

Budbaerersken (The Messenger)

Kirsten Flagstad tribute

Alf Hurum, Hjalmar Borgstrom, Knut Hakanson,
Oistein Sommerfeldt, Arne Dormsgaard, Sigurd
Lie, Sverre Jordan

Isa Katharina Gericke, s; Bengt Forsberg, p

LAWO 1120—58 minutes

“My intention with this recording is to shed new light on facets of Kirsten Flagstad as an interpreter of art song. The songs recorded here were written by composers, some of whom were her accompanists at one time or another, or they were young, talented individuals whom she helped into the limelight; a few of them became lifelong, close friends. The songs are of such high quality that they deserve the attention of new performances...”

So writes the singer in her notes to this recital. One might argue that the best way to examine Flagstad’s interpretations is to find her own recordings of this music. The problem is that although she programmed many of these songs in recitals, she did not leave recordings of all of them. And Ms Gericke is quite correct: this music is too appealing to ignore. Collectors of Scandinavian art songs may be familiar with this repertoire, but it is still relatively unexplored material outside of Scandinavia. I suspect many of us will be hearing these songs for the first time. Many of them sound folk-like. The texts deal with broken hearts, unrequited love, or nature. They’re all beautiful, with shimmering accompaniments. None is very long (the longest takes four minutes).

In the middle of the recital pianist Bengt Forsberg treats us to a smashing performance of Liszt’s transcription of Isolde’s ‘Liesbestod’ from *Tristan und Isolde*, perhaps as a bow to Flagstad’s classic portrayal of the Irish princess.

Gericke has a warm, sensuous voice, even from top to bottom, and she interprets these songs with great love and passion. She does not attempt to sound like or imitate Flagstad, but finds her own way. I’d love to hear her in some of her operatic roles.

Intimate, warm sound. Texts, translations, and notes.

REYNOLDS

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