

**Second Thoughts and Short Reviews: Spring 2020/#1B**  
**By Brian Wilson, Johan van Veen and David Barker**

This is the second part of Spring 2020/1. It's indexed in the first part.

**Richard STRAUSS (1864-1949)**

*Metamorphosen*, TRV290 (1945) [28:43]

**Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)**

Symphony No.3 in E flat, Op. 55 'Eroica' (1804) [46:32]

Sinfonia Grange au Lac/Esa-Pekka Salonen

rec. July 2018, La Grange au Lac, Évian, France. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless (.wav) press preview

**ALPHA 544** [75:20]

I mentioned this recording briefly in [Autumn 2019/1](#) – I was waiting for a better (lossless) transfer than the low-rate mp3 which Outhere had originally sent and I received the wav version only at the last minute, as I was completing that edition. My only reservation was to wonder if there really was a clientele of those who wanted these two works together, but then I found myself comparing the mood of Furtwängler's recording of Beethoven's Fifth (1944) with Strauss's *Metamorphosen*, a work which must have been gestating at around the same time and was performed the year after that recording. Also, I had forgotten that the Strauss contains a quotation from the *Eroica*, as if to call upon the spirit of Beethoven, lost in the war years. Thus, I have negated my own reservations about a recording which Michael Cookson [reviewed favourably](#), prompted myself to look at it again, and now enjoy the coupling much more.



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[Symphony No. 5](#) in c minor, Op.67 [34:00]

Symphony No.7 in A, Op.92 [40:06]

NDR Philharmonie/Andrew Manze

rec. Großer Sendesaal des NDR Landesfunkhaus Hannover, 21-23

January 2019 (Symphony No.5) and 11-14 March 2019 (Symphony No.7) DDD/DSD.

Reviewed from high-definition stereo layer.

**PENTATONE PTC5186814 SACD** [74:12]

[Symphony No. 5](#) in c minor, Op.67 [33:31]

[Symphony No. 6](#) in F, Op.68 'Pastoral' [39:27]

WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln/Marek Janowski

rec. Kölner Philharmonie, Germany, 24-29 September 2018.

DDD/DSD

**PENTATONE PTC5186809 SACD** [72:58]



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**Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)**

[Symphony No. 5](#) in c minor, Op.67 [45:19]

[Symphony No. 6](#) in F, Op.68 – ‘Pastoral’ [43:51]

Orchester Wiener Akademie/Martin Haselböck  
rec. 2018/19, Palais Niederösterreich, Vienna

**ALPHA 479** [80:16] For purchase links see **Recommended** [review](#) by Michael Wilkinson.

Having given us a well-considered recording of the *Eroica* (**HMU807470**, download only, with *Contredanses* and *Prometheus* finale) and accompanied Martin Helmchen in a very fine account of Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 5 (Alpha – [Winter 2019-20/1](#)), **Andrew Manze** now sets himself in competition with one of the classic Beethoven Symphony couplings, from Carlos Kleiber (DG Originals **4474002**; No.7 on *Beethoven 2020 Symphonies and Overtures* – above; No.5 on *The Very Best of Beethoven*, above).

You would expect a conductor who made his mark in the baroque repertoire to move the opening of the **Fifth Symphony** along rather faster than Sir Malcolm Sargent in 1945 (Beulah [3PS57](#)), and you would not be disappointed. There’s plenty of *allegro* and *brio* here yet, surprisingly, the clock says that there’s only seconds difference between the two accounts of the first movement. Manze doesn’t underplay the grandeur of the opening and he’s prepared to linger along the way sometimes. He actually gives a degree more length and weight to the second movement and to the finale without making either sound lumpen. This may be, as the publicity material claims, a historically aware performance with a modern orchestra, though it won’t disappoint those looking for a weighty but not ponderous account.

The **Seventh Symphony** is anything but weighty. Not only is it shot through with the spirit of the dance, as Wagner asserted, it also prefigures many of the quirky characteristics of the late quartets and piano sonatas, so any performance needs to disturb the listener as well as make the feet tap. The \$64,000 question always concerns the speed of the finale – too slow and it’s lost its power, too fast and the players may come off the rails. Manze drives the NDR orchestra pretty hard – his tempo slightly faster than Fischer’s (Naxos complete symphonies) but both orchestras stay pretty well on track throughout and, above all, both the spirit of the dance and the foreshadowing of the later Beethoven are present in both.

I still want to keep access to the Carlos Kleiber recording, but I also want my cake and eat it, especially as the new recording comes in superior SACD sound.

I’ve already seen two reviews of the **Marek Janowski**. Both were (rightly) well pleased with the unaffected account of the Fifth but they diverged over the comparatively plain recording of the *Pastoral*. The question is whether the latter takes us on an expressive journey or misses some of the sense of wonderment. It’s a work that can take care of itself pretty well without too much interpretation; though this is much faster overall than, say, Böhm on the DG *Beethoven 2020 Symphonies and Overtures*, I enjoyed hearing it. In fact, there were moments when Janowski revealed new aspects of the work for me – the chirping of the birds in the first movement, for example – without appearing to meddle with the music. Not an outstanding *Pastoral*, but a very good one.



Beethoven Symphonies 5 & 6  
WDR Symphony Orchestra  
Marek Janowski


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SYMPHONIES 5 & 6 PASTORAL

RESOUND  
BEETHOVEN  
VOL. 1

ORCHESTER WIENER AKADEMIE  
MARTIN HASELBÖCK

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**Martin Haselböck's** series of 'Beethoven Resound' with the period-instrument Vienna Academy Overture, recorded in venues known to the composer, now reaches its final volume, No. 8. In this case the recording was made in the Landhaus Hall where the series began. Having had mixed feelings about some of the earlier volumes, and having read MW's [very positive review](#), I was hoping to hear this latest volume when, pat upon cue, my latest batch of press previews arrived from the Outhere group – and left me disappointed in that the music files were missing, with only the booklet and front and back covers! I hope to be able to track down the missing files for the next edition.

Symphony No.9 in d minor, Op.125 'Choral' (1824) [66:24]  
 Ann-Helen Moen (soprano), Marianne Beate Kielland (mezzo), Allan Clayton (tenor), Neal Davies (bass)  
 Bach Collegium Japan/Masaaki Suzuki  
 rec. January 2019, including a public concert on 24 January Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall: Takemitsu Memorial, Japan. DDD/DSD.  
 Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](http://eclassical.com).  
**BIS BIS-2451 SACD** [66:24]



It may come as something of a surprise to see Masaaki Suzuki shedding his baroque mantle for Beethoven, but he has stepped out of his Bach specialism before, having recorded the Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* (**BIS-2321 SACD** – [review](#)). He also recorded Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, *Apollon Musagète* and Concerto in D with the Tapiola Orchestra (**BIS-2211, SACD**). Dave Billinge thought his Stravinsky lacking in sparkle – [review](#) – and Des Hutchinson thought there were better recordings to be had – [review](#). Conversely, I liked it, finding in it the life and lilt that I thought missing in another BIS recording from Jukka-Peka Saraste and from Alexander Janiczek (Linn) – [DL News 2016/6](#). Bearing in mind that I've already seen several slightly contradictory reviews of this Beethoven (Simon Thompson was not impressed – [review](#)) where would I sit on this particular fence?

I would have hoped to compare Suzuki's period-instrument recording with its opposite number from the DG *Beethoven 2020* collection, but the period performance download from that edition contains only one symphony, and that in a trio arrangement. I've therefore chosen Emmanuel Krivine with Les Éléments (Naïve **V5258**, 5 CDs, complete symphonies; No.9 on V5202 – [DL Roundup July 2011/1](#)). That's a small-scale orchestra, but there's nothing small-scale about the performance, leaving us in no doubt that this was Beethoven's last word in symphonic form. The reconstruction of his incomplete Tenth is interesting, but little more. I also listened again to Osmo Vänskä on another BIS SACD (**BIS-1616**), having compared his recording and Krivine's with Daniel Barenboim's rather heavy *Beethoven for All* (Decca **4783511**) in [September 2012/1](#).

Suzuki adopts a very similar approach to both the period-instrument Krivine and the modern-instrument Vänskä in the opening movements; certainly, there's nothing either under-powered or unduly heavy. It's in the finale, however, that Suzuki's long experience with the Japan Bach Collegium and a wide range of soloists in Bach's choral music pays dividends.

Where I do agree with ST is in praising the quality of the recording: detailed but well integrated.

**Ludwig van BEETHOVEN**

Violin Concerto in D, Op.61 [42:36]

**Pēteris VASKS (b.1946)**

Concerto for violin and string orchestra, 'Tala gaisma' (Distant Light) [30:32]

Fanny Clamagirand (violin)

English Chamber Orchestra/Ken David Masur

rec. St Jude's, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London, 9-11 March 2016.

DDD.

**MIRARE MIR476** [73:08]



CD available from



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Fanny Clamagirand has made several recordings for Naxos, including well-liked accounts of the music of Saint-Saëns – [review](#) – [review](#) – but her debut for Mirare brings her into well-contested territory with the Beethoven concerto. Perhaps that’s why they waited almost three years to release the recording – or were they waiting for the 2020 celebrations? In any event, they hedged their bets by tempting us with the first and only recording of the Pēteris Vasks concerto. That was probably wise: the Beethoven is good, but there’s nothing to distinguish it from the umpteen other recordings of this popular work.

I’m a committed fan of Vasks’ music and that would have sold the recording to me unheard. As it is, it’s an ethereal work – I must stop over-using that word for the music of the likes of Arvo Pärt and Vasks, but it is apt. With no reference recording, I can’t imagine it receiving better advocacy. Even if you have several recordings of the Beethoven, this is a must for lovers of Vasks’ music; others should try it, but with the warning that it’s addictive.

