

Second Thoughts and Short Reviews - Winter 2019-20/3
By Brian Wilson, Dan Morgan, Simon Thompson and Johan van Veen.

Winter #1 is [here](#) and Winter #2 is [here](#). Earlier editions are archived [here](#). Reviews are by Brian Wilson unless otherwise stated.

Concurrently with this edition I have embarked on a summary, due soon, of some of the new releases and reissues for the Beethoven 2020 celebration of his 250th birthday.

I mentioned some of these in Winter #2, but the trickle has since become a flood. My task has been made much easier by Mark Zimmer's [very detailed survey](#) of the three bumper box sets from DG, Warner and Naxos, which allows me to concentrate on single albums and some of the individual releases associated with those box sets, especially the smaller download selections from the DG box. I've dealt with some of these in my article and hope to include the rest in forthcoming editions of these regular Second Thoughts and Short Reviews.

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Music for Milan Cathedral

Herrmann Matthias WERRECORE (c1500-after 1574)

Inviolata, integra et casta es Maria [06:52]

Franchinus GAFFURIUS (1451-1522)

O sacrum convivium [02:30]

Herrmann Matthias WERRECORE

Popule meus [11:59]

JOSQUIN DESPREZ (c1450-1521)

Alma redemptoris mater/Ave regina coelorum [06:12]

Herrmann Matthias WERRECORE

Proh dolor [02:51]

Ave maris stella [10:19]

Inclina Deus meus [07:05]

Gaspar VAN WEERBEKE (c1445-after 1516)

Ave regina coelorum, mater [03:50]

Herrmann Matthias WERRECORE

Beati omnes qui timent Dominum [06:01]

Dominique PHINOT (c1510-c1556)

Homo quidam fecit [03:25]

JOSQUIN DESPREZ

Inviolata, integra et casta es Maria [05:19]

Siglo de Oro/Patrick Allies

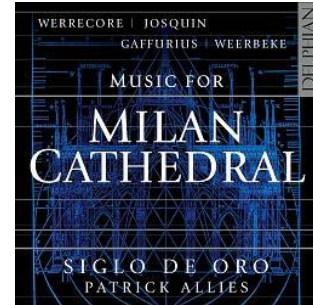
Recorded 2019 in the Chapel of Merton College, Oxford, UK DDD

Texts and translations included

Reviewed as a 16/44 FLAC download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com

DELPHIAN RECORDS DCD34224 [66:28]

For purchase details, please see 'Recommended' [review by BW](#).



It cannot be appreciated enough when performers turn to forgotten composers and bring them to our attention through recordings. That is what Patrick Allies and his ensemble Siglo de Oro have done with this disc, devoted to Hermann Matthias Werrecore, one of the many representatives of the Franco-Flemish school, which dominated the music scene during the 15th and early 16th centuries. As is so often the case with composers who today are largely ignored, he was held in high esteem in his time. The position of *maestro di cappella* of Milan cathedral, which he held from 1522 until the 1550s, was certainly not a minor post. His extant oeuvre is not very large, but it seems that hardly any of his compositions are available on disc. Here we get six motets which are new to the catalogue, among them two remarkably large-scale motets. What makes this disc even more interesting is that Werrecore is put here in his historical context. Franchinus Gaffurius was his predecessor in Milan, whereas Gaspar van Weerbeke was the latter's colleague at the court of Galeazzo Maria Sforza. Dominique Phinot was a contemporary of Werrecore, whose music he included in a collection of sacred works which he himself edited. Also included are two motets by Josquin Desprez, who had a strong influence on Werrecore.

Siglo de Oro is a very fine ensemble which sings this programme with strong commitment. At its largest it comprises thirteen voices, but it produces a beautiful transparent sound. Only in the passages for reduced forces I noticed a slight vibrato in some of the voices. Overall, the voices blend very well. This disc makes an excellent case for a forgotten master, who here receives the attention he deserves. [JV]

Salve, Salve, Salve: Josquin's Spanish Legacy

Cristóbal de MORALES (c.1500-1553)

Jubilate Deo omnis terra [5:30]

Chant: *Gaudeamus Omnes in Domino* [1:19]

Tomás Luis de VICTORIA (c.1548-1611)

Missa Gaudeamus [22:17]

I. *Kyrie* [3:58]

II. *Gloria* [7:00]

III. *Credo* [11:19]

Tomás Luis de VICTORIA

Salve Regina [10:01]

Missa Gaudeamus [10:48]

IV. *Sanctus* [5:53]

V. *Agnus Dei* [4:55]

Francisco GUERRERO (1527/28-1599)

Ave Virgo sanctissima [4:05]

Chant: *Salve Regina* [2:50]

Josquin DESPRES (c.1450-1521)

Salve Regina [8:08]

Francisco GUERRERO

Surge propera amica mea [6:14]

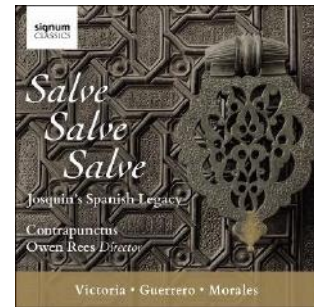
Contrapunctus/Owen Rees

rec. St Michael and All Angels, Oxford, 13-15 March 2019. DDD.

Texts and translations included

Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from hyperion-records.co.uk.

SIGNUM SIGCD608 [71:18]



CD from	
Download from Hyperion	

The rival recording of Victoria's *Missa Gaudeamus*, from *The Cardinal's Musick*, is now available only as a download or as a special CD from Presto. The only other version, from the Lay Clerks of Westminster Cathedral, offers the music in a liturgical sequence, including Mass readings and organ music by Frescobaldi (**CDA67748**). I made the Westminster CD *Recording of the Month* – [review](#) – and Robert Hugill thought it 'something special' – [review](#) – so you might expect me to rule out the new Signum, except that they are very different in their concept, the new recordings seeking to trace the influence of Josquin in the Golden Age in Spain. Both succeed very well on their own terms; while the male voices of Westminster Cathedral would have been what the composers expected to hear, I imagine that they would not have balked at the mixed-voice delights of *Contrapunctus*. The 24-bit download, costing around the same as the CD, is very good.

Giovanni Pierluigi Da PALESTRINA (1525/26-1594)

Lamentations - Book 2

Lamentations for Maundy Thursday 'In Coena Domini' [22:43]

Lamentations for Good Friday 'In Parasceve' [24:07]

Lamentations for Holy Saturday 'Sabbato Sancto' [25:20]

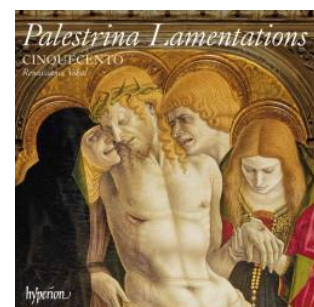
Cinquecento - Renaissance Vokal

rec. 2018, Kartause Mauerbach, Vienna, Austria DDD

Texts and translations included

Reviewed as a 24/88 FLAC download with pdf booklet from hyperion-records.co.uk.

HYPERION CDA68284 [72:12] For purchase details please see review by Dominy Clements.



