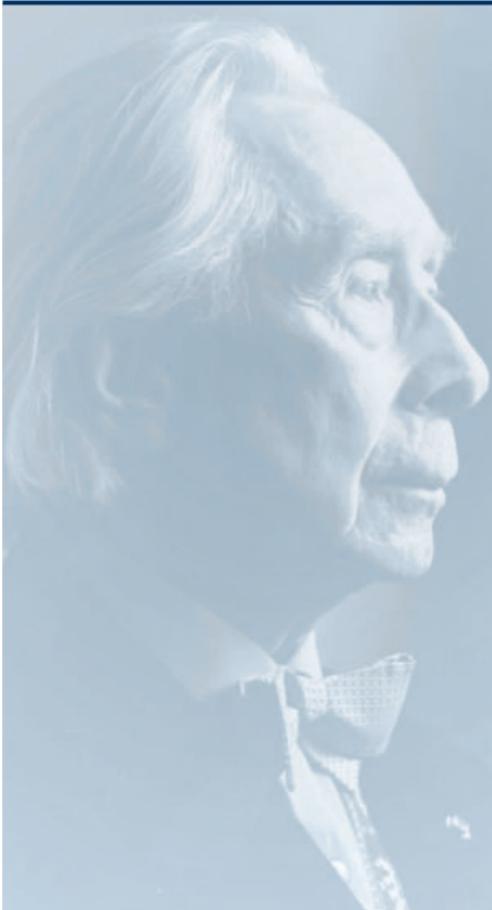




SÆVERUD PIANO EDITION • 6

DDD

8.557100

A profile portrait of Harald Sæverud, an elderly man with long, wavy hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a patterned bow tie. The portrait is semi-transparent and serves as a background for the text on the right.

**Harald
SÆVERUD**

Complete Piano Music

“Lolita”

Fabula gratulatorum

**Con moto energico
ma molto grazioso**

Einar Steen-Nøkleberg

Harald Sæverud (1897-1992) Complete Piano Edition, Volume 6

Throughout his life, Harald Sæverud was one of the most distinctive figures on the Norwegian music scene. His desire to express himself and his will to seek unique solutions to the artistic challenges presented by each new work gave rise to a personal musical idiom, easily recognisable as ‘Sæverudian’. The English conductor Sir John Barbirolli, closely acquainted with Sæverud’s orchestral music, expressed his uniqueness thus: “Whether you like the music of Sæverud or not there is no mistaking who wrote it, and this can be said of few composers of the present day.”

The neglect, or even contempt, with which Sæverud often appeared to treat conventions and inherited ‘truths’ should not be seen as a disparagement of the historical music tradition. It was within this tradition that he found support for his own preferences, often indicating Mozart and Haydn as his most important influences. His formal music education was somewhat fragmentary; in 1915 he entered the Music Academy in Bergen where he studied piano, supplemented by lessons in music theory taught by Borghild Holmsen, an accomplished pianist and composer with a degree from the music conservatory in Leipzig. After having completed the course at the Bergen Music Academy, Sæverud undertook further periods of study in Berlin (1920–21) and Paris (1925).

The support he received from his older, distinguished colleagues at the outset of his career was particularly important to Sæverud. Certain members of this group of colleagues, such as Christian Sinding, had difficulty in grasping Sæverud’s musical intentions, but were nonetheless positive towards his achievements. Sæverud’s spirited style and power of expression bore witness to his unique talent. The support and encouragement offered by Gerhard Schjelderup in Norway and Carl Nielsen in Denmark were no less influential, just as was Sæverud’s friendship with the composer and conductor, the

younger Johan Ludwig Mowinckel. It was thanks to Mowinckel that excerpts from Sæverud’s *Symphony No. 1* were performed in Berlin in 1921.

Slowly but surely, Sæverud gained a prominent position in the musical life of Norway, subsequently attracting international interest, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s. In addition to being one of Norway’s most distinctive and unique composers, he was also able to find time for administrative work and held honorary positions in organizations such as Ny Musikk (the Norwegian section of the ISCM) and Musikskelskabet Harmonien (the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra). In the course of his career he received a number of awards both in Norway and abroad, and from 1953 was a recipient of the annual State grant to artists.

