

## Multiple Context Interpretation of Grieg's Art Songs

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**Abstract:** The evolution of the inner music form of Grieg's art songs confirms the changes in the external social, historical and cultural context. The knowledge, interrogation and understanding of the work are closely related to the specific time and space environment. Grieg crossed artificially set regional boundaries and artistic sects in the complex and diverse context of the times, prompting fringe music to recognize itself. The thoughts, emotions and cultural information released by his works reflect the reconstruction of belief in music tradition and the aesthetic turning of the audience. The context theory is introduced into the study of Grieg art songs to explore the different essential cognition and meaning generation of musical works due to differences in context..

**Keywords:** Form Context; Generation Context; Reception Context; Belief Reconstruction; Aesthetic Turn

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Norwegian composer Grieg's art songs are artistic expressions formed in complex social environments, with their own non repeatable sound materials, structural characteristics, genre norms, and specific methods of technical application, as well as expressions of feelings and thinking. On the one hand, Grieg deeply cultivates the soil of Norwegian ethnic and folk music art, integrating distinct Norwegian music characteristics into his works, and using European traditional music art creation as a model, accepting the dominant ideas and creative concepts of European music art, actively integrating into the development process of European music art; On the other hand, he strives to detach himself from the traditional music creation paradigm in Norway and even Europe, and declares the modern trend of music art development through a structural transformation of ideological concepts and creation. Through the construction of his music creation practice, Grieg continuously expands and creates context, seeking appropriate expressions between European music art and Norwegian folk music, and continuing and strengthening the process of communication between Norwegian music culture and European music culture. As an epistemology and methodological approach, context theory has been applied to the research of various disciplines in the field of philosophy,

humanities and social sciences since the 1960s. The change from the study of monistic and static contexts to the study of diverse, dynamic, and cognitive contexts has broken through the static perspective and explored the dynamic generation and interrelationships of contextual elements more from the dynamic and cognitive perspectives. The nature of different contexts shows differentiated development, and the exploration of the ways in which contextual activities are influenced has also shifted from the focus on explicit influences to the deepening of implicit influences. In a broad sense, society, culture, era, and even specific music content and form can all become elements of context. However, as a subjective construction of the creative subject, the context composition of Grieg's art songs covers the conditions and situations that are closely related to music, run through the entire process of song creation, and have a major impact and constraint on creation and performance activities, that is, the form context, generation context and reception context that run through the entire process of music creation. The context of form has its own inherent operational laws, which have a significant constraining effect on music creation. The generation context and reception context with dynamic characteristics have implicit effects. Introducing contextual theory into the study of Grieg's art songs, interpreting these works in multiple contexts, resulting in different essential understandings and meaning generation, and exploring the common basis behind the differences in contextual composition.

## 2. THE MUSICAL FORM CONTEXT OF HIERARCHICAL OVERLAPPING AND INTEGRATION

In the structure of music itself, whether it is melody, harmony, rhythm, mode and tonality, or motivation, theme, phrase, segment, and form structure, a considerable degree of regularity and stability is maintained, which has a significant restrictive effect on the creation of music texts. Creators jointly abide by this rule and requirements, forming a clear musical form context. By borrowing or adapting folk music, Grieg transforms the voice expression of Norwegian farmers into musical works, creating a multi-level musical form context, with its ethnic characteristics maintaining a flowing state in the music. Exploring the rich musical form context in Grieg's art songs is a diverse journey, just like crossing the dramatic countryside of Norway (Wang, 1998). When the music work composed of music technology elements and their combinations is completed, it has its own specific symbolic form and internal structural system of contextual

