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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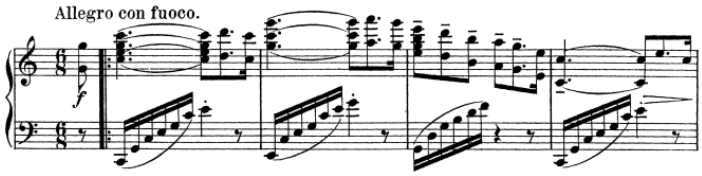
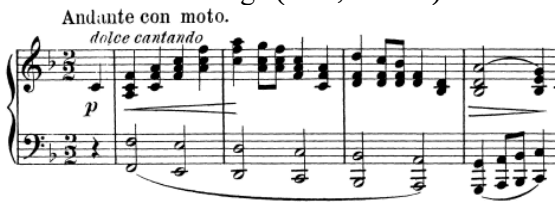
Volume 1 (Published 1896)

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



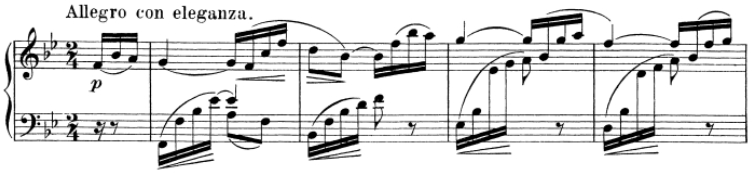
Returning to the island
- Mixolydian harmonic background layer
- Uncommon modulations
- Dance-like middle section

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



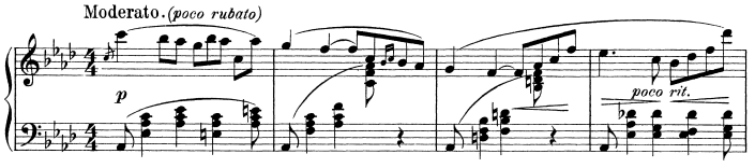
Widely popular and performed by piano students
- Clear voicing and balance in chordal texture
- Frequent jumps
- More technically accessible

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



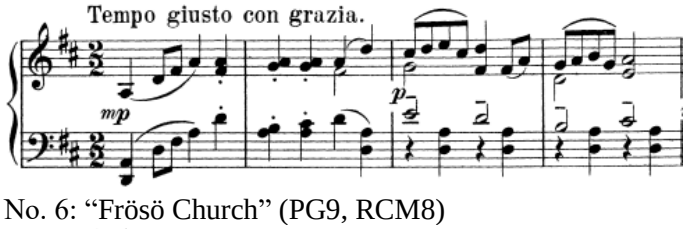
Inspired from playing the sport
- Etude-like with short melodic fragments
- Surprising harmonic build-up to climax
- Various melodic articulations

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



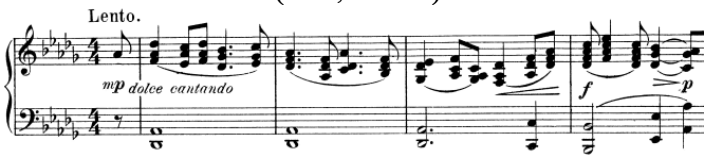
Inspired by the beautiful landscape
- Elegance without dramatic character
- Syncopated accompaniment
- Chromatic melodic lines

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



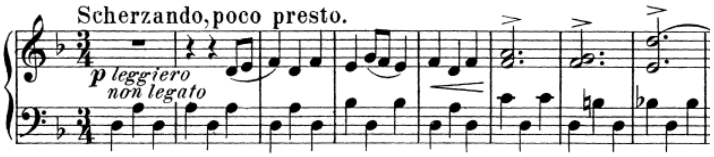
"Congratulations"
- Graceful articulations, four-part textures, and imitation
- Dance-like middle section with drone bass
- Tonal shifts through the circle progression and by ascending thirds

No. 6: "Frösö Church" (PG9, RCM8)



