

**Second Thoughts and Short Reviews: Winter 2019-2020/1**  
**By Brian Wilson and Johan van Veen [JV]**

Reviews are by Brian Wilson unless otherwise stated.

Autumn 2019/2 is [here](#).

**Index** [page numbers in brackets: conversion to pdf may displace later pages slightly]

- ALDRICH** Sacred Choral Music – Christ Church, Oxford\_Convivium [19]  
**BACH** Complete Secular Cantatas – Suzuki\_BIS [20]  
**BACH, KUHNAU, SCHELLE** – Christmas in Leipzig – Solomon’s Knot\_Sony [10]  
**BEETHOVEN** Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 5 – Helmchen/Manze\_Alpha [27]  
**BRUCKNER** Symphonies Nos. 1 and 9 – Abbado\_Accentus [27]  
**CHARPENTIER, Marc-Antoine** Motets for Double Choir – Amsterdam Baroque/Koopman-Erato Veritas [19]  
**CHAVEZ** Symphony No.2 (see **COPLAND**) [32]  
**COPLAND** Symphony No.3; **CHAVEZ** Symphony No.2 – Orchestra of the Americas\_Linn [32]  
**DANDRIEU** *Magnificats et Noël*s – Robins\_Château de Versailles [15]  
**DOHNÁNYI** Piano Quintets – Hamelin; Takács Quartet\_Hyperion [30]  
**DVOŘÁK** Complete Symphonies – Staatskapelle Berlin/Suitner\_Brilliant Classics [30]  
**GRAUPNER** *Magnificat* (see **KEISER**) [15]  
**GRUDENCZ** - Fifteenth-century music from Central Europe - La Morra \_Glossa [18]  
- music by Grudencz also in *Filia Sion* – Vox Clamantis\_ECM New Series (with **HILDEGARD of Bingen**, etc.) [17]  
**HANDEL** *Messiah* – Kirkby, Hogwood, etc\_Decca [20]  
- Christopher Hogwood recordings\_Decca [21]  
**HAYDN** *Missa Cellensis* – Akademie für Alte Musik, Berlin\_Harmonia Mundi [24]  
**KEISER** *Dialogus von der Geburt Christi* – Rastatter Hofkapelle\_Carus (with **GRAUPNER** *Magnificat*) [15]  
**KUHNAU** – Christmas in Leipzig (see **BACH**) [10]  
**LUTOSŁAWSKI** Polish Carols, etc. - Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra\_Naxos [34]  
**MESSIAEN** *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte Trinité* – Winpenny\_Naxos [17]  
**Recommended** **MOZART** Piano Sonatas Nos. 7, 11, 15 and 18 – Christian Blackshaw\_Wigmore Hall Live [26]  
- Serenades Nos. 10 and 11 – EU Chamber O\_Divine Art [26]  
**PROKOFIEV** *Alexander Nevsky* – SNO/Neeme Järvi; Danish RSO/Kitajenko\_both Chandos [31]  
- Violin Concerto No.1, Symphony No.3, *Chout* (complete) – LPO/Lazarev\_LPO [32]  
**SCHELLE** – Christmas in Leipzig (see **BACH**) [10]  
- Christmas Music – Concerto Palatino, Kölner Akademie\_CPO [12]  
**SCHÜTZ** Christmas Story – Yale Schola Cantorum\_Hyperion [8]  
**SHOSTAKOVICH** *The Gadfly* – USSR Cinema SO\_Beulah (with **WALTON**) [33]  
**TCHAIKOVSKY** The Nutcracker – Covent Garden/Wordsworth\_Opus Arte DVD [28]  
**TELEMANN** Christmas Cantatas III – Kölner Akademie\_CPO [13]  
**WALTON** *Henry V* – Olivier/Walton\_Beulah (with **SHOSTAKOVICH**) [33]  
**WILLIAMS** Music from the *Star Wars* Saga – Slovak National Symphony Orchestra\_Sony download [34]  
**ZEIDLER** *Missa pastoritia* (Christmas Mass); **HABEL** *Sinfonia*\_DUX [25]
- Advent Carols** – King’s College, London\_Delphian [4]  
**Baroque Christmas: Sanctus** – Ex Cathedra\_Alto [14]  
**Christmas** – Gesualdo Six\_Hyperion [5]  
**Christmas at St George’s Windsor**\_Hyperion [7]  
**Christmas Concertos** – Hogwood\_Presto CD [21]  
**Christmas with the Shepherds** – Marian Consort \_Delphian [1]

*Clair de Noël* – Salzedo Harp Duo\_Azica [13]  
**A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols: The Centenary Service** – King’s College, Cambridge\_King’s [10]  
 - 1978 service (?) – King’s College, Cambridge\_Warner [10]  
*Filia Sion* – Vox Clamantis\_ECM [17]  
*Machet die Tore weit: Advent and Christmas in Halle and Leipzig*\_DG Archiv [11]  
*Magnificat: Christmas in Leipzig* (see **BACH**) [10]  
*Noëls Baroques a Versailles* – Centre de Musique de Versailles\_Château de Versailles [16]  
**Recommended** *Nowell synge we bothe al and som* – Gothic Voices\_Linn [3]  
**Now may we singen: Music for Advent and Christmas** – Westminster School\_Signum [7]  
*Nuit de Noël* – Various\_Alpha [4]  
*Scintillate, amicæ stellæ* – Cappella Artemisiae\_Tactus [6]  
**The Secret Life of Carols: 800 Years of Christmas Music** – The Telling\_First Hand Records [14]  
**A Spanish Nativity** – stile antico\_Harmonia Mundi [5]  
*Weihnachten in Leipzig* – Various\_DG download [11]  
*Wie schön singt uns der Engel Schar* – Music from the time of Prætorius\_DG Archiv [11]

\*\*\*

## Christmas

The seasonal recordings have been coming in for some time. Some have already been covered in earlier editions. **NB:** Johan van Veen has added to the review of *Nowell synge we bothe al and som*, strengthening my recommendation of what was already my Christmas recording of this year.

### In [Autumn 2019/1](#):



#### *Christmas with the Shepherds*

Jean MOUTON (bef. 1459-1522)

*Quæramus cum pastoribus* [5:41]

Cristóbal de MORALES (c.1505-1553)

*Missa Quæramus cum pastoribus: Kyrie* [5:28]; *Gloria* [6:30]

Jean MOUTON

*Puer natus est nobis* [7:15]

Cristóbal de MORALES

*Missa Quæramus cum pastoribus: Credo* [11:31]

Jean MOUTON

*Noe, noe, noe, psallite noe* [4:41]

Cristóbal de MORALES

*Missa Quæramus cum pastoribus: Sanctus & Benedictus* [5:52]

*Pastores dicite, quidnam vidistis?* [4:02]

*Missa Quæramus cum pastoribus: Agnus Dei* [6:26]

Annibale STABILE (c. 1535-1595)

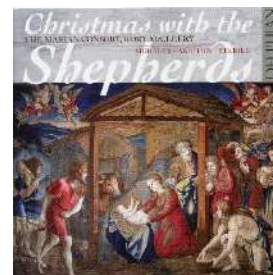
*Quæramus cum pastoribus* [5:22]

The Marian Consort/Rory McCleery

rec. 13-15 January 2014, Chapel of Merton College, Oxford. DDD

Latin texts and English translations included – but not with download.

DELPHIAN DCD34145 [62:55]



This remains as fine a recording as when I first praised it and when John Quinn and Glyn Pursglove did so in greater detail – [review](#) – [review](#). There’s no booklet with the download, or with any other download of this recording that I can find, and that is a problem, an all too common one.

### In [Autumn 2019/2](#):



**Nowell synge we bothe al and som**

A Feast of Christmas Music in Medieval England

**Advent:**

*Veni, O sapientia* – Anon (?15th century) [2:51]

*Angelus ad virginem* – Anon (14th century) [3:06]

*Alma redemptoris mater: As I lay* – Anon (15th century) [2:29]

**John DUNSTAPLE (c. 1390–1453)** *Gaude virgo salutata / Gaude virgo singularis / Virgo mater comprobatis / Ave gemma caeli luminarium* [4:37]

Nowell, nowell, nowell – Anon (15th century) [3:53]

**John COOKE (c. 1385–1442)** *Ave regina caelorum* [2:14]

*In natali novi regis* – Anon (12th century) [2:38]

Alleluya: A nywe werk is come on honde – Anon (15th century) [3:50]

Mervele not, Joseph – Anon (15th century) [4:13]

Edi be thu, heven queene – Anon (13th century) [4:03]

*O sapientia* – Gregorian chant [0:45]

**Walter FRYE (d. 1475)** *Ave regina caelorum* [2:36]

**Christmas**

Lullay, lullay: Als I lay – Anon (14th century) [9:31]

*Ecce, quod natura* – Anon (15th century) [3:43]

*Ave Rex angelorum* – Anon (15th century) [4:11]

**QUELDRYK (fl. c. 1400)** *Gloria* [2:12]

Ther is no rose of swych vertu – Anon (15th century) [3:06]

*Benedicite Deo* – Anon (15th century) [4:11]

**Leonel POWER (d. 1445)** *Sanctus* [4:14]

*Resonet, intonet* – Anon (12th century) [2:02]

Nowell synge we bothe al and som – Anon (15th century) [1:59]

*Puer natus est nobis* – Gregorian chant [0:59]

Nowell: Owt of your slepe – Anon (15th century) [1:23]

*Cantate domino* – Gregorian chant [0:41]

Nowell: Now man is bryghter – Anon (15th century) [1:25]

Gothic Voices

rec. Boxgrove Priory, Chichester, UK, 27–30 October 2018. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

Reviewed as lossless (24/96 wav) press preview. [Download from linnrecords.com](http://www.linnrecords.com).

**LINN CKD591** [77:08]



This has to be my Advent and Christmas **Recommended** choice this year.

If you want something from the medieval period with a touch more earthiness, try *Thys Yool*, a recording by the Martin Best Ensemble reissued in 2017 and still very enjoyable 30 years on from its making (**Nimbus 7103** – [review](#) – [Christmas Past and Present](#)).

**NB:** Johan van Veen has also reviewed the Linn recording:

If you are looking for something special to listen to during Christmas time, and are open to very ancient songs, this disc is something you will enjoy. Gothic Voices is an ensemble that specialises in music of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance periods. It often comes up with original programmes, and that is the case here too. The basic idea is that the modern carol evening is transported to the fifteenth century. The programme includes recent pieces – from the 15th century, that is – and pieces from earlier centuries which were still known and sung at that time.

Most of the music is anonymous, but we also find some of the best-known composers of the early Renaissance, such as John Dunstaple and Walter Frye. The texts are either in Latin or in the vernacular,

and the singers use historical pronunciation. Whereas some pieces were meant for liturgical performance, others are the product of 'popular' culture. They vary strongly in character: some are rather introverted, where others are quite exuberant. A good example of the latter is the anonymous *Owt of your slepe*. The four singers in the ensemble are excellent and make a real feast of this programme. It is a nice mixture of more or less familiar and little-known pieces. This is one of the most imaginative and interesting Christmas discs I have heard in recent years. [JV]

\*

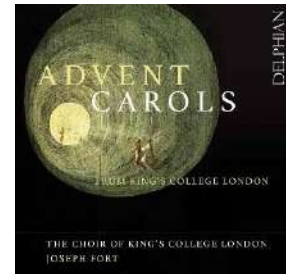


Alpha have raided their back catalogue and that of Zig-Zag Territoires, also part of the Outhere group, for a 2-CD collection *Nuit de Noël* (Alpha 571 [63:28 + 68:42]). The first CD, *Noël Traditional* opens with some reverse engineering of French Christmas music by baroque composers with the original words overlaid on the instrumental arrangements. I see less point, however, in the second CD of random snippets, not all by any means related to the season.



