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SEEKING NATIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH MUSIC: THE IDEA OF NATIONAL MUSIC IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY POLAND AND NORWAY

Nineteenth-century Polish and Norwegian music history illustrates the way in which Romantic and national ideas are reflected in contemporary musical culture. At the same time, it also reflects the creation of a national identity through the idea of a national music. That process took different guises in different countries, with particular cultural elements chosen and used politically in the development towards the modern national state.

The meaning of the term ‘national music’ has been subject to historical change and is also related to several non-musical factors, such as socio-political, historical and ideological ideas. From a musicological point of view, the creation of a ‘national music’ also reflects the interaction between different political and musical-cultural processes in Poland and Norway during the 1800s.

In the nineteenth century, both Poland and Norway lacked political independence and were under the rule of foreign states. Norway was under Danish rule for over four hundred years, from 1380 to 1814.¹ Inspired by contemporary ideas of freedom, human rights and democracy, the Norwegian constitution, the Grunnloven, was written and approved in 1814. However, as a result of the settlement after the Napoleonic Wars, Norway was forced into a new union, this time with Sweden.

¹ Magne Njåstad and Tor Ragnar Weidling, ‘Norge under Dansk styre: 1537–1814’ [Norway under Danish rule: 1537–1814], in *Store norske leksikon* [Great Norwegian encyclopaedia]; https://snl.no/Norge_under_dansk_styre%2F1537-1814 (accessed 17 February 2016); Francis Sejersted, ‘1814: Det selvstendige Norges fødsel’, in *Store norske leksikon*; https://snl.no/1814%2FDet_selvstendige_Norges_f%C3%B8dsel (accessed 17 February 2016).

The Swedish-Norwegian union lasted until 1905, when Norway finally gained sovereignty.

Plate 1. The Danish-Norwegian union (1537–1814)



Poland's political history is far more dramatic and complex.² In the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, Poland-Lithuania was the most powerful state in Eastern Central Europe, stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. After the demise of the Jagiellonian dynasty, in 1572, the state was dragged into several wars. During this period, Russia gradually gained a dominant role in Polish politics. This created anxiety within other powerful states and towards the end of the eighteenth century led to the division of Poland. In 1772, Poland was divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria.

² 'Polens Historie', in *Store norske leksikon*; https://snl.no/Polens_historie (accessed 17 February 2016).

Plate 2. The dividing of Poland (1772–1795): *Carte des partages de la Pologne en 1772, 1793 et 1795*, Biblioteka Narodowa, Warsaw, ZZK 44 638



After Napoleon's defeat, in 1814, the Vienna Congress decided to transform most of the former Poland into a kingdom with the Russian tsar as ruler. In 1830–1831, there was an uprising among the peasants to rid themselves of serfdom. The Russians quashed the uprising ruthlessly, with executions, deportations and Russification. Around 1850, the former Polish state was ruled by three mighty states: Prussia, Austria and Russia, all trying to wipe out Polish culture. Another riot in 1863 led to the dissolution of what was left of Poland, which was now placed under Russian rule. After the First World War, Poland gained its independence, and in 1918 the Second Republic was proclaimed. After the settlement of the Second World War, Poland was put under Russian communist rule. Not until the 1989 elections did Poland gain a non-communist government. Poland became a member of NATO in 1995 and a member of the EU in 2004.

NATIONAL ROMANTICISM AND THE SHAPING OF A NATIONAL IDENTITY

Romanticism as a school of art developed around 1800 and was to influence art and music during most of the century.³ Romanticism built on ideas originating in Plato and Christian mysticism. Key words were longing, truth, freedom and love.⁴ In Poland and Norway, romanticism was mainly expressed through its variant of national romanticism and the ideas of the philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803).⁵ Herder's ideas also came to deeply influence the idea of the shaping of national identity. This is the case both in Poland and Norway, where language, art and religion became important factors in creating national sentiment.⁶

Plate 3. *Johann Gottfried Herder* (1744–1803), drawing by G. von Kugekgen, engraved by R. Cooper, 1825, Mary Evans Picture Library



³ See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanticism> (accessed 18 February 2016).

⁴ 'Romantikken' [Romanticism], in *Store norske leksikon*; <https://snl.no/romantikken> (accessed 18 February 2016). Ingrid Loe Dalaker, *Nostalgi eller nyskaping? Nasjonale spor i norsk musikk. Brustad, Egge og Groven* [Nostalgia or invention? National traces in Norwegian inter-war music: Brustad, Egge and Goven] (Trondheim, 2011), p. 291.

