

Underrepresented Teaching Repertoire from Scandinavia:
Exploring Wilhelm-Peterson Berger's *Flowers from Frösö Island*

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Background

Early Childhood

- Grew up in Västerbotten in northern Sweden
- His mother was from an upper-class family, and his father the son of a tenant farmer
- Gifted child with a strong upbringing in music and rhetorical writing from parents

Higher Education

- Stockholm Royal Conservatory: organ diploma, composition and harmony studies
- Extended study in Dresden, Germany

Work Experience

- Piano teacher, opera director, and composer
- Notoriously harsh principal music critic at the *Dagens Nyheter* newspaper in Stockholm

Life

- Built a house (Sommarhagan) on Frösö Island, Jämtland where he stayed every summer and retired to
- Composed during nature walks



Geo-Political, Social, and Folk Influences

Sweden-Norway Union: 1814-1905

- Norway's fight for independence: Looking retrospectively to folk music for its national style
- Swedish composers relying on their own national style

Political Influence from Sweden's Social Democratic Party

- Even-temperament
- Valuing beauty, pleasantness, and the country's landscape
- Avoiding strong individualism in favor of collectivism

Folk Influences

- Telling of Swedish folktales and legends as a pastime activity
- Experiencing solitude in nature

Flowers from Frösö Island (3 Volumes)

Technical and Musical Elements

- Voicing and balance in chordal textures
- Subtle and contrasting mood shifts in Impressionistic/Romantic styles
- Typically ABA form
- Mid-intermediate through advanced levels

Themes

- Descriptive titles that reference the beautiful landscape, events, and places on the island
- Memorable melodies with moods from melancholic and nostalgic to energetic
- Use of modes and dance rhythms
- Use of harmonic and pedal effects to create Nordic soundscape
- Troll-like programmatic style

Leveling

- Pianist's Guide (PG) and Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM)

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Volume 1 (Published 1896)

No. 1: "Return" (PG10, RCM10)

Allegro con fuoco.

Musical score for No. 1: "Return" (PG10, RCM10). The score is in 3/4 time, marked "Allegro con fuoco." It features a lively melody in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand.

Returning to the island

- Mixolydian harmonic background layer
- Uncommon modulations
- Dance-like middle section

No. 2: "Summer Song" (PG7, RCM7)

Andante con moto.
dolce cantando

Musical score for No. 2: "Summer Song" (PG7, RCM7). The score is in 3/2 time, marked "Andante con moto." and "dolce cantando." It features a slow, lyrical melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand.

Widely popular and performed by piano students

- Clear voicing and balance in chordal texture
- Frequent jumps
- More technically accessible

No. 3: "Lawn Tennis" (PG8, RCM8)

Allegro con eleganza.

Musical score for No. 3: "Lawn Tennis" (PG8, RCM8). The score is in 2/4 time, marked "Allegro con eleganza." It features a light, elegant melody in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand.

Inspired from playing the sport

- Etude-like with short melodic fragments
- Surprising harmonic build-up to climax
- Various melodic articulations

No. 4: "To the Roses" (PG9, RCM8)

Moderato. (*poco rubato*)

Musical score for No. 4: "To the Roses" (PG9, RCM8). The score is in 4/4 time, marked "Moderato. (*poco rubato*)". It features a slow, lyrical melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand.

Inspired by the beautiful landscape

- Elegance without dramatic character
- Syncopated accompaniment
- Chromatic melodic lines

No. 5: "Gratulation" (PG10, RCM9)

Tempo giusto con grazia.

Musical score for No. 5: "Gratulation" (PG10, RCM9). The score is in 3/2 time, marked "Tempo giusto con grazia." It features a graceful melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand.

"Congratulations"

- Graceful articulations, four-part textures, and imitation
- Dance-like middle section with drone bass
- Tonal shifts through the circle progression and by ascending thirds

No. 6: "Frösö Church" (PG9, RCM8)

Lento.