Piano Trio No.5 in D, Op.70/1 'The Ghost' (1808) [23:51]

Piano Trio No.7 in B-flat, Op.97 'Archduke' (1811) [39:26]

Trio Chausson

Rec. DomoLab de Saint-Gobain à Aubervilliers, 19-22 September 2019. DDD.

**MIRARE MIR500** [63:17]



CD available from



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These two trios make for a good pairing, not simply because they both have nicknames. And, for once, the Latin motto quoted in the booklet, *per aspera ad astra*, through hardships to the stars, is not so fanciful: the 'Ghost' trio is full of presentiments of the emotional turmoil of the late quartets and piano sonatas while the 'Archduke' though standing on the absolute verge of the late quartets, between Op.95 and Op.120, is a much more assured work. These performances bring out the contrasts between the two very well – much better than the World Record Club recording from which, nevertheless, the 'Archduke' became one of my all-time favourites.

With the same coupling in the offering from Renaud Capuçon, Gautier Capuçon and Frank Braley (Warner), it may be safer to wait. Or there’s the classic (1964) Beaux Arts Trio on Decca Virtuoso **4785153**, well worth considering and not just for the lower price (around £8.50 on CD, around £6 as a lossless download). They even throw in the Op.4 'Gassenhauser' Trio for good luck.



Violin Sonata No.3 in E-flat, Op.12/3 [18:29]  
 Violin Sonata No.7 in c minor, Op.30/2 [24:30]  
 Violin Sonata No.6 in A, Op.30/1 [21:11]  
 Violin Sonata No.8 in G, Op.30/3 [16:47]  
 Lorenzo Gatto (violin), Julien Libeer (piano)  
 rec. April 2019 Studio Flagey, Brussels (Belgium) and May 2019  
 Théâtre Populaire Romand, Salle de Musique, La Chaux-de-Fonds  
 (Switzerland). DDD Reviewed as press preview.  
**ALPHA 565** [81:05]



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This is the third volume of the violin sonatas from these performers: I reviewed the two earlier releases (Alpha 240 and 407) in [Autumn 2018/1](#). I liked the compromise between the modern concert grand and the fortepiano in the form of the straight-strung grand employed by Libeer. Those who collected the two previous releases should be very happy with their successor. Richard Hanlon rightly says of Volume 2 that the performances can hold up their heads in the face of competition – [review](#) - but those starting to collect the Beethoven Violin Sonatas should consider the two budget-price Harmonia Mundi collections which I mentioned in connection with the earlier volumes: Isabelle Faust and Alexander Melnikov (**HMC902025/27**, 4 CDs) and, for period performance, Daniel Sepec and Andreas Staier (**HMG508398/99**: Nos. 4 and 7, with Jean-Guihen Queyras, cello, in Piano Trios Nos. 3 and 5 plus Hummel, 2 CDs).

My press preview of **Paul Badura-Skoda** playing the **Piano Sonatas** came in truncated form – just the final CD of the 9-disc set, recordings originally released individually by Auvidis-Astrée (**ARCANA A203**). Deep joy, however, that it offers the last three sonatas, Opp.109, 110 and 111, played on a Graf piano (Vienna, c.1824), recorded in 1980. All the sonatas were recorded in the Baumgartner Casino, Vienna, between 1979 and 1990. In addition to the Graf, the pianos employed are a Schantz (Vienna, c.1790), a Broadwood (London, c.1796), a Walter (Vienna, c.1790), another Broadwood (c.1816), a Schmidt (Prague, c.1830) and a Hasska (Vienna, c.1815).



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You might think that these three pinnacles of the piano sonata repertoire would sound less than impressive on a period instrument, but you would be wrong. I was so impressed by these recordings from a pianist whose work I have always admired that I asked for the complete set, which duly arrive in lossless format and proved equally attractive. The 9-CD set and the lossless downloads sell for around £33 and are well worthwhile – 10 hours of delight.

Badura-Skoda had already recorded a series of the Beethoven sonatas for Unicorn, hailed as ‘direct and free from all sentimental trappings’, so the transition to period instruments was natural. Only those constitutionally averse to the fortepiano need steer clear of these attractive recordings – they should go for Steven Osborne (below).

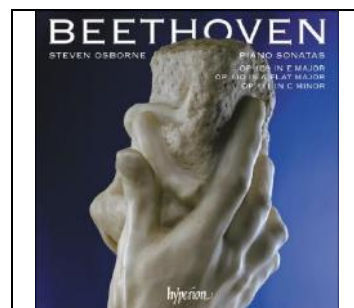
The 166-page booklet is amply illustrated, with photos of five of the pianos and detailed notes on the music and the instruments; the price of the set, around £33 or \$28 on CD or lossless download, is almost worth it for the booklet alone. As I close this round-up, the rest of the recordings arrived in time for me to sample them and conclude that the set is well worth considering.

Piano Sonata No.29 in B-flat major, Op.106 'Hammerklavier' [46:55]  
 Piano Sonata No.32 in c minor, Op.111 [26:18]  
 Filippo Gorini (piano)  
 rec. August 2019, Beethoven Haus, Bonn. DDD.  
 Reviewed as press preview  
**ALPHA 591** [73:15]



[Piano Sonata](#) No.30 in E, Op.109 (1820-21) [18:15]  
 Piano Sonata No.31 in A-flat, Op.110 (1821) [19:36]  
 Piano Sonata No.32 in c minor, Op.111 (1822) [25:45]  
 Steven Osborne (piano)  
 rec. 2018, Concert Hall, Perth, UK  
 Reviewed as 24/96 download from [hyperion-records.co.uk](http://hyperion-records.co.uk)  
**HYPERION CDA68219** [63:39]  
 For purchase links see *Recommended* – [review](#); *Recording of the Month* – [review](#); [Autumn 2019/1](#).

Comparative recording: Nos. 31 and 32, Six Bagatelles, Op.126  
 Yevgeny Sudbin (piano) **BIS BIS-2208 SACD** [62:53] Reviewed as  
 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](http://eclassical.com).



Those resolutely insistent on the modern instrument rather than Paul Badura-Skoda's fortepiano will be well served in this threesome by **Steven Osborne**. That will also appeal to those seeking 24-bit sound – download from [hyperion-records.co.uk](http://hyperion-records.co.uk) – as will Yevgeny Sudbin on BIS in Opp. 110 and 111, with Bagatelles, Op.126, whose BIS recording also comes on SACD and as a surround-sound download (**BIS-2208 SACD**, download from [eclassical.com](http://eclassical.com)).

These late sonatas form the apex of Beethoven's achievement along with the late string quartets, Nos. 12-16, plus the *Große Fuge*, Op.127-Op.135. If I have paid them less attention than the quartets, that's my loss rather than any deficiency on the part of the music. These new and recent releases give me a chance to make amends. All three have real merits, but **Steven Osborne** (Hyperion) wins for me because he includes all three of the final sonatas in first-rate performances.

The *Hammerklavier* is a massive and important sonata (**Filippo Gorini**), but less relevant to its Op.111 companion than its two predecessors. If you want the *Hammerklavier* with the three late sonatas, plus Op.90 and Op.101 into the considerable bargain, don't overlook the 2-for-1 Alfred Brendel set on Decca Duo **4383742**, 1970s recordings that still sound very well. I've had time only to dip into the Gorini, but have been generally impressed.

I would have preferred the *Bagatelles* which round off the **BIS** programme to have been placed before the sonatas, but forget the title – these are no flimsy pieces unlike the earlier works with the same title which, like me, you may have played when learning the piano. The music is much more serious than the name implies, making them an appropriate conclusion.

Just to complicate matters, DG have released a new (rec. September 2019) album of Maurizio Pollini in these last three sonatas (**4838250**). I've had time only to dip into these – I recommend sampling from Naxos Music Library if you can, or even from Spotify.



*The Creatures of Prometheus*, Op.43 ballet music (1801)

Turku Philharmonic Orchestra/Leif Segerstam

rec. 2017, Turku Concert Hall, Turku, Finland. DDD.

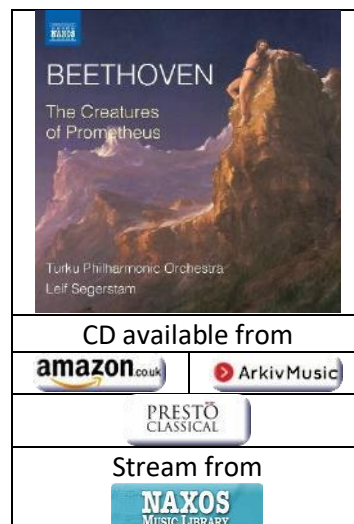
Reviewed as lossless press preview.

**NAXOS 8.573853** [76:34]

See [review](#) by Robert Cummings: 'A fine performance ... with excellent sound reproduction ... may be the one to get.'

A surprising inclusion in the 2020 New Year's Concert from Vienna – [review](#) – but apt for the dawn of the Beethoven 250 year, was the inclusion of one of his *Contredanses*, music associated with the *Prometheus* ballet and the finale of the *Eroica* symphony. Better still, this Naxos release gives a rare opportunity to hear the whole ballet. The only other recent complete recordings, from Armonia Atenea (period instruments, Decca **4786755**) and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra (included in the Beethoven 2020 set and in *Works for the Stage* from that collection, DG **4837655**) offer slightly less music. Another, earlier period-instrument recording comes from the Orchestra of the 18th Century with Frans Brüggen (Decca **4787436**, with symphonies and violin concerto, 7 CDs, target price £21).

