

## Musical Forms and Devices: Prepared Work – Area of Study 1

### GRIEG: Anitra's Dance from the Peer Gynt Suite No.1 (Op. 46)

#### The Composer

- Edvard Grieg – born in Bergen, Norway in June 1843 and died in September 1907.
- A composer from the Romantic era (1810 – 1900) in music and generally considered to be one of the leading composers of the era.
- Grieg learned the piano from the age of six – his father was a merchant and his mother was a music teacher.
- He studied at the Leipzig Conservatory in Germany, and in 1861 he made his debut as a concert pianist at Karlshamn, Sweden.
- Grieg was interested in the characteristics of folk music in Norway and they were his inspirations for his musical works.
- His output included works for the piano (e.g. Piano Concerto in A minor, Piano Sonata in E minor and Symphonic Dances – later arranged for orchestra).
- He also composed an album for Male Chorus and sonatas for violin and cello. He composed incidental music for plays.
- Grieg was influenced by the music traditions of Felix Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcEnSITNaGM>

#### Composition Date: 1875 (Romantic Period)

Peer Gynt is a play in five acts written in verse by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828 – 1906). The play was published in 1867 and Grieg composed 26 movements as incidental music for the play. Peer Gynt (Op. 23) was premiered in 1876 at the Mollergaden Theatre in Oslo. Grieg conducted this performance.

The title character, Peer Gynt, is a charming but lazy peasant youth who leaves his home in order to seek his fortune. He meets a girl called Anitra in Act IV of the play. She is the daughter of the village leader. Peer Gynt tries to seduce her but she is too clever and robs him of his money and possessions. You will be studying the music composed for this section, “Anitra's Dance”.

Grieg decided to select four of the movements from the whole Peer Gynt work to create Suite No.1 (Op. 46) in 1888, which contained: Morning Mood, The Death of Ase, Anitra's Dance and In the Hall of the Mountain King.

Along with Grieg's Piano Concerto in A Minor, Peer Gynt Suite No. 1 continues to be the most famous works by this composer. All four movements of Suite No.1 were not in the order of the original work or story. Grieg also put together another Suite (No. 2) in 1891 with four other movements from the original score.

### General Information on Anitra's Dance

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Instrumentation:  | String Orchestra (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello I, Cello II and Double Bass) and Triangle.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Tempo:            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tempo di Mazurka/Molto Allegro</li> <li>160 bpm</li> <li>Spirited dance (waltz)</li> <li>Tempo slows at bar 68-69 (<i>poco rit</i>) and resumes original tempo at bar 70 (<i>a tempo</i>).</li> </ul>                                                |
| Dynamics:         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Range from <i>pp</i> (<i>pianissimo</i> – very soft) to <i>f</i> (<i>forte</i> – loud)</li> <li>Crescendo (gradual volume increase) and diminuendo (gradual volume decrease) throughout the piece.</li> </ul>                                        |
| Tonality:         | <p>Main Key: <b>A minor</b></p> <p>Bar 40-46 is in the key of D major (tonic major).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Rhythm and Metre: | <p>Simple rhythms, including quavers, crotchets and minims - dotted crotchets are effectively used in new section.</p> <p>Triple time (3/4 – 3 crotchet beats in a bar).</p>                                                                                                                |
| Texture:          | <p>Mainly homophonic: melody and accompaniment.</p> <p>Imitation is used (e.g. bar 70).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Melody and pitch: | <p>Conjunct and disjunct movement – well balanced with use of anacrusis.</p> <p>Use of trill and mordent (melodic ornaments).</p> <p>Large range for the main melody (violin I – nearly 3 octaves).</p>  |
| Harmony:          | Harmony is diatonic (e.g. bar 7) and chromatic in other sections (e.g. bar 15).                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

# Background Notes

## Grieg: Peer Gynt Suite No.1: Anitra's Dance

### Structure and Tonality

The key is A minor. Here is the main structure of the piece and featured keys:

| Section                                         | Bars  | Number of bars | Keys                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------------------------------|
| Introduction                                    | 1-6   | 6              | A minor                                |
| Section A                                       | 7-22  | 16             | A minor – E minor                      |
| SECTION A is then repeated (Bars 7 -23)         |       |                |                                        |
| Section B                                       | 24-39 | 16             | E major – A major                      |
| Section A1<br>(development section)             | 40-69 | 30             | D major – D minor<br>F major – A minor |
| Section A2 (extended)                           | 70-89 | 20             | A minor                                |
| SECTION B and A are then repeated (Bars 24 -90) |       |                |                                        |
| Coda (short)                                    | 91-93 | 3              | A minor                                |

