

Second Thoughts and Short Reviews: Summer 2018/1
By Brian Wilson and Dan Morgan

Reviews are by Brian Wilson except where signed [DM]

[Spring 2018/3 is here.](#)

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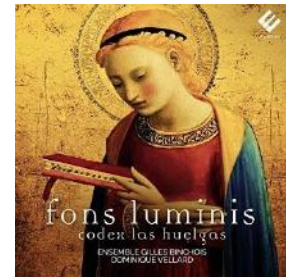
ALFVÉN *Midsummer Vigil*, etc._Chandos, BIS
Richard Rodney BENNETT *Orchestral Works, Vol. 2*_Chandos
BRAHMS *Handel Variations (+ SCHUMANN Piano Concerto)*_Decca
BRUCKNER *Symphony No.8*_BR Klassik
BUXTEHUDE *Abendmusiken*_Alpha
Francesca CACCINI *Alcina*_ Deutsche Harmonia Mundi
CHARPENTIER *La Descente d'Orphée*_Glossa
DIAMOND *Symphony No.6, etc.*_Naxos
GESUALDO *Sacrarum Cantionum*_Ricercar
HANDEL *Handel Edition*_Brilliant Classics
- *Acis and Galatea*_Chandos Chaconne
- *Water Music; Harpsichord Suites*_Beulah
HAYDN *Symphonies Nos. 3, 26, 30 and 79*_Alpha
HOLST *The Planets (+ Richard STRAUSS Zarathustra)*_DG
LÉONIN *Ecole De Notre Dame* (see Pérotin)
MACHAUT *Messe de nostre Dame, etc.*_Brilliant Classics
- *Fortune's Child*_Hyperion
MAHLER *Symphony No.1*_C-Avi
MENDELSSOHN *Piano Concerto No.1 (+ SCHUMANN)*_Linn
- *Violin Concertos, Octet*_BIS
MUSSORGSKY *Night on the Bare Mountain* (original and revised versions)_Naxos
PÉROTIN, LÉONIN *Ecole De Notre Dame*_Ambronay
SCHUMANN *Piano Concerto*_Decca (see BRAHMS and MENDELSSOHN)
SMETANA *Festive Symphony and Overture*_Supraphon, Naxos
Richard STRAUSS *Zarathustra* (see HOLST)
URSPRUCH *Piano Concerto; Symphony*_CPO
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Mass, Te Deum, etc*_Signum
John WILLIAMS *A Life in Music*_ClassicFM/Decca

Come to My Garden, My Sister, My Beloved - German Early Baroque Lovesongs_Deutsche Harmonia Mundi
Every Time I feel the Spirit (Paul Robeson)_Beulah
Fons Luminis – Sacred Vocal Music from Codex Las Huelgas_Evidence Classics
*O Beata Lux: Music for Trinity*_Harmonia Mundi
*Vienna Philharmonic Summer Night Concert*_Sony

Memory Lane: Classic recordings from 1963, still available, of **BACH** *Violin Concertos* (Oistrakh, DG); **CHOPIN** *Piano Concerto No.2, Polonaises* (Askenase, DG); **DVOŘÁK** *Symphony No.8* (Kertész, Decca); **MAHLER** *Symphony No.2* (Klemperer, Columbia, now Warner); **RAMEAU** *Pygmalion* (Couraud, DG); **SPOHR** *Nonet* (Fine Arts Quartet, Saga, now Alto); **Richard STRAUSS** *Tod und Verklärung* (Szell, Columbia, now Sony).

Fons Luminis – Sacred Vocal Music from Codex Las Huelgas (c.1330)

Rex obiit et labitur (Planctus) [1:57]
Casta catholica, Da dulcis domina (Conductus) [2:31]
Kirie, fons bonitatis (troped Kyrie) [2:03]
Gloria, spiritus et alme (troped *Gloria* and alternating plainchant) [5:43]
Sanctus, cleri cetus psallat letus (troped *Sanctus*) [4:04]
Agnus dei, o Jhesu salvator (*Agnus* in plainchant and trope) [3:29]
Audi pontus, audi tellus (Conductus) [2:54]
Sanctus, veni redemptor gencium (troped *Sanctus*) [3:21]
Bonum est confidere (Conductus) [3:00]
Mater patris et filia (Conductus) [5:34]
Plange castella misera (Planctus) [3:00]
Quod promisit ab eterno (Conductus) [6:29]
Omnium in te Christe credencium (Conductus) [1:15]
Clastrum pudicie, Virgo viget melius, Flos filius (3-part Motet) [1:01]
De castitatis thalamo (Conductus) [1:33]
Benedicamus Domino cum cantico [1:58]
Virgo virginum (Motet) [2:11]
locundare plebs fidelis (Prosa) [4:36]
O Maria maris stella, O Maria dei cella, Veritatem (3-part Motet) [1:29]
O Maria virgo davitica, O Maria maris stella, Veritatem (3-part Motet) [1:36]
Benedicamus Domino (Organum) [4:57]
 Ensemble Gilles Binchois/Dominique Vellard
 rec. Basilique de Véselay, 18-23 September 2017. DDD.
 Texts and translations included.
EVIDENCE CLASSICS EVCD051 [64:41]



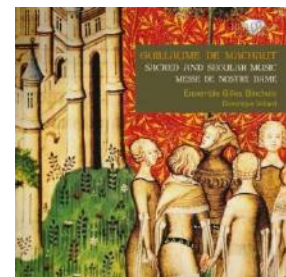
Download available from



Even if you followed my [recommendation](#) and purchased an earlier Signum selection of music from the Spanish Las Huelgas codex, a fascinating collection of monodic and polyphonic music from around 1100 to 1300, this new recording makes a most enjoyable addition.

Full marks for the inclusion in the booklet of a note on the interpretation of the music of the manuscript for the specialist and, for the general listener, a glossary of such technical terms as *copula*, *organum* – a style of composition, not the name of the instrument – and *conductus*.

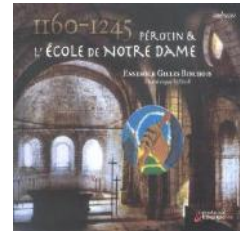
Vellard and his team are always at the least very able interpreters of the music of this period. On a 3-CD reissue from Brilliant Classics of recordings from the 1990s they take up at around the point that the Codex was put together, with a selection of the sacred and secular music of **Guillaume de Machaut**. On the first CD they offer one of the best recordings of his *Messe de nostre Dame*, the first polyphonic mass composed *en bloc*, with appropriate plainchant propers for the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The Hilliard Ensemble on Hyperion, who offer just the Mass without setting it in a liturgical context and add *Le Lai de la Fonteinne* and *Ma fin est mon commencement*, are well worth having at full price but that means that one CD costs more than the Brilliant Classics three. (CDA66358).



CD2 reissues a Cantus release entitled *Le vray remede d'amour* and CD3, also originally from Cantus, contains *Le jugement du roi de Navarre*. The music is interspersed with recitations of Machaut's poetry.

The CDs remain available separately for download¹, but the complete set, over 3 hours of music and poetry, can be found for around £8, with the texts on a separate CD-ROM (Brilliant **94217** – [review](#)). Downloaders happy with mp3 (at 320kbs) will find this for £5.49 from [7digital.com](#): no booklet but the texts and translations can be found at [Brilliant Classics](#).

In the earlier music of **PÉROTIN, LÉONIN** and the School of Notre Dame de Paris, from the late 12th and early 13th centuries, Vellard adopts controversially slow tempi, both on his earlier recording for Harmonic Records (no longer available) and, in a different selection more recently recorded for Ambronay, on **AMB9947**. Not all dealers stock the Ambronay label, and those who do tend to ask a high price, but the download is worth tracking down: for [emusic.com](#) subscribers it's just £3.20 in mp3 (320kbs), without booklet.



¹ One hopeful seller on Amazon is asking £351 for the second CD separately. This is far from the only occasion when someone can be found asking a ridiculous price for a CD which has been reissued at a lower price, or in a budget box, or as an inexpensive download. Beware!

Guillaume de MACHAUT (c.1300-1377)

Fortune's Child

Gais et jolis [5:20]

Dous amis, oy mon complaint [5:51]

Dame, je vueil endurer [2:41]

Trop plus est bele / Biauté paree de valour / Je ne sui mie [1:53]

Douce dame, tant com vivray [3:12]

Dou mal qui m'a longuement [2:59]

Comment puet on miex ses maus dire [3:54]

Dame, vostre dous viaire [5:37]

Hé! Mors! / Fine Amour / Quare non sum mortuus [2:27]

Dame, mon cuer enportez [5:15]

Riches d'amour [5:19]

Helas! pour quoy virent / Corde mesto / Libera me [3:17]

Puis que ma douleur agree [6:42]

Honte, paour, doubtance [6:12]

The Orlando Consort

rec. Church of St John the Baptist, Loughton, Essex, 27-29 April 2016. DDD.

Texts and translations included

Reviewed as 24/96 download from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#).

HYPERION CDA68195 [60:38] For purchase details please see [review by Gary Higginson](#).



This fifth and latest volume in the Orlando Consort's survey of the music of Machaut shares the virtues of its predecessors: **CDA67727** – [DL News 2013/14](#), **CDA68008** – [review](#), **CDA68103** – [review](#) – [review](#) – and **CDA68134** – [review](#). The music on the new release concentrates on the familiar theme of the ups and downs of courtly love, appropriately illustrated on the cover by the familiar image of Fortune's wheel.