This may be a side-line for Beethoven year, rather than an essential purchase, but it's very enjoyable to hear the great man in lighter mood and to have the music so very well played. Considering the grim nature of the Prometheus legend – the bringer of fire to mankind eternally punished by the gods by having his liver gnawed out every day and regrown by night, the treatment is surprisingly light-hearted.



*König Stephan*, Op.117 ('King Stephen') (1811) [38:71]

*Leonore Prohaska*, WoO96 (excerpts) (1815) [5:31]

*Opferlied*, Op.121b (1824 version) [5:41]

*Bundeslied*, Op.122 'In allen guten Stunden' (1824) [4:38]

*Opferlied*, Op.121b (1822 version) [7:18]

*Ihr weisen Gründer glücklicher Staaten*, WoO95: 'Chor auf die verbündeten Fürsten' (1814) [1:51]

*Die gute Nachricht*: Chorus: *Germania*, WoO94 (1814) [5:04]

Claus Obalski, Roland Astor, Ernst Oder, Angela Eberlein (speaker);  
Reetta Haavisto, Johanna Lehesvuori (soprano); Merja Mäkelä (alto);  
Niklas Spångberg, Juha Kotilainen (bass)

Päivi Severeide (harp); Key Ensemble; Chorus Cathedralis Aboensis

Turku Philharmonic Orchestra/Leif Segerstam

rec. 27–31 August 2018 and 15–19 October 2018, Turku Concert Hall,  
Turku, Finland. DDD.

Texts and translations available online.

**NAXOS 8.574042** [73:56]



Beethoven's incidental music for Kotzebue's play on the life of the first King of Hungary, St Stephen, is not exactly everyday fare: there seems to be only one other recent recording, directed by Michael Tilson Thomas, and that's download only (Sony **G0100012223363**: Beethoven Late Choral Music). The overture features more frequently. Considered alongside his other music from this period – the late piano sonatas and quartets – it's pretty small beer, and the play itself is nowhere near the quality of Goethe's *Egmont*, but even small beer from Beethoven's barrel is worth tasting. Once again, Naxos and Leif Segerstam shine an interesting and worthwhile sidelight on Beethoven. Non-German-

speakers should be aware that there are several acres of dialogue, making this less appealing than the *Prometheus* recording.

*Die Weihe des Hauses* (Consecration of the House) Overture, Op.124 [12:02]

*Die Weihe des Hauses*, incidental music, Hess 118 [3:32]

Chorus with soprano solo: 'Wo sich die Pulse', Wo098 [6:28]

Incidental music to *Die Ruinen von Athen* (The Ruins of Athens): March with chorus *Schmückt die Altare* [6:59]

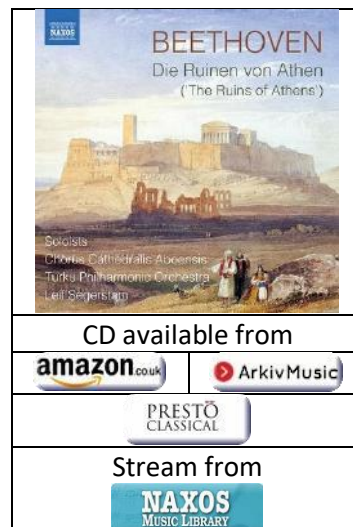
Incidental music to *Die Ruinen von Athen* [52:41]

Angela Eberlein (narrator), Claus Obalski (narrator), Juha Kotilainen (bass), Reetta Haavisto (soprano), Roland Astor (narrator), Leah Sinka (narrator), Ernst Oder (narrator)

Chorus Cathedralis Aboensis

Turku Philharmonic Orchestra/Leif Segerstam

**NAXOS 8.574076** [81:42]



The Overture to the *Consecration of the House* is well enough known, and it receives a suitably grand performance, though without quite achieving the gravitas that Otto Klemperer brought to it at only a very slightly slower tempo (Beethoven Overtures **9029533454**, download only). The extra 3-minute choral snippet and the following *Wo sich die Pulse*, shavings from the master's workshop, are interesting rather than compulsory listening. Naxos do seem to have been determined to cram in all that they could for their Beethoven collection.

The music for Kotzebue's play on the *Ruins of Athens* is also usually known only by the Turkish March, here performed with its chorus. The only other recording of the incidental music that I can find comes without dialogue, so represents about 60% of what Naxos give us. Those with little German are again warned that there is plenty of dialogue on the Naxos recording. Overall, then, this is an interesting sidelight on Beethoven's music.

*Kantate auf den Tod Kaiser Josephs II*, Wo087 'Trauerkantate' ('Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II') (1790) [44:25]

*Kantate auf die Erhebung Leopold II. zur Kaiserwürde*, Wo088 ('Cantata on the Accession of Emperor Leopold II') (c.1790) [28:19]

Reetta Haavisto, Johanna Lehesvuori (sopranos), Tuomas Katajala (tenor), Juha Kotilainen, Niklas Spångberg (basses)

Key Ensemble, Chorus Cathedralis Aboensis

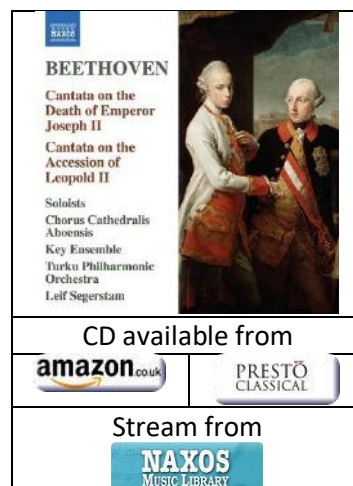
Turku Philharmonic Orchestra/Leif Segerstam

rec. 27-31 August and 15-19 October 2018, Turku Concert Hall, Turku, Finland. DDD.

Texts and translations available online.

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview.

**NAXOS 8.574077** [72:43]



The WoO numbers (works without opus; neither was performed in the composer's lifetime) remind us that this is another sidelight on Beethoven's music, though this time those with no German have less to fear – there's no dialogue. Don't expect too much from this music written when he was nineteen and still in the shadow of those great masters of choral music, Haydn and Mozart. The cantatas do, however, contain more than a few hints of the music to come and they are certainly worth an occasional outing. There's an Arco Diva recording of both which Michael Cookson thought 'fascinating and well performed' – [review](#). I haven't heard that, but this Naxos will do very nicely,



though one of the sopranos is a little over-parted in places. The texts are available online which, apparently, is not the case with the Arco Diva.

### Late String Quartets

String Quartet in f minor, Op.95 'Serioso' (1810) [22:02]

String Quartet in B-flat, Op.130 (1825-26) [42:36]

*Große Fuge* in B-flat, Op.133 (1825) [15:02]

String Quartet in E-flat, Op.127 (1824-25) [39:36]

String Quartet in c# minor, Op.131 (1826) [38:46]

String Quartet in a minor, Op.132 (1825) [46:38]

String Quartet in F, Op.135 (1826) [24:28]

Brodsky Quartet

rec. Potton Hall, Dunwich, Suffolk; 26 and 27 October 2017 (Opp. 133 and 135), 7–10 May 2018 (Opp. 95 and 131), 21–24 May 2018 (Opp. 130 [except Cavatina] and 132), and 8–10 April 2019 (Opp. 127 and 130 [Cavatina])

Reviewed as lossless download with pdf booklet from [chandos.net](http://chandos.net)

**CHANDOS CHAN20114** (3 CDs, around £15) [80:03 + 78:32 + 71:38]



I said that I wouldn't promise any 'best buys', and that applies especially to these late quartets, which contain so many aspects that it's almost impossible for one set of recordings to encompass. I will, however, just mention the Belcea Quartet's recordings, much reissued in different combinations, currently available as an 8-CD set of the complete quartets (**Alpha 469**, target price £27, also available to download for around £24 in lossless sound).

The Brodsky Quartet's definition of 'late' starts a little earlier than most, with the 'Serioso' quartet, Op.95, usually defined as 'middle-period'. Their performance amply justifies its position here, just as an ideal account of Symphony No.7, Op.92, also usually regarded as 'middle-period', emphasises those qualities which it possesses in common with the late quartets and piano sonatas, qualities which earned Weber's opinion that Beethoven was ripe for the lunatic asylum – passages where the music arches up in ecstasy only to crash down in despair.

But the moment that must really have set the perruqued heads of Vienna wagging comes with the opening chords of the next quartet, Op.127. It must have sounded as alien to them as the music of Pierre Boulez when I first heard it – and as it still does, more than 50 years later. My benchmark here is the CBS recording by the Budapest Quartet; I thought there must be something wrong with the radio when I first heard it, but I think the Brodsky Quartet would still have had the same effect if they had made my introduction to this quirky work.

Overall, these are powerful and committed performances, which cast new light on the music and are well recorded – but the 'best buy' that I said I couldn't name remains the Belcea Quartet's recording of all the quartets for only a little more than this set of the late quartets.

### Complete Works for Piano and Cello

Cello Sonata No.1 in F, Op.5/1 (1796) [25:59]

Cello Sonata No.2 in g minor, Op.5/2 (1796) [30:07]

Cello Sonata No.3 in A, Op.69 (1807-08) [28:06]

Cello Sonata No.4 in C, Op.102/1 (1815) [15:07]

Cello Sonata No.5 in D, Op.102/2 (1815) [22:27]

12 Variations on 'See the Conquering Hero' comes from Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* WoO45 (1796) [12:25]

7 Variations on *Bei Männern welche Liebe fühlen* from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* WoO46 (1801) [10:17]

12 Variations on *Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen* from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Op.66 (1798) [18:23]

Ori Epstein (cello), Omri Epstein (piano)

rec. January and September 2018, Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, Waterloo, Belgium

**LINN RECORDS CKD627** [84:42 + 70:50] See also [review](#) by David R Dunsmore: 'Competent ... dedicated [and] enjoyable'.



