

FESTIVAL 2023

SEASON



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#### **PROGRAM**

April 16, 2023

#### Suite in the Olden Style, Op. 10

**CHRISTIAN SINDING** 

Presto

(1856 - 1941)

Adagio

Tempo giusto

Julie Coucheron, piano — David Coucheron, violin

#### Lyric Pieces, Op. 43

**EDVARD GRIEG** 

Sommerfugl (Butterfly)
Til våren (To spring)

(1843 - 1907)

Julie Coucheron, piano

#### The Song of Veslemøy

**JOHAN HALVORSEN** 

(1864 - 1935)

Karen Bentley Pollick, violin  $\,-\,$  Julie Coucheron, piano

#### **Allt Under Himmelens Faste**

**JOHAN SVENDSEN** 

(1840 - 1911)

Karen Bentley Pollick, violin - Charae Krueger, cello - Julie Coucheron, piano

#### Passacaglia, Op. 20 No. 2

**HANDEL** (1685-1759)

arr. HALVORSEN (1864 - 1935)

David Coucheron, violin — Charae Krueger, cello

#### INTERMISSION

#### Violin Sonata No. 3, Op.45

**EDVARD GRIEG** 

Allegro molto ed appassionato

(1843 - 1907)

David Coucheron, violin — Julie Coucheron, piano

#### **Traditional Norwegian Hardanger Fiddle Tunes**

Faremoans brureslag (The Faremos' Wedding Tune)

St. Thomasklokkeslåtten (The St. Thomas Bell Tune)

Skjoldmøyslaget (Valkyrie Battle)

Fanitullen (The Devil's Dance)

Karen Bentley Pollick, Hardanger Fiddle - Ashley Brandt, dancer - David Brandon, dancer Susan Dodge (Amelia Island Dance Festival), choreography

#### Peer Gynt Suite No. 1

**EDVARD GRIEG** 

(1843 - 1907)

Morning Mood

Anitra's Dance

In the Hall of the Mountain King

David Coucheron, violin — Julie Coucheron, piano — Charae Krueger, cello

YAMAHA Grand piano generously provided by Keyboard Connection - The Piano Place in Jacksonville

# CHRISTIAN SINDING Suite in the Olden Style, Op. 10

"Behind the clouds, the sky is always blue."

Norwegian proverb

hristian Sinding, composer, and violinist was born in Kongsberg, near Oslo. He was the youngest of five children. He neglected his studies at Kristiania Cathedral School and at age sixteen worked at the Hals Brothers' piano factory. In 1874 he moved to Leipzig, home of the Conservatorium der Musik founded by composer Felix Mendelssohn. Here he was influenced by the works of Johann Sebastian Bach and Richard

Wagner. Other Norwegian composers, Halfdan Kjerulf, Edvard Grieg and Johan Svendsen, were also there in Leipzig during that time. Sinding's love of nature is evident in his compositions, and he was



inspired by the mountains and fjords of Norway. His compositions are known for their "lush harmonies, sweeping melodies, and emotional intensity." His most famous works include the Suite in A Minor for Violin and Orchestra and his piano piece, Rustle of Spring. His Suite in the Olden Style, Op. 10 was composed in 1889. It has three movements each set in A Minor. His affinity for the Baroque period is evident while incorporating newer elements as well. Nineteenth century pianos included the addition of pedals

which broadened the instrument's capacity for expression. Sinding included these pedal markings and also allowed the piano to be an equal partner with the violin.

#### JOHAN SVENDSEN Allt Under Himmelens Faste

"The fair wind blows even if the sailor does not see it."

— Norwegian proverb

n September 30, 1840, composer, conductor, and violinist Johan Svendsen was born in Christiania (now Oslo.) Known for his Norwegian classical contributions, he spent most of his life in Copenhagen, Denmark where he composed large works for orchestras and ensembles. He studied violin and composition at the Music Conservatory in Leipzig, Germany and found great influence



in the works of Bach, Beethoven, and Liszt. As a military bandmaster in Norway, he was intrigued by the Hardanger fiddle and incorporated it into his compositions. *Allt Under Himmelens Faste (Everything Under the Firmament)* was composed in 1889. Written for a festival celebrating the 400th anniversary of the Swedish Reformation, it is based on a Swedish hymn text.

