

PEER GYNT

Bill Barclay
REHEARSAL DRAFT 9/18/17

CAST:

Peer Gynt
Solveig (soprano)
Aase / Madwoman
Button Moulder / Voice of the Boyg / Father of the Groom
The Dovre King / Mads Moen / Herr Trumpetterstrale / Hussein
Woman in Green / Aslak's Wife / Herr von Eberkopf / Madwoman
Alsak / Mr. Cotton / Begriffenfeldt
Ingrid / Monsieur Ballon / Anitra / Madwoman (dancer)
Hardanger fiddler / Madman (violinist)

This is a full staged adaptation for the concert hall. Orchestra, chorus and actors share the stage. There are three slightly raised areas where most of the action is played. Actors are visible throughout, assisting each other by providing new props, costume pieces and scenic elements as the play progresses. The running time is one hour.

To clarify underscoring, the text that is spoken over the music is indented.

At start, the orchestra tunes and the conductor enters as normal. The orchestra has stand lights but the Prelude begins in concert lighting.

MUSIC No. 1 - Prelude (3:00 with cuts:)

- From 2m after B to 3rd m. of Vivace - hardanger fiddle plays solo
- From 4m before D to 11m from the end.

Poco Andante - LX slow dim on orchestra

6m before Letter B - LX follow hardanger fiddler from offstage into playing position.

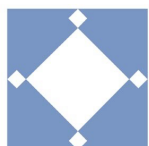
Poco Allegro (fiddle solo) - tight spot on fiddler

Letter C (poco andante) - AASE enters

5m later (cresc.) - Solveig enters

Allegro con brio - full company enter with brio.

3:00



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Scene 1 - Narrator I (1:20)

BUTTON A moulder of buttons, I, with my ladle and cart.
MOULDER When your lamp is spent, I melt down your heart.
Now death's not as bad as that sounds if you're Norse,
And your ego called Self is prepared, of course.

Tonight we've just a pocket knife and flint
To melt down this button who we call Peer Gynt.

A ne'er-do-well, huge lover of life,
An image of Henrik Ibsen himself:
His travels and women, his mother and wife.

Grieg's music brought fame to Ibsen's wandering wit.
But we players tend to condense things a bit.
Both men are long dead, which is lucky for us:
The jokes that we wrote and our musical cuts;
They'd throw our buttons straight under the bus.

Grieg was ashamed he was too on the nose.
Ibsen, ashamed of himself in his prose.
We think Peer would just say - take it as it goes.
Voracious be ye, in both beauty and pain!
And always give thanks - for the public domain. *(the actors all bless themselves)*

Enjoy the Self you see in your works!!
Forgive that Self its foibles and quirks.
So: home comes young Peer who's been gone for six weeks,
With nothing in hand but tall tales of his feats.

MUSIC No. 6 - Great Folks may be Known by the Mountains they Ride (:15)

4:20

Scene 2 - The Buckride (3:00)

(Peer sneaks up behind AASE, steals her glasses and gooses her from behind).

AASE AHH! Ah, what the - who's there-?!

PEER Egg man! Eggs for sale!

AASE Where the sap are you?

PEER Eggs so fresh you can hear 'em cluck.

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AASE With cheek like that don't push your luck. (*she grabs her specs back*)

PEER Your little egg's just had it awful rough.
Or maybe you just ain't been broody enough. Bok, bok, bok

AASE Peer! (*cries*)

PEER BOGAWWWWK!

AASE PEER!!!! my boy, he's *alive*, thank - (*hug that turns on a dime into a beating*)
God forsaken, devil, you canker, miserable child!
What, no gun, no meat, muddy eyes all wild?

PEER The proudest Buck I saw, Ma, his hooves in the snow,
I sight him up all nice and slow, then-
BANG!

AASE Hah!

PEER Crack the buck goes back.

AASE *Knull meg!*

PEER I had him mounted sure and fast but then-

AASE No no!

PEER The buck rises up and off we go!

AASE B-b-b-ut you had him then, you killed the deer?!

PEER Just as my knife's blade met the skull
A seagull scuttled up and knocked my wrist,
Then down the cliff we dropped careening through the mist!

Aase, simpering can hardly listen

Down, and down, past seagulls scattered in the scree,
Then *kah!* We plunged i'th'foamy sea!

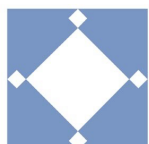
AASE Peer, you didn't, no my boy.