⁵ See 'Nasjonalromantikk' [National romanticism], in *Store norske leksikon*; <https://snl.no/nasjonalromantikk> (accessed 18 February 2016).

⁶ F. M. Barnard, *J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 2–60.

Modern theory of the development of nineteenth-century nations is usually divided into two main areas: political and cultural nationalism. Cultural nationalism is also closely related to concepts such as 'national identity', 'cultural nation building' and simply 'the national'.⁷ Herder meant that a specific group of people had certain traits in common, in which culture made up the most essential part. He maintained that by studying the culture within a defined group of people, one could come to know a certain folk character or folk spirit. He then turned his attention to common cultural traditions, like fairy-tales, myths, songs, dialects, building and clothing traditions, ornamental painting and wood-carving. For Herder, poetry and art were understood as the direct expression of a national spirit or folk character. Herder also divided poetry into folk poetry and art poetry and claimed that art poetry could never compare to folk poetry for power and richness. In a similar fashion, folk music was seen as an expression of a specific folk character. In this way, one can claim that a mixture of anthropological, political and aesthetic ideas formed the basis for the idea of developing national music.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Norwegians in general had no clear awareness of a specific national culture. A Romantic aesthetics based on Herder's ideas about folk spirit and folk culture permeates several Norwegian written sources from the first decades of the nineteenth century.⁸ However, it was not until the breakthrough of national romanticism, towards the end of the 1840s, that Norwegian art and musical life began to flourish. In 1849, an important art event was held at the Christiania Theatre.⁹ Several Norwegian writers, musicians, painters and actors joined forces to arrange tableaux of Norwegian art in three great performances, featuring declamation, songs and instrumental music, all to original painted backdrops. The main goal was to promote the national in all areas of art.

⁷ Ernest Gellner, 'Nations and Nationalism, General Perspectives', in Øystein Sørensen (ed.), *Nordic Paths to National Identity in the Nineteenth Century* (Oslo, 1994).

⁸ Harald Herresthal, *Med Spark i Gulvet og Quinter i Bassen* [With heel clicks on the floor and open fifths in the bass] (Oslo, 1993); Ørnulf Hodne, *Det nasjonale hos norske folklorister på 1800-tallet* [Expressions of the national in the work of nineteenth-century Norwegian folklorists] (Oslo, 1994).

⁹ See e.g. Arvid Vollsnes (ed.), *Norges musikkhistorie* [Norwegian music history], vol. ii (Oslo, 2000).

Ideas about an original and authentic Norway were closely connected to the concept of a 'Golden Age' in Norwegian culture during the Middle Ages. The goal was to recreate that Norwegian culture, which was rooted in the rich mediaeval culture, but on a higher level. The revival of this so-called 'Golden Age' was connected to the Norwegian peasant culture and way of living. Both folk music and fairy-tales were regarded as a reminder of this spirit and as a bridge leading directly from the Middle Ages to modern Norway.

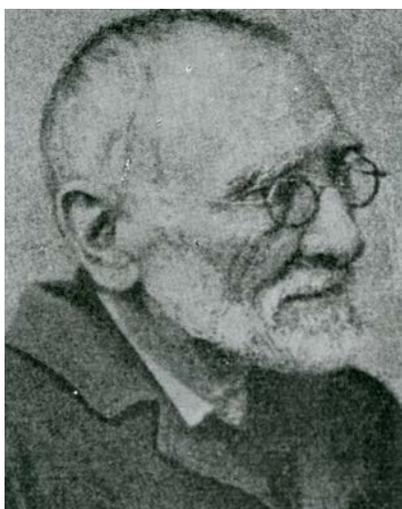
Plate 4. *Ludvig Mathias Lindeman* (1812–1887), unknown photographer, National Library of Norway, 04173



In Norway, the influence of national Romantic ideas reached a peak in the decades after 1850. This school of art is characterised as a broad cultural movement focusing on the people and the nation, making use of several elements taken from Norwegian peasant culture. Already at this time, folk arts were regarded as a means of proving Norwegian distinctiveness and a foundation for national art. Herder's ideas are reflected in several ways in Norwegian culture during the 1850s, for instance in the widespread collecting of fairy-tales and folk tunes, in the constructing of a Norwegian literary language and in the area of painting. In the decades after 1840, the musician Ludvig Mathias Lindeman

