Edvard Grieg: Complete Symphonic Works, Vol. IV

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American Record Guide 31.03.2015 (Paul L Althouse - 2015.03.31)

Over his entire career Grieg wrote only two orchestral works in the traditional multimovement format: this symphony and concerto. Both are early works. The symphony was completed in 1864, when the composer was 20; the concerto followed in 1868. The symphony had a curious fate because after some partial performances Grieg withdrew it, declaring it should not be performed. And so it wasn't until 1980, and since then a few recordings have appeared. The work shows debt to Mendelssohn and Schumann but probably doesn't have enough interest to enter the general repertory. It does have, though, catchy themes and lovely moments that show the remarkable skill and finesse of a young composer. The sweet romanticism we associate with Grieg is not yet part of his style—it really sounds more like Mendelssohn!—and it is clear that after these two early orchestral works he directed his career in other directions.

The symphony performance under Eivind Aadland has everything you would hope for: lots of energy and excitement, with a very fine, well-prepared orchestra. The music emerges with a sense of youth and enthusiasm, and rhythms are crisp. With the concerto, of course, we are on familiar ground. The catalog lists dozens of fine recordings, and a relative newcomer like Schuch (now in his mid-30s) won't gain notice easily. But this is a fine performance. He throws himself into the piece with lots of excitement in the outer movements and plenty of virtuosic display, mainly in the big cadenza. He also gives us ample poetry in the slow movement and the finale (before the strange stop in the middle!) Schuch is ably backed by Aadland, who brings the same level of excitement here as in the symphony.

This is Volume IV of Audite's complete edition of Grieg's orchestral work in five volumes (see our index). It comes with fine, detailed notes, and the sound is first rate. A fine job all around!

Bayerischer Rundfunk BR-Klassik, CD-Tipp vom 06.10.2014 (- 2014.10.06)

BROADCAST

CD-TIPP

Sendebeleg siehe PDF!

BBC Music Magazine November 2014 (MSR - 2014.11.01)

Grieg's most popular piece alongside his most forgotten, the amlable Symphony he withdrew soon after it was written. The Concerto performance lacks fire, but it's an agreeable combination.

Classical CD Choice December 13, 2014 (Barry Forshaw - 2014.12.13)
source: http://www.cdchoice.co.uk/?p=829

[...] the concerto is given a reading of great spirit and colour.

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Das Orchester 02/2015 (Susanne Rudolph - 2015.02.01)
source: http://www.dasorchester.de/de_DE/journal...

Da der norwegische Dirigent Eivind Aadland mit dem WDR Sinfonieorchester all diese Attribute mit liebevoller Detailgenauigkeit und sprühendem Elan ausspielt und weder kernige Klangwucht noch Empfindungstiefe scheut, dürfte es dem Zuhörer ähnlich gehen wie einst Rubinstein und Bernstein: Je öfter er die Sinfonie anhört, desto lieber wird sie ihm… Kurz: Diese bemerkenswerte Talentprobe des jungen Edvard Grieg, in der sein typisch nordisches Idiom schon aufscheint, ist eine bereichernde Entdeckung.

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Der Tagesspiegel 07.12.2014 (Frederik Hanssen - 2014.12.07)

Stille Nacht? Von wegen!

Tagesspiegel-Kritikerinnen und -Kritiker empfehlen: Die besten CDs zu Weihnachten

[...] leidenschaftliche Musik, handwerklich tadellos gearbeitet und genuin romantisch.

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Diapason N° 631 Janvier 2015 (Nicolas Derny - 2015.01.01)

«Rentre chez toi et écris une symphonie», conseille Niels Gade au jeune Grieg, qui s'était alors frotté qu'aux petites formes. L'apprenti s'exécute. Mais note en 1867 «Ne doit jamais être jouée» sur le manuscrit de son unique tentative. Conventionnelle dans sa construction, la symphonie offre pourtant de beaux atouts mélodiques.

Depuis la levée de l'interdiction en... 1981 par la bibliothèque qui la détenait, les gravures ne manquent pas. La nouvelle, bien ancrée sur son large socle (mais pas empesée pour autant), doit beaucoup au geste nerveux d'Eivind Aadland. On peut rêver, dans l'ondoyant Adagio espressivo, de couleurs plus «boréales» que celle de l'orchestre de Cologne, mais l'élan populaire que le chef confère au scherzo et l'énergie trépidante du finale enthousiasment plus que de coutume. Un joli coup de frais.

