



EIVIND GROVEN

(1901–1977)

SYMPHONY NO. 1
'TOWARDS THE MOUNTAINS'

SYMPHONY NO. 2
'THE MIDNIGHT HOUR'

KRISTIANSAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PETER SZILVAY

Eivind Groven (1901–1977) Symphony No. 1 ‘Innover viddene’ · Symphony No. 2 ‘Midnattstimen’

Eivind Groven – Tradition and Renewal

‘If anyone asks the way to Groven’s place, they will receive the answer that they only have to follow their longing. It is to the east of noise, and to the west of today’s insane tempo – just by a forest lake. And on the other side there is someone playing.’

This lyrical greeting from the composer Arne Nordheim on the occasion of Eivind Groven’s 60th birthday in 1961 describes both his personality and also his music.

Eivind Groven (1901–1977) grew up on a farm in the region of Vest-Telemark, located in the centre of Norway, isolated geographically but not culturally. The heritage of folk music was strong. Before Groven was 15 years old, he played over 200 *slåttar* (folk dance tunes) on the Hardanger fiddle and also composed for this instrument. After training as a teacher he settled in Oslo. His encounter with classical music set his musical origins in relief – it had a liberating effect and spurred him on in three ways:

Folk Music

Faced with audiences, especially in the capital city, who might listen to genuine folk music with reluctance, prejudice or lack of knowledge, Groven felt he had a job to do. He wanted to give them insight into a world of music that, in his opinion, was on a par with art music in terms of complex formal thinking, melodic richness and intrinsic value. He presented Norwegian and international folk music in articles and radio programmes. Groven laid the foundation of the folk music archive at the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation and made sure they had modern, high-quality recording equipment. He collected around 2,000 Norwegian folk tunes and preferred to use a transcription method that best reproduced the unique intervals and rhythmic structures of folk music. His notation of Helge Ingstad’s sound recordings (1949–50) of the Nunamiut people, Alaska, was another pioneering piece of work. Groven considered these Eskimo melodies to be a contribution to ‘world music’ – long before the concept of ‘world music’ was introduced.

Acoustics

With his background in folk music, Groven soon discovered that the piano and other keyboard instruments cannot reproduce all the harmonies in all the keys pure at the same time, as only twelve tones per octave are available. He learned that folk musicians use acoustically pure intervals and, like Hermann von Helmholtz and others, felt that the twelve-tone equal temperament made the music too smooth. Groven constructed several pure-tuned organs with a minimum of 36 tones per octave, but these always retained a standard keyboard. His unique invention was a tone selection device that is controlled by impulses directly from the keys and ‘tunes’ the instrument while it is being played. The aim was to reproduce pure intervals in all keys and also to recreate the scales that are found in folk music.

Groven’s theoretical and practical preoccupation with the problem of pure tuning attracted international interest. By means of letters and visits he maintained contact for many years with international composers, musicologists and musicians such as Martin Vogel (Germany), Adriaan Fokker (the Netherlands) and Alois Hába (Czechoslovakia). When Albert Schweitzer was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1954, he visited the Trinity Church in Oslo to play Bach on the pure-tuned pipe organ Groven had installed there. Schweitzer expressed his unqualified approval. Groven distributed a recording of music played on his pure-tuned organs. The international response was substantial. The American violinist Camilla Wicks wrote in a letter: ‘This work is the greatest “break-through” in reproducing music since the invention of recording sound.’ (8 September 1968).

Compositions

Many interwar composers tried to create a new national music by combining elements of authentic folk music with new techniques. In the 1920s, Groven felt that the music needed, for instance, other harmonic tools. Folk music’s universe of pitches influenced his choice of chord systems. With modal means and musical material from the upper part of the overtone range he created an extended tonality.

Around the time of the First World War, a need was felt for new formal solutions in European music. The continuous variation form, extended to include transformation or metamorphosis technique, appealed to many composers. Among Norwegian composers, Groven was probably the one who most clearly applied developmental principles derived from instrumental folk music. In Groven’s compositions folk music is often encountered as subtly transformed, usually not as direct quotations. Nonetheless, his musical material was related to it, and in symphonic works it demanded a new approach to form compared to that which had previously formed the basis for Norwegian music.