(1812–1877) carried out extended work collecting folk tunes.¹⁰ Lindeman's recordings of folk and dance tunes were of great importance for Norwegian composers in the nineteenth century, who exploited rhythmic and melodic motifs from this music in their art music compositions. Composers like Halfdan Kjerulf (1815–1868), Johan Svendsen (1840–1911), Otto Winter-Hjelm (1837–1931) and Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) all wrote works in a national Romantic style.¹¹

Plate 5. *Oskar Kolberg* (1814–1890), reproduction of photograph, from the Fryderyk Chopin Institute's photographic collection, F.3520



The first research into Polish folk music took place around 1800, and from then on musical culture was completely dominated by national Romantic ideas.¹² The dividing of Poland and the loss of

¹⁰ Lindeman's collections of Norwegian mountain melodies, *Norske Fjeldmelodier harmonisk bearbejdede af L.M. Lindeman*, comprising 68 melodies in 5 volumes, was published in 1840. The collection *Ældre og nyere norske Fjeldmelodier samlede og bearbejdede for pianoforte* was published between 1853 and 1867 (nos. 1–592) and from 1907 (nos. 593–636). See also Nils Grinde, *Norsk musikkhistorie* [Norwegian music history] (Oslo, 1981), Vollsnes (ed.), *Norges musikkhistorie*, vol. ii, and Hodne, *Det nasjonale* [The national].

¹¹ Vollsnes (ed.), *Norges musikkhistorie*, vols. ii and iii.

¹² Henryk Oskar Kolberg (22 February 1814–3 June 1890) was a Polish ethnographer, folklorist and composer. He is best known for his work titled *Lud* [The common folk] (reissued as

Polish independence in the late eighteenth century generated a strong need to forge a national identity. A considerable change in folk music collection and research methods came with Oskar Kolberg (1814–1890). At the end of the 1830s he started compiling folk tunes, and by the early 1840s he had collected hundreds of song manuscripts. His first collection of songs with piano accompaniment was published at the end of the decade. Kolberg collected and published folk music from several geographical regions. Each volume was connected to a certain geographical region and contained music from Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Belarussian ethnic groups. In 1857, Kolberg published *Pieśni ludu polskiego* [Songs of the Polish people], containing several hundred ballads and folk dance melodies with no harmonisation. Altogether, he published 25,000 songs and about 15,000 melodies.

As in Norway, several Polish composers were influenced by Herder's ideas on folk art's ability to create national sentiment. Throughout most of the century, composers drew on rhythmic and melodic motifs taken from Polish folk music, especially from polonaises and the different mazurka types. These elements were also exploited by several composers in the generation before Chopin, for instance Michał Kleofas Ogiński, Józef Elsner, Karol Kurpiński, Maria Szymanowska and Karol Lipinski, who made use of these kinds of elements in larger works like sonatas, symphonies, operas and church music in a Classical style.

In the next generation, Chopin's music, which combined elements from folk music with original harmonic solutions, became the symbol of Polish national romanticism. Other composers from this period are Józef Nowakowski, Antoni Orłowski and Julian Fontana. Stanisław Moniuszko, the second most famous composer after Chopin, was the father of Polish national opera. He also makes use of themes and rhythms taken from Polish folk tunes.

Dziela Wszystkie [Complete works]), a compilation of folk traditions from all the Polish regions. Between 1857 and 1890, he published 33 volumes; after his death, 3 more volumes were issued. The compilation contains 12,000 folk songs, 1,250 folk tales, 670 fairy-tales, 2,700 proverbs, 350 riddles and many other ethnographic documents. Kolberg also compiled ethnographic information on neighbouring regions. Jan Stęszewski and Krzysztof Źwizewicz, 'Poland... §2: "Traditional music"', in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn, Stanley Sadie (ed.), vol. xx (Oxford University Press, 2001).

Plate 6. Front page of Oskar Kolberg's publication *Lud* [The common folk], vol. *Kaliskie* [The Kalisz region], Biblioteka Narodowa, Warsaw, II 720.950 A