connections, which not only conforms to the inherent correlation of music form, but also adapts to the construction of dynamic contextual elements. Music is a broader environmental discourse that creates sensory experiences in specific time and space (Dalton-Bradford, 2001). The relatively closed internal form of music works is inextricably linked with the open external environment of social history and culture. With the change of social history and culture, the use of music forms also shows a conscious or unconscious choice process. The evolution of musical forms often confirms the changes in the external world. The sound accumulated in the history of Norwegian music culture in the context of globalization can be identified through Grieg's music. As a Norwegian musician, Grieg inevitably took root in the Norwegian ecological environment and became a global role for Norwegians at that time. Norwegian folk music elements constitute the most unique contextual unit of Grieg's music form. When capturing the plasticity of Norwegian folk music, Grieg avoids directly presenting it in the surface form of Norwegian music, but explores the inherent contextual composition of its musical form based on the world's perspective and the connections between European cultures. The first and second themes of "Song of Solweg" (Op.23, No.1) are permeated with the melody of Norwegian folk songs, forming a distinct rhythmic structure with contrasting modes, beats, speed, intensity, and texture writing. Grieg highlights the elements of natural tone melodies, half tone progressions, biases, and typical Springer dance pieces, highly summarizing the national characteristics of Norwegian music. The details of Norwegian folk music, such as the fifth degree fixed bass, punctuation groups, downward decomposition of trills to chords, and passionate ascent along the fifth and third degrees, are placed in a dramatic structure and excellently reflected in "Autumn's Storm" (Op.18, No.4). When applying elements of Norwegian folk music, Grieg is fascinated by the color lines in the harmonic structure and strives to express a sense of hidden harmony in folk tunes according to his own arrangement. The novel sound from the Norwegian folk instrument Hardingfela has given Grieg creative impetus. The continuous sound effect produced by the resonant strings of the Hardingfela as melody accompaniment is often applied by Grieg in music and has been diversified and expanded in application. In "By the Tomb of Mother" (Op.69, No.3), the continuous notes formed by the dominant notes are accompanied in the bass section, while in "Welcome Ladies" (Op.49, No.3), the internal continuous notes are used to complement the performance of the recitation. In "At Brookside" (Op.33,

No.5), the tonic and dominant tones separated by five degrees continue to be refreshing. The combination of the main chord duration and subordinate chords in “Lagenhild” (Op.44, No.3) produces a bright sound effect. The uniqueness of a scale with a rising fourth is rooted in the long-standing connection between Norwegian and European culture. Many musicologists associate the "uniqueness" of this scale with the Lydian mode in church mode. In fact, this rising fourth is always "corrected" and restored in the singing practice of medieval plainsongs or Renaissance polyphony. The minor scale in the opening of “Injured Heart” (Op.33, No.3) emits a slight exotic tone due to an increase in the fourth (Example 1), in which the music struggles to move forward in the conflict of time states, and the strong disharmony and instability within reflects the protagonist's inner pain and suffering. Grieg did not label his work as “Lydia”. He clearly captured the uniqueness of the fourth note from the performance of the Hardingfeld violinists, rather than continuing the theoretical model developed by medieval monks centuries ago. Example One: Injured Heart

*Allegretto espressivo.*

*p*

Mit Hjar-ta har vo-ret i Li-vets Strid og mangt eit Sår har det fen-gjet; det låg  
Mit Hjer-te har væ-ret i Li-vets Strid og mangt et Sår har det få-et, det lå

*p*

**Figure 1:** Injured Heart

Like other people trained in Leipzig, Grieg accepted the famous view once expressed by Rameau that basic harmony can produce melody and regarded harmony as the foundation of music. His musical language usually addresses the harmony order and functional goals of traditional tonal systems. Although Grieg often escapes from idealistic aesthetics during the goal oriented process, this profound directionality indicates that traditional European composition techniques are the basic standard for Grieg's music creation, and strict classical training has enabled him to create beautiful and interesting harmonic effects for plain melodies. In his long-term abstract and independent music creation, Grieg did not permanently fall under the magic of Norwegian scenery, but repeatedly moved away from his home. Although he endured various ideological and cultural impacts due to his