### Advent Carols

Advent Prose: Drop down, ye heavens, from above [4:46]  
**Giovanni Pierluigi da PALESTRINA (1525–1594)** *Canite tuba* [5:10]  
 Antiphon: *O Sapientia* [0:47]  
**Philip MOORE (b. 1943)** *Sancte et sapienter* [4:10]



Antiphon: *O Adonai* [0:50]

**Orlande de LASSUS (1530/2–1594)** *Ad te Domine levavi* [4:05]

Antiphon: *O Radix Jesse* [0:49]

**Joel RUST (b. 1989)** *O Radix Jesse* [4:56]

Antiphon: *O Clavis David* [1:00]

**William BYRD (1539/40–1623)** *Tollite portas* [1:45]

'Helmsley' melody noted by **Thomas OLIVERS (1725–1799)**, arr. **Joseph Fort** Lo! he comes with clouds descending [4:14]

Antiphon: *O Oriens* [0:44]

**Cecilia McDOWALL (b. 1951)** *Advent Moon* [5:00]

Antiphon: *O Rex Gentium* [0:46]

**George BENJAMIN (b. 1960)** 'Twas in the year that King Uzziah died [7:09]

Antiphon: *O Emmanuel* [0:45]

**William BYRD** *Lætentur cæli* [2:37]

'Veni Emmanuel' melody, said to be French, adapted by **Thomas HELMORE (1811–90)**, arr. **Joseph Fort** O come, O come, Emmanuel [4:51]

Antiphon: *O Virgo virginum* [1:02]

**Kerensa BRIGGS (b. 1991)** *Magnificat* (Gloucester Service) [6:27]

**HILDEGARD of Bingen (1098–1179)** *O frondens virga* [2:56]

Choir of King's College London/Joseph Fort

Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [chandos.net](http://chandos.net).

rec. 8-10 April 2019, All Hallows', Gospel Oak, London. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

**DELPHIAN DCD34226** [64:56]

This year's Advent offering from Delphian comes from King's College London. Their Advent Sunday service is very popular and this recording encapsulates the essence of it.



**A Spanish Nativity**

**Tomás Luis DE VICTORIA (1548-1611)**

*O magnum mysterium* [4:27]

**Francisco GUERRERO (1528-1599)**

*Beata Dei genitrix Maria* [6:57]

*A un niño llorando, villancico* [2:43]

**Alonso LOBO (1555-1617)**

*Missa Beata Dei genitrix Maria:*

*Kyrie; Gloria* [8:53]

**Mateo FLECHA 'El Viejo' (c1481-c1553)**

*El Jubilate, ensalada* [6:53]

**Alonso LOBO (1555-1617)**

*Missa Beata Dei genitrix Maria:*

*Credo* [7:38]

**Mateo FLECHA 'El Viejo'**

*Ríu ríu chíu, villancico* [2:56]

**Alonso LOBO (1555-1617)**

*Missa Beata Dei genitrix Maria:*

*Sanctus & Benedictus* [5:42]

**Pedro RIMONTE (1565-1627)**

*De la piel de sus ovejas* [3:53]

**Alonso LOBO (1555-1617)**

*Missa Beata Dei genitrix Maria:*

*Agnus Dei* [2:51]

**Cristóbal DE MORALES (c1500-1553)**

*Cum natus esset* [11:18]

stile antico

rec. March 2019, All Hallows' Church, Gospel Oak, London

Texts and translations included

Reviewed as 24/88.2 download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](http://eclassical.com).

**HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902312** [64:15]

A mixed reception from Johan van Veen and myself for this: the 'serious' items are excellent, but Stile Antico need to let their hair down more for the interspersed folksy bits.



**Christmas**

**Anon. Veni Emmanuel** [3:29]

**Michael PRÆTORIUS (1571-1621) Nun komm der heiden**

*Heiland* [2:44]

**Jonthan HARVEY (1939-2012) The Annunciation** [4:07]

**Thomas TALLIS (c.1505-1585) Videte miraculum** [10:32]

**Cheryl FRANCES-HOAD (b.1980) The promised light of life** [2:34]

**Anon. Gaudete** [1:59]

**Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958) The truth sent from above** [3:07]

**Michael PRÆTORIUS Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen** [3:08]

**Anon. Angelus ad virginem** [2:44]

**Gustav HOLST (1874-1934) Lullay my liking, H129, Op.34/2** [4:46]

**John RUTTER (b.1945) There is a flower** [3:56]

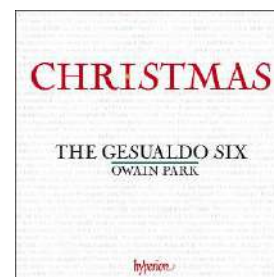
**Jakob HANDL (1550-1591) Canite tuba in Sion** [2:04]

**Anon. There is no rose** [2:58]

**Hans Leo HASSLER (1562-1612) Verbum caro factum est** [2:22]

**Anon. Coventry Carol** [2:55]

**Owain PARK (b.1993) On the infancy of our saviour** [4:30]





**Eleanor DALEY (b.1955)** Love came down at Christmas [5:29]  
**Anon.** *In dulci jubilo* [2:57]  
**Jonathan RATHBONE (b.1957)** The Oxen [3:13]  
**William James KIRKPATRICK (1838-1921)** Away in a Manger [2:41]  
**James Lord PIERPONT (1822-1893)** Jingle Bells [1:51]  
 The Gesualdo Six/Owain Park  
 rec. Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge, 3-5 January 2019. DDD.  
 Texts and translations included  
 Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [hyperion-records.co.uk](http://hyperion-records.co.uk)  
**HYPERION CDA68299** [74:17]

Beautiful performances – perhaps, a little too ‘perfect’ for some tastes.



**Scintillate, amicæ stellæ**  
**Il Natale nei conventi italiani tra Cinquecento e Seicento**  
 (Christmas in the Convents of 16th- and 17th-Century Italy)  
**Francesco Rognoni TAEGGIO (1570-1626)**  
*Puer Natus (Messa, salmi intieri e spezzate, 1610)* [3:07]  
**Agostino SODERINI (fl.1608)**

*O Maria (Sacracrum cantionum I, 1598)* [3:50]

**Rosa Giacinta BADALLA (1660-1710)**

*Scintillate Amicæ Stellæ (Motetti a voce sola, 1684)* [7:22]

**Domenico MASSENZIO (1586-1657)**

*Noè Noè (Sacri Motetti, Op.10, 1631)* [3:41]

*Magi Videntes Stellam (1631)* [2:26]

**Chiara Margarita COZZOLANI (1602-1678)**

*Ecce annuntio vobis (Concerti sacri, Op.2, 1642)* [7:47]

**Caterina ASSANDRA (1590-after 1618)**

*Hodie Christus (Motetti, Op.2, 1609, ed. Bruce Dickey)* [4:08]

**Gregorian Chant (1606 Venetian Antiphony):**

*Hodie nobis Cælorum Rex* [1:46]

**Andrea ROTA (1553-1597)**

*Hodie Christus natus est (Motectorum I, 1588)* [3:39]

**Tiburzio MASSAINO (1550-after 1608)**

*Quem vidistis Pastores? (Sacri cantus II, 1580)* [2:24]

**Sisto REINA (1623-after 1664)**

*Silentium (Fiorita corona di melodia celeste, 1660)* [5:50]

**Daniel SPEER (1636-1707)**

*O præclara Dies (Philomela angelica cantionum sacrarum, 1688)* [8:27]

**Giovanni Battista STRATA (fl.1609-1651)**

*O Maria che giubilante partoristi (Arie di musica, 1610)* [3:53]

**Gasparo CASATI (c.1610-1641)**

*Natus est Iesus (Terzo libro de sacri concerti, 1640)* [3:57]

**Maria Xaveria PERUCONA (1652-after 1709)**

*Ad Gaudia, ad Iubila (Sacri motetti, 1675)* [6:08]

**Isabella LEONARDA (1620-1704)**

*Gloria in Excelsis Deo (Motetti, con le litanie della Beata Vergine, Op.10, 1684)* [9:41]

Cappella Artemisia/Candace Smith

rec. S. Cristina della Fondazza Bologna, Italy, June 2011. DDD.

Texts not included but reportedly available from Tactus website.

**TACTUS TC280003** [79:12]



I summed this up in my [review](#) on the main pages with ‘Let this recording of music chiefly by female composers, for Christmas but enjoyable at any time, lead you to other similar collections by this ensemble’. You can find the CD purchase links there.

\*\*\*



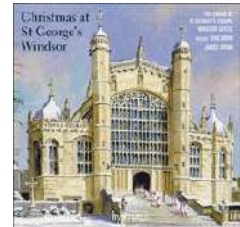
### Christmas at St George's Windsor

A sequence of music for Advent, Christmas & Epiphany

Luke Bond (organ)

St George's Chapel Windsor/James Vivian

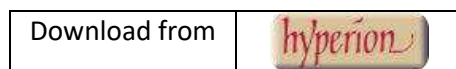
rec. 27 June 2018, St Matthew's Church, Northampton; 28-29 June 2018, All Hallows, Gospel Oak, London



Texts and translations included.

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

**HYPERION CDA68281** [70:11] For details and purchase links please see review by [Marc Rochester](#).



MR notes that the main title is slightly misleading, but in fairness the subtitle does say that this is music for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany – and the three have become conflated in our secular age, with the Magi of the Epiphany subsumed into Christmas, which itself starts long before even Advent Sunday, so that everyone is tired of it long before Twelfth Night. A local branch of a national hostelry proclaimed last year ‘Christmas begins on October 30 and ends on December 23’. Really?

Though St George's is a royal peculiar, it doesn't get the same recording opportunities as one might expect. I believe it's seven years since they offered a Christmas recording, and then with boys' voices only – [review](#). With a varied programme of the familiar and unfamiliar, I'm not surprised that this has been nominated the Christmas choice by BBC Music Magazine – it could easily have been mine, too.



### Now may we sing

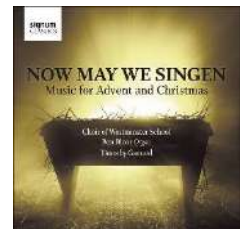
Music for Advent and Christmas

**Matthew MARTIN:** *Novo profusi gaudio* [3:54]

**Judith WEIR:** Drop down, ye heavens, from above [2:00]

**Henry John GAUNTLETT:** Once in Royal David's city [5:11]

**Sir James MacMILLAN:** The Strathclyde Motets: O Radiant



Dawn [4:23]

**Ghislaine REECE-TRAPP:** Alleluia! A New Work is come on Hand [1:50]

**Andrew CARTER:** *Mary's Magnificat* [3:30]

**Sir John TAVENER:** *Ex Maria Virgine: Ave rex angelorum* [3:10]

**Trad.:** It came upon the Midnight Clear (adapt. **Arthur Sullivan**, Arr. **David Willcocks**) [3:27]

**Richard ALLAIN:** Lullay, myn lyking [5:08]

**Celia McDOWALL:** Now may we sing [3:14]

**John RUTTER:** The King of Blis [3:56]

**Trad.:** O Little Town of Bethlehem (arr. **Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**, Desc. **Timothy Garrard**) [3:45]

**Elizabeth POSTON:** Jesus Christ the Apple Tree [3:26]

**Roxana PANUFNIK:** Angels Sing: No.1 – Jesus Christ is Born [1:13]

**Richard WILBERFORCE:** My Musick shine [5:07]

**Felix MENDELSSOHN:** Hark! the herald angels sing [3:30]

**William MATHIAS:** Sir Christèmas [1:33]

**Alexander CAMPKIN:** Sleep, Holy Babe [4:40]

**Trad.:** O Come, All Ye Faithful (arr. **David Willcocks**) [4:08]

Ben Bloor (organ)

Westminster School Choir/Timothy Garrard

rec. January 2018, Keble College Chapel, Oxford. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

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

**SIGNUM SIGCD595** [67:11]

This recording was actually released just before Christmas 2018 but has reappeared in the 2019 lists. Rob Barnett thought there was ‘something for everybody’ – [review](#). I understand that the CD was not ready last year – RB’s links would have led you to downloads – though I obtained 24/96 files and liked what I heard – [review](#).



### Heinrich SCHÜTZ (1585-1672)

*Hodie Christus natus est*, SWV456 [5:48]

*Das Wort ward Fleisch und wohnt unter uns*, SWV385 [3:42]

*Der Engel sprach zu den Hirten*, SWV395 [3:09]

*Ave Maria, gratia plena*, SWV334 [6:52]

*Ein Kind ist uns geboren*, SWV384 [3:29]

*Magnificat Anima mea Dominum*, SWV468 [10:44]

*Weihnachts-Historie* (The Christmas Story), SWV435 [37:19]

Yale Schola Cantorum/David Hill

rec. St Thomas’ Episcopal Church, New Haven, CT, USA. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

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

**HYPERION CDA68315** [71:03]



CD available from	
Download from	

When Roger Norrington’s recording of Schütz’s Easter Oratorio, *Historia der Auferstehung*, and the Christmas Story, *Weihnachts-Historie*, with the Schütz Choir were released in the 1970s, they were hailed as groundbreaking; there was so very little of the composer’s music then, and what there was often came in only decent performances. Yet, even then, Peter Pears (Easter) and Ian Partridge (Christmas) as the Evangelist didn’t seem quite right to me, less so now by comparison with more recent versions. (Decca Eloquence 4428655, Christmas, and 4662702, Easter, both download only.) I keep my copy of an earlier Decca Serenata CD of the Christmas music largely for the sake of the double-choir motets, taken from a third 1970s Argo release.