Machaut novices should begin with his great Mass setting, *Messe de nostre Dame* – see above and [Retrospective Autumn 2016](#) for some of my likes and dislikes. Those in search of his secular music may safely start with this or any of the predecessor volumes in the series.

Pierre de la RUE (c. 1460 – 1518)

Missa Almanca a 4 [35:00]

Missa de Sancto Antonio a 4 [29:59]

Missa Puer Natus Est Nobis a 4 [32:42]

Missa Tous Les Regretz a 4 [31:17]

Beauty Farm [Bart Uvyn (countertenor), Hans Jörg Mammel, Hannes Wagner (tenor), Joachim Höchbauer (bass)]

rec. Chartreuse Mauerbach, Refectory December 2016. DDD.

Texts not included.



FRA BERNARDO FB1800751 [64:59 + 63:59] For purchase details please see [review by Gary Higginson](#).

Let me get the grumbles out of the way first: Fra Bernardo come up with some singularly inappropriate covers for the CDs of Beauty Farm – the same is true of their Gombert recording (see below) – and though the texts of the Latin Mass are readily enough available, they should have been included in the booklet.

The good news is that this 2-CD set brings us recordings of four otherwise unavailable but attractive Mass settings by a neglected composer, complementing recordings of La Rue’s Masses from The Brabant Ensemble (Hyperion **CDA68150** – [review](#)), Capella Pratensis (Challenge Classics **CC72710**)¹ and Ars Antiqua of Paris (Naxos **8.554656**).

The performances have all the qualities, for good (mostly) or ill (slightly) of Beauty Farm’s earlier Gombert recording for Fra Bernardo – [review](#) – though the personnel for these 4-part settings is smaller. The singing is mostly as beautiful as the group’s name implies – though a little unvaried in beauty at times – and the bass part, though only a single voice, dominates the texture more than is usual in performances of music of this period, a legacy of the singers’ association with Graindelavoix. As with the Gombert, I prefer the Brabant Ensemble in this repertoire: go for their Hyperion CD first if you don’t yet have it, but the new Fra Bernardo gives us four new works in performances which allow them to make their impact.

¹ My apologies to Challenge for calling them Channel in my review of CDA68150.

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

***O lux beata Trinitas* – Music for Trinity**

Aleksandr Tikhonovich GRECHANINOV (1864-1956)

Heruvimskaya pesñ (Cherubic Hymn), Op.29

Benjamin BRITTEN (1913-1976) *Festival Te Deum*, Op.32

Graham ROSS (b. 1985) *Duo Seraphim**

Charles Villiers STANFORD (1852-1924)

Laudate Dominum, Psalm 150

Pavel Grigor’evic CESNOKOV (1877-1944)

Heruvimskaya pesñ (Cherubic Hymn), Op.29/5

John STAINER (1840-1901) *I saw the Lord*

James MACMILLAN (b. 1959) *Sanctus and Benedictus* (from The Mass)

Pyotr Il’yich TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

Heruvimskaya pesñ (Cherubic Hymn), in F

John SHEPPARD (c.1515-1558) *Libera nos, salva nos I & II*

William BYRD (c.1543-1623) *O lux beata Trinitas*

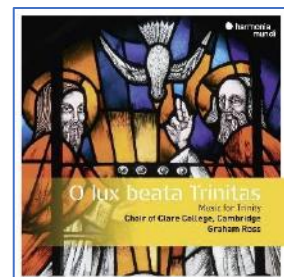
Sergei RACHMANINOV (1873-1943)

Heruvimskaya pesñ (Cherubic Hymn), Op.31/8

Joshua PACEY (b.1995) *Tres sunt**

Mikhail IVANOVICH GLINKA (1804-1857)

Heruvimskaya pesñ (Cherubic Hymn), Op.31/11



Gabriel JACKSON (b.1962) Hymn to the Trinity (*Honor, Virtus, et Potestas*)

Charles WOOD (1866-1926) Hail, gladdening light

Eleanor Carter, Nicholas Morris (organ)

Choir of Clare College, Cambridge/Graham Ross

reg 17, 29 & 30 June 2017, Chapel of Tonbridge School, Kent and Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral, Cambridgeshire. DDD.

Texts and translations included

HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902270 [74:55]

CD available from

PRESTO
CLASSICAL

For their final – alas – recording of music for the major festivals of the Christian year, Graham Ross and his team have chosen English and Russian music in honour of the Trinity, to celebrate Trinity Sunday. Though it's released just in time for Trinity Sunday 2018, it will, inevitably, be after that day that you read this: no matter – this, more than any other festival, is worth celebrating all year round. The English music ranges from John Sheppard and William Byrd in the sixteenth century to Joshua Pacey (b.1995), while the Russian contributions are settings of the Cherubic Hymn from the Orthodox Liturgy of St John Chrysostom.

With the net cast so wide, as usual, and the standard of performance and recording¹ that we have come to expect, what's not to like here? The Passiontide album, *Stabat Mater*, is listed in the booklet as download only (**HMU907616: *Recording of the Month*** – [review](#)), though some dealers still stock it: hurry if you want it on CD.

I've awarded a ***Recording of the Month*** for the series as a whole.

¹ I was able to hear only the mp3, which is very good, so the 24-bit download should sound superb.

***Come to My Garden, My Sister, My Beloved* - German Early Baroque Lovesongs**

Giovanni Pierluigi da PALESTRINA (c.1525-94)

Melchior FRANCK (1573-1639)

Valentin HAUSSMANN (1565-1614)

Johann Hermann SCHEIN (1586-1630)

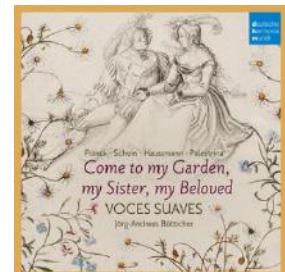
Voces Suaves/Jörg-Andreas Bötticher (organ and harpsichord)

Orí Harmelin (lute), Plamena Nikitassova (violin), Matthias Müller (viola da gamba), William Dongois (cornet)

rec. 11-14 October 2017, Couvent des Dominicaines, Guebwiller, Alsace. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

DEUTSCHE HARMONIA MUNDI G0100038961584 [69:48]



CD available from

amazon
.co.uk

PRESTO
CLASSICAL

This is the ideal concept album to follow the recent Royal Wedding, with its emphasis on the Song of Songs, excerpts from which are here set by Melchior Franck, while instrumental versions of two Palestrina settings from this book are played between the vocal items, most (all?) of which are not otherwise available on record.

Most recently I praised Voces Suaves for their recording of sacred music by Giovanni Croce (*Arcana* – [Autumn 2017/3](#)). This new recording of music which, like the Song of Songs itself, crosses the boundaries of sacred and secular love, is just as welcome.

Carlo GESUALDO da Venosa (1566-1613)

Sacrarum Cantionum quinque vocibus Liber Primus (1603)
O vos omnes [2:45]

Giovanni Maria TRABACI *Consonanze stravaganti* [2:08]

Carlo GESUALDO

Domine, ne despicias deprecationem meam [2:15]

Sancti Spiritus, Domine [1:44]

Exaudi, Deus, deprecationem meam [2:30]

Venit lumen tuum [2:29]

Illumina faciem tuam [3:58]

Giovanni de MACQUE *Intrata d'organo* [2:56]

Carlo GESUALDO *Maria, Mater gratiæ* [3:02]

Precibus et meritis [2:20]

Ave dulcissima Maria [3:52]

Dignare me laudare te [1:46]

Ave Regina cælorum [3:01]

Luzzasco LUZZASCHI *Ave Maris stella* [1:52]

Carlo GESUALDO *Hei mihi Domine* [2:58]

Tribulationem et dolorem [3:10]

Peccantem me quotidie [3:53]

Reminiscere miserationum tuarum [3:15]

Tribularer si nescirem [3:26]

Laboravi in gemitu meo [3:12]

Deus, refugium et virtus [2:37]

Giovanni de MACQUE *Consonanze stravaganti* [2:22]

Carlo GESUALDO *O crux benedicta* [3:02]

Odhecaton

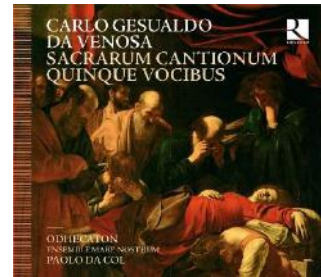
Liuwe Tamminga (organ)

Ensemble Mare Nostrum/Paolo Da Col

rec. October 2013, Venosa, Abbazia della SS. Trinità; Molfetta, Chiesa di San Bernardino (organ works) DDD

Texts and translations included

RICERCAR RIC343 [63:30]



Comparative version: **Delphian DCD34176** The Marian Consort/Rory McCleery – [review](#) – [Autumn 2016](#).

Do you want your Gesualdo with or without instrumental accompaniment? If the latter, which I generally prefer, go for the Delphian recording or the Naxos or Gimell recordings mentioned in Autumn 2016 (link above). The instrumental support on Ricercar may not be authentic but it's not over-intrusive and the music is performed with intensity by an appropriately small group of singers. (It may well be that the small choir was accompanied in the intimate venue of the ducal chapel.) Whichever recording you choose, this music is less heated than you may expect from Gesualdo but much of it is still passionate, especially those works penitential in nature, as befits the composer's bad-boy image.