brief isolation from Norway, he caught the mainstream trend of European music and art development. Grieg is familiar with the musical languages of Liszt, Chopin, and he often imitates the creative techniques of Schumann and Mendelssohn. The "Four Songs" (Op.2), created based on the poetry of Shamisso and Heine, is Grieg's pioneering work in the field of vocal music with a "Schumann style". Most of these songs display a melancholic musical mood similar to Schumann's lyrical songs. Grieg had a lasting influence on Schumann's style in music creation (Grimley, 2006). He practiced Schumann's creative concept of integrating and supplementing traditional consciousness, contemporary criticism, and progressive beliefs in his music. During his further study in Copenhagen, Denmark, Grieg had the opportunity to fully understand the style and features of Scandinavian music, and gradually realized the importance of marking his own music as Norwegian music. He used the "translation" ability he learned in Leipzig to transform the original materials into a series of new idioms that can be understood in a broader international cultural context, making them works with cosmopolitanism dimensions. By regularly hosting concerts around the world, Grieg strives to build a bridge between Norway's national identity and international style and society. These trips not only make him famous, but also enable him to maintain academic exchanges with cultural and artistic elites such as Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Liszt, Saint Saen, Pierre Grieg, Bjornstein, Ibsen, and Andersen. With an open world perspective, Grieg did not limit his "inspiration" to national strength, but collected the essence of world music to conform to the trend of the times in the development of music art. The emergence of Impressionist technical forms, such as the sudden shift in A-F-D that brought unexpected expectations in "Lagenhild", the unconventional chord progression with a hazy color unique to Impressionism music In "Spring Rain" (Op. 49, No. 6), the vague melody outline and lack of termination in "Autumn Thoughts" (Op. 59, No. 1), the short passage lines of Impressionism in "On a Small Boat" (Op.60, No. 3) and the use of unclear tonality in "A Bird Crying and Flying by" (Op.60, No. 4), further opened up the linguistic context of Grieg's music. Grieg purposefully breaks the tradition when dealing with dissonant chord progression and maintains a much longer time of disharmony than many of his contemporaries can bear. The reappearance of "Troubadour's Song" (Op.25, No.1) uses seven chord, nine chord and eleven chord continuous progression (Example 2), and the tension accumulated continuously can be relieved after 16 beats. This unconventional approach that allows the characteristics of the raw material to indicate the range of sound points the way forward for Stravinsky and

Bartok. Grieg independently established and developed technical forms based on the needs of music expression and image shaping, forming a unique and poetic music that never loses its freshness (Plantinga, 1984). He constructed a unique European music creation technique and a formal context that combines elements of Norwegian folk music at the same time. Example Two: Troubadour's Song

brud. I sto\_re klr\_ker og sa\_le mig selv jeg spil\_led ind, og fos\_sens gru og

C: II<sub>7</sub> II<sub>11</sub> V<sub>9</sub> I<sub>7</sub> I<sub>11</sub> F: I<sub>7</sub> IV

Figure 2: Troubadour's Song

### 3. THE GENERATION CONTEXT OF THE INTERWEAVING OF RETURN AND DEPARTURE

The particularity of music indicates that its own musical form cannot directly display social phenomena, character images, and their activity states, but rather reflects typical social ideologies and emotional changes generated through the content of music works. Music works gain identity in the overall context of music production, which is the result of the combination of composer's musical and non musical thinking. Grieg is the direct producer of his own works. He organizes the structure and content of his songs by selecting music materials and technical terms based on his musical thinking, and determines the direction of sound movement based on his own cognition, requirements, and habits. The cognition of the world, personal habits, and artistic requirements are the main factors that formed the generation context of his artistic songs. These contextual elements, including dynamism, implicitness, and generativity, continue to drive Grieg to climb the pinnacle of art and seek the meaning of life. In the 19th century, people's awareness of national self-improvement and self-reliance was awakened by the national independence and liberation movements, and artists generally developed a strong interest in their own ethnic and folk music culture. Norway will always be his spiritual harbor