PEER At long last I bestrode the mare-

AASE It's bestrid I think but I don't care.

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PEER Across the river next we landed there.

AASE Thank *God* you're safe, for two months *straight*
I've prayed and hoped you've not been *ate*, you--!

Suddenly realising it's all a lie

Peer, you fool you've made that whole thing up!

Peer bursts out laughing

The man who told that tale was Gudbrand Genny!
A story I heard when nearly twenty.
'Twas he, a hero real who rode the buck
Not you, you cheat, you thief, you little F-

PEER MA! A tale can happen twice!

AASE Then where's the deer you've nearly killed?

PEER For any old hag to find there still!

AASE Peer! God's my life you've preyed upon my age too long!
Years I've wished since John Gynt died
For hands like yours but savage woe betide!

PEER I'm meant for higher things than weed the farm!

AASE So now we've pain, deceit and worse than harm?

PEER There's a *whole world* that I-

AASE The whole *town knows what a fake you are!*
Peer Gynt...
At Haeggstad you could have made your mint
Marrying the fairest daughter of the day,
Who just last week drew a far lesser gent.

PEER What's he?

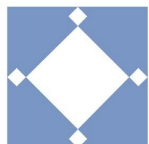
AASE Mads Moen, a bigger pig than even you are wont to be
O, once we knew how clever and how quick your mind could be!

PEER When's the weddin'?

AASE Tomorrow, to the shame of thee.

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PEER I'll fetch Ingrid from that impish swan!

AASE With father's wealth? It's now long gone! Peer...

PEER We'll go right now!

AASE We?!

PEER I'll need you to convince them of me.
We'll both bestride the mare you'll see.

The mare rides off (Sound)

Or perhaps we'll walk.

AASE I won't cross earth with speed or luck.

PEER Then jump on dear, I'll play the buck!

He hoists her up on his back.

AASE Peer? Peer! Put me down, I'm scared!

PEER Across the water here, take hold of my left ear! (*sound: Swish*)

AASE Leave me be an' I'll run (*swish*) and tell them you'll come. (*swish*)
And warn that pretty lass to find her gun!

PEER (*stops*) Maybe this wasn't the best idea.
How bout you sit tight and just wait here.

Hoists her on top of the mill house.

AASE Watch your hands, oh Saint Maria!
Oh dear, you're not going to leave me here I fear!
7:10

MUSIC No. 2 - The Wedding March (repeat first four measures, woodwinds 2nd x only)

PEER I can't have you come, you'll give me away!

AASE Am I to sleep on the roof of a mill?

PEER Don't budge, I'll be back, I promise, you hear?

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AASE My son! My life! My heart. PEER!!!!

7:20

Scene 3 - The Wedding (4:00)

Melody here (first part). Repeat the 4 measures before A while:

PEER Now there's the farm, the party's just begun!
They'll all be there: backbiters, naysayers, every one.

(frantically checking his pockets)

I'll take a quick drop so my confidence sings.
Ah here it is, *takke Gud* - so their jokes won't sting. *(He drinks)*

Second melody here (Letter A). At B, cut to H:

Two people pass behind Peer on the way to the wedding. Peer hides.

ASLAK Aghck! That tot'll never learn him.
(winds Letter H+3&4)

WIFE It's no wonder really the boy's a fool, just look at his mother.
(winds m7&8)

ASLAK An' old John Gynt too, a dreamer sure but not a lazy duck.
(violins m11&12)

WIFE The boy's a mix o' bad from both, pure Gyntish luck.
(flutes m15)

PEER Curse them all!
(violin m17)

I should go back.
(winds m19)

Look at yourself, you filthy wreck.
(solo violin 6m from the end)

That Haeggstad girl for all I care
Can wed with every Lars, Alf, and Anders there!
(End)

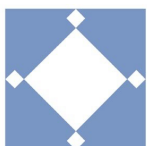
8:40

MUSIC No. 3a - The Halling (1:30)

(gasps) The fiddler's striking up - they're doing the Halling!
Dancing it in the yard, a gaggle o'birds watch each lad
As he whirls and leaps, that can't be bad!

Aslak brings his Wife up to dance on the table.

FATHER Now come, you kids and kick this barrel o'beer.



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FATHER Come in, my dear, and don't be shy, you're one of Ingrid's friends?

SOLVEIG Aye, sir, but sad to be without a gift to make amends.

FATHER Such handsome pleasing charms are truly all that can / be wished.