Harald Sæverud’s output falls into two main categories, works for orchestra and works for piano. The works for orchestra include nine symphonies, and solo concertos for oboe, violin, piano and bassoon, in addition to a number of single movement works. It is, therefore, no coincidence that his Opus 1 is *Five capricci* for piano (1919), while Opus 2 is the *Symphony No. 1 in G minor* (1920). At a relatively late stage in his career he also made a considerable contribution to the chamber music repertoire. It is also interesting to note that his meagre production of theatre music had a substantial impact in Norway’s cultural circles; this is particularly true of his music to Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt* (1947), which became an ‘anti-romantic’ opposite to Edvard Grieg’s music to the same play.

Many of the characteristic traits which make Sæverud’s music so easily recognisable are ubiquitous in his music, and not least in the works for solo piano. It is not so easy, however, to categorize Sæverud’s music in any one particular style. His music has been labelled in a variety of ways, atonal (though much of

First Performances of Harald Sæverud

It was most exciting investigating Sæverud's forgotten and hidden (posthumous) manuscripts. They were in total disorder and had to be examined with the greatest care. The manuscripts were kept in Siljustøl, the composer's house, and in Bergen off. bibliotek, Musikkavdelingen (the Bergen Public Library, Music Department). Every composition and every note in this recording, however, is original, with nothing added, nothing changed.

Among the pieces from Sæverud's posthumous manuscripts here included, *Con moto energico ma molto grazioso* and *Solskyedriv* are good examples of Sæverud's mature, dissonant style, while many of the others are in a more romantic language. Let the rest of the pieces speak for themselves and for the most exciting and sparkling musical personality of Harald Sæverud.

Sæverud's Musical World

"All my music has grown out of a vague and supernatural sound. As a fourteen-year-old boy I heard the invisible fluttering of owls' wings in the summer night. This made the starting-point for all my music."

So much for Sæverud's own words. Motifs came to his mind almost like wild flowers and weeds, he said. He let them grow freely while he, the composer, could only be their guiding gardener. Evidently he could not decide for their growth and development, just lead them along. As much as Sæverud loved plants he even cared for stones. "There is also much stone in my music!" he said.

Sæverud does not often describe the grand Norwegian scenery of mountains and fjords. He rather gives focus to fragments of nature and human moods; he describes ancient legends and myths or tales from valleys and islands. Throughout his life Sæverud consciously suffered from being born on the site of a former churchyard, a place of execution from Viking times. He kept talking about the sadness, sorrow and the dissonances this fact gave to his art. "There are reflections of murder and death in me as well as in my music." Those were his words. This provides, therefore, an underlying sombre quality to his otherwise cheerful music.

Einar Steen-Nøkleberg

**The Sæverud Edition has been supported by Grieg-Forsk
and the Edvard Grieg Museum, Bergen, Norway**

his music is clearly tonal), barbaric (though many works are inclined towards lyrical-romantic moods), dissonant (though just as frequently we encounter consonant triads), thematically 'short of breath' (though many themes are given generous space in which to unfold). Common to most of the piano pieces is an apparently simple form and texture, often two-part, with detailed dynamics and pedalling. Frequently we find highly individual development of each part, giving the music a distinctive dissonant quality, and when the rhythmic element in each part is treated similarly freely, the end result is that tonal quality referred to above as 'Sæverudian'.

Fabula gratulatorum, Op.51, was written in 1973 to mark the sixtieth birthday of the Hungarian-American pianist Andor Foldes, who for years was an ardent advocate of Sæverud's piano music, especially his *Piano Concerto, Op.31*, which he played several times from the early 1950s on. In *Fabula gratulatorum* Sæverud has used Andor Foldes' name as the basis for the thematic material and the composition is a large-size fable that in many ways continues the style of the *Suite, Op.6*.

Sæverud wrote the *Bryllupsmarsj, Op.46*, (also with the title *Marcia solenne*) for the wedding of his oldest son Sveinung in 1966. In the version for orchestra it was performed for the first time by the Bergen Philharmonic

Orchestra in April 1967. With its steady rhythm and a sound which recalls that of the Norwegian folk hardanger fiddle the piece turns into a wedding march with the characteristic free dissonances so recognizably 'Sæverudian'.