and emotional habitat for Grieg. He has a reflective nostalgia for Norway and his hometown, which prompts him to grasp the inherent natural essence of Norwegian music and its evolution trend in line with the trend of the times, providing people with a unique comprehensive music landscape. His exceptional composition ability and artistic breadth remind people of Norway's steep cliffs and deep fjords. Grieg showed a concern for folklorism and a desire to return to the countryside. He spent a lot of time delving into various parts of Norway, collecting first-hand information on local music, gathering and organizing folk music, visiting local folk festivals, and doing a lot of research on local chronicles. Grieg has been trying to present the style and spirit of Norway since the early stages of his music creation, such as the strong and enthusiastic Norwegian style of "In the Dark Clouds" (Op.2, No.2), the punctuated triplet rhythm he likes to use at the end of "Thank You" (Op.10, No.1), and the five degree fixed bass in "Song of the Forest" (Op.10, No.2). Grieg believes that language also plays an important role in building Norwegian national identity. He supports the restoration and maintenance of language that is considered a relatively pure region, believing that it can express "emotions of the heart". He favored the use of Norwegian vernacular language, which Ibsen vehemently opposed and once became a benchmark for the national rejuvenation movement in Norwegian literature, to resist the constantly eroding international metropolitan trends. Grieg specifically chose dialects related to the folk to create, such as composing a suite (Op.33) for the vernacular poetry of Norwegian farmer poet Wenye, in order to demonstrate his emphasis on the folk nature of art. Due to such claims and practices, Grieg deviated from the modern process of European music art development and isolated himself. The frustration caused by this is reflected in the strong sadness expressed in the suite (Op.33) music he composed for the vernacular poetry of Norwegian farmer poet Wenye. The resulting sense of frustration is reflected in the strong sadness expressed in the music of this work. The whole divertimento starts with confessional grief. The first one, "The Destiny of the Poet" (Op.33, No.1), uses the seven chords formed by two minor third degrees and one major third degree at the beginning to emphasize the frustrations of fate. The second one, "Spring" (Op.33, No.2), in some bright colors, turns out to be a sad major image. The last one, "My Goal" (Op.33, No.12), seems to express the feeling of overcoming difficulties, but the generous passion of music cannot suppress the sadness and melancholy expressed throughout the work. Although Grieg thinks that there is fewer ethnic orientation in his songs than in other works because of the influence of Danish and German

poetry, national emotions flow in his blood. These music works reflect Grieg's musical thinking and creative emotions based on the Norwegian music tradition in the Norwegian social history environment, reflecting a sense of identity and pride. When Grieg began his music creation, it was at the focus of Norwegian intellectuals' attention to cultural identity. Writers attached importance to learning from folklore and folktales and artists focused on collecting farmer songs and dances during this period. In stark contrast to the more complex music of advanced Western European societies, Norwegian folk music has been regarded as a manifestation of primitive and backward musical culture, and has long been juxtaposed with wild music and low-grade music. However, Grieg discovered the inherent advantages of folk music beyond the rules of instrumental music, as its pure and natural state has been completely lost in "advanced" music. The development of ethnic folk music was driven by the need for cultural nationalism, especially in the German Romantic movement where folk culture and art were idealized. Like most artists of his time, Grieg romanticized the purity and spiritual vitality of Norwegian folk art, believing that the creativity and authenticity of these voices, juxtaposed with exquisite and elegant beauty, bold power, and wildness, came from a time when Norwegian peasant culture was confined to remote valleys isolated from the outside world. He constantly pursues the Norwegian color in music, emphasizing the ability of Norwegian artists to provide clean, pure, and healthy art to the world, while also directly expressing love for the country. In the process of cooperating with Norwegian contemporary writers such as Ibsen and Bionson, Grieg was prompted to observe and reflect on Norwegian social life for a long time, and to have a keen insight and understanding of social reality. By reflecting and comprehending the national character of Norway, the internal emotional and psychological foundation of Grieg's music creation has been established. On the other hand, Grieg often withdraws himself from the local accent and sentiment, choosing to stay away from the abusive social life in Norway, and develops from seeking to improve his own music creation level to seeking a way out for Norwegian culture and art. As the center of the political, economic and culture of the world, Europe has led the development direction of capitalism in modern times. Due to the intensive flow of cultures among European countries, the construction of cultural significance is no longer limited to a single region and a single cultural tradition, but is placed within the political, economic, and cultural exchange and exchange relationship within the Pan European framework. Grieg realized that the cultural foundation of this pan European system