Musical score for No. 6: "Frösö Church" (PG9, RCM8). The score is in 4/4 time, marked "Lento." It features a slow, lyrical melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand.

Sacred, mature work

- Careful voicing and pedal use
- Soundscape: folk style; surprising harmony shifts and dynamic changes
- Triplet eighths

No. 7: "In the Twilight" (PG9, RCM8)

Scherzando, poco presto.

Musical score for No. 7: "In the Twilight" (PG9, RCM8). The score is in 3/4 time, marked "Scherzando, poco presto." It features a playful melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand.

Troll-like programmatic piece

- Hemiola effects in the hypermeter
- Detached, chromatic accompaniment
- Colorful harmonic shifts
- Chromatic thirds accompaniment under an elegant melody in the middle section

No. 8: "Greetings" (PG9, RCM8)

Semplice e dolce.

Musical score for No. 8: "Greetings" (PG9, RCM8). The score is in 3/4 time, marked "Semplice e dolce." It features a simple, lyrical melody in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand.

Profound, yet simple, epic-like, melancholic and lyrical character

- Dorian mode and melodic grace notes
- Alternating textures
- Use of wide range, rolled chords, and melodic lines in the lower range

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Volume 2 (Published 1900)

No. 1: "Sun Salutation" (PG10, RCM10)

Moto moderato, ma appassionato.

Musical score for No. 1: "Sun Salutation". The score is in 3/4 time, marked *Moto moderato, ma appassionato*. It features a right-hand melody with frequent leaps and a left-hand accompaniment with syncopation. The dynamic marking is *f sempre*.

- Technically demanding hand extensions and leaps
- Clear voicing in thick textures
- Modulations to chromatic mediant
- Syncopation in accompaniment

No. 2: "Jämtland" (PG9, RCM8)

Tranquillo e cantabile.

Musical score for No. 2: "Jämtland". The score is in 4/4 time, marked *Tranquillo e cantabile*. It features a right-hand melody with a nostalgic, hymn-like quality and a left-hand accompaniment with a single-line, mysterious feel. The dynamic marking is *p legato*.

- Theme 1: nostalgic, hymn-like
- Theme 2: single-line, mysterious, in 6/8
- Rondo form with the first theme varied, while the second theme remains consistent

No. 3: "Far Away Into the Woods" (PG6, RCM6)

Lento assai.

Musical score for No. 3: "Far Away Into the Woods". The score is in 6/8 time, marked *Lento assai*. It features a right-hand melody with a cowherd's call and a left-hand accompaniment with an Aeolian mode and open-fifth drone. The dynamic marking is *p legato*.

- Reminiscent of cowherd's call in the distance
- Soundscape: Aeolian mode, open-fifth drone, and tonic pedal
- Extreme dynamic changes
- Bird song effects and Grieg-like harmonic builds

No. 4: "Feast of St. Lars (Autumn)" (PG7, RCM7)

Semplice, moto moderato.

Musical score for No. 4: "Feast of St. Lars (Autumn)". The score is in 4/4 time, marked *Semplice, moto moderato*. It features a right-hand melody with a melancholy style and a left-hand accompaniment with articulated, *leggiero* themes. The dynamic marking is *mf*.

- Late-summer style: melancholy contrasted with articulated, *leggiero* themes
- Octatonic harmonic background layer

No. 5: "Waves Against the Shore" (PG8, RCM7)

Poco tranquillo, cantando.

Musical score for No. 5: "Waves Against the Shore". The score is in 4/4 time, marked *Poco tranquillo, cantando*. It features a right-hand melody with chromatic lines and a left-hand accompaniment with circle progression. The dynamic marking is *p*.

- Stormy weather on the great lake Storsjön
- Chromatic melodic lines in RH and LH
- Circle progression
- Unique harmonic progressions that primarily use chromatic mediant

No. 6: "Memories" (PG8, RCM7)

Andante, molto tranquillo.