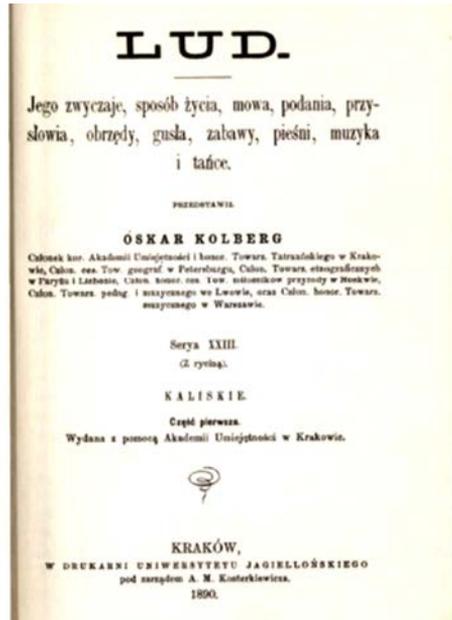


Plate 7. Oskar Kolberg's volumes of *Lud. Jego zwyczaj, sposób życia, mowa, podania, przysłowia, obrzędy, gusła, zabawy, pieśni, muzyka i tańce* [The common folk: their customs, way of life, speech, legends, proverbs, rites, pagan ceremonies, games, songs, music and dances], photograph – Waldemar Kielichowski



Plate 8. *Fryderyk Chopin* (1810–1849), Maria Wodzińska, 1836, Muzeum Narodowe, Warsaw



The tragic history of Poland also gave rise to a slightly different kind of national identity. This too had its origins in Romantic ideas, but it was most clearly expressed in Polish literature.¹³ Polish literary romanticism had its breakthrough with the publication of the first volume of Adam Mickiewicz's poetry, in 1822. After the November Uprising of 1830–1831, literature developed along two different lines, one abroad and one in Poland. Within Poland, writers cultivated prose on themes taken from contemporary life and from Polish history. In the emigrant literature, meanwhile, Poland's unhappy political history was interpreted from a specific religious-metaphysical point of view and gave rise to a certain philosophy of history, so-called Polish Messianism. Within this movement, the suffering Polish people were understood as the nation representing the history of Christ. The key writers were Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, Zygmunt Krasiński and Cyprian Norwid.

¹³ Zdzisław Mach, 'National Anthems: The Case of Chopin as a National Composer', in Martin Stokes (ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 45–61.

The concept of the ‘national prophet’ is closely related to the idea of Polish Messianism and plays an important role in the construction of a Polish national identity. This concept often refers to great nineteenth-century artists and philosophers who contributed to a Polish national mythology, creating heroes and legends and telling stories about Poland’s great past, tragic present and glorious future. They wrote about the role of the Polish nation in the history of humankind and about Polish martyrdom, which would help Poland save the rest of the world. In this way, Polish nationalism is based on ideals and values connected to heroic fights, great victories and great personalities, who fight, fall and, through a tragic fate, become martyrs. The emigrant writers from this period are still considered to be the most important contributors to the creation of Polish national identity. Fryderyk Chopin is the only composer and musician among those heroes, and he is still the object of an almost religious worship today.

THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN DEVELOPING NINETEENTH-CENTURY NATIONAL IDENTITY

The concept of ‘national music’ is not restricted to the ideas of the nineteenth century. A brief reconstruction of the period from the 1700s to the 1900s shows the ways in which the idea of the ‘national’ in music has changed.¹⁴ In the eighteenth century, ‘national style’ was a kind of convention representing a certain repertory of techniques and styles.¹⁵ Every serious composer was expected to be able to write in French, German or Italian style. French style was expected to be light and elegant, German ‘learned’ or contrapuntal, and Italian melodious and catchy. However, there was no demand for a composer to be of the same nationality as his chosen national music style. As such, it was no problem for a Swedish composer to write in, say, Italian or French style.

¹⁴ Dalaker, op. cit.

¹⁵ Carl Dahlhaus, ‘Nationalism and Music’, in *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century*, tr. Mary Whittall (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 90–91; Ger. Orig. *Zwischen Romantik und Modern: Vier Studien zur Musikgeschichte des späteren 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1974). Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, tr. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 35–41; Ger. orig. *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1980).

Folk music was treated in a similar way. Elements of folk music from distant areas were often used in extended art music compositions, as in finales or in the trios of minuets.¹⁶ This was part of a lengthy tradition in European art music, with composers alluding to rustic life or to exotic cultures. Turning to the early nineteenth century, virtuoso performers, such as Paganini, Liszt and Thalberg, showed advanced technical skills in a continuous stream of new pieces. As early as the 1820s and 1830s, it was usual for virtuosos to use folk music material in their concerts. Several touring virtuosos used folk music as a starting point for their variation sets and also published collections of such sets. The French cellist and composer Auguste Franchomme (1808–1888) wrote several variation sets on Irish, Scottish and Tyrolean tunes or folk-style melodies. These variations should be regarded as part of the virtuoso tradition, and they show a combination of lyrical, dramatic and virtuoso elements.¹⁷ Chopin's mazurkas, polonaises and songs are often seen as one step further in the development of national music. Several of the melodic-rhythmic elements in Chopin's compositions draw their inspiration from Polish folk music. However, very few of the melodies can be traced directly to a single folk melody or type of folk melody; instead, they show traits from a variety of specific rhythms or melodic motifs found in folk music of a certain geographical region.¹⁸

