

Edvard Grieg

Solveig's Song



This month **Bridget Mermikides** creates a simple but lyrically beautiful arrangement of a piece from Grieg's magnum opus, *The Peer Gynt Suite*.

ABILITY RATING

● ● ● ● ● Moderate

| INFO | WILL IMPROVE YOUR |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| KEY: E minor | ✓ Single line melody playing |
| TEMPO: 72 bpm | ✓ Bass-melody separation |
| CD: TRACKS 28-29 | ✓ Repertoire of romantic works |

THIS MONTH WE return to the work of the Norwegian Romantic composer Edvard Grieg (1843-1907). Grieg adopted many Norwegian folk music elements and blended them with the prevailing 19th century style, and as such is an excellent example of a 'nationalistic' composer. He also happens to be one of the first composers to have their work recorded in their lifetimes, and in fact archive audio recordings exist of him playing the piano.

The folk elements in Grieg's music give it a very lyrical and rustic quality. It's also highly programmatic and accessible, which explains its extensive use in TV and film. Here I've arranged a piece from Grieg's incidental music composed from 1874-76 for Henrik Ibsen's play, *Peer Gynt*.

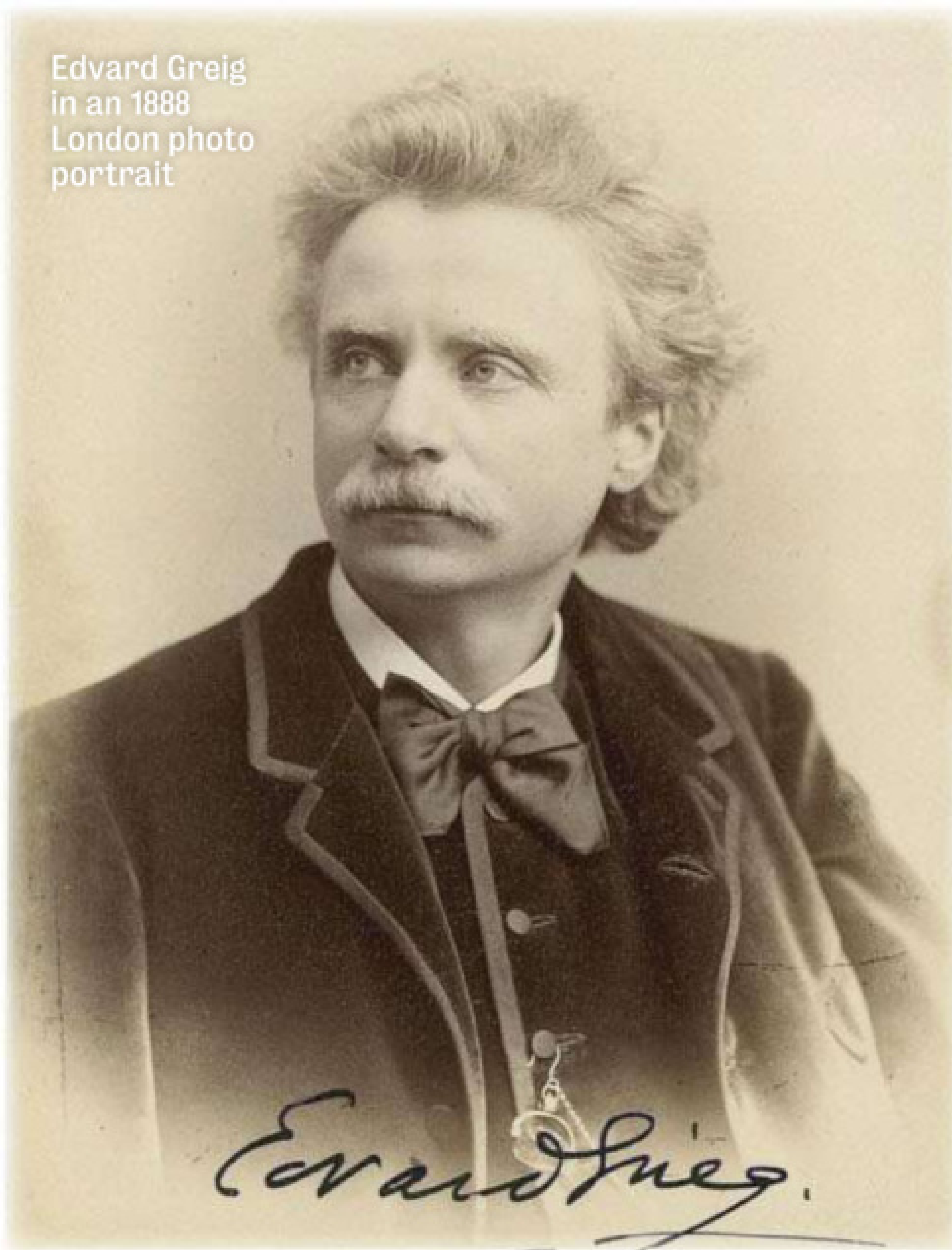
Solveig's Song is from Act IV of the play, and the last piece of the *Peer Gynt Suite No.2* – a set of

