

Reviews:

Rafael de Acha, rafaelmusicnotes.com, 14.10.2019:

"Norwegian harpist Sidsel Walstad is technically and musically a force of nature, holding her own against the massive orchestration of the harp concerto, and protean in her ability to spin a long legato line with an instrument notoriously hard to master. But master she does deliver a memorable performance that will surely become a standard against which to judge future attempts at this musical minefield. Aside from praising the mere value of representing the genius of Alberto Ginastera in this perfectly engineered compact disc, perfectly played, perfectly produced, perfectly packaged (and annotated by Jan Hedrick Hayerdahl) we salute the LAWO label for its enterprise and hope that the future will bring more interesting releases.
Extraordinary *****

Marçal Borotau, Sonograma Magazine, 29.11.2019:

"Sidsel Walstad has a great command of her instrument, which is essential to balance the sound game with the Norwegian Radio Orchestra. "[...] Miguel Harth-Bedoya focuses on the sound quality of the instrumentalists, in the tonality, atonality, strength, virtuosity and expressiveness of the Ginastera style in an artistic context that shared the American and European tradition."

Remy Franck, Pizzicato, 14.12.2019

"On this CD, Sidsel Walstad plays the revised version from 1968. Ginastera's Concerto is technically very challenging and also broadens the expressive spectrum of the harp concerto in general. The soloist is technically flawless and, together with the conductor Miguel Harth-Bedoya, she underlines the sometimes gloomy drama of the work."

Kate Wakeling, BBC Music Magazine, January 2020

"[...] Ginastera's Harp Concerto (1965) combines fierce rhythmic energy with passages of ethereal beauty and calm. It is fiendishly demanding for the soloist – harpist Sidsel Walstad describes its performance as akin to "climbing a mountain" – but she makes light work of the Concerto's technical rigours in this wonderfully spirited and sensitive interpretation, well-supported throughout by the Norwegian Radio Orchestra."

Dominy Clements, Musicweb International, January 2020

"[...] The first movement in particular has a special energy with plenty of rhythmic drive, the orchestration vital but transparent, allowing the soloist to shine but also creating a highly dramatic, almost cinematic atmosphere. [...] The Norwegian Radio Orchestra proves itself entirely capable of creating Ginastera's desired Argentinian moods, skilfully led by Peruvian conductor Miguel Harth-Bedoya, whose "heart pounds for South American music and culture". [...] The recording and performances are pretty impeccable."

Theartsdesk.com, Graham Rickson, 25.01.2020

"[...] Soloist Sidsel Walstad is superb throughout. Especially in the third movement's opening soliloquy, Walstad running her fingernails over the strings at several points. Miguel Harth-Bedoya's valiant Norwegian Radio Orchestra are game accompanists in this tricky repertoire, the frenzied final minutes (including what sounds like a direct reference to Messiaen's Turangalîla Symphony) tightly controlled and terrifically exciting. This is a great concerto, not just a great harp concerto. [...]
Lawo's sound has plenty of punch – a fascinating release."

Raul da Gama, thewholenote.com, 27.01.2020

"[...] Both Walstad and the orchestra deliver fine performances of two of Ginastera's eminently paradigmatic works. Walstad's playing is eloquently dreamy and distinctively ripe in tone. Her performance, based on the 1968 revision (also performed by Nicanor Zabaleta), is scintillating. The orchestra, under Harth-Bedoya's baton is stunning. What musicians across the board deliver is startlingly fresh and alive."

SULLIVAN, American Record Guide

"Ginastera's harp pieces redefined the expressive and technical possibilities of the instrument. [...] In this attractive recording, Sidsel Walstad turns in a colorful, sharply articulated performance, with poetry and virtuosity to spare. Her coordination with the Norwegian Radio Orchestra is deft, and her cadenza in the finale is stunning. Aggressively rhythmical and hauntingly lyrical, the concerto is a mesmerizing work, full of special effects for the harp and colorful solos for other instruments as well, especially brass and percussion. The slow movement is a mournful song initiated by strings. The percussive finale ends with a startling dissonance.

Alison Young, harpcolumn.com, 01.05.2020

"[...] It's in the slow movement that the orchestra and soloist display their tender side, demonstrating a willingness to linger in the biting dissonances that refuse to ever quite resolve. The effect is of the wide-open pampas in the Argentine countryside, mysterious and not quite in focus. I never wanted it to end, though I sometimes wanted a bit more lingering and bit less moving forward.

" [...] A cadenza of surprising extended techniques opens the final movement, the harp strumming the open notes of a guitar as a kind of dare. Walstad whispers, wails, growls, hisses, and intones gloriously, leaving us eating out of her hands. When the final harp gasp leads to the orchestra entering in a wild duet of percussion and ostinato strings, the game is on. The harp cuts through the fray, exchanging the lead line with the vigor of an orchestra playing as one, her nails-on-strings a chance to play alongside the superb percussion section. The orchestra never stops in this folk-inflected dance as it pushes to a magnificent ending. [...]"