# JOHAN HALVORSEN Passacaglia, Op. 20 No. 2 (After Handel) The Song of Veslemøy or Song of Veslemøy

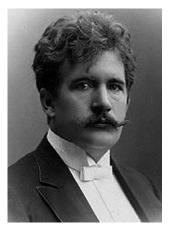
"He was a man of the theatre. But beyond the transitory towers a lasting musical legacy."

— Hans Rossiné, Listen to Norway

omposer, conductor, and violinist Johan Halvorsen was born in Drammen, Norway. At a very early age, he was an accomplished violinist and was later known as one of Norway's premiere violin virtuosos. Beginning in 1889 he worked as a violin professor and chamber musician at the Helsinki Music Institute. Several years later he was offered a position to conduct both a theater and semi-professional orchestra in Bergen. In 1894, he married composer Edvard Grieg's niece, Anna. In 1899 as his

successful musical reputation grew, he was offered the position of conductor at the new national theatre in Christiania. Here he stayed for thirty years, conducting performances of operas, and writing incidental music for more than thirty plays. Musicologist and author Øyvin Dybsand said, "... as a composer Halvorsen was mainly self-taught, apart from some lessons in counterpoint from Albert Brecker in Berlin (1893). His compositions develop the national Romantic tradition of his friends Grieg and Svendsen, but his was a distinctive style marked by brilliant orchestration inspired by the French Romantic composers."

Halvorsen's *Passacaglia* published in 1894 was written for violin and cello (or violin and viola.) It is based on a theme published in 1720 by composer Georg Frederic Handel (1685-1759) and is considered one of the most widely performed string duos in the chamber music repertoire. This "brilliant extrapolation" of Handel's Passacaglia is taken from the last movement of the Baroque composer's Harpsichord Suite No. 7 in G Minor, HWV 432.



From the Oxford Dictionary, a passacaglia is "a composition similar to a chaconne, typically in slow triple time with variations over a ground bass." It is an Italian word taken from the Spanish pasacalle from pasar (to pass) + calle (street), a dance often played by musicians in the streets. Handel's work contained fifteen variations whereas Halvorsen's contains twelve.

Violinist Felicity James at the Colburn Conservatory of Music

penned this descriptive synopsis.

"The Passacaglia opens with the cellist courageously stating the four-measure ground bass while the violinist introduces the melody in a series of powerful double stops. This opening statement is followed by a series of variations that feature melodies in both the violin and cello in a wide range of contrasting moods and styles, while using techniques such as pizzicato, ponticello, spicatto, and legato bowstrokes. ...Halvorsen's Passacaglia lasts several minutes longer than the inspiring work, as each variation elaborates extensively on the main theme, showing off every angle of the two instruments. The penultimate variation is one of the most virtuosic for both musicians. featuring thrillingly dramatic scales spanning the extreme low and high registers of each instrument. This, in turn, leads into the final variation, which is a series of double-stop sixteenth notes that charge all the way to the finish line in breathtaking culmination. Unlike the somber conclusion of the Handel movement, Halvorsen calls for a Picardy

third—a bold G Major chord closing the piece in triumph."

In contrast, his Veslemøys Sang (Little Molly's Song) or Song of Veslemøy is a quiet, introspective piece. This charming and beautiful melody is based on a Norwegian folk song that tells the story of a

young girl named Molly who is trying to catch a fish. Halvorsen, an accomplished violinist and violist, also played the Hardanger fiddle most proficiently and like Grieg, found much inspiration in the folk music of his native Norway.