PEER / A dance, fair jewel, one trip to wet your feet?

SOLVEIG You're keen to dance with one you've yet to meet.

PEER The name's Peer Gynt, how old be ye, my thing?

SOLVEIG I-I'll be confirmed next spring.

PEER Let's christen yer heels and make them sing!

SOLVEIG No!

10:10

The music suddenly stops.

FATHER No?! *(they all laugh)* My dear if any-

SOLVEIG You have of drink betaken.
Your mind, your heart will be forsaken
By what your eye sees only through its mist.
Your good and noble honour's lost in this.

FATHER *(clearing his throat)* Strike up again, hist!

PEER I've never heard such beauty spoke before.

SOLVEIG It merely comes from you - so wild, yet pure.

10:30

MUSIC No. 3b - Springdans

MADS Peer, here come quickly, Peer.

PEER What is it Mads.

MADS It's Ingrid, Peer she won't come out.

PEER Won't what?

MADS You had a power over her once, and-

PEER You must take me for a dunce-

AASE Just please come back!

MADS Then send you to the trolls!

AASE Maybe don't come back.

11:30

CUT from 4th measure of Andante doloroso to letter A.

Scene 4 - Abduction of the Bride (2:00)

INGRID Will you just slow down?!

PEER Let go of me, stop. Stay!

INGRID And watch you while you walk away?
 And disappear behind the lake?

PEER I've such a headache, and you-

INGRID Your love.

PEER -were a mistake.

INGRID How can you say that? We've got to get married now!

PEER Are you bashful and faithful, do you counsel and sing?
 Are you to be finely confirmed this spring?
 It's she I can't keep out of my mind.

INGRID Yet so rude and so unkind?
 Did we not agree to be partners forever?

PEER You were desperate.

INGRID You were drunk.

PEER You wanted to bed me.

INGRID You said you'd wed me.

PEER Away to hell all women in the world! But -

INGRID But?

PEER One.



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SOLVEIG Aye, all you can to me impart,
 So I may know the truth, deep in his heart.

AASE A youth like you may live to regret it.

SOLVEIG Not I, lady, and I shall never forget it.

13:40

Scene 5 - Peer Alone (1:45)

Enter Peer, slightly out of breath

PEER Alack, I should no further go.
 Up and up's a rocky maze!
 And down this gorges' pelicaned haze
 A death awaits of want and woe.

I should go back, but back to what? A mess.
These women all want equal pounds of flesh!
Ha, look at that! An eagle swooped, and turns away.
Oh how I'd kill to trade my place with you today.

I'd soar and duck and prey and sing;
Then lord oe'r god's every other thing.
Look there's Engaland, there Francis and the Pope!
Old John Gynt's house, lit up, doors ope,
Afore the fence got broke or th'windows pitched
Or sorrow buffed the glint clean off of it.

There's John and Aase, and who's that merry lad?
Dancing the Halling o'er tables, heads and pups,
And all the aunts and uncles deep in cups.
They roar and sing and gusty pride swirls round
The finest cedar tables of the town.

MUSIC No. 3a - The Halling (again). First faint and distant, then growing louder.

The toast? Peer Gynt, the tallest in his class!
The rose of fairest spring and sure for a lass'll
Grow oxen for lads and print girls as fair
As any sweetest sweetness anywhere.

What me, my turn? Oh stop! Ok fine.
As long as you'll help me by clapping in kind.

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The company claps, indicating the audience should clap too. Peer dances.

Will me higher and higher, to the beams of the farm!
Lift up my kicks past the beams and beyond.
And we'll leap and we'll dance till we're red in the throat
From Halling and dancing and gossiping smoke
And trancing and thumping and running around,
Nay faster and faster ne'er touching the-

He runs into a tree branch and is instantly unconscious.

Scene 6 - The Woman in Green

15:30

MUSIC No. 8 - Dance of the Troll King's Daughter.

Cut from letter B to the final bar of the movement.

Over the next piece, the body for Peer is replaced by a dummy, so he is dreaming the below. Peer the actor lies next to his dummy.

Enter The Woman in Green through the audience from measure 5. Her skin, clothing, hair are all green. Two peacock feathers hang over her. She is a creature from another world. She spots a male middle aged audience member sitting on the aisle. (LX - spot on the Woman in Green and lights down onstage for Peer to be replaced by the dummy)

During the first D major section of the music she crosses the hall and ad libs with the audience:

GREEN Well hello there! Hi. Hello. Aren't you sweet. How are you????

