

orchestral

# In the Hall of the Mountain King Edvard Grieg Norway

Listeners may recognize this piece often used in movies and commercials, but what is the real story?

## In The Hall of the Mountain King



from the play "Peer Gynt"  
story: Henrik Ibsen  
(1828-1906)  
adapted from folk tale  
music: Edvard Grieg  
Norway



**Focus:** Holiday Music and Songs

December

Week Three  
Lesson 15<sup>A</sup>

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Three weeks of December lessons.

- Music & Words: exploring seasonal music from other countries/cultures
- Music & Dance: creating and enjoying dance with seasonal music
- Music & Story: Ibsen's play "Peer Gynt" has flying reindeer, trolls and adventure ---all of which make a good holiday telling and listening



### Music(C)

**C1.2** apply elements of music while playing  
**C3.2** identify, through listening,  
 music from a variety of times, cultures

element focus: dynamics and tempo

optional written work: create a character in words or drawing that would fit into the music-story

instrumental music: **The Hall of the Mountain King**  
 Edvard Grieg  
 story: **Peer Gynt** by Henrik Ibsen, Norway

### Warm-Ups(3 minutes)



**The Listening Game**



**Follow Me**

### Review and Practise Song

one or two of:

**We Wish You a Happy Holiday**  
**'Twas in the Moon**  
**Japanese Carol**  
**African Noel**



### Play Music or Show Video Song

This week simply enjoy the seasonal music with students. Show the mp4 videosongs, or use the "singalong" recordings. Choose the songs from those listed, or others you have taught.

**Active Listening Music:** **In The Hall of the Mountain King**  
**from the story of Peer Gynt**  
**music composed by: Edvard Grieg**

Even though the story of Peer Gynt has nothing to do with the holiday season, its full of mythical creatures and adventure. Even better ---it's a story that everyone in your class can enjoy no matter what their holiday traditions. The music that was written to go with it is often used in movie themes. You, or your students, may recognize it!



Background information and activity ideas are on the following pages. If not used now, tuck them into your idea bag.

## Teacher Background Information

### In the Hall of the Mountain King Trolls Peer Gynt Henrik Ibsen Edvard Grieg

Ibsen wrote a play called **Peer Gynt** (name of main character)



Ibsen asked **Edvard Grieg** to compose **music** for the play



Act II is where **Peer meets the King Troll** (In the Hall of the Mountain King)

Peer Gynt is definitely an adult story ---however parts of it lend themselves to storytelling for children, as is common in many richly written plays. It takes place in **Norway**, the land of the midnight sun, trolls and reindeer.

#### Playwright: Henrik Ibsen

**Henrik Ibsen**(March 1828-May 1906)

Thought by many to be surpassed in play writing only by Shakespeare, Ibsen's plays continue to influence society today. Perhaps his best known are *The Doll House* (a criticism of marital roles) and *Pillar of Society*. His popular plays placed Ibsen's beliefs and judgements on society before the communities in which he lived.

Ibsen grew up in Norway and published his first, unsuccessful plays, from there. His homelife was chaotic. In 1864 he entered into a self-imposed exile in Italy and for 27 years did not return to Norway. It was during this time that his most successful plays were written.

*Peer Gynt*, a 5-act play(1867) was the last one Ibsen wrote in verse. It's a ponderous play, difficult to stage. The play follows the life of Peer Gynt from lazy, mischievous boyhood to a wandering youth to an explorer and finally elderly recluse. Just before writing the play, Ibsen had read Kierkegaard's recent books and styled his new play after some of the ideas he developed from that reading. *Peer Gynt* is a rampant satire on the people and country of Norway. Ibsen asked Edvard Grieg to compose music to go with the play.

Ibsen's micro-managing of the music composition finally led to Grieg's abandoning the commission --but not before he composed a score that runs nearly 90 minutes. Two of the pieces, *Morning Mood* and *In the Hall of the Mountain King*, are better known today than the play for which they were written.

#### Composer: Edvard Grieg

**Edvard Grieg** (1843-1907)

When Edvard Grieg lived, his country, Norway was far away from the centres of music and art creation. His mother, who was an amazing pianist, taught Edvard to play and encouraged him to follow a career in music. When he was 15, Edvard traveled to the Leipzig Conservatory in Germany. After his studies he traveled around Europe performing. Every summer he went home to Norway to spend quiet time in his cottage composing.

Edvard met the person who wrote Norway's National Anthem. This person taught Edvard about the rich tradition of folk music in Norway. Edvard decided that he wanted his country's music to become better known and appreciated. From that time on, Edvard's compositions included melodies and themes that were Norwegian.

#### Trolls


Long a part of Norse mythology, trolls are not nice. Smaller trolls are sometimes found living in burial mounds. Norway's tradition had larger trolls ---sometimes very ugly, but always dim-witted, man-eaters often turning to stone at the touch of sun light. Stories of trolls traveled with Norse voyagers and traces of them are found in Celtic lore and language.



