

transcript.

Well hey there and welcome to Episode #2 of Busy Kids Love Music, an educational podcast for music-lovers brought to you by Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano.

(Chances are, around Halloween time, you'll start to hear this tune pop up in commercials, cartoons or on the radio. This piece, called "In the Hall of the Mountain King", is perhaps the most famous work from composer Edvard Grieg. It's part of a larger body of work called *The Peer Gynt Suite*, which we're going to talk about in more detail in just a few minutes.

Edvard Grieg was a Norwegian composer born in 1843. He took piano lessons from his mother beginning at age 6, and went on to study music at the Leipzig Conservatory. It was there he began to learn Norwegian folk tunes and make connections with other artists and musicians

When spending a winter in Rome, he met another talented Norwegian man, Henrik Ibsen, who wrote plays. In 1867 Ibsen wrote a famous play called *Peer Gynt*, inspired by a fairy tale character who travels to all four corners of the globe. Ibsen originally didn't want the play to be performed onstage.

In 1874, Ibsen changed his mind and wrote to his friend Edvard Grieg to ask if he would compose the music for a stage production of the play. Music written as background music for a play is called incidental music. Grieg composed a collection of 33 songs for the play.

Initially Grieg found the task of composing for a play to be difficult and called it a "terribly unmanageable subject". But eventually, he began to feel he was the perfect person for the job. The play premiered in 1876 and Grieg conducted the orchestra himself. It was a fantastic success.

Let's listen to a few excerpts from the *Peer Gynt Suite*.

Does the music you're listening to now create a picture in your mind as you hear it? This piece is called, "Morning Mood". It was performed as incidental music -- remember that means "background music" -- in Act 4, scene 4 of Ibsen's play. The hero of the story -- Peer Gynt -- is stranded in the Moroccan desert after his friends took off with his fancy boat while he slept. The sun is rising and Peer Gynt is fighting off a group of monkeys with a tree branch.

Now that many of the pieces from *Peer Gynt* are performed on their own -- meaning they aren't performed as incidental music -- "Morning Mood" is often associated with the beautiful mountains and scenery in Grieg's home country of Norway. (Fade the music out

Let's revisit "In the Hall of the Mountain King" -- perhaps the most famous piece of the play -- and the most famous piece Grieg composed. The music starts softly and is played by low instruments in the orchestra -- cellos, double basses and bassoons. Peer Gynt -- our mischievous hero is tip-toeing through the halls of the mountain king.

(if it's possible to match what I'm describing with what is happening in the music, that would be awesome!) The trolls, goblins and gnomes hear him and begin to chase him. Notice how the music gets faster and louder and higher -- things feel a bit more frantic and wild -- until all the instruments crash at the end!

transcript.

On my website, I've created a listening map for you to follow along with as you listen to Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King". To download that listening map and check out the shownotes from this episode, visit busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/2

Just because the episode is over doesn't mean the learning has to stop. I've created a free ebook for you with loads of activities, listening guides and composer biographies. To get your hands on the book, visit [.busykidsdopiano.com/freebook](http://busykidsdopiano.com/freebook). That's busykidsdopiano.com/freebook. For more information on today's episode, including show notes as well as a list of the music you heard, visit busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/2.

See you soon!