjord
where Gunnar and Kari row.
Now the sun sets in Øy-mountain
and way over Raudsid-peak,
now the sun sets in Øy-mountain.

About the performers



Photo by Shaya Lyon

instrumental in developing educational programs that engage kids of all ages in classical music.

Since 2015, **Bobby Collins** has served as Music Director and Co-Founder for The Sound Ensemble, a Seattle based chamber orchestra that promotes diversity and equity, while seeking to be at the forefront of what it means to be a relevant orchestra in the 21st century. He has also served as Music Director of Seattle Festival Orchestra since 2018, where he established the ensemble as the only orchestra in Seattle, providing consistent, year-round access to great orchestral music for kids. In addition to this, Bobby serves as Assistant Conductor for Yakima Symphony Orchestra, a music educator and guest conductor. With a repertoire spanning the ancient to the contemporary, Bobby has worked as a conductor and educator with the entire spectrum of orchestras.

As Co-Founder and Music Director, Bobby has contributed heavily to the growth and development of The Sound Ensemble. His work has helped establish TSE as one of the leading new music ensembles in the region. Bobby is uniquely gifted at crafting engrossing programs to enrich and entertain diverse audiences. With both Seattle Festival Orchestra and The Sound Ensemble, he has been



A “versatile and passionate musician”, **Abbie Eads** captivates audiences on stages throughout the country as both conductor and cellist. Currently Conductor-in-Residence of the Northwest Edvard Grieg Society, Abbie has garnered the respect of conductors, singers, and instrumentalists throughout the world.

This 2023-24 season she will be conducting and performing cello in collaboration with various ensembles including the Minot Symphony Orchestra, Bismarck-Mandan Symphony Orchestra, Bemidji Symphony Orchestra, Western Plains Opera, Minot Chamber Chorale,

Dakota Pro Musica, and the Northwest Edvard Grieg Society. Her current work as Development Officer for the Minot State University Foundation provides her a unique opportunity to inspire more people to become supporters of the arts.

Previously Abbie was the Director of Music and Liturgy at Seattle’s Our Lady of the Lake Parish and Director of Orchestras and Adjunct Professor at Pierce College in Puyallup, WA. During her studies in Seattle, she was conductor of the University of Washington Campus Philharmonia Orchestras and Assistant Conductor of the University of Washington Symphony Orchestra as Graduate Assistant.



Soprano **Laura Loge** has been hailed for her “luminous stage presence” and “characterful and versatile voice.” Opera roles include Violetta, Musetta, Micaëla, Mother (Hansel & Gretel), Ännchen, Lisa (La Sonnambula), La Fée, Lucy (The Telephone), Rosalinda, and Suor Genovieffa, among others. She has performed as the soprano soloist in Mozart’s Requiem, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and Incidental Music to Egmont, Neilsen’s Third Symphony, Fauré’s Requiem, Grieg’s Incidental Music for Peer Gynt, David Monrad Johansen’s Syv Sanger, Op.6, arranged for her and chamber orchestra, Schumann’s Mass and Requiem, Handel’s Messiah, and Verdi’s Requiem. Laura specializes in Nordic art song and chamber music, having performed across the United States and in Norway, including in Edvard Grieg’s villa. She has produced two albums of Nordic song, including *Breaking the Language Barrier: Songs in Norwegian and Danish, Composed by Foreigners and Songs and Piano Music of Edvard Grieg, Op. 33 & 66*. Her next album, *Der Skreg en Fugl*, featuring previously unrecorded songs by Norwegian women with pianist Angela Draghicescu will

be released on the Chandos label in 2025. Laura is Founder and President of the Northwest Edvard Grieg Society, Artistic Director of Nordic Chamber Music, former Artistic Director of Mostly Nordic Chamber Music Series at the National Nordic Museum, and Concert Series Coordinator at Saint Mark’s Cathedral in Seattle. She received her Bachelor of Music from Saint Olaf College, her Master of Music from the New England Conservatory and studied Nordic Art Song and chamber music at the University of Stavanger Conservatory of Music.



