

Abstract

Ph.D. dissertation at Göteborg University, Sweden, 2008

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Title: *Det ulmer under overflaten. Agathe Backer Grøndahl (1847–1907),
genus, sjanger og norskhet*

English title: *What smoulders beneath the surface. Agathe Backer Grøndahl
(1847–1907), gender, genre and Norwegianness*

Language: Norwegian, with an English summary

Department: Department of Culture, Aesthetics and Media

Series: Skrifter från musikvetenskap, Göteborgs universitet, nr 91, 2008

ISSN 1654-6261

ISBN 978-91-85974-07-8

My dissertation is a problem oriented one. The composer pianist Agathe Backer Grøndahl (1847–1907) has always been a self-evident figure in chapters of Norwegian music history books that cover music, musicians and composers in "Grieg's shadow". Extensive historical source materials (reception materials connected to Backer Grøndahl's concerts and compositions; her letters, notebooks, workbooks and sketches) form the basis of the study. The problems studied are what kind of expectations are connected to three intertwined core concepts connected to Backer Grøndahl, namely: "femininity", "genre", and "Norwegianness" (the folk-influenced Norwegian tradition). Musical and material, as well as institutional, sociological and economical, "Agathe Backer Grøndahl" discourses are examined. The arenas where the three core concepts and discourses unfold, sound, develop, are moulded and understood, are threefold:

- Musical culture with which the pianist composer and her compositions interacted from 1866–1903.
- Presentations of her in monographs and music history books.
- Various attempts to revise this kind of music historiography.

The musical analysis starts out from reception materials connected to her performances of her own works and tries to trace the critics' descriptions in the scores. The works analyzed are: One of her two orchestral compositions, *Andante quasi allegretto* for piano and orchestra (1869) in sonata form. (I rediscovered this "lost" work in the National Library in Oslo.) The song "To the queen of my heart" (Op. 1/3, 1870), the descriptively titled lyrical piece *Wood Nymph's Dance* (1887), the feminist cantata *Nytaarsgry* (1901) performed at the Scandinavian Women's Convention 1902 and the singable and (in)famous song "Eventide" Op. 42/7 1899). Performed compositions become performative via the reception materials, hers, the listeners' and amateur performers "producerly texts" connected to them.

Key words: Agathe Backer Grøndahl. Music, gender and genius, femininity, music historical knowledge and canonisation, gender and genre, gender and "Norwegian sound", musical analysis and performativity, "Andante quasi allegretto", "Til mit Hjertes Dronning", "Huldreslaat", "Nytaarsgry", "Mot Kveld".