Soliste et maestro travaillent ensuite à caractériser au mieux les différents épisodes du concerto pour piano. De la vigueur parfois un peu dure au lyrisme le plus chantant, Herbert Schuch montre l'étendue de sa palette expressive et veille à l'élégance du rubato. En outre, les compères semblent prendre un malin plaisir à accentuer ici l'influence de Chopin, à tirer là des fusées lisztiennes, ou à annoncer Rachmaninov. Personnel, bel et bon, mais trop contrôlé. Un peu d'abandon n'aurait pas nui.

Fanfare 26.03.2015 (Jim Svejda - 2015.03.26)

For the fourth (and next-to-last) installment of its stunning series of the complete symphonic works of Edvard Grieg, Audite made the canny decision to combine the composer's least-known major work with the one performed with the most monotonous frequency. Incredibly enough, these two youthful half-hour works, written barely five years apart, hardly seem the work of the same composer.

Composed for Copenhagen at the suggestion of Niels Gade when Grieg was only 20, the Symphony in C Minor is an amiable, well-made stylistic hodge-podge that mixes Schumann, Mendelssohn and—for those with a very discerning ear—Gade himself. Finished in 1864, the symphony was not performed until 1980, when it was finally heard against the composer's wishes and instructions. The premiere was given—wouldn't you know it—in the Soviet Union, by the Russian conductor Vitali Katayev, who asked the Bergen city library for a photocopy for "research purposes only" and then performed it anyway. (One more reason not to lament the passing of The Evil Empire.)

The brilliant young Norwegian conductor Eivind Aadland treats the piece like the early work it is, wisely choosing never to overstate the case or try to turn it into the youthful masterpiece it clearly isn't. Still, everything is done with such loving care and meticulous attention to detail—listen especially to the incredibly refined and sensitive phrasing in the lovely Adagio espressivo—that it's difficult to imagine a stronger case ever being made for the piece.

The version of the piano concerto is as fresh-minted and spontaneous sounding as everything else in the series, with the WDR Symphony again playing in a way that suggests it's coming to the music for the very first time (in the best possible sense). The Romanian-born Herbert Schuch is a probing and imaginative soloist, often acting like the first among equals in a fine chamber music recital. The playing itself is lithe and endearingly capricious, especially in the concerto's cadenza, which for once sounds like cadenzas were meant to sound: as though someone were making it up on the spot. There's also plenty of fire and muscle when the music requires it, most notably in a finale which steps off at a pace that manages to seem both

cracking and completely comfortable. Again, the orchestra performs countless little expressive miracles along the way. Try sampling the flute solo about two and a half minutes in: You can actually smell the chilly morning air.

As in the previous installments in the series, the recorded sound is as warm and natural as the performances themselves. Alas, the concluding Volume Five must now be anticipated with equal amounts of eagerness and regret: as in, what a pity Grieg didn't write more things for this bunch to record.

Gramophone December 2014 (Rob Cowan - 2014.12.01)

GRAMOPHONE
THE WORLD'S BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

'Must never be performed' is an obvious red rag to any musical bull and although Grieg's youthful C minor Symphony reveals numerous influences, some more obvious than others, it's confidently built, thematically appealing and mildly memorable in a way that recalls similarly derivative early symphonic works by Dvorak and Glazunov. Its first recording, by the Bergen Symphony Orchestra under Karsten Andersen, is now out on Decca Eloquence (appropriately coupled with Goldmark's equally engaging Rustic Wedding Symphony), and shares the market with worthy versions under Ari Rasilainen, Okko Kamu, Terje Mikkelsen and Neeme Järvi. Up until now I would probably have rated the latter as top contender but this newcomer from Eivind Aadland and the Cologne WDR Symphony Orchestra, which is captured in admirably natural sound and appears in the context of Grieg's 'Complete Symphonic Works, Vol 4', is a fresh, lightly sprung performance that avoids any inappropriate feelings of portentousness and highlights the mazurka-style third movement as the most characteristic in terms of its thematic material.