# EDVARD GRIEG Lyric Pieces, Op. 43 Violin Sonata No. 3, Op. 45 Allegro molto ed appassionato Peer Gynt Suite No. 1

"When we are young, friends are, like everything else, a matter of course. In the old days we know what it means to have them." — Edvard Grieg

The compositions of Edvard Grieg have been written by the voice of Norway itself. Composer and pianist Claude Debussy described Grieg as "the most authentic voice of the north." Grieg himself said, "the spirit of my native land, which has long found a voice in the traditional songs of its people, is a living presence in all I give forth." A most prolific composer, his works include compositions for the piano, orchestra, voice, chamber works, plus three sonatas for violin and piano, a cello sonata, and a string

quartet. Modestly he once said, "I am not a genius, I am just a hard-working composer."

Born in Bergen, Norway on June 15, 1843, Edvard Grieg was introduced to music at an early age by his mother. Being a talented pianist, she was his first teacher and instilled a love of Mozart, Weber, and Chopin in her fourth child, Edvard. Grieg wrote: "The traditional way of life of the Norwegian people together with Norway's legends, Norway's history, Norway's natural scenery, stamped itself on my creative imagination from my earliest years."



Initially, Grieg sought to study law but quickly realized his true passion was music. At the urging of the Norwegian violinist, Old Bornemann Bull (1810-1880) or Ole Bull, the fifteen-year-old Grieg was sent to study at the Leipzig Conservatory. Here he concentrated on piano; other classes and courses he found tedious. He said: "I must admit, unlike Svendsen, that I left Leipzig Conservatory just as stupid as I entered it. Naturally, I did learn something there, but my individuality

was still a closed book to me." Returning home in 1862, Grieg was strongly influenced by the eccentric virtuoso violinist Bull to bring forth national Norwegian music. This encouragement coupled with the inspiration from his good friend composer Rikard Nordraak, led Grieg to say: "I had found myself...and with the greatest facility I overcame all the difficulties which in Leipzig had seemed to me insurmountable. With my fancy emancipated I composed one work after another. That my music at first was criticized as artificial and strange did not confuse me; I knew

what I wanted, and I boldly aimed for the goal which I meant to attain."

Grieg's Lyrical Pieces, Op. 43 are from his collection that contains a total of sixty-six short pieces and were published in ten volumes. Beginning in 1876 with Op. 12, these popular pieces were composed throughout the next thirty-four years. The third volume, Op. 43 was written and published in 1886. His first two volumes, Op. 12 and 38, were extraordinarily popular. Grieg proposed naming the third book, containing Sommerfugl (Butterfly) and Til våren (To spring), "Spring Songs." His publisher strongly disagreed and convinced the composer to remain with Lyric Pieces, its "brand name." The publisher had been correct as these found longlasting success. Twenty years later the publisher wrote to Grieg reporting that these were still "selling like hot cakes."

The multi-talented Grieg, a composer, conductor, pianist, writer, and artist, composed three violin sonatas. The first two sonatas were published within two years, however his Violin Sonata No. 3 followed almost two decades later. It was composed at his home, Troldhaugen in the second half of 1886 spilling into the first part of 1887. The composer was the pianist for its premiere in the Leipzig Gewandhaus on December 10, 1887. He was joined by the Russian violinist and Leipzig Conservatory professor, Adolph Brodsky. This sonata is the last piece of chamber music Grieg composed and he described it in a letter to his publisher as his last "crime for the violin." In January 1900, Grieg wrote to his friend and Norwegian poet Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and said:

"Last week I had the pleasure of performing my three violin sonatas with Lady Neruda-Hallé before a very discerning Danish Audience and receiving a very warm response. I can assure you that we did very well, and it had special significance to me, because these three works are among my very best and represent different stages in my development: the first, naïve and rich in ideals, the second, nationalist, and the third with a wider outlook."

