

WALTON: Viola Concerto;

SINDING: Suite in the Old Style

Eivind Holtsmark Ringstad, va; Oslo Philharmonic/
Joshua Weilerstein, Arvid Engegard

LAWO 1133—42 minutes

Eivind Holtsmark Ringstad (b 1994) is a fine young violist, and he has much sympathy for Walton's lovely, melancholy Viola Concerto. Joshua Weilerstein gets refined support from the Oslo Philharmonic, and I would rank this with the better recordings of the work. Like all recordings except William Primrose's with the composer conducting from 1946, it is too slow—but it's so difficult that it is easy to see why.

The companion piece is Christian Sinding's perennially popular Suite in an arrangement for viola by Norwegian violinist Nils Thore Rost. The transition from violin to viola is so effective that I barely noticed the difference. Ringstad has a chance to show his virtuosity in the opening perpetual motion Presto. The funereal Adagio would benefit from some more overt emotion. The folk quality of the finale comes across nicely. The recording is very clear, but I wish that the orchestra were more forward to bring out the counterpoint better.

Ringstad plays the "Vieuxtemps" viola made by Giambattista Guadagnini in 1768.

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American Record Guide