



E. Grieg: Complete Symphonic Works Vol. 1

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[Fish Fine Music](#) (2011.10.04)

Our CD of the week this week was a really pleasant surprise as I probably wouldn't normally reach for a disc of such oft-recorded fare. Edvard Grieg wanted to give Norway its unique voice and he did that with songs, piano pieces, and particularly with his symphonic works, to be released by Audite in a 5-volume series. This first SACD presents Grieg's principal collections: his four Symphonic Dances of 1898 and his two suites from the incidental music to Henrik Ibsen's drama Peer Gynt. No rarities here then – so what is so special?

Eivind Aadland's roots in the Norwegian folk tradition audibly influence his interpretations. He comes from a family where folk music played an important role and as a child he came into intensive contact with Grieg's music. Aadland was chief conductor and artistic director of the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra from 2003 until 2010 and Queenslanders may be interested to discover that he is now the Principal Guest Conductor of their very own Symphony Orchestra! Anyway, this is playing of a very high standard indeed but the folk inflections make it irresistably delicate, light and tangy. Just listen to Anitra's Dance for instance and you will hear, maybe for the first time, why Percy Grainger was drawn to Grieg. Solveig's song is another special moment – gone the soupy romanticism of many interpreters, what we have here is intimate and exquisite. Joyous stuff that will make you really listen again – bring on volume 2!

“Aadland is a native of Grieg's Bergen, steeped through his family in the Norwegian folk-music tradition... To the WDR players he has communicated a lightness of touch and a fine Grieg balance in which the winds sing out almost like concertante soloists... With recording matching the scale of the music-making, Aadland's new cycle... has hit the ground running.” Gramophone Magazine, October 2011

“[this disc] should really be heard not only by all admirers of this composer but also by his detractors... in terms of tempos and of internal orchestral balance, Aadland places this music on altogether a higher plane than it usually occupies, and obtains really fine playing from the West German Radio Symphony Orchestra of Cologne. This is notable music-making” International Record Review, July/August 2011