



The Sixty-fourth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,548th Concert

Håvard Gimse, *pianist*

November 13, 2005
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI: 50 (1794)

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro molto

César Franck (1822–1890)

Prelude, Fugue, and Variation, op. 18

Norwegian Miniatures

Edvard Grieg (1843–1907): *March of the Trolls*, op. 54, no. 3

Geirr Tveitt (1908–1981): *Landeleik Tune*, op. 150, no. 27

Alf Hurum (1882–1972): *Miniature*, op. 52

Sverre Bergh (1915–1980): *Norwegian Dance no. 2*

Harald Sæverud (1897–1992): *Ballad of Revolt*, op. 22, no. 5

INTERMISSION

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1949)

Four Scherzi

Scherzo no. 1 in B Minor, op. 20

Scherzo no. 3 in C-sharp Minor, op. 39

Scherzo no. 4 in E Major, op. 54

Scherzo no. 2 in B Minor, op. 31

The Musician

A native of Kongsvinger, Norway, Håvard Gimse has established himself as a leading Scandinavian pianist. He studied with Hans Leygraf at Berlin's Hochschule der Künste and with Jiri Hlinka in Norway. Since winning the 1987 Jugend Musiziert competition in Germany, Gimse has gone on to win the Steinway Prize (1995), the prestigious Grieg Prize (1996), and the Norwegian Society's Sibelius Prize (2004). Known for his distinct musical palette and broad repertoire, Gimse has performed recitals throughout Europe, the United States, and Latin America, and has been a concerto soloist with the Baltimore Symphony, the Royal Philharmonic, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the BBC Welsh National Symphony, and the Belgian National Philharmonic Orchestra, among others. He has performed at the Valdemossa Chopin Festival and the festivals of Edinburgh, Bath, Schleswig-Holstein, and Oslo. He is the assistant program manager of the Oslo Chamber Festival.

Gimse is one of Norway's most prolific recording artists. He has more than thirty CDs to his credit, many of which garnered recommendations in the *Penguin Guide*, *Gramophone*, *CD Review*, *BBC Music Magazine*, and *Phono Forum*. He performs at the National Gallery for the second time, having played here to great acclaim in 2001, and appears by arrangement with ProArte International Management of Bergen, Norway.

Program Notes

Joseph Haydn's piano sonatas span a period of almost four decades and culminate with the three sonatas he wrote in 1794, during his second trip to London. He wrote them for a concert pianist, Terese Jansen; Haydn was a witness for her wedding to the engraver Francesco Bartolozzi (1727–1815). The first movement of the *Sonata in C Major* opens with a striking staccato main theme and a melodious second theme, which Haydn treats with prolific variations. The complex harmonies and mysterious turns of the first movement, the dramatic, solemn octave passages in the second movement, and the unabashed scherzo character of the third movement support the claim that some of the romantic innovations for which Beethoven is credited were already present in the music of his teacher, Haydn.

Although best known as an organist and composer for that instrument, César Franck was equally at home with the piano and transcribed many of his own works for it. He first composed the *Prelude, Fugue, and Variation*, op. 18, as a piano-organ duet for two of his pupils, Louise and Geneviève Deslignières. Later he produced versions for piano solo and organ solo. In the *Prelude*, the soaring melody in the style of a barcarolle holds the listener's interest. A brief interlude, marked *lento*, unveils the head of the fugue theme. This is followed by the fugue itself, which unfolds in a leisurely tempo (*allegretto ma non troppo*) and builds to a convincing stretto climax without ever losing its lyrical quality. The *Variation* is actually a repeat of the prelude with arabesques in the left-hand accompaniment. These present a special challenge when the work is played as a piano solo: in the version for organ and piano, the bass line and the arabesques are divided between the pianist's left and right hands while the organist plays the melody, but in the piano solo version, the left hand must take on both the arabesques and the bass while the right hand plays the melody.