was the fulcrum for gaining the independent development power of Norwegian music. Whenever he moves away from Norway's lagging artistic environment, Grieg becomes more integrated into the European modernization process. With the artist's sensitive sense of smell, he distinguishes artistic achievements that match his creative ideas and aesthetic interests. For example, the ancient peasant theme praised in Haydn's oratorio "The Four Seasons" in "The Tempest of Autumn" (Op.18, No. 4), the Schumann style laments in "Chronicles in the Memorial Book" (Op.25, No. 3), the stylized Italian image portrayed in "Monte Picchu" (Op.39, No. 1), and the music clearly influenced by the lyrical style of French songs in "You Are Early Spring" (Op.59, No. 3), drawing on Wagner's "Tristan" harmonic effect in "Love" (Op.70, No.1), the Lisztian chord performed in the Norwegian way in "Princess" (Op.21, No.4). In the frequent process of contact, integration, and collision with European music art, Grieg gradually established his own distinct musical form and style characteristics. The musical thinking and creative techniques in his works tend to be complex and diverse, and then demonstrate his unique personality to the world with new music paradigms. As a small-scale music genre, art songs embody the essence of romantic music. Romantic music has the strongest emotional expression and the most "conversational" nature. Grieg uses artistic songs to express his thoughts and emotions towards the external world, and what is important for him is the authenticity of emotions expressed in music. The complex emotions of the author's personal love life that cannot be clearly expressed are revealed through a melody that goes up first and then down in 'I Love You'(Op.5, No.3), and the love oath is constantly strengthened with multiple variations of the original motivation, conveying a strong admiration and longing for the lover. Grieg recorded the joy of being a new father in "Margaret's Cradle" (Op.15 No.1). The incident of his daughter's premature death dealt a heavy blow to him, and his grief and sorrow were sent to "Among the Roses" (Op.39, No.4). His memory and remembrance of his mother were written in "By His Mother's Tomb". The "Rølsund Pavilion" in the suburbs of Bergen, the small fishing village on the shore of the West Joel Fjord and the small wooden house in Luvthus were places where Grieg once expressed his musical thoughts. His admiration for the natural scenery of Norway and his longing for peaceful and comfortable rural life were all reflected in works such as "In the Forest" (Op.18, No.1), "I Sing a Song for Spring" (Op.21, No.3), "Spring Rain" (Op.49, No.6), and "Bright Night" (Op.70, No.3). Hegel believed that the true content of romantic art is absolute inner life (Button, 2000). Grieg broke the rules in music

creation, and according to his understanding of “how music should develop”, he creatively let the chord get rid of the rules and restrictions of the vocal part. For example, the bass of the first bar of “Only One Thing” (Op. 33, No. 8) entered the pure fourth from the third, and the four and six chords on the second beat moved freely without restrictions. The thirteen chords of the third degree relationship in “The Girl in the Mountains” (Op.67, No. 2) was carried out in parallel, and the treatment of dissonant chords was completely independent of convention. There was no formal terminations in “Now You Are Resting” (Op.59, No. 6) and “A Bird Crying and Flying Over” (Op.60, No. 4). In his works with a romantic tendency, Grieg often avoids using the formal termination characteristic of classical music, but instead replaces the subordinate or subordinate chords with variable chords, forming complex and unclear terminations. The form of direct connection between art and nature is the creative paradigm in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the "universal" rules and “scientific” foundations of nature represented the ideals that art sought to emulate (Onderdonk, 2009). In the 19th century, romanticists attributed genius and creativity to the pursuit of “infinite” abstraction and transcendence of truth. Artists hoped to achieve infinite pursuit by breaking tradition. The influence of the composer's personal life experience and socio-cultural historical environment objectively exists, and non musical thinking affects the direction of the development of music themes, genres, and forms.

#### 4. THE ACCEPTANCE CONTEXT OF THE COEXISTENCE OF BELIEF RECONSTRUCTION AND AESTHETIC TURNING

The receiver of music is the audience, and the music text is appreciated and listened to by the audience through the intermediate stage of performance, becoming a truly vibrant sound work. The appreciation experience of music art is a subjective experiential activity of identification and rejection. Sharing music with creators involves listeners with different cognitive backgrounds who enter the audience with predetermined psychological expectations. Through the exchange and dialogue of ideas, emotions, and cognition between the music work and the creator, they construct their own understanding and cognition of the work through the continuous transmission of changes in music listening experience, and participate in the process of supplementing the meaning and aesthetic reconstruction of the music work. This system energy with group listening habits constantly permeates and influences the creation and performance