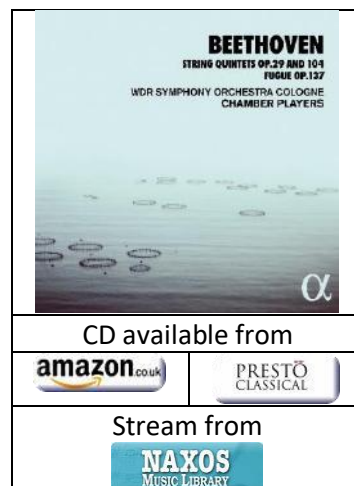
The Cello Sonatas are the orphans of Beethoven's chamber music, yet there have been some notable recordings, often, as here, by two members of a piano trio. One of the best was made by another family pairing, Alfred Brendel and his son Adrian, a 2-for-1 Philips Duo (**4753792**). Like the new recording, that includes the variations, as do András Schiff and Miklós Perényi (ECM **4724012**) and, for period performance fans, Steven Isserlis (cello) and Robert Levin (fortepiano) on Hyperion **CDA67981/2**. From earlier times, DG offer Pierre Fournier (cello) with Wilhelm Kempff (**4530132**, 2-for-1) and with Friedrich Gulda (**4776266**, download only).

For the **Beethoven 2020** set and for the selection on **Chamber Music, Volume 1**, DG have chosen Mischa Maisky and Martha Argerich (**4837658**, 8½ hours, with Violin Sonatas, Horn Sonata, etc., around £36 lossless download). The Fournier/Kempff Sonata No.3 (1965) and the even earlier (1963) Sviatoslav Richter/Miroslav Rostropovich Sonata No.5 appear on the *Beethoven 2020 Historical Recordings* selection.

Like David Dunsmore, I enjoyed hearing the two Linn CDs, and would be happy with them on my Desert island – but if you were to offer me one of the alternatives instead, I might well be tempted. The DG twofers are attractively priced, as is the Beethoven 2020 download – so much more music for less than twice the price of the Linn.

The two recordings on the DG historical set, too, are well worth revisiting, though the Epsteins score over their predecessors by including the outer movement repeats in No.3 – my favourite of the five – and the recording, especially of the piano, is more natural. More importantly, they give a very satisfying account of the work, if slightly less than impassioned.

String Quintet in C, Op.29 (1801/2) [33:00]  
 String Quintet in c minor, Op.104 (1797, arr. 1817) [31:19]  
 Fugue in D for string quintet, Op.137 [1:49]  
 WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne Chamber Players  
 rec. August 2019, Kölner Philharmonie, Cologne. DDD.  
 Reviewed as press preview.  
**ALPHA 585** [66:26]



There already were two fine recordings of the string quintets, at budget price on Naxos from the augmented Fine Arts Quartet (**8.572221**, coupled as by Alpha – [review](#)) and from the Nash Ensemble in Hyperion (**CDA67693**, Op.4 and Op.29). I was impressed by the Naxos but recommended getting to know the string quartets and piano trios before the quintets and I also thought that the Hyperion had a slight edge in Op.29 – [review](#). Op.29 is an independent composition, but Op.104 is not quite what it seems: it's an arrangement of the early piano trio, Op.1/3, the work which caused the rift between Beethoven and his mentor Haydn. Unconventional then, it seems mild by comparison with the other works for string quartet and piano which he was composing by the time of the arrangement.

Op.29 is well worth hearing and it receives a fine performance here. If you already have the Naxos, I wouldn't necessarily add the generally slightly brisker new Alpha recording. If you are hovering between the two, it's worth bearing in mind that the Naxos can be found for around £6.50 on CD and downloaded, with pdf booklet, for less than £4. The Hyperion is available direct from [hyperion-records.co.uk](http://hyperion-records.co.uk) for £6.50 on CD or as a lossless download with pdf booklet.

### Johann Simon MAYR (1763–1845)

Mass in E-flat (1843) (reconstructed and arranged by Franz Hauk and Manfred Hößl)  
 World Premiere Recording  
 Dorota Szczepańska (soprano), Johanna Krödel (alto), Markus Schäfer (tenor), Daniel Ochoa (bass)  
 Simon Mayr Chorus  
 Concerto de Bassus/Franz Hauk  
 rec. 31 July – 5 August 2018, Asamkirche Maria de Victoria, Ingolstadt, Germany. DDD.  
 Texts and translations included  
 Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview  
**NAXOS 8.574057** [86:46]



Naxos have done well by Mayr over the years, including several recordings of his music, sacred and secular, directed, as here, by Franz Hauk and set down in the composer's home town of Ingolstadt. Ten years ago, in 2010, I welcomed his recording of Mayr's *Te Deum*, coupled with a *Missa Solemnis* which may, or may not, have been composed by Leopold or Wolfgang Mozart – [review](#). As then, too, it's Franz Hauk who must take the major credit for the revival and editing of the music and its successful recording. I was a little less entranced by their recording of *Il Sogno di Partenope* – [review](#) – but Göran Forsling was more welcoming – [review](#).

No serious reservations about the new recording, however. This late work is almost worth comparing with Haydn's Masses and it receives a performance and recording that deserve to assure it a place in the repertoire. I don't recall encountering Concerto de Bassus before, but these young period-aware performers deserve more outings on record.

**Richard STRAUSS (1846-1949)**

*Ein Heldenleben*, Op.40 [45:54]

*Der Rosenkavalier* - Suite [21:59]

Royal Scottish National Orchestra/Thomas Søndergård

rec. Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, 14 & 19 March 2018 and 7–8 August 2018. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless .wav press download.

**LINN CKD510** [67:53]

*Also sprach Zarathustra*, Op.30 (1896) [36:12]

*Ein Heldenleben*, Op.40 (1898) [45:43]

Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra/Vasily Petrenko

rec. 2016, Oslo Konserthus, Norway

**LAWO CLASSICS LWC1166** [79:56]

Vasily **Petrenko's** tenure in Oslo was almost at an end in 2016, while Thomas **Søndergård** and RSNO are beginning a new relationship with Linn. With recordings of *Ein Heldenleben* as the major work common to these recordings, it seems logical to concentrate on a comparison between them and with the front runners in this work. For many readers that will mean Herbert von Karajan with the BPO in 1985, on DG Gold, surprisingly available now only as a download (**E4390392**, with *Tod und Verklärung*). The earlier BPO/Karajan recording from 1959 is also now download only (DG Originals **E4497452**, budget price, with Wagner *Siegfried Idyll*).



CD available from



CD available from



I have owned the original release of the Karajan digital recording, a very short CD then at 46:45 (**4155082**), since soon after its release and have to admit that I have probably played it once or twice only. Listening to it again, I can only assume that was because I was still turning to Reiner on RCA, one of my last LPs to go<sup>1</sup>. It's a typically plush performance, but in a way that suits the music well, never as bombastic as this work can sound, and the recording matches the playing, not noticeably inferior to the Lawo and Linn.

As Warner have recently put us in their debt by reissuing Rudolf Kempe's EMI *Heldenleben* and *Tod und Verklärung* and the *Rosenkavalier* Suite on an inexpensive but generously timed 88-minute download, I also chose that for comparison (**9029540368**, around £6 in lossless sound). Kempe's *Zarathustra* has also been reissued, with *Don Juan* and *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* Suite (**9029540383** [90 minutes]). For those in search of a more complete Strauss recommendation, the 9-CD Warner Budget Box is even better value at around £29 on disc or £25 as a lossless download (**9029554251**). Kempe's *Heldenleben* has been described as more aristocratic than Karajan's. I'm not sure how that helps to define it, but it certainly takes some beating. Fine as is Andrés Orozco-Estrada's Pentatone recording which Marc Bridle made one of his Recordings of the Year, the coupling of *Macbeth* makes it less competitive for me – [review](#).

**Petrenko's** tenure in Oslo got off to a good start with an Ondine recording of the two Shostakovich cello concertos – [review](#) – and they have continued for the Norwegian label Lawo, also generally with success, though our reviewers were not always in agreement, for example about his Prokofiev *Romeo and Juliet* – [review](#) – [review](#). Michael Cookson, in a detailed [review](#), thought these Strauss performances well made, but that they were up against intense competition.



The Oslo Philharmonic may not have the sheer polish of their Berlin counterparts and that's apparent right from the beginning, but Petrenko's tenure has shaped them into a fine orchestra and they have an energy that takes the listener along, combined with a glowing string sound in the closing sections that even Karajan would have appreciated. Better now than on their erstwhile recordings for Chandos, they are on a par with some of the world's best. It's difficult to compare tempi because, for some strange reason, Lawo choose not to divide either work into separate tracks – there are just two for the whole CD.

Apart from the front and rear covers, there's a lot of pink about the Lawo – the CD cover, the booklet, with nigh-illegible white font on pink, and the inside of the diptych itself which houses the CD. Like almost all my recent review discs, the companies are doing their little bit for the environment, though the CD tray itself is plastic. What pink has to do with Strauss, however, the Oslo Phil, or Vasily Petrenko I have no idea.

I suppose one might loosely think of the *Rosenkavalier* waltz sequence on the Linn recording as 'pink music', but I'm pleased to say there's nothing of that colour about the download version of the booklet at least – I haven't seen the packaging, but, mercifully, the notes are all in black type on white: boring but legible.

Thomas Søndergård's recordings for Linn have also been generally well received, not least his Sibelius with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales – [review](#) – [review](#) – though, again, not always with unanimity – [review](#).

