



Borghild Bryhn Langaard
Norwegian soprano, student of Nina Grieg
Recordings 1908 - 1916

Carmen, National Theatre, Kristiania, 1908

Photo: Oslo Museum



EDVARD GRIEG

- KONCERT -

ONSDAG 21. MARTS 1906 KL. 8

I

BRØDRENE HALS'S

KONCERTSAL

PROGRAM:

1. **Stemninger** (af Op. 73).
Resignation — Folketone fra Valders — Hommage a Chopin —
Studenternes Serenade — Lualaa.
2. **Fra Holbergs Tid.** Suite i gammel Stil (Op. 40).
Prælude — Sarabande — Gavotte — Air — Rigaudon.
3. **Albumblade** (Op. 28).
Allegro con moto — Allegretto espressivo — Vivace — Andante
serioso.
4. **Romancer.**
Udfarten. — Ragnhild. — Prinsessen. — Et Haab.
5. **Slaatter**¹⁾ (af Op. 72).
a. Gangar²⁾. — b. Brurmarsch³⁾. — c. Haugelaat. — d. Kivle-
møyene⁴⁾. — e. Prillaren⁵⁾. — f. Tussebrurefera paa Vossevangen⁶⁾.
6. a. Humoreske Gis-møll (af Op. 6).
b. Berceuse (af Op. 38).
c. Bryllupsdag kaa Troldhaugen⁷⁾ (af Op. 65).

Samtlige Musikstykker komponeret eller bearbejdet
af *Edvard Grieg*.

Sang: **Frøken Borghild Bryhn.**
Piano: **Edvard Grieg.**

Flygel fra Brødrene Hals's Fabrik.

¹⁾ Efter en gammel Spillemand i Telemarken, nedskrevet for Hardangerfele af Johan Halvorsen. Fri Bearbejdelse for Piano af Edvard Grieg.
²⁾ Efter Møllargutten.
³⁾ Komponeret af Møllargutten, da hans Kjereste, Kari, sveg ham for at gifte sig med en anden.
⁴⁾ Springdans og Gangar fra Selljord.
⁵⁾ Springdans fra Os Prestegjeld.
⁶⁾ Gangar.
⁷⁾ Komponistens Villa nær Bergen.

Borghild Bryhn Langaard (1883-1939)

Borghild Bryhn was born in Kongsvinger, Norway, on 23 July 1883. In 1886 she moved with her parents to Kristiania (now Oslo, the capital of Norway), where she studied voice with Gina Oselio and Nina Grieg when she had completed her schooling.

Nina Grieg's famous husband, Edvard Grieg, heard Borghild Bryhn in connection with one of her voice lessons. When she made her debut on 21 March 1906, at the Brødrene Hals piano factory, it was Grieg who accompanied her on the piano.

When I began working on this project I heard from several sources that Borghild Bryhn and Edvard Grieg had made recordings together, but unfortunately I have never found any evidence that this is the case. But we have included a recording of Grieg playing “Til Vaaren” (“To the Spring”) at the end of this release, made in Paris in 1903.

Borghild Bryhn made her debut as an opera singer at the National Theatre on 8 May 1907 in the title role in “Sjømannsbruden” (“The Sailor’s Wife”) by Sigwardt Aspestrand. It was a tremendous success, and was followed by several concerts. Her London debut took place in the autumn of 1907 at Covent Garden, where she played Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana* opposite John McCormack, the famous Irish tenor. She also played the roles of Laura in *La Gioconda* by Ponchielli and Musetta in Puccini’s *La Bohème*.

In 1908, conductors Hans Richter and Percy Pitt mounted an English version of Wagner’s *Ring* cycle in which Borghild Bryhn played the main role of Brünnhilde. Bryhn declared that she was a Wagnerian soprano, and soon added the roles of Venus and Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* to her repertoire.

In 1908 she also completed her first six recordings, made for the Gramophone Company in London on 12 June. The songs she recorded were “Solveigs sang” (“Solveig’s Song”) (track 3), “Ragnhild” (track 4), “Synnøves sang” (“Synnøve’s Song”) (track 5), “Sæterjentens Søndag” (“The Herdgirl’s Sunday”) (track 6), “Astri, mi Astri” (“Astri, My Astri”) (track 7) and “Sidste reis” (“The Last Voyage”) (track 14).

In December 1908 she took over the title role in *Carmen* at the National Theatre in Oslo from Gina Oselio.

Bryhn married Captain Mads Conrad Langaard on 13 October 1909, and subsequently made several recordings for the Gramophone Company and Pathé.

It is possible that the Pathé recordings in the English 77000 series were recorded in 1907, but I have decided to classify them as 1909 recordings here. The first two tracks here, “Elisabeth’s Greeting” and “Senta’s Ballade”, are from that recording. In August 1909 she recorded tracks 15, 17, 18, 19 and 21 for the Gramophone Company in Copenhagen, at the Kongen af Danmark hotel.

She had a successful guest appearance at the Royal Opera in Stockholm, and in November 1909 she sang the part of Aida in Halfdan Christensen and Jens Wang’s magnificent production of the opera. In 1910 she performed the roles of Santuzza and Aida at the Vienna Court Opera. In December 1911 she was greatly admired for her interpretation of the role of Elsa in *Lohengrin*, and in the pre-Christmas season of 1912 she repeated her role of Carmen to great acclaim.

In the Netherlands in 1913 she sang Venus in *Tannhäuser* at the celebration of the centennial of Wagner's birth. In Berlin on 5 October 1913 she recorded songs from the great operas of Wagner (tracks 12 and 13), Verdi (track 8) and Puccini (tracks 9 and 20). She also made guest appearances as Venus in *Tannhäuser* in Milan and Budapest.