Meeting in 1867, Grieg and the famous Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen became close friends. The two joined forces with Grieg composing music for several of Ibsen's plays. Ibsen's "Peer Gynt", originally written in verse rather than being written as a play, tells the story of a young Norwegian peasant's travels and adventures. Grieg's music for Ibsen's revised story, now written as a play, is some of the composer's most well-known. Today, it is usually heard in the form of orchestral suites. The original score was completed in 1875 and the stage play's premiere was on February 24, 1876, in the Mollergaden Theatre, Christiania (now Oslo.) Grieg re-orchestrated much of this music in 1885 and added new pieces in 1902. The Peer Gynt Suite No. 1 contains four movements. Morning Mood opens Act IV of Ibsen's play and is set in North Africa. Grieg wrote: "I imagine the sun breaking through the clouds at the first forte." Anitra's Dance he described as "a soft little dance which I am very anxious should sound delicate and beautiful." In the Hall of the Mountain King comes from Act II when Peer Gynt comes up against the hostile court of the troll king in a dream fantasy. It has been described by Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw as a "riotous piece of weird fun."

Grieg's biographer Aimer Gronvold wrote, "His music came from the depths of rural Norway where the quick and resonant tone of the Hardanger fiddle met his ear, and the Hardangerfjord's shifting moods enchanted the eye."

— Emma Mills Bledsoe, 2023

#### ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

#### Julie Coucheron, piano

Pianist Julie Coucheron began playing the piano at age four. Since then, she has established an international career, winning awards and prizes in Italy, Germany, the U.K., and the U.S. Ms. Coucheron worked with musicians such as Claude Frank, Emanuel Ax, Chee-Yun Kim, Christopher O'Riley, Steve Miller Band, Yo-Yo Ma, and Elton John. She toured Europe, the U.S., South America and Asia, and regularly performs at festivals such as the Oslo Chamber Music Festival, Bergen International Music Festival, Amelia Island Music Festival, Madison Chamber Music Festival, Juneau Jazz and Classics, and La Jolla Summer Fest. She is the founder and Artistic Director of the Kon Tiki Chamber Music Festival in Oslo, Norway and Artistic Director of the Georgian Chamber Players in Atlanta, GA. Ms. Coucheron enjoys a close collaboration with her brother, the Concertmaster of the Atlanta Symphony, David Coucheron. They released two recordings, 'Debut' and 'David and Julie' on the Naxos label.



#### David Coucheron, violin



David Coucheron joined the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra as Concertmaster in September 2010. At the time, he was the youngest concertmaster among any major U.S. orchestra.

Throughout his career, Coucheron has worked with conductors Robert Spano, Michael Tilson Thomas, Simon Rattle, Mstislav Rostropovich and Charles Dutoit, among others. He has performed as soloist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, Sendai Symphony Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra.

Coucheron has given solo recitals at Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, the Kennedy Center and the Olympic Winter Games (Salt Lake City, Utah), as well as in Beograd, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Serbia, Singapore and Shanghai. His chamber music performances have included appearances at Suntory Hall as Wigmore Hall and Alice Tully Hall. Coucheron serves as

the Artistic Director for the Kon Tiki Chamber Music Festival in his hometown of Oslo, Norway. He is also on the artist-faculty for the Aspen Music Festival and Brevard Music Festival.

Coucheron began playing the violin at age three. He earned his Bachelor of Music degree from The Curtis Institute of Music, his Master of Music from The Juilliard School and his Master of Musical Performance from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, studying with teachers including Igor Ozim, Aaron Rosand, Lewis Kaplan and David Takeno. Coucheron plays a 1725 Stradivarius, on kind loan from Anders Sveaas Charitable Trust.

#### Karen Bentley Pollick, violin & Hardanger Fiddle



Aren Bentley Pollick is one of America's leading contemporary musicians, performing a wide range of solo repertoire and styles on violin, viola, piano and Norwegian hardangerfele to extend the boundaries of the concert experience from the Baroque to cutting edge contemporary music and live improvisations. A native of Palo Alto, California, she began piano lessons at age 5 with Armenian pianist Rusana Sysoyev, studied with Camilla Wicks in San Francisco, and with Yuval Yaron, Josef Gingold and Rostislav Dubinsky at Indiana University, where she received both Bachelors and Masters of Music Degrees in Violin Performance with a cognate in Choral Conducting. She performed in master classes of Nathan Milstein in Zurich, Jean-Jacques Kantorow in Victoria, B.C., and Glenn Dicterow in Carmel, CA. Her recordings of original music include Electric Diamond, Angel,