**NB: The overall structure could be analysed as binary or ternary form for a number of musical reasons, so candidates will not be asked to comment on this in any examination. However, this structural analysis above clearly shows the individual sections which *will* feature in examinations (A, A1 and A2 have been labelled to show differentiation).**

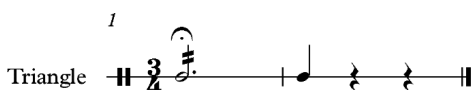
### Musical Analysis

#### Introduction (bars 1-6)

The time signature of this dance is 3/4 (metre = 3 crotchet beats in a bar). The **tonic** key of the movement is A minor, and the upper strings (violins and violas) perform a paused dominant chord of E major (chord V) to begin the dance. These string parts are played **divisi**, meaning half of the performers should play each note. All strings (apart from double basses) are **con sordini** (muted) and strings are played **arco** (with the bow) on the first chord.



The dynamic is very soft (*pp* – **pianissimo**), and cellos and basses are **tacet** (not performing). The triangle part accompanies with a **roll** followed by one crotchet beat on the first beat of the next bar.



The accompaniment pattern then begins at bar 3 played by all strings apart from the first violins. All string instruments use **pizzicato** (plucking of the strings). The rhythm is very simple, using crotchets and quavers with the bass note of A clearly heard on the first beat of the bar. The texture of the introduction is **homophonic**, and the harmony is **diatonic**. The introduction uses two chords: the tonic, A minor (chord i), and the dominant, E major (chord V), on the third beat of each bar. The dominant chords on the third beats contain added discord notes – 7ths and 9ths. The dynamics are marked *p* (**piano** - quiet) for all instruments – a little louder than the first chord.



### Section A (bars 7-22/23)

#### Bars 7-14

The A section begins in A minor and the texture is still homophonic (melody with accompaniment) with three crotchet beats per bar. The overall tempo is **Tempo di Mazurka** (160 crotchet beats per minute) or **Molto Allegro**. The first violins play the melody *arco* (bowed). Section A consists of a number of musical motifs which are used in the whole prepared piece of music.

Theme w  
Melody details

Violin I

6

11

conjunct movement

some disjunct movement

chromatic movement in melody and some disjunct movement

The first theme heard (theme w) begins with an **anacrusis** (3<sup>rd</sup> beat of bar 6 – an upbeat) and features stepwise (**conjunct**) movement as well as wider melodic intervals between notes (**disjunct** movement). The Violin I part shown above gives some examples of the melodic movement and intervals used (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>). An **upper mordent** is used in the first full bar of theme w (a rapid single alternation between a note and the note above). The violins play some **staccato** (detached) notes and some **slurred** notes (played smoothly) and the dynamic marking is *piano*. Another ornament used is a **trill** (a repeated alternation between two adjacent notes e.g. DEDEDE etc.). The rhythm used in both the melody and accompaniment is simple and mainly uses minims, crotchets and quavers. The other string instruments perform an accompaniment in the same style as the introduction (*pizzicato*), and the triangle plays on the first crotchet beat of alternate bars.

Theme w  
Harmony details

Violin I

6

11

tonic and dominant chords - diatonic harmony

diminished chord

chromatic harmony

The harmony in the first four bars of theme w is diatonic (as in the introduction), and the phrase ends on a **perfect cadence** in A minor. The second phrase (bars 11-14) is based in A minor and finishes on a B major chord (chord II). B major is the dominant of E minor and the music is modulating to this key. The overall harmony is highlighted in the extract above.

# Background Notes

## Grieg: Peer Gynt Suite No.1: Anitra's Dance

### Bars 15-22/23

Theme x

15

Violin I

*pp*

chromatic movement - B A# A G# G F# F E D#

Perf 4th

The second part of the A section starts with theme x, which is based in B Major played by the first violins and first cellos (in octaves). The melodic material is generally **chromatic**, but some clear triads can be identified (E major in bar 16 and B minor in bar 17). This theme is performed over a repetitive **pedal** B note performed by the second violins, second cellos and double basses. The pedal is played on beats one and three. This melodic **transition** theme in Violin I and Cello I is bowed while the other strings still use *pizzicato*. The music begins *pianissimo*, becoming gradually louder (*crescendo*) and then gradually quieter (*diminuendo*) whilst the violas highlight the descending chromatic movement (shown below in semitone steps). The texture is still homophonic (using a melody and accompaniment). This figure ends on the first beat of bar 19 where the melody instruments – first violins and first cellos – complete their phrase with another upper mordent ornament.