Governed by continuous variations on various levels, the most characteristic Norwegian instrumental folk music, the ‘*slått*’ tradition, is structured according to a unique asymmetric ‘budding’ technique that was ‘in Groven’s blood’ and which he followed in his symphonic works as well. He perceived a relationship between the Baroque *Fortspinnung* technique and the ‘development stage’ of the instrumental folk dances. In an article, Groven wrote: ‘Folk dances are like sonata movements with principal motifs, several subsidiary ideas and rich variations of these.’ He himself combined the structure of the dances with familiar formal principles, a type of innovation and adaptation that Béla Bartók also used.

Symphony No. 1, Op. 26 ‘Innover viddene’ (‘Towards the Mountains’) (1937, rev. 1950)

The subtitle *Innover viddene* (‘Towards the Mountains’) of Groven’s *First Symphony* refers to a literary source of inspiration, the play *Drifttekaren* (‘The Cattleman’, 1908) by Hans E. Kinck. In particular the third movement (*a Largo* with the opening theme in the tuba – ‘the heavy death motif’) captures some of the drama’s atmosphere. The protagonist Vraal stands on a mountain one spring night and ‘feels pain about the world’s seemingly random governance, that mankind cannot grasp’, the composer wrote.

Groven worked on music associated with this drama as early as the 1920s. The first version of the *Symphony* won Second Prize in a competition organised by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation in 1937. The work was broadcast on the radio (6 December 1938), but only performed once in

the concert hall, in New York (1948). Formally it was unconventional, and the *Symphony* was revised after the first performance of the *Second Symphony*. The third and fourth movements in folk music chain forms (*Springar* and *gangar*) were omitted, and were later incorporated into *Symfoniske slåttar I* (1956). Groven expanded and reworked the remaining material and organised it in four movements. The first performance of the revision was given by the ‘Harmonien’ Orchestra in Bergen (2 November 1950), conducted by Olav Kjelland.

The *First Symphony* is characterised by asymmetric folk dance form. From one level to the next, the principle of transformation can be followed – in individual themes, within the sections, in interludes, on several layers at once, and also from one movement to the next. The third movement has a rondo character with elements of folk dance form, and also exists in a version for organ. In the other movements, Groven combines the ‘budding’ technique of the instrumental ‘*slått*’ tradition with elements of sonata form.

The well-known main theme in the first movement is related to so-called ‘*lalinger*’ (calls used for recognition over long distances, for example in the mountains). In 1937, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation announced a competition for interval signals and station idents for use on the radio. Groven won in both categories. *Kjenningssignalet* (the station ident) is identical to the opening theme of the *First Symphony* (composed as early as 1933) and was used for over half a century to identify radio broadcasts in Norway and abroad. The *First Symphony* is therefore often called the ‘*Signal Symphony*’.

Symphony No. 2, Op. 34 ‘Midnattstimen’ (‘The Midnight Hour’) (1938–43)

When Groven’s *Second Symphony* was premiered by the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra conducted by Olav Kjelland (24 October 1946), the press reviews were overwhelmingly positive. The composer was honoured with a torchlight procession. The symphony’s subtitle *Midnattstimen* (‘The Midnight Hour’) leads our thoughts to the heavy war years, but Groven stressed that the work should not be understood programmatically. The composer hired and conducted the Oslo Philharmonic himself in order to get the work performed

in the capital (4 November 1946).

Four themes form the basis of the first movement, and movement structures from different stylistic areas are combined. Associations with sonata form may have some relevance – but at the same time, the organic formal thinking and rhythms of the folk dances make themselves felt: motifs emerge and are constantly varied. Fragments of motifs are combined in new ways; their interaction helps to blur the dividing lines between the sections of the movements, and a structural ambiguity arises.