“I've transposed the piece from the original key of A minor down a 4th to E minor, so it sits better on the guitar.”

instrumental works drawn from the incidental music to work as independent – and hugely popular – concert material. In the lyrics, the character Solveig sings about her lover, Peer Gynt – who has abandoned her – and declares that she will wait for him and be reunited, even if only in heaven. The melancholy nature of the lyrics is echoed in the beautiful melody built mainly on a minor scale.

I've transposed the piece from the original

Edvard Grieg
in an 1888
London photo
portrait



TECHNIQUE FOCUS

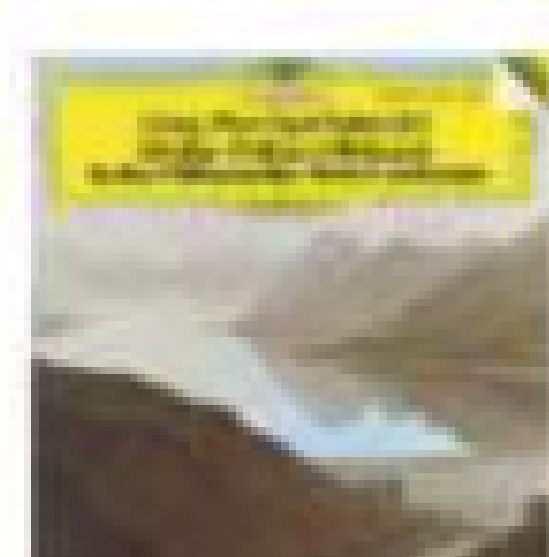
SITTING POSTURE

An important aspect of technique in classical guitar playing is adopting the correct sitting posture. The guitar is placed on the left thigh (for right-handed players), which is raised by placing the foot on a footstool. The left knee should be pointing forwards and the right knee to the side so the guitar rests on the inside of the right thigh. The guitar should be positioned at an angle where the neck is pointing slightly upwards, and the right forearm rests on the larger bout of the instrument. This should hold the instrument securely in place and provide ease of facility for both hands.

key of A minor down a 4th to E minor (and down from A major to E major during the waltz sections which modulate to the parallel major scale) so that it sits better on the guitar. Although some of the orchestral parts have been dropped, due to practical considerations, I hope I've managed to retain much of the character of the piece, due to the pastoral simplicity and phrasing of the melody which appears in single-line form in the introduction and conclusion.