Francisco de PEÑALOSA (1470—1528)

Lamentationes Jeremiae (Lamentations of Jeremiah): Feria V [11:34]

Pedro de ESCOBAR (1465—after 1535)

Stabat mater dolorosa [3:58]

Francisco de PEÑALOSA

Lamentationes Jeremiae: Feria VI [11:21]

Missa L'homme armé: Gloria [4:51]

Sancta Maria succure miseris [2:28]

Unica est columba mea [2:33]

Missa L'homme armé: Credo in unum Deum [7:32]

Francisco GUERRERO (1528—99)

Quæ est ista [5:20]

Antes que comáis a Dios [2:17]

Francisco de PEÑALOSA

Agnus Dei (*Missa L'homme armé*) [3:20]

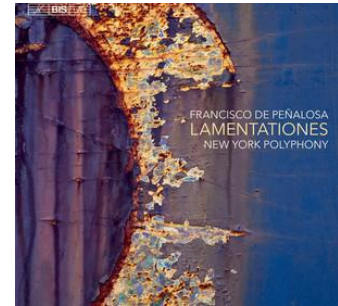
New York Polyphony

rec. June 2018, Princeton Abbey, Princeton, New Jersey, USA. DDD/DSD

Texts and translations included.

Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com.

BIS BIS-2407 SACD [56:41]



SACD from	
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Hyperion: Considering that the Lamentations of Jeremiah belong to the heart of the liturgy for Holy Week, it isn't surprising that quite a number of settings are available on disc. However, vocal ensembles seem to overlook Palestrina's settings. He left four sets; only the first has been printed, whereas the others have been preserved in manuscript. A fifth seems of doubtful authenticity. As far as I know, all of these sets are available in at least one recording, but it would be an exaggeration to say that they belong to the standard repertoire. Therefore this recording of the second set is most welcome. The settings are for four voices, but in some passages the number of parts is reduced to three, in others extended to five. The closing verse of the Lamentations for Holy Saturday is even for eight voices, and just for this short episode three additional singers are involved.

Cinquecento decided to perform these Lamentations with one voice per part, which seems historically justified. It allows for optimum intelligibility of the text. That is also due to the excellent singing of the members of Cinquecento. Add to that an immaculate blending of the voices and perfect intonation, and we have a performance which cannot fail to make a lasting impression. The recording is also exactly right: there is just enough space around the voices, but without compromising the intimacy these pieces require. In short, these are superb performances. Can we get the other sets too, please? [JV]

There are several only recordings on these **Hyperion and BIS** recordings., though doubtless The Sixteen will record Palestrina's second set of Lamentations in due course in their survey of his music. For the moment, however, **Cinquecento** have the field to themselves with this successor to the Hyperion recording of Lamentations Book III (**CDA67610** – [review](#)).

That recording of Book III, available to download from Hyperion in lossless sound, with pdf booklet, for the very attractive price of just £6.50 when I was writing this review, is very different from Cinquecento's of Book II – it was made with a cathedral choir, larger in number and with boys' voices on the top line. The immediate reaction would be to describe the singing as more reverential, but that would be to do the new recording a disservice. These are two different sets of settings, so there

is no competition and both are very good in their different ways. Perhaps I might choose the Westminster choristers if push came to shove, but I'd hate to be deprived of either.

Alternatively, Musica Contexta and Simon Ravens offer three Chandos albums of Palestrina settings of music for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday on which the Lamentations Book III are placed in context with the responsories which punctuated them during Matins and Lauds for those three days in the Roman Breviary (**CHAN0617**, **CHAN0652** and **CHAN0679**). All three can be downloaded, with pdf booklet, in lossless sound for £9.99 each from chandos.net. I thought I had reviewed these some time ago but can't find where, which gives me the opportunity to recommend them alongside the Hyperion for a more complete picture of the Holy Week liturgy.

Cinquecento's use of a countertenor on the top line, with two tenors and a single baritone and bass, plus three extra tenors brought in for the eight-part sections, corresponds closely to the way in which these Lamentations would have been sung in Rome in Palestrina's day, so it's undeniably a valid way to interpret the music, though it doesn't rule out larger-scale versions – including the King's College, Cambridge, recordings of Palestrina's masses and motets, directed by Sir David Willcocks and Sir Philip Ledger; though dating back as far as 1970 in some cases (Warner **2176552** budget-price – [review](#)).

Musica Contexta (Chandos) offer a different Palestrina sound picture again, with four high countertenors on the top line, two countertenor altos, four tenors and three baritones. When The Sixteen get round to the Lamentations, their female top line will sound different again and the Tallis Scholars, who have recorded only part of the Holy Saturday Lamentations from Book III on their *Tallis Scholars sing Palestrina* set, offer yet another approach. All have something important to say about the music, not least the Scholars, whose 2-for-1 offering is well worth obtaining (Gimell **CDGIM204** – see [The Tallis Scholars at 30](#) for this and other Palestrina and Lamentations recordings).

For a Palestrina novice, that Gimell recording would be a good place to start, not least because it contains the composer's most famous work, the *Missa Papæ Marcelli*. That Mass is no longer believed to have been the work that saved polyphony when the Council of Trent seemed likely to ban it, but it's still the best place to get to know this major composer, whom Organ Morgan in *Under Milk Wood* reckoned second only to 'Johann Sebastian mighty Bach'.

Having mentioned that The Sixteen have not yet got around to the Lamentations, let me draw attention to the latest volume (No.8) in their continuing Palestrina series. This concentrates on music associated with the institution of the Eucharist, together with the *Missa Fratres ego accepi*, itself based on a Eucharistic text (Coro **COR16175** – review in [Autumn 2019/1](#)).

If Palestrina's Second Book of Lamentations is not otherwise available, at least there is plenty more of his music to be found on record. In the case of the earlier composer **Peñalosa**, not only is this recording of his Lamentations unique in the catalogue, there's not much more of his music on record. Westminster Cathedral and James O'Donnell have recorded two of his Masses (Hyperion Helios **CDH55326** – [review](#) – [DL Roundup June 2011/1](#) and Pro Cantione Antiqua and Bruno Turner his motets (Hyperion Helios **CDH55357** – [review](#) – [review](#)). His *Missa Nunca fue pena mayor* is on Glossa **GCD922305**, from Ensemble Gilles Binchois and a Meridian recording of his sacred and secular works, entitled *Court and Cathedral*, remains available to download from some sources. The Hyperion recordings are available direct for £6.50, CD or download, and £7.99 respectively – click on the links in the catalogue numbers.

The BIS programme includes the Lamentations for Feria V (Maundy Thursday) and Feria VI (Good Friday). The other major work is the Mass based on the tune *L'homme armé*, which seems to have fascinated renaissance composers. Three items from the Mass are interspersed throughout the

programme; there would surely have been enough room to have included the *Kyrie* and the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*. In all other respects, this is a very fine recording and one to tempt you to others by NY Polyphony – start with Endbeginning, music by Brumel and contemporaries and Jackson Hill (b.1942) (**BIS-1949 SACD** – [review](#)).