A process of transformation also characterises the second movement, which assumes a ritornello-like form, mainly in 5/8 time. Moreover, polyphonic elements are prominent in the texture. Before the onset of the elegiac main theme (in F Phrygian mode) – an idea that in abbreviated, varied or modified form permeates the whole movement – the contrabassoon and fateful timpani strokes create a bleak atmosphere. Still, there are signs of a shift towards a brighter conclusion.

The third movement has been called a 'peace finale'. It was written at Groven's childhood home, during ten days in the late winter of 1943. Like a spring dream, it swirls forth out of a dark background. It is based on sonata form. The development section is not a stormy reworking of the thematic material, but a lyrical passage where the second

subject is illuminated in a new musical context. The music then moves forward towards a jubilant climax in C major.

Three Life Goals

As a composer, collector of folk music and scientist, Groven bridged the gap between Norwegian urban and rural cultures. At the same time he was part of a wider European trend. His folk music transcriptions are some of the finest Norwegian examples of their kind. The knowledge he acquired in the field of acoustics resulted in the pioneering work he undertook in the development of pure-tuned organs. As a composer he contributed to musical renewal in terms of both sound and form.

Many of his colleagues appreciated Groven's uniqueness. In a radio interview, Arne Nordheim highlighted the beginning of the third movement of the *First Symphony*. He regarded Groven as an 'avant-gardist' in his day because he did not apply 'garnish' to folk music, but was deeply rooted within it: 'While others made instrumentations of folk tunes, Groven created sounds, for example in his symphonies, which in my opinion are quite unique' (1 November 1978).

Anne Jorunn Kydland

English translation: Andrew Barnett

Peter Szilvay

Peter Szilvay is a renowned interpreter of new music. He served as assistant conductor to Mariss Jansons at the Oslo Philharmonic and later held the same position at the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra. Szilvay has regularly appeared with Norwegian orchestras and has conducted numerous ensembles including the St Petersburg Philharmonic, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France 'Alfortville' and the Royal Danish Orchestra. He is an experienced opera conductor and has worked on the German and Italian operatic repertory. He has led productions at Den Norske Opera, Nordnorsk Opera, Opera Sør and at the Mainfranken Theater in Würzburg, Germany. In 2011 the Norwegian Society of Composers awarded Szilvay the Artist Prize. He has conducted numerous premieres and recorded new music with the Oslo Philharmonic and the Norwegian Army and Navy Bands. With the Norwegian Radio Orchestra he recorded the symphonies of Edvard Fliflet Bræin. A pioneer in his field, he has also recorded orchestral music by Jon Øivind Ness for the Simax label and Lene Grenager for the Aurora label. www.peterszilvay.com

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Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra

The Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra (KSO), numbering 71 musicians from 17 different nations, is one of Norway's seven full-time professional symphony orchestras. Chief conductor Nathalie Stutzmann began her tenure in autumn 2018, with her predecessors including Giordano Bellincampi, Rolf Gupta and Terje Boye Hansen. Since 2018–19 Julian Rachlin has served as principal guest conductor. The KSO has existed in its current form since 2003, when the Kristiansand Chamber Orchestra joined forces with Southern Norway's professional military band. Within its 42-week season, the KSO performs

approximately 20 symphonic subscription concerts, as well as family concerts, educational programmes, a chamber music series, and a variety of recording projects. In 2012, the orchestra moved into its new home, the Kilden Performing Arts Centre. The centre also hosts the theatre, opera and outreach companies, allowing for a multitude of collaborative projects. The state-of-the-art technical capabilities of the centre include the recently established KSO Play, through which a growing number of concerts and other material are available. NRK, Norway's national broadcasting service, regularly records the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra's concerts. www.kilden.com/kristiansand-symfoniorkester

Eivind Groven (1901–1977)

Innover viddene, 1. symfoni · Midnattstimen, 2. symfoni

Eivind Groven – Tradisjon og Fornyelse

Hvis noen spør om veien til Grovens sted, vil de få til svar at de bare må gå etter sin lengsel. Det er østenfor støy og vestenfor dagens sinnsyke tempo – like ved et skogvann. Og på den andre siden er det noen som spiller.