Chopin's way of using elements of folk music was slightly different to that of his French friend Franchomme. By consciously choosing elements only from his home country, Chopin's way of expressing himself can be seen as a further development of the eighteenth-century's way of using national elements. In 1836, Schumann described Chopin's use of national elements as authentic. These elements seem to have been

¹⁶ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, pp. 302–311.

¹⁷ Examples are found in Franchomme's *Airs nationaux, variées pour violoncelle avec accompt de piano*, Op. 25 Nos. 1–3, *Variations sur des themes russes et écossais*, Op. 6, and *Deuxieme Air russe varié*, Op. 32. Dalaker, 'Thomas Tellefsen i norsk og fransk musikkultur' [Thomas Tellefsen in Norwegian and French musical culture], doctoral dissertation, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, 2005, p. 106; Pol. tr. as *Thomas Tellefsen w norweskiej i francuskiej kulturze muzycznej* (Warsaw, 2014).

¹⁸ Chopin made use of different melodic and rhythmic motifs from the folk mazurka, such as the *holupiec* and *ionicus minor*. Stęszewski and Ćwizewicz, 'Poland... §2: "Traditional music"'; *New Grove*, Dalaker, 'Thomas Tellefsen', p. 56.

a source of energy and inspiration in a different way than if a non-Pole had been writing in 'Polish style'.

Plate 9. *Auguste Franchomme* (1808–1888), Jean-Auguste-Alfred Masson



Plate 10. Front page of Auguste Franchomme's *Airs nationaux*, Op. 25



Rikard Nordraak (1842–74) was the first Norwegian composer to formulate written ideas on using folk music as a foundation for

Norwegian art music.¹⁹ In 1841, he said that folk music rhythms and melodies ought to function as an important source of inspiration and be absorbed into traditional art music. The next generation of composers tried to express Nordraak's view through music. To be able to use folk music elements in a fruitful way, one needed to know which elements were specifically Norwegian, and which elements were suitable to be used.²⁰ Short folk music pieces would not be suitable, for example, for composing monumental Norwegian art music. So folk music elements had to be assimilated into art music's formal principles. To create a Norwegian 'school' of music required educated composers and composers who were willing to work on developing Norwegian art music.

Plate 11. *Rikard Nordraak* (1842–1874), unknown photographer, National Library of Norway, 06012

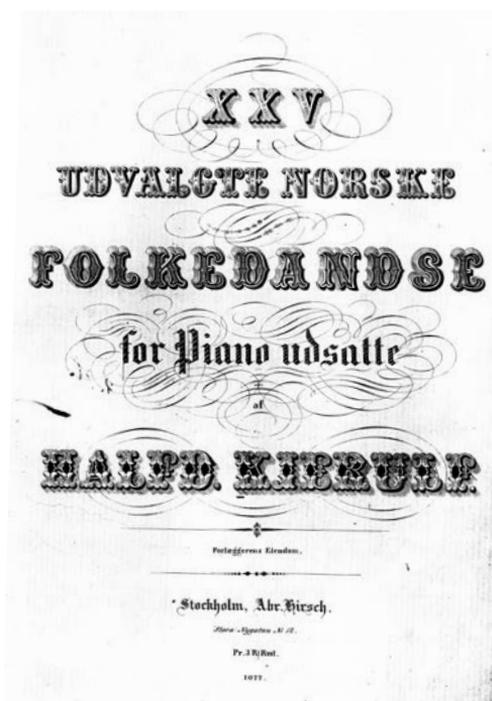


¹⁹ Dalaker, *Nostalgj*, pp. 45–46.

²⁰ See e.g. Otto Winter-Hjelm, 'Om norsk Kunst og nogle Kompositioner af Edvard Grieg' [Of Norwegian art and some compositions by Edvard Grieg], *Morgenbladet*, 14 and 16 September 1866.