Jan Antonín LOSY (c1650-1721)

Note d'oro

Suite in a minor [12:35]

Suite in F [15:57]

Suite in G [11:42]

Suite in d minor [13:48]

Suite in g minor [10:12]

Menuet in C [01:29]

Suite in B flat [12:04]

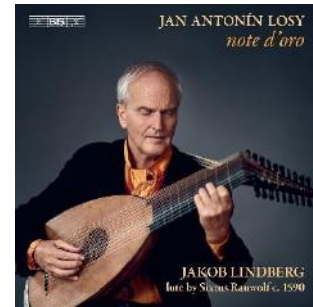
Chaconne in F [02:49]

Jakob Lindberg (lute)

rec. 2018, Länna Church, Sweden. DDD/DSD

Reviewed as a stereo 24/96 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com

BIS-2462 SACD [82:15]



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Jan Antonín Losy is probably known only to those who have a special interest in lute music, unlike, for instance, Silvius Leopold Weiss or Robert de Visée. Losy was born into a Bohemian aristocratic family. His social standing allowed him never to need to enter the service of a patron. In the booklet to Jakob Lindberg's recording of suites by Losy, Tim Crawford provides some interesting facts on Losy's contacts with other composers, such as Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel, who from 1715 to 1718 was Kapellmeister in Prague and who has given us a lively account of Losy's playing. He played not only the lute, but also the violin. Stölzel also observes the influence of the French style in his playing, and that manifests itself too in the suites Jakob Lindberg has recorded. However, there are also traces of the Italian style, for instance in movements called aria. Losy can be considered an early representative of the ideal of *goûts réunis*, the mixture of the two main styles in Europe. None of his compositions have been printed, but around 200 pieces have been preserved in manuscript. There are relatively few fixed suites, and therefore most suites played here have been put together by Lindberg from different sources, which was common practice at the time.

There is something aristocratic about these suites, and that is emphasized both by Jakob Lindberg's delicate and rhetorical style of playing and the superb historical instrument he uses, built by Sixtus Rauwolf in Nuremberg around 1590, and in some ways adapted in 1715. It is the ideal instrument for this repertoire. Thanks to the perfect combination of music, performer and instrument, this is the best possible case for the little-known Jan Antonín Losy and his music. [JV]

Philharmonia 75

Luigi BOCCHERINI (1743-1805)

Overture in D, Op.43 [6:17]

Johannes BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Piano Concerto No.1 in d minor, Op.15 [51:19]

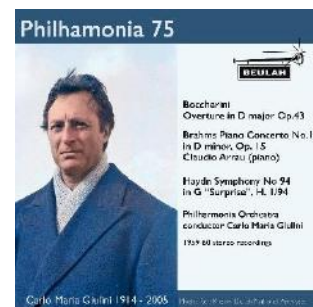
Joseph HAYDN (1732-1809)

Symphony No.94 in G 'Surprise', Hl.94 [20:08]

Claudio Arrau (piano)

Philharmonia Orchestra/Carlo Maria Giulini

rec. 1959-1960. ADD/stereo



BEULAH 1PS58 [77:45]

Fans of box sets may be tempted to invest in Warner's 24-CD *Philharmonia Orchestra – Birth of a Legend (9029534951)*. That involves another swathe of shelving – there doesn't seem to be a space-saving download – and the outlay of around £80, but you do get some classic performances from Herbert von Karajan, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Guido Cantelli, Arturo Toscanini, Paul Kletzki, André Cluytens, Sir William Walton, Otto Klemperer, Carlo Maria Giulini, Sir Charles Mackerras, Otto Ackermann, Henry Krips, Nicolai Malko, Robert Irving, Artur Rodzinski, George Weldon, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Igor Markevitch, Herbert Menges, Efrem Kurtz and Esa-Pekka Salonen, inherited from the EMI stable.

Beulah's 75th-birthday tributes, of which this is the first, will be more modest and available singly. For this first release, by accident or design, nothing overlaps with the Warner set, though there are several other Giulini recordings there; he was, after all, one of the stalwarts of EMI's Columbia label. The Brahms has, however, been reissued by Warner on a 9-CD set *Carlo Maria Giulini: The Concerto Recordings (4317612 – review)*.

Reviewing that set, Stephen Greenbank defended the Brahms concertos against the accusation levelled in some quarters of unduly slow tempi, finding them 'engaging and [with] an inner logic, Arrau bringing to the scores many profound insights'. Rob Maynard was also impressed by the 'very fine' accounts of both concertos, as reissued by EMI on a super-budget Brahms concerto collection (*5094212 – review* – now download only).

You wouldn't expect this to be a first-choice recording of the concerto; for me would be Emil Gilels with the BPO and Eugen Jochum, a notable bargain offering of both the piano concertos (DG Originals *4474462*) or, for a recording of much the same vintage as the Arrau, Clifford Curzon with the LSO and George Szell (Decca Legends *E4663762*, with Franck *Symphonic Variations*, download only, or *4788563*, Vinyl), but I enjoyed Arrau and Giulini far more than reviewers had in the 1960s; after all, Giulini recorded a notable Brahms Symphony No.1 for Columbia, so the accusation of being out of step with his music doesn't hold up.

Nor would Giulini's Haydn be a first choice; it's big-band Haydn, more like Beecham than modern recordings, but I did enjoy hearing everything on this tribute reissue and commend it to your attention. The recordings have transferred well.

Joseph HAYDN (1732-1809)

String Quartet in F, Op.50/5, 'The Dream' [17:26]

James MACMILLAN (b.1959)

Tuireadh (Lament, 1991)* [21:38]

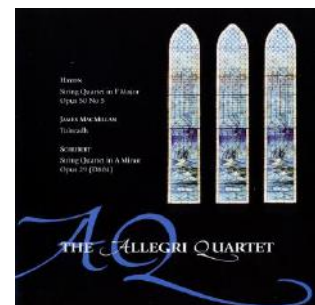
Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

String Quartet No.13 in a minor, D804, 'Rosamunde' [35:40]

James Campbell (clarinet)*;

Allegri String Quartet

NAIM NAIMCD067 [74:45]

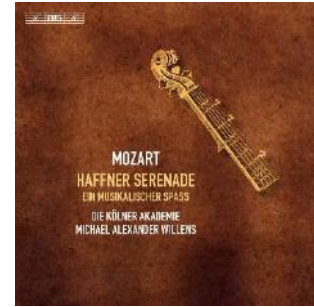


The diversity of the music here is my only reservation – and it's less relevant because this is one of a series of recordings made by audio manufacturers Naim, designed to show the prowess of the Allegri Quartet and their equipment. The mp3 download from emusic.com, albeit at the full 320kb/s, won't quite do the latter, but it's an inexpensive way to obtain an attractive set of performances, not least of the Schubert.

MacMillan's *Tuireadh*, a memorial for those who died in the Piper Alpha disaster, can also be found in a performance by the Emperor Quartet on a BIS album of the composer's chamber music (**BIS-1269** [73:32], CD or download in 16- and 24-bit lossless from emusic.com).

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756—91)

March in D, K249 (1776) [4:03]
 Serenade in D, 'Haffner', K250 (1776) [60:27]
Ein musikalischer Spaß, K522 (A Musical Joke) (1787) [20:50]
 Alexander Janiczek (violin)
 Die Kölner Akademie/Michael Alexander Willens
 rec. May 2018, Deutschlandfunk Kammermusiksaal, Cologne, Germany.
 DDD/DSD
 Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com.
BIS-2394 SACD [85:51]



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Two works by Mozart bear the name of the Haffner family – this Serenade, which encapsulates a violin concerto – and the Symphony No.5. The March in D is also associated with the Serenade. It's undemanding but very enjoyable music and it's persuasively presented by these period-instrument players, fresh from their fruitful association with Ronald Brautigam in all the Mozart piano concertos, and released almost simultaneously with their equally fine Beethoven piano concerto set, again with Brautigam. Those concerto recordings are well worth obtaining by all but outright haters of the fortepiano – and this recording of the Haffner Serenade is equally first-rate. The recording is also very good; having just upgraded to a car 'Infotainment' system which can play 24-bit flac, I've been enjoying hearing it there, as well as at home. At 86 minutes, it's ideal for a long-ish journey. (BIS offer advice to those with older CD players which won't cope with 80+ minutes). Avoid any dealers who try to charge for this as if for a 2-CD set.