Steven Luksan is a composer, pianist, and educator making music in Seattle, WA. He is a pianist at Seattle Opera, on faculty at Music Center of the Northwest, and is the accompanist for the Seattle Mannskor (The Norwegian Male Chorus of Seattle). He currently serves as Composer-in-Residence with the Northwest Edvard Grieg Society. Steven received a Master’s Degree in Music Composition from the University of British Columbia and Bachelor’s Degrees in Music and Norwegian Language from the University of Washington.

Steven is an advocate for the performance of new and uncommon compositions (especially those by Scandinavian composers and women composers), and for the performance of chamber music in intimate settings. He is the founder and artistic

director of the Saltwater Music Series (Des Moines, WA), a concert series dedicated to performances of local and off-the-beaten-path chamber music. As a performer and researcher, his interests focus on late-19th and 20th century Nordic and American music, especially music composed by Norwegian-American immigrant composers.

Highlights of the 2023-2024 concert season include the premiere of Steven's first opera, *Valparaiso*, a tour throughout Washington State with Seattle Opera's production of *Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers*, and a revival of Alf Hurum's chamber music in both Hawaii and Washington. As a scholar, this season includes Steven's presentation of his research paper "Bjarne Rolseth in America: the Life and Work of a Norwegian-American Composer" at the International Edvard Grieg Society Conference (Bergen, Norway), and his lecture recital "Leif Erikson in Seattle: Gerard Tønning and Norwegian Opera in the New World" for the Society for the Advancement Scandinavian Studies.

About the Ensembles

Founded in 2017, **Northwest Edvard Grieg Society** was created to promote the music of Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg in the Northwest. This includes performances, educational outreach, research, and supporting individuals and collaborating with other organizations. The initial project that catalyzed the creation of NWEGS was a seven concert series performing all 180 of Grieg's art songs over three (ended up being five) years, with two singers, one Norwegian pianist in both Bellevue and Portland. Following the successful completion of that project, NWEGS initiated a regular concert series consisting of two or three chamber music concerts each year, with each concert presented at least twice – once in the greater Seattle area and again further afield. One of the three concerts is a collaborative concert with another musical non-profit, in which we present a larger concert and provide the expertise of repertoire and language to that organization to create a truly unique performance that they would not have otherwise been able to mount. On top of that, in 2023 NWEGS took on the responsibility of producing the Nordic Chamber Music Series (a re-imagining and re-branding of Mostly Nordic previously at the Nordic Museum), in the spirit of Edvard Grieg's similar endeavors in Copenhagen when he formed the "Euterpe" New Music Society to highlight Scandinavian art music. NWEGS also presents workshops, lectures, participates in student engagement at universities, and performs at private events outside of their two concert series. Again inspired by Edvard Grieg's support of his colleagues and those who followed after him, we are not limited only to Grieg's music and love to share music by other Norwegian composers who are mostly unknown in the US, as well as presenting music by our Composer-in-Residence, Steven Luksan.

The Sound Ensemble was founded in 2015 in order to delight audiences with profound performances of contemporary work by composers from underrepresented communities. We believe in the power of music to create community and transform lives. As an ensemble of flexible size, made up of local professional musicians, we provide potent musical experiences through inspired performance. Each concert prioritizes the programming of music from underrepresented composers, such as women, people of color and the LGBTQ+ community.

With a passion for collaboration and a desire to see all music supported, we collaborate annually for our Songwriter Showcase. Each year, we work with several local songwriters to arrange their music to be performed with TSE as the "band", creating access for small and talented indie artists to utilize the diverse colors of a chamber orchestra. Sharing our musical styles, audiences and traditions we learn and refine our art together.

Musicians

Music Director/Conductor

Bobby Collins

Clarinet

Beverly Setzer

Trombone

Ryan Shepherd

Violin

Raisa Asiryants
Clare Larsen

Conductor

Abbie Eads

Bassoon

Robyn Watson

Percussion

Storm Benjamin

Viola

Andrew Wickell

Flute/Piccolo

Sarah Bassingthwaighte

Horn

Carey LaMothe

Harp

Ellen Yamanaka

Cello

Michael Tavani

Oboe

Darlene Franz

Trumpet

Christine Eisenmenger

Piano

Cassie Fry

Bass

Scott Swanberg

Soprano Soloist

Laura Loge