It's fitting that the cover illustration should be by that other bad-boy of the period, Michelangelo Merisi, better known as Caravaggio, but I'm less enamoured of the fact that it comes in one of those cardboard efforts where the booklet is glued into the inside of the front page and the CD is housed in a plastic tray.

Francesca CACCINI (1587-c.1641)*La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* (1625)

Huelgas-Ensemble [Michaela Riener (mezzo, Alcina), Bernd Oliver Fröhlich (tenor, Vistola Fiume), Sabine Lutzenberger (mezzo, Melissa), Achim Schulz (tenor, Ruggiero), Katelijne Van Laethem (soprano, Sirena), Axelle Bernage (mezzo, Nunzia), Matthew Vine (tenor, Nettuno)]/Paul Van Nevel
 rec. live 28 January 2016, AMUZ St Augustine Church, Antwerp, Belgium.
 DDD.



Texts and translations included.

DEUTSCHE HARMONIA MUNDI 88985338762 [88:24]



This is the second recording of Francesca Caccini's vocal entertainment *La Liberazione di Ruggiero*, following a Glossa album which was my Discovery of the Month in 2017 – [review](#). Actually, the DHM release was recorded a few months before the Glossa. Both are very good, with very fine soloists, the new account giving the music a little more time to breathe, though the Glossa by no means sounds hurried. Different solutions have also been provided for the inclusion of music not specified in the score: for the new recording this is taken from Caccini's contemporary Salomone Rossi. Whichever version you choose, don't miss this, the first opera-scale work by a female composer.

Diet[e]rich BUXTEHUDE (1637-1707) Abendmusiken*Gott hilf mir, denn das Wasser geht mir bis an die Seele*, BuxWV34

Trio Sonata in a minor, BuxWV272 [7:59]

Befiehl dem Engel, dass er komm, BuxWV10 [5:42]*Jesu, meine Freude*, BuxWV60 []

Trio Sonata in B-flat, BuxWV255 [8:26]

Herzlich Lieb hab ich dich, O Herr, BuxWV41 []

Trio Sonata in D, BuxWV267 [8:18]

Jesu, meines Lebens Leben, BuxWV62 []

Ensemble Masques [Sophie Gent, Tuomo Suni (violin), Kathleen Kajioka (viola), Mélisande Corriveau (viola da gamba) Benoît vanden Bemden (violone) Olivier Fortin (organ & harpsichord)]/Julien Martin (recorder)

Vox Luminis [Sara Jäggi, Zsuzsi Tóth, Stefanie True, Caroline Weynants (sopranos), Daniel Elgersma, Jan Kullmann (altos), Robert Buckland, Philippe Froeliger (tenors), Sebastian Myrus, Lionel Meunier (basses)]/Lionel Meunier

rec. January 2017 Amuz (Festival Van Vlaanderen - Antwerp). DDD.

Texts and translations included

ALPHA287 [85:17]



This is a very useful collection of some of the works which Buxtehude performed on Sunday evenings in Lübeck, chamber-scale spiritual cantatas and trio sonatas. Some of these works can be found in other collections, but not coupled as here. The performances of BuxWV41 and 62 in Volume 3 of Ton Koopman's survey of Buxtehude's vocal music are included in a larger collection (*Opera Omnia* Volume VII, Challenge Classics **CC72246**, 2CDs). If you just want a single CD, the new Alpha is highly recommended.

Marc-Antoine CHARPENTIER (1643-1704)*La Descente d'Orphée aux enfers*, H.488 (Paris, 1686)

Cyril Auvity - Orphée; Céline Schee - Eurydice; Etienne Bazola - Pluton;
 Floriane Hasler - Proserpine; Maïlys de Villoutreys - Daphné; Virgile Ancely
 - Apollon & Titye; Jeanne Crousaud - C enone; Dagmar Saskova - Ar ethuze;
 Kevin Skelton - Ixion; Guillaume Gutierrez - Tantale;
 Fran ois-Nicolas Geslot (haute-contre) David Witczak (basse)
 Ensemble Desmarest/Ronan Khalil (harpsichord, organ)
 rec. Th  tre de Poissy, France, June and July 2017. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

GLOSSA GCD923602 [60:45]

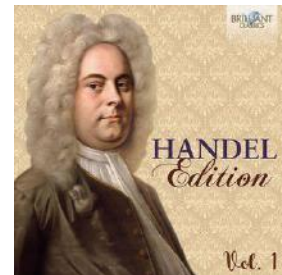
CD available from			
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With this lively and dramatic account, we now have four versions of Charpentier's perfect short opera on the descent of Orpheus to the underworld. All have their virtues: the oldest, from Les Arts Florissants and William Christie, sets the bar very high and comes at an attractive price, especially as a download where it's available for around  4 in lossless sound – even less for mp3 – albeit without the texts (Erato **0630119132**). The most recent, from Ensemble Correspondances and S ebastien Dauc e, was released in the Autumn of 2017 (Harmonia Mundi **HMM902279**). In my [review of that release](#), I expressed the opinion that we were well served by all three then available, the third coming from Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs with Boston Early Music forces (CPO **7778762**, with *La Couronne des Fleurs*. **Recording of the Month** – [review](#) – [DL News 2014/10](#)).

The new recording is slightly slower overall than its rivals, but that's apparent on paper rather than in the hearing; in fact, in many respects it sounds even livelier than the others. The recording is very good, and the notes detailed and informative. Subscribers to [Naxos Music Library](#) can compare the four versions there.

George Frideric HANDEL (1685-1759)

The 65-CD Brilliant Classics **Handel Edition** which replaced their earlier offering in 2015 can be found for as little as  68 – beware of paying more, much more in the case of one dealer's price of  107.43. With generally stylish performances, retaining some of the contents of the 40-CD box and improving in several important works with period-instrument ensembles, it's aptly summed up in Robert Blackburn's 'A mixed bag with the potential for agreeable surprises' – see his [review](#) for full details.



The set is gradually being released in smaller packages for download or streaming: Volume 1, opening with the *Water Music* (stylish, from Concerto K oln) and the *Fireworks Music* (lumpen performances – the overture dragged out interminably) typifies the curate's egg nature of the collection. The other major works are the *Concerti a due cori* and Organ Concertos Nos. 1-11, not first choices but not at all bad: five hours of music for  6.47 in 16-bit lossless sound, but with no booklet, from [Qobuz](#). I had thought of making this my Bargain of the Month but the performances are too variable. The liner notes and sung texts for the 65-CD set can be downloaded from [Brilliant Classics](#).

George Frideric HANDEL (1685-1759)

Acis and Galatea, HWV49a, Pastoral entertainment in one act (1718)

Galatea - Lucy Crowe (soprano)

Acis - Allan Clayton (tenor)

Damon - Benjamin Hulett (tenor)

Polyphemus - Neal Davies (bass-baritone)

Coridon - Jeremy Budd (tenor)

Soprano in choruses - Rowan Pierce (soprano)

Early Opera Company/Christian Curnyn

rec. Church of St Jude-on-the-Hill, Central Square, Hampstead Garden Suburb; 14–17 November 2017. DSD.

Text included.

Temperament: Vallotti; Pitch: A = 415 Hz.

Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from chandos.net.

CHANDOS CHACONNE CHSA0404(2) 2 SACDs [37:38 + 49:10] For purchase links please see **Recording of the Month** [review](#).



With a considerable discography of recordings of Handel for Chandos's early-music Chaconne label Christian Curnyn and his Early Opera Company are a logical choice for *Acis and Galatea*, the pastoral entertainment which Handel composed for the Earl of Carnarvon's palatial establishment at Cannons. Only the elaborately decorated parish church of St Lawrence, for which Handel composed the Chandos Anthems, remains as a reminder of the Earl's lavish establishment. The libretto was partly written by Pope, concerning whose poetry I fear that I share Keats' very low opinion¹, but the music is the thing and that's one of Handel's minor masterpieces.

Acis is just too long to fit on one CD but Chandos compensate by charging as for one disc in common with most of the rival recordings. It's a work which has been well served, from the slightly abridged archive recording with Joan Sutherland and Sir Adrian Boult (Chandos **CHAN3147** – [review](#) – Decca Eloquence **4804924**, 4 CDs, with *Messiah*) to John Butt and his Dunedin Consort, a **Recording of the Month** (**CKD319**, 2 CDs – [review](#)) which for me even displaced the very fine King's Consort account on Hyperion. The most recent recording, from Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbes with Boston Early Music Festival forces (CPO **7778772**, 2 CDs, with *Sarei troppo felice* – reviewed as lossless download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com) is also well worth considering.

I'm not going to ditch any of those, but the new recording takes a well-deserved place alongside them. The 24/96 download is very good but, as usual, leaves me wondering why, at £13.99, it costs more than the SACD (£11.50 from one dealer) – with the surround-sound download costing even more (£19.99).

¹ It was surely a touch hypocritical of Pope to produce a libretto for an establishment which he satirised, at least in terms of the elaborate church and the tepid sermons preached there.

