



## Slagr & Camilla Granlien Songs by Geirr Tveitt



### Irresistibly poetic soundscapes

### Slagr are exploring the magic of Norwegian composer Geirr Tveitt

When Slagr released their first album *straum, stille* on the Ozella imprint in 2011, critics and listeners alike were instantly taken with the fragile and brittle, yet highly expressive and powerful music of the Norwegian chamberfolk-trio. Eager not to repeat themselves, Slagr's new release *Songs by Geirr Tveitt* is paying homage to the musical legacy of one of the most renowned Norwegian composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with tender sounds and transparent textures. Supported by folk singer Camilla Granlien, Anne Hytta (Hardanger fiddle), Sigrun Eng (cello) and Amund Sjølie Sveen (vibraphone, tuned glasses) are effortlessly connecting the worlds of classical music, folk and improvisation - just like Geirr Tveitt once did, when composing his little masterpieces.

The cosmos of Slagr is defined by the contrast between the sensitive violin- and cello-timbres of Anne Hytta and Sigrun Eng and the crystalline tones emanating from Amund Sjølie Sveen's tuned wine glasses and vibraphone. Camilla Granlien's haunting voice is seamlessly navigating the galaxy spanned by these polarities and together, the fourpiece are preserving the traditional music of Norway, while simultaneously enriching it with other European traditions. The result is both anthemic and lyrical: "Already when playing Tveitt's music as members of a youth orchestra, I was curious whether one could infuse Norwegian folk music with contemporary sounds", says Eng, who, next to playing the cello, is also responsible for arranging the pieces. "His melodies are extremely clear, which is something you'll also find in the poetry and melancholia of Norwegian folk songs. To me, his vocabulary makes for a perfect match with Slagr's soundscapes."

Despite fearlessly treading new waters, *Songs by Geirr Tveitt* is characterised by the same meditative, minimalist mood of its predecessor *straum, stille*. Recorded in Oslo's famous Rainbow Studios and produced by fiddle-virtuoso Nils Økland, most of the pieces on the album originated in the 1960s and were initially written for radio-portraits of leading Norwegian poets. Tveitt would set some of their poems to music, composing short, but refined miniatures as an accompaniment to the lyrics. By combining Tveitt's music with poetry by Olav H. Hauge, Aslaug Vaa, Aslaug Låstad Lygre and Alf Prøysen, Slagr are renewing that beguiling bond between words and music.

The album opens with "Snø" (Snow), whose lyrics by Olav H. Hauge (1908-1994) evoke images of pure white. Camilla Granlien's vocals are making the freshness of a clear Winter's day palpable, while conjuring up visions of a gentle Sommer's night with the eerily beautiful sounds underpinning Aslaug Låstad Lygre's (1910-1966) "Mjukt skjer åra". Thanks to the pristine harmonies, the multi-layered melodic motives as well as the sober sounds of Anne Hytta's fiddle and Sigrun Eng's cello, Aslaug Vaas's (1889- 1965) excursions into the fjords of Norway are turning into a transcendental listening experience.

Once again, softness and tenderness are vital characteristics of Slagr's latest sonic explorations. When, as on Aslaug Låstad Lygre's poem "Godnatt" (Good Night), the group are serenading nature, one feels transported to a meadow in Spring. And when, as in Alf Prøysen's (1914-1970) "Lomnaesvisa", they are telling the story of girl who wants to commit suicide, but takes back her decision at the very last moment, the musical poetry and beautiful sadness of Slagr are fully revealed.