The paucity of recordings then has turned into a cornucopia now, with several very fine recordings at all prices and with a variety of couplings. In the bargain basement price-wise there’s the Oxford Camerata with Jeremy Summerly from 1995 (Naxos **8.553514**), while the Ars Nova Copenhagen recording directed by Paul Hillier is also something of a bargain in that it couples the Christmas and Easter works (DaCapo **8.226058** – [review](#)). Fans of large sets should investigate 8-CD Volume 2 of the complete Schütz recordings directed by Hans-Christoph Rademann on Carus **83.042**, currently on offer for £40.12. See below for this recording with other Christmas music on its single-CD release.

Other very fine accounts include a Hyperion Helios with the King’s Consort, coupled with music by Giovanni Gabrieli, which emphasises Schütz’s debt to the Venetian composer (**CDH55310** – [review](#) – Archive Service or download in lossless sound for £6.99 from [hyperion-records.co.uk](http://hyperion-records.co.uk)) and Christmas Vespers, with the *Weihnachts-Historie* embedded (DG Archiv **4630462** – [review](#) – download only, around £4.60 in lossless sound).

None of these reproduces exactly the programme of any of the others and the new Hyperion offers yet another different mix of Schütz’s music, all of it relevant to Christmas. It’s also one of the most generously coupled. The Yale Camerata have achieved several successes in a wide range of music, with their founder Simon Carrington, their current conductor David Hill, and guest conductor Masaaki Suzuki, so I had high expectations of the new release of some of my favourite music. Of the musical



S's of his time – the others Schein and Scheidt and the non-alliterative Demantius – Schütz is the greatest.

First up on this new recording are several Latin and German-text works celebrating Christmas. It's not just in the Latin *Magnificat* that Schütz adopts and adapts the style of the Gabrieli and Monteverdi, as he was to do also with the Christmas story, abandoning the older style used in his Resurrection story in favour of Italianate recitative. So close is Schütz's later style to his Italian models that it's possible that one setting of the psalm *Cantate Domino*, though published as one of his works, is actually a piece by Gabrieli that he brought back from Venice.

Although no other recording exactly matches the programme on the new Hyperion, Carus preface the *Weihnachts-Historie* with *Magnificat Anima mea Dominum*, SWV468 and *Hodie Christus natus est*, SWV456. (Carus **83.257** – [review](#) – or 8-CD box set listed above). Hans-Christoph Rademann may not, as Johan van Veen writes, be the most adventurous director of this music but I have enjoyed hearing many of his recordings of Schütz: see my [review](#) of Volume 18 (*Symphoniæ sacræ* II) and Volume 19, German Madrigals and Wedding Music, 83.277 – [review](#). The *Magnificat*, which opens the Carus CD, receives as good a performance as I expected – a little cautious, perhaps, by comparison with the new Hyperion, but honours are generally about equal. Though not strictly relevant to the Christmas theme – it celebrates Mary's delight at hearing that she is to bear Jesus – it features on several recordings of the *Weihnachts-Historie*.

I haven't heard all the other recordings, but either the Carus or the new Hyperion will do very well. The same is true for *Hodie Christus natus est*. Unless, that is, you prefer the recording by Westminster Cathedral Choir with boys' voices on the top line (Hyperion **CDA67522**: Christmas Vespers – [review](#) – [Christmas 2009](#)). You could do much worse than to have that older recording, in any case – download available, with pdf booklet, from [hyperion-records.co.uk](http://hyperion-records.co.uk).

The *Weihnachts-Historie* may sound easy to perform; it's anything but – Schütz refused to sell anything other than the Evangelist's part, suggesting that even that could be simplified to a more chant-like style, and would loan the *intermedia*, as he called them, only to institutions which he deemed worthy to perform them. Not all of those *intermedia* have survived, so any modern edition requires a degree of reconstruction.

I'm amazed that such a fine recording as that from The King's Consort is now available on CD only from the Hyperion Archive Service, but the download, with pdf booklet, is excellent value at £6.99. Robert King takes the music at a fair pace, though never hurrying it. Only those who dislike the Gabrieli works which conclude the recording – and those who love Schütz will surely embrace his Venetian models, too; perhaps even more – or need the Christmas and Easter works together (on DaCapo) need look elsewhere. It's rather short at 56 minutes, but the budget price covers that. From Ruth Holton in particular, as the Angel, the work emerges as charming rather than dramatic, though Michael George's bass takes some beating in the latter respect. Forced to a choice for my Desert Island, it would have to be the King's Consort for the more reliable quality of the soloists. If you choose that, it is possible to pick and choose individual tracks from the new album to download, where the choral singing is very good, as is the recording in Hyperion's best 24-bit sound.



### A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

#### The Centenary Service

Henry Websdale (organ)

King's College Choir Cambridge/Sir Stephen Cleobury

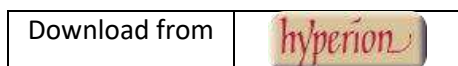
rec. 24 December 2018, King's College Chapel, Cambridge. DDD.

Texts included.

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

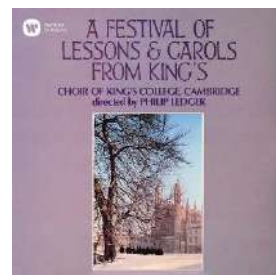


**KING'S KGS0036 SACD** [81:53 SACD and download; 76:44 CD] For full details and purchase links please see John Quinn's **Recommended** [review](#).



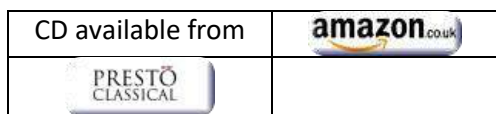
Building on the success of last year's *100 Years of Nine Lessons and Carols*, King's now bring us last Christmas Eve's full service to mark that centenary. The new recording is self-recommending, especially as it now becomes a memorial to Stephen Cleobury, who died soon after his retirement, but if you need to be convinced John Quinn's review – link above – says it all. I need merely add that the lossless download from Hyperion costs just £6.50, with 24/96 at £9.75 and even 24/192 at £11.35. (Be warned, however, that 24/192 is a large file and may take a long time to download.) Downloaders get the extra five minutes which the SACD adds to the CD and the booklet comes with the deal – in pdf format, so without the hard-covers, of course.

Warner Classics have reissued a shorter [57:03] recording from an earlier generation of King's, directed by **Philip Ledger**, for download only. It doesn't seem to be too widely available but it can be streamed by subscribers to [Qobuz](#), where the album can be downloaded, albeit without booklet and at a rather high price (£9.49 in 16-bit, £10.99 in hi-res). The original LP was released by EMI as ASD3778 in 1979, so I presume that the recording was made the previous year, when Thomas Trotter was the organ scholar. A slightly different selection (timings of the common items are identical and both contain William Mathias' *A babe is born*, so from the same service?) offers better value on **2435662425**, released in 1996 and now download only (lossless £7.51 from [Presto](#), mp3 £4.99 from [Amazon UK](#), both again without booklet).



**Magnificat - Christmas in Leipzig**  
**Johann SCHELLE (1648-1701)**  
*Machet die Tore weit* [9:11]  
**Johann KUHNAU (1660-1722)**  
*Magnificat* in C [27:33]  
**Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750)**

*Magnificat* in E-flat, BWV243a [33:48]  
 Solomon's Knot/Jonathan Sells  
**SONY 19075992622** [70:31]



The Bach *Magnificat* is well known, both in this Christmas version, with additional German seasonal words, and in the 'normal' version. That of his predecessor Kuhnau is less known, though there have been recordings by an ensemble led by Gregor Meyer (CPO **555021-2**) and one from the Japan Bach Collegium and Masaaki Suzuki, which also includes the Bach in D-major guise with two settings by Zelenka (BIS **BIS-CD-1011**). The Schelle Advent *Machet die Tore weit* (fling wide the gates) sets the tone for a lively performance – far preferable to the 1963 Archiv recording reviewed below – but that may serve to whet your appetite for more of Schelle's seasonal music (see below).



A similarly named collection, **Weihnachten in Leipzig**, is something of an *omnium gatherum*, with a long list of performers: Wiebke Lehmkuhl (contralto), Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Dresdner Kammerchor/Riccardo Chailly; Thomanerchor/Georg Christoph Bille; John Constable (harpsichord), Tess Miller (oboe), Celia Nicklin (oboe), Håkan Hardenberger (trumpet), Academy of St Martin in the Fields/Iona Brown; Jaap ter Linden (viola da gamba), Musica



Antiqua Köln/Reinhard Goebel; Sarah Pendlebury (soprano), Hannelore Devaere (harp), Gabrieli Consort/Paul McCreesh; Ulrike Schott (harpsichord), Karl Richter (harpsichord), Iwona Fütterer (harpsichord), Hedwig Bilgram (harpsichord), Münchener Bach-Orchester/Karl Richter; Simon Preston (organ) DG **4826068** [71:45] (download only).

Some of the pieces are very short and prospective purchasers would be better to go for Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* complete, for example, rather than these bits and pieces, especially as the download is quite expensive, around £11 for lossless, no booklet.



***Machet die Tore weit: Advent und Weihnachten im alten Halle und Leipzig***, offering Advent and Christmas music by **Sebastian KNÜPFER, Friedrich Wilhelm ZACHOW, Esaias HICKMANN** and **Johann KUHNAU** is much less expensive, with lossless sound for less than £5 and four complete works, but the lack of a booklet and the fact that these recordings date

from 1963, before the period performance movement really got under way, is something of a drawback. (DG Archiv **4315352**: Rotraud Pax, Elfriede Vorbrig (sopranos), Ortun Wenkel (contralto), Johannes Hoefflin (tenor), Jakob Stpfli (bass); Boys' Chorus of the Gymnasium Eppendorf, Norddeutscher Singkreis, Instrumental-ensemble der ARCHIV Produktion, Gottfried Wolters).



Worth hearing, perhaps as streamed from [Qobuz](http://Qobuz), for the only available recordings of Knüpfer's *Machet die Tore weit* and Zachow's *Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar*, but there's some out-of-tune instrumental playing to contend with. I'm afraid that the cover is the most attractive part of this reissue.

Rather more worthwhile is another DG Archiv recording from 1962 - ***Wie schön singt uns der Engel Schar: Weihnachtslieder der Praetoriuszeit*** (Christmas music from the time of Praetorius).



**Johannes ECCARD**: *O Freude über Freud* [3:12]  
**Andreas CRAPPIUS**: *Nun ist es Zeit zu singen hell* [2:22]  
**Johann Hermann SCHEIN**: *Verkündigungsdilog: Maria, begrüßet seist du, Holdselige* [10:11]  
**Johannes ECCARD, Jacob PRÆTORIUS, Caspar OTHMAYR**:  
*Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her* [2:19]

**Cornelis FREUNDT**: *Wie schön singt uns der Engel Schar* [1:57]

**Michael PRÆTORIUS**: *Quem pastores laudavere - Den die Hirten lobeten sehre* [4:45]

*Weihnachtslieder: Hosanna dem Sohne Davids* [1:17]

*Dem neugebornen Kindelein* [1:46]

*Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* [10:06]

**Lukas OSIANDER, Melchior SCHAERER, Johann WALTER, Samuel SCHEIDT, Adam GUMPELZHAIMER, Caspar Othmayr, Erhard Bodenschatz**: *Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ* [5:09]

**SCHEIDT**: *Ein Kind geborn zu Bethlehem* [2:52]

**Michael PRÆTORIUS**: *In dulci júbilo* [7:11]

**Leonhard SCHRÖTER**: *Lobt Gott, ihr Christen alle gleich* [2:32]

*Hört zu und seid getrost sehr* [3:04]

*Ein Kind geborn zu Bethlehem* [2:39]

*Freut euch, ihr lieben Christen* [1:50]

*In dulci júbilo, nun singet* [2:17]



*Der Tag, der ist so freudenreich* [3:53]

Margot Guillaume (soprano), Helmut Krebs (tenor);



Eppendorfer Knabenchor, Spielgemeinschaft Der Archiv Produktion, Städtischer Chor Hamburg/Adolf Detel

**DG ARCHIV 4396462** [70:52]

Download from	
Stream from	

These are still the only recordings of some of this music; the singing remains stylish even by today's standards, as does the recording. There are no texts, but this download-only release can be found for as little as £3.97 (mp3)/£4.96 (lossless).



