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Trondheimsolistene: "In Folk Style"

June 2010

Norway's 2L Releases One of the Best Recordings Ever!

2L Records 68

Formats: Blu-ray, Hybrid Multichannel SACD

Musical Performance	★★★★★
Sound Quality	★★★★★
Overall Enjoyment	★★★★★

Morten Lindberg is the CEO and head engineer of 2L Records. He has made magnificent recordings in many different locations with many different artists, but he seems to have a special affinity for the Trondheim Soloists and Selbu Church, the recording location for this release. Their first collaboration, *Divertimenti* (2L 50), won many accolades including some right here at the SoundStage! Network. Hard as it is to believe, this second two-disc Blu-ray/SACD combo is even better. It is that rare find, a perfect disc, five stars across the board, with plenty to like and no detractions.



The music is by Edvard Grieg, Norway's most famous composer, and two 29-year-old musicians associated with the Trondheim Soloists: Emilia Amper and Gjermund Larsen. Grieg is represented by his zippy *From Holberg's Time* (*Holberg Suite*), the lyrical "In Folk Style," and the rollicking "Cow Call and Peasant Dance." Amper's piece is a suite of folk tunes called *Arbégé*, written for nyckelharpa and strings. Amper is the soloist on the seldom-heard instrument, which is a type of fiddle with a chromatic keyboard. Larsen wrote *Diploma*, a suite for fiddle and strings, as his competition piece for a Performance Diploma at the Norwegian Academy of Music. The title might sound scholarly, but the music was inspired by the composer's native village, and the "Trondheim Soloists local pub, Krambua!" Larsen is the soloist for this work.

The 17 Trondheim musicians have played together for many years. They breathe as one and continuously bring some small but telling nuance to the playing that makes you want to exclaim "that is so right." The boisterous bounce of the *Holberg Suite*'s opening, the melancholy of the same suite's "Sarabande," and the good humor of the "Peasant Dance" are all within their endless range of emotions. Lindberg's recording will perk up your ears right from the beginning, with sharp, pointed attacks that are entirely musical and a string sound so natural and lovely that it sounds just like being there. Regular readers will know that I am a bug on presence. This recording had so much that the very air of my listening room seemed charged with it. Lindberg's use of surround sound is unique, and it works to make the listener part of the performance experience. The stereo mixes sound very good, but the surround ones are better. The Blu-ray offers the program in 5.1 24/192kHz DTS-HD Master Audio, 7.1 24/96kHz DTS-HD Master Audio, and 2.0 24/192kHz. The SACD presents the concert in multichannel and stereo high definition and stereo Redbook CD. If you have a Blu-ray drive connected to your computer, you can also download files so you can carry this wonderful music with you on your favorite portable digital device. It's also available on the 2L website and presumably will hit the iTrax and HDtracks sites soon. By offering so many choices, Lindberg has made it possible for anyone to hear this wonderful recording, which is something everyone should do as soon as possible.

Be sure to listen to: The last movement of the *Holberg Suite*, taken at a breathless tempo, mixes dazzling bowed and pizzicato playing. The recording is so clean that you can listen for the melody the first time around then take a second listen to concentrate on the accompanying lines.

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radb@soundstagenetwork.com