

Eirik the Viking

Aagard-Nilsen, Gudim, Lindberg, Bull, Clarke, Thingnaes, Koch, Monti

Eirik Gjerdevik, tu; Stavanger Brass Band; Bergen Tuba Quartet—Lawo 1064—68 minutes

It is not uncommon for tuba recordings to include unaccompanied pieces—things that unveil, in vivid detail, the instrument's very wide range and panoply of sound possibilities. This album by tuba player Eirik Gjerdevik, a member of the Norwegian Navy Band Bergen (Jan/Feb 2015: 216), includes Erland von Koch's Monologue 9 and Torstein Aagard-Nilsen's fierce 'Eirik the Viking'. Also by that composer is *Bloodaxe' Lament*, a 12-minute piece for tuba and brass band, where the composer imagines what 10th-Century king Eirik Bloodaxe might have been thinking before heading into battle—maybe during and after, too, since things become rather dramatic in the middle and fade away poignantly at the end. It's a good piece, best on the album, and Gjerdevik is a good tuba player.

The very fine Stavanger Brass Band is also heard in a couple of swinging original pieces—Lars-Erik Gudim's *Tuba Libre* and Frode Thingnaes's Tuba Concertino—plus two arrangements of traditional Norwegian tunes ('Torn-Erik's Song' and Ole Bull's 'Melancolie'). The Bergen Tuba Quartet plays in three show-off selections: Herbert L Clarke's hokey and rather ho-hum 'Autumn Day' and the all-too-familiar 'Carnival of Venice' and 'Czardas'.

KILPATRICK

Point of Departure

Caviani, Mikulka, Bohme, Vaughan Williams, Hubeau

Travis Heath, tpt; Steve Zivin, p
Mark 51280—54 minutes

This trumpet recital has an arresting opener: Laura Caviani's 5-minute *Point of Departure* for eight trumpets, all parts played by Travis Heath. It is a very enjoyable piece and an impressive feat—remarkable that a person can interact so precisely with his many-recorded selves. That said, I would much rather hear eight people play it. They would have to work to blend tone qualities and play in tune; but if they were good, they would do it—and there might be more electricity in the performance than there is here. It's well done, but it feels hemmed in.

The rest of the program is more conventional. Michael Mikulka's Trumpet Sonata (2007) is new to me. It is an excellent work

with tuneful melodies, very tonal harmonies that sometimes take surprising turns, and challenging passages for the soloist. I hope this is not the last time I hear it.

There aren't many recordings of Oskar Bohme's terrific, melodramatic Concerto in F minor, especially ones with piano accompaniment (the one by Wolfgang Bauer is fabulous, March/April 2010). These players give it heroism and adventure in the outer movements, lots of heart in the middle one. The Trumpet Sonata (1943) by Jean Hubeau is one of my favorites, especially III with its gentle swing that was meant to sound like blues but sounds to me like an "I'm an old cowhand" sort of Western song.

Heath says that Vaughan Williams's *6 Studies in English Folk Song* (1926) have never been done on trumpet before, mainly because the lowest notes are below the trumpet's natural range. That's a good reason for not doing them, given that those notes have to be forced. These pieces should sound dreamy and wistful, but they don't here.

Except for the Vaughan Williams and some excessive vibrato and a rather boxy studio sound, I greatly enjoyed listening to these players and this music.

KILPATRICK

Vintage Cornet Recital

Liberati, Rimmer, Hohne, Bohme, Puccini, Arban, Sousa, Clarke, Saint-Saens, Hartmann

Mark Ponzio; JeongSoo Kim, p
Mark 51330—62 minutes

It's great when a cornet sounds the way a cornet should sound: round and sweet most of the time, incisive only occasionally. Sometimes—whether because of player's concept or recording set-up—cornets sound just like trumpets. But Mark Ponzio, trumpet professor at Northern Illinois University and solo cornet with the New Sousa Band and Illinois Brass Band, is a specialist who owns 112 vintage cornets.

Arban's 'Fantasie Brilliante' and Clarke's 'From the Shores of the Mighty Pacific' are the most familiar of these pieces. Aficionados will know Oskar Bohme's 'Russian Dance', 'La Reine d'Amour' by Sousa, and maybe John Hartmann's 'Fantasia Brilliante on Rule Britannia'. A few lovely melodies are included: 'Londonderry Air', 'O Mio Babbino', 'The Swan'. New to me are cornet pieces by Alessandro Liberati ('Canzona Napolitana'), William Rimmer ('Cleopatra Polka'), and Carl Hohne ('Slavic Fantasie').