**Johann SCHELLE (1648-1701)**

- Uns ist ein Kind geboren*, Part 1 [2:22]
- Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar* [8:19]
- Da die Zeit erfüllet ward* [12:39]
- Uns ist ein Kind geboren*, Part 2 [7:47]
- Machet die Tore weit* [9:26]

*Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe* [10:22]

*Actus musicus auf Weyh-Nachten: Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her* [23:25]

Monika Mauch (soprano), Myriam Arbouz (soprano), Marian Dijkhuizen (alto), Georg Poplutz (tenor), Jakob Pilgram (tenor), Raimonds Spogis (bass)

Concerto Palatino, Kölner Akademie/Michael Alexander Willens

rec. Deutschlandfunk Kammersaal, 26-29 January 2017. Texts and translations included.

**CPO 555155-2** [74:34] For CD purchase details see [review by Johan van Veen](#).



CD available from	
	
Stream from	

I missed this very attractive recording of music by one of Bach's predecessors as Thomaskantor last year, but Johan van Veen picked up on it – link above. I'm very pleased to have caught up with it a year late; with instruments in tune, it was a treat to hear after the

Archiv. The track numbering error which JV noted seems to have been corrected for the digital booklet. Target price for the download (which comes with a pdf booklet) is £7.99 for lossless sound.

Another version of Schelle's *Machet die Tore weit* opens an attractive earlier CPO release (**777332-2**, [December 2010](#)). Neither the Passionato nor the Classicsonline link now applies – both have bitten the dust – and the download (target price £7.99 for lossless) comes without the booklet, as does the streamed version from Naxos Music Library.



**Georg Philipp TELEMANN (1681-1767)**

**Christmas Cantatas III**

- Schmecket und sehet, wie freundlich*, TWV1:1251 [17:44]
- Im hellen Glanz*, TWV1:926 [18:17]
- Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, TWV1:745 [25:33]
- Und das Wort ward Fleisch*, TWV1:1431 [14:57]

Monika Mauch (soprano), Nicole Pieper (alto), Georg Poplutz (tenor), Klaus Mertens (baritone), Raimonds Spogis (baritone), Manfred Buhl (bass), Joel Urch (bass)



Kölner Akademie/Michael Alexander Willens

rec. 4-6 June 2018, Immanuelkirche, Wuppertal, Germany. DDD.


Texts and translations included.

**CPO 555254-2** [76:50]




CD available from	
	



Stream from	
-------------	---

We seem to have missed this, perhaps because it was released in January 2019, following hard on the heels of CPO's second volume of Telemann's Christmas Cantatas from a different team (**555166-2** – [review](#)). With so much music to his credit, even more than Bach – just look at the TWV (Telemann Werke Verzeichnis) numbers in the list, two of them over 1000 – the miracle is that labels such as CPO can keep recording works not available before, as here, and all that they touch sounds marvellous. Their first recording in a new series of his *Concerti da Camera* from Camerata Köln is one of my Recordings of the Year for 2019 (**CPO 555131-2** – [review](#)). This Christmas recording is hardly far behind.



Stream from	
-------------	---

**Clair de Noël** features music, mainly of a

seasonal nature, from the Salzedo Harp Duo, Nancy Lendrim and Judy Guinn (**AZICA 71332**). It's very enjoyable in small

doses, but lack of variety means that you probably wouldn't want to play it in one go; one piece sounds rather like another as played on two harps. A few non-Christmas items do make for a degree of variation: *Greensleeves* (the traditional tune, not the VW arrangement, as implied by calling it a Fantasia), Pachelbel's Canon and Gigue and Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*, but this is one for streaming, I think, rather than downloading or CD purchase.



**The Secret Life of Carols: 800 Years of Christmas Music**

**Anonymous** (15th century, England) Lullay, my child [4:38]

**Anonymous** (17th century, Germany) *Es kommt ein Schiff, geladen* [1:58]

**J. S. BACH (1685–1750)** *O Jesulein süß*, BWV 493 (1735) [3:51]

**Traditional** (20th century, Ireland) Christmas Eve (Tommy Coen's reel) [1:48]

**Anonymous** (12th century, England) Gabriel fram evene king (*Angelus ad virginem*) [1:55]

**Franz Xaver GRUBER (1787–1863)** (Austria) *Stille Nacht* (1818) [3:27]

**Anonymous** (13th century, England) Lullay, lullay, als I lay on Yoolis Nicht [6:03]

**Traditional** (16th century, Catalonia) *El Noi de la Mare* [2:09]

**Traditional** (16th century, Germany) *Maria durch ein' Dornwald ging* [2:36]

**Traditional** (18th century, Finland) *A Maa on niin kaunis* ('The Land is So Beautiful') [3:32]

**Anonymous** (12th century, England) *Verbum caro factum est* [2:21]

**Traditional** (16th century, England) Coventry Carol [3:48]

**Traditional** (13th century, Finland) *Heinillä härkien kaukalon* ('On the hay in the bulls' trough') [3:03]

**Bernard de la MONNOYE (1641–1728)** *Patapan* (c.1700) [2:10]

**Anonymous** (15th century, England) As I lay upon a night [3:15]

**Anonymous** (15th century, England) Nowell, nowell (Salutation Carol) [4:41]

The Telling

rec. St Mary Magdalene, Sherborne, UK, 4–8 August 2019

Texts and translations included

**FIRST HAND RECORDS FHR094** [51:17]

CD available from	
	
Stream from	

The Telling is a small group – Clare Norburn (voice), Ariane Prüssner (voice and frame drum), Jean Kelly (Celtic and medieval harps) and Kaisa Pulkkinen (baroque and medieval harps) – and these are small-scale, intimate performances of a wide range of

music, most of it unfamiliar or, at any rate, not pumped out over supermarket PA systems. As I write, I've just been subjected to a dose of that, courtesy of a pop radio station as I waited in my podiatrist's waiting room; listening to The Telling has been a real antidote.



A small complaint: some of the Middle English texts, though pronounced as authentically as they can be – the C15 was a time of change in this respect – are printed in the booklet in modernised form, while others are in original spelling.



**Baroque Christmas: Sanctus**

Music for the Nativity

Ex Cathedra Chamber Choir & Baroque Orchestra/Jeffrey Skidmore

rec. 1996, Oscott College, Sutton Coldfield. DDD.

No texts.



**ALTO ALC1377** [75:06] Originally released as ASG CDGAU166 – still available from some details, more expensively.

CD available from	
Stream from	

There’s nothing bargain basement about the performances on this budget-price reissue, which was actually released in 2018, but the presentation is cheap, with no texts and very little detail about the music. That ranges from **BACH** (*Sanctus* from the b-minor Mass) on track 1 to his Christmas Oratorio, the chorale: *Ach, mein herzliebes Jesulein*, which closes the programme. In between, we have music by **CORELLI**, **CHARPENTIER**, **MONTEVERDI** (*Christe, redemptor omnium*), **SWEELINCK**, **BUXTEHUDE**, **Gibbons**, **Giovanni GABRIELI** (*Magnificat*) and others. **BOUZIGNAC**’s *Noë, Noë! Pastores cantate Domino* (tr.3) is a real find.

The performances are lively, especially the pieces where dulcian, cornetto, musette and chalemie join in the proceedings. This was a worthwhile buy at full price in 1996; it’s especially so at budget price, but the text-free penny-pinching presentation takes it down a notch or two.



**Reinhard KEISER (1674-1739)**

*Dialogus von der Geburt Christi* (1707) [30:52]

**Christoph GRAUPNER (1683-1760)**

*Magnificat* in C (1722) [14:08]

Rastatter Hofkapelle/Jürgen Ochs

rec. SWR Studio Baden-Baden, June 2008. DDD.



Reviewed as streamed from [Naxos Music Library](https://www.naxos.com) – no booklet  
**CARUS 83.417** [45:00]

CD available from	
Stream from	

This was the premiere recording of Keiser’s joyful setting of the Christmas story. The forces employed are rather small – a legacy of Schütz, perhaps – but the instrumental accompaniment, with trumpets to the fore, makes this one of the most delectable

Christmas works of this period. As for Graupner, this *Magnificat* reminds us that the burghers of Leipzig were not wrong to prefer him to Bach – he was the more established composer. This is back catalogue – first [reviewed by Jonathan Woolf](#) in 2008 – but worth searching out. There’s no booklet with the streamed versions or the download.



**Jean-François DANDRIEU (1681-1738)**

***Magnificats et Noël***

*Magnificat du 1er ton* in d minor [08:30]

*Tierce en taille* in A [03:03]

*Muzète* in G [02:48]

*Magnificat du 2e ton* in g minor [09:04]

*À la venue de Noël* [02:48]

*Bon Joseph écoutez-moi* [03:39]

*Or nous dites Marie* [04:33]

*Carillon ou cloches* [03:29]

*Magnificat du 8e ton* in G [10:51]

*Fugue chromatique* [02:17]

*Fugue. Hymne Ave maris stella* [01:53]

*Magnificat du 3e ton* in a minor [10:55]

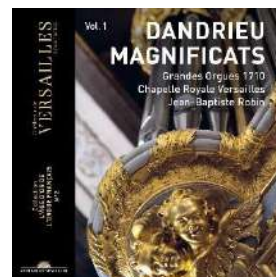
*Offertoire pour le jour de Pâques: 'O filii et filiae'* [06:47]

Jean-Baptiste Robin (organ)

rec. 2019, Chapelle Royale, Versailles, France. DDD.

Reviewed as a stereo 24/96 download with pdf booklet from Outhere

**CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES SPECTACLES CVS023** [70:52]



***Noëls baroques à Versailles***

**Pierre DANDRIEU (1664-1733)**

*Laissez paître vos bêtes* [10:39]

**Claude-Bénigne BALBASTRE (1724-1799)**

*Où s'en vont ces gais bergers* [04:33]

*Joseph est bien marié* [05:17]

*Or nous dites Marie* [06:45]

**Jean-François DANDRIEU (1681-1738)**

*Vous qui désirez sans fin* [06:38]

**Louis-Claude DAQUIN (1694-1772)**

*Quand le sauveur Jésus-Christ* [07:58]

*Une jeune pucelle* [10:13]

**Claude-Bénigne BALBASTRE**

*À la venue de Noël* [05:05]

**Michel CORRETTE (1707-1795)**

*Tous les bourgeois de Châtres* [05:18]

**Louis-Claude DAQUIN**

*Qu'Adam fut un pauvre homme* [07:58]

Gaétan Jarry (organ)

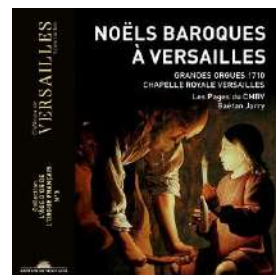
Choeur des Pages du Centre de musique baroque de Versailles

rec. 2019, Chapelle Royale, Versailles, France. DDD.

Texts and translations included

Reviewed as a stereo 24/96 download with pdf booklet from Outhere

**CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES SPECTACLES CVS025** [70:23]



Since 2009, the wonderful Royal Chapel in the castle of Versailles has offered an annual programme of concerts, some of which have also been released on disc. So far, the historical organ of 1710 by the Clicquot dynasty, restored in the 1990s to its original state, has not been documented on disc, but now the label Château de Versailles de Spectacles has planned a series of recordings of this instrument. The first disc was recorded by Ton Koopman (it will be reviewed later on MWI) and on the next two his colleagues Jean-Baptiste Robin – the organ's incumbent since 2010 – and Gaétan Jarry present the instrument in programmes of French organ music of the 18th century.