George Frideric HANDEL

Water Music: Suites in F, D and G, HWV348-350

Harpsichord Suites Nos. 1 in A, 2 in F, 3 in d minor and 4 in e minor, HWV426-429

Philomusica of London/Thurston Dart (harpsichord)

rec. 1959, 1956. ADD/stereo

BEULAH 2PD69 [74:30] Best downloaded in lossless sound from Qobuz for the same price as mp3 from other suppliers.

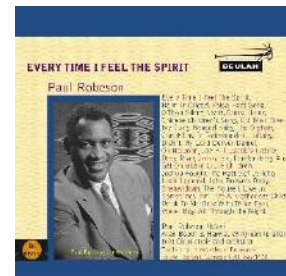


The recordings which Thurston Dart made with the Philomusica of London were in many ways the beginning of modern practice in performing baroque music. These recordings, recorded with modern

instruments but with a sense of baroque style – Dart’s day job was as a London University academic – led to the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields with Neville Marriner, still using modern instruments, and thence to period-instrument practice. So stylish, indeed, are these performances and so well has the recording come up that I might well have been fooled in a blind test into thinking this a recent recording.

I imagine that the *Water Music* will be the main selling point. The harpsichord suites, though recorded only three years earlier, are a little less appealing, chiefly because the mono recording, or the chosen instrument, a Goff from 1952, sounds less clear. The ear soon adjusts, and I enjoyed this half of the programme, too, but this time modern practice, though having learned much from Dart, has come a long way since these recordings were made. Paul Nicholson’s recording of all eight suites on a Hyperion Dryad budget twofer is the best recommendation here (**CDD22045**, with Fugues HWV605-612).

Beulah’s other June 2018 release, though very different, is equally recommendable. ***Every Time I feel the Spirit*** contains 28 tracks sung by **Paul Robeson**, mostly recorded at his ‘farewell’ concert in Carnegie Hall in May 1958¹. The accompanists are Alan Booth and Harriet Wingreen (piano), Milt Okun and his orchestra and, on some tracks, Okun’s chorus. Much of the music is of a (very) sentimental nature and Robeson misses no opportunity to play on this. Occasionally it’s over-slow and overdone – at least for me – but tracks like *Sometimes I feel like a motherless Child*, *Get on board little Children* and (especially and inimitably) *Old Man River* amply compensate. Much of the material is predictable but *Christ lag in Todesbanden* (sung in English and German), while it might take JS Bach by surprise and wouldn’t win any prizes for authenticity or German pronunciation – it’s transposed too low even for Robeson’s dark-toned voice – makes me wish that he had been coached for and recorded more such repertoire.



His rendition of the Schubert Lullaby, *Schlafe holder süsse Knabe* (again in somewhat unidiomatic German) also suffers from being pitched so low that the voice sounds merely growly. His *Jerusalem* is rather more successful and the Dvořák-inspired *Going Home* even more so, despite the banal words. The recordings have been well transferred, though the piano tone sounds rather hollow at times and the applause is sometimes rather abruptly terminated. (Beulah **1PS23** [70:09] – download from Qobuz).

¹ He performed at least twice after that ‘farewell’, in New York in June 1958 and in London in August of that year; excerpts from both used to be available on a CBS LP.

(Franz) Joseph HAYDN (1732-1809) Haydn 2032: Volume 6

Symphony No.3 in B, Hob.I:3 [13:52]

Symphony No.26 in d minor, Hob.I:26 ‘Lamentatione’ [15:43]

Symphony No.79 in F, Hob.I:79 [23:25]

Symphony No.30 in C, Hob. I:30 ‘Alleluia’ [14:04]

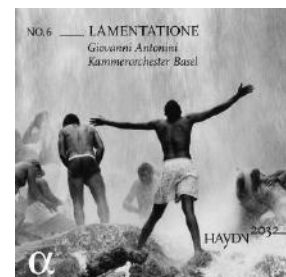
Kammerorchester Basel/Giovanni Antonini

rec. Landgasthof Riehen, 2-7 March 2017. DDD

Period instrument performances.

Reviewed as mp3 press preview.

ALPHA678 [67:05]



Can we really be up to volume 6 of this series planned to include all the Haydn symphonies, arranged thematically and performed by Kammerorchester Basel and Il Giardino Armonico conducted by Giovanni Antonini? If so, perhaps I shall survive to hear more of them than I had expected, though assuredly – I hope – not until 2032. Whereas previous volumes have added a work by one of Haydn's contemporaries, this time we have an all-Haydn affair, though not one which directly competes in terms of the coupling with any other recording. (Apart, of course, from the complete sets from Doráti on Decca or Adám Fischer on Nimbus).

As before, the performances are very good – bright and upfront in fast movements and not lingering over-much in slow movements, though without a sense of undue haste. There are other ways of performing these slow movements, as both Adám Fischer (Nimbus **NI5426-30**, Nos. 1-20) and Roy Goodman (Hyperion **CDH55111**, Nos.1-5) demonstrate in the case of the *andante moderato* of No.3. After hearing Antonini, who takes two minutes less, I must admit to finding those two favourite Haydn interpreters surprisingly stodgy-sounding.

No.26 is usually paired with other *Sturm und Drang* symphonies, as by Christopher Hogwood (Decca **4402222**, with Nos. 42-44, 48-49, download only) and Trevor Pinnock (DG **4637312**, 6 CDs). Here in the slow movement, marked *adagio*, Antonini's tempo is more in line with his rivals – just a minute faster than Hogwood and only seconds faster than Harry Christophers with the Handel and Haydn Society (Coro **COR16158**, with No.86 and Mozart Violin Concerto No.3). Pinnock, Fischer and Vilmos Tátrai (Hungaroton) are *hors de combat* for comparison, as they omit repeats here.

All in all, this is a recording of No.26 to stand with, if not to excel, the best. Buy it for this work and you'll wonder why its less frequently recorded companions are not better known. This is only the second period-instrument recording of No.79 and it's every bit as spirited as Ottavio Dantone's premiere (Decca **4788837**, 2 CDs, Nos. 78-81). If anything, it makes a better case than Dantone for fast-ish tempi – in [DL News 2016/5](#) I found myself preferring the more leisurely modern-instrument performances from Nicholas Ward in Nos. 77-79 on Naxos.

Even the cover photograph is more appropriate than with the earlier volumes, though it takes a while to see the relevance: it depicts a mass baptism and these symphonies often incorporate melodies derived from plainchant. The notes in the booklet are brief but good.

For once my press preview came at full-strength mp3 (320kbs.) rather than the usual very poor 192kbs, so I'm more confident in reporting that the recording is very good.

Felix MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847) Violin Concertos

Violin Concerto in d minor (second version, 1822/23) [20:37]

Octet in E-flat, Op. 20: III Scherzo (arr. for orch.) [4:29]

Violin Concerto in e minor, Op. 64 (original 1844 version, world premiere recording) [26:02]

Isabelle van Keulen (violin)

Nieuw Sinfonietta Amsterdam/Lev Markiz

rec. October 1995, July 1998, Waalse Kerk, Amsterdam. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#).

BIS-CD-935 [51:11]



CD available from			
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The release of a new CPO recording of the early d-minor concerto, with the Concerto for violin, piano and string orchestra (**555197-2**, Lena Nedauer, Matthias Kirschnereit, the SW German Chamber Orchestra and Timo Handschuh – [review](#)) reminded me that I had never followed up a

recommendation by Geoffrey Molyneux in an edition of Download News in favour of this BIS recording, which he preferred to a Hyperion recording of the two Mendelssohn violin concertos.

Better late than never. Both the BIS and the new CPO make a very good case for the early work, accompanied on BIS by the original version of the better-known mature concerto and on the new CPO by an equally fine performance of the double concerto. The BIS booklet specifies in detail the variations between the mature concerto in its original form, as played here, and the more familiar revision. That's very helpful for scholars, though the average listener – including myself – will hardly be aware of the differences.

Should you choose the BIS, you need not miss out on the double concerto: that's also performed by Isabelle Keulen and the Amsterdam Sinfonietta, with Ronald Brautigam in the piano role, on **BIS-CD-713**, available to download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com.

For a recent recording of Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto in g-minor, Op.25, please see Schumann (below).

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

Alfred Brendel Live in Vienna

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-56)

Piano Concerto in a minor, Op.54 [31:26]

Johannes BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Variations and Fugue on a theme by Handel, Op.24 [27:30]

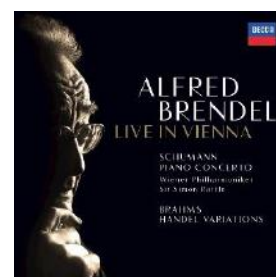
Alfred Brendel (piano)

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra/Sir Simon Rattle

rec. live Konzerthaus, Vienna, 4 June 1979 (Schumann); Musikverein,

Vienna, 11 March 2001. DDD.

DECCA 4833288 [58:56]



CD available from			
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Never the time and the place and the person together or, in the case of my experience of the Schumann Piano Concerto, never the right combination of soloist, orchestra, conductor and recording – until now. Which is not to say that there haven't been some pretty close matches – Leif Ove Andsnes and Maris Janssons, especially their second recording (EMI/Warner **5575622**, with Grieg) or Stephen Kovacevich and Sir Colin Davis (Philips **4784805**, download only, also with Grieg). With Brendel's early recordings of this concerto now download only (**4623212**, with Kurt Sanderling) or on vinyl (**4789274**, with Claudio Abbado), this new recording is most welcome: it hits the spot exactly in all respects, except for those for whom the slightest rustle of audience presence and a brief burst of well-deserved applause are anathema.