The musical joke is not the most subtle ever – Mozart and his sister Nannerl had a crude sense of humour – but Willens and his team do their best for it. Or should that be 'their worst'; the joke is that this should sound like a ham composer and a dud orchestra getting everything wrong, which must be hard for players of this quality. (Older readers may remember Tommy Cooper, a good magician who found fame when one of his tricks went wrong, after which he concentrated on getting things wrong.) I hope the cover shot doesn't show all that was left of the first violin after having to play so badly.

RECOMMENDED

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART

Piano Concerto (No.5) in D, K175 (1773) [20:55]
 Overture to 'La finta giardiniera' in D, K196 (1775) [4:53]
 Overture to 'Il sogno di Scipione' in D, K126 (141a) (1772) [7:52]
 Piano Concerto (No.6) in B-flat, K238 (1776) [19:26]
 Overture to 'Lucio Silla' in D, K135 (1772) [7:44]
 Overture to 'Il re pastore' in C, K208 (1775) 3:17
 Piano Concerto (No.8) in C, K246 'Lützwow' (1776) [21:56]
 Overture to 'Zaide' in G, K344 (1779 – 80) (Symphony No.32, K318) (1779) [8:12]
 Piano Concerto (No.9) in E-flat, KV 271 'Jenamy' (1776) [30:57]
 Jean-Efflam Bavouzet (piano)
 Manchester Camerata/Gábor Takács-Nagy
 rec. The Stoller Hall, Hunts Bank, Manchester; 4-5 May 2019 and 26-27 September 2019. DDD.



CD from	
Download from Chandos	

Reviewed as press preview.

CHANDOS CHAN20137(2) [60:49 + 64:22]

This series of Mozart piano concertos, which I believe to be the best on modern instruments for many years now, turns its attention to the teenage composer and his first true compositions in that form – Nos. 1-4 were arrangements of other composers and No.7 is a concerto for three pianos. I have seen it suggested that the Chandos team should have coupled these early concertos with their recordings of his mature works – not a bad idea, but they have adopted a different strategy here to make the listening public more aware of the early concertos by offering them on a 2-CD set. It might have been better to offer the set as a two-for-one, but that’s my only reservation in recommending these recordings. I’m cheating slightly by attaching the ‘Recommended’ label – that really applies to the whole series – but I do so in the hope of encouraging readers to go for this recording. It’s only with No.9, whose nickname has been found to refer to the young lady for whom the work was composed, that most listeners start to listen to these concertos, but its predecessors are miracles for a teenage composer, more interesting than most of his early symphonies.

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

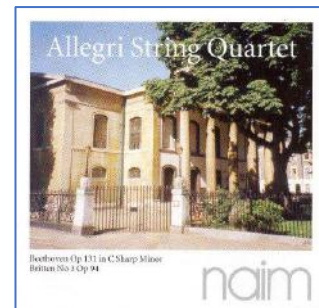
String Quartet No.14 in c-sharp minor, Op.131 [38:37]

Benjamin BRITTEN (1913-1976)

String Quartet No.3, Op.94 [26:24]

Allegri String Quartet

NAIM CD027 [64:13]



CD from	

I’m not sure when these recording were made for the audio manufacturers Naim; in the mid-late 1990s, I suspect, when several recordings were produced for the label to demonstrate their equipment at dealerships. Several of them are available as downloads from emusic.com, mostly reasonably priced for members – but I must remind readers that the amount of decent classical and jazz material from this source has recently been very depleted. I’m just hanging in there for the few gems that remain such

as the Allegri Quartet’s Schubert and Haydn (see above), and recordings by the Vermeer Quartet, Iona Brown and the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, etc. Their per-track charging policy means that some of the recordings are inexpensive, but others, such as an album of baroque music from Handel and others, entitled *A London Concert*, is more expensive than from other download suppliers.

While I wouldn’t have made the Allegri Quartet my first choice for either the Beethoven or the Britten, these are intelligent and musical performances – a trifle bland for late Beethoven, more apt for the Britten – and the 320kb/s mp3 sound is more than decent, if lacking somewhat in presence.

Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

Death and the Maiden Quartet (arr. 12 Ensemble) [44:06]

John TAVENER (1944-2013)

The Lamb (arr. 12 Ensemble) [4:01]

Oliver LEITH

Honey Siren [16:53]

Sigur RÓS

Fljótavík [4:15]

12 Ensemble

Downloaded from <https://www.pias.com/#>

SANCHO PANZA SPANCD002 [69:15]



CD from	

12 Ensemble, an uncondacted string orchestra, are a new group to me, and this disc made a hugely positive impression. Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* quartet lends itself to upscaling particularly well, most famously in Mahler's version. However, in their new version 12 Ensemble have altered the dynamic markings and, crucially, created a new part for the orchestral double basses. They make an enormous difference and are key to the piece's success. They growl with sinister intent beneath the texture, creating a sense of both threat and, in the second movement, dangerous allure. I found the slow movement enormously compelling, and there's a sense of live wire tension to the other movements that is very successful.

The other arrangements work just as well, especially Tavener's *The Lamb*, which fits them like a glove. Oliver Reith's delightfully clever *Honey Sirens* is played with delicate sensitivity, while Sigur Rós' *Fljóttavík* sounds absolutely gorgeous, its folky melody played with the most welcoming warmth. The sound is super in this download, which I got from the [PIAS site](#), those basses grounding the sound marvellously in my headphones. [ST]

Anton BRUCKNER (1824–1896)

[Symphony No.6](#) in A, WAB106 (1879-1881) [56:01]

Urtext edition by Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs

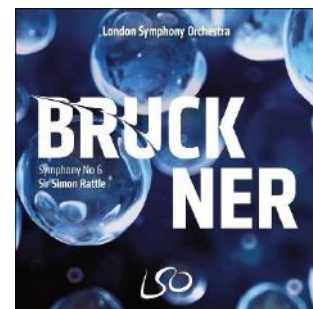
London Symphony Orchestra/Sir Simon Rattle

rec. live, 13 & 20 January 2019, Barbican Hall, London

World premiere recording of this edition. DSD

Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from hyperion-records.co.uk

LSO LIVE LSO0842 SACD [56:01]



SACD from	
Download from	

This recording has been the subject of considerable debate on the MusicWeb Message Board, following a lukewarm [review](#) by Ralph Moore and a more appreciative [review](#) by Michael Wilkinson. Following lengthy, sometimes tetchy, exchanges, that debate is now closed.

Without getting embroiled in the *minutiæ* of the argument, and certainly without speculating who may or may not be the greatest living conductor, I'll merely note that I largely enjoyed this recording. Reviews on Amazon range from 5 to 2 stars but beware: you may have read recently that many such reviews are linked to the wrong product; most of these are actually of the Colin Davis recording and one of them, a 2-star rating, shows a lamentable inability to spell.

You should find the SACD for around £8, but most dealers charge more than that for the lossless download and more still for 24-bit; Hyperion offer the former for £6.50 and the latter for £9.75, both with the booklet.