of music works, forming a dynamic and differentiated acceptance context. In the specific reception context of musical works, each individual's own auditory preferences, as well as the group acceptance habit system possessed by listeners from different eras and places, all manifest as an explicit or potential aesthetic expectation when facing musical works, thus forming differences in understanding and judgment of musical works. Music genres serve as carriers for understanding the essence of music. The audience obtains their first impression of music through music genres. The content and expression techniques of music are dialectically unified in various recognizable factors within the music genre, forming paradigms and rules that are adapted to real-life social practice and reflect typified characteristics. Under the social conditions of the 19th century, artistic songs were enriched and developed, while maintaining their popularity. This genre, usually composed of a single sound accompanied by piano, showcased the equal partnership between music and writing (Hersey, 2016). Having a certain knowledge reserve of the basic material and sound structure of the work itself is beneficial for people to focus on listening to the music text. The lyrics make the music content concrete, providing path guidance and situational reference for the understanding and interpretation of art songs, and easy to activate the common context associated with the works of the audience and composer. Grieg delves deeply into the underlying artistic conception of the lyrics, using humanized expressions to evoke people's emotional and experiential reactions. Unlike Ibsen's sharp criticism of language and writing, Grieg focuses more on expressing the kind and generous nature of humans and the natural and sincere emotions, as shown in "Song of Solweg", "Solweg's Cradle" (Op.23, No.2), and "Mother's Sorrow" (Op.15, No.4). Tchaikovsky believes that Grieg's music embodies a profound human nature. The audience can be strongly influenced by these recognized cognitive factors, experiencing the emotions aroused by music as their own emotions, and resonating with the emotions and experiences in musical works. Music receivers gain an understanding of music by activating their internal knowledge and experiential context. This is a process of continuous collision and adaptation between the cultural information released by music works and the inherent cultural traditions of the audience during the listening aesthetic experience. Moreover, the inherent cultural defense psychology and closed cultural tribal mentality often become barriers to cultural acceptance. Norwegian folk music has various forms, and farmers' songs are colorful. Although Norway's professional music culture is backward, its amateur music life is rich and lively. Wealthy families love to play the piano, often

hold family music salons, and singing songs is also essential. However, for the bourgeois Norwegians who were most likely to participate in solo concerts or perform Grieg music at home, these peasant music was clearly too primitive and too close to a aspect of Norway that they themselves could not recognize, and the music performances in the cities at that time were dominated by the German singing cultural tradition. Grieg is no longer stuck in Norwegian folk music genres when creating music. His music is not just a single tone centered around Norway, but spans different ethnic groups and genres, so that they can be accepted and familiar by more listeners, meeting different appreciation tastes. This process was difficult for Grieg. His mother once thought that his music was unpopular (O'Leary, 2010). Some ethnography scholars accused him of using and distorting real folk music materials. Grieg had to fight against chauvinism who wanted to limit Norwegian music to Norwegian people. The greater use of modern harmonic techniques under the Pan European trend in music poses a challenge to Grieg's identity as a Norwegian, to the extent that later generations accuse him of conveying his colonized Norwegian rural traditions to European audiences, as a composer attempting to speak as a postcolonial subject under Danish, Swedish, and German rule (McClary, 2008). Despite being outside Norway, Liszt fully recognizes the national and original nature of Grieg music, and gives high praise and practical support. However, for the Leipzig music industry, which was accustomed to measuring the performance level of singers based on whether they had performed an opera at that time, Grieg's art songs could not be fully understood. In the eyes of some singers, his songs were so simple and easy to sing that their talents cannot be fully utilized. Niels Gard, an outstanding Danish romantic composer, once complained that Grieg's music was too Norwegian. German critics even thought that Grieg was trapped in a fjord and could not escape. Even though Grieg later gained international reputation, his works still faced some skepticism. In the 1870s, Grieg's works began to receive public praise in the United States, but only a few years ago, Norwegian pianist Edmund Newpert received different or negative reviews when performing Grieg's works in London and New York (Kijas, 2013). In the debate with those critics who want to deny his claim to cosmopolitanism or Norwegian music culture, Grieg finds and insists on his own aesthetic personality. The music conveys the independent consciousness of Norwegian society, culture and art participating in the process of modern European development. He hopes that smart listeners can understand that his music is not only the exotic atmosphere embellished in their concerts, but also valuable works in the