Konzerto and Succubus and Ariel View, for which she has received three music awards from Just Plain Folks, including Best Instrumental Album and Best Song. On her own record label Ariel Ventures she has produced chamber music featuring works by Russian pianist/composer Ivan Sokolov on <amberwood>, Homage to Fiddlers& Russian Soulscapes; music of Swedish composer Ole Saxe on Dancing Suite to Suite & Peace Piece; Bebop for Beagles, Estadio, and filmed Dan Tepfer's Solo Blues for Violin and Piano.

#### Charae Krueger, cello



ellist Charae Krueger is Principal Cellist for the Atlanta Opera Orchestra and the Atlanta Ballet Orchestra. She is Lecturer and Artist in Residence in Cello at Kennesaw State University in Georgia, having been a faculty member since 2006. Ms. Krueger is an avid chamber musician and is a member of the Summit Piano Trio and the Serafin Ensemble. She is a regular featured artist at the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival in North Carolina, the Grand Teton Music Festival in Wyoming and at Serafin Summer Music. Her solo and chamber music recitals have been featured on NPR's Performance Today, WABE Radio Atlanta and WGBH Radio Boston. She plays frequently with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the Charleston Symphony. Ms. Krueger also enjoys recording studio work and has played on albums of Bruce Springsteen, Faith Hill and Natalie Cole.

#### William David Brandon, dancer

William attended Charlotte Ballet's, formerly North Carolina Dance Theatre, summer intensive program and other summer programs. He graduated in 2020 from Jacksonville University where he completed at least twelve productions as a guest artist. He has worked with Chattanooga Ballet, Dance Arts, and South Georgia Ballet for their productions of the Nutcracker.

#### Ashley Brandt, dancer

A shley is a Jacksonville native. She began her training at The Florida Ballet Conservatory at age 14. After collaborating with the New York Dance Project, Davis Robertson recruited her to join his company with Nicole Duffy. Ashley is now the Artist in Residence at Saltmarsh Dance. She recently performed as a soloist in Pietresanta Italy and was a dancer in Amelia Island Dance Festival's short film project, Wandering.

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Bryan & Karen Tabler

Robert Tankel

Kenneth & Leila Taratus (in memory of Christopher Rex)

Nancy Tarbis

Bill & Susan Thigpen (in memory of Christopher Rex)

John & Gail Thompson (in memory of Christopher Rex)

Ruth Igoe

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#### HOUSING PARTNERS

We thank the many organizations & individuals for their hospitality in housing the Festival's guest artists.

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## YOUNG PATRONS

If you have a love of music and an interest in exploring the arts, culture and community of Amelia Island, you will want to be a part of this dynamic group of young adults between the ages of 21 and 50.

Join for FREE. More details at https://ameliachambermusic.org/young-patrons/

# INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING for the 2023 Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival?

The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival is a volunteer-driven organization with a small staff. The Festival would not exist without the skills, hard work and dedication of many volunteers. This is why we need your help.

To learn more and to sign up to become a volunteer please visit: https://ameliachambermusic.org/volunteer-opportunities/

## A heartfelt THANK YOU to all of our Sponsors, Contributors, Volunteers, Partners and Patrons for a wonderful 22nd Season. Without you the AICMF could not exist.

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

Friday, April 28, 2023

Harlem String Quartet

5:30 pm

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Saturday, May 13, 2023

Lisa Kelly & JB Scott Jazz Sextet

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

1:00 pm | Fernandina Beach Municipal Airport

Mark O'Connor "Beethoven & Bluegrass"

Saturday, June 3, 2023

7:00 pm The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island

**Christopher Rex Spring Institute Final Concert** 

St. Peter's Episcopal Church 5:00 pm



 $^st$ Times and venues are subject to change. For tickets and more information please visit www.aicmf.org