From the end of the 1850s, the view on how to use national elements gradually changed. Composers used entire folk tunes as a starting point for their compositions and saw this as a more authentic way of exploiting 'the national'. They also made use of national titles such as *slått*, *halling*, *springer* and *bånsull*, and gave information about the tune's geographical origin. At the same time, composers tried to avoid too much similarity with the harmonisation in Lindeman's collections.²¹ This was the starting point for several compositions by Kjerulf, Winter-Hjelm, Svendsen and Grieg.

Plate 12. Front page of new folk tune arrangements by Halfdan Kjerulf and Otto Winter-Hjelm

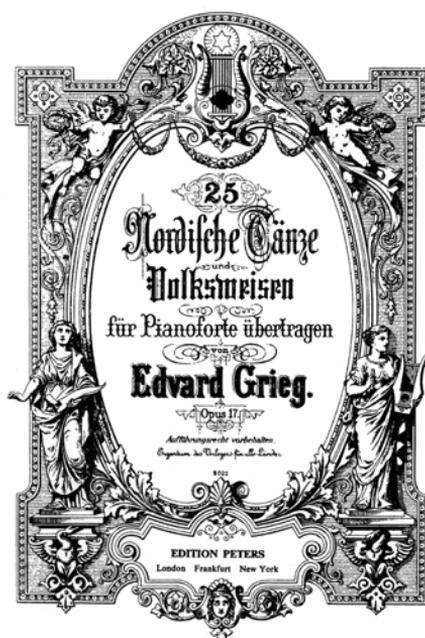


Edvard Grieg's music builds on the traditions of the previous generation, and Grieg did not initially distance himself from this. His works

²¹ In *Humoresker* [Humoresques], Op. 8 (1865), Grieg integrates rhythmic and melodic motifs from different folk tunes in a very traditional way. In 1867, the first of his ten volumes of *Lyriskke stykker* [Lyric pieces] was published. The ten volumes were issued from 1867 to 1901. See Vollnes (ed.), *Norges musikkhistorie*, vol. iv (2000), p. 293.

can be characterised as ‘pictures’, in the tradition of the Romantic piano piece. In 1867, he published the first of ten volumes of *Lyriske stykker* [Lyric pieces]. Of the sixty-six pieces, many have Norwegian titles, such as ‘halling’, ‘gangar’ and ‘springar’, and many drew on Lindeman’s collections of folk tunes.²² In some instances, Grieg used the whole folk tune with no changes; elsewhere, he made minor rhythmic or melodic changes. The pieces were also extended through repetitions, changes in harmony and added bars at the beginning or the end of a piece.

Plate 13. Edvard Grieg, front page of *Nordische Tänze*, Op. 17 (1869)

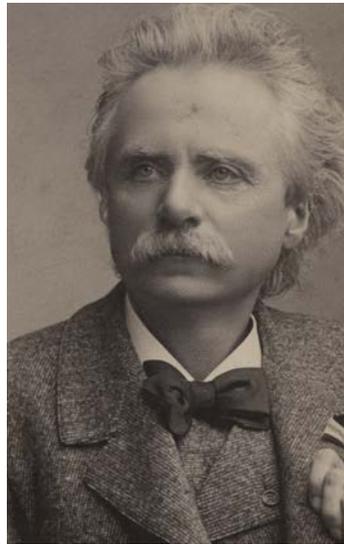


In the area of harmony, Grieg used what for his time were partly harsh dissonances and combinations of chords which completely break with the rules of traditional harmony. However, it was not until his

²² Grieg also published other folk tune arrangements: *25 norske folkeviser* [25 Norwegian folk songs], Op. 17 (1869) and *Norske danser for firhendig klaver* [Norwegian dances for piano for four hands], Op. 35 (1881). Finn Benestad and Dag Schjelderup Ebbe, *Edvard Grieg – Mennesket og kunstneren* [Edvard Grieg: the man and the artist] (Oslo, 1980), p. 343.

latest works, *19 norske folkeviser* [19 Norwegian folk songs], Op. 66 (1896) and *Slåtter*, Op. 72 (1902), that Grieg further developed the folk material.²³ In *Slåtter*, Op. 72, Grieg was inspired by the tuning and dissonances in the playing of the Hardanger fiddle. Through those elements, he created astonishing new harmonisations. In his time, this work was regarded as very progressive. Later, it was seen as an important foundation for the development that took place in Norwegian music during the inter-war period.