The Brahms coupling may be less essential, but certainly does not detract from the value of a highly recommendable recording.

Subscribers to Naxos Music Library can stream [there](#), with pdf booklet and compare with other recordings, including [Brendel and Sanderling](#).

Another very enjoyable recent recording of the **SCHUMANN Piano Concerto** which we seem to have missed couples it with **MENDELSSOHN's Piano Concerto No.1 in g minor, Op.25** and the 1835 version of his overture *Die schöne Melusine* in performances by Ingrid Fliter (piano) with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra directed by Anton Méndez (Linn **CKD555** recorded in 2015 [60:51]). That's available on SACD or as a download in mp3, lossless and 24-bit from linn-records.co.uk. Subscribers stream from [Naxos Music Library](#).



Anton BRUCKNER (1824-1896)

Symphony No. 8 (version 1890, ed. Nowak 1955)

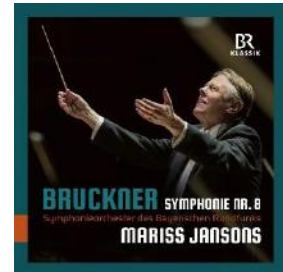
Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks / Mariss Jansons

rec. live, 13-18 November, 2017, Philharmonie, Munich

BR KLASSIK 900165 [80:07] Reviewed as a 16-bit press download. Pdf booklet included. Previous review: [Michael Cookson](#).



Conductor Mariss Jansons has a loyal following, but I find his performances an acquired taste. Always serviceable, certainly, but seldom inspired. In fact, I've seen him referred to – rather mischievously – as Yawnsons. That said, I much admired his recent RCO Mahler Seventh, which is refreshingly free of the usual mannerisms, not least a tendency to micro-manage the orchestra ([RCO Live](#)). The playing and sound are splendid, too. But just to underline how polarised critics are about Jansons, a *Gramophone* reviewer absolutely shredded that Seventh, insisting whatever it was, it wasn't Mahler.



Jansons, who often records the same rep in both Amsterdam and Munich, doesn't appear to have done that with Bruckner's Eighth (yet). This really is a piece that's tailor made for those glorious Dutch horns, but, to be fair, their Bavarian counterparts excelled themselves in a recent Bruckner Sixth with Bernard Haitink ([BR Klassik](#)). Alas, they aren't quite so memorable here, but then I just don't feel Jansons has the measure of this epic score. Indeed, while I would never straitjacket the symphony and say there's only one way to play it, Jansons' rather prosaic approach sells the music short at every turn.

Those agogic pauses are a real turn-off, and although the tuttis are impressive, they feel curiously synthetic; that, surely, is because they haven't been properly prepared for. In short, Jansons' Bruckner Eighth is about isolated gestures, which makes for a very episodic and rhetorical reading. Even the usual epiphanies pass almost unnoticed. The recording is a little too hard for my taste – muscular timps, though – and in the context of such an unyielding performance it all feels so dogged, so driven. There is applause, quickly faded.

Marmite Jansons strikes again. **[DM]**

Bedřich SMETANA (1824-1884)

Festive (Triumph) Symphony in E, Op.6 [44:38]

Festive Overture in D, Op.4 [8:20]

František Jan ŠKROUP (1801-1862)

The Tinker, Op.1: Overture [6:59]

Antonín DVOŘÁK ()



The Cunning Peasant: Overture [8:08]

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra/Karel Šejna

rec. 1966 AAD/stereo (Symphony), 1955, 1951 AAD/mono.

SUPRAPHON SU1914-2 [68:19]



CD available from		Stream from	
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Smetana made the mistake of interweaving the Austrian Emperor's Hymn into his Festive Symphony, a move which hardly gelled with his image as the first of the Czech national composers. Had Franz Josef actually been crowned King of Bohemia, as planned, of course, it would not have been such a *faux pas*, but the work didn't deserve to sink almost without trace – at least the best movement, the scherzo, survived and can be found on its own on some recordings.

No-one did Smetana or Dvořák better than Karel Šejna, but his recordings tend to sound dated – that's the case with the fillers here – his 1966 stereo recording of the Symphony, however, sounds pretty good for its age.

If it's more modern sound that you must have, there's a new recording just released by Naxos, sounding bright and up-front which, in some ways, makes it initially seem preferable to the Supraphon. (**8.573672**, Berlin RSO/Darrell Ang, with *Bartered Bride* Overture and orchestral excerpts). Ultimately, however, Šejna's is the recording to return to on the (perhaps rare) occasions when you want to hear the symphony. The fillers on Supraphon, apart from the *Festive Overture*, are pretty small beer.



Both the Supraphon and Naxos, together with a Marco Polo recording and others, can be streamed by subscribers to [Naxos Music Library](https://www.naxos.com).

Anton URSPRUCH (1850–1907)

Piano Concerto, Op.9 in E-flat¹ [41:39]

Symphony, Op.14 in E-flat² [50:38]

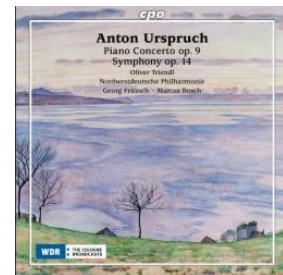
Oliver Triendl (piano)¹

Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie/Georg Fritsch¹; Marcus Bosch²

rec. Schützenhof, Herford, 16-19 March 2009, 12-16 December 2006. DDD.

CPO 555194–2 [41:39 + 50:38] For purchase links please see [review](#) by

Stephen Greenbank.



Anton Urspruch has some interesting things to say, even though he tends to say them at greater length than ideal. His music is, nonetheless, well worth getting to know in these sympathetic performances. If not sure, try it from [Naxos Music Library](https://www.naxos.com), where you can also find the pdf booklet. It's rather naughty for dealers and download providers to charge top dollar for two CDs when the total time is only 92 minutes.

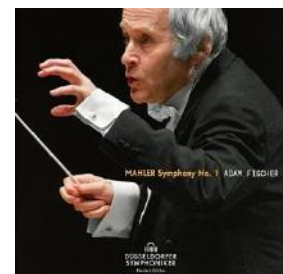
Gustav MAHLER (1860-1911)

Symphony No. 1 in D major (1888, rev. 1896)

Düsseldorfer Symphoniker/Ádám Fischer

rec. live, 10-12 February 2017, Tonhalle Düsseldorf

C-AVI 8553653D [53:00] Reviewed as a 24/48 download, with pdf booklet, from [eClassical](https://www.eClassical.com)



For a different response, please see [review by Michael Cookson](#).

CD available from		
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'Not a giant killer, but not a pygmy either' – that was my response to [Ádám Fischer's Düsseldorf Mahler Fourth](#), the second in a new cycle that began with No. 7. This new First faces strong competition from the old guard, among them Bruno Walter (CBS-Sony), Rafael Kubelík (DG, Audite); Leonard Bernstein (CBS-Sony, DG), James Levine (RCA), and Klaus Tennstedt (EMI-Warner, [BBC Legends](#)). As for the newcomers, there's Yannick Nézet-Séguin's BRSO account, which was one of my top picks for 2016 ([BR Klassik](#)). Thanks to Kubelík, those Bavarians have a proud Mahler tradition, as do the Utah Symphony, whose Maurice Abravanel set is worth a look ([Musical Concepts](#)). Regrettably, their recent First with Thierry Fischer was something of a let-down ([Reference](#)).

What really appealed to me about [Ádám Fischer's Mahler 4](#) was its uncluttered, unassuming character; some may think that's code for dull, but it's actually a refreshing take on this oft-played piece. And despite their sunny dispositions, Nos. 1 and 4 both have inherent tensions that need to be addressed as well; Tennstedt's BBC First is particularly revealing in this respect, and [Ádám Fischer](#), although comparatively 'straight' in the Fourth, is suitably forensic when required. But what of his First? Well, the opening movement is nicely shaped, and the playing is decent enough. Tempi are generally well chosen, and progress is fair to good. In short, a promising start.

Alas, it's all downhill from here. The second movement is certainly well sprung, but I longed for a bit more weight and texture – more shading, I suppose – and the pulse gets a little thready at times. Tempo relationships aren't well-judged, either. As for that macabre cortege in the penultimate movement, it's quite brisk, which deprives the music of essential strangeness. Even more disappointing, there are some rhythmic fumbles and odd decelerations, neither of which I'd expected from this conductor. Outwardly, his finale seems powerful enough, but there's little of the cumulative tension that others generate here. Again, the playing is rather untidy, and the sound, otherwise acceptable, hardens in the climaxes.

Not a front-runner; doesn't augur well for the rest of this cycle. [DM]

[My apologies to Dan, who sent me this review in November 2017; somehow it slipped through the net. BW.]

French Moments

Albert ROUSSEL (1869 – 1937)

Piano Trio in E-flat, Op.2 (1902, revised 1927) [27:51]

Achille-Claude DEBUSSY (1862 – 1918)

Premier trio in G (1880) [23:03]

Gabriel FAURÉ (1845 – 1924)

Piano Trio in d minor, Op.120 (1922 – 23) [18:52]

Neave Trio [Anna Williams (violin), Mikhail Veselov (cello), Eri Nakamura (piano)]

rec. Potton Hall, Dunwich, Suffolk; 19 – 21 October 2017. DDD.