A good idea to couple Grieg's least familiar orchestral work with its totally familiar near contemporary, the A minor Piano Concerto, in a not insubstantial reading by the excellent Herbert Schuch, who sounds-as if he's worked over every semiquaver with infinite care. Not that the performance lacks spontaneity, more that inner voices, crisp rhythms and a sculpted brand of poetry suggest a truly 'settled' interpretation, one that happily compares with (but hardly replaces) the best available. Again Aadland and his Cologne players provide an excellent account of the orchestral score, supportive of Schuch and distinctive on its own terms, and the recorded balance is excellent.

hifi & records 1/2015 (Uwe Steiner - 2015.01.01)

hifi & records

Wie schon in den vorangegangenen drei Folgen seiner Einspielung sämtlicher Orchesterwerke Griegs macht Eivind Aadland auch diese Musik so stark wie irgend möglich, vor allem gönnt er ihrem poetischen Zauber die erforderliche Transparenz und die Vielfalt der Orchesterfarben. Auf vordergründige Effekte verzichtet zumal die Wiedergabe des Klavierkonzerts. Herbert Schuch musiziert ganz auf dieser Linie, indem er bei tadelloser Technik, niemals vordergründig den Virtuosen ausstellt, um stattdessen vielmehr die Schönheiten dieser Partitur lyrisch und sanglich zu entfalten. Eine Empfehlung!

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

http://theclassicalreviewer.blogspot.de Sunday, 19 October 2014 (Bruce Reader - 2014.10.19)

Audite's fourth volume in their edition of The Complete Symphonic Works of Edvard Grieg is another fine release that leaves this series set to become a real winner

Altogether this is another fine addition to Audite's ongoing complete symphonic cycle. The recording from Köln Philharmonie is excellent and there are informative booklet notes. This series is set to become a real winner.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Image Hifi 2/2015 (Heinz Gelking - 2015.02.01)

Hörenswertes

In Köln entstand keine stürmische, sondern eine eher frische und kraftvolle, am Klavier brillant gespielte und trotzdem nicht vom Solisten dominierte, sondern auch durch ein prägnantes und transparentes Orchesterspiel getragene Version. [...] Lange habe ich keine Aufnahme mit Klavier plus Orchester gehört, in der Parameter wie Transparenz, Energie und Raum so gut unter Dach und Fach gebracht wurden.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Infodad.com November 13, 2014 (- 2014.11.13)

The extent of the symphony

His Piano Concerto, however, is of crucial importance, and it shares the SACD with the symphony and gets a grand, sweeping and altogether winning performance from Herbert Schuch.

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International Record Review December 2014 (Colin Anderson - 2014.12.01)

Edvard Grieg would prefer that we did not know his Symphony in C minor. But his cover was broken in the late days of the LP when Decca issued a digital recording by Karsten Andersen and the Bergen Philharmonic. The work has not been hidden since, although it is hardly a staple of the repertoire, and is unlikely ever to be. One may well understand the composer's reluctance to have the music played, yet there are some attractive ideas in a symphony that is concise, confident and lyrical, and certainly with numerous trademarks of the Norwegian's style. It's a warm-hearted score, and not a little evocative in places, cast in the traditional four movements and playing for just over half an hour. So it doesn't outstay its welcome; and, anyway, Grieg wasn't about putting on a big show. Rather he invented some pleasing melodies, developed and orchestrated them well if modestly, and his dynamic palette is wide, which Eivind Aadland ensures we appreciate; furthermore, when needed, the composer invests moments of drama to keep the listener engaged and the music on a clear-cut journey.

There is something of a chivalrous fee l to the first movement. If the slow one is a relative disappointment, it's because the very opening is quite lovely but then the music doesn't quite bloom as the initial promise suggests it might. It's tenderly played here, though, as part of a sympathetic and well-prepared reading that continues with a robust, dancing scherzo, itself contrasted with a pastoral trio. The finale drives along with a sense of purpose and direction and also with a sense of emotional urgency, and lightly trips, too, in a very attractive way. The cited stylistic likenesses that are made in Audite's annotation to composers such as Niels Gade, Mendelssohn and Schumann are justified, if applicable more to the former than the two Germans. Yet, ultimately, Grieg is characteristically Grieg in this work, not quite fully formed, doubting himself, but leaving us a work that can be much enjoyed.

The excellent music-making and recorded sound is carried into a piece at the polar extreme of Grieg's popularity, the Piano Concerto. Eric Morecambe may have made hay with it more than 40 years ago, with André Previn his willing and brilliant accomplice. Herbert Schuch, with the full support of the orchestra and conductor, gives a fresh and flowing, feisty even, account of music easy to take for granted. There is much that is gentle and tender, too, and the slow movement is especially soulful, beautifully brought off, and the finale has an invigorating impetuousness as well as idyllic romance and final triumph. Throughout, a positive collaboration informs this honest outing for such a familiar concerto. (The earlier volumes in this series were reviewed in July / August 2011 and September 2013).

ionarts.blogspot.com Tuesday, August 30, 2016 (Jens F. Laurson - 2016.08.30)
source: http://ionarts.blogspot.com/2016/08/dip-...