Edvard Grieg wrote many short pieces for piano, often built on Norwegian folk tunes and dances, and during his lifetime came to be known as “the Chopin of the North.” He was born in Bergen, the descendant of a Scotsman who spelled the family name “Greig.” Grieg’s mother, Gesine, was his first piano teacher. His talent was noted by the legendary Norwegian violinist Ole Bull (1810–1880), who was Gesine’s brother-in-law. Bull persuaded Edvard’s parents to send him to the conservatory in Leipzig, Germany, which at that time vied with the Paris Conservatory as the prime music school in Europe. After completing his studies, Grieg went for three years to Copenhagen, where he continued to develop his skills as a composer in the international style. There he met a fellow Norwegian composer, Rikard Nordraak (1842–1866), who inspired in Grieg an enthusiasm for Norwegian folk music and romantic nationalism that changed his life. Grieg returned to Norway in 1866, founded the Norwegian Academy of Music, and lived the rest of his life in a house near Bergen that he named Troldhaugen. He died in 1907, at age sixty-four, and his funeral was honored by thousands of Norwegians who stood in the streets of his home town as the procession passed.

Like Edvard Grieg, Geirr Tveitt was born in Bergen and studied in Leipzig. He also studied in Paris under Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959). Tveitt was a dedicated collector and arranger of folk music from the region along the Hardanger Fjord in western Norway. Misfortune was no stranger to Tveitt. His hand-built studio overlooking the Hardanger Fjord was destroyed by snow in 1960, and his house burned to the ground in 1970, incinerating almost 80 percent of his notes and scores. An unusual feature of his musical output is that much of it is built on the Lydian, Dorian, and other modes, rather than classical major and minor tonalities.

The earliest serious representative of musical impressionism in Norway was Alf Hurum. In his *Exotic Suite* of 1918, the impressionist influence is conspicuous. Other noteworthy works include an orchestral tone poem, two sonatas for violin and piano, and a string quartet. Hurum left Norway in 1924 and spent most of the rest of his life in Hawaii, where he founded the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra and served as its conductor from 1924 to 1926. Versatile as well in areas other than music, Hurum worked in the last part of his life chiefly as a painter.

Sverre Bergh was born in Hamar, a town north of Oslo. From 1935 to 1937 he studied music theory with the Norwegian composer Fartein Valen (1887–1952) and with other teachers in Vienna. From 1937 to 1946 Bergh worked as a free-lance musician and conductor at various theaters, the most important of which was the National Theater of Bergen. He arranged and composed a great deal of music for the stage, movies, radio, and television, and his name is today closely linked to musical theater. His compositions are mostly in neoclassical style and are marked by a generous supply of humor. At the time of his death in 1980, he was the director of the Bergen International Festival.

Like many of his fellow Norwegians, Harald Sæverud was deeply affected by the plight of his country in World War II. In his fury, he composed what many consider to be his best work, *Kjempeviseslåtten* (Ballad of Revolt). The work is strong and clear, with intense rhythms that evoke heartbeats. Sæverud also grew up in Bergen, where from 1915 to 1918 he studied at the Academy of Music. Later he continued his studies at the Academy of Music in Berlin. Sæverud wrote mostly orchestral music, but from the 1930s on he also wrote for the piano. During the same decade, he became one of the leading figures of the cultural life of Norway, and from 1939 to 1954 he was a member of the Norwegian branch of the International Society for Contemporary Music. After Sæverud's death in 1992, part of his home at Siljustølen in Bergen was made into a museum.

In the second half of this program, Håvard Gimse provides the listener with a rare opportunity to hear in one sitting all four of the scherzi that Chopin wrote as independent compositions. These works have been the favorites of many pianists since Chopin's time, including Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921), who wrote that the *Scherzo* op. 54 was his favorite work for the piano. In Chopin's hands, the scherzo was transformed from a light-hearted movement within a sonata or a symphony to a towering tragic poem that explores tribulations and conflicts with sometimes tragic, sometimes triumphant resolutions. Chopin usually pays respect to the traditional scherzo form by presenting two contrasting themes and restating each before moving to a section that presents a different color, texture, and key from that of the opening themes. As he approaches the end of this second section, which corresponds to the trio of a more traditional scherzo, Chopin takes liberties with the form, introducing improvisatory elements, embellished repetitions, or fresh interludes. As in the traditional scherzo, there is a return to the opening themes after the trio, but these are almost always interrupted by a dramatic surprise before the scherzo finishes with a coda.

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry after 6:30 pm
is not permitted.

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