Pyotr Ilych TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

[Violin Concerto](#) in D, Op.35 (1878) [34:34]

Samuel BARBER (1910-1981)

Violin Concerto, Op.14 (1939) [23:33]

Johan Dalene (violin)

Norrköping Symphony Orchestra/Daniel Blendulf

rec. 2019, Louis de Geer Concert Hall, Norrköping, Sweden

Reviewed as 24/96 stereo download with pdf booklet from

eclassical.com. Also available on SACD and as a surround-sound



SACD from	

download.

BIS SACD BIS-2440 [58:47] See also [review](#) by William Hedley: ‘[In] deliver[ing] the composer’s message ... without compromising their own character ... Johan Dalene and Daniel Blendulf are the genuine article’.



I put off writing about this recording on what I thought the not unreasonable grounds that there were far too many versions, especially of the Tchaikovsky for any meaningful comparison. But that’s to ignore the fact that, so far as I am aware, this is the only recording (ever?) to combine the two concertos in full: Joshua Bell has recorded both separately and there’s a download album of single-movement excerpts with most of the other usual suspects (Decca **4756175**, if you’re interested). Moreover, this is the recording debut of an important young musician and it’s an impressive one.

If I say that Johan Dalene and Daniel Blendulf give us the essence of the Tchaikovsky without mannerisms or exaggeration, and at tempi admirably chosen, falling midway between my comparisons, you may think that means dull – far from it; the sheer quality of the playing makes this a very competitive account. I listened for comparison to Grumiaux (Philips), Batiashvili (DG), Friedman (RCA) and Radulović (DG) for comparison, but decided that comparison was futile, not merely because of the unique coupling. The one movement where these performers go out on a limb is the finale, where they take longer than any of my comparisons – a whole minute longer than Friedman but lively enough without ever sounding hectic.

If you know my usual preference for the lesser work(s) to be played first, you may expect me to wish that the order had been reversed, but Dalene and Blendulf almost convince me that the Barber is as important a concerto as the Tchaikovsky. It may not be its equal for virtuosity, but it’s a work of great beauty. Here again, though Isaac Stern and Leonard Bernstein are still my go-to performers, albeit that I had some reservations in my [review](#) of the last CD appearance of the three Barber concertos (CBS, various couplings, all download only), the BIS performance and recording are first-rate. The latter, as heard in 24-bit format, is as unobtrusively excellent as the performances.

Philharmonia 75

Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

Symphony No.5 in D [38:08]

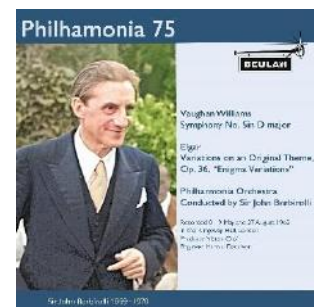
Sir Edward ELGAR (1857-1934)

Variations on an Original Theme, Op.36 ('Enigma') [30:36]

Philharmonia Orchestra/Sir John Barbirolli

rec. 8-9 May and 27 August 1962. ADD/stereo

BEULAH 2PS58 [68:45]



When released in 1963 on ASD508, the Vaughan Williams took a whole 12-inch LP. It had to compete then – and still does – with Sir Adrian Boult’s Decca recording with the LPO and, even though that comes in mono only, and download only, it remains first choice for many VW aficionados. It’s available on its own on a Naxos Classical Archives download (**980372**, around £5 in lossless sound) or as part of the complete symphonies (**4732412** – [review](#) – around £39 in lossless). Some dealers offer the Decca Eloquence reissue of Nos. 3 and 5 or the earlier, identical reissue (**4611182**, around £10) as a download. If you don’t mind mp3, not at the top bit-rate, and an awful Technicolor cover, the Classical Masters set of all the Boult VW symphonies remains available from [Amazon UK](#) for £7.99.



Now, I love Boult’s VW to bits, the mono Decca more than the later EMI stereo, and I wouldn’t want to be without it, but Barbirolli’s recordings of his music are special, too; those of the ‘London’ Symphony and No.8, which he made for Pye, especially very worthwhile (Symphony No.8: Beulah

4PDR17 – [DL News 2016/6](#)). I don't recall hearing this recording of No.5, but it has served to remind me why, if limited to one of his works for my Desert Island, this would be it – even more than *Flos Campi* or the *Tallis Fantasia*.

Barbirolli's Elgar, too, is pretty special, not least his classic recording of the *Introduction and Allegro* and other works (Warner or Beulah **1PS42** – [Spring 2019/2](#)). His *Enigma Variations* appeared on ASD548, with *Cockaigne*, to high praise and though I would probably choose Pierre Monteux's recording from this period (Decca Eloquence **4805019**, download only, with an equally fine Dvořák Symphony No.7 – [Spring 2019/2](#)), there's very little between them; this represents the Philharmonia of the period at its best – up there with their Beethoven for Klemperer. Both recordings have come up very well in these new transfers. The Enigma recording is also available as a download (or vinyl LP!) from Warner, but costs more and contains less music than the Beulah.

Claude DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

Trois Nocturnes (1897-99) [26:05]

Première Rapsodie, for clarinet and orchestra (1910) [8:04]

Marche Écossaise (1911) [6:42]

Les soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon (2017) (orch. Colin Matthews) [2:34]

La Damoselle élue (1888) [21:05]

Sergio Castelló López (clarinet); Sophie Bevan (soprano); Anna Stéphany (mezzo-soprano)

Upper Voices from the The Hallé Youth Choir and The Hallé Choir

Hallé Orchestra/Mark Elder

rec. 2018/19, Bridgewater Hall, Manchester; BBC Studio HQ9, Salford, UK. DDD

Reviewed as 24-bit download with pdf booklet from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#).

Text for *La Damoselle élue* not included

HALLÉ CDHLL7552 [64:56] See also **Recommended review** by Richard Hanlon.



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PRESTO CLASSICAL	
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It would take a great deal to displace the recent Harmonia Mundi recording of the *Nocturnes* from François Xavier-Roth and his period band, Les Siècles (**HMM905291**, with *Faune* and *Jeux*) but this modern-orchestra Hallé release doesn't attempt to do that. In any case, opinion was somewhat divided about the Xavier-Roth, with DM – [review](#) – much less impressed than JQ – [review](#). A more apt comparison would be with Bernard Haitink's recordings on a budget twofer (Decca **4387422**: *Images*, *Faune*, *1^{ere} Rapsodie*, *Nocturnes*, *La Mer*, etc.) That's a first-class bargain; Pierre Monteux's *Nocturnes*, available only on an over-expensive short-value download or as part of a 24-CD set, are not. I seem to have lossless (flac) files of his LSO *Nocturnes* (*Nuages* and *Fêtes* only) and other works; unhelpfully, I don't remember where I got them, but see my comparison of Monteux, Haitink and La Shui (BIS) in [DL News 2014/12](#).

Mark Elder, too, has become a complete Debussy interpreter, as witness his two recordings of the Colin Matthews transcriptions of the piano *Préludes* (**CDHLL7513** and **7518** – [DL Roundup March 2010](#)). Now he follows with a recording of *Nocturnes* and other shorter works which builds on that earlier success. Don't throw out Monteux or Haitink, both still sounding fresh, but add the new Hallé recording – remember that Hyperion downloads of this label bring lossless sound at what you might expect otherwise to pay for mp3 and 24-bit, at £9, for less than most providers charge for 16-bit.

Richard STRAUSS (1864-1949)

Ein Heldenleben [45:52]

Rosenkavalier Suite [21:59]

Royal Scottish National Orchestra/Thomas Søndergård
rec. Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, 7-8 August 2018. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless download from linnrecords.com.