Plate 14. *Edvard Grieg* (1843–1907), c.1890, Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek, 0241954



Considering the two composers who today are regarded as the national composers in Poland and Norway, it is relevant to take into consideration Carl Dahlhaus's observations concerning nineteenth-century national music.²⁴ His description of nineteenth-century political processes and their connection to musical culture in many ways reflects Chopin's and Grieg's way of using national elements in folk music. In this context, music acted as a kind of national essence, repressing elements that threatened national independence. Discussing the idea of nationalism

²³ Dalaker, *Nostalgj*, p. 49.

²⁴ Dahlhaus, 'Nationalism and Music', pp. 79–101.

in music, Dahlhaus also considers constructive and emotional aspects, considering the latter to be very important. Whether something is experienced as national depends on a collective opinion; that is, whether certain ideas gain resonance in the population. According to Dahlhaus, whether particular elements were central or marginal to the shaping of national music in the nineteenth century depended on historical, social and regional conditions. Also, the type of political nationalism and different political processes might also have been important for national manifestos in the area of music.

Edvard Grieg and Fryderyk Chopin both used folk music as the starting point for their compositions; both assimilated certain rhythmic and melodic motifs into art music; both also made use of titles taken from folk music, like 'mazurka', 'polonaise' (Chopin), 'slått', 'halling' and 'springar' (Grieg). In addition, unlike Chopin, Grieg made use of whole folk tunes as the foundation for his compositions. So these composers reflect the process of redefining regional traits in folk music that were generally accepted as something essentially 'Norwegian' or 'Polish'. In addition, both composers heeded the expectation in nineteenth-century music aesthetics to express something individual and original. Through the combination of folk music elements and new harmonic colouring and techniques, their music was heard as both sufficiently national and sufficiently original to generate a collective and authentic national feeling in the population.

The two composers also actively supported the forging of a national identity through their attitudes and conduct, which must have helped arouse a common, national sentiment in the population. During his Paris years, Chopin was regarded as an exiled patriot. His art music came to symbolise the national struggle, helping to strengthen the Polish spirit at a time when the country was deprived of political status.²⁵ In several circumstances, Grieg revealed that he saw his mission as being a national composer. His intention was to depict Norwegian scenery, Norwegian history and Norwegian folk poetry through music.²⁶ Grieg collaborated several times with Norwegian artists who also wished to promote 'the national', prime examples

²⁵ Mach, 'National Anthems'.

²⁶ Benestad and Schjelderup Ebbe, *Edvard Grieg*, pp. 330–340.

being Grieg's music to Henrik Ibsen's drama *Peer Gynt* and his melodies to lyrics by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. As such, the attitudes of Grieg and Chopin towards the national and their way of exploiting national folk music helped earn them lasting positions as national composers. In addition, Chopin has been raised to the position of a national hero and prophet. He is acknowledged as one of the greatest contributors to Polish national identity and one with the ability both to arouse resistance to Poland's political tragedy and to inspire the advancement of the Polish nation.



1900–1930: NATIONAL MODERNISM – A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT
OF THE NATIONAL IN MUSIC

Around the turn of the twentieth century, Igor Stravinsky worked consciously to reinterpret elements from folk music and Russian mythology and create new ways of using them. That material was combined with rhythmical complexity and advanced harmonisation. Stravinsky's solutions and the work of composers like Bela Bartók and Zoltán Kodály during the same period must be seen as part of the development a new kind of national music, building on ideas differing from those of Herder.²⁷

Bartók's and Kodály's 'rediscovery' of the forgotten and overlooked music of the peasantry can be regarded as a reinterpretation of the 'national' in Hungarian music.²⁸ As a result of their work in collecting

²⁷ In 1908, Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967), a Hungarian composer and ethnomusicologist, and Béla Bartók (1881–1942), a Hungarian composer, pianist and ethnomusicologist, started collecting Hungarian folk music together. Kodály wrote his doctoral thesis on the strophic design of Hungarian folk music (1906) and continued collecting folk music throughout his life. Bartók finished collecting folk music in 1918. László Eöszce, et al., 'Kodály, Zoltán'; <http://www.oxford-musiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/15246> (accessed 4 August 2014); also Stephen Erdely, 'Bartók and folk music', in Amanda Bayley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Bartók* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 24–44.