In 1935 Sæverud wrote music for the play *Vold mot Lucretia*, a play by André Obey, *Le viol de Lucrèce*, based on Shakespeare's poem *The Rape of Lucretia*. From this music Sæverud in 1936 extracted a suite for orchestra in six movements. There also exist, however, some excerpts for piano, mainly drawn from the *Spinning Scene*.

In *Sveinungs sang* and *Li-tone-fantasi* we find motivic similarities with the *Li-tone* from *Op.14*, while *Digitalis* and *Digitalis-fantasi* may be regarded as early sketches for *Revebjølle* (*Digitalis purpurea*) from *Op.22*.

Of the other pieces here included *Lolita* (*Appassionato molto*) is a declaration of love to his wife Marie, whose second name was Lolita. The two pieces *Dulgt kjærlighet* and *Takk for det gamle*, are humorous dedications to his friend Sigmund Torsteinson, who from 1955 to 1978 was the curator of Edvard Grieg's home, Trolldhaugen.

Øyvind Norheim

Einar Steen-Nøkleberg



The Norwegian pianist Einar Steen-Nøkleberg was an early winner of the German High School Piano Competition. Other prizes include the Norwegian Piano Competition in 1972, and in 1975 the Norwegian Critics Prize for Best Performance, awarded after a performance of Grieg's *Piano Concerto* at the Bergen Festival. In 1976 he was honoured for the Norwegian recording of the Year, with a recital of music by Norwegian Baroque composers. Other awards include the Grieg Prize in 1985 and in 1992. From 1975 to 1981 Einar Steen-Nøkleberg was professor of piano at the Hanover Musikhochschule and in recent years has enjoyed an international career, with recitals throughout Europe, in the United States of America and in the former Soviet Union. He was appointed a Knight of St Olav by the King of Norway for his contribution to Norwegian music.

© Hæge Håtveit Moe

1	Con moto energico ma molto grazioso	3:04
2	Lolita (Appassionato molto)	2:05
3	Sveinungs Sang (Sveinung's Song)	1:15
4	Bryllupsmarsj til Sveinung 2.4.1966, Op. 46 (Wedding March for Sveinung, 2.4.1966, Op. 46)	2:30
5	Humoreske i G (Humoresque in G)	2:23
6	Barcarole, f-moll (Barcarolle in F minor)	1:06
7	Ord uten sang, g-moll (Words without Song in G minor)	1:51
8	Reisen til Eventyrland - kort versjon (Journey to Fairytale Land - short version)	1:49
9	Solskyedriv (Sunny Day)	3:13
10	Høst, b-moll (Autumn in B flat minor)	1:12
11	Jonsoknatt (Midsummer Night)	1:04
12	Andante, G-dur (Andante in G major)	1:51
13	Digitalis i F (Digitalis in F)	1:40
14	Digitalis-fantasi i D (Digitalis Fantasia in D)	1:13
15	Båd'n-sull i G (Lullaby in G)	1:51
16	På kingelvevstrenger - tidlig versjon av Op. 22, nr 4 (On the Strings of a Spiderweb - early version of Op. 22, No. 4)	1:12
17	Kristi-Blodsdråper - tidlig versjon av Op. 21, nr 1 (Fuchsia - early version of Op. 21, No. 1)	1:40
18	Sagn, g-moll (Legend in G minor)	0:55
19	Barcarole i G (Barcarolle in G)	3:30
20	Lokk, G-dur (Shepherd's Call in G major)	1:36
21	Romance, c-moll (Romance in C minor)	3:46
22	Andante, f-moll (Andante in F minor)	1:46
23	Andante, ess-moll (Andante in E flat minor)	2:01
24	Huldresagn I (Wood Nymph's Legend I)	1:08
25	Huldresagn II (Wood Nymph's Legend II)	1:34
26	Huldresagn III (Wood Nymph's Legend III)	3:26
27	Vals, a-moll (Waltz in A minor)	2:19
28	Springdans-fantasi, a-moll (Roundel Fantasia in A minor)	2:12
29	Capriccio (Allegretto grazioso)	2:01
30	Sine nomine in A	0:47
31	Li-tone-fantasi (Hillside Melody Fantasia)	2:33
32	Dukkenes ball (The Dolls' Ball)	1:44
33	Dulgt kjærlighet (Hidden Love)	1:01
34	Takk for det gamle (Many thanks for last year)	0:33
35	Lucretia - utdrag (Lucretia - excerpts)	2:37
36	Fabula gratulatorum (a Andor Foldes), Op. 51	4:50

