



Edvard Grieg: Complete Symphonic Works, Vol. V

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[American Record Guide](#) (Vroon - 2016.03.01)

This series has been good except where there is formidable competition. This program is, by that standard, mixed. Certainly the Norwegian Dances here can't compete with Jarvi on DG (Gothenburg Symphony). Note also that Grieg never orchestrated these dances; they were written for two pianos. The two pieces from Peer Gynt are available in complete recordings—just not in the suites. But most of one piece (Act I Prelude) is just 'Solveig's Song' for orchestra, and we have that on dozens of recordings. The other piece takes less than 2 minutes. The Opus 68 Lyric Pieces are seldom heard in orchestrated form. The only Lyric Pieces that have been recorded often by orchestras are the Opus 54 set. (But there is a Naxos that has Opus 68: 572403.)

I don't like 'The Mountain Thrall', a six-minute piece for baritone and orchestra.

That leaves the six orchestral songs. Three of them are familiar: the two Solveig songs from Peer Gynt and 'The Last Spring'. To those are added 'From Monte Pincio', 'A Swan', and 'Henrik Wergeland'. I know no better recording of the six songs, though of course there are better ones of the Solveig songs in sets of Peer Gynt. (Eileen Farrell did one of them with Fiedler.)

Tempos are slower than in any other recording I know. The singer never sounds "operatic" but has a sweet folk simplicity combined with a lovely, well-trained voice. There's a Norwegian melancholy here that often fails to show up.

The six songs take 27 minutes (Inger Dam-Jensen on Naxos takes 24 minutes). Add the 8 minutes of the two Lyric Pieces, and there is 35 minutes of music here that can't be beat elsewhere. Sound is excellent.