Denne lyriske hilsen fra komponisten Arne Nordheim i anledning Eivind Grovens 60-årsdag i 1961 beskriver både jubilantens personlighet og musikk.

Eivind Groven (1901–1977) vokste opp på et gårdsbruk i Vest-Telemark, avsides, men ikke isolert kulturelt sett. Folkemusikkarven sto sterkt. For Groven var 15 år, spilte han over 200 slåtter på hardingfele og komponerte også for dette instrumentet. Etter å ha utdannet seg til lærer bosatte han seg i Oslo. Møtet med tradisjonell kunstmusikk satte hans musikalske herkomst i relieff, virket forløsende og ansporet til innsats på tre felt:

Folkemusikk

Overfor et publikum, især i hovedstaden, som kunne lytte til genuin folkemusikk med motvilje, fordommer eller manglende kunnskaper, følte Groven han hadde en oppgave. Han ville åpne en musikkverden som etter hans oppfatning var på høyde med kunstmusikken med hensyn til komplekse formtenkning, melodisk rikdom og indre verdi. I artikler og radioprogram presenterte han norsk og utenlandsk folkemusikk. Groven la grunnlaget for folkemusikkarkivet i Norsk rikskringkasting og sørget for moderne opptaksutstyr av høy kvalitet. Han nedtegnet omkring 2000 norske folketoner og ville anvende den transkripsjonspraksis som best kunne gjengi folkemusikkens særegne intervaller og rytmiske strukturer. Et annet pionerarbeid er hans nedtegnelser av Helge Ingstads lydopptak (1949–50) fra Nunamiut-folket, Alaska. Groven betraktet disse eskimomelodiene som et bidrag til «verdensmusikken» – lenge før begrepet «world music» var introdusert.

Akustikk

Med sin bakgrunn i folkemusikk oppdaget Groven tidlig at klaver og andre tasteinstrumenter umulig kan gjengi alle samklanger i alle tonearter rene samtidig når kun 12 toner i oktaven står til rådighet. Han erfarte at folkemusikere tok i bruk akustisk rene intervaller og opplevde liksom bl.a. Hermann von Helmholtz at 12-tempereringen forflatet musikken. Groven konstruerte flere renstemte orgler med minimum 36 tonemuligheter i oktaven, men et vanlig spillebord ble alltid beholdt. Hans enestående oppfinnelse var en tonevalgautomat som styres av impulser direkte fra tangentene og «stemmer om» instrumentet under spillets gang. Målet var å gjengi rene intervaller i alle tonearter samt gjenskape skalaer som opptrer i folkemusikk.

Grovens teoretiske og praktiske arbeid med renstemmingsproblematikken har vakt internasjonal interesse. Han hadde årelang kontakt med utenlandske komponister, musikkforskere og musikere, f.eks. Martin Vogel (Tyskland), Adriaan Fokker (Nederland) og Alois Hába (Tsjekkia). Da Albert Schweitzer mottok Nobels fredspris i 1954, besøkte han Trefoldighetskirken i Oslo for å spille Bach på det renstemte pipeorglet som den gang sto der. Han ga uforbeholden anerkjennelse. Groven distribuerte en plate med musikk spilt på de renstemte orglene. Responsen fra utlandet var stor. Den amerikanske fiolinisten Camilla Wicks skrev i et brev: «This work is the greatest 'break-through' in reproducing music since the invention of recording sound» (8.9.1968).

Komposisjoner

Flere av mellomkrigstidens komponister ønsket å skape en ny nasjonal musikk ved å forene elementer fra autentisk folkemusikk med nye teknikker. I 1920-årene følte Groven at musikken trengte f.eks. andre harmoniske «akser». Folkemusikkens univers av tonehøyder influerte på valg av akkordsystemer. Med modale midler og tonemateriale fra øvre del av overtonerekken skapte han en utvidet tonalitet.