NAXOS**DDD**

8.557100

Playing Time
71:17
 © & © 2003 HNH International Ltd.
 Booklet notes in English
 Made in E.C.

www.naxos.com

NAXOS**SÆVERUD: Complete Piano Works, Vol. 6****8.557100**

“All my music has grown out of a vague supernatural sound. As a fourteen-year-old boy I heard the invisible fluttering of owls’ wings in the summer night. This was the starting-point for all my music.” Throughout his life, Harald Sæverud was one of the most distinctive figures on the Norwegian music scene. His desire to express himself and to seek unique solutions to the artistic challenges presented by each new work, gave rise to a personal musical idiom. Sæverud’s music tends not to describe the grand Norwegian scenery of mountains and fjords, but focuses on nature and the human moods reflected in it, incorporating Norwegian folk-lore and legends.

Harald
SÆVERUD
 (1897-1992)

WORLD PREMIERE
RECORDINGS
Complete Piano Works, Vol. 6

1	Con moto energico ma molto grazioso	3:04	19	Barcarolle in G	3:30
2	Lolita (Appassionato molto)	2:05	20	Shepherd’s Call in G major	1:36
3	Sveinung’s Song	1:15	21	Romance in C minor	3:46
4	Wedding March for Sveinung	2:30	22	Andante in F minor	1:46
5	Humoresque in G	2:23	23	Andante in E flat minor	2:01
6	Barcarolle in F minor	1:06	24	Wood Nymph’s Legend I	1:08
7	Words without Song in G minor	1:51	25	Wood Nymph’s Legend II	1:34
8	Journey to Fairytale Land	1:49	26	Wood Nymph’s Legend III	3:25
9	Sunny Day	3:14	27	Waltz in A minor	2:19
10	Autumn in B flat minor	1:12	28	Roundel Fantasia in A minor	2:12
11	Midsummer Night	1:04	29	Capriccio (Allegretto grazioso)	2:01
12	Andante in G major	1:51	30	Sine nomine in A	0:47
13	Digitalis in F	1:40	31	Hillside Melody Fantasia	2:33
14	Digitalis Fantasia in D	1:12	32	The Dolls’ Ball	1:44
15	Lullaby in G	1:51	33	Hidden Love	1:01
16	On the Strings of a Spiderweb	1:12	34	Many thanks for last year	0:33
17	Fuchsia	1:40	35	Lucretia (excerpts)	2:37
18	Legend in G minor	0:55	36	Fabula gratulatorum, Op. 51	4:50

Einar Steen-Nøkleberg

The Sæverud Edition was recorded on 9th-10th June 1997, 30th June - 3rd July 1997, 14th April 1998, 15th-17th May 1998, 16th - 18th July 1998, 22nd July 1998, 24th - 26th November 1998 and 1st May 2002 in St Martin’s Church, East Woodhay, Hampshire, UK. • Producer: Andrew Walton (K&A Productions Ltd.)

Engineer: Eleanor Thomason • Post-production: Emma Stocker and Andrew Walton

A complete track list can be found in the booklet • This recording has been recorded and edited at 24bit resolution

The Sæverud Edition has been supported by Grieg-Forsk and the Edvard Grieg Museum, Bergen, Norway

Booklet Notes: Øyvind Norheim • Cover Photo: Harald Sæverud © H. J. Brun, Bergen (Siljustøl Museum, Bergen, Norway)

8.557100**SÆVERUD: Complete Piano Works, Vol. 6****NAXOS**