At Letter A:

Aren't you handsome, what's your name? Steve? Well!

Theme in A major

What are you doing here? Are you alone? Is that your wife?

You don't have children do you? All taken, that's my luck up and down.

When you're green you get all the luck. Uh huh.

Oh you know what I mean do you. Do they call you pink?

Maybe they call you blue eyes. Well they call me green. And all my kind.

Dating's a bitch you should try it sometime.

16:15

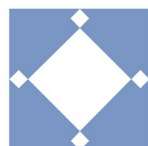
Suddenly she sees Peer and the music ends.

GREEN Oh, hello marriage.

PEER Hello - green.

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GREEN Yes I'm the Woman in Green, my Pa's the Dovre King of the trolls, and you are?

PEER Your father's a king, is he?

GREEN You don't look like this if you aren't a princess, sister.

PEER Well what an unbelievable coincidence! My mother's a Queen!

GREEN She isn't! What's her name and where's she now?

PEER Queen Aase and named through valley and town.
And I her only son and just as renown.

GREEN And you, you handsome prince, are travelling alone?

PEER Uh-huh.

GREEN No one to miss you on your little throne?

PEER Nuh-uh.

GREEN Do you want to come with me to see mine?

PEER See your what?

GREEN Oh you're cheeky, you princely kind.
We don't have to go far to be lovers you know.

PEER Why not.

GREEN It's magic. I rub my hands (*she does*) and you - just - blow.

Peer blows into her hands. Lights out.

17:00

Scene 7 - The Hall of the Trolls

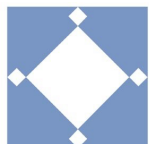
MUSIC - In the Hall of the Mountain King (2:30)

Sung in Royal Danish. Flashes of the violent imagery appear in English as LX projections. The screamed text at the end is as follows. In lights we see KILL HIM after each phrase.

| | |
|--|----------|
| To the butcher's block with him! | KILL HIM |
| The Christian swine has bewitched her! | KILL HIM |

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Shall I bite his thumbs off? KILL HIM
Or boil him to a broth! KILL HIM
We'll skewer this liar inch by inch! KILL HIM

19:30

PEER Where am I? What's happened? What's going on!

KING (*singing as he arrives*). Coming! I'm coming, hold on. Poop! Here I am.

PEER Who are you?!

KING It can be a very uncivilised place down here, try to stay calm.

PEER And you are?

KING Hungry, if I must be honest.

PEER I am too.

KING Well, that's awkward 'cause we can't eat both of us! *He laughs.*

The chorus laughs anemically.

Pity, that usually plays better. Besides you're not much to eat, *Peer Gaunt!*

He whips out a chicken leg.

PEER What do you want from me?

The King paces during the below eating.

KING Well you see it's rather easy.
Of late our troubles as a diminutive race have increased.
Whether we stand or fall in the new world depends on diplomacy, outreach.
Technology's march hasn't been good to us you see -
Trolling isn't quite as honourable as it used to be...
Help from sympathetic kinds is helpful in these troubled times.
Your having only one head may count against you with some of my clan,
but...

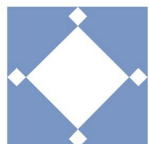
The chorus all quickly chatter about this.

Silence! To the point:
You've met my daughter and it would appear you two like each other.
And what's a ruthless king to do in the way of true love, mmm-hmmmm?

GREEN Mm-hmm.

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KING And I believe you have a saying where you come from.
How does it go, it's an "act of thumb."

PEER Rule?

KING What? Ah, yes I do, thank you, very kind.

PEER No - rule, of... nevermind.

KING Well we have a saying too.

PEER I bet you do.

KING If you hanky panky with the Troll King's daughter,
Lickity splikit you're chewed alive by our smelly children,
And the King takes a bath in the broth of your bones.

PEER That's catchy.

KING Usually gets a bigger laugh.

PEER How comforting.

KING It's a longstanding tradition! Unless...

PEER Unless?

KING You marry and conceive troll babies and live here forever!

PEER Troll babies!

KING I NEED AN HEIR.

GREEN And you need to learn some manners, Peer.

PEER You sound just like my mother.

KING "You break it you buy it!" Yes, that's the one.

PEER But I just looked at her.

KING Oh a lying little son of a gun.
You mean you didn't cast *your lascivious eye?!?*

PEER Sure, I looked but you can't really believe-



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KING Are you aware of how troll girls conceive?!

