

Lenten Noonday Recital
March 18, 2021
Matthew Phelps, piano

Sonata in E minor, Op. 7

Edvard Grieg
(1843-1907)

- I. Allegro Moderato
- II. Andante Molto
- III. Alla Menuetto, ma poco piu lento
- IV. Finale - Molto Allegro

Ballade in the Form of Variations on a Norwegian Folk Song, Op. 24



Edvard Grieg was the most well-known Norwegian composer of the 19th century, if not in the country's history. His best-known compositions include the *Peer Gynt* Suite from which "In the Hall of the Mountain King" and "Morning Mood" derive, the Piano Concerto in A minor, and the Holberg Suite. He was a prolific composer for the piano, although audiences today mainly know him for the piano concerto and sets of Lyric Pieces. The Sonata and Ballade are relatively unknown to audiences today.

The Sonata was written in 1865 and revised later in 1887. It is a four-movement work and was dedicated to the Danish composer Niels Gade. The first movement is a standard sonata form and uses the composer's initials E-H-G (H being the German note name for the tone B) as the opening theme. The second movement is a lyrical song with a middle section that alternates between agitated and grand. The third movement is a slow dirge with a placid middle section. The final movement is a dramatic gigue with a grand conclusion.

The Ballade is a substantial work and is Grieg's most personal piano composition. Its composition was completed in 1876 and written in the wake of his parents' death. For its theme, it uses an ancient 16th century melody, which Grieg transforms through a variety of methods, all with drama and intensity. Grieg never performed it in concert and is said to have only premiered the work at a small gathering of friends. After this private performance, Grieg is rumored to have been trembling and vowed never to perform the work again.

Matthew Phelps is the Minister of Music at West End United Methodist Church, Artistic Director of Vocal Arts Nashville, and a pianist, organist, and chamber musician. At West End he oversees a comprehensive music department that includes two adult choirs, four choirs for children and youth, and two handbell choirs. With Vocal Arts Nashville he leads the premiere professional chamber choir in the region. He has conducted Nashville Concerto Orchestra, Mozart Birthday Festival Orchestra, and the Nashville Ballet in the American Premiere of Peter Salem's "A Streetcar Named Desire." As a soloist and pianist for the Elliston Trio, his repertoire has ranged from Bach to Frederic Rzewski, which he has performed throughout the nation. At the request of the composer, Phelps will give the premiere of his own edition of Frederic Rzewski's "Ages" over the summer. He has won the American Prize in Choral Conducting, along with awards as a pianist and organist.



Upcoming at West End

March 28th

4 PM

Heinrich Schutz St. Matthew Passion

Livestream only

April 1

7 PM

Maundy Thursday

April 2

12 noon

Good Friday

April 4

Easter Sunday

8:30, 9:45, 11 AM

All services are currently available in-person or livestream. Reservations are required to attend in-person. For more information visit www.westendumc.org.

