2L audiophile reference recordings

Multi-ch stereo

Exclusive High Definition Music – video only for menu guide

2.0 L PCM 24/192kHz

Two-disc-box

01 Marianne Thorsen / Trondheim Solistene
Mozart: Violin Concerto in D major – Allegro
9:12

02 Dena Piano Duo
Mozart: Sonata for 2 Pianos in D Major – Allegro
6:04

03 Cikada Duo
Nordheim: Colorazione (excerpt)
2:09

04 Ellen Sejersted Badtaker
Åm: Vere Meininga (excerpt)
5:05

05 Consortium Vocale
Crux Fidelis
5:03

06 Kristiansand Symfoniorkester / Solistkoret
Islandsnoen: REQUIEM – Lacrymosa
4:49

07 Kristiansand Symfoniorkester / Solistkoret
Islandsnoen: REQUIEM – Confutatis
2:11

08 Ola Gjeilo / T. Barber / J. Martens
Gjeilo: North Country II
5:09

09 Stig Nilson / Anders Kjellberg Nilsson
Plagge: Duels for 2 violins - Vivo
1:46

10 Berit Opheim Versto
Springer etter Gudmund Eide
1:32

11 Johannes Martens Ensemble
Carter: Sonata for Violoncello and Piano - Moderato
4:54

12 Annar Follesø
Bartok: Sonata for Solo Violin – Fuga
4:08

13 Tone Wik / Barokkanerne
Vivaldi: Recitative and Aria from Cantata RV 679
4:03

14 Tor Espen Aspaas
Schönberg: Sechs kleine klavierstücke op. 19 (excerpt)
2:51

15 Engegårdkvartetten
Haydn: String Quartet op. 76, no. 5. Finale/Presto
3:24

16 Kristiansand Blåseensemble / B. Sagstad
Ives: Overture & March “1776”
3:31

17 Trondheim Solistene
Britten: Simple Symphony, op 4 - Boisterous Bourree
2:59

18 Kåre Nordstoga
Sandvold: Orgelimprovisata over DEILIG ER JORDEN
4:58

19 Ensemble 96 / Ø. Fevang
Nystedt: Immortal BACH
4:04
Violin Concerto no. 4 in D major - Allegro
W. A. Mozart (1756–1791)
Marianne Thorsen / TrondheimSolistene

With this recording we wish to present a fresh version of the most elegant violin concertos in the history of music. While respecting the origin and tradition of this music, we have sought a new and dynamic musical experience rooted in our present time. To us, Mozart is as solid as rock, as soft as snow, and as clear as ice; this recording embraces the listener in a sonic world that invites him or her to participate actively in the experience, in close and mutual interaction with the soloist and the orchestra. Only in this way can we genuinely express our love of Mozart’s music. This album was declared a Record to Die For by STEREOPHILE magazine and won the Spellemannprisen 2006.

Album: MOZART violin concertos (2L38SACD)
Recording venue: Selbu Church, May 2006
Original source: DXD (352.8kHz/24bit)

Sonata for 2 Pianos in D Major - Allegro con spirito
W. A. Mozart (1756–1791)
Dena Piano Duo

Mozart was without a doubt one of Grieg’s favourite composers. What is special about Grieg’s adaptations of the Mozart sonatas is that he has not reworked them in the traditional – and perhaps derogatory – manner. Grieg’s unusual achievement lies in the fact that he has retained Mozart’s text unchanged, adding an entirely new part which can be performed together with the original. When both parts are played, they interweave and become something entirely new. This album is made of Mozart’s Sonata in D for Two Keyboards, their Fantasia for two pianos in C minor and Grieg’s Old Norwegian melody with variations.

