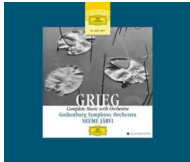


Edvard Grieg - Complete Music with Orchestra CD6 (2001)

Wpisany przez bluesever

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Edvard Grieg - Complete Music with Orchestra CD6 (2001)



Old Norwegian Romance, Op.51 1.*Poco tranquillo* 0:40 2.*Tema. Andantino espressivo* 0:47
3.*Poco Allegro, ma tranquillo* 0:31 4.*Energico* 0:29 5.*Allegro leggiero* 0:32 6.*Poco Andante*
1:04 7.*Maestoso* 0:51 8.*Allegro scherzando e leggiero* 0:43 9.*Andante* 1:01 10.*Andante*
1:39 11.*Preso* 0:36 12.*Tempo di Menuetto* 1:41 13.*Allegro marcato* 0:59
14.*Tempo di Valse* 1:11 15.*Adagio molto espressivo.* 2:38 16.*Finale. Allegro molto marcato*
1:38 17.*Pomposo* 1:20 18.*Prestissimo* 1:03 19.*Andante molto tranquillo* 1:56

Fire digte, op 21

20.*The first meeting* 3:20

6 Songs, Op.39

21.1. *Fra Monte Pincio* 4:43

6 Songs, Op.25

22.2. *En Svane* 2:10

12 Songs, Op.33

23.2. *Våren* 4:30

Norge - Norway, op.58

24.*Henrik Wergeland* 4:09 25.*Den Bergtekne - The Mountain Thrall, op.32* 6:09 26.*Foran*
sydens kloster - At a southern convent's gate, op.20 9:00 27.*Bergliot, op.42* 17:26

Barbara Bonney (soprano) Randi Stene (mezzo-soprano) Håkan Hagegård (baritone) Rut
Tellefsen (narrator) Göteborgs Symfoniker Neeme Järvi - conductor

The Old Norwegian Melody takes a brief but attractive theme and the ensuing variations alternate poetry, delicacy and strength. Some of the variations are very brief indeed but all make their point (Järvi's characterisation of them is always spot on) and there is a more extended Adagio molto espressivo before the last group which constitute a majestic finale which then dies away so that the work ends with a very poetic coda.

Has this quiet ending discouraged conductors (with the notable exception of Beecham) from taking the piece up? If so, shame on them, for this is clearly the masterpiece among Grieg's

works for full orchestra and deserves a place in the repertoire alongside the variations of Brahms, Dvorak and Elgar.

The listener will find it interesting to compare the first song here, *The First Meeting*, with Grieg's arrangement of it as the second of the *Two Melodies*, op. 53. On his own Järvi digs into it and draws it out (it lasts a minute longer) with very rich string tone. The music can take it but a light soprano voice probably couldn't, and Barbara Bonney gives a performance which is just as moving in its tender restraint as is the other in its more overt passion. Järvi adapts himself to Bonney's quite different conception with admirable musicianship.

These orchestral songs (arranged by Grieg from piano originals) are all highly attractive. The absence of the words is once again regrettable though such melodic writing can be enjoyed for its own sake, especially when so well sung. *Spring* is an outstandingly beautiful piece.

Being originally conceived for just voice and piano, these songs are mainly intimate in expression. *The Mountain Thrall* was intended for an orchestra of strings and two horns from the start and is a fine example of the composer's epic vein. Grieg himself was particularly fond of it and felt that with it he had "accomplished one of the few good deeds of my life".

Whoever made the decision not to print the words in this set, which were included with the original issues, most emphatically has not done one of the few good deeds of his life. I keep returning to this, and I have to since "*Before a Southern Convent*", while it has its moments of lyrical writing, has many more where we clearly need to know what is being said. But above all, it is quite ridiculous to expect any but a native Norwegian to sit through over 17 minutes of recitation – *Bergliot* - without knowing what it is about. This is especially so considering that actual sustained music is rare; for the most part Grieg illustrates the poem with tremolandos and dramatic chords. I daresay it is very effective, and Norwegian would seem the ideal language for near-hysterical dramatic declamation, rather like Münch's "*The Scream*" come to life. But only a Norwegian is likely to hear it a second time. The booklet notes are informative but, if space really forbade a few pages more, in the case of the vocal works perhaps it would have been better to keep the words and omit the note. Or could not the note on the piano concerto have been omitted, since it is sufficiently well-known not to need it?

I must confess that Grieg was one of my teenage passions, and like most such it didn't seem to last. Well-disposed as I am towards romantic music generally I never systematically explored him beyond the well-known pieces. There must be many music-lovers who would say the same

and I recommend this box to all of them. There are some disappointments (particularly the Symphonic Dances) but in general this is a small output of consistently high quality, and a wider range than one might expect. Performance and recording are of such quality as to ensure that it is not necessary to seek alternative versions of these works save perhaps the Piano Concerto and those few that were recorded by Beecham. The notes are good, in three languages, so all that is lacking for a definitive presentation is the texts. Why will companies spoil the ship for a ha'porth of tar? And if they say there wasn't room in the booklet, I reply that they haven't worried unduly about questions of space, for the box itself is high, wide and handsome, with the result that it won't fit into any of the shelves or drawers where I keep my CDs. Now I call that real smart. ---Christopher Howell, www.musicweb-international.com

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