

CLASSICAL CD REVIEWS

**“Blockbird – Norwegian Recorder Music” = Music by Norwegian composers [TrackList follows] – Caroline Eidsten Dahl, recorders/Per Arne Frantzen, piano/Vegard Lund, guitar/Anders Eidsten Dahl, organ – LAWO Classics**

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I happen to really like the sound of a recorder played well – such as it is here by Ms. Eidsten Dahl. However, I think, for many people, it is still a niche market and suffers from stereotyping. Many people think only of Renaissance music or maybe something

“Lord of the Rings-ish”. So it is a welcomed rarity when a collection comes out that showcases the lovely little instrument playing music by contemporary composers and from cultures we don’t get to hear much of here in the U.S.

All of the music here is really very entertaining and often very lovely. For my tastes, I actually preferred the works for solo recorder to those with accompaniment. Works like Lasse Thoresen’s *Miranda’s Fluorish* or the amazing “*Birds in the Night*” by Morten Gaathaug are truly evocative of a Nordic forest scene or something exotic and dreamlike. In fact, I was taken by the two works by Gaathaug in particular. His *Seashore Meditations* for recorder and guitar is a soulful rumination on traditional sea chanty without actually quoting any existing melodies.

At another end of the spectrum of possibilities for recorder is the treatment of Christian choral sonatas, the *Choralsonate No. 1*, by Kjell Mørk Karlsen for recorder and organ. This work sounds very much in the vein of the old Baroque *Sonate da Chiesa* and yet has a modern harmonic template and some modality that does feel Scandinavian at the same time.

Honestly, all of the works here are very entertaining and have a wonderful ‘old but new’ and very unique quality to them that crosses geographies and cultures. Additionally, Caroline Dahl is a very fine player with a serene tone quality and an obvious sensitivity to the music itself. She is accompanied when called for by equally fine musicians. All of the composers represented here are new to me and – even if they are somewhat ‘specialist’ composers – I enjoyed all the works a great deal.

I have also noticed these past several months a bit of resurgence in recorder (‘*blockflöte*’) recordings by younger artists. Maybe the recorder is ‘cool’ again. I’ve always enjoyed it and especially when played exceptionally well as it is here and in works that go beyond some of the known Baroque idiom. I think this is a highly enjoyable album and the sound quality from LAWO Classics is quite good!

—Daniel Coombs

<http://www.audaud.com/blockbird-norwegian-recorder-music-music-by-norwegian-composers-tracklist-follows-caroline-eidsten-dahl-recordersper-arne-frantzen-pianovegard-lund-guita/>