Album: MOZART/GRIEG vol. II (2L57SABD)
Recording venue: Sofienberg Church, August 2008
Original source: DXD (352.8kHz/24bit)

Colorazione (excerpt)
Arne Nordheim (1931–)
Cicada Duo

Since 1960 the composer Arne Nordheim has enchanted both musicians and audience with a unique soundscape. His music may be considered a source to the later Nordic Sound of electronica. Today’s DJs might not willingly announce “Grandfather taught me this”, but that’s actually the case! Cikada DUO is Kenneth Karlsson (piano/synthesizer) and Bjørn Rabben (percussion). They are joined by Åke Parmerud (elektronica) and Elisabeth Holmertz (soprano) in this production of Arne Nordheim’s music. Take the stand within the percussion and let yourself be embraced by electronica, vocal and synthesizers in an extreme surround sound recording, as originally intended by the composer.

Album: NORDHEIM (2L39SACD)
Recording venue: Henie Onstad Art Centre, May 2006
Original source: 88.2kHz/24bit

vere meinga (excerpt)
Magnar Åm (1952–)
Ellen Sejersted Bødtker / Oslo Kammersolister

“SONaR is a sound signal sent out to create an echo from whatever it may encounter and thus reveal the unknown. I think we all send our symbolic sonars into physical and spiritual space, in a constant search for meaning. At least I do. And my life and music represent both this child’s sonars and the universe’s ever-unfolding answer.” – Magnar Åm

“The music is insistent, powerful and existential, bringing out the dramatic qualities of the instrument. In the cadenza the electric harp with all its effects carries on a dialogue with its acoustic counterpart, as if the new and the ancient world were melting together.” – Ellen Sejersted Bødtker

Album: SONaR (2L51SABD)
Recording venue: Ris Church, January 2007
Original source: 96kHz/24bit
Gregorian chant, in its all-embracing spirituality and poetry, appeals to the deeper levels of the human heart. Monks in the Middle Ages composed and performed this music as an integrated part of their daily occupation with Sacred Scripture. Throughout the centuries Gregorian chant has enriched and deepened the liturgy of the church, and has been a source of inspiration in every period of European music history. Under the leadership of Alexander M. Schweitzer, Consortium Vocale presents chants from the five Sundays of Lent, Palm Sunday and Good Friday, recorded in the medieval church at Ringsaker in Norway.

Album: EXAUDIAM EUM - Gregorian Chant for Lent and Holy Week (2L43SACD)
Recording venue: Ringsaker Church, September 2006
Original source: DXD (352.8kHz/24bit)

Sigurd Islandsmoen’s REQUIEM for soloists, choir and orchestra is a unique flower in the Norwegian music flora. Throughout the 1940s and 50s the work enjoyed huge success both in Norway and abroad thanks to its beautiful and accessible Latin and folk music based musical language. And then, mysteriously, the music disappeared and the work was buried in the dust of oblivion for several decades. But now it has been revived and restored to its former glory, a source of inspiration to future generations. This album was declared a Record to Die For by STEREOPHILE magazine 2008.

Album: Islandsmoen REQUIEM (2L36SACD)
Recording venue: Kristiansand Cathedral, March 2006
Original source: 88.2kHz/24bit

This reflective, tuneful album is a collection of beautiful piano music written and performed by Ola Gjeilo. His music is a blend of jazz, classical and popular music influences, married in a unique and passionate style. The evocative melodies and harmonies of Stone Rose are sure to captivate listeners from the first hearing.

Many of the tracks are expressions of Ola’s deep love for New York City, where he lives and maintains his highly successful career as a composer and pianist.

Album: Stone Rose (2L48SACD)
Recording venue: Sofienberg church, August 2007
Original source: 96kHz/24bit
Duels for 2 violins - Vivo
Wolfgang Plagge (1960-)
Stig Nilsson / Anders Kjellberg Nilsson

Violinist Stig Nilsson presents a selection of six contemporary Norwegian works from his extensive repertoire. Throughout his long career as concertmaster of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, and as a much sought-after soloist and ensemble partner – and not least as a source of inspiration to a great many colleagues and composers – Stig Nilsson has contributed perhaps more than any other to putting Norwegian composers on the map. Numerous works have been dedicated to him over the years; some of them even for two violins. Hear him in solo performances and together with his son, Anders Kjellberg Nilsson.