Omkring første verdenskrig meldte det seg innen europeisk musikk også behov for nye formale løsninger. Den

kontinuerlige variasjon utvidet til forvandlings- eller metamorfoseteknikk tiltalte mange komponister. Groven var nok den komponist i Norge som tydeligst anvendte utviklingsprinsipper utledet av instrumental norsk folkemusikk (slåtter). I Grovens musikk møter man ofte folkemusikken i transformert skikkelse, vanligvis ikke som direkte lån. Likevel var hans materiale beslektet med den og krevde i symfoniske verker en ny formtenkning sammenlignet med den som tidligere dannet grunnlaget for norsk musikk.

Bestemt av fortløpende variasjoner på ulike nivå er mye av slåttemusikken strukturert etter et egenartet asymmetrisk knoppskytingsprinsipp som Groven hadde «i blodet» og videreførte i symfoniske verker. Han opplevde et slektskap mellom barokkens viderespinningssteknikk og slåttemusikkens «gjenomføringsmoment». I en artikkel skrev Groven: «Slåtten er en slags sonatesats med hovedmotiv og flere sidemotiver med rike variasjoner av disse». Selv kombinerte han slåttenes struktureringsidé med kjente satsprinsipp, en form for nyskaping og tilpasning som også Béla Bartók praktiserte.

Innover viddene, 1. symfoni

Undertittelen Innover viddene på 1. symfoni (1937/revidert i 1950) er delvis fremkalt av stemninger i dramaet Driftekaren (1908) av Hans E. Kinck. Ikke minst tredjesatsen (largo med åpningstemaet i tuba, «det tunge dødsmotiv») gjengir noe av atmosfæren der hovedpersonen Vraal en vårnatt på fjellviddene «føler smerten over verdens tilsynelatende tilfeldige styring som mennesket ikke fatter», noterte komponisten.

Allerede i 1920-årene arbeidet Groven musikalsk med Driftekaren. Første versjon av symfonien vant 2. premie i en konkurranse Norsk rikskringkasting arrangerte i 1937. Verket ble sendt i radio (6.12.1938). Urformen er siden oppført kun én gang i konsertsalen, i New York (1948). Symfonien ble omarbeidet etter premieren på 2. symfoni. Tredje og fjerde sats i folkemusikalske kjedeformer (springar og gangar) ble tatt ut og senere innlemmet i Symfoniske slåttar I (1956). Groven utvidet og bearbeidet det gjenværende stoffet og fordelte det på fire sats. Første fremføring av revisjonen ga Musikselskabet Harmoniens Orkester i Bergen (2.11.1950), ledet av Olav Kjeland.

Formmessig er 1. symfoni strukturelt preget av den asymmetriske slåtteformen. Fra nivå til nivå kan omformingsprinsippet følges, i det enkelte tema, innenfor et parti, avsnittene imellom, i flere sjikt samtidig – og også over satsgrensene. 3. sats har rondokarakter med trekk fra slåtteformen og fins også i en versjon for orgel. I de øvrige satsene forener Groven slåttemusikkens knoppskytingsprinsipp med trekk fra sonateformen.

Det kjente hovedtemaet i første sats er beslektet med såkalte «laling» (en blanding av sang og rop, en kommunikasjonsform praktisert i det fri): I 1937 utlyste Norsk rikskringkasting en konkurranse om pause- og kjennings-signal til bruk i radioen. Groven vant i begge kategorier. Kjennings-signalet er identisk med åpningstemaet i 1. symfoni (komponert allerede i 1933) og ble i over et halvt århundre brukt for å varsle radiosendinger i Norge og utenlands. 1. symfoni kalles derfor ofte Signalsymfonien.

Midnattstimen, 2. symfoni

Da 2. symfoni (1938–43) ble uroppført av Trondheim symfoniorkester dirigert av Olav Kjeland (24.10.1946), var aviskritikken overstrømmende positiv. Komponisten ble hyllet med fakkeltog. Symfoniens undertittel Midnattstimen bringer tankene til de tunge krigsårene, men Groven understreket at verket ikke skulle oppfattes programmatisk. Ved første fremføring i Oslo (4.11.1946) leide og dirigerte komponisten Filharmonisk Selskaps Orkester.