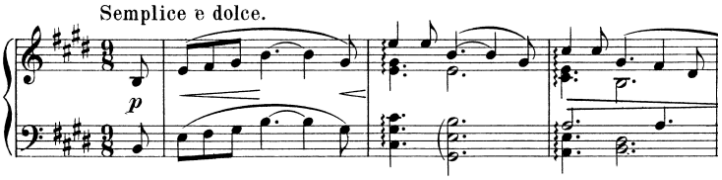
Sacred, mature work
- Careful voicing and pedal use
- Soundscape: folk style; surprising harmony shifts and dynamic changes
- Triplet eighths

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



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)



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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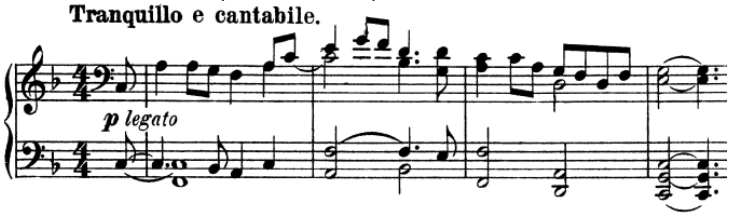
Volume 2 (Published 1900)

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

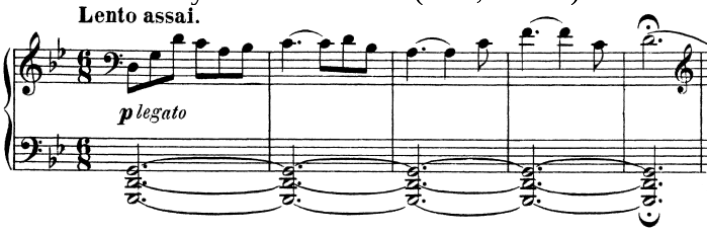
- Technically demanding hand extensions and leaps
- Clear voicing in thick textures
- Modulations to chromatic mediants
- Syncopation in accompaniment

No. 2: "Jämtland" (PG9, RCM8)



- 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

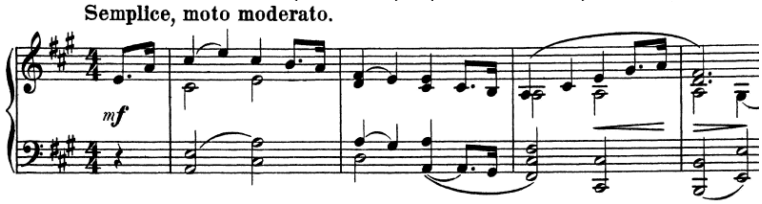
No. 3: "Far Away Into the Woods" (PG6, RCM6)



Reminiscent of cowherder's call in the distance

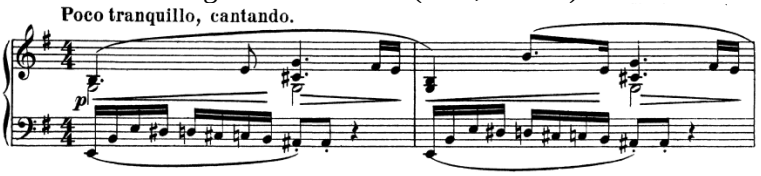
- Soundscape: Aeolian mode, open-fifth drone, and tonic pedal
- Extreme dynamic changes
- Bird song effects and Grieg-like harmonic builds

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



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

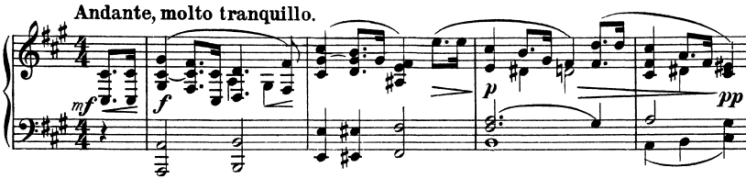
No. 5: "Waves Against the Shore" (PG8, RCM7)