Album: SOLO + (2L47SACD)
Recording venue: Ullensvang Church, March 2007
Original source: DXD (352.8kHz/24bit)

Springar etter Gudmund Eide
trad. Slåttetrall
Berit Opheim Versto

Slåttetralling is the Norwegian folk singer's way to present the instrumental music. When the dancers couldn't find a fiddle player, they used a singer. By imitating the fiddle and using improvised nonsense "words", the singer creates variations and a spectre of colours in the melodies. This way of using the voice is based on tradition documented in old archive recordings. The tunes have also been passed on orally in personal encounters from generation to generation. Berit Opheim Versto brings this tradition to life in a modern soundscape.

Album: Slåttar på tunga (2L46SACD)
Recording venue: Jar Church, June 2007
Original source: 88.2kHz/24bit

Sonata for Violoncello and Piano - Moderato
Elliott Carter (1908-)
Johannes Martens Ensemble

For this album of music by Elliott Carter cellist Johannes Martens has assembled some of Norway’s foremost young musicians. Tracing Carter’s development through some of his most creative periods, these works – from the beautiful 1946 Elegy and the celebrated Cello Sonata from 1948 through to newer pieces for solo instruments, duo, trio and string quartet – constitute nearly a cross-section of musical evolution in the 20th century’s second half. Heard individually, the chamber works of Elliott Carter give the listener tantalising snapshots of the composer’s style and technique; as a group, they represent a microcosm of his musical personality.

Album: Chamber Music by ELLIOTT CARTER - Figments and Fragments (2L54SACD)
Recording venue: Sofienberg Church, January 2008
Original source: DXD (352.8kHz/24bit)

Sonata for solo violin - fuga
Béla Bartók (1881-1945)
Annar Follesø

Bartók’s music receives red-blooded, totally committed performances by three of Scandinavia’s most gifted musicians on a disc ranging from the striking modernism of the Second Violin Sonata, via the jazz flirtation of Contrasts to the magisterial Bach homage of the Sonata for Solo Violin. Annar Follesø in 1998 became the first Norwegian violinist to appear as a soloist at the Salzburg Festival, Austria, as he was awarded the violin prize for his interpretation of the Bartók Solo Sonata.

Album: BARTÓK (2L28SACD)
Recording venue: Sofienberg Church, October 2003
Original source: 44.1kHz/24bit
Cantata RV 679 - Che giova il sospirar, povero core
Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)
Tone Wik / Barokkanerne

18th century Venice; where Hollywood meets Las Vegas; where the jet-set of Europe could conceal their identities behind masks and hurl themselves into the fake world of commedia dell’arte. Bellezza Crudel is a small selection of delightful cantatas and concertos. Vivaldi’s world is one of heartfelt, musical intensity, confirming the Venetians’ adoration of theatrical beauty.

Cantate RV 679, 660, 664, 678 (soprano) — Concerti RV 484 (fagotto) and RV 441 (flauto)
Album: Bellezza Crudel (2L56SACD)
Recording venue: Jar Church, February 2008
Original source: DXD (352.8kHz/24bit)

Sechs kleine klavierstücke op. 19 - (1 and 2 - excerpt)
Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951)
Tor Espen Aspaas

The First and Second Viennese Schools and their associated cultural environments constitute a fascinating, enigmatic musical terrain of strong mutual relationships. This recording seeks to explore points of tension between the two epochs by contrasting four central compositions – masterpieces which constantly inform our perception of what music is and what music can be. Two canons, mirrored in their own reflection.