Linn CKD510 [67:53]



CD from	
Download from	
linnrecords.com .	

Ein Heldenleben has become the RSNO's Strauss tone poem of choice in recent years - I've heard them play it three times in the last decade – and they do it marvellously. This Linn recording (which I downloaded from the Linn site in CD-quality) captures them at their best, opening up the sound delightfully and making everything transparent. The strings sound superb in the hero's theme, and the winds have a whale of a time as the adversaries, while the violin solo for the hero's companion is beautifully taken by, I assume, guest leader David Adams. Thomas Søndergård directs things well, though I wanted a little more energy in the battle and the hero's subsequent re-emergence. Still, it's a lovely performance beautifully recorded, and the *Rosenkavalier* suite is a winner, too, the whooping horns and swooping strings of the Prelude captured wonderfully by the Linn sound. Without ever wallowing, Thomas Søndergård shapes the waltzes with a delicious sense of schmaltz, and the whole span is characterised by a sense of a wry wink and a smile. This is marvellously enjoyable. [ST]

Maurice RAVEL (1875-1937)

Jeux de Miroirs

Alborada del gracioso pour orchestre (from *Miroirs* M.43) (orch. 1918-19) [7:51]

Le Tombeau de Couperin. 6 pièces pour piano deux mains, M.68 (1914-17) [25:52]

Concerto in G, M.83 (1929-31) [22:20]

Le Tombeau de Couperin Suite d'orchestre, M.68a (orch. 1919) [17:44]

Alborada del gracioso. (1904-05) *Pour piano* [7:09]

Javier Perianes (piano)

Orchestre de Paris/Josep Pons

rec. 2017/18, Philharmonie de Paris; Sala Unicaja Maria Cristine, Malaga. DDD.

Reviewed as 24/48 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com.

HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902326 [81:05]

For CD availability see also 'Recommended' [review by John Quinn](#).



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eclassical.com

John Quinn's review more or less says all that you need to know about this fascinating recording – it's especially valuable if you know only the orchestral or the piano versions of *Alborada* and *Tombeau*, but it also includes a recording of the Piano Concerto in G as good as any on the market. The only problem is that the G major concerto is usually coupled with the left-hand concerto, so you are likely to end up with two recordings; you could do much worse.

The 24-bit recording is very good.

Rodion SHCHEDRIN (b. 1932)*Carmen Suite* (1968) [44:38]**Ottorino RESPIGHI (1879-1936)***Pines of Rome* (1923-1924) [21:31]Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks/Mariss Jansons
rec. live, 13-17 November 2017, Philharmonie im Gasteig (*Carmen*); live,
15-17 May 2019, Herkulesaal, Munich**BR KLASSIK 900183** [66:09] Reviewed as a 16-bit download; pdf booklet included. See also *Addendum*, p.18.

As regular readers will know, I've never been a great fan of the late Mariss Jansons, but I was much impressed by his 2007 Mahler [First](#) and 2010 [Seventh](#), with the BRSO and Concertgebouw respectively. Also, William Hedley thought so highly of the 2010 Jansons/BRSO [Shostakovich Tenth](#) that he awarded it a 'Recommended' tag. Alas, given my ambivalence towards this conductor in general and Shchedrin's *Carmen Suite* in particular, this new album challenges me on two fronts. That said, in *Pines of Rome* it's Jansons who has the really tough task, that of competing with classic versions from the likes of István Kertész and the LSO in the 1960s (Decca) and the incomparable Fritz Reiner in Chicago, recorded for RCA in 1959. (I've not heard the Latvian's complete EMI-Warner 'Roman Trilogy', made with the Oslo Phil in the late 1990s.) Jansons has far fewer rivals in the Shchedrin; the only recording I have is the Yuli Turovsky/I Musici de Montréal one, which, I must admit, sounds pretty spectacular ([Chandos](#)).

The last time I heard the *Carmen Suite* was at a London performance of Matthew Bourne's quirky ballet, *The Car Man*. As I suspected, the music grew tiresome quite quickly; then again, the production is hardly Bourne's best. (So, not so much a hurdle for me to clear as a mountain to climb.) To be fair, Jansons turns in a respectable reading, Shchedrin's more lugubrious moments - of which there are plenty - are only a little less ponderous than usual, but at least the work's lyrical passages are nicely done. In fact, it's the attention to colour and detail that impresses most, even if, as so often with this conductor, there are hints of micro-management in both phrasing and dynamics. Happily, the Bavarians are in fine fettle, and the sound is decent enough, with a good stereo spread. (The terrific bongos are well caught, too.) And while Jansons' *Carmen Suite* isn't nearly as visceral as Turovsky's, I daresay some listeners will prefer the piece played that way. The Munich audience, soon faded, certainly enjoyed it.

Jansons' *Pines*, recorded in the more congenial acoustic of the Herkulesaal two years later gets off to a spirited and sparkling start, the bright brass and sharply etched strings undeniably appealing. The catacombs are suitably Stygian, with a splendid tam-tam, and Jansons builds to a most satisfying climax here. The *Pines of the Janiculum* is beautifully shaped, the various solos highly evocative. The BRSO strings are magical, too. The real showstopper, though, is the finale, its march rhythms razor sharp, the approaching legions generating a thrilling sense of anticipation. (Fabulous percussion, too, as required.) Now if only we'd had the rest of this colourful trilogy, rather than that dull Shchedrin piece, this would be a first-class release.

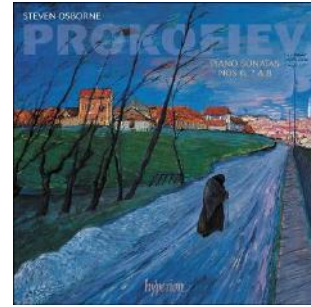
No, Jansons hasn't changed my mind about the Shchedrin; his Respighi is mighty persuasive, though.
[DM]

RECOMMENDED**Sergei PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)**

Piano Sonata No.6 in A, Op.82 (1940) [28:31]

Piano Sonata No.7 in B-flat, Op.83 (1942) [17:24]

Piano Sonata No.8 in B-flat, Op.84 (1944) [28:26]
 Steven Osborne (piano)
 rec. February 2019, St Silas the Martyr, Kentish Town, London. DDD.
 Reviewed as a 24/96 download with pdf booklet from hyperion-records.co.uk
HYPERION CDA68298 [74:21]



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Having just edited Dan Morgan’s forthcoming review of this recording of the ‘wartime’ sonatas, I simply had to include it here. These sonatas are among the greatest works of the twentieth-century and among the hardest to play, but you would hardly think so from Steven Osborne’s performances. Dan gave it ‘Recommended’ status, which it thoroughly deserves, and the 24-bit recording is excellent; there are 24/96 and 24/192 variants, the latter, ideal for audiophiles, comes as a large file and is rather expensive, so the 24/96 which I listened to is the one I recommend.

Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)
Symphony No.10 in e minor, Op.93 (1953) [53:48]
 Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra/Mariss Jansons
 rec. live, 4 March 2010, Herkulesaal, Munich, Germany. DDD.
BR KLASSIK 900185 [53:48]



See also reviews by [Michael Cookson](#) and [William Hedley](#) (*Recommended*)

Olga VICTOROVA (b.1960)
Quinlong Azure Dragon [8:00]
Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH
Symphony No.10 in e minor, Op.93 (1953) [50:48]
 philharmonie zuidnederland/Dmitri Liss
 rec. live October 26, 2018, Theater aan het Vrijthof Maastricht; October 27, 2018, Muziekgebouw Eindhoven; October 28, 2018, Eurogress Aachen. DDD.
FUGA LIBERA FUG756 [58:48]



There are several very fine recordings of this symphony: from Neeme Järvi (Chandos **CHAN8630**), Vasily Petrenko (Naxos **8.572461: Bargain of the Month** – [review](#) – or **8.501111** Complete Symphonies) and, most recently, Andris Nelsons (DG **4795059** – [review](#) – [review](#) – [review](#)) to name just three. My own go-to recording for a long time has been the Järvi, briefly available on licence as a Boots CD. It may still be at full-price, but it comes with the bonus of Ballet Suite No.4, though I add the usual caution that it’s best to re-programme the tracks to avoid having lighter music to follow the big stuff. DG wisely open the Nelsons recording with the filler, as do Fuga Libera.

Jansons CD from	
Stream from	

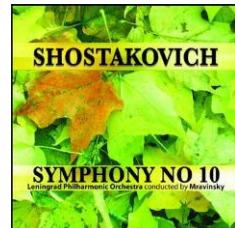
Liss CD from	
Stream from	

In listening to the new recordings and again to the Järvi, I have aimed to forget about the presumed portrait of Stalin in the *scherzo* – supposedly described by Shostakovich, tongue in cheek, as one of the ‘benefactors of humanity’. We can certainly agree that it’s ‘about’ the hopes and fears following the death of Stalin – there were fears, especially in the West, about what

might follow that event – and the composer’s part in it, represented by the DSCH signature motive in the *allegretto*. With generally fast-ish tempi, **Dmitri Liss** allows us to enjoy the music for its own sake, without missing any of the desolation and power of the great first movement, though he takes four minutes less than Nelsons and is 1½ minutes faster than Järvi. Get that right and the rest almost follows. Whatever you make of the Stalin reference, the second movement goes like a whirlwind, the *allegretto* is enigmatic and the *andante* introduction to the finale leads into a universal dance in which DSCH is able to join. I had expected to enjoy this recording, following Liss’s Myaskovsky Sixth, described by Rob Barnett as ‘volatile and possessed’ – [review](#). That works for his Shostakovich and, while, the orchestra is hardly one of the world’s greatest, they offer him very fine service. The recording, though I received it in mp3 only, is good. The opening *Quinlong Azure Dragon* neither helped nor hindered my enjoyment.

Both Liss and **Maris Jansons** come in the form of live recordings. I can be brief about the latter because my colleagues have said it all and I enjoyed it as much as they did. Overall, however, I found myself enjoying the Liss recording as much, if not (surprisingly) slightly more, especially in the second movement, where Jansons puts just slightly too much into the music and outstays his welcome by a few seconds by comparison with Liss and Järvi. Which to buy? Petrenko may be the least expensive, but he’s certainly not cheap in any other sense, but my ultimate choice remains Järvi on Chandos.

There’s a download recording of the Tenth which purports to be a remastered recording by the **Leningrad PO** and **Yevgeny Mravinsky** on Emkay Remasters, available for around £3.50. The timings don’t correspond with the version by these performers on Warner and the sound is pretty dire: raw, thin and shrill. If you fancy Shostakovich in the car, this recording, with its garish cover, might just do for that. I purchased this from emusic.com – members’ price £1.68 – it’s an intense account, but I can’t recommend it.



Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

[String Quartet](#) No.13 in b-flat minor, Op.138 (1970) [20:04]

String Quartet No.14 in F-sharp (1973)[27:56]

String Quartet No.15 in E-flat, Op.144 [37:48]

Fitzwilliam String Quartet

rec. 2018/2019, St. Martin’s Church, East Woodhay, UK. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless (.wav) press preview

LINN CKD612 [48:13 + 37:48] See also [review](#) by Roy Westbrook: ‘if you want the full Soviet-era head-in-hands experience of these demanding pieces, this is the one’.



CD from	
Download from	
linnrecords.com	

The Fitzwilliam Quartet in an earlier incarnation made a much-lauded series of recordings of Shostakovich (Decca **4557762**, 6 CDs). Only one player remains from the earlier line-up, but this new release, which I hope will be the first of a series, bids fair to equal that achievement. RW includes a comparative table of timings in his review, from which it’s apparent that the quartet now gives the music rather more time to make its point. They are slower, too, than the eponymous Shostakovich Quartet, whose 5-CD set of the 15 quartets, recorded 1980-88, makes an excellent bargain on Alto, but one which seems doomed to disappear from the catalogue. (Download Nos. 12-14 on Olympia [OCD535](#) or look out for a copy of Regis **RRC1024**, budget price). Bargain of bargains, those prepared to accept mp3 can download this set from uk7digital.com for £4.49.

I shall not be jettisoning the Shostakovich Quartet, but there’s no denying the intensity of these new Fitzwilliam versions and the recording is superior to the older Soviet sound. RW wished it had been

available on SACD, like the Mandelring Quartet (Audite), but Linn have ditched that format, though there is a 24-bit download (both 24/96 and 24/192 available from [Linn](#)).

Ēriks EŠENVALDS (b. 1977)

- There Will Come Soft Rains [3:55]
- The new moon [3:47]
- Long Road: I love you night and day [6:09]
- Rivers of light [5:57]
- Northern Lights [6:19]
- Only in sleep [5:31]
- O, She Doth Teach the Torches to Burn Bright [5:35]
- A Soldier's Mother's Lullaby [6:52]
- Spring Rain [5:17]
- In My Little Picture Frame [4:50]
- Evening [3:30]
- My Luv Is Like A Red, Red Rose [3:52]
- Stars [4:02]
- Amazing grace [5:22]
- The Pacific Lutheran Choir of The West/Richard Nance
rec. April 2018, Lagerquist Concert Hall, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington, USA. DDD
Reviewed as 24/48 download with pdf booklet from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#).
- SIGNUM SIGCD603** [71:05]



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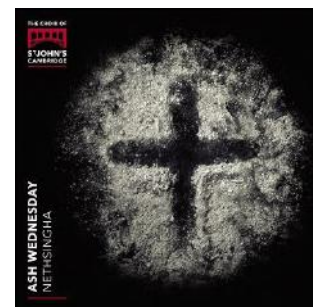
If you know the music of Ēriks Ešenvalds, you will not be surprised or, I think, disappointed with this recording. If you don't know his oeuvre, 'Eastern European minimalist' would be my approximate description, but it's better if you sample the tracks from the Hyperion web-site – link above. Best of all, grab the [free February 2020 sampler](#) while it's available for a whole track, *In My Little Picture Frame*. (The sampler will also give you access to several other fine releases, including Steven Osborne's recording of Prokofiev's war-time piano sonatas (above, p.14). Much of the music on the Ešenvalds recordings is ethereal, all of it immediately attractive.

The State Choir of Latvia recording of many of these works may be more 'authentic', but it's download only (**518616**). The Pacific Lutheran Choir offer idiomatic performances – the texts are, after all, in English – and the recording is very good, with 24-bit available for just £9 (16-bit £7.99). Expect to pay around £12.50 for the CD.

If this inspires you to experiment further, Trinity College Choir and Philip Layton have recorded *Northern Lights* and other works (Hyperion **CDA68083** – [review](#) – [review](#) – there's some overlap with the Signum recording). And with Holy Week and Easter not far off, there's another Hyperion recording directed by Stephen Layton *Passion and Resurrection* **CDA67796** – [review](#) – [DL News 2015/3](#)).