CHANDOS CHAN10996 [70:08] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [chandos.net](#). For purchase details please see [Recording of the Month review](#).



Achille-Claude DEBUSSY

Premier Quatuor, Op.10 (1893) [26:51]

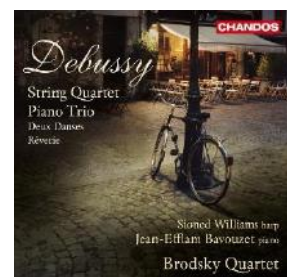
Deux Danses (1904) [10:44]

Premier trio in G (1880) [21:59]

Rêverie (c.1890) [5:52]

Chris Laurence (double-bass), Sioned Williams (harp); Jean-Efflam Bavouzet (piano); Brodsky Quartet

rec. 18-19 October and 1 November 2011, Potton Hall, Dunwich, Suffolk. DDD.



CHANDOS CHAN10717 [65:29] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from chandos.net. For purchase details please see [review](#) by Dominy Clements: ‘a superb Debussy disc to have.’

CHAN10996: This is my first encounter with the Roussel Trio, of which there is not exactly a glut of recordings, and with the Neave Trio, here celebrating their second recording for Chandos. Their first appearance was on an album of *American Moments*, trios by Korngold, Bernstein and Foote (**CHAN10924**). In common with other reviewers, Nick Barnard – [review](#) – had mixed feelings about that release.

‘Neave’ (more correctly spelled *Niamh*) is an Irish word for ‘bright’ or ‘radiant’, but I found their performance of the Roussel mostly somewhat subdued, sounding like Debussy or Ravel in predominantly pensive mode¹, with occasional radiance rising to the surface in the finale where marked *vif et gaiment*. Perhaps the fault lies in the music rather than the performance, but this seems to me one for Roussel completists.

The opening of Debussy’s *Premier Trio* transports us to a much more amenable world, but the Neave Trio face stiff competition here and in the Fauré from the Florestan Trio at mid-price (Hyperion **CDA30029**). Not only are their performances of two of these works excellent, they add a performance of the Ravel which, as I wrote in [DL Roundup October 2010](#), is the highlight of a superb recording and as good as any that I have heard. It’s also available to download from [Hyperion](#) in 24-bit sound for £7.30 (£6.50 for 16-bit) whereas the Chandos costs £9.99 (16-bit) or £13.99 (14-bit). Good as the Neave Trio are throughout, they don’t achieve quite the same degree of *appassionato* playing in the finale.

The recent highly regarded recording of Debussy’s Sonatas and the Trio (Erato **9029577396: Recording of the Month** – [review](#)) has just been reissued as part of a 2-disc set of Debussy’s Complete Chamber Music (**9029565258**, download only).

Livelier tempi in the Fauré – more closely in line with those of the Florestans – pay dividends. Overall, were this to be my sole recording of the Debussy and Fauré on my Desert Island, I wouldn’t feel short-changed, but the Florestan Trio remain top of my pile, not least for the inclusion of the Ravel instead of the Roussel ...

... the earlier Chandos recording, however, with members of the Brodsky Quartet and Jean-Efflam Bavouzet in an all-Debussy programme on **CHAN10717** is also very special. You may well have the String Quartet in the more usual coupling with the Ravel², but it’s well worth duplicating that wonderful work for the sake of these very fine performances.

¹ though Roussel denied the influence of Debussy and Franck.

² as, for example, from the Dante Quartet (Hyperion **CDA67759** – [DL Roundup February 2010](#))

Gustav HOLST (1874-1934)

The Planets, Op. 34, H126 (1914-17) [46:03]

Richard STRAUSS (1864-1949)

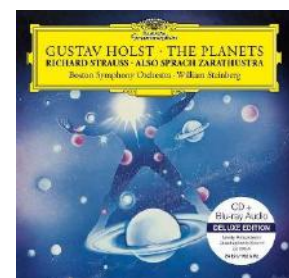
Also sprach Zarathustra, Op 30, TRV 176 (1895-1896) [29:53]

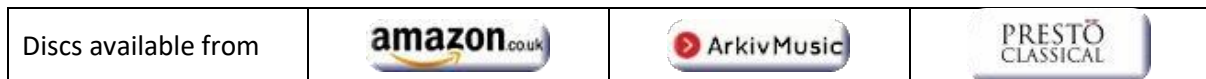
New England Conservatory Chorus

Boston Symphony Orchestra/William Steinberg

rec. September & October 1970 (Holst), March 1971 (Strauss), Symphony Hall, Boston

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 479 8669 CD/BD-A [75:56] Reviewed as 24/192 flacs. Previous review: [John Quinn](#) (Recording of the Month)





We may bitch about some labels' tiresome tendency to plunder their back catalogues. However, remastering old recordings – rather than simply reissuing them – is another matter entirely. True, this can be a hit-and-miss affair, but when it's properly done the sonic gains are a revelation. This Steinberg/Boston coupling, almost fifty years old, is no exception. I [reviewed](#) it as a 24/96 UMG download from Linn (no longer available) and was sufficiently impressed to make that remaster a Recording of the Month.

Now it's been tweaked again and released on Blu-ray Audio, in both stereo and surround. I've been listening to the two-channel, 24/192 mix, which I didn't think would be much of an advance on the earlier high-res version. Seconds into the Strauss, I realised I was wrong. Remember when CDs first appeared, and critics spoke of a veil being removed from the music? Well, several appear to have been lifted here, revealing so much nuance and detail. Not only that, it all sounds so airy and effortless.

Equally astonishing is the *feel* of this *Zarathustra*, which, at times, made me think I was hearing it for the very first time. Goodness, Steinberg really makes the strings sing and Strauss's colours glow with renewed lustre. One doesn't just listen to this performance, one revels in it. And, if anything, the partnering *Planets* is even finer, the menacing timps of *Mars* uniquely terrifying, the percussion superbly projected. More important, all the felicities of this much-played score, so often obscured, rise, Phoenix-like, from the mix. I listen to high-res music every day, so I know how rewarding modern recordings can be; that said, good analogue originals, sensitively remastered, can be just as impressive. Then again, it's a process that depends on a superior source, and this classic was always one of those.

Simply astounding. [DM]

[Vinyl enthusiasts: it's also available on LP (**4798518**), though at the same price as the BD-A I know which I would choose. BW.]

HUGO ALFVÉN (1872-1960)

Midsommarvaka (Midsummer Vigil), Op.19 Swedish Rhapsody No.1 [13:31]

Upsala-rapsodi (Upsala Rhapsody), Op.24 Swedish Rhapsody No.2 [10:41]

Dalarapsodi (Dalecarlian Rhapsody), Op.47 Swedish Rhapsody No.3 21:51]

En skärgårdssägen, Op.20 (A Legend of the Skerries) [18:23]

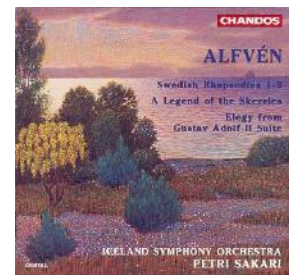
King Gustav Adolf II Op.49: Elegy [5:31]

Iceland Symphony Orchestra/Petri Sakari

rec. Haskolabio University Hall, Reykjavik, Iceland, October 1993. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless download with pdf booklet from chandos.net.

CHANDOS CHAN9313 [69:57]



Midsommarvaka (Midsummer Vigil), Op.19 Swedish Rhapsody No.1 [13:30]

Upsala-rapsodi (Upsala Rhapsody), Op.24 Swedish Rhapsody No.2 [9:52]

Dalarapsodi (Dalecarlian Rhapsody), Op.47 Swedish Rhapsody No.3 [21:26]

En skärgårdssägen, Op.20 (A Legend of the Skerries) [16:11]

Suite from *Bergakungen* (The Mountain King) [15:00]

Stockholm Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/Neeme Järvi

rec. Stockholm Concert Hall, Sweden, 1987-1995. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com.

BIS-CD-725 [77:00]

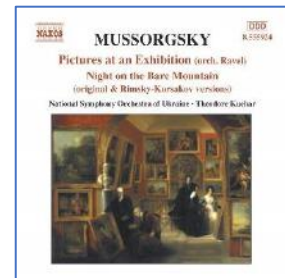




Midsummer's Day will be over by the time that you read this, but two almost identical programmes including Alfvén's music to celebrate what Matthew Arnold called 'the high mid-summer pomps' remain relevant for the rest of the summer. Each opens with the familiar *Midsummer Vigil* and contains the other two Swedish Rhapsodies. The BIS CD gathers together the fillers from their recordings of Alfvén's symphonies (**BIS-CD-1478**); if you have the specially priced 5-CD set of these, you already have all the music on BIS-725.

You can hardly go wrong with either of these: choose according to your preference of coupling. Neither is available in 24-bit sound but both sound very well.