# Teacher Background Information

## Synopsis of the Play: Peer Gynt wherein he meets the King of the Mountain

**Setting:** Norway --land of the midnight sun, trolls and reindeer

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- Act 1** Peer kidnaps a bride and runs away.
  - Act 2** Peer is banished from his community, dreams of trolls.
  - Act 3** Peer past catches up with him and he runs away.
  - Act 4** Peer travels running from one con after another.
  - Act 5** Peer returns home as an old man and is confronted by all he has been running from.

### Act 1

Peer Gynt's mother hopes that he will grow up to restore lost family fortunes but he doesn't. As the play opens Peer is stringing together a story about a reindeer hunt that went awry but still leaves him as a hero. His mother scolds Peer for lying and not paying attention to Ingrid, the daughter of the richest farmer.

Everyone goes to a country wedding. Peer decides he is in love with the bride, Solveig. She hides away from him. After much drinking, Peer kidnaps her and takes her to the mountains.

### Act 2

Peer is banished for kidnapping the bride. Far from home he meets 3 young women, parties with them and runs head-first into a large rock. Peer falls down unconscious.

✱ The next part is probably a dream. Peer meets another women, dressed in green, and goes with her into the mountain. Once there, Peer is captured by trolls and brought before the Mountain King. Trolls are known for eating men. Peer spins a story about wanting to live with the trolls. The King offers Peer his daughter(the woman in green) in marriage. Peer agrees. Later Peer reconsiders and runs away, the trolls chase.  
(The music explored today is from this part of the story.)

Peer wakes up and sees Solveig's sister (who along with the rest of both families has been searching for him). The sister gives Peer food and tells him that Solveig is now in love with him. Peer gives the sister a silver button(given to him by another character) and asks her to give it as a token to Solveig.

### Act 3

Peer is an outlaw living in the hills. The kidnapped bride finds him and insists on living with him. As she enters the cottage, an elderly woman in green appears with a child at her side, Peter's child. This weighs heavily on Peer's mind and he decides to just leave so he doesn't have to face his life.

### Act 4

Peer travels for many years --Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, Greece. As a businessman his ethics are questionable including slavery and con games. Peer poses as a prophet to a Bedouin tribe, attempting to seduce the chief's daughter. She steals his money, gets away and leaves him. Peer ends up in a madhouse --where is finally the "emperor" of fools.

### Act 5

On his way home as an old man, Peer is shipwrecked. Another traveler scares Peer who lands on shore with no belongings, pitiful and grumpy. As he travels in Norway he is confronted by everything he did not do --the songs unsung, the work never done, tears unshed and questions not asked.

His dead mother appears and claims that Peer did not lead her to heaven. The button-maker appears who claims that Peer's soul must be melted down to be reused. The Troll King comes and says Peer has been a troll his whole life and then the Devil has his say.

In the last scene, his kidnapped bride offers Peer absolution saying that his right self has always been in her faith, hope and love. Solveig sings a lullaby as Peer appears to die.

There are indications in the play that this is a false ending as Peer gets a second chance at life as his own child.

## Active Listening In the Hall of the Mountain King

1 "Holidays are good times for singing and dancing, but they are also good times for storytelling, for new movies and theatre plays. What movies do you like that have music in them? How is the music used?" (to help tell the story, to fill in silence, to help us get scared ...)

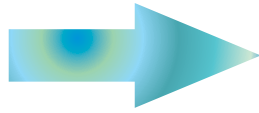
2 "Here is some music that goes with a story. Instead of me telling you the story, use your imagination ---try to think what might be happening in the part of the story for this music. Get comfortable, wiggle your shoulders a bit, shake old ideas gently from your mind, maybe close your eyes and listen ..."



### Play Music In the Hall of the Mountain King

Gather up ideas from students. Help them to discern what in the music led them to certain feelings or ideas.

3 "Quite a while ago, a man named Henrik Ibsen wrote a play. The play was about a boy named Peer Gynt. When Henrik was finished writing the play, he asked Edvard Grieg to write some music to go with the play. That's the music we just heard! Listen to the story."



In a country called Norway, way up north where the reindeer live, there was a very naughty boy named Peer. He told lies. He didn't help his mother. He teased little children and got into fights. When he was nearly old enough to leave home, everybody in his village went to a wedding. Peer went too. But at the wedding, Peer got into trouble. He decided to run away, far away, way up into the mountains.

Now these were not ordinary mountains. Trolls lived in these mountains. Big, scary, ugly trolls who liked to eat people! And the biggest, ugliest troll of all was the Mountain King.