²⁸ In Hungary's upper and middle classes, popular forms of Gypsy music, played in the form it was given through romanticism and Liszt's tradition, were long seen as authentic folk music in Hungary. See David Cooper, 'Bartók's orchestral music and the modern world', in Bayley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Bartók*; Lynn Hooker, 'The political and cultural climate in Hungary at the turn of the twentieth century', in Bayley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Bartók*; Erdely, 'Bartók and folk music'; Judith Frigyesi, 'Béla Bartók and the concept of nation and

folk music, the two composers stand out as researchers who, with the help of new methods and new technical equipment, contribute to more scientific ways of collecting and to questioning Romantic ideas of the 'national'.²⁹ For Bartók, as for several other composers, the collecting of folk music and scientific research in that field helped renew knowledge of folk music, as well as creating new solutions in art music.³⁰ Bartók saw this development as a reaction against the chromatic language of the Wagner-Strauss line. He saw his new interest in folk music as an alternative to the atonal music developing at the same time.

Around the turn of the century, Poland still did not exist as a free and independent state. The country was divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria. Musical culture was in stagnation, and composers, who had few musical stimuli from abroad, wrote mainly in a conservative, Romantic style. The Young Poland group of composers was the first one to actively explore contact with Central European trends in music. One of those composers was Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937). In his early works, he was strongly influenced by Chopin, later by Debussy, Ravel and music from the Far East. After Poland was proclaimed a free nation, in 1918, several artists responded by creating national works of art. In this way, folk music became both a source for the creation of a national identity and a means to a new and more modern style of music. For Szymanowski, this resulted in a national orientation, related to Stravinsky's solutions. Szymanowski also wrote several articles on a national theme: 'Let our music be *national* in its Polish characteristics, but not falter in striving to attain universality. So, let it be national, but not provincial'.³¹

Norway finally became independent in 1905, but a prolonged national Romantic attitude influenced Norwegian art music until the early 1920s. Over that period, young composers started to feel a real

volk in modern Hungary', *The Musical Quarterly*, 78/2 (1994); Jim Samson, *Music in Transition: A Study of Tonal Expansion and Atonality* (London, 1977), p. 41.

²⁹ In several instances, Bartók commented on the difference between nineteenth- and twentieth-century attitudes and the use of national elements in music. See Béla Bartók, 'The relation of folk song to the development of the art music of our time', in *Béla Bartók Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (London, 1976) and Bartók, 'The influence of peasant music on modern music', in *Béla Bartók Essays*.

³⁰ Bartók 'The relation of folk song'.

³¹ Jim Samson, 'Szymanowski, Karol' in *New Grove*, vol. XXIV, p. 895.

need for renewal. Even though they were seeking original solutions and new ways of expressing themselves, the constant national orientation in Norwegian culture moved them to continually look upon folk music as an obvious starting point for their compositions. This fact immediately placed them before the challenge of combining Norwegian folk music elements with contemporary styles in music. These types of thought were first expressed through theoretical ideas in the early 1920s.³² However, folk music elements were not expected to be placed within the frames of traditional art music, as in the nineteenth-century German instrumental tradition, as they were considered merely 'finery'. On the contrary, the structural elements of folk music were now to forge the music from within.³³ On all essential points, the young composers' solutions were different from the traditional national Romantic way of expressing national elements. Each composer's individual methods built bridges between nationalism and modernism.³⁴ The key composers were Eivind Groven (1901–1977), Klaus Egge (1906–1979), Geirr Tveitt (1908–1981) and, slightly later, Harald Sæverud (1897–1992).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

These brief considerations dealing with the concept of 'national music' from its origins in the late eighteenth century to the new ideas coming to the fore in the early twenty-first century shows that it has undergone historical change from its emergence in the late eighteenth century to the inter-war period of the twentieth century. While in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century the concept of national music conveyed conventional styles in art music, Herder's ideas on a specific folk character deeply influenced the understanding of this concept over the rest of the nineteenth century. In the early twentieth

³² Hampus Huld-Nystrøm, *Fra munkekor til symfoniorkestere* [From monastic chant to the symphony orchestra] (Oslo, 1969), p. 181.

³³ Vollsnes (ed.), *Norges musikkhistorie*, vol. iv, p. 95.

³⁴ Dalaker's book deals with the construction of a new national music in Norway during the inter-war period. She also discusses the historical change in the meaning of concepts such as 'national music' and 'modernism in music'. Dalaker, *Nostalgi*, op. cit.

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century, the concept was redefined once again, this time in connection with modernism in music. From a musicological point of view, when employing the concept of 'national music' or 'the national in music', one should never forget that it is closely related to contemporary political needs. In looking for elements which helped forge the national, one can sometimes find new knowledge and surprising connections.