Fire temaer danner grunnlaget i 1. sats, og satsstrukturer fra ulike stilområder kombineres. Assosiasjoner til sonaten har en viss relevans. Samtidig gjør slåttemusikkens organiske formtenkning og rytme seg gjeldende: Motiver skyter knopper, varieres fortløpende og føyes sammen på nye måter. Potenseringen bidrar til å tilsøre skillelinjene mellom satsdelene. En strukturell tveetydighet oppstår.

Forvandlingsprosessen preger også 2. sats som får en ritornellpreget utviklingsform, hovedsakelig i 5/8-takt. I tillegg er det polyfone fremtredende. Før det elegiske hovedtemaet som i forkortede, varierte eller endrete skikkelser gjennomsyrrer hele satsen, setter inn i f- frygisk, skaper kontrafagott og skjebnetunge paukeslag en dyster atmosfære. Likevel er det tillop til bevegelse mot en lysere avslutning.

'Fredsfinale' er 3. sats blitt kalt. Den ble skrevet på hjemmegården i løpet av ti dager senvinteren 1943. Som en vårdrøm virvler den seg ut fra mørk bakgrunn. Sonateformen ligger til grunn. Gjennomføringsdelen er ingen stormfull bearbeidelse av det tematiske stoffet, men et lyrisk parti hvor sidetemaet belyses i nye klanglige omgivelser. Deretter beveger musikken seg fremover mot et jublende klimaks i C-dur.

Tre livsoppgaver

Som komponist, folketoneinnsamler og vitenskapsmann fungerte Groven som brobygger mellom norsk by- og bygdekultur. Samtidig var han del av en større europeisk strømning. Folkemusikktranskripsjonene representerer noe

av det ypperste Norge har av nedtegnelser. Kunnskapene han tilegnet seg innen akustikk, resulterte i nybrottsarbeidet med de renstemte orglene. Som komponist bidro han til musikalsk fornyelse på det klanglige og formale område.

Mange kolleger verdsatte Grovens egenart. I et radiointervju trakk Arne Nordheim frem åpningen i tredje sats av 1. symfoni. Han oppfattet Groven som en «avantgardist» i sin tid fordi han ikke laget «garnityr over folkemusikken», men hadde folkemusikken som hjemstavn: «Mens andre instrumenterte folketoner, så laget Groven klanger f.eks. i sine symfonier som etter min mening er ganske unike» (1.11.1978).

Anne Jorunn Kydland

Many interwar Norwegian composers tried to create a new national music by combining elements of authentic folk music with new techniques. Eivind Groven was considered one of the most innovative composers in this quest, integrating the structure of folk dances from his rural upbringing into familiar formal principles. Both symphonies make use of techniques of so-called ‘progressive transformation’, which led fellow composer Arne Nordheim to declare: ‘While others made instrumentations of folk tunes, Groven created sounds, for example in his [two] symphonies which, in my opinion, are quite unique.’

**Eivind
GROVEN**
(1901–1977)

**Symphony No. 1, Op. 26 ‘Innover viddene’
(‘Towards the Mountains’) (1937, rev. 1950)**

26:06

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 I. Andante quasi cantabile | 6:19 |
| 2 II. Allegro | 5:49 |
| 3 III. Largo | 7:43 |
| 4 IV. Allegro ma non troppo | 6:02 |

**Symphony No. 2, Op. 34 ‘Midnattstimen’
(‘The Midnight Hour’) (1938–43)
(ed. Peter Szilvay, b. 1971)**

29:28

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| 5 I. Allegro moderato | 8:06 |
| 6 II. Andante | 11:02 |
| 7 III. Allegro | 10:09 |

**Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra
Peter Szilvay**

Recorded: 27–30 June 2017 at the Kilden Teater og konserthus, Kristiansand, Norway
Producer and editor: Jørn Pedersen • Engineer: Eirik Mordal • Booklet notes: Anne Jorunn Kydland
Publisher: Norsk Musikkinformasjon [1]–[4], NB noter (National Library of Norway), [5]–[7]
Cover photo: Midnight sun on the Norwegian Atlantic coast © Christa Eder / Dreamstime.com



8.573871

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Playing Time
55:45



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