Sigmund Groven - the Grieg Album
Grappa label

SIGMUND GROVEN HAS made, to date, some 23 CD albums of harmonica music.
He has long done his 'hard yards'.
He has long produced his 'pop' albums.
He has, long historically, recorded his '12-required-tunes-for-the-mouthorgan' album.
And now he is playing that he really wants to play. Just now he has immersed himself in Grieg. As if, like a reclusive monk, he has retreated into the personal cloisters of his own being and where it is manifestly apparent that he is in love with his music. This is absolutely not a 'pop' album. It is a truly classical album presented by, arguably, the leading exponent of the concert harmonica in the world today. Comprising 27 songs, folk songs and lyrical pieces - some as brief as a minute - it is an album entirely dedicated to Edvard Grieg.

It has variegated moods in a diversity of colours. Some of it is melancholy. Much of it is moving. All of it is elegant and beautiful.
Obviously I am 'sold' on Groven and believe that, to call his work an harmonica album is rather like calling Yehudi Menuhin a fiddler - or the collected works of Shakespeare, a book.
This may not even be a financially highly successful album. If so, I doubt if Mr Groven even cares. He charts his musical universe alone.
This is the music he loves - and loves to play.
This is the music of his homeland, Norway. It is inventively interpreted. It is music evocative of the mist-shrouded fjell and ancient, ice-gouged rocks, the heady coda fragrance of brooding forests of pine and silver-barked bjork, and the brittle, chill turbulence of the Vik.
It is the music of Edvard Grieg, sensitively performed by a pinnacle maestro who is at one with its composer.
A contemporary of Ravel, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Liszt and Debussy, Bergen-born Grieg (1843-1907) was a third generation immigrant to Norway from Scotland; the product of a commercial fishing, and also extremely musical, family.
A prolific composer, Edvard Grieg pioneered new approaches to Norwegian music and became the definitive musical expression of that country.
Sigmund Groven was born in the Telemark district of Norway and his genesis in music was inspired by the music of the legendary Tommy Reilly from the tender age of nine. His musical evolution would fill very, many pages, sufficient to mention that he is world acclaimed and, also, one of the very few harmonicists indeed to have graced the boards of Carnegie Hall. Those who truly appreciate the fluid finesse, the rich palette of colours, the piercing, crystal clarity and amazing tonal range of the harmonica and harmonica music - embracing also those who appreciate quality music per se - will love this series of recordings. Every serious harmonacist ought have some representative Groven in their music library to remind them just how a concert chromatic really sounds.
I was actually playing 'Solveig's Song' from the Peer Gynt suite (track 3), when a female friend happened to call by. I asked what she thought of the music. Receiving no reply, I turned to her. Her eyes were misty as she said, with faltering voice, "I never knew it (the harmonica) could sound so beautiful".
This is a remarkable performance.
It is classic music.
It is classic Groven.
It is very good.
Very good indeed.

May be ordered through Birdland Music, Sydney.
"I was actually playing 'Solveig's Song' from the Peer Gynt suite (track 3 of Groven's CD), when a female friend happened to call by. I asked what she thought of the music. Receiving no reply, I turned to her. Her eyes were misty as she said, with faltering voice, "I never knew it could sound so beautiful.""

"Sigmund Groven, like Tommy Reilly and Larry Adler before him, makes full use of the wide range and tonal expressions of which the harmonica is capable. His musicianship is superb, and he now unquestionably reigns supreme as one of the finest exponents of the harmonica in the world."

- Sir George Martin

Picture, above, shows Sigmund Groven (left) with good friend and fellow tunesmith, globally acclaimed, Sir George Martin.