Peer wasn't very careful and he got captured by the trolls. The trolls took him into the mountain, to the hall of the Mountain King. The King asked Peer what he was doing there. Peer made up a story about wanting to live with the trolls. The King liked his story and offer Peer his daughter's hand in marriage. Peer said yes. But later Peer changed his mind.

4 "What do you think happened next? Here is where the music comes in. Listen again and try to imagine what Peer is doing, what the trolls are doing, what the Mountain King is doing..."



### Play Music In the Hall of the Mountain King

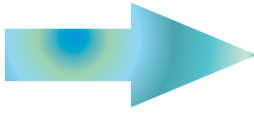
5 Gather ideas about what might be happening to Peer.

crescendo  
music getting louder

accelerando  
music getting faster

6

**"You had some very good ideas. Henrik Ibsen had good ideas too. He wrote in his play that:**



Peer decided he didn't want to live with the trolls so he ran away. The troll guards heard him escaping and chased him. They chased and chased and chased until Peer got to where the troll pathways led out into big doors. He tried one door, then another, then another until ...

**"Do you think he got out? Yes -Peer got out. The trolls couldn't chase him outside because it was a sunny day. If sun light touches a troll, then the troll turns into stone/rock."**

7

**"As the music plays this time, begin by using your fingertips on your knees to keep the beat. When the music gets louder, make the beat louder, by patting your hands on your knees. When the music gets very exciting and loud, clap your hands with the beat. When the music stops, "STOP".**



**Play Music**

**In the Hall of the Mountain King**

8

**"Ibsen didn't write words for the music and neither did Edvard Grieg. I don't know who wrote these words, but they do fit the story very well.**

Post the words.

**We are trolls who live in caves, live in caves, live in caves.  
We are trolls who live in caves, Peer Gynt where are you?**

**Dovregubben is our King, is our King, is our King.  
Dovregubben is our King, you spurned his daughter-troll.**

**We will find you very soon, very soon, very soon.  
We will find you very soon we're coming after you!**

Dovregubben: term for the Mountain King

**"The first part of the music is slower and quiet. Think the first set of words for that part. When the music starts to get faster, then change to the second set of words. When you hear the cymbal start smashing, think the last set of words --and make sure you are thinking loudly. While thinking the words, use your hands on your knees to help the trolls look for Peer."**



**Play Music**

**In the Hall of the Mountain King**

9

**"Well done, I could feel the excitement get bigger. Can you see Peer Gynt climbing up inside the mountain, looking for the escape route, and the trolls close behind him? Last time to hear the music --class choice, shall we try singing the words, or use silent lips? (let the class decide)**



**Play Music**

**In the Hall of the Mountain King**

**Choose** from the following to continue the lesson...

## A Adding Instruments/Exploring Timbre

Remind students about the instrument rules. Give each student a non-pitched percussion instrument. Allow 1-2 minutes for students to experiment with their instruments looking for ways to make soft sounds and ways to make loud sounds. Conduct a drill in following cues to make sound soft, loud and changing between.



### Play Music In the Hall of the Mountain King

**1st Time:** students play with rhythm, following the dynamics  
cymbal-like instruments wait to play with the cymbal part

**2nd Time:** ask students playing hand drums to play with the beat  
cymbals play with the cymbals in the music  
everyone else plays with the rhythm

## B Illustrating the Hall of the Mountain King

What does a troll look like? Engage students in a discussion, brainstorming for descriptive words and noting them on chart paper. Who else would have been in the hall of the Mountain King? (goblins, gremlins, bats?) Ask each student to create a troll using markers for outlines and crayons for colouring in. The troll needs to use most of an 8.5 x 11 paper. When finished students cut around their trolls. Make a crown and crown one of the student trolls to be King. Use the trolls to create a bulletin board display about the music. This display and music may be used in January as it is not tied to December.

## C Play the Hot/Cold Game to practice changing dynamics

One student is chosen to be a troll. Troll covers their eyes. Hide something in the classroom in plain sight i.e. nothing needs to be lifted or moved to find it. Troll opens eyes and begins the hunt. The class either pats their knees or uses rhythm instruments to indicate hot (close to the object-very fast) or cold (far away - very slow). Students will learn to leave some speeding up space for very close to the object. If the troll finds the object in a reasonable amount of time, then the troll chooses the next Peer Gynt (who hides the object), teacher chooses the next troll.

## D Act the story with the music

Half the class are rocks, half the class are trolls. While the music plays the trolls tiptoe hunt for Peer Gynt, their actions changing in intensity as the music changes. The rocks may either be silent or sing the troll words. Repeat changing roles.



### Play Music In the Hall of the Mountain King

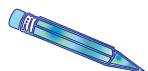
Time  
Left?

Sing or Dance Holiday Music

Try One of the Optional Ideas from Lesson 14B

OR Your Own Favourite Seasonal Music Ideas

New Repertoire



In the Hall of the Mountain King