GREEN I'm pregnant now, though I suppose it could be Steve.

PEER I won't! I can't be a father, I have so much yet to learn.

GREEN Well you've five whole minutes to cram before it's born.

PEER Five minutes?!

KING Yes, yes, your child will grow, as mixed-blood creatures do
So rapidly it will astonish us all! (*laughs evilly*)
Which is handy in fact, for I'm not very tall.

PEER Get me out of here, troll, back off, let me pass!

GREEN (*shrieks, starts to go into labour*) He's coming!

PEER Shit that was pretty fast.

22:00

MUSIC No. 9a - Peer Gynt Hunted by the Trolls (Peters edition, 2:40)

(Music)

KING Don't just stand there, help her!

(Music - *Chorus sings in Danish*)

(*She cries in pain*)

(Music - *same*)

PEER Just try to hold still.

(Music)

KING Come on now, roll your sleeves up, get in there.

Letter B (Music)

PEER I can't, I just - can't!

(Music)

(*She cries again*)

(Music - *singing again*)

PEER I demand you let me go. Right this instant I say!

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(Music - they yell. The Troll King laughs)

KING This is your last chance Peer, help her and stay or be eaten and die!

(Music - singing again)

PEER I refuse. You can't do this to me, I'm a young man.
I never knew her like that!

KING Are you saying she's not beautiful?

(Screams)

PEER She *is*, but - well not right now.

KING You are a liar! A thief and a cheat. Get hold of him!

PEER No, no please!

KING You dare infertilate the daughter of the Troll king?

PEER What did you just say??

KING AFTER HIM!

(Music cut here to letter D)

PEER *(in the pause of the music)* Mother where are you?!

24:40

Scene 8 - The Boyg

MUSIC - The Boyg - with dialogue (Attacca from above)

*The Boyg is a commanding disembodied voice that reverberates around the hall.
The stage darkens and we are in a hall of mirrors in Peer's own mind.*

PEER Sure I'm nearly out. *(stops)*
Is there someone there?
(Sensing) Who - who are you? Answer!

M4

BOYG My Self.

PEER Make way then.

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BOYG How does one escape one's Self, Peer Gynt?

M6

PEER Show thyself!

BOYG Show thyself.

PEER Let me pass I say!

BOYG One wants to pass and not be found?
Go around, young Peer, go always around.

PEER Who the devil *are* you?

M8

BOYG I am the Great Boygen. The Boyg who is you, the Boyg who is slain,
The Boyg who's alive, the Boyg with no name.

PEER I could really do without this stupid riddle game.

BOYG (*chuckles*) Who are *you*... Peer Gynt?

M10

PEER I'm a man. I'm Jon Gynt's son. And I do what I like!

BOYG Know ye the difference between troll and man?
Man: to thyself be true.
Troll: to thyself be enough!

PEER Enough! Then what's true?

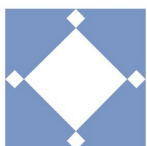
BOYG Truth is through, is within, not around,
Who won't look inside shall never be found.

Cut to 2m before the Allegro (<f>)

PEER Go away, Boygen! What do you mean not around?

BOYG Through is beneath, under Self, under ground.
I leave but I'm here, all the time, in your sound.
You wish to escape? Go round, Peer Gynt, and ever - AROUND.

26:15



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Allegro

CHORUS Boyg, is he coming? (*Here the Chorus sings in English*)

BOYG Yes. Inch...by inch...

CHORUS All you sisters from far away,
Fly here to join us.

PEER Solveig, if you mean to save me,
Be quick or I am lost!
I can't find my way, the light is getting dim.
Don't be coy, throw away your disguise
Come see my heart and be my eyes!

CHORUS He's failing!

BOYG He's losing heart.

CHORUS Spirits come here! Demons come here!

PEER Mother!

CHORUS Boyg, he's falling!
Seize him, seize him!

*LX up on Solveig, and Aase, apart. Both are praying for Peer.
Peer has retaken the position of his sleeping dummy.*

BOYG I can't take him now, his death we prolong
The women that pray for his life are too strong.

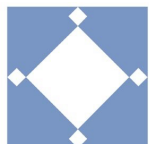
27:30

MUSIC No. 13 - Morning Mood - (3:45) *This is the midway point.*

*Over the course of this piece, the lights come back onstage and Peer wakes up.
He finds the highest ground he can and observes day break.*

31:15

Contact Bill@ConcertTheatreWorks.com for the Full Script



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