

Quotes from reviews:

Critical Post Chicago: We were stymied when we received this submission, admittedly, because we'd never heard anything like it. We searched for other derivative works to compare it to but came up mostly empty.

This is the kind of work usually funded for the sake of it, not for commercial value.

Tony Currie - BBC

it's a splendid recording and we have already used a track. It will get more plays in the autumn season

Congratulations on making such a first class CD.

Critical Post Chicago: Leaving the market aside, this work is brilliant! Every once in a blue moon I get to apply that word correctly. All of us thought it!

Spoken word gets it mixed up with others in the genre, and this album is beyond that because it's Shakespeare. Shakespeare dramatised well.

Indy band Guru "I hate to admit it, but I actually feel more cultured and intellectual after completing the album.

This is more than just a relaxer. It's a fascinating piece of music augmented by a beautiful arrangement.

Critical Post Chicago: Producer Bjørn Palmqvist gave us a run for our money. Breaking it down this way; we live in a world of pop culture, that by its very patina, something dummed down so far we find ourselves constantly carping about how bad its all become.

...In order for us to do a proper markup on this submission we had to let the album take its course in our imaginations, as all of us needed a lot of time to let the recordings by Bjørn Palmqvist & Co. do their thing. It was a challenging task. Which is why we agreed to it in the first place, for the challenge was part of the journey. Challenge, you say? Yes, and the challenge was to slow down and listen.

Critical Post Chicago: Entitling this as a "triumph" is no mere, ridiculous gush. I'm not saying it because of Willie's rep. If it didn't work well, I'd have left that part out, and you can trust we'd say so. It's fact to this critic's ears. I have never heard so fine a marriage for Shakespeare as this work. His words are jazz. His words are classical. Palmqvist and company dance the hedgerows of Shakespeare's meters with excellent precision and sensibility. Not only is it original, it actually works.

Critical Post Chicago: This is not an album for gross natured individuals, it's an album for intellects. As well, this album works great for a fine natured long distance driver. It's the kind of album you drop the needle on and just let spin. ..."It's not to be pendantic, it's to be precise because this album is extraneously precise."

..."Which brings us to this point: How could we say Shakespeare won't stand the test of time?

Moreover, if this derivative work didn't have Shakespeare as a foundation, would the music background on its own merit stand the test of time. The answer to the first question is obvious. The answer to the second question is not so obvious for the music is mated so closely to Shakespeare's meter, as a whole, it would be unconscionable to divorce the two from each other, it's meant as a complete work. The versatility and innovation inspired by Shakespeare's works are legion. This album joins that throng."

..."Every member of this ensemble knows the nature and overall "sound" the market makes. They know how fraught with difficulty this was before ever attempting such a daring exploration. Putting Shakespeare Sonnet's to music is like publishing a work that, in today's parlance, as rap is to the dumb crowd, this is, and would be, "rap" for the literatti."

..."Vocalists, Linda Elvira and Thomas Magnussen breathe the drama intended. Bjørn Palmqvist's music creates the most interesting songs we've heard in decades. That's the point. Shakespeare's Sonnets become song. That happy marriage of words to music so finely woven they lift spirit. That makes this album, "great art" in terms of definition number four above. We'd like to see it done live."

..."I'm not a great student of these sonnets and would not spend too much time pursuing this lithe prose. Hearing them this way, for me, makes perfect sense. Comprised as such, I will be listening to this work for some time to come. Listening to sonnets without the type of music in this work I would find too tedious. I'd have to be in love with the tone of the vocalists speech to have any regard beyond a few minutes. There is not one actor or vocalist alive on this planet I could listen to, it would seem forever till the end, given the length of this album which clocks at about 49 minutes. Yet, the music bed suspends and carries the audience, and it's beautiful. This accompaniment makes this album great art. I will keep this fresh in my collection for frequent visits.

That's my take."

Brian Sidler/ Critical Post Chicago

...Imagine Palmqvist's exploration on manuscript paper determining meters for passages. Every few bars or so there's a time signature change. Navigating that as a composer is impressive. Oh, I'm sure there's some classical chappies who could find a way to chafe, just because. Jazz folks too. However, in my humble view they'd be mistaken.

Credit is equally due to the instrumentalists, Drums: Magnus Brandell, Bass: Morten Ankarfeldt, Guitar: Bjørn Palmqvist, Soprano: Janne Solvang, Tenor: Sten Sejr, Violin: Bjarke Falgren, Violin: Georgios Chrysanidis, Violin: Liisi Kedik, Cello: Andreas Broch, Cello: Tobias Van der Pals, Flute: Inge Kongsgaard Hansen. A very apt crew in the orchestra pit. Of special note, soprano, Janne Solvang is intoxicating.

Briefly let's turn to the composer, Bjørn Palmqvist. This man belongs somewhere in the pantheon of great modern composers. Not in a classical sense or a jazz sense strictly, much more in a "modern" sense and in both genres. These compositions are very

modern. They take in a complexity and refinement especially suited for a modernists acute sense of hearing. To use the word "progressive" is absolutely backwards. In its modernist sense, the compositions have stark meter variations. One envisions clean lines of well made Danish furniture and of the finest woods. Every line has specific purpose with no frills, yet plenty of flourish, and if there is such a thing, "no frills-yet flourish", Palmqvist deserves to be lauded for having done both.

It is advised that when one goes to make a proper soufflé, don't bump the oven before it's done or the dish will "fall." Bjørn Palmqvist and friends knew how to make this soufflé and clearly they had the talent, spent the patience to make it right.