Although this is one of the easier pieces in this classical series, it's also one of the most beautiful. As ever, patience is the fastest way to success; and remember, there's no limit to how expressively even the simplest melody can be performed. So take your time getting the piece perfectly under your fingers, and use the tab captions to help with some of the techniques. I hope you enjoy learning and playing this wonderful tune! 🎸

NEXT MONTH: Bridget arranges and tabs Albeniz's *Granada*



TRACK RECORD The *Peer Gynt Suites*, performed by Berlin Philharmonic and conducted by Herbert von Karajan (1983, Deutsche Grammophon) is a good reference point from which to learn the piece; for a version with the melody sung, check out the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra with Paavo Jarvi conducting and soprano Camilla Tilling singing with ethereal beauty: *Peer Gynt Grieg* (2005, Warner Classics).

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 29

[Bars 1-6] The opening six bars consist of a single line melody emulating the unison orchestral strings. Play as smoothly and legato as possible adding a little glissando between each of the two notes in bars 4, 5 and 6.

[Bar 8] The bass note and chords at bar 8 set the mood for the melody, which

begins on the last beat of bar 9. From here on try sticking to the suggested fretting – a four-string barre is needed on the last beat of bar 10. Keep an ear on the sound of the melody notes and keep their volume and tone consistent. In addition, aim to shape the melody musically as a singer would.

Em

D G B5 B

Em B7/E

Em Em/G B Em D

G G/D C Am7 Dsus4 D G G/D B7/A Em/G

F#5 F Em B♭(b5) A7 Am6 B/D# B7/A Em/G

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 29

[Bar 23] On beat 3 of bar 23 it is not possible to slur the grace notes while holding onto the B7 chord, so I had to slide the F# up to the G and then

quickly re-pluck the F#. If in doubt listen to my recording of the track to see how it should sound.

Chords: D/C, E/B, Em, Am7/B, B7, Em

22

Chords: B7/E, B13/E, E, B7/E, B13/E, E

25

Chords: B7/E, B9/E, E, B13/E, B/E, E

29

Chords: B7/E, E, B7/E, B/E

33

Chords: E, A/E, E, A/E, E, Em

37

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 29

[Bar 56] Just like bar 25, a four-string barre is used on and off throughout the next 10 bars or so. Again, listen to the recorded track if necessary to

understand the rhythm and phrasing. Next the whole piece is repeated over and ends with a similar theme to that at the start.

41

B7/E Em Em/G B Em

E B G D A E

0 2 3 5 7 8 8 7 7 3 0 0 3 3 2 2 4 4 0 0 0

0 0 0 7 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 4 4 0 0 0

0 0 0 7 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 4 4 0 0 0

45

D G G/D C Am7 Dsus4 D G G/D

E B G D A E

0 0 2 3 5 7 8 8 7 7 0 0 3 3 2 2 3 3 0 0 0

0 0 0 7 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 3 3 0 0 0 0 0

2 0 0 7 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

49

B7/A Em/G F#5 F Em Bb(b5) A7 Am6 B/D# B7/A Em/G

E B G D A E

0 7 8 0 7 6 2 5 4 0 3 0 3 2 2 0 7 0 0 7 7 6

7 8 0 0 0 0 4 3 2 3 0 0 2 1 7 0 8 7 8 0

7 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 6 7 0 0 0 0

53

D7/C E/B Em/B Am7/B B7 Em

E B G D A E

2 2 5 4 0 0 3 2 2/3 2 0 0 2 0 7

1 0 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

3 2 2 1 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

56

B7/E B13/E E B7/E B13/E E

E B G D A E

9 7 10 9 10 7 9 9 9 9 7 10 9 10 7 9 9 9

8 7 8 7 9 9 8 7 8 7 9 9 8 7 9 9 9

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 29

60

B7/E B9/E E B13/E B/E E

E B G D A E

7 9 7 9 7 9 9 9 8 9 8 9 9

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

64

B7/E E B7/E B/E

E B G D A E

11 9 9 7 9 7 9 9 9 7 9 7 8 8 7 9 8 7

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

68

E A/E A A/E E Em D

E B G D A E

0 0 9 10 12 9 12 12 12 12 14 14 12 10 7

1 2 9 11 9 7

2 4 0

72

Em C Em

E B G D A E

8 9 8 8 10 7 12 4 9 2 7 0