Musical score for No. 6: "Memories". The score is in 4/4 time, marked *Andante, molto tranquillo*. It features a right-hand melody with wistful, hopeful, and nostalgic themes and a left-hand accompaniment with a wide range and various textures. The dynamic markings are *mf*, *p*, and *pp*.

- Wistful, hopeful, and nostalgic themes
- Use of wide range and various textures
- Alternates between mediant keys

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Volume 3: Humoresques and idylls (Published 1914)

No. 1: "Prelude" (PG8, RCM8)

Allegro. $\text{♩} = 152$

f

Con Ped.

The score for 'Prelude' is in 4/4 time with a tempo of Allegro (♩ = 152). It features a dynamic of *f* and includes the instruction 'Con Ped.' at the bottom.

- Etude-like: frequent leaps, octaves, four-note chords, and dotted rhythms
- Themes with patriotic rhythms

No. 2: "Entry into the Sommarhagan" (PG10, RCM10)

Alla marcia. $\text{♩} = 120$

f

The score for 'Entry into the Sommarhagan' is in 2/2 time with a tempo of Alla marcia (♩ = 120). It features a dynamic of *f*.

- Patriotic: bugle call and drum styles
- LH spans a tenth (roll, redistribute octave placement, or omit)
- Detailed phrase markings

No. 3: "Landscape in the Evening Sun" (PG5, RCM5)

Lento. $\text{♩} = 92$

p *pp* *p*

Con Ped.

The score for 'Landscape in the Evening Sun' is in 4/4 time with a tempo of Lento (♩ = 92). It features dynamics of *p*, *pp*, and *p*, and includes the instruction 'Con Ped.' at the bottom.

Soundscape created through 4ths and 5ths in melody and accompaniment, repeated short motives, pedal use, and extreme dynamic range

No. 4: "Folk Humor" (PG7, RCM7)

Vivace. $\text{♩} = 160$

p

senza *rit.*

The score for 'Folk Humor' is in 3/4 time with a tempo of Vivace (♩ = 160). It features a dynamic of *p* and includes the instruction 'senza rit.' at the bottom.

Jämtland *polska*: Dorian mode, swung feel, triplets and up-feeling on third beat, agogic accents on second beat, and use of drone bass

No. 5: "The Wilderness Beckons" (PG6, RCM6)

Andante. $\text{♩} = 80$

mp

The score for 'The Wilderness Beckons' is in 3/4 time with a tempo of Andante (♩ = 80). It features a dynamic of *mp*.

- Haunting melodic theme played in different voices and accompaniment
- Chordal bell effects in middle section

No. 6: "Under the Aspens" (PG9, RCM8)

Andante con moto, dolce cantando $\text{♩} = 120$

p *legato* *murmurando*

con *rit.*

The score for 'Under the Aspens' is in 4/4 time with a tempo of Andante con moto, dolce cantando (♩ = 120). It features dynamics of *p* and includes the instructions 'legato' and 'murmurando' at the bottom.

- Etude for the LH
- Voicing and balance in four-part texture
- Two against three rhythm

No. 7: "In Many Years" (PG9, RCM8)

Molto espressivo. $\text{♩} = 66$

mf *p* *mp*

The score for 'In Many Years' is in 3/4 time with a tempo of Molto espressivo (♩ = 66). It features dynamics of *mf*, *p*, and *mp*.

- Introspective and idyllic character: Aeolian and Dorian modes
- Hand extensions, leaps, and rolled chords

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Conclusion and Recommendations

Scandinavian Literature

- Unique melodies, harmonies, contrapuntal textures, moods, and soundscapes
- Technical challenges: tenths, rolled chords, octaves, hand extensions and leaps

Sequencing Literature

- In preparation: Grieg's easier *Lyric Pieces*
- Prepares for: Brahms's, Liszt, and Chopin character pieces and dances

Score Availability

- Multiple online stores
- IMSLP
- SwedishMusicalHeritage.com (free Levande Musikarv edition)

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