



Speaksome

Christian Wallumrød *pf. synth. autoharp. drum machine*
Hubro CD2650

Pianist-composer Christian Wallumrød is best known for chamber works inspired by Norwegian folk and church music. *Speaksome* is his second solo album and features a varied, eventful set of pieces, playful and often bucolic. They show a remarkable postmodern sensibility, intimate but with power and affect. A 'less is more' aesthetic leads to textures so minimal they're mostly played with one hand.

As his colleague Ivar Grydeland comments, Wallumrød's music is both historic and futuristic. In recent years he's returned to electronics, as here. *Speaksome* is mostly studio-recorded but 'Self Volk' was captured at home, with creaks and ambient noise. Each piece is full of character. 'Speakless' is for prepared piano with electronic and feedback effects that include a sound like a slowly bouncing ball. The spacious 'Nölen und Laden', as much sound-decay as sound, is acoustic with ghostly electronic overdubs; 'Zitternpappel' is bluesy with echo-laden effects.

'Treeline' opens as an out-of-kilter pointillist tonescape with random beats, soon counterpointed by ponderous piano chords. The engaging 'Gitar', with its gently rolling country feel, is a gem; the title-track synthesises Norwegian folk and blues. These pieces recall Peter van der Merwe's striking thesis, in *Origins of the Popular Style*, of the universality of the blues – he even has a chapter on 'The British Origins of the Blues', which clearly could be extended to Norway. **IP**

ANDY HAMILTON