The suite of waltz music from *Der Rosenkavalier* is pretty small beer after *Ein Heldenleben* – in fact, no beer at all, but plenty of *Schlagobers*, that naughty but nice Viennese whipped cream. You may feel that its position is justified in letting the listener relax after all that deep and deedy – and noisy – heroism, but I'd far rather have had it placed first.

That being said, I refer you to Simon Thompson's appreciative review in [Winter 2019-20/3](#).

<sup>1</sup> The Living Stereo CD reissue of *Also sprach Zarathustra* and *Ein Heldenleben* is now download only (**09026614942**). Similarly, the 8-hour Richard Strauss Orchestral Works and Concertos, which includes those two recordings together with those of George Szell, Pierre Monteux, Rudolf Kempe and others from the RCA and Sony vaults (**G0100030538675**, very good value for around £19 in lossless sound).

### Norman O'NEILL (1875-1934)

String Quartet in C (before 1893? and 1909) [18:48]

Piano Trio in one movement, Op.32 (1909) [8:53]\*

Piano Quintet in e minor (1904) [28:32]\*

Theme and Variations for piano trio, Op.1 (1895) [13:07]\*

Bridge Quartet (Colin Twigg, Catherine Schofield (violins); Michael Schofield (viola); Lucy Wilding (cello)); Michael Dussek (piano)\*

rec. Wyastone Concert Hall, Monmouth, 22-23 February 2012

**EM RECORDS EMRCD005** [73:22]

Please see reviews by [Michael Cookson](#), [Gary Higginson](#) and [Paul Corfield Godfrey](#). (NB: Musicweb no longer sells this label.)

Gary Higginson was, perhaps, over-egging the pudding a little, but only a little: 'If in any way you like English music then this disc is a must. Even if you don't this disc is a must. In fact you have little choice: buy it, please'. It's good value



CD available from	
	
	
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for subscribers to emusic.com – no booklet, but the three reviews listed above will give you what you need to know.

**The Pearls of Polish Music**

**Mieczysław KARŁOWICZ (1876-1909)**

Violin Concerto in A, Op.8 [33:05]

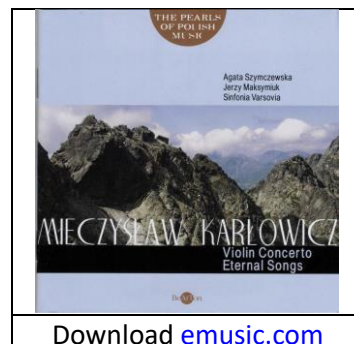
Eternal Songs, Op.10 [27:12]

Agata Szymczewska (violin)

Sinfonia Varsovia/Jerzy Maksymiuk

Date?

**BEARTON** [60:17]



**Mieczysław KARŁOWICZ (1876-1909)**

Violin Concerto in A, Op.8 (1902) [27:00]

**Moritz MOSZKOWSKI (1854-1925)**

Ballade in g minor, Op.16/1 (1871) [11:25]

Violin Concerto in C Op.30 (1882) [34:13]

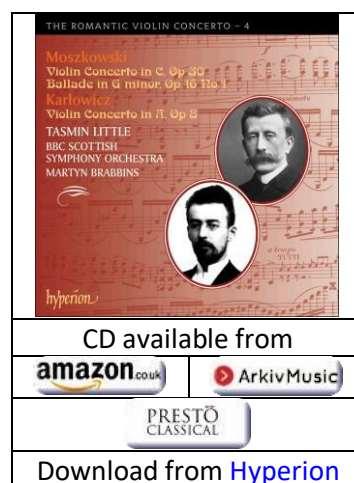
Tasmin Little (violin)

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Martyn Brabbins

rec. Caird Hall, Dundee, 11-12 Sept 2003

Reviewed as lossless download with pdf booklet from [hyperion-records.co.uk](http://hyperion-records.co.uk).

**HYPERION CDA67389** [72:38]



Please see reviews by [Rob Barnett](#) and [Ian Lace](#)

If you are looking for a tuneful violin concerto, a little off the beaten track of Bruch, Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky and, though not on a par with them, really enjoyable for anyone with a sweet tooth for melody, you could do much worse than the Karłowicz. There's a surprising amount of choice: in addition to the two recordings listed here, Tasmin Little re-recorded it for Chandos (**CHSA5185**) and there are recordings on Dux and Naxos, plus one by Nigel Kennedy (Warner).

The **BeArTon** is not widely available – hence the fact that I am unable to give the catalogue number – but it can be downloaded by subscribers to emusic.com for £2.52 or less (320kb/s mp3, no booklet). The performance is idiomatic and the recording good, if a little too close; good value for the price.

But the **Hyperion** is good value, too: ordered directly from their web page, the CD was on offer for £8 when I checked, the same price as the lossless (16-bit) download. Coupling – more violin or more Karłowicz – price and recording quality could be the deciding factors; the lossless Hyperion or the CD in better quality than the BeArTon in mp3.

**Igor STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)**

Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments [19:52]

**Leoš JANÁČEK (1854-1928)**

Piano Sonata 1.X.1905 in e-flat minor, JW VIII/19 'From the Street' [11:45]

Capriccio for piano (left hand) and chamber ensemble, JW VII/12 'Vzdor' [20:33]

Marios Papadopoulos (piano)

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

rec. Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel, Hampstead, London, November 1984. DDD.

**OXFORD PHILHARMONIC OP0010** [52:10]



This former Hyperion recording, reissued by Oxford Philharmonic and selling for around £8.50, is good value in 320 kb/s mp3 at £3.78 for subscribers to [emusic.com](http://emusic.com). But it also remains available on **CDA66167** from the archive service and for £6.99 as a lossless download from [hyperion-records.co.uk](http://hyperion-records.co.uk), where you can find the booklet, not available from emusic.com. It's emphatically NOT worth the £52.45 being asked by one retailer, whose link I have therefore not included.

**The Pearls of Polish Music**

**Stanisław MONIUSZKO (1819-1892)**

String Quartet No.1 in d minor [16:53]

**Karol SZYMANOWSKI (1882-1937)**

String Quartet No.2, Op.56 (movements 2-3)

- ii *Vivace scherzando* [3:59]

- iii *Lento* [4:17]

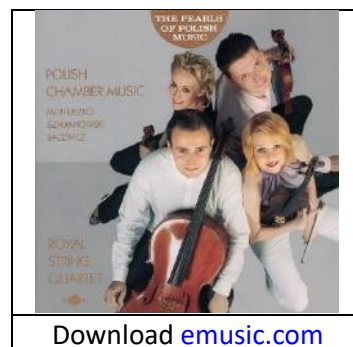
**Grazyna BACEWICZ (1909-1969)**

String Quartet No.4 [20:49]

Royal String Quartet

released 2006

**BEARTON** [47:12]



Polish performers in Polish music, a real bargain at £3.78 for subscribers, from emusic.com, but the price to pay is the absence of notes – and why do the Royal Quartet not perform the opening movement of the Szymanowski, readily available on other recordings? It's not just an omission by emusic – other download providers, who charge more, also omit it. There would be plenty of room.

With a wide variety of styles on offer here, all well captured by this distinguished young quartet, it's unlikely that you will like all three works equally. The best thing would be if one or more of these composers were to catch your attention and prompt you to follow up with, for example, all Bacewicz's String Quartets from the Silesian Quartet (Chandos **CHAN10904**, 2 CDs for the price of one: **Recording of the Month** – [review](#) – [review](#) – [Late Autumn 2016](#)).

**Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)**

Sonata for Violin and Piano in a minor [28:59]

**Gustav HOLST (1874-1934)**

Five Pieces for Violin and Piano\* [16:18]

**Henry Walford DAVIES (1869-1941)**

Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat\* [18:01]

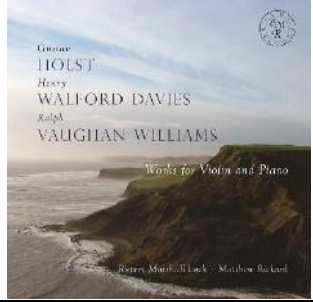
Matthew Rickard (piano), Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin)

rec. 13-14 April 2012, Wyastone Concert Halls, Wyastone Leys, Monmouth, Wales

\*World première recordings

**EM RECORDS EMRCD006** [58:52]

See [review](#) by Michael Cookson and [review](#) by Jonathan Woolf. (NB Musicweb no longer sells this label). Download from [emusic.com](http://emusic.com) (mp3)



CD available from

[amazon.co.uk](#) [ArkivMusic](#)

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Three of the Holst Five Pieces and the Walford Davies Sonata here receive their first outings on record. They make good companions for the Vaughan Williams Violin Sonata which opens proceedings and which receives as compelling a performance as any. Even the VW doesn't feature too often; the main competition comes from the Nash Ensemble on Hyperion in an all-VW chamber music programme (**CDA67313**, Archive service or download with pdf booklet, from [hyperion-records.co.uk](http://hyperion-records.co.uk)). I'm torn between the two: EM Records for the Walford Davies, Hyperion for the Phantasy Quintet; to avoid duplication you can download the quintet from Hyperion separately for just £2.00.