Dip your ears

[…] It's almost eerily similar to another recent (also live) recording that combines the concerto with Lyric Pieces (although four of Ott's twelve chocies overlap), namely that of Javier Perianes on Harmonia Mundi with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sakari Oramo. If I had to choose between the two, Ott would win out; when she differs, however marginally, in tempos, she's a touch fleeter, which I like… and the recorded sound (and orchestra's wind section: no hiss with the Bavarians) is slightly better on DG, which becomes notable in the slow movement. Compared to Herbert Schuch's recording on Audite (a very delicate, favorite performance, with the WDR SO Cologne and Eivind Aadland) the sound is more direct and almost (and only in comparison) brash.

In the Lyric Pieces Ott (and the acoustic) is a little drier, a little leaner, while Perianes indulges in a freer rubato. Incidentally that's closer to Grieg, whose rubato was very free-wheeling, indeed. Another fine, slightly specialist release, of Grieg's Piano Concerto and select Lyric Pieces (played on Grieg's piano and trying to emulate Grieg's own performances) shows this to be the case, namely that of Sigurd Slåttebrekk with the Oslo Philharmonic under Michail Jurowski on Simax (ionarts review here: Musical Journey Through Norway). Alice Sara Ott navigates her way through these pieces in similar manner as with the concerto. She won't indulge, and while her butterfly is fast and sufficiently nervous, she doesn't deliberately undercut the romantic cliché, either. Like that butterfly, the pieces flit by with great pleasantness and slight blandness.

If that sounds like a gentle bashing, it's not intended that way. These qualities are no detriment to the music or recording. Actually, this disc could be considered an ideal Griegtroduction™: it does not overly color the canvas of the music and leaves the ears ready, thereafter, to open-mindedly receiving and considering any number of differing interpretations. The only snag: There is one similar recording already, which does all that, a little more of it, arguably a little more interestingly while doing it, and certainly no worse at it. That's Leif Ove Andsnes' first, super-stormy, recording of the concerto with the Bergen Philharmonic under Dmitri Kitayenko which, in a coupling on a Virgin twofer (now Erato, if only Warner only re-issued it at last, hopefully with the same Delacroix' "Orphan girl seated in cemetery" on the cover), added many more lyric pieces and the Piano Sonata on two discs priced lower than the DG release. […]

Klassisk Musikkmagasin Nummer 4/2014 (Martin Anderson - 2014.10.01)

Schuch's very first entry is made with such precision and power that you sit up in surprise – you know that something special is ahead of you, and so it proves, in one of the best accounts of this constantly recycled concerto that I've heard. [...]

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk MDR FIGARO | Take 5 | 03.11.2014 | 18:05-19:00 Uhr (Andre Sittner - 2014.11.03)
source: http://www.mdr.de/kultur/rueckblick/mdr-...

BROADCAST CD-Empfehlung

Alles in allem also sehr gelungen und eine würdige Fortsetzung der zu Recht vielgelobten Grieg-Reihe bei Audite.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Musik & Theater 11/12 November/Dezember 2014 (Reinmar Wagner - 2014.11.01)

Verbotene Sinfonie

Beschwingt, akzentuiert klingt das, mit Elan und einer Portion eher jugendlichem als romantischem Pathos, Herbert Schuch ist der tadellose Solist im Klavierkonzert.

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Muzyka21 listopad 2014 (Stanisław Lubliński - 2014.11.01)

Płyta urzekła mnie po pierwszych dźwiękach. Poziom orkiestry jest znakomity pod względem sprawności technicznej i precyzji, nienagannej intonacji, spójności barwowej i elegancji odpowiedniej dla muzyki Norwega. [...] Herberta Schucha prawdziwym mistrzem klawiatury. Jego niezwykła elastyczności w podejściu do koncertu Griega zachwyca.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Neue Musikzeitung 10/14 Oktober 2014 (Hanspeter Krellmann - 2014.10.01)

Unüberhörbar

[...] vier zur Serie gebundenen CDs in einer durchgehend resolut angegangenen wie sensibel nachempfundenen Darstellung.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Piano News Januar/Februar (I/2015) (Carsten Dürer - 2015.01.01)

Mit seiner Eigenschaft der nicht nur brillierenden, technischen Sicht auf diese Musik weiß Schuch dieses Konzert eindringlich zu gestalten, mit Lyrismus, mit Vehemenz, mit famoser Agogik und Phrasierung. Und er bildet mit dem Orchester eine derartig grandiose Einheit, dass man sich kaum erinnert, dieses Konzert jemals besser gehört zu haben . Eine Referenzeinspielung!

