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SACD & Other Hi-Res Reviews

**HarmOrgan (Harmonica & Organ) - [TrackList below] Sigmund Groven, chromatic harmonica/ Iver Kleive, pipe organ - 2L Pure Audio Blu-ray + SACD**

*The world's smallest and the world's largest musical instrument together in stunning baroque pieces and Norwegian folk music*

Published on December 23, 2010



**HarmOrgan (Harmonica & Organ) - [TrackList below] Sigmund Groven, chromatic harmonica/ Iver Kleive, pipe organ - Pure Audio Blu-ray + 5.0 SACD, DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 (192K/24-bit) or PCM Stereo 192K/24-bit - 2L 77, 1.3 hours \*\*\*\*\*:**

The enterprising 2L label (aided by some financial support from the Norwegian government) continues to release exciting and off-the-beaten-track music in their audio-only Blu-ray + hybrid SACD format. Just about all of them should appeal as much to the audiophile whose primary interest is the ultimate in hi-res surround on Blu-ray (192K on all channels!), as well as to the music lover open to unusual works. The idea behind this one is spelled out on the box: "The world's smallest and the world's largest musical instrument together in stunning baroque pieces and Norwegian folk music."

There have been a number of recordings of panpipes and pipe organ - a most enjoyable duo combination - but to my knowledge this may be the first combining harmonica and pipe organ. The two performers are not just doing this as a lark, but have been collaborating for over 30 years, having built up a sizable repertory of music which they have either composed or arranged themselves for the unusual duo. They recorded a Christmas disc with a singer a decade ago, but this is their first instrumental harmonica & organ album.

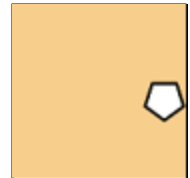
A good way to start your experience with this album is to view the short video of a performance by the duo. I was only sorry there wasn't more hi-def video of the two in performance. This is a fine way to get familiar with the performers; I wish more standard CDs would do this sort of thing using the Enhanced CD feature - a few have done so.

The virtuoso abilities of the chromatic harmonica are quite amazing. Groven has no difficulty handling the details of Bach's *Flute Sonata in E-flat Major*, nor the *Siciliana & Giga* movements from Handel's *Recorder Sonata in F Major*. The other works are composed or arranged by either Groven or Kleive. One becomes aware of the close match of the harmonica's tiny reeds with the giant pipes of the organ. These are all lovely pieces which will be unfamiliar to most but possess a unique special taste of Norwegian folk music. The Uranienborg Church in Norway is the venue, and the careful miking used by 2L preserves a fine feeling for the site's acoustics.

I don't see the need for having both separate Blu-rays and SACDs and I doubt if other labels are going to take up the practice due to expense, but the price has not been inflated as a result, and audiophiles should snap these up if the various music programs appeal to them at all.

**TrackList:**

- 1 Gloria
- 2 Aria
- 3 BACH: Flute Sonata in E-Flat Major, Bwv 1031; Allegro Moderato
- 4 Flute Sonata in E-Flat Major, Bwv 1031; Siciliano



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- 5 Flute Sonata in E-Flat Major, Bwv 1031; Allegro
- 6 I Himmelen
- 7 Melodier Fra Koralboka; Vektervers
- 8 Melodier Fra Koralboka; Mitt Hjerte Alltid Vanker
- 9 Melodier Fra Koralboka; Kom Regn Fra Det Høye
- 10 Melodier Fra Koralboka; Kristne, La Oss Søke Sammen
- 11 Melodier Fra Koralboka; Se, VI Går Opp Til Jerusalem
- 12 Påskemorgen
- 13 Lengte
- 14 Myllargutens Bruremarsj
- 15 Toccata "Store Gud, VI Lover Deg"
- 16 Suite Provençale; En Bagatell I Det Store Og Hele, Ikke Noe Å Bry Seg Om
  
- 17 Suite Provençale; Farvel Kjære Venn – Som Et Pust I Siv
- 18 Suite Provençale; Den Grønne Trøya
- 19 Suite Provençale; Côte D'Azur
- 20 HANDEL: Recorder Sonata in F Major, Hwv 369 - Siciliana & Giga
- 21 Undring
- 22 In Memoriam
- 23 Vårsøg

-- John Sunier

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