In the spring of 1914 she appeared at the Central Theatre in Kristiania, first with an interpretation of Tosca that was received enthusiastically by both audiences and reviewers, and later in a few performances of *The Sailor's Bride*. Her success with Tosca was repeated in the following seasons. She also presented concerts at the Calmeyergatens Mission, among other places, and in May 1914 she participated in the opening of the Norwegian Jubilee Exhibition in Oslo, as the soloist in a cantata composed for the occasion by Christian Sinding to a text written by Nils Collett Vogt. She also sang the parts of Tosca and of Elsa in *Lohengrin* at the Copenhagen Opera. In July 1914 she recorded several songs for the record label Pathé, and two recordings from that session are included here: "O Sole Mio" (track 11) and "Vaaren" ("Last Spring") (track 24).

In 1915 she sang the part of Margarete in Gounod's *Faust* at the National Theatre together with the new talent Bjørn Talén.

She made her last recordings for the Pathé label in September 1916, and here we have included "Lolita" (track 10), "Modersorg" ("A Mother's Grief") (track 22) and "Fra Monte Pincio" ("From Monte Pincio") (track 23) from this session. Her 1909 marriage with cavalry officer Mads Langaard had ended, and on 7 March 1918 she married Bjarne Lindvig, the son of a shipowner, in the USA.

While in the USA she was persuaded to return to the opera stage by conductor Cleofonte Campanini, and she sang the part of Amelia in Verdi's "Un ballo in maschera" at the Chicago Opera in November 1919. A short time later she retired from both opera and concert activities at the age of 36. She had been in poor health for a while, and she declared that she had never felt comfortable with life as an international opera singer. Thus her "meteoric career", as Reidar Mjøen called it, was over.

Her marriage to Lindvig also came to an end. She met her third husband, the Italian officer Ermanno Brunelli, in Italy, where they were wed on 7 June 1930. They moved to Oslo, where she spent a decade as an unusually popular voice teacher. She died of heart failure on 20 November 1939, only 56 years old. She is buried in Vår Frelses gravlund (the Cemetery of Our Saviour) in Oslo.

Chronology, selected appearances

- 1907 Kristiania (Oslo). National Theater, *Sjømannsbruden* (title role)
- 1907 Covent Garden (London). *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Brünnhilde)
- 1908 Covent Garden (London). *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Santuzza)
- 1910 Vienna Court Opera. *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Santuzza)
- 1910 Vienna Court Opera. *Aida* (Aida)
- 1913 Amsterdam Opera. *Tannhäuser* (Venus)
- 1914 Copenhagen Opera. *Tosca* (Tosca)
- 1914 Copenhagen Opera. *Lohengrin* (Elsa)
- 1919 Chicago Opera. *Un ballo in maschera* (Amelia)

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sunget af

Frøken Borghild Bryhn
med Orkester Akkompagnement

KRISTIANIA.

G. C.-83650

The Gramophone Company Label 1908 with angel (Pre-dog) (track 6)

83650A



8457
Label from 1910 or later - with dog "Nipper"

We are fortunate enough to have a photograph and article from the daily newspaper Aftenposten, 3 September 1916, describing a recording for the Pathé label where Mrs Borghild Langaard sings. The picture is probably from a recording session on 25 August.

How to sing oneself into eternity

Up at the Norwegian Student Society, peculiar things have been going on for the past few days. The small hall, where usually the members of the Artists' Association hold festivities every Friday evening that last until morning, has been the scene of a number of unusual events. It is here that the William Farre firm has arranged for a number of Norwegian artists to play, sing and recite their most well-known pieces – with or without an orchestra – onto a Pathéphone gramophone.

The most important element of such a recording session is, of course, the recording machine itself. We will not attempt to provide a thorough and technical description of this monstrosity of a machine. But we can mention that there are a large, heavy bag of sand, a several-metres-tall wooden scaffold, two different electrical cords, a bellows, two tin trumpets of sizeable dimensions, and a number of large and small wheels, all with different names, all of which fit together perfectly. And this is just a selection of all the strange objects that we saw in and on this monster, which is – in a word – indescribable.

Mrs Borghild Langaard is being recorded

Photo: Aftenposten 1916 / Nasjonalbiblioteket





Early Pathé label. "Senta's Ballad" (track 2) recorded in England 1909.
90 rpm, vertical cut "Hill & Dale", with start from the centre of the record.

Pathé label ca 1916. "O Sole Mio" (track 11) recorded 1914.
80 rpm, with "normal" start from the outside.

Pathé

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- 5° — Préserver le disque de la poussière en le remettant dans sa pochette après chaque audition.



Cavalleria Rusticana

Photo: Oslo Museum



Lohengrin, National Theatre, 1911

Photo: Ernest Rude / Oslo Museum

This recording has been supported by the Municipality of Kongsvinger, the birthplace of Borghild Bryhne.



Tracks 1, 2, 4, 5, 16 and 21 are copies from National Library of Norway.
Thanks to Richard Gjems

Tracks 22, 23 and 24 are copies from
the Norwegian Institute of Recorded Sound.
Thanks to Jacqueline von Arb

All other tracks are transferred from 78, 80 & 90 rpm records from
the Nordic Sound Collection at the Nordic Sound Studio.

Cover photo: Postcard with signature, Nordic Sound Collection.

English translations by Shari Nilsen

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Norwegian soprano Borghild Bryhn
listening to the Pathéphone

*Photo: "Pathé Acoustic recordings in Scandinavia"
by T. Franzén, L. Thelander and V. Vanberg*



Photo: Oslo Museum

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