Stormy weather on the great lake Storsjön

- Chromatic melodic lines in RH and LH
- Circle progression
- Unique harmonic progressions that primarily use chromatic mediants

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



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

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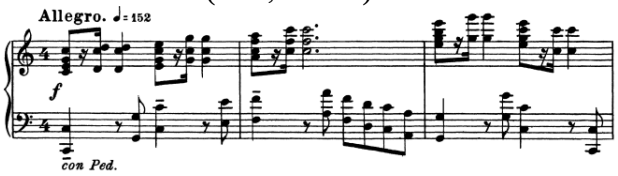
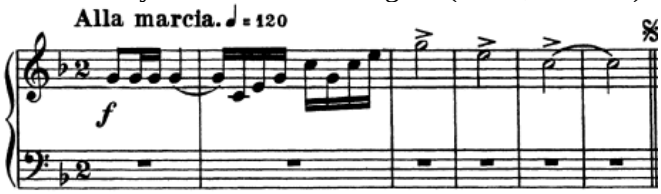
Volume 3: Humoresques and idylls (Published 1914)

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



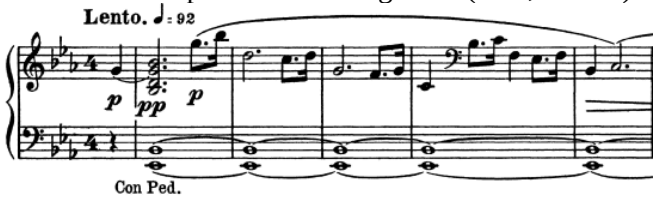
- Etude-like: frequent leaps, octaves, four-note chords, and dotted rhythms
- Themes with patriotic rhythms

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



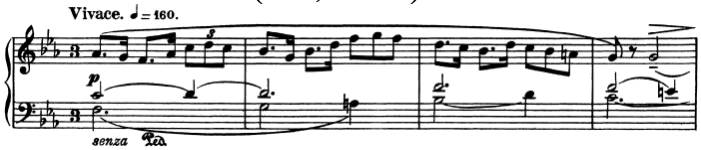
- Patriotic: bugle call and drum styles
- LH spans a tenth (roll, redistribute octave placement, or omit)
- Detailed phrase markings

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



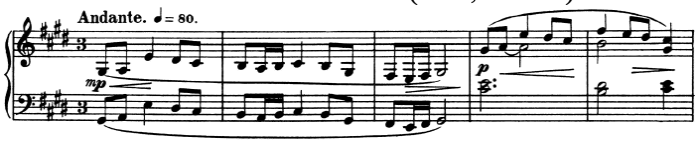
Soundscape created through 4ths and 5ths in melody and accompaniment, repeated short motives, pedal use, and extreme dynamic range

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



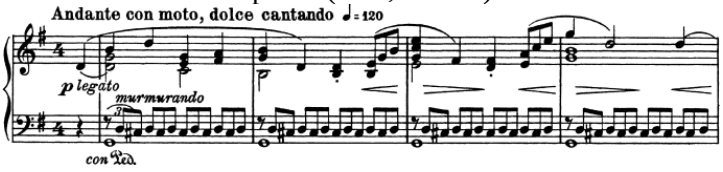
Jämtland *polska*: Dorian mode, swung feel, triplets and up-feeling on third beat, agogic accents on second beat, and use of drone bass

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



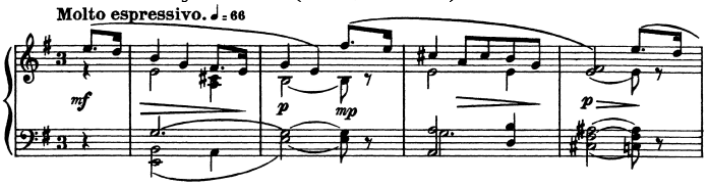
- Haunting melodic theme played in different voices and accompaniment
- Chordal bell effects in middle section

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



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

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



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

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: Brahm's, Liszt, and Chopin character pieces and dances

Score Availability

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

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