15

Violas

*p*

**NB: Middle C for the viola is on the middle line of the stave (alto clef – viola).**

Theme w then returns (bar 19) in **unison**. Violin II and violas play in octaves, joined in bar 21 by the first violins with a **scallic** extension of the theme in E minor. The last cadence here is V-I in E minor (**perfect cadence**). All stringed instruments are **accented** in **unison** (B-E). The dynamic now returns to forte (*f* - loud). The melody here is mainly conjunct, **monophonic** in texture and played *pizzicato*.

19

The viola part is an octave lower

+ Violin I

Violin II & Violas

*f*

monophonic texture

V I

**NB: The whole A section is repeated exactly.**

### Section B (bars 24-39)

The first theme heard in Section B (theme y) features a **dotted** rhythm and a conjunct melody. The second bar (**ascending**) is an inversion of the first bar (**descending**).

Theme y    divisi  
24    arco    inverted pitch

Violin I



*p*  
E major (dominant of main tonic key)

The harmony is based in the **dominant** major (E major). The first two notes are the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> intervals of the scale and the first violins play in 3rds. The second violins perform the simple accompaniment *arco* in bars 24-27. The lower strings are still playing pizzicato and the triangle plays a crotchet on the first beat in every other bar. The texture is homophonic, and the harmony is diatonic.

The next theme presented is theme z, which is a four-note quaver motive first played by the second violins and violas (*pizzicato*) and imitated by the first violins and cellos (*arco*). This is four bars long and provides us with a **diminished** chord in the key with some **passing notes** between (each note in a diminished chord is made up of minor 3rd intervals, e.g. G#, B, D & F). The rhythms here are made up of quavers, and the triangle part is silent during this theme. The texture here is **monophonic**, which is a contrast to theme y, and with the use of *pizzicato* this gives a quieter feel. Apart from the double basses, the descending pattern is played by all of the other instruments.

Theme z    28    divisi arco

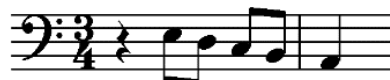
Violin I & Cellos

Violin II & Viola



Following a different descending pattern in the cellos, the music moves to the tonic major in bar 32 (A major - 17).

31    pizz.



# Background Notes

## Grieg: Peer Gynt Suite No.1: Anitra's Dance

The previous eight bars are then repeated in this new key firstly with theme y.

Theme y

32 divisi

Violin I



Theme z once again is based on a diminished chord, this time using the notes C#, E, G & B $\flat$ . Once again, the ideas heard firstly are played *pizzicato* by the second violins and violas and imitated *arco* by the first violins and cellos.

**NB:** Remember a diminished chord is made up of minor 3rds.

Theme z

36

Violin I & Cellos

Violin II & Viola

divisi arco

pizz.



This material is repeated from the E major section before but now **transposed** to A major and finishes with another short descending pattern by the cellos, which takes us to the **subdominant** major (D major) in bar 40.

**NB:** This is a **circle of fifths**: E major (bar 24) – A major (bar 32) – D major (bar 40).

# Background Notes

## Grieg: Peer Gynt Suite No.1: Anitra's Dance

### Section A1 (development) (bars 40-69)

The section contains four-bar balanced phrases apart from the last, which only contains **three bars**. The melody of this section is theme w, which is played *arco* by the first violins but now heard in D major, the subdominant. It begins as before with an **upbeat** and contains the ornaments as heard in the original section. The other strings play a simple *pizzicato* accompaniment as before, using the chords of D and A.

Violin I

42 **dolce**

V i V(7) i V7 i V9 i

**pp** in D Major (subdominant major of tonic key)

After a few bars of accompaniment, theme x is heard again at bar 49 but in D minor (**subdominant minor** – iv). The melody is again played with *arco* with *pizzicato* accompaniment and the dynamic marking is *piano*. Again, notice the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> notes of the chords here:

Violin I

49

V i V i V7 i V9 i

**pp** in D Minor (subdominant minor of tonic key)

From the upbeat to bar 55, this melody and accompaniment is repeated four times in a series of different keys. Each time theme w is heard, played by the first violins and then imitated a bar later by the violas. From bars 54-61, the first cellos perform the notes E $\flat$  & F $\sharp$  as long sustained notes. The first cellos then continue with a slurred two-note pattern for the next eight bars.