Ash Wednesday

- William BYRD (c.1539-1623)** The Preces [1:37]
- Gregorio ALLEGRI (1582-1652)** *Miserere mei, Deus* [13:08]
- The First Lesson, Isaiah 1¹⁰⁻¹⁸ [2:02]
- Thomas WEELKES (c.1576-1623)** The Short Service: *Magnificat* [3:00]
- The Second Lesson, Luke 15^{11-end} [3:20]
- Thomas WEELKES** The Short Service: *Nunc Dimittis* [1:37]
- The Apostles' Creed [1:04]
- William BYRD** The Responses [6:25]
- Ne irascaris Domine* [10:53]



The Prayers [2:28]

Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750) Prelude in e minor, BWV548i [7:39]

Choir of St John's College Cambridge/Andrew Nethsingha
rec. live St John's College Chapel, Cambridge, 6 March 2019. DDD.

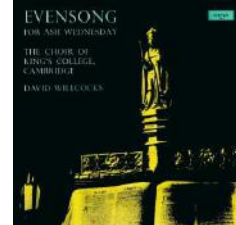
Texts and translations included

Reviewed as 24/44.1 download with pdf booklet from hyperion-records.co.uk

SIGNUM SIGCD605 [53:22]



The obvious comparison is with the classic (1964) King's College recording of Evensong for Ash Wednesday with David Willcocks and Master Roy Goodman, himself later a distinguished conductor, hitting the high notes in Allegri's *Miserere* (Argo **4789533**, download only). That's rather expensive and comes without booklet, but the *Miserere* is available more reasonably priced, with music by Palestrina on Decca Legends **4663732** (the CD; again, the download is expensive and there's no booklet.)



Since 1964 we have come to realise that it's almost impossible to reconstruct the 'real' Allegri *Miserere* – generations of use in the Sistine Chapel added embellishment and ever higher top notes – so, as the booklet acknowledges, what is sung on the new Signum recording is a compromise, retaining the famous top Cs 'despite the lack of strict authenticity'. At least St John's sing it in Latin – paradoxically, when the language is hardly hanging on even to the university curriculum, let alone in schools. In 1964, it was sung in English. Otherwise, forget about scholarly speculation and enjoy the kind of spiritual-musical experience which, even in this secular age, is a cornerstone of the BBC Radio 3 Wednesday and Sunday afternoons. The 24-bit recording reminds us how much audio technology has advanced even since 1964.

Addenda

Apologies for adding this at the last minute. I had intended it as a review for the main site, but Michael Cookson's [review](#) appeared just as I was tying up the loose ends, and Dan Morgan had already given us his thoughts (above, p.14).

Rodion SHCHEDRIN (b.1932)

Carmen Suite: Ballet for Strings and Percussion (1967) [44:38]

Ottorino RESPIGHI (1879–1936)

Pini di Roma: Symphonic Poem for Orchestra, P141 (1924) [21:31]

Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks/Mariss Jansons
rec. live München, Philharmonie im Gasteig, 13–17 November 2017
(Carmen); live München, Herkulesaal der Residenz, 15–17 May 2019.
DDD.

BR KLASSIK 900183 [66:09]



You may be familiar with the two conventional suites from Bizet's *Carmen*. You may think this is something similar, but that would be to reckon without Rodion Shchedrin's input. In fact, the *Carmen* Suite is fairly tame by comparison with some of his other music; nevertheless, it's scored in ways that would never have occurred to Bizet, so it's very far from being simply an arrangement. There's lots of percussion and extra effects from the strings. Indeed, the music is not just from *Carmen*; there's material here from *L'Arlésienne* and *La jolie fille de Perth*, all put together as a ballet for Shchedrin's wife to dance, "not paying obsequious homage to ... Bizet, but ... creatively".

BR Klassik spell the composer's name in the German way as *Schtchedrin*, which looks like too many letters if you are used to the English spelling. The music is much more fun than trying to transliterate the name. The most ardent Bizet fans had better stay clear; the rest of us can enjoy the music in much the same way as *Pineapple Poll*, Sir Charles Mackerras' arrangement of Gilbert and Sullivan – which is more enjoyable than the original G&S, but that's a personal opinion. There's more of Schchedrin in *Carmen* than there is of Mackerras in *Poll*, or of John Lanchberry in *La fille mal gardée*, but I enjoyed it just as much.

This recording competes with an earlier DG album from the Russian National Orchestra and Michael Pletnev (4711362 – [review](#)). The praise bestowed on that earlier recording is just as appropriate here and, in any case, the DG is now download only, which will rule it out for many. While Jansons was not Russian, he did have a special affinity for Shchedrin's music: see Jens F Laurson's [review](#) of a 2012 concert at the Herkulessaal which featured his music.

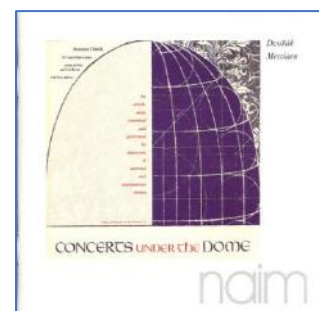
The DG is an all-Schedrin affair, whereas the BR Klassik adds Respighi's *Pini di Roma*. That's not exactly a logical coupling, and many potential buyers will already have a good recording, coupled with other Respighi works. On the other hand, this recording of the Respighi is very good – even better, perhaps, than the Schedrin. Jansons brings out the quieter, reflective sections of the piece just as well as its more forthright elements. In fact, if you want proof that Respighi's music is colourful but not brash, look no further than this recording. If you want brash, his *Roman Festivals* provides that.

If you didn't know either of these works, or had heard them but didn't have a recording, you've come to the right place to have them sold to you. If the Shchedrin prompts you to explore his music further, you could try his Symphony No.2, coupled with his Concerto No.3 on a Chandos recording from the BBC Philharmonic and Vasily Sinaisky (CHAN9552 – [Winter 2018-19 #2](#)).

Presumably, these were two recordings for which BR Klassik couldn't find suitable pairings when Jansons died in November 2019. As it is, they make a fine contribution to his valuable legacy. And, on reflection, the Respighi is just as much larger than life as the Schedrin, especially as the performance is the equal of any that I know, including those mentioned in my [Winter 2019-20 #2 roundup](#).

The recording of both works is first-rate, as heard from CD. For audiophiles there's a 24-bit download for around £14, which I haven't heard, but most will be much more than content with the CD or the 16-bit download. All in all, this is a seemingly odd coupling which works very well.

Another last-minute addition offers a mixed bag: The **Vermeer Quartet** in **Antonín DVOŘÁK's** String Quartet No.9 in d minor, Op.34, B75, and **Olivier MESSIAEN's** *Quatuor pour la Fin du temps* (**NAIMCD008** [73:40] downloaded from [emusic.com](#), mp3, no booklet). Recorded in 1993 and 1994, it's another of audio manufacturers' Naim's CDs which they put out as samplers of their equipment in the mid-late 1990s.



In this case, the sub-title *Concerts under the Dome* reminds us that it was intended as a souvenir of a concert early in the quartet's life at the Ascension Church in Illinois. The Dvořák comes over well, but there are so many versions of the Messiaen which make much more of the music. Pascal Morguès and Trio Wanderer come with a shorter coupling, but at mid-price on Harmonia Mundi Gold (**HMG501897**). See [review](#) by Jens S Laurson for a comparison of that, on its original release, with other recordings.