The original version of **Mussorgsky's *Night on the Bare Mountain***, now mostly heard in Rimsky-Korsakov's arrangement, was specifically linked to pagan midsummer goings-on with the title *St John's Night on the Bare Mountain*. It's instructive to compare the two versions on a Naxos release mainly devoted to the Ravel orchestration of *Pictures from an Exhibition*, where the Ukraine National Symphony Orchestra is conducted by Theodore Kuchar (**8.555924**). Like Steve Arloff – [review](#) – I found myself preferring the longer original in these fine performances, as streamed, with pdf booklet, from [Naxos Music Library](#).



I'm not sure when the **Vienna Philharmonic Summer Night Concert** became almost as important as the New Year Concert. The 2018 concert, on 31 May, is already available on CD and as a download (Sony **19075833992**) and can be streamed, with booklet, from [Naxos Music Library](#). This year the music is mostly by Italian composers or on an Italian theme but, this being Vienna, inevitably there's Strauss to conclude the evening in the form of Johann II's *Wiener Blut* waltz. Valery Gergiev conducts, and Anna Netrebko (soprano) contributes. The DVD, filmed outside the Schönbrunn Palace, is due in early July 2018. Very enjoyable.



Ralph VAUGHAN WILIAMS (1872-1958)

Mass in g minor (1920-21) [25:55]

Te Deum in G (1928) [7:44]

O vos omnes (1922) [5:59]

Antiphon 'Let all the World in every corner sing' (*Five Mystical Songs*) (1911) [3:15]

Rhosymedre (1920) [4:40]

O taste and see (1952) [1:46]

Prayer to the Father of Heaven (1948) [5:39]

O, clap your hands (1920) [3:20]

Lord, thou hast been our refuge (1921) [9:17]

Joseph Wicks (organ), David Blackadder (trumpet)

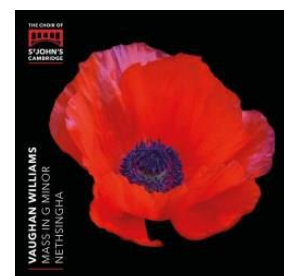
The Choir of St John's College, Cambridge/Andrew Nethsingha

rec. 2017, Chapel of St John's College, Cambridge

Texts and English translations included

Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#).

SIGNUM CLASSICS SIGCD541 [67:32] For purchase details please see [review by John Quinn](#).



John Quinn’s enthusiasm – link above – is far from unique. All I need add is that this fine recording once again demonstrates that VW’s proclaimed atheism was more akin to Hardy’s Christian agnosticism and that older recordings of the Mass, directed by Richard Hickox (Chandos **CHAN9984/CHSA5003**, with Symphony No.4, download only) and Stephen Darlington (Nimbus **NI5083**, with sacred and secular songs – [review](#)), are not superseded. (The Regis reissue of the performance by the Holst Singers seems to have fallen by the way, even as a download).

David DIAMOND (1915-2005)

Rounds for String Orchestra (1944) [15:28]

Music for Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* (1947) [22:20]

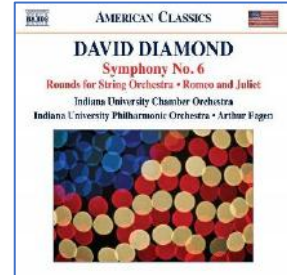
Symphony No. 6 (1951-1954)* [27:10]

Indiana University Chamber Orchestra, Indiana University Philharmonic Orchestra/Arthur Fagen

rec. 2016-2017, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, Bloomington, USA

*World premiere recording

NAXOS AMERICAN CLASSICS 8.559842 [65:00] Reviewed as a 16-bit press download. Pdf booklet included. Previous review and purchase details: [Rob Barnett](#)



CD available from			
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In the past I’ve had good reason to praise Naxos’s American Classics series, not least because it’s introduced me to so much fine music. Previous instalments in the David Diamond strand – the ex-Delos issues with Gerard Schwarz and the Seattle Symphony – are no exception. This album, like so many before it, contains works that are entirely new to me; ditto these players and their conductor. And, although Naxos releases aren’t quite the super bargains they used to be, they are still cheap enough to tempt listeners who want to try something new.

Rounds for String Orchestra, in three movements, is certainly a bracing introduction to this collection, partly because the recording is very bright and upfront. This student band, clearly committed, digs deep, literally and figuratively; ensemble is clean and rhythms are well sprung, too. The skill of these players shouldn’t come as a surprise, as I’ve long admired the very high quality of US college groups. And while Diamond displays less formality in *Romeo and Juliet*, there’s still a clarity, a strength of outline, which suggests a fierce and forceful intellect. That said, this rigorous substrate is overlaid with a degree of lyricism which, in turn, admits a wider range of expressive possibilities.

The Sixth Symphony, written seven years later, takes no prisoners. In three taut, sinewy movements, it calls for a hard-edged delivery that some may find a tad relentless after a while. Fortunately, Diamond doesn’t overwork his material, a distinct advantage in such a tightly argued context. As before, the playing is highly focused, the conducting equally so. Rob Barnett found the overall sound of this release pleasing enough, but I longed for more natural balances and a deeper, wider soundstage. Then again, there are no rival recordings, so this will have to do for now.

Challenging stuff; not without rewards, though. **[DM]**

Sir Richard Rodney BENNETT (1936-2012)

Orchestral Works, Vol. 2

Concerto for Stan Getz (1990) [21:36]

Symphony No.2 in one movement (1967) [18:21]

Serenade for Small Orchestra (1976) [12:36]

Partita (1995) [16:26]

Howard McGill (tenor saxophone)



BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/John Wilson
 rec. City Halls, Glasgow; 21–23 November 2017. DSD.
 Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from chandos.net.
CHANDOS CHSA5212 SACD [69:25]



See also reviews of Volume 1 (**CHSA5202**) from [Nick Barnard](#) and [Gary Higginson](#).

Who better to record the music of Richard Rodney Bennett than John Wilson? There's a strong connection between the two: the collage on the cover of the new SACD was designed by Bennett for Wilson when he moved home in 2011. I'm particularly pleased to see the Concerto for Stan Getz at the head of Volume 2, a work which Wilson conducted at Bennett's 70th birthday concert in the Queen Elizabeth Hall in March 2006. The soloist then was Andy Scott and the orchestra the BBC Concert Orchestra but the Chandos team rise to the occasion just as well.

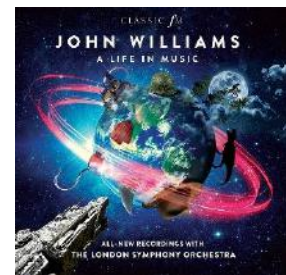
Apart from the concerto the rest of the music is not quite as immediate in appeal as that on Volume 1 – and much less so than Bennett's film music¹ – but it's all worth persevering with in these idiomatic performances.

I'm still mystified by the fact that, as ordered directly from Chandos – or from dealers – the SACD is significantly less expensive than the 24-bit download, with the surround-sound download almost twice the price of the physical product. Or why at least one download provider can undercut Chandos by £2 for 16- and 24-bit downloads. Many years ago, I chose not to read PPE but I can't imagine that a knowledge of economics would have helped to understand this conundrum.

¹ Recorded by Rumon Gamba and the BBC Phil on Chandos **CHAN9867**. Also on the USB collection **CHUSB0020**, the contents of 29 CDs in both lossless and mp3 sound for £145, and on **CHUSB0003**, equivalent to 14 CDs for £75.

John WILLIAMS (b.1932) *A Life in Music*

Main Title from *Star Wars* [6:07]
 Theme from *Jurassic Park* [6:01]
 Hedwig's Theme from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* [5:08]
 The Raiders March from *Raiders of the Lost Ark* [5:40]
 Flying Theme from *E.T.* [4:05]
 Theme from *Schindler's List* [4:05]
 The Flight to Neverland from *Hook* [4:56]
 Hymn to The Fallen from *Saving Private Ryan* [6:26]
 Shark Theme from *Jaws* [3:12]
 Superman March from *Superman* [4:40]
 London Symphony Orchestra/Gavin Greenaway
DECCA CLASSIC FM CFMD60 [50:20]



Dan Morgan's review of *John Williams at the Movies* may well have appeared by the time that you read this. If not, look out for his enthusiastic appreciation of Dallas Winds directed by Jerry Junkin in sensational performances on a spectacular recording, available on SACD or as a high def download (**Reference Recordings FR-142**). It might seem bad timing for Decca and ClassicFM to bring out their *A Life in Music* at the same time but there is, in fact, very little duplication: with a full 86-piece orchestra

at his disposal, film music specialist Gavin Greenaway is able to give us a different and very enjoyable selection. The recording is big-screen but that's how it sounded in the cinema.

Apologies for the brevity of detail in the heading: there was none with the streamed version to which I listened, and I gather there's not much with the CD.

Memory Lane

In late June 1963, having finished finals I started the 170 miles home with the latest copy of *Gramophone* on the passenger seat, waiting to be flicked through half-way home in a lay-by near Lichfield. Though the number of releases in the summer months then was much diminished, I remember noting how many fine recordings were reviewed, something of an oasis in a dry season, and wondering if I could afford even a fraction of them.