Sechs kleine klavierstücke op. 19
Album: MIRROR CANON (2L49SACD)
Recording venue: Sofienberg Church, September 2007
Original source: DXD (352.8kHz/24bit)

String Quartet In D, Op. 76, No. 5 - Finale/Presto
Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
Engegårdkvartetten

The Engegård Quartet made their first appearance at the 2006 Lofoten International Music Festival. Inspired by the midnight sun, their musical landscape ranges from glowing core energy to the gentle lyrical sound of Norwegian nature. Edvard Grieg and Leif Solberg are natural choices for this Scandinavian quartet, complemented by the music of Joseph Haydn reflected in a Nordic atmosphere. The strong musical nerve is emphasized by an intense sound production by Lindberg Lyd.

Over the Hills and Far Away (1776)
Charles Ives (1874-1954)
Kristiansand Blåseensemble / Bjørn Sagstad

MARCHES – Cymbal crashes, screeching clarinets and harsh trombones. But a march comes in many colours – and not necessarily one to be marched to! MARCH is more than a military instrument apt to shift groups of troops. Over the hills and far away we find a colourful postcard from the East signed Camille Saint-Saëns, a wild and wonderful chaos in “1776”, a warm tribute to a Norwegian valley, a moving memorial to a dear friend, and a source of sheer enjoyment as in Percy Grainger’s “Over the Hills and Far Away” – vitamin C in musical form for children of all ages!

Overture & March “1776”
Album: Over the Hills and Far Away (2L31SACD)
Recording venue: Kristiansand Cathedral, May 2005
Original source: 44.1kHz/24bit

Beethoven / Schönberg / Webern / Alban Berg

Album: STRING QUARTETS Haydn - Solberg - Grieg (2L53SACD)
Recording venue: Jar Church, October 2007
Original source: DXD (352.8kHz/24bit)
Simple Symphony, op 4 - Boisterous Bourree
Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
TrondheimSolistene

The divertimento as a musical genre dates back to the nineteenth century. Divertimenti were composed for various social occasions and were intended to be light, uncomplicated and cheerful. Such pieces were often scored for small string ensemble. Over the years this effortless, elegant form has appeared in many different musical styles and, to a large extent, set the standard for the virtuosic chamber music we know today. A number of the most prominent composers of our age have engaged with this most fascinating musical style and have contributed to its further refinement as a chamber-symphonic showpiece. This album was nominated for three GRAMMY Awards 2008: Best Small Ensemble, Best Engineering and Best Surround Sound Album.

Album: DIVERTIMENTI (2L50SABD)
Recording venue: Selbu Church, November 2007
Original source: DXD (352.8kHz/24bit)

Orgelimprovisata DEILIG ER JORDEN
Arild Sandvold (1895-1984)
Kåre Nordstoga

JULEMESSE - Missa in nativitate Domini is a new and exiting celebration of Christmas, and definitely Sølvguttene's most unique Christmas album to date. The album is a Christmas Mass, with all its regular parts, in addition to traditional Christmas carols. What makes this recording special is that we have chosen to sing chants from various composers, while it's normal to sing a whole mass from the same composer. We wanted to reveal how different composers from different periods of time have interpreted the same words. The music covers a range of over 1000 years, from Benedictus which is from the 10th century to Kjell Mørk Karlsen's and Wolfgang Plagge's compositions from our time.

Album: JULEMESSE - missa in nativitate Domini (2L42SACD)
Recording venue: Uranienborg Church, February 2006
Original source: 88.2kHz/24bit

Immortal BACH
Knut Nystedt (1915-)
Ensemble 96 / Øystein Fevang

The beginning of the universe and the drama at Golgatha; medieval music and German baroque; the writings of Søren Kierkegaard – and a child's baptism in Oslo in 1987. Knut Nystedt draws his inspiration from all ages, creating his monumental choral art with a Christian perspective and wide, humanistic appeal. This surround sound recording reproduces the three-dimensional effect as envisaged by the composer – Surrounded by the Wonders of Creation. This album was nominated for two GRAMMY Awards 2006: Best Choral Performance and Best Surround Sound Album.