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Record Geijutsu 2015.2 (- 2015.02.01)

japanische Rezension siehe PDF!

Scherzo Número 305 - Marzo de 2015 (Juan Carlos Moreno - 2015.03.01)

Mejor, como siempre, Eivind Aadland, quien vuelve a demostrar su empatía con Grieg en este poco agradecido programa.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

The New Listener 09/04/2016 (Oliver Fraenzke - 2016.04.09)

Perlen des Nordens

Eivind Aadland geht dem Orchesterwerk dieses grandiosen Komponisten auf den Grund, gemeinsam mit dem WDR-Sinfonieorchester Köln spielte er es auf fünf CDs für audite ein. Das Orchester spielt klar und durchhörbar, der Dirigent verzichtet auf alle unnötigen Romantizismen und überdehnte Tempi rubati. [...] Es entstehen vielfarbige Schattierungen und das Ganze wird nicht wie viel zu häufig zu hören in einem einzigen monochromen „Grieg-Klang“ verschmolzen.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

Vårt Land Tirsdag 13. Januar 2015 (Olav Egil - 2015.01.13)

Grieg med dyp pust

Blant uendeligheten av innspilte Grieg-toner føyer de nyeste seg inn blant dem som tar det store overblikket - uten tusser, tuer og norske kratt

Det er en forrykende tolkning. Aadlands utgave er, som alt i denne serien, preget av moden vurdering og sikker sans for at musikken bærer, om den bare får tid til å puste og ikke piskes opp. I Aadland hånd – opplever jeg – blir Griegs Symfoni for første gang virkelig interessant. Naturlig virtuositet (ved behov) avløses av klassisk, symfonisk refleksjon, kall det gjerne alvor, en lys form for alvor.

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WDR 3 01.03.2016 (- 2016.03.01)
source: http://www1.wdr.de/av/audio-edvard-grieg...

BROADCAST

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www.limelightmagazine.com.au June 2015 (Greg Kune - 2015.06.01)

A warhorse gets a good trot alongside a forgotten pony

I've raved about Eivind Aadland's recordings with the excellent West Deutsche Rundfunk Orchestra in his Grieg cycle and this vivid performance and lovely recording maintain the standard. [...] One review exclaimed "his shadings have shadings" - exactly! His tone is gorgeous and so is this CD.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

www.opusklassiek.nl januari 2016 (Aart van der Wal - 2016.01.01)

Het is duidelijk, Aadland en het orkest hebben dit repertoire zo goed in de vingers, er zoveel affiniteit mee dat dit project alleen daarom al als ijzersterk mag worden gekwalificeerd Daar komt dan nog bij dat het orkestspel van hoog gehalte is en dat de in de Keulse Philharmonie en de Bismarck-zaal gemaakte opnamen tot de beste mogen worden gerekend die ik tot nu toe uit die bron heb gehoord.

Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.

www.pizzicato.lu 29/10/2014 (Remy Franck - 2014.10.29)

Lebendige Grieg-Interpretationen

In seiner Gesamtaufnahme von Edward Griegs symphonischem Werk kommt Eivind Aadland nicht an der viel und nicht zuletzt vom Komponisten selber geschmähten Symphonie vorbei. Aadlands motiviertes Dirigieren kann die uncharakteristische Musik nicht ins Positive wenden: Das Werk zieht vorbei und hinterlässt kaum Spuren.

Im Klavierkonzert geht der Dirigent recht sachlich mit der Musik um und arbeitet zusammen mit Herbert Schuch ein Maximum an Nuancen und Kontrasten im Grieg-Konzert heraus. Das führt zu einer lebendigen Darstellung, in der kraftvolle Bravour und poetische Lyrik mit klarem Kopf platziert und dosiert werden.

Lively and stylish performances in a very natural sound. However, even in such a good interpretation,

Grieg's Symphony remains a rather uncharacteristic and unsatisfying work.

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