Robin has devoted his entire programme to music by one of his predecessors, Jean-François Dandrieu, who was appointed organist at the Royal Chapel in 1721. The main part of the programme comprises two genres. First, settings of the *Magnificat*, which reflect the *alternatim* practice in the Catholic liturgy at the time. It is a bit of a shame that the plainchant verses are not included. The track-list also does not link the sections to the verses of the *Magnificat*, which would allow the listener to note the way Dandrieu illustrates the text. The second genre concerns *Noëls*, a particularly popular genre from the late 17th century onwards. Such pieces are played across the world, but this recording demonstrates why they really need a classical French instrument with its wide range of colours. Robin is an excellent player who convincingly shows the quality of Dandrieu's music and the features of this instrument. On a technical note: in the digital booklet track 19 should be track 04.

Gaétan Jarry's programme comprises only *Noëls* by composers from across the 18th century. The origin of these songs often goes back as far as the Middle Ages, but they gradually became part of the liturgy. Until the beginning of the 17th century they were sung during the Offertory; then the ecclesiastical authorities tried to put an end to this tradition. As a way of compensation, organists started to play variations on these songs during the Offertory. This resulted in a large repertoire of such *Noëls*, from which Jarry plays a small selection. Although most of the tunes are rather well-known, their texts are not. Therefore, it was a splendid idea to include them here, performed by the children's choir of the Centre de musique baroque in Versailles. They sing the stanzas in alternation with the organ variations. This is a highly enjoyable disc, which is a real alternative to previous recordings of *Noëls*. Jarry is an outstanding organist, and the singing of the choir has an infectious freshness.

For organ lovers, these two discs are treasures, and they should keep an eye on upcoming recordings at the magnificent organ in the Royal Chapel in Versailles. [JV]

BW reviewed **CVS025** in Autumn 2019/2: A collection of French traditional Christmas music sung by a young choir and in organ arrangements. Don't expect the young singers to sound like King's College Choir – you may find this high-pitched singing a little wearing, but it's part of the deal and it's very good of its kind.

BW has also reviewed **CVS023**:

CD available from	
	

Like puppies, this is not just for Christmas; it contains three examples of the instrumental *Noël*, those arrangements of traditional French Christmas music

which were fashionable in the C17. But it's more than that: it's Volume 2 of a series of the glories of the organ music of the period, and it's advertised as 'Dandrieu Volume 1'. It's virtually self-recommending to lovers of the organ music of this period and, indeed, to anyone interested in the music of this Golden Age and especially the great organ in the Chapelle Royale at Versailles.

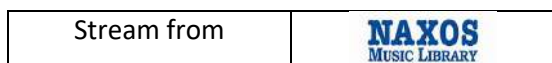
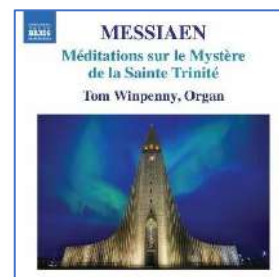
Organists will find a full organ specification in the booklet and the details of the various alterations up to and including its 1996 restoration, but not the registration of each piece, which would have been even more helpful. Otherwise, the booklet is, as usual with this label, one of the glories of the release. Look out for Dandrieu 2.

On Volume 1 of the series, Ton Koopman performs music by **BACH, CLÉRAMBAULT, François and Louis COUPERIN** and **DAQUIN (CVS016)**.

**Olivier MESSIAEN (1908-1992)***Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte Trinité* (1969)

Tom Winpenny (organ)

rec. 2018, Hallgrímskirkja, Reykjavík, Iceland

**NAXOS 8.573979** [73:47]

I'm not sure that the Christmas decoration is

appropriate for Messiaen's meditation on the Trinity, but you really should add the latest and best of Tom Winpenny's series to your collection. It's one of Dan Morgan's Recordings of the Year – see his full [review](#), which also contains purchase details.

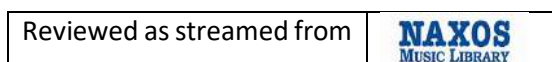
\*\*\*

**Filia Sion***Ecce venit* / Psalm 94 (Gregorian antiphon) [9:36]*Virgo prudentissima* / *Magnificat* (Gregorian antiphon) [4:59]*Gaudeamus* (Gregorian introit) [2:47]*Rex virginum* (Organum, from: Codex Las Huelgas) [3:35]*Gloria* (Gregorian) [3:31]**Magister PEROTINUS (c.1160-c.1230)** *Beata viscera* [8:21]*Audi filia* (Gregorian gradual) [5:22]**Petrus Wilhelmi de GRUDENCZ (c.1400-c.1480)** *Prelustri elucentia* [2:43]*Ave Maria* (Gregorian offertory) [6:09]**Hildegard von BINGEN (1098-1179)** *O ignis spiritus* [6:25]*Agnus Dei* (Gregorian) [1:07]*Exulta filia Sion* (Gregorian communion) [3:05]*O Maria* (Motet, from: Montpellier Manuscript) [4:46]*Salve regina* (Gregorian antiphon) [2:52]*Ma navu* (Jewish tune, from Cochin) [5:41]

Vox Clamantis/Jaan-Eik Tulve

rec. September 2010, Dome Church of St Nicholas, Haapsalu. DDD.

Texts and translations included

**ECM NEW SERIES 2244** [71:07]

It's not exactly Christmas music, but there's plenty here in praise of the Virgin Mary. All the music is beautiful – not least, of course, Hildegard's *Agnus Dei* – with Petrus de Grudencz a real discovery. It's all well worth Dominy Clements' award of [Recording of the Month](#). Don't be put off by the gloomy cover.

**Petrus Wilhelmi de GRUDENCZ (1392-after 1452) - Fifteenth-century music from Central Europe**Anonymous: *Domine ad adiuvandum me festina* [3:38]**Petrus Wilhelmi de GRUDENCZ:** *Predulcis eurus* [4:03]Anonymous: *Veni / Da gaudiorum / Veni* [1:24]**Petrus Wilhelmi de GRUDENCZ:** *Pneuma / Veni / Paraclito / Dator* [3:02]**Nicolaus de RADOM (fl.early C15)** *Ballade* (instrumental) [2:32]**Johannes HOLANDRINUS?** *Virelai* (instrumental) [1:58]**Othmarus Opilonis de JAWOR (fl.c.1440):** *Rondeau* (instrumental) [1:24]**Nicolaus de RADOM** *Hystorigraphi, aciem* [4:44]**Petrus Wilhelmi de GRUDENCZ:** *Kyrie: Fons bonitatis* [5:48]Anonymous: *Ave mater summi nati (= En vergier)* [2:43]



*Virginem mire pulcritudinis* (= *En discort*) [2:27]

*Resurgente domino* (= *Je languis*) [2:50]

*Ave mater O Maria* [2:36]

**Nicolaus [de Týn?]:** *Unde gaudent / Eya, Eya / Nostra iocunda* [0:45]

**Petrus Wilhelmi de GRUDENCZ:** *Probleumata enigmatum* [3:35]

**Johannes TOUROUT (fl.c.1460)** *O gloriosa Regina mundi* [4:02]

Anonymous: *Mit ganczym willin – Der winter der wil weychen* (instrumental) [2:04]

**Petrus Wilhelmi de GRUDENCZ:** *Plaude euge theotocos* [1:32]

*Psalteriis et timpanis* [2:53]

*Promitat eterno* [2:26]

*Psalmodium exileratum* [0:55]

**Nicolaus de RADOM** *Alleluya* [0:28]

Anonymous: *Christus ... victos / Chorus nove / Christus ... mala* [2:08]




Anonymous: *Ex trinitatis culmine* [4:54]

La Morra/Corina Marti & Michał Gondko

rec. Schloss Beuggen (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), 26-30 January 2016. DDD.

Texts and translations included

**GLOSSA GCD922515** [64:53]

CD available from	
	
Reviewed as streamed from	

More music by Grudencz, this time as the backbone rather than an occasional walk-on. On this and the above recording different dates are given for him. To complicate matters further, he's also known as Piotr z Grudziądza in his native Polish. Forget that;

investigate and enjoy his music, imbued as it is with the freshness of the late medieval transition to the early renaissance, on either of these recordings. Try the *Kyrie: fons bonitatis* on either recording and you will want to hear the rest.

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

*Josué*, H. 404 [12:25]

*Mors Saülis et Jonathæ*, H403 [35:32]

*Canticum pro pace*, H392 [10:42]

*Prælium Michaelis Archangeli factum in cælo cum dracone*, H410 [8:46]

*Troisième Leçon de Ténèbres du Mercredi saint*, H135 [14:27]

*Troisième Leçon de Ténèbres du Jeudi saint*, H136 [18:37]

*Troisième Leçon de Ténèbres du Vendredi saint*, H137 [15:05]



*Quam dilecta tabernacula tua* (Psalm 83), H167 [20:05]

Barbara Schlick (soprano), Nancy Zijlstra (soprano), Kai Wessel (countertenor), Dominique Visse (countertenor), Christoph Prégardien (tenor), Harry van Berne (tenor), Peter Kooy (bass), Klaus Mertens (bass)

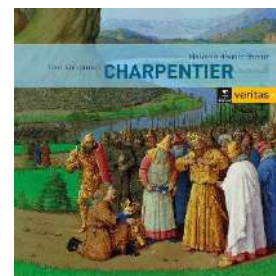
Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra/Ton Koopman

First released 1992. DDD.

**ERATO VERITAS 2564619535** [67:26 + 68:15]

CD available from	
	

I have been slow to notice that this 2-CD set of Charpentier's double-choir motets, including the only available recordings of *Josué* (Joshua) and the *Prælium Michaelis Archangeli factum in cælo cum dracone* (the Fight in Heaven between the Archangel Michael and the dragon), previously available on Warner Erato Apex, has been transferred to Warner Erato Veritas, still at super-budget price, around £8.50.



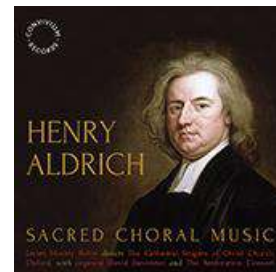
As a 4-page gathering is missing from my copy of the Apex, I'm tempted to replace it with the reissue, except that Veritas twofers tend to come completely without texts, as I believe is the case



here. There's no download or streamed version for me to check, so I'll stay with the Apex, which is still being sold for \$11.99 by [arkivmusic](http://arkivmusic.com). Either way, it's a very worthwhile bargain, not very seasonal – CD2 is devoted mainly to settings of the *Tenebræ* for Holy Week – but well worth having at any time. Though it was first released as a 2-CD set in 1992, some of the items seem to date from up to ten years earlier, but it all sounds well.

**Henry ALDRICH (1647-1710)**

- O Give Thanks [2:35]
- The Lord is King [7:00]
- All People that on Earth do dwell [2:19]
- O God, thou art my God [7:31]
- God is our hope and strength [3:17]
- O Lord our Governor [3:47]
- Sing unto the Lord [3:25]
- Morning, Communion & Evening Service in F:
- I. *Magnificat* [6:38]
- II. *Nunc dimittis* [2:39]
- O Sing unto the Lord [5:04]
- Praise the Lord, all ye heathen [2:22]
- I Will Love Thee, O Lord [8:50]
- Out of the Deep [3:24]
- Give Ear, O Lord [3:07]
- Be Not Wroth (after Byrd's *Civitas sancti tui*) [3:56]
- Music for the Oxford Act 1682
- Conveniunt doctiæ sorores* [9:02]
- Suite [4:58]
- David Bannister (organ)
- The Cathedral Singers of Christ Church, Oxford
- The Restoration Consort/James Morley Potter
- CONVIVIUM CR052** [79:54]



CD available from	
Stream from	

If you thought that the record companies had found all that was worth finding among the composers of the late C17 and early C18, this recording of the music of Henry Aldrich, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford (1689-1710), whose modern members here honour his

memory, may make you think again. A modest man, who was buried in the cathedral without a monument, at his own request, his music may not quite have equalled his architectural skills, still evident in the layout of Peckwater Quad, or the compositional skills of Purcell, but it's worth at least streaming – follow the Naxos link.

The Cathedral Singers is a mixed-voice group which keeps the daily services going when the main choir is away or on vacation. On the evidence of this recording, it's no second best; its members make a good case for the music of a composer who was clearly influenced by the great composers of the past – one of the items is an arrangement of Byrd's *Sancta civitas*, with English words.

The download versions offer only the back insert, so I can't give the date and venue of these performances. Though the diction is excellent, we still deserve the texts. The notes – but no texts – are available on the [Convivium website](http://convivium.org).

**Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750)**  
**Complete secular cantatas**

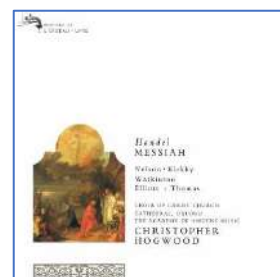
BIS have just made available their 10-disc series of the secular cantatas, in 16- and 24-bit downloads, for \$49.99 – from [eclassical.com](http://eclassical.com). That works out at \$5 per album – a very tempting price even if you bought some of them on SACD or as downloads when they appeared, but didn't complete the set. I need hardly add that all the performances, directed by Masaaki Suzuki, are among the very best.



**George Frideric HANDEL (1685-1759)**  
*Messiah*, HWV56 (Foundling Hospital version, May 1754)  
 Emma Kirkby (soprano), Judith Nelson (soprano), Carolyn Watkinson (contralto), David Thomas (bass), Paul Elliott (tenor),  
 Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford/Simon Preston

Academy of Ancient Music/Christopher Hogwood  
 rec. 1979, St Jude's, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London. DDD.

**DECCA OISEAU-LYRE 4304882** [2 CDs: 2:16:06] or **4788160** [download with pdf booklet]. Limited edition 2-CD\_blu-ray available from [Amazon UK](http://Amazon UK) and [Arkivmusic](http://Arkivmusic).



CD available from	

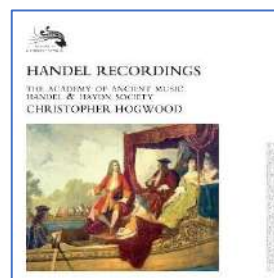
**Christopher Hogwood: Handel Recordings**

Details after review

Academy of Ancient Music/Christopher Hogwood

**DECCA OISEAU-LYRE 4828103** [22 CDs]

CD available from	



**Christmas Concertos**  
**Arcangelo CORELLI (1653-1713)** Concerto grosso Op.6/8 in g minor 'fatto per la notte di Natale' [12:50]  
**Gregor Joseph WERNER (1695-1766)**  
 Christmas *Pastorella* for organ and strings [4:46]  
**François-Joseph GOSSEC (1734-1829)** *Suite de Noël*s [5:49]

**George Frideric HANDEL (1685-1759)** *Messiah*, HWV56: *Pifa* (Pastoral Symphony) [2:45]

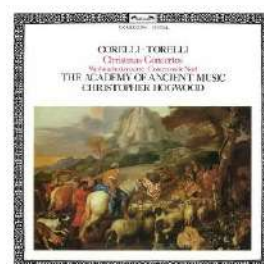
**Pavel Josef VEJVANSKY (c.1633-1693)** *Sonata Natalis* in C [4:40]  
 Sonata à7 [2:53]

**Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750)** Christmas Oratorio, BWV248 - Part Two: *Sinfonia* [5:12]

**Giuseppe TORELLI (1658-1709)** Christmas Concerto Op.8/6 in g minor [5:45]

Academy of Ancient Music/Christopher Hogwood  
 rec. July 1982, St. Barnabas, North Finchley, London. DDD.

**PRESTO CD 4101792** [44:38]



CD available from	
-------------------	--

In recognising Emma Kirkby with a well-deserved Gramophone Lifetime Achievement award, this recording of *Messiah* received special mention. Other recordings had brought us closer than before than before to the sound that Handel would have expected, notably from Sir Colin Davis (1966, Philips, now 2-for-1 Decca Duo 4383562) and Sir Charles Mackerras (HMV, now Warner download 2435694495), but this was the version that opened the way for other very fine recordings with period instruments and awareness of period performing style.

Emma Kirkby has sometimes been accused of lacking in expression, but she and the other soloists let the music speak for itself. This is not the only way to enjoy the music – some of the players in the Academy of Ancient Music were still having problems making their period instruments sound right – and there are times when I may prefer something more traditional. Perhaps even Sir Malcolm in Huddersfield (Classics for Pleasure, 2 CDs, super-budget-price 5757762), or Sir Thomas with lots of extra instrumentation? Well, not the latter, great Beecham fan though I am.

The soloists join the chorus, here very ably provided by Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford, with Simon Preston, no less, directing them, so we have two distinguished conductors of baroque music for the price of one. You can find a detailed comparison between the Hogwood recording and a recent account, also using the 1754 version, from Le Concert Spirituel and Hervé Niquet, in Michael Greenhalgh's [review](#) of the latter. He liked the Niquet better than me – [Autumn 2017/3](#) – but agreed that 'Hogwood's is a more revealing celebration of Handel's counterpoint'.

The 2-CD set remains on sale at full price, around £25, with the limited edition blu-ray almost twice as much, where it remains available. The download, remastered at the same time as the blu-ray, shortly after Christopher Hogwood's death in 2014, is much less expensive – around £13 in lossless sound, with pdf booklet, containing the conductor's valuable note on interpreting the music.

Other very fine *Messiah* recordings there are, to suit all tastes. One of my other favourites, from John Butt and the Dunedin Consort, the 1742 Dublin version, is especially recommendable: Michael Greenhalgh made it a Recording of the Month – [review](#) – and I made it my Download of the Month from the back catalogue in [November 2009](#). I'm amazed to discover that, while the download remains available from [linnrecords.com](#), in mp3, 16- and 24-bit sound, at prices from £12 to £25, the CDs seems to have dropped out of the catalogue (**CKD285**).

Alternatives well worth considering include The Sixteen and Harry Christophers (Coro **COR16062**, 3 CDs, currently reduced from £17.25 to £12.93 from Presto – [DL Roundup December 2008](#)). Those less wedded to period instruments but still looking for a sense of period style should try Polyphony and the Britten Sinfonia conducted by Stephen Layton on Hyperion **CDA67800**, 2 CDs at an attractive price, currently reduced to £10.20 from Presto, or download in lossless sound, with pdf booklet, for £8 from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#). I gave the Hyperion a thumbs-up for pressing all the right buttons as a middle-way performance – [review](#) – and John Quinn 'enjoyed [it] greatly' – [review](#).

If you followed my recommendation of Decca's 50-CD *Baroque Era* collection, you will already have Hogwood *Messiah*. Volume 1 of the download version remains available as **4787094**, but it's rather more expensive now at around £39 (mp3) or £49 (lossless) than when I recommended it in [DL News 2014/10](#). That's still good value for 25 hours of wonderful music and performances, though there's no booklet.

There's no download of the 22-CD *Handel Recordings* set, but it's available for around £45. It's a very valuable resource, but it's not complete – some of the shorter items included in *Baroque Era I* are omitted, and it includes the Op.3 *Concerti grossi*, but not the Op.6 set with the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, which is included in *Baroque Era I*. No great matter: the Op.6 concertos are available separately on a two-for-one Decca set, **4588172**. Once again, some of the early instruments had not been fully mastered at the time of some of these recordings – the horns in the *Water Music*, for

example, sound a little insecure by comparison with The King's Consort on Hyperion (**CDH55375**, with *Fireworks Music*, download or Archive Service CD from [hyperion-records.co.uk](http://hyperion-records.co.uk)). Such small points, however, never spoil the overall enjoyment.

A recent Decca Eloquence reissue illustrates the process of change in Handel performance: two overtures which Boyd Neel recorded with his chamber-size orchestra in 1955, the *Water Music* which Thurston Dart, academic and performer, was one of the first to record complete (1960), in three suites, rather than the excerpts which had been cobbled together by Hamilton Harty – modern instruments but played with a sense of historical style – and a step back to an older style in arrangements of the *Largo* (from *Serse*) and *Il Pastor Fido* (LSO/George Szell, 1962). The album is rounded off with Dart and the Philomusica in two Mozart Epistle Sonatas, recorded in 1957. (**4828531** [76:16] – [review](#)). When Jeremy Noble hailed this recording of the *Water Music* as ‘the best and most convincing version we are likely to get for a long time’ (December 1959) he was spot on.

Of the music not included in *Baroque Era I*, the *Concerti grossi*, Op.3 are the most attractive on the Hogwood 22-CD set. They are available as a separate download, but at a price: at least £11.97 for lossless sound, without booklet. The same applies to the three *Concerti a due cori*, though, paradoxically, the 2-CD Double Decca set with the *Water Music* and *Fireworks Music* costs less, on CD and as a download – but that involves duplication of material from the *Baroque Era*.

A word of warning: some suppliers are offering an earlier 8-CD Decca set of Hogwood's *Messiah*, *Athaliah*, *Esther* and *La Resurrezione* for as much as £75.49 in lossless format, sans booklet – very poor value!

The third AAM/Hogwood album brings us back to Christmas, a programme book-ended by Corelli's well-known Op.6/8 and Torelli's less known Op.8/6, both in g minor. It's an enjoyable programme but, at 45 minutes it's rather short value – one to stream, rather than to purchase, especially as the download costs very little less than the Presto special (ex-Decca) CD. Subscribers to Naxos Music Library will find it [there](#).

If you're looking for a *Messiah* recording, you should seriously consider this Hogwood set, either on its own or as part of the multi-disc Hogwood recordings listed. The album of baroque Christmas music offers less good value but is well worth streaming as an alternative to the usual festive fare.

### **Christopher Hogwood: Handel Recordings**

Track details:

*Water Music* Suites Nos. 1-3, HWV348-350\*\*

*The Alchemist* HWV 43: Incidental music\*\*

Music for the Royal Fireworks, HWV351\*\*

*Concerti a due cori* Nos. 1-3, HWV332-4

Arias (2) for Wind Band

*Concerti grossi* Op.3 Nos. 1-6, HWV312-317\*

*Tu fedel? tu costante?* (HWV 171)

*Mi palpita il cor* - Cantata HWV132

*Alpestre monte*, HWV81

*Tra le fiamme*, HWV170

*Rinaldo* Overture

*Lascia ch'io pianga* (from *Rinaldo*)

*Alcina* – Overture

*Tu la mia stella sei* (from *Giulio Cesare*)

*Amadigi di Gaula*: Sinfonia

*V'adoro, pupille* (from *Giulio Cesare*)

*Ariodante*: ballet music

*Bel piacere* (from *Agrippina*)  
*Admeto: Overture*  
*Desterò dall'empia dite* (from *Amadigi di Gaula*)  
*Mi deride l'amante* (from *Amadigi*)  
*Ah! Ruggiero* (from *Alcina*)  
*Giustino*, HWV35: *Adagio*  
*Non disperar* (from *Giulio Cesare*)  
*Piangerò la sorte mia* (from *Giulio Cesare*)  
 Minuet from *Alcina*  
*La Resurrezione*, HWV47\*\*  
*Esther*, HWV50  
*Athalia*, HWV52  
*Messiah*, HWV56\*\*  
*Alceste*, HWV45  
*Comus*, HWV44  
*Acis and Galatea*  
*Rinaldo*, HWV7  
*Orlando*, HWV31\*\*

Emma Kirkby (soprano), Kiri Te Kanawa (soprano), Patrizia Kwella (soprano), Carolyn Watkinson (contralto), Ian Partridge (tenor), David Thomas (bass), Patrizia Kwella (Esther), Anthony Rolfe Johnson (Ahasuerus), Ian Partridge (Mordecai), David Thomas (Haman), Emma Kirkby (Israelite woman), Paul Elliott (1st Israelite), Andrew King (2nd Israelite/Habdonah/Officer), Drew Minter (Priest), Westminster Cathedral Boys' Choir (chorus), Joan Sutherland (Athalia), Emma Kirkby (Josabeth), Aled Jones (Joas), James Bowman (Joad), Anthony Rolfe Johnson (Mathan), David Thomas (Abner), Choir of New College Oxford (chorus), Judith Nelson (soprano), Carolyn Watkinson (mezzo), Paul Elliott (tenor) & David Thomas (bass), Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford (chorus), Paul Elliott (tenor), Margaret Cable (mezzo), Lynee Dawson (Galatea), John Mark Ainsley (Acis), Nico van der Meel (Damon), Michael George (Polyphemus), Cecilia Bartoli (Almirena), David Daniels (Rinaldo), Bernarda Fink (Goffredo), Gerald Finley (Argante), Luba Orgonasova (Armida), Daniel Taylor (Eustazio), Bejun Mehta (A Christian Magician), James Bowman (Orlando), Arleen Augér (Angelica), Catherine Robbin (Medoro), Emma Kirkby (Dorinda) & David Thomas (Zoroastro)  
 The Academy of Ancient Music, Handel & Haydn Society\*/Christopher Hogwood

\*\* Also available on Baroque Era Volume 1.