**Continental Britons - The Émigré Composers**

**Egon WELLESZ (1885-1974)**

Octet, Op.67 (1948) [30:48]

*Geistliches Lied* (Sacred Song) for medium voice, violin, viola and piano, Op.23 (1918/19) [9:29]

*Kirschblütenlieder* (Cherry Blossom Songs) from the Japanese-style poems of Hans Bethge Op.8 (1911) [6:06]

**Leopold SPINNER (1906-1980)**

*Zwei kleine Stücke* (Two Small Pieces) for violin and piano (1934) [5:22]

**Berthold GOLDSCHMIDT (1903-1996)**

Fantasy for oboe, cello and harp (1991) [11.41]

**Peter GELLHORN (1912-2004)**

Intermezzo for violin and piano (1937) [4.28]

**Vilém TAUSKÝ (1910-2004)**

*Coventry* - A Meditation for string quartet (1941) [8.19]

**Hans GÁL (1890-1987)**

Violin Sonata in b-flat minor, Op.17 (1920) [23:59]

*Fünf Melodien* (Five Songs) for medium voice and piano, Op.33 (1917-21) [11:59]

**Berthold GOLDSCHMIDT (1903-1996)**

The Old Ships (James Elroy Flecker) (1952) [4:31]

**Mátyás SEIBER (1905-1960)**

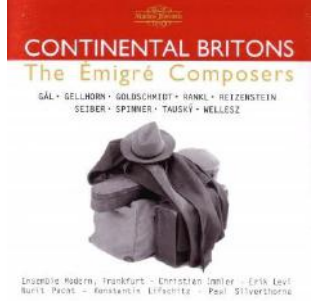
Violin Sonata, Op.17 (1960) [16:37]

**Franz REIZENSTEIN (1911-1968)**

Quintet for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and horn (1934) [11:42]

**Karl RANKL (1898-1968)**

*War* – eleven songs, Op.10 (1939-42) (No.4 They; No.5 *Böhmisches Rekrutenlied*) [3:39]



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Seven Songs for baritone and piano op.6 (1939-42) (No.6 *The Whim*) [3.39]

Ensemble Modern, Frankfurt

Nurit Pacht (violin); Konstantin Lifschitz (piano)

Christian Immler (baritone); Erik Levi (piano)

Paul Silverthorne (viola)

rec. live, Wigmore Hall, London, June 2002. DDD

**NIMBUS NI5730/1** [76:46 + 76:38]

‘An eye-opening set ... Do not miss this double CD’ – see [review](#) by Rob Barnett.

‘A fine, wide-ranging and authoritatively performed survey of works of émigré European composers who settled in Britain’ – see [review](#) by Jonathan Woolf.

I missed this when it was released and came across it only as a result of hearing this recording of Vilém Tauský’s *Coventry* on BBC Radio 3. Tauský and his Czech military band were among those assigned to clean up the mess after the Luftwaffe raid on Coventry and he wrote this piece for string quartet to commemorate the bombing, a combination of Czech tunes in an English setting.

I had been vaguely aware that he had composed a harmonica concerto for Tommy Reilly (Chandos **CHAN8617**) but had not realised how versatile a musician he was – not just a light-music conductor, which I had thought was all that he was, but conducting opera at Sadler’s Wells and Covent Garden and director of Welsh National Opera. His *Coventry* is just one of many reasons to choose this recording.

### **English Piano Trios**

**Rosalind ELLICOTT (1857-1924)**

Piano Trio no.1 in G major (1889) [28:54]

**Samuel COLERIDGE-TAYLOR (1875-1912)**

Trio in E minor (1893) [8:48]

**Rutland BOUGHTON (1878-1960)**

Celtic Prelude “The Land of Heart’s Desire” (1921) [7:10]

**James Cliffe FORRESTER (1860-1940)**

Trio “Folk Song Fantasy” (1917) [13:00]

**Harry Waldo WARNER (1874-1945)**

Trio, op.22 (1921) [19:40]

Trio Anima Mundi

rec. 2017, The Music Auditorium, Clayton, Australia

**DIVINE ART DDA25158** [77:53]



CD available from



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Three of my colleagues have reviewed this and have unanimously praised it ([review](#) ~ [review](#) ~ [review](#)), with it earning Recording of the Month status in January. I am, therefore, going against the tide in expressing some reservations. I admit to having had high expectations, having chosen Trio Anima Mundi’s previous release (Hurlstone, Hyde, d’Ollone & Wiren – [review](#)) as one of my Recordings of the Year back in 2013. Perhaps had I come to this more neutrally, I may not have been as disappointed.

Rosalind Ellicott was clearly influenced by Brahms; his fingerprints are all through this. The work may be substantial in its duration, but Ellicott struggles to fill the time with memorable content. The middle movement Adagio is, without doubt, the best of the three movements, but even here, the more than eleven minute span is asking too much of the material.

John France says that the problem with the Coleridge-Taylor is that it is too short. I felt that it was so “sweet” that had it been any longer, I would have developed diabetes by the end. The dramatic

beginning is not justified by the light material that follows, the Scherzo is very trite, and the furious marking of the Finale nods to Dvořák but Dvořák doesn't nod back.

The Boughton is the shortest of the five, and perhaps with the smallest ambitions by not calling itself a Piano Trio to follow in the footsteps of Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms et al. It is, however, the one that provided me with the most pleasure. It is rather a stream of consciousness collection of themes, which are all interesting though brief. It simply fades away as though Boughton didn't know how to finish it, and did the 1920s version of turning the microphone levels down.

I'd not encountered the names James Forrester or Harry Warner previously. The Forrester Trio won its section of the 1917 Cobbett Phantasy Prize. Based around two folksongs, it is predominantly gentle and slowish with only a few minutes towards the end rising to allegretto tempo. While this makes for easy listening, it is certainly not attention-grabbing.

Two of my colleagues identified the Warner as the standout of the five, whereas I found it annoying in its seeming inability to decide whether it wanted to be Brahms, Prokofiev or Gershwin. I admit to not being able to listen to it all the way through in one sitting.

None of this is intended as a criticism of the members of Trio Anima Mundi. They play these works as well as one could expect, providing as much colour and character as could be found. It's not their fault that I haven't been as enthused as I was with their earlier recording. They are to be praised for their willingness to find, learn and record hitherto forgotten works, and kudos as well to Divine Art for supporting them. **[David Barker]**

### Ricercar Collection

These new additions to the Ricercar mid-price collection, due for release in late March 2020, are scheduled to cost around £7.75 each, even for the 2-CD set. (The usual caveat applies: don't pay the £9.99 being asked by one dealer.) I'm especially pleased to see artwork of quality comparable with the original releases and decent sets of notes, neither of which has always been the case with reissues from the Outhere group recently. Full marks, too, for providing the press previews in lossless (wav) format instead of mp3.

#### **Salve Antverpia**

Music played, sung and printed in Antwerp during the 16th century  
La Caccia and Capilla Flamenca

rec. Église Saint-Apollinaire, Bolland, October 1998. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

**RIC137** [70:47]

Music, mainly for dancing, by the likes of Tielman Susato, Pierre Phalèse and Jacobus Clemens non Papa, performed by a battery of renaissance instruments. David Munrow, thou shouldst be living at this hour, with thy Early Music Consort. Since Munrow's pioneering recordings of Prætorius and Susato there have been many such collections, but this is among the best of them – some recent albums have been more concerned with authenticity and have missed some of the fun in the process. Here *La morisque* is even livelier than from Munrow and his consort. The texts of the (few short) vocal items are not included.



**Wilhelm Friedemann BACH (1710-1784)**

Complete Chamber Music: *Duetti*, Sonatas and Trio Sonatas

Ricercar Consort

rec. Filosofisch Theologisch College van de Societeit van Jezus VZW, Heverlee, May & October 1992. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

**RIC138** [2 CDs 2:19:54] Reissued from 5400439891258



There's a wide variety of music on offer from Wilhelm Friedemann, though his works are less well known than his father's or brothers'. This 2-CD set would be an excellent and inexpensive introduction to his music. It's not quite as complete as the title would lead us to believe: two pieces were rediscovered in 1999 which, of course, are not included – they are to be found on a CPO recording with Camerata Köln which Johan van Veen enjoyed apart from some sloppy presentation in the booklet – [review](#).

**Carlo FARINA (c.1600-c.1640)**

*Capriccio Stravagante a 4* (1626) and *Sonate*

Ensemble Clematis/Leonardo García-Alarcón (virginal)

rec. Église Saint-Jean l'évangéliste, November 2008, Beaufays. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

**RIC139** [66:00] From RIC285.



The *Capriccio stravagante* which rounds off this recording appears in numerous anthologies, but it proves to be atypical of Farina's music in general. This is the only recording of his other sonatas, which are much less flamboyant than the *Capriccio*. Don't be put off by the cats' chorus on the cover; with the exception of that one work, this is quiet and meditative music, but not at all dull. There are no rival recordings, but I doubt if Ensemble Clematis could be bettered in this repertoire.

**Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750)**

*Tocatta und Fuge* in d, BWV565 [8:55]

*Tocatta, Adagio und Fuge* in C, BWV564 [15:23]

*Fantasia und Fuge* in g, BWV542 [11:59]

*Tocatta und Fuge* in F, BWV540 [14:22]

*Tocatta und Fuge* in d, 'Dorian' BWV538 [13:29]

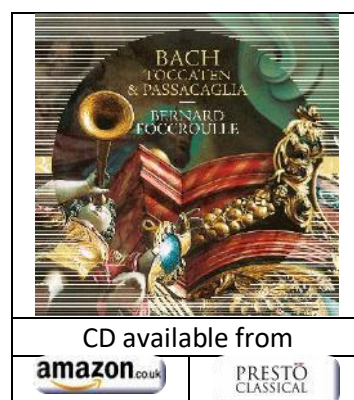
*Passacaglia* in c, BWV582 [13:40]

Bernard Foucroulle (Schnitger and Schott Organs)

rec. Schnitger organ Martinikerk, Groningen; Schnitger organ Ludgerikirche, Norden; Schott organ Klosterkirche, Muri, 1988-2008. DDD

DDD

**RIC140** [72:00]



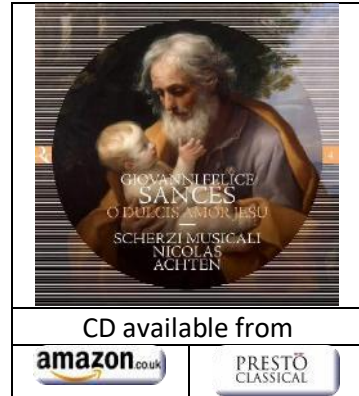
This single-CD excerpted from the award-winning complete recordings on **RIC289** (16 CDs) would be self-recommending were it not for the existence of so many similar collections in all price ranges. Had it been released as a 2-CD set it would have been more competitive with, for example, Peter Hurford's Decca twofer (**4434852**). For only a few pounds more, that's a more comprehensive collection. None of which is meant to decry this Ricercar reissue by an organist whose work I have valued on a number of recordings.

