

Duluth Budgeteer News
Arts & Entertainment

SUNDAY, AUGUST 8, 2004

New Strikepoint CD has great mix of styles

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Budgeteer News

One of the more interesting touring musical groups in the Twin Ports is Strikepoint, billed as one of the world's top handbell ensembles. It's based in Duluth as a ministry of First United Methodist Church.

Probably the best way to experience any handbell ensemble is live, which you have a chance to do this week. But the concert comes in support of a new CD that's the next best thing.

"No LoiteRing," the punning name of the group's fourth and latest CD, has a breadth of musical styles: classical, sacred, Sousa marches and commissioned new works based on Northland scenes.

That commissioned piece, "Sky-Tinted Waters" by Cathy Moklebust, is one of the highlights. "Sky-Tinted Waters" is imaginative and evocative. It comes in three movements, each celebrating a lake setting.

The first movement is "Canoeing on West Bearskin Lake (Peaceful Waters)," a charming bit of music that, with chimes, captures the look of a still summer morning, sunlight glinting off the lake.

The second, "Ice Fishing on Mille Lacs (Sven and Ole's Day Out)," captures something of the quirky Northland culture, although the dialogue in it rings a little cliched to me.

The third, "Along the North Shore of Lake Superior (Song of the Lighthouses)," is haunting with a whiff of Scandinavian folk songs and does a nice job capturing the sort of sad beauty of a lake that is so breathtakingly "other." The only drawback, and it's significant, is the unfortunate climactic chord, suddenly and somewhat senseless-

REVIEW



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CD

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ly shifting from a minor to a major key, dissipating the mood.

You'll be surprised at some of the variety of sounds these artists can get from handbells. They play with precision, and sometimes they sound like bells, other times

like an organ. I'm sure that even this CD, a decent recording, doesn't do justice to the kind of sounds you will hear live. Many of them are on display in H. Dean Wagner's "Te Deum."

"Count Your Blessings," which includes a bass and guitar, has parts which might as easily be played by a Caribbean steel drum band.

Other enjoyable tracks on the disc include Edvard Grieg's familiar "Anitra's Dance" and John Philip Sousa's "El Capitan," arranged by Moklebust. The march takes on an upbeat, almost carnival sound.

Another Moklebust track of note is a nice setting of "Greensleeves" with some delightful dissonance.

If you want to pick up a copy of the disc and get the pleasure of hearing all the sonorities live, check them out at UMD's Weber Music Hall Wednesday at 7 p.m., where the group will cap its summer tour and celebrate the new disc. There is no admission charge, but a donation of \$8 is suggested.