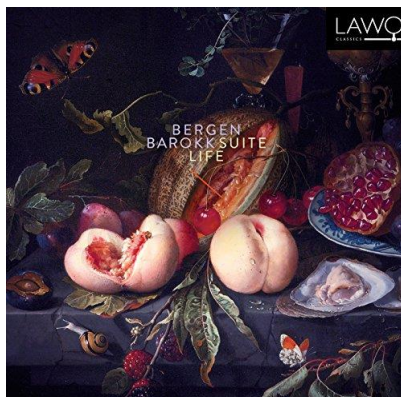


a SUITE LIFE • Bergen Barokk • LAWO 1096 (SACD: 65:53)

Music of **PHILIDOR, MARAIS, HOTTETERRE, CHÉDEVILLE, F. COUPERIN, VISÉE, DE LA BARRE**



Bergen Barokk: Suite Life
AUDIO CD; HYBRID SACD - DSD

The individual that unites the diverse pieces and composers in this program is none other than Louis Quatorze, the “Sun King.” He was a man who loved music and who loved to dance, and over the course of his reign he employed many composers to flatter his tastes. There is no guarantee that Louis and his subjects danced to the specific works on this SACD, but several of these composers—or members of their respective families—were employed at his court, so anything is possible.

Usually, I list all of the works in a collection, but because this SACD contains 31 tracks, with an average length of a little over two minutes each, I hope I will be forgiven for saving both the editor’s space and my time! Bergen Barokk has assembled these pieces in an unusual manner—not by composer or genre but by key. For example, the first set of seven tracks is comprised of pieces in G Major and in G Minor, and the composers are Philidor, Hotteterre, and Marais. Nevertheless, because the set opens with an Overture by Philidor and ends with a Gigue by Hotteterre, this set of seven feels like an actual suite. Similarly, the second suite (pieces in A Major and in A Minor) opens with a Prelude by Marais and closes with a Chaconne by Philidor. Some of these works were connected with each other in suites of the composer’s own devising, but most of them have been reassembled by Bergen Barokk, creating unique juxtapositions. To some, this might seem like an insensitive practice, but the results are enjoyable and not stylistically jarring, so I am not inclined to object. All of the sources are listed in the booklet, so scholars need not complain too much. Bergen Barokk was founded in 1994—in Norway, of course. Its members are Frode Thorsen (recorders), Hans Knut Skeen (harpsichord), Markku Luolajan-Mikkola (viola da gamba), Thomas C. Boysen (Baroque guitar and theorbo), and Thor-Harald Johnsen (Baroque guitar). You may hear some of these works played by a combination of instruments that is different from what you are used to. For example, I know François Couperin’s *Muséte de Choisi* from performances on one or two harpsichords. On an ATMA Classique CD, the melody is taken by a Baroque oboe (Bruce Haynes) and accompanied by harpsichord (Arthur Haas) and viola da gamba (Susie Napper). On the present CD, the melody is played by Thorsen, and the drone accompaniment is provided by the other members of Bergen Barokk. Throughout this disc, there are solo moments, of course, but this is primarily a group effort.

Programmatically, then, this SACD is a little unconventional, but the performances are lively and characterful. I therefore have no difficulty recommending this disc without reservation. **Raymond Tuttle**

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