**Giovanni Felice SANCES (c.1600-1679)**

*O Dulcis Amor Jesu: Motets (Book I) for One, Three and Four Voices*  
 Scherzi Musicali/Nicolas Achten (baritone, theorbo, harpsichord)  
 rec. Église de Sart-lez-Spa, June 2009. DDD.  
 Texts and translations included  
 Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview.

**RIC141** [73:11]

A reissue of RIC292, which appeared as recently as 2010. Distinguished in his own time, a Roman by birth who moved to Venice and then became Imperial Court composer, he is now almost forgotten. This fine recording should do much to restore his reputation, especially now that it's available less expensively.



**Élisabeth JACQUET de la GUERRE (c.1664-1729)**

*Violin Sonatas (1707)*  
 Les Dominos/Florence Malgloire  
 rec. Église Notre-Dame de Centeilles, October 2010. DDD.  
 Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

**RIC142** [78:02]

A reissue of RIC310, another recording originally released as recently as 2011 – the cover is almost indistinguishable from the original. Johan van Veen thought some of the tempi a little slow in comparison with another recording which he was [reviewing](#) on the Verso label, but that's currently unavailable from some dealers, download-only from others, and the Ricercar is now more attractive price-wise. One way or another, you should get to know this music of probably the most talented female composer between Hildegard of Bingen and Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann.

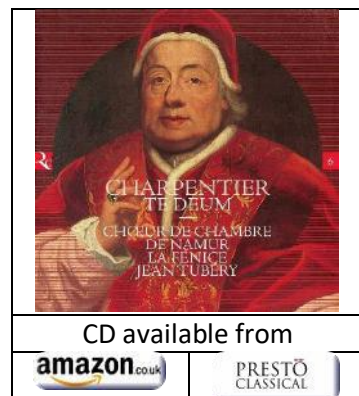


**Marc-Antoine CHARPENTIER (1643-1704)**

*Te Deum, H146* [22:57]  
*Messe pour Plusieurs Instruments au Lieu des Orgues, avec le plain-chant «pour les prestres»* H513 [26:50]  
 Chœur de Chambre de Namur  
 Les Agréments; La Fenice/Jean Tubéry  
 rec. Église du prieuré de Cons-La-Grand-Ville (Te Deum), September 2004  
 Église abbatiale de Pontigny (Messe), October 2004. DDD.  
 Texts not included

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

**RIC143** [49:47]



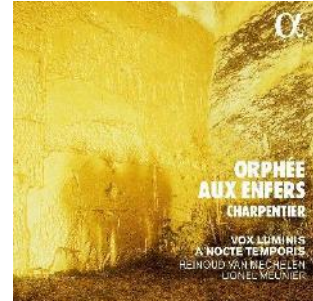
Another fairly recent recording which retains a slightly modified version of the original cover (RIC245). The performance is comparatively plain by contrast with many recent recordings of the *Te Deum*, but Charpentier wrote this music for church, not the opera house – if you want his operas, there are plenty of recordings. The classic King's College Cambridge recording is very much of its era – the David Willcocks era; this is much more like what Charpentier would have expected to hear, complete with French pronunciation of the Latin, but it's not dull – far from it. The Mass employs a combination of instruments for occasions when the organ is unavailable.



Having praised the quality of the booklets for this series in general, I have to deplore the lack of texts here. Those of the *Te Deum* and Mass are not hard to find online, but that's beside the point.

Those in search of Charpentier in a more theatrical vein should turn to another very fine recent release from the Outhere stable:

*Orphée Descendant aux Enfers*, H.471 and *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers*, H.488, both works on the Orpheus theme, the second incomplete, performed by Vox Luminis and A Nocte Temporis directed by Reinoud van Mechelen and Lionel Meunier, rec. February 2019, Keyhof Chapel, Huldenberg, Belgium. DDD. Texts and translations included. **ALPHA566** [82:22]



As so often with recent releases on this label, I'm baffled by the relevance of the cover, but otherwise very much enjoyed the contents.

### ***Nuits Occitanes***

Troubadour Songs

**MARCABRU (c.1100-1150)** *Lo vers comens* [6:11]

**Raimon JORDAN (c.1178-1195)** *Lo clar temps vei brunezir* [7:49]

**Bertran de BORN (c.1140-1205)** *Rassa tan cries* [10:03]

**Beatriz (Contessa) de DIA (c.1140- after 1175)** *A chantar m'er* [9:20]

**CADENET ( c.1160-1253)** *S'anc fui ni prezada* [7:52]

**Guiraut de BORNELH (c.1138-1215)** *Reis glorios* [8:52]

**Bernat de VENTADORN ( c.1125-c1200)** *Con lerba fresch* [9:02]

**Raimon de MIRAVEL (c.1140-1220)** *Cel que no volh auzir chansons* [5:03]

**Berenguer de PALAZOL (c.1160-1209)** *Tan m'abelis* [5:26]

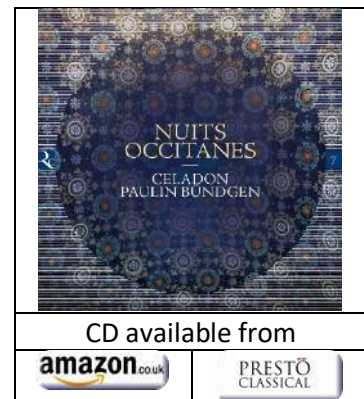
Ensemble Céladon

rec. August 2013: Church of Notre-Dame, Centeilles. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

**RIC144** [68:13]



CD available from

amazon.co.uk

PRESTO CLASSICAL

A reissue of an even more recent (2014, **RIC340**) release, which Gary Higginson thought 'highly attractive and most beautifully recorded' – [review](#). It's rare to have such an attractive collection of these works of the poet-singers of medieval Provence at mid-price. Follow it with music from the end of the tradition with *The Last of the Troubadours*, Guiraut Riquier, sung by the Martin Best Ensemble (Nimbus **NI5261** – [review](#), with links to other recordings in the series). The reissued collection of troubadour and jongleur music from Millenarium, which I [reviewed](#) in 2018 (**RIC134**), though lower full-price on CD, can be obtained as a lossless download with booklet for £3.75 from [Presto](#).

The original Ensemble Céladon release contained only modern French and English translations of the texts, GH's only reservation; the reissue goes one better and also includes the original Occitan texts.

**RECOMMENDED**

**Dieterich BUXTEHUDE (1637-1707)** Selected Cantatas

*Herr ich lasse dich nicht* [9:21]

*Dialogus inter Christum et fidelem animam* [9:56]

*Nichts soll uns scheiden von der Liebe Gottes* [9:45]

*Wenn ich, Herr Jesu, habe dich* [5:05]

*Jesu, meine Freud und Lust* [6:57]

*Ich halte es dafür* [13:22]

*Ich suchte des Nachts* [14:48]

*Das neugeborne Kindelein* [7:06]

*O clemens, o mitis, o caelestis Pater* [7:52]

*An Filius non est Dei* [13:08]

*Mein Herz ist bereit* [7:55]

*Drei schöne Dinge sind* [10:47]

*Ich bin eine Blume zu Saron* [8:23]

*Laudate pueri Dominum* [5:56]

*Gen Himmel zu dem Vater mein* [7:52]

*Singet dem Herrn* [7:39]

*Klag-Lied: Fried' und freudenreiche Hinfahrt* [6:12]

Greta de Reyghere, Agnès Mellon (sopranos), Henri Ledroit, James Bowman (counter-tenors), Guy de Mey, Ian Honeyman (tenors), Max van Egmond (bass)

Ricercar Consort

rec. Église Saint-Apollinaire, Bolland (1985-1990). DDD.

Texts and translations include

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

**RIC145** [2 CDs: 76:20 + 75:42]



Of the earlier reissue on RIC252 (now download only) I wrote: 'The performances are good: the names of the participants alone practically guarantee that and the music represents the strengths of Buxtehude's vocal music – less varied than Bach but, if anything, even more beautiful.' That still sums up my reaction to the new reissue. Nor does the music suffer from the fact that most of these cantatas are much shorter than Bach's, the longest only 15 minutes long. Like the other 2-CD sets, this seems to be sold for the price of one, around £7.75, at least by some dealers. That's not the only reason why this has to be my top choice of these reissues.

***Krummhorn, Cromorne, Storto, Tournebout?***

Dances, Lieder, chansons and madrigali by **SUSATO, ALAMIRE, ISAAC, SENFL, MANCHICOURT, JOSQUIN, WILLAERT, MAINIERO, SCHEIN, PRÆTORIUS**, etc.