Album: Immortal NYSTEDT (2L29SACD)
Recording venue: Uranienborg Church, February 2004
Original source: 48kHz/24bit

www.2L.no
Blu-ray is the first domestic format in history that unites theatre movies and music sound in equally high quality. The musical advantage of Blu-ray is the high resolution for audio, and the convenience for the audience as one single player will handle music, films, their DVD-collection and their old library of traditional CD.

What we are seeing is a completely new conception of the musical experience. Recorded music is no longer a matter of a fixed two-dimensional setting, but rather a three-dimensional enveloping situation. Stereo can be described as a flat canvas, while surround sound is a sculpture that you can literally move around and relate to spatially; with surround you can move about in the aural space and choose angles, vantage points and positions.

By developing one common format the surround technology that we have been working with for years finally becomes accessible to the general public. Fairly soon almost all disc players will be Blu-ray devices, and already now a majority of the sound systems that come off the shelf are 5.1 surround systems. People buy the equipment for the sake of film entertainment, but with it they get access to the unique musical experience that we are offering. Stereo is still possible of course, but the fact is that the resistance towards surround is mostly based on ignorance. People just don’t know what they are missing out on.

A senior Norwegian HiFi journalist visited our studio recently. Prior to our listening session I explained to him how we recorded MOZART and DIVERTIMENTI with the orchestra in a circle, all musicians facing each other – surrounding the listener. He rose from his chair and wanted to leave. I begged him to listen - and he stayed for three hours; leaving us with the conclusion: “Now I need to go home and write an article apologising all my readers for the thirty years I have misguided them in stereo. Surround sound is the real thing.”

The musical and technical process of recording and editing are identical for SACD and Blu-ray. When I started as a recording engineer in 1990 there was no focus on surround sound in classical music. It was the introduction of SACD that made us aware of this magnificent perspective. Surround sound gave us the solution to the depth and spatial resolution we experienced live on stage in a concert house, but were not able to recreate in stereo.

We prefer to record in spacious acoustic venues; large concert halls, churches and cathedrals. This is actually where we can make the most intimate recordings. The qualities we seek in large rooms are not necessarily a big reverb, but openness due to the absence of close reflecting walls. Making an ambient and beautiful recording is the way of least resistance. Searching the fine edge between direct contact and openness; that’s the real challenge. A really good recording should be able to bodily move the listener. This core quality of audio production is made by choosing the right venue for the repertoire, and balancing the image in the placement of microphones and musicians relative to each other in that venue. Planning and discussions with the musicians create trust and a sense of occasion and excitement that translates onto the recordings. What we insist upon in the recording phase is time. We usually spend from four to six days of recording on a 60-minutes repertoire. In credit of the musicians I need to say that this is not in need of getting the score right, but in order to bring forward the right mood and dimensions. At most projects the entire first day is spent bringing the dimensions down from a 1500-people hall to the proximity encountered on a home-visit to your living room. The challenge of this process is to get the volume down, keeping the intensity and energy up, without being intrusive. There is no method available today to reproduce the exact perception of attending a live performance. That leaves us with the art of illusion when it comes to recording music. As recording engineers and producers we need to do exactly the same as any good musician; interpret the music and the composer’s intentions and adapt to the media where we perform.
At venue recording sessions our analogue to digital converters can do both the one-bit DSD and the multi-bit PCM formats. We can also listen directly to the analogue output from the microphones.

