

Nibbles *Norwegian Trombone Ensemble* (Lawo Classics)

What's not to love about the trombone, an instrument as well-suited to slapstick comedy as it is to deep solemnity? This collection of music for trombone quartet is a treat, the goofier numbers balanced by moments of profound poetry, all played beautifully by players holding posts in Norwegian orchestras. The quiet, slower numbers really showcase just how good they are: Beethoven's sublime *Drei Equali* are magnificently imposing, as is Bruckner's *Locus Iste*, the players' breathing and phrasing giving both works warmth and majesty. The Bruckner is especially striking, a symphonic adagio pared down to barely three minutes.

Short pieces by Scheidt and Gabrieli complete the tally of authentic trombone music, the rest of the disc containing arrangements. Debussy's *Trois Chansons* sound remarkably good transcribed for trombones, and a Telemann sonata for four violins is effective. We also get Bacharach, Gershwin and Abba, and the disc's title comes from the closing number "Nibbler", a zingy encore written by American virtuoso Tommy Pederson. A disc for everyone, not just brass players. The quartet's irreverent sleeve notes are a fun read, and the engineering is outstanding.

Graham Rickson, theartsdesk.com, 08.08.2020

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