

**NORDRAAK:**Songs; Piano Pieces

Helene Wold, s; Eugene Asti, p

LAWO 1119—63 minutes

Rikard Nordraak (1842-66) did not live long enough to compose a lot of music. He is primarily known as the composer of the Norwegian national anthem. About 40 compositions have been preserved, including songs, piano works, and pieces for male choir. After arriving in Berlin in 1865, he was stricken with tuberculosis in October and died in Paris the following March, only 23 years old. He had a passionate patriotism and a love for folk music, which can be heard in the works assembled for this program.

They are enjoyable, folk-like settings, songs that one can learn quickly and easily. Helene Wold's singing of them is first-rate. According to the legendary pianist, Erika Lie

Nissen (who had once been engaged to Nordraak),

"Nordraak never learned to play with great technical proficiency. He was not fond of practicing. But he played with much feeling and a most profound grasp of the music. He referred to himself as an adagio player because fast tempos were not his thing." Eugene Asti, himself the preferred accompanist for many of today's recitalists, has lovely tone and feeling.

This entire release is distinguished by its charm and beautiful presentation. Texts and translations are included, though some may be frustrated that the English translations are not printed next to the original Norwegian.

Many lovely photos of Norwegian mountainscapes are included as well.

Excellent, intimate sound.

REYNOLDS

*American Record Guide*