Edvard Grieg: Complete Symphonic Works, Vol. V

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Fanfare (Peter Burwasser - 01.04.2016)

This is volume five of Audite's survey of the complete symphonic music of Edvard Grieg, and not surprisingly, it continues to delight with excellent performances and wonderful surprises from the corners of this great composer's output (not to mention the very familiar Peer Gynt music). This edition features two works for orchestra and voice, including six songs for soprano, and one for baritone. The six orchestral songs are a grouping of early works with piano accompaniment that the composer orchestrated in Copenhagen in 1895. They are exceptionally beautiful, with, typically for Grieg, a strong folk influence. Swedish soprano Camilla Tilling sounds very much in her element here, with her light bodied, lyrical soprano capturing the mood of the music nicely. The song for baritone, Den Bergtekne (The Mountain Thrall) was written for orchestra and voice, the only such example in Grieg's output, according to the program notes. Norwegian singer Tom Erik Lie renders the music with the gravity of a Schubert song. The two Lyric Pieces, as well as the Norwegian Dances, are also orchestrations of familiar piano music. The Lyric Pieces sound a bit overweight in this garb, but the Norwegian Dances, originally for piano four hands, translate well.

No surprises here as far as Aadland and his Cologne musicians are concerned, and that's a good thing, because previous releases have also featured lusty, deeply committed performances. Great engineering from Audite, also as usual (and I am only hearing it in standard CD playback). This is a terrific series.

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