



E. Grieg: Lyric Pieces

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Grieg's Lyric Pieces lend themselves to a wide variety of approaches, from the nervous energy and disquiet of the composer's own playing (faintly preserved on ancient acoustic discs) to the introspective delicacy of Gieseking and Gilels. Pianist Hideyo Harada goes her own way as she follows carefully mapped-out interpretive itineraries. In the A minor Melody Op. 47 No. 3, she opts for broad pacing in the outer sections, where she coaxes out inner voices in long arcs. Perhaps Erotik (Op. 43 No. 5) lingers too much when it ought to move along, yet the focus and intensity with which the central climax builds cannot be denied.

The famous Butterfly Op. 43 No. 1 usually flutters with the wind. Here, however, it's choreographed with painstaking refinement, as are the B minor Op. 62 No. 4 Brooklet's trickling patterns. Similar observations apply to the dynamic gradations in Vanished Days (Op. 57 No. 1) as well as to the Op. 54 No. 5 Scherzo's amazingly dead-of-center scales and runs. It's also a relief to hear Wedding Day at Troldhaugen so elegantly shaped and articulated (many pianists simply pound it to death); ditto the March of the Trolls.

To be sure, Harada doesn't project Grieg's melodies with the natural ebb and flow or disarming simplicity marking Antonio Pompa-Baldi's interpretations on Centaur. You might say that Harada relates to Pompa-Baldi in Grieg's Lyric Pieces as Michelangeli does to Rubinstein in Chopin's Mazurkas: not that there's anything wrong with that! In other words, Harada displays a high level of artistry throughout the 22 selections that make up this thoughtfully programmed, beautifully recorded, and unusually distinctive Grieg recital.