**Joseph HAYDN (1732-1808)**

*Missa Cellensis in honorem Beatissimæ Virginis Mariæ*, in C, Hob. XXII:5 [65:53]

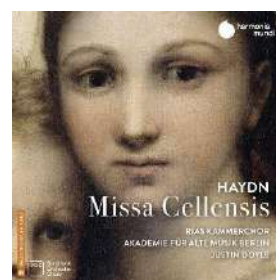
Johanna Winkel (soprano), Sophie Harmsen (alto), Benjamin Bruns (tenor), Wolf Matthias Friedrich (bass);

RIAS Kammerchor;

Akademie für Alte Musik, Berlin/Justin Doyle  
 rec. live, June 2018, Konzerthaus Berlin. DDD.

Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](http://eclassical.com).

**HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902300** [65:53]



CD available from	

Comparative recording: **CHANDOS CHAN0738** – Collegium Musicum 90/Richard Hickox (complete Mass Edition, 8 CDs). On CD 7 of this set and on the single-CD release, **CHAN0667**, the Mass is coupled with the fragmentary *Missa Sunt bona mixta malis*.

Rather confusingly, two Masses by Haydn are known as *Missa Cellensis*, both in C and both composed for the Mariazell church. The one in question here, also known as *Cäcilien-messe*, was composed in



1766 but the score was lost and the work re-composed from memory in 1773, when it was probably expanded to its present size. The other work, Hob. XXII/8 is much shorter.

There's a decent budget-price recording on Naxos **8.572122**, which John-Pierre Joyce found 'lively and theatrical but let down by some of the solo singing' – [review](#). In any case, the real bargain is to be found in the Chandos set of Richard Hickox's recordings of all the Haydn Masses: the 8-CD set is reduced by [Presto](#) to £28.40 as I write; [Amazon UK](#) have it for the regular price of £29.80 and the lossless download from [chandos.net](#), with pdf booklet, costs £29.99.

This large-scale work, from early in Haydn's tenure at the Esterházy court, receives an attractive performance and those who demand 24-bit sound will be happy with it, but it's likely to cost around £15 in that format\*. The Hickox, though the box set is in mp3 or 16-bit only, is available separately in 24-bit download form for £11.99, and very good 24-bit it is, in no way inferior to the new Harmonia Mundi. Where the new recording dances along, the Chandos is even more terpsichorean under Hickox's direction and the soloists finer still than the very accomplished new team. Try the third *Kyrie* in both versions for comparison; you would hardly believe that Hickox is just one minute faster – the dance rhythm, worthy of Bach, sounds ever so slightly squashed on the new recording. Yet, were the Chandos recording not available, I would have no hesitation in praising the new account.

\* [eclassical.com](#) are initially offering 24-bit for the same price as 16-bit, \$13.33.

### A Diversion: Haydn and the *lira organizzata* and the baryton

The current BBC TV adaptation of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, whose heroine has the unusual name Lyra, reminded me of the long defunct instrument the *lira organizzata*, a hurdy-gurdy-like contraption with organ pipes, not to be confused with the lyre, for which Haydn wrote several works for the King of Naples, a devotee of the instrument. Some time ago I reviewed a Naxos CD of concertos for two *lira organizzate* which rather disappointingly turned out to consist of arrangements for recorders, flutes and oboe: a pleasant album, but hardly the real thing – [review](#). A BIS recording is similarly, disappointingly, arranged – [review](#). In fact, as no specimen of the *lira* has survived, and most of the music exists only in arrangement, it seems unlikely that we shall ever hear it as Haydn composed it – unless some very enterprising DMus student can reconstruct the instrument and the music. It may be that in Heaven, to quote *The Lost Chord*, we shall hear that lost refrain. Here's hoping.

We do, however, have recordings of the other strange instrument for which Haydn composed over 100 trios, the *baryton*, played by his Esterházy employer – brought to life by Guido Balestracci (baryton) and his companions on a Ricercar recording of these works, as recommended by Johan van Veen (**RIC315** – [review](#)). The Brilliant Classics box to which JV refers has been more conveniently split up into five 4½- to 5-hour sections as downloads, around £9.75 each in lossless sound.

BIS also made a series of recordings of Haydn's music for his Esterházy employers and for the King of Naples, gathered together as a 6-CD set – [review](#) – which can be downloaded from [eclassical.com](#) for \$24.91; it's important to follow this link, as they also have it for almost twice the price and other providers are asking over £57 for the lossless version. The CDs are currently reduced by [Presto](#) from £41.50 to £31.12.



#### Jozef ZEIDLER (1744-1806)

*Missa pastoritia* (Christmas Mass) [24:33]

#### Antoni HABEL (1760-1831)

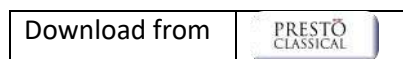
*Sinfonia* in F [18:01]

Iwona Socha (soprano), Magdalena Kulig (mezzo), Tomasz Krzysica (tenor), Wojciech Gierlach (bass)

Polski Chór Kameralny Schola Cantorum Gedanensis



Polska Orkiestra Sinfonia Iuventus/Paweł Przytocki  
**DUX DUX1218** [42:47] (Download only)



Zeidler's Christmas Mass is one of three such compositions to which he gave the title *Missa pastoritia*, literally Mass of the Shepherds. Like the more familiar Charpentier *Messe de Minuit*, and Ryba's Czech Christmas Mass, it employs Christmas music which would have been familiar to the hearers, in this case from Polish tradition. It's a charming work – more refined in tone than the Ryba – and it receives a sympathetic if not perfectly polished performance.

As a contemporary of Haydn who transcribed his music, it's hardly surprising that the Habel symphony sounds similar to his work, if noticeably less inspired. This is one of only two recordings of his music – the other, again coupled with Zeidler, is also on Dux – and it's certainly worth hearing, at least as streamed from [Naxos Music Library](#), where you can find other Zeidler recordings from Dux.

Unfortunately, one thing that Dux recordings seem to have in common is their (often very) short playing time.

### Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791)

Serenade No.10 in B-flat, K361('Gran Partita', 1781) [50:32]

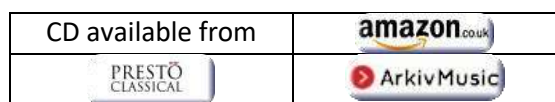
Serenade No.11 in E-flat, K375 [26:41]

European Union Chamber Orchestra/Santiago Mantas

rec. All Saints' Church, East Finchley, London, 16-17 November, 2015. DDD.

First recording of complete K361.

**DIVINE ART DDA25136** [77:21]



This CD has been gathering dust on a pile of discs that I thought I had reviewed some considerable time ago – in fact, around the time of John France's [review](#). It's

especially regrettable, in that I liked the recording as much as he did – the neglect in no way reflects my opinion of the performance or the sound quality. At least the delay has allowed me to list more purchase links.

Don't get too excited by the 'first recording' claim; it merely amounts to a rectification of a few bars, so earlier recordings are by no means ruled out. Among these are Berlin Philharmonic Wind Ensemble (Nos. 10 and 11, as here, Warner **3434242**, download only) and Sabine Meyer Wind Ensemble, 'an attractive proposition [and] solid value' – [review](#) (Nos. 10-12, etc., Warner **2153052**, a 3-CD super-budget set, now download only).

## RECOMMENDED

### Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791)

#### Piano Sonatas Volume 4

Piano Sonata No.7 in C, K309 [19:35]

Piano Sonata No.11 in A, K331 'Alla Turca' [27:24]

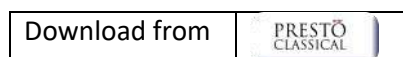
Piano Sonata No.15 in F, K533/494 [27:44]

Piano Sonata No.18 in D major, K576 'Hunt' [17:44]

Christian Blackshaw (piano)

rec. live Wigmore Hall, London, 5 January 2013. DDD.

**WIGMORE HALL LIVE WHLIVE0078** [2 CDs: 92:40]



I was under the apparently mistaken assumption that I had reviewed this fourth and final volume in Wigmore Hall Live's distinguished series of recordings of Christian Blackshaw's performances of the Mozart piano sonatas,

back in 2015. In an attempt to make amends after such a long hiatus, I need only say that this is just as fine as Albert Lamm thought in the case of WHL0061 in [DL News 2014/3](#). Though I received it on two CDs, it's download only from most dealers (target price for lossless sound £9).

### Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Piano Concerto No.2 in B flat, Op.41 [28:44]

Piano Concerto No.5 in E flat, Op.73 'Emperor' [37:36]

Martin Helmchen (piano)

Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin/Andrew Manze

rec. October 2018, Teldex Studio, Berlin (No.2) and May 2019, Berliner Philharmonie (No.5)

Reviewed as mp3 press preview.

**ALPHA 555** [66:23]



CD available from	

We may associate Andrew Manze with baroque music, but recently he has been moving away from his base, with recordings of, for example, Vaughan

Williams, a variable series which has recently concluded with a recording of his shorter works which I very much enjoyed (**ONYX4212** – [review](#); [review](#) by Simon Thompson). This is, I believe, only Andrew Manze's third foray into Beethoven: hitherto he has recorded the Violin Concerto (with James Ehnes and Liverpool Phil, **ONYX4167: Recording of the Month** – [review](#)) and the Third Symphony in Helsingborg (Harmonia Mundi **HMU807470**).

Michael Greenhalgh compared Manze's 'stylish' account of No.2 in a detailed [review](#) of a recent Naxos coupling of Nos. 1 and 2, to which he gave 'recommended' status. Certainly, this is, as I expected, a stylishly accompanied account of No.2, perhaps a little understated, but that's not inappropriate for this early work, which still owes much to Haydn and Mozart. The *Emperor* is equally straight but satisfying; though many will be looking for something more barnstorming<sup>1</sup> from all concerned. I enjoyed an album which reminded me of the civilised Beethoven typified by Wilhelm Kempff's recordings with Ferdinand Leitner, still my benchmark in so many respects (DG: Nos. 4 and 5 **4474022**, mid-price; 1-5 **4272372**, download only).

<sup>1</sup> More 'imperial', perhaps, though the name 'Emperor' applies only in English-speaking countries.

### Anton BRUCKNER (1824-1896)

Symphony No.1 in c minor (Vienna version, 1891, ed. Brosche) [50:10]

Symphony No.9 in d minor (ed. Nowak) [63:06]

Lucerne Festival Orchestra/Claudio Abbado

rec. live Concert Hall of KKL Lucerne, August 2012 and 2013. DDD.

**ACCENTUS ACC30489** [50:10 + 63:06] For purchase details [see review by Michael Wilkinson](#)



BBC Music Magazine rated this a 5+5-star recording, but Michael Wilkinson expressed some doubts about No.1 which, I must say, I share. It's not just the decision to use the 1891 revision, when most prefer one of the earlier editions; somehow it doesn't quite hang together the way that Abbado's Bruckner usually does, and I found myself noticing the inevitable repetitions and joins in the aural wallpaper more than usual. When everything comes right in the finale – music and performance – it's a little too late.

Abbado seems to have preferred the 1891 version, having recorded it with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra in 2013, again for Accentus. Having enjoyed several of Valery Gergiev's recordings of Bruckner, live in St Florian with the Munich Philharmonic, I was not surprised to find Michael Cookson praising his account of No.1 in the 1877 Linz edition – [review](#).

On the face of, the very fine performance of No.9 seems hard to recommend when it's coupled with this No.1, but there's a simple solution: the DG recording of this symphony with Abbado was also made live in Lucerne in August 2013. It represents a conflation of several concert recordings including, in part, the one presented on Accent and it received a plethora of praise (**4793441: Recording of the Month** – [review](#) – [DL News 2014/10](#)).



**Pyotr Il'yich TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)**

The Nutcracker, Op.71 (1892)

Gary Avis - Herr Drosselmeyer

Anna Rose O'Sullivan - Clara

Vadim Muntagirov - The Prince

Marcelino Sambé - Hans-Peter / The Nutcracker

Marianela Nuñez - The Sugar Plum Fairy

Orchestra of the Royal Opera House/Barry Wordsworth

Peter Wright after Lev Ivanov and Marius Petipa - choreographer

Julie Trevelyan Oman – designer

Directed for the screen by Ross Macgibbon

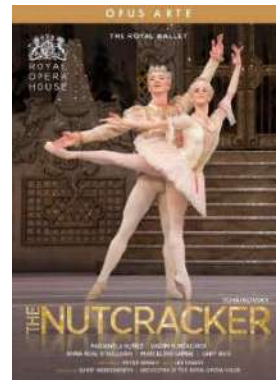
Rec. 3 December 2018, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London.