62 **poco rit.**

**f** dim.

In this section the dynamics increase until bar 58 and then decrease to bar 66. At bar 69 the tempo begins to get a little slower as shown by the marking **poco rit.**

# Background Notes

## Grieg: Peer Gynt Suite No.1: Anitra's Dance

### Section A2 (bars 70-89/90)

The A section then returns at the original tempo (*a tempo*), and the main musical elements are generally the same. However, this time, the first violins play in octaves and the first cellos **imitate** theme w one bar later. All other instruments are playing with *pizzicato* and the dynamic is *piano* once again. This theme is marked **dolce**, which means it should be played sweetly. The upper mordent and trills are featured as in the original A section.

arco divisi  
a tempo

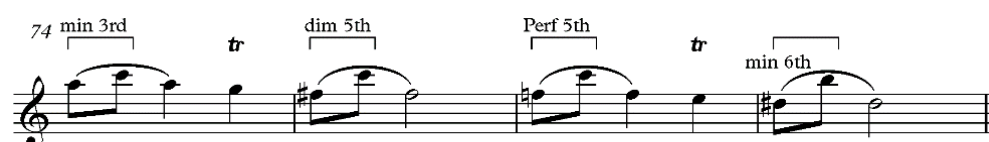


Violin I

Cello

*p*

The second half of the theme below is now extended to eight bars instead of the original four bars earlier in the piece. This forms another **sequence**, with bars 78-81 being a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> lower than bars 74-77.



74 min 3rd tr dim 5th Perf 5th tr min 6th

chromatic movement in melody  
some disjunct movement



78 min 3rd tr dim 5th Perf 5th tr min 6th

chromatic movement in melody  
some disjunct movement

Theme x is then heard once again – a perfect 4<sup>th</sup> higher in pitch than before, and this concludes this section.

**NB:** The first Section A finished in E minor (**dominant** minor – v) but now A2 concludes in the **tonic** minor key of A minor (chord i).

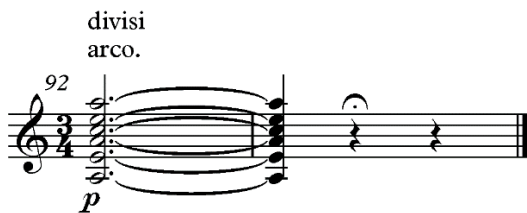
**NB:** The B Section and both A Sections are repeated.

# Background Notes

## Grieg: Peer Gynt Suite No.1: Anitra's Dance

### Coda (bars 91-93)

Following the repeat of the A section for the final time, the cellos and bass provide an extra dominant and tonic crotchet beat to end the piece – a **perfect cadence**. This is followed by the upper strings playing the chord of A minor (*arco* and *divisi*) in the same way the movement began with a triangle roll but now with the **tonic chord** as described.



# Background Notes

## Grieg: Peer Gynt Suite No.1: Anitra's Dance

### Activities

Listen to 'Edvard Grieg - Peer Gynt - Suite No. 1, Op. 46 - III. Anitra's Dance' on YouTube.

For a visual performance check out 'Edvard Grieg: Anitra's Dance from Peer Gynt Suite • Volker Hartung, conductor' on Youtube.

1. Discuss in a group what you have learnt from the prepared piece that could be useful in your composing.
2. Rehearse a group performance of 'Anitra's Dance' with some friends. Organise a performance to the class and talk about the success and challenges it presents in performance.
3. Grieg is perhaps best known for his 'Piano Concerto in A Minor'. Find out what you can about this work. Does it have any connection with the prepared set work?

### Tasks

1. Here are some other musical works that feature incidental music:
  - **Henry Purcell: Abdelazer Suite (1695)**
  - **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Thamos, King of Egypt (1776)**
  - **Felix Mendelssohn: A Midsummer Night's Dream (1842)**

Listen to these works online and compare the music.

2. Incidental Music can be used in a play, television or radio programme, video game or film. This music is also featured in Area of Study 3 – have a listen online and describe the **timbre**, **tone colour** and **dynamics** within this style.



Edvard Grieg  
(Norway)



An image of the  
character Peer Gynt