Digital eXtreme Definition is a professional audio format that brings “analogue” qualities in 24 bit at 352.8 kHz sampling rate. DXD preserves 8.4672 Mbit/s (3 times the data of DSD) per channel. This leaves headroom for editing and balancing before quantizing to DSD for SACD or PCM for Blu-Ray. All audio formats on The Nordic Sound are sample rate converted from the same DXD master. Comparing them in our studio we find only subtle differences from DXD down to 192kHz and 96kHz. The obvious degeneration is from 96kHz down to 48kHz. We find DSD, as used in the SACD format, somewhat different in colour from PCM; in some mysterious way DSD is softer and more beautiful but slightly less detailed. In DXD we find the shimmering brilliance from the original analogue source as directly from the microphones. Linear PCM is offered in addition to DTS HD Master Audio on this Blu-ray with the purpose of convincing audiophiles of the true lossless qualities of commercial encoding. The stereo layer of the SACD and the LPCM 2.0-stream on the Blu-ray are both full resolution mix from the original microphones. Mostly we find that the microphone placements used for the surround make a fine stereo. Occasionally we put up extra microphones dedicated for the stereo stream.

I personally prefer extremely high resolution PCM over the DSD and I would claim that DSD is not transparent. But it all comes down to what the sound from your speakers can do to your body and mind. I find that the placement of microphones has an infinite more important role in the final experience of music, than the difference between HiRes PCM and DSD. Sometimes a lie can be more beautiful than the truth!

Morten Lindberg
February 2009
The 2L label is best described as a premium brand with very high production and packaging values. “We are in a very fortunate position in Norway because we have cultural grants from the government to help preserve and re-vitalize our cultural heritage and that means Norwegian repertoire both in a historic and contemporary perspective,” explains Morten. “Our strength is where we live, where we have grown up and where we have our local knowledge and culture. We also have a choice of venues that other countries do not have. You might consider this an invitation to other labels to visit Norway, make their recordings and publish worldwide.”

Lindberg Lyd has been passionate about SACD and since the year 2000 has been making serious investment in the new format through advanced equipment and pioneering technology like DXD. But now exploring the possibilities of Blu-ray proves that 2L is not committed to format. Their heart lies with music in high resolution multi channel audio, distribute on the carriers that at any given time reach the largest audience.

Their approach to recording is somehow different from the others. They would not shy away from using the surround channels to their full potential, dedicated to actual instruments or vocal parts instead of just the ambience. The music seems to be more engaging and more involving, putting the listener right in the centre of music making. Most multi-channel projects are all discrete 6-channel recordings employing six microphones and six recording tracks (sometimes augmented with back up or fill in microphones and tracks). Depending on the repertoire and the recording venue, but whenever possible, they would avoid cardioid microphones that have narrow directional characteristics. In the recording of Mozart’s concertos for violin and orchestra (2L38SACD) the members of the orchestra formed a circle, with the five microphones set up in the middle. That places the listener into the position of the conductor. Vibrancy is in the air. Tone of the instruments is vividly natural. The Gregorian Chant recording by Consortium Vocale Oslo (2L43SACD) also conjures lifelike presence without exaggerating hi-fi excitement. Both these titles are DXD processing. The result is sonic quality that exemplifies high definition and fine, smooth texture. The signal path is as simple and short as it is technically advanced and the company has devised a formula which Lindberg Lyd describe as: “Fantastic musicians and adventurous music in a beautiful venue!”
Recorded in Norway 2004-2008 by Lindberg Lyd AS

Recording producers
Morten Lindberg, Wolfgang Plagge and Jørn Simenstad

Balance engineers
Morten Lindberg and Hans Peter L’Orange

Editing, mix and mastering
Lindberg Lyd, Oslo, Norway

Compilation and SACD authoring
Morten Lindberg

Blu-ray authoring msm-studios

This Pure Audio Blu-ray Disc has been designed to offer two ways of operation, either with or without a TV screen: you can either navigate the on-screen POP-UP MENU or simply use the dedicated buttons of your remote control. The NUMERIC keys directly access the corresponding track number and the desired audio stream can be selected by the COLOURED keys on your remote. 5.1 DTS HD Master Audio is preselected.

All resolutions and encodings presented on these two discs are derived from the same original DXD source files 24bit / 352.8kHz