Looking back now, I'm surprised to see how many made it through to the CD era and are still not only available today but well worth at the very least checking out:

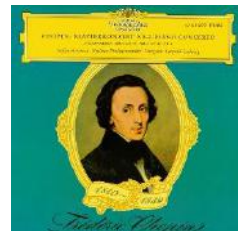
BACH Violin Concertos: David and Igor Oistrakh, VSO/David Oistrakh, RPO/Eugene Goossens (DGG SLPM138820). These classic performances remain readily available on a budget-price 2-CD set with Beethoven, Brahms and Tchaikovsky. (DG Originals **4474272**). The 2-violin concerto was also reissued by Alto, with Vivaldi concertos, and I was amazed to hear how well the performances had worn, still meriting RF's 'tremendously good' – [DL News 2016/4](#). Available to stream from [Naxos Music Library](#). For all the virtues of the recent DG release of brilliant teenager Daniel Lozakovich's recording of the two solo concertos and Partita No.2 (**4799372** – review pending), I wonder if that will still be around in 55 years.



A mere eight-minute fragment remains available of Karl Förster's recording of Bach's 'Hunt' Cantata, *Was mir behagt*, BWV208, with Fritz Wunderlich and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau among the soloists (ASD534, with Telemann 'Canary' Cantata). (*Fritz Wunderlich, die Tenor-Legende*, Warner **9029592154**, 3 CDs, around £13.50, stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)). This recording of Telemann's cantata about a poor old dead canary has expired without trace.



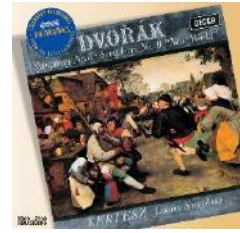
CHOPIN Piano Concerto No.2; Polonaises No.3 (Military) and No.6 (Heroic): Stefan Askenase; BPO/Leopold Ludwig (DGG SLPM138791). The same, short-value, coupling remains available on DG **4779082**, download only (budget price) or stream from [Naxos Music Library](#). I own an earlier CD incarnation of this recording, but I have to admit that I haven't played it for some time. Chopin is not my favourite composer, though I like the concertos – but preferably as recorded with greater power by Rubinstein (Sony **88697087542**, 3 CDS, super-budget price).



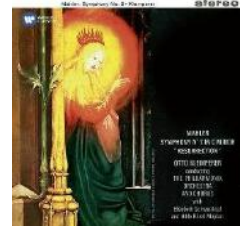
Among the reissues in the same month DGG (as it then was) released Askenase's 1957 recording of Chopin's *Polonaises* Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 9 at mid-price (Heliodor 478424). These recordings, more grist to Askenase's mill than the concertos, remain available as part of a box set of all his 1950s recordings – mainly Chopin, but with other composers, too. (DG Original Masters **4775242**, 7-CDs, around £32, or stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)). It's worth noting that this Heliodor reissue cost 21/-, about the lowest price for LPs at the time, but the equivalent in today's values of more than the 7-CD box set.



DVOŘÁK *Symphony No.8; Scherzo capriccioso*: LSO/István Kertész (Decca SXL6044). There's no need to point out that the Kertész recordings of the Dvořák symphonies retain their classic status. No.8 and No.9 (*New World*) remain available in very fine transfers on a single mid-price reissue (Decca Originals **4757517**, download only) which can be streamed from [Naxos Music Library](#). The complete symphonies, with fillers, on six CDs are a bargain for around £30 (Decca **4300462**). Only Rafael Kubelík scores more highly in these works.



MAHLER *Symphony No.2 (Resurrection)*: Soloists; Philharmonia Orchestra and Choir/Otto Klemperer (Columbia **SAX2473/4**). In the rivalry between Klemperer and Walter, it was the former's Brahms and the latter's Mahler that won the day for me. In fact, a friend and I found both recordings of the *Resurrection Symphony* in a sale soon after the release of the Klemperer, so we had both between us. Faced with the same choice today I'm still not sure which I would go for, especially as the Klemperer, with attractive soloists in Schwarzkopf and Rössl-Majdan, is now available at an attractive price from Warner (Original Jacket Reissues **2564609029**, around £7.50; stream earlier EMI GROC release from [Naxos Music Library](#)). The Walter Mahler symphonies are available only to download for around £38/£50 (mp3/lossless); Symphonies Nos.1 and 2 can be streamed from [Naxos Music Library](#).



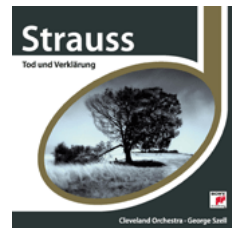
RAMEAU *Pygmalion* (almost complete); *Les Indes Galantes* (excerpts): Soloists; Lamoureux CO/Marcel Couraud (DGG SAPM198202) remains available as part of a 50-CD DG set *The Golden Age of Archiv Production* (**4795555**, around £120) and can be streamed from [Naxos Music Library](#). Perhaps the performances now sound a little less stylish than in 1963 but they would be well worth issuing singly were it not for the existence of a Veritas twofer of *Pygmalion* directed by Hervé Niquet (**5220272**, with *Le Temple de la Gloire* excerpts and the *Grands Motets*, around £8) and fine recordings by Christophe Rousset and William Christie which I [compared](#) in 2017.



SPOHR *Nonet*: Fine Arts Quartet, NY Wind Quintet (Saga **XID5147**), then costing 21/-, would be reduced in price a few months later to a then unbelievable 12/6 (£0.63). Saga LPs were somewhat given to noisy surfaces but, as I recall, this was one of the better offerings. The very enjoyable performance remains available on Alto **ALC1266**, at super-budget price, with the Spohr Octet (Vienna Octet) and his Clarinet Concerto No.1 (Gervase de Peyer; LSO/Colin Davis). That's an even better bargain now than the LP was then – [review](#). Stream from [Qobuz](#) but be aware that the download costs much the same as the CD.



Richard STRAUSS *Tod und Verklärung*: Cleveland Orchestra/George Szell was reissued, albeit still at full price, coupled with the *Adagio* from Mahler's Tenth Symphony, on Columbia **SAX2488**. It's now a rather expensive download on Sony **G010000961672L** at over £11 for lossless, coupled as originally with *Don Juan* and *Till Eulenspiegel* – stream from [Naxos Music Library](#). It's slightly better value coupled



with the *Symphonia Domestica* and *Dance of the Seven Veils* on Sony **G010001079751E**, again download only; also available to stream from [Naxos Music Library](#). Szell's Strauss remains well worth hearing.



Those looking for a bargain Szell recording will find his 1960 Schumann *Symphony No.3 (Rhenish)* online for as little as £1.99 in a decent, if slightly muddy, transfer from Four Seasons Records. That's the performance which, for its sheer energy, earned a reviewer's 'That's Szell that was', a reference to a then current TV advertisement for Shell petrol. The official Sony 2-CD set of Schumann's four

symphonies and *Manfred Overture* is now download only. (**G0100012222880**, around £10/£13, mp3/lossless; stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)).

Did I buy any of them? Only the Saga – all that I could afford – but I did listen to the others courtesy of the University Record Library when I returned for my post-grad year in October.

A post-script on prices

I couldn't end without saying something about prices. It's not just that downloads seem sometimes to be illogically priced by comparison with the physical CD or SACD – more of that anon – there's also a serious disparity even among the dealers to whom we give purchase links. In one case I've not listed one dealer because they are asking almost three times the norm for a 'special import' of a CD generally available in the UK. In other cases, I can only recommend that you make comparisons: the boot is not always on the same foot.

It's no longer the case that UK dealers are asking so much more than their US counterparts, as a comparison between Amazon UK and Amazon US will reveal – use the same hyperlink but choose amazon.com.

I can see no reason at all why some dealers charge more for 24-bit downloads than for the equivalent SACD, where one exists, and even more, as much as £19.99, for surround-sound. Eclassical.com are a very praiseworthy exception here: most new releases, from their own label BIS and others, are offered initially in 24-bit for the same reasonable price as 16-bit, usually very competitive with the SACD equivalent. Even after the limited offer, 24-bit surround, where available, is always the same price as 24-bit stereo.

Least explicable of all is the fact that at least one download and streaming provider regularly asks £12 or more for new releases in 16-bit, with the Brendel Schumann Piano Concerto reviewed above costing £13.49 in CD-quality 16-bit, when the CD can be found for as little as £11.25 – a regular price, not a special offer. It's also on offer from another dealer at £17.09, thus making my other point about shopping around.

Those looking for a bargain should keep an eye on Chandos's [Sale CDs](#) – £2.50 each plus p&p – and Hyperion's ['Please buy me'](#) slot.

At the time of writing Chandos was offering Bax Orchestral Works (CHAN9879), Enescu Symphony No.3, Symphony No.1 and Suite No.3 (CHAN9633, CHAN9507), Salieri *Falstaff* (CHAN9613, 2 CDs for £5), Elgar *The Black Knight* (CHAN9436), Holst Orchestral Works (CHAN9420) and Malcolm Arnold Symphonies 1 and 2; 3 and 4; 5 and 6 (CHAN9335; 9290; 9385) and that's just from the first two dozen or so. Most of these have been reissued and recommended for much more than £2.50 each. I sense a special article coming on.

Hyperion often have Tallis Scholars recordings on Gimell at half price: currently they have the *Requiem* 2-CD set (CDGIM205: Victoria, Duarte Lôbo, Alonso Lobo and Cardoso) for £5.88 on CD or download. *Josquin and his Contemporaries* (Hyperion CDA67183) is even less expensive at £5.25.