Kathelijne van Laethem (soprano) and Dirk Snellings (bass)

Syntagma Amici/Bernhard Stilz

rec. Filosofisch Theologisch college van de societeit van Jezus V.Z.W., Heverlee, March 1990. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

**RIC146** [58:35] Previously available as RIC262.



The mysterious title refers to the various names given to that strange instrument the krummhorn, as depicted on the cover, in German, English, Italian and French. It includes the last work in which it appears, by Schein in 1617. This is another evocation of the material with which David Munrow burst upon the musical scene and, while it's entertaining, I'd recommend going for Munrow's Early Music

Consort recording of the music of Susato, Morley, Prætorius and others on *Renaissance Dances* (Erato Veritas **3500032**, 2 CDs around £8.50). These Veritas twofers have been disappearing and the download equivalents are more expensive – don't ask why – so it's one to snap up, then move on to one of the Ricercar recordings.

**Henri du MONT (1610-1684)**

*Motets À Voix Seule* (Motets for solo voice)

*O fideles* [11:45]

*Cantica Sacra* [12:34]

*Meslanges: Pavane* [3:32]

*Motets à deux voix* [14:17]

*Motets à deux, trois et quatre parties* [11:28]

**Léonard HODEMONT (ca 1580-1636)**

*In toto corde meo* [2:19]

*O bone Jesu* [3:07]

*Deus canticum novum* [2:47]

*Peccavi super numerum* [3:05]

Henri Ledroit (countertenor), Gérard Lesne (countertenor echo)

Ricercar Consort

Bernard Focroulle (organ)

rec. Église Saint-Jean l'évangéliste, Beaufays, December 1981, July 1984. DDD

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

Texts and translations included.

**RIC147** [64:50] Reissued from RIC029.



Despite the title, most of these works are for two (countertenor) voices. Perhaps the best place to start to get to know du Mont (or Dumont as the name is sometimes spelled) would be from his *Grands Motets*, either on another Ricercar recording (**RIC202**, CD, or download around £7.50) or a former budget-price Harmonia Mundi recording, now rather more expensive as a download from [eclassical.com](http://eclassical.com) and without texts (**HMA1961077**). Go for that, then the Ricercar.

**RECOMMENDED**

*Trauerkantaten* (Funeral cantatas)

**Georg Philipp TELEMANN (1681-1767)** *Du aber Daniel, gehe hin*, TWV4 [27:35]

**Christian Ludwig BOXBERG (1670-1729)** *Bestelle dein Haus* [6:52]

**Georg RIEDEL (b.1934)** *Harmonische Freude frommer Seelen* [11:43]

**Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750)** *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit*,

BWV106 (*Actus Tragicus*) [20:21]

Greta de Reyghere (soprano) James Bowmann (countertenor) Guy De

Mey (tenor) Max Van Egmond (bass)

Ricercar Consort

rec. Filosofisch Theologisch college van de societeit van Jezus V.Z.W.,

Heverlee, March 1990. DDD.

Texts and translations included

Reviewed as lossless press preview

**RIC148** [76:33] Reissued from RIC224.



I last encountered these recordings as part of a 7-CD box set of music for Passion and Resurrection (**RIC344**); I recommended that set in [April 2014](http://www.musicweb-international.com) and it remains excellent value – especially as it can currently be found for as little as £27.75. The single-CD release, too, is well worth considering. A fine line-up of soloists, sensitively accompanied and directed, makes this funeral music sound anything but

dreary. Of course, the Bach and Telemann are the highlights, but there's plenty of fine music in the other works. Don't be put off by the title.

**Girolamo FRESCOBALDI (1583-1643)**

*Il Regno d'Amore*

Mariana Flores (soprano)

Clematis/Leonardo García Alarcón (harpsichord, organ)

rec. Église Notre-Dame de Centeilles, June & October 2009. DDD

Texts and translations included

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

**RIC149** [60:27] Reissued from RIC300.



CD available from



My colleague Johan van Veen [reviewed](#) the original release on his own website. Though he recommended it, he had reservations about Marianna Flores' nice and pleasant voice as not engaging fully with the texts and the scoring of the pieces. Both remain true, though overall the booklet is much more informative than most such lower-price efforts, and there appears now to be no rival recording.

**Marin MARAIS (1656-1728)**

*Trios Pour les Couchers du Roi* (1692)

Ricercar Consort/Philippe Pierlot (treble and bass viol)

rec. Église Saint-Jean l'Évangéliste Beaufays, January & May 1998.

DDD.

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

**RIC154** [2CDs: 2:18:17] Reissued from RIC298.



CD available from



Royalty appears to have been as afflicted as anyone by insomnia, at least if we are to believe Shakespeare: Lady Macbeth lacked "the season of all natures, sleep", and Henry IV envied the cabin boy "crammed with distressful bread" for his ability to sleep atop a swaying mast. We don't know if Le Roy Soleil had such a problem; if he did, Marais had composed two hours of soothing music for him, the first such music to be published in France. Though Lully – his probable model – had included such pieces in his stage works, Marais exceeds him. The music is both soothing and entertaining and the performances are very good.

**A Renaissance Collection**

Josquin DESPREZ (c.1450-1521) *Nymphes des bois* [4:46]

Johannes OCKEGHEM (1410-1497) *Mort tu as navré de ton dart* [10:33]

Antoine BRUMEL (c.1460-1512) *Heth, cogitavit Dominus* [8:08]

Josquin DESPREZ *Mille regretz* [2:03]

Cipriano de RORE (1515-1565) *Mon petit coeur* [5:11]

Roland de LASSUS (1532-1594) *Suzanne un jour* [3:18]

Cipriano de RORE *Ancor che col partire* [2:33]

Giovanni P. da PALESTRINA (1525-1594) *Vestiva i colli* [3:57]

Domenico MAZZOCCHI (1592-1665) *Oh se posteste* [5:18]

Cherubino WAESICH (fl. 1630) *Ardo per voi, mia vita* [2:50]

*O rubella d'amor* [2:46]

Robert FAYRFAX (1464-1521) *Ah Robin* [2:11]

HENRY VIII (1491-1547) *Hélàs, Madame* [0:49]

Though some saith [3:09]



CD available from



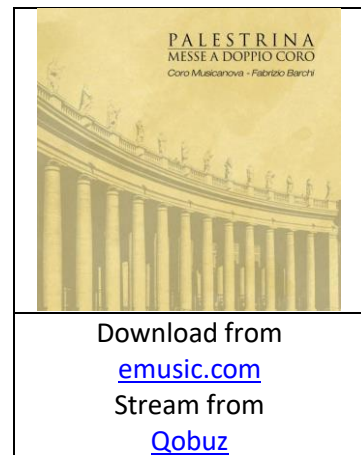


**Luca MARENZIO (1563-1599)** Zephyrus breathing [2:11]  
**Joachim von BURCK (1546-1610)** Vom Ölenberge [2:51]  
**Caspar OTHMAYR (1515-1553)** Mein himmlischer Vater [5:07]  
**Mogens PEDERSØN (ca 1580-1623)** Kyrie om Pasche a 5 [2:05]  
*Deus miseratur nostri a 5* [5:20]  
*Fader vor udi Himmerig a 5* [1:16]  
 Vox Luminis/Lionel Meunier  
 rec. Église Saint-Jean l'Évangéliste Beaufays, 2010-2013. DDD.  
 Texts not included  
**RIC155** [75:58]

Not one for renaissance specialists, though they will probably find much to enjoy, but a pick-and-mix selection that should appeal to those who don't know much about the music of the period and would like to discover more. It's bitty but, as I note elsewhere, those discovering classical music seem to like bitty anthologies. All the music comes from various box sets which have been issued on the Ricercar label.

**Giovanni Pierluigi da PALESTRINA (1525-1594)**  
**Double Choir Masses**

*Fratres ego enim accepi* (Motet) [3:03]  
*Missa Fratres ego enim accepi* [27:23]  
*Laudate Dominum omnes gentes* (Motet) [3:00]  
*Missa Laudate Dominum omnes gentes* [28:21]  
 Coro Musicanova/Fabrizio Barchi  
 No booklet, no details. Released 2019?  
**LOOK STUDIO SRL** [61:48]



I came across this little gem as I was closing this edition. I can't tell you much about it; I hadn't even heard of the label before, or that from which I understand it's licensed, Pirames International. Coro Musicanova was founded by Fabrizio Barchi in 1999 and is apparently best known for performing middle-of-the-road music with Andrea Bocelli. I didn't expect much, but got much more than I anticipated: very decent and persuasive singing, well recorded. The choir have recorded for Brilliant Classics and Da Vinci Classics, but we don't seem to have caught up with them at MusicWeb before.

Best of all, though the *Missa Ego enim accepi* has been recorded by The Sixteen (Coro **COR16175** – [Autumn 2019-1: Recommended](#)) and the motet *Laudate Dominum* can be found on a couple of other recordings, there seems to be no other recording of the eight-part Dorian Mass based on that motet. If this were a ramshackle performance – it definitely isn't – that would be of little account, but until The Sixteen get around to this Mass, there's no reason to avoid this inexpensive release. No booklet, so I can't give a place or date for this recording.

I'll end with a conundrum. There's a decent recording of two Mozart piano concertos, Nos. 21 and 24, by Jean-Philippe Collard and Les Musiciens de Paris. I'm not sure when it was made, certainly much earlier than the given date of 2004, but it's been reissued by Bi Jo-ke Music and can be downloaded from emusic.com for £0.84, or from Amazon UK for £1.58 (both mp3, no booklet). Amazon are also offering it on a second-hand CD from £0.49 or new for £1,280.50. It's certainly well worth £0.84, but the big Jo-ke has to be on anyone who pays that price for the new CD. Why would anyone do that, indeed? Oh, and why does an album of Mozart's mature concertos carry the picture of him as a child genius?