mainstream music standard repertoire. Grieg artistically presents his personal psychological experience and cultural reflection in his song works, fully expressing his personal emotions and life thinking, while infiltrating the Norwegian "voice" into the mainstream music field in Europe at that time, forming a special spiritual force and conveying it to the audience. Dana believes that this is the basic starting point for conducting work research, which is that the emergence, development, and extinction of art are constrained by the overall social environment. To understand an artist and their works, it is necessary to have a deep understanding of the spirit of the times and social customs in which they are located (Bao, 2006). In the 19th century, musical works were considered to embody the ideal state of beauty (Brian & Etme, 2012). Traditional tonal music, as a powerful system that embodies the beauty of ideal harmony, can not only stimulate sensory perception to obtain aesthetic experiences and establish aesthetic concepts, but also provide a way for emotional expression and emotional relaxation. However, the irrationalism philosophical trend of thought that began to appear in the middle of the 19th century has a strong resonance in the field of art, and the traditional tonal system has gradually moved towards fission. During this period, musicians were committed to reconstructing traditional musical concepts, developing new musical thinking, new ways of expression, and changing music listening modes, exploring their own path of innovation to break through the limitations of traditional rules. The fantastic ideas of Grieg's art songs in melody, harmony, rhythm and color are intrinsically unified with the context of the times, reflecting the pursuit of artistic originality under the surging trend of social history and cultural development and change at that time, which is in line with the reception context where the audience is more inclined to hear music works with unique characteristics, attractive theme representation, unexpected modulation, and charming ingenuity details. His interest in Norwegian folk music prompted Grieg to expand his traditional tonal system. This kind of music is that the flow of scales between the big third degree and the minor third degree makes the tonal system vague, which is reflected in romantic music, that is, the sense of direction of tonal progress becomes unclear, and the traditional concept of tonality is shaken, which has a great impact on the feelings of listeners (Watkins, 2011). This conceptual shift indicates that composers are no longer loyal to the traditional functional tonal system, which not only brings about changes in musical form, but also demonstrates the structural transformation of Grieg's inner thoughts and emotions. It also means a transformation of ideological consciousness in the field of social culture

and art, as well as a transformation of the audience's inner spiritual needs. The bold handling of discordant chords is Grieg's departure from the exemplary significance of the relative harmony between rationality and sensibility represented by the traditional tonal system. Although the ending of music often retains a return to the main theme to achieve spiritual tranquility, it is no longer an absolute peace in pursuit of a perfect ending, but a helpless compromise that subjective ideals cannot achieve in a strong emotional state and a hope to escape from sadness. Compared to the extreme discord and the rejection of internal unity and natural harmony by sound in Schoenberg's music, Grieg appears much more conservative. He only explores his creative strategies in complex and diverse social trends, creating opposition and conflict within the framework of established standards of traditional music ideology that can be accepted by concert hall audiences (Carl, 2006).

## 5. CONCLUSION

Music works are existence that transcends time and space, but the understanding, questioning, and comprehension of the works are closely related to the specific time and space environment. The historical nature of a text determines that it must appear in a specific context. The multi context interpretation of Grieg's art songs focuses on specific and realistic social causes and cultural concerns, reflecting a “search for explanations of social and cultural phenomena related to various races, customs and physical geography environment”. Whether it is Grieg's works or other classic works that occupy a more important position, their status, value, and significance are not taken for granted. Their construction, formation, reflection, and correction are all interrelated with specific contexts. Fundamentally, this is closely related to how to view and understand aesthetic philosophical propositions such as art, society, and self. As the "music of culture", Grieg's art songs hide the continuity of the development of social history and culture and its fragmentation and reconstruction. Its multi-level overlapping music forms transcend the artificially set regional boundaries and artistic factions, and also enable marginal music art to re understand self and its development prospects. Faced with the global flow of culture and art, the exploration and maintenance of national traditional culture and art, as well as maintaining the independence of one's own culture and art, all require understanding and attention in global interaction.

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