

Edvard Grieg – Holberg-Lyric-Sigurd Jorsalfar Suites (Leppard) [1980]

Written by bluesever

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Holberg Suite, Op.40 1. *Präludium (Allegro vivace)* 2. *Sarabande (Andante)* 3. *Gavotte (Allegretto)* - *Musette (poco più mosso)* - *Gavotte* 4. *Air (Andante religioso)* 5. *Rigaudon (Allegro con brio)* Sigurd Jorsalfar, three Orchestral pieces Op.56 6. *Prelude: In the King's Hall (Op.22 No.1)* 7. *Intermezzo: Borghild's Dream (Op.22 No.2)* 8. *Homage March (Op.22 No.4)*
Lyric Pieces, Op.54
9. *Shepherd's Boy* 10. *Norwegian Rustic March* 11. *Notturmo* 12. *March of the Dwarfs*
English Chamber Orchestra Raymond Leppard - conductor

There's a case for suggesting that...the "Hommage March" (from Sigurd Jorsalfar) require[s] full symphonic forces to do [it] justice, but Leppard balances his much smaller resources carefully, ensuring that every strand of detailing is plainly audible. The lyrically nostalgic central episode of the march is especially well done. The smaller pieces, such as...the string orchestra version of the Op. 54 Lyric Suite sound stylish and polished. Leppard's Holberg Suite also is subtly controlled and elegant... If you require these works complete, and with full annotations, consider Neeme Järvi's Grieg set from Gothenburg in DG's "Collectors' Edition" series. The recordings are fine, the minor caveat being that the full Gothenburg Symphony string section never attains the sheen and transparency of the ECO under Leppard, especially in the "Holberg" music. As an example, the notoriously difficult ending of the "Rigaudon" is hard to bring off with full strings, and Järvi's team (especially his solo violinist) only just about make it through, whereas Leppard's ECO negotiates it flawlessly. --- ClassicsToday.com

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