



RICERCARE

KVANDAL String Trio op.12

MORTENSEN Trio op.3 **BRÆIN**

Trio op.15 **JOHANSEN** Ricercare

Ssens Trio

LAWO CLASSICS LWG 1238

**Beautifully balanced readings of
a quartet of Norwegian trios**

The Ssens Trio (pronounced 'essence') makes a good case for these four string trios by Norwegian composers active in the postwar years. Johan Kvandal's Trio of 1950 is the most conservative of the bunch, marrying a Shostakovich-like guile with a hint of folk-nationalism, all firmly diatonic and/or modal but not devoid of charm. Finn Mortensen's Trio from the same year is tonally more free-ranging – indeed its composer went on to champion Schoenbergian dodecaphony later in the decade. A more caustic Shostakovich rears his head again in Edvard Fliflet Bræin's single-movement Trio, probably written in the 1960s but maybe earlier. With Bertil Palmar Johansen's

Ricercare we move on a generation or more and to a work written for the Leopold String Trio in 1996; it's the knottiest of the pieces here but in its greater emotional depth also makes the most telling use of the textural capabilities of the three stringed instruments.

Recorded in a supportive but not over-resonant church acoustic, these are all very well-judged performances that bring out the individual characteristics of each composer. Texturally, the three players sound evenly balanced and their individual focus and technical acuity all come across in the punchiness and crispness of attack while at the same time giving voice to the expressive lyricism shared by all four pieces.

MATTHEW RYE

KESSELOW GUY



The essence of Norway from the Ssens Trio