Picture 16:9 anamorphic

LPCM stereo, 4:1 DTS surround sound

NTSC/PAL compatible

**OPUS ARTE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE COLLECTION OA1290D DVD** [107 minutes plus 9 minutes extras]



DVD available from	

Also available as **OABD7259D Blu-ray** (reviewed by [Rob Maynard](#))

Barry Wordsworth and Peter Wright are old *Nutcracker* hands: the forerunner of this production was first performed at Covent Garden in December 1984. Wright notes, in the kind of question-and-answer format that has become common in booklets recently, how his view of the ballet has developed since then, via a Birmingham production in which Drosselmeyer remained on stage throughout Act II and became essentially the central character. Clara, too, is given more to do in this act, without any of this in any way proving irksome to those who dislike meddling – I'm pleased to note that Wright eschews any attempts at a Freudian subtext: 'I don't go in for all that, not in these sorts of ballets'.

I'm also pleased to note that he regards the music as the greatest draw, even though he is the producer-choreographer and that, without quite saying that *Nutcracker* is his favourite Tchaikovsky ballet, 'it's a wonderful score [with] some his best things in it'. *D'accord*.

Any opera or ballet recording worth keeping has to be satisfying when played in audio only, *sans* picture. DVD sound can sometimes be disappointing when played on good equipment, so I'm pleased to report complete satisfaction in that regard, especially as there seem to be problems with the blu-ray – see below – normally to be recommended for better audio.

Would I choose this *Nutcracker* as an audio experience in preference to my favourites on CD? A whole line of these began with Antal Doráti, whose single-LP selection from his Minneapolis complete recording, on a strange Philips offshoot, the 'Wing' label, sold of all places in Singer sewing machine shops for 10 shillings (£0.50), opened up for me vistas beyond the Suite; his LSO recording can still be obtained as a [Presto special CD set](#) or as a download (Mercury **4327502**) or on 2-for-1 Decca Duo (**4425622**, with *Sleeping Beauty* highlights) and his Concertgebouw remake is on Philips **E4647472**, both reasonably priced. I still like Ernest Ansermet's recording on budget-price Australian Decca Eloquence (**4800557**, with Suites Nos. 3 and 4).

Sir Simon Rattle's EMI recording received mixed reviews, but I still like it as much as when I made it Download of the Month in [December 2010](#), in preference even to Ansermet and Richard Bonyngé (Double Decca 2-for-1 **4448272**, with Offenbach *Le Papillon*). The Rattle remains available from Warner in de-luxe (**6316212**) or standard (**6463852**) editions, the latter good value at around £16.50. (There's also a single-CD highlights album for around £8.50.) The best bargain of all comes in the form of André Previn's recording from his heyday with the LSO (Warner **9676942**, with Løvenskiold *La Sylphide*).

In that interview in the booklet Wright points to the Waltz of the Snowflakes and the Journey to the Land of Sweets as the musical highlights of *Nutcracker*. Compare those scenes on this DVD *sans* picture with the audio recordings that I've mentioned and there's very little to choose between them. As, indeed, there is in the magical transformation scene, here almost as wonderful without the visuals as it is with them. And the fight with the mice is as exciting as any. Of course, seeing adds an extra dimension, but I sometimes want just to listen as see with the mind's eye, and for that the new DVD will do just as well.

Turning to the visuals, bargain lovers may wish to consider a less expensive 1985 Covent Garden DVD of Peter Wright's earlier version of this production, with Gennadi Rozhdestvensky conducting (Warner **0630193942** – [review](#)). The 2009 production, on DVD or blu-ray, also remains available at around the same price as the newer recording.

Another inexpensive version, around £16 on blu-ray, comes from the Royal Dutch ballet and transfers the action from Christmas to St Nicholas' Day, when traditionally presents are given in Holland. I missed some of the Christmas elements, and thought the presentation rather shabby, but otherwise liked that recording, especially with its price advantage and 150 minutes of bonus material (Arthaus **108087** – [review](#)).

I wasn't unduly fazed by the changes made in that Dutch production and I'm certainly not put out by the greater prominence throughout the new Covent Garden version by the presence of Drosselmeyer as the magician in whose workshop the whole action takes place. His presence is not obtrusive and it makes sense to transfer him from the slightly mysterious counsellor – with an eyepatch in the original – who attends the proceedings to the central, guiding character. Gary Avis, Wright's Drosselmeyer in several productions, is ideal for the part; it's not for nothing that he's been described in some quarters as a national treasure.

That and the greater involvement of Clara in Act II help to overcome the problem that has often been pointed to as the weakness of this ballet, the apparent disparity between the two acts – one of the reasons why the first performance was unsuccessful. Taking a leaf from ETA Hoffman's original story, the *Nutcracker* becomes Drosselmeyer's nephew, who can be freed from his transformation only by the love of Clara. As laid out in the synopsis in the booklet, it makes sense.

Julia Trevelyan Oman's costume designs add to the opulence and desirability of this recording. As, too, does the setting in mid-nineteenth-century Germany, as per Hoffman's 1816 *Der Nussknacker und der Mausekönig*.

So, music, design and the guiding figure of Drosselmeyer are all in place, but that still doesn't make an ideal *Nutcracker* without the rest of the dancers. Much as I enjoyed the Royal Dutch version, everything is even more perfect at Covent Garden, from Clara and the Sugar Plum Fairy from the principals down to the corps de ballet.

Rob Maynard, reviewing the blu-ray, echoes one very much less than grunted customer on Amazon UK. who reports that the picture becomes fuzzy in places, that the dancers jump about when they should not, and that the fault is common to all the copies tried. On this occasion, the older DVD



technology seems to be preferable, with no appreciable judder noted from either my blu-ray player or the PC. In all other respects, my opinion accords exactly with RM's; this is a Nutcracker to reckon with the best.

### Antonín DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

Complete Symphonies

Staatskapelle Berlin/Otmar Suitner

rec. 1979-1983. DDD.

**BRILLIANT CLASSICS QUINTESSENCE 96043** [43:09 + 77:33 + 75:25 + 78:16 + 78:17]



CD available from	

This complete set of the Dvořák symphonies, licensed from Berlin Classics, for around £15 (currently reduced by Presto to £10.50; download from Qobuz with booklet for £8.50) looks like – and is – a real bargain. I've been able only to dip into the set, but nothing that I heard sounds amiss. The whole set fits on five CDs thanks to some pruning of the earlier symphonies, but the composer pruned four out of existence himself. For more money the Kertész set (Decca **4786459**, 9 CDs, with Tone Poems) would be preferable, supplemented with individual symphonies from the likes of Mackerras, Ancerl (both Supraphon) and Kubelík (DG), but these Suitner recordings would make a good, inexpensive alternative. The recording is good but hardly outstanding.

In earlier incarnations, still available, the symphonies were coupled with the composer's other orchestral music (**95297**, 9 CDs – [review](#)) and as part of the Brilliant Box of Dvořák's music (**95100**, 45 CDs).

### Ernö (Ernst von) DOHNÁNYI (1877-1960)

Piano Quintet No.1 in c minor, Op.1 (1895) [30:40]

String Quartet No. 2 in D flat, Op.15 (1906) [24:32]

Piano Quintet No.2 in e flat minor, Op.26 (1914) [25:43]

Marc-André Hamelin (piano)

Takács Quartet

rec. Concert Hall, Wyastone, Monmouth, 12-15 August 2018. DDD.

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

**HYPERION CDA68238** [81:00] For purchase details see [review](#) by Chris Ramsden: 'A splendid recording of undervalued, infrequently played music'.



Download in 16- and 24-bit from	
---------------------------------	--

Hyperion already had a fine recording of the two quintets, performed by the Schubert Ensemble of London and available at mid-price on their Helios label (**CDH55412**, with Serenade in C for string trio). Like the new recording, it offers ample playing time (75 minutes) when other combinations of the quintets or one of the quintets and a quartet are much less generous. David Barker compared the Helios favourably with a rival, much shorter (54 minutes), recording on Naxos – [review](#). Helios recordings are no longer quite as inexpensive, but the Dohnányi can be found on CD for around £8.50 or downloaded in lossless sound for £7.99 from [Hyperion](http://Hyperion). And Naxos prices have been hiked to around £7.50 or even more recently.

Like DJB, I enjoyed the Helios recording, thinking a download-only Hungaroton rival only very slightly preferable (**HCD11624**: Quintet No.2 and Sextet, Tátrai Quartet – [DL News 2014/10](#)). Now, by a small margin, the new recording becomes first choice.

If the only music by Dohnányi that you know is the familiar *Nursery Variations*, these chamber works are very different. That's an enjoyable piece which deserves its popularity, and the 5-CD Chandos set

which contains it and several other less-known orchestral works by the composer, such as the *Ruralia Hungarica*, is well worth exploring (**CHAN10906(5)X** – [review](#) – [review](#) – [DL News 2016/8](#)<sup>1</sup>). I took the opportunity to dip into that box of orchestral delights again, and greatly enjoyed it. That said, the quintets, the quartet and the Serenade, recorded in various permutations on these albums, are equally attractive in such fine performances, either from the older Helios or Hungaroton albums or, in 24-bit sound, the new recording.

<sup>1</sup> I'm pleased to report that the lossless download, from [chandos.net](#), now costs less than before, at £23.95, with mp3 at £14.97. The download from other suppliers, however, still tends to cost more – much more – than the CDs. *Caveat emptor*. Incidentally, that edition of DL News announced that I was ceasing to edit the regular round-ups. What ever happened to that resolution?

**Sergey Sergeevich PROKOFIEV (1891–1953)**

*Scythian Suite*, Op.20, from the ballet *Ala et Lolly* [20:01]

Suite from *The Steel Dance (Le Pas d'acier)*, 'A ballet of construction', Op. 41a [13:19]

*Alexander Nevsky*, Op.78, Cantata for mezzo-soprano, chorus and orchestra, from the music to the film\* [40:02]

Linda Finnie (contralto)

Scottish National Orchestra Chorus

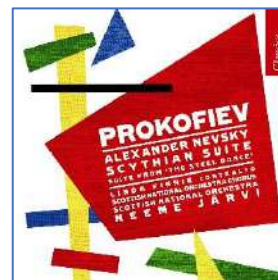
Scottish National Orchestra/Neeme Järvi

rec. Glasgow City Hall; 28 & 29 September 1988 (The Steel Dance), Caird Hall, Dundee; 21–23 August 1987 (other works). DDD.

Texts and translations included.

Reviewed as lossless download with pdf booklet from [chandos.net](#). (NB: earlier release still available to download at a higher price.)

**CHANDOS CHAN10482X** [73:45] See [review by Tony Haywood](#): 'stands out even in a crowded field'.



*Scythian Suite* Op.20 from *Ala et Lolly* [23:28]

*Alexander Nevsky*, Op.78 [39:19]

Ludmila Schemtschuk (mezzo)

Danish National Symphony Choir

Danish National Symphony Orchestra/Dmitri Kitajenko

rec. Danish Radio Concert Hall, Copenhagen, 26 January 1990. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

Reviewed as lossless download with pdf booklet from [chandos.net](#).

**CHANDOS CHAN9001** [62:57]



Järvi CD available from	
Kitajenko CDR available from	

Both of these recordings emerged well from Ralph Moore's [recent survey](#) of *Alexander Nevsky* on record: the Järvi was one of his second-line recommendations and the Kitajenko would have scored more highly if the recording had been more lifelike. Others, without decrying the recording, thought that the performance

failed to catch fire, much preferring Järvi. This review arose from the fact that I had previously listened to the Järvi only in mp3 and to the Kitajenko not at all.

I remember sitting enthralled to the 1938 Eisenstein film as an undergraduate – the Battle on the Ice shot on a bomb site but made to look like a huge area, well before CGI was even imagined and even before he came across German colour film towards the end of WW2 – and though neither of these recordings can quite recreate that visual experience, they both stir the memory. Fritz Reiner still finds a valued place in my listening (RCA Living Stereo **09026637082**, download only, with Khachaturian

Violin Concerto, Kogan and Monteux – [review](#) – [review](#)), but these two recordings come close. The *Scythian Suite*, however, on both recordings, is best ignored.

### Sergei PROKOFIEV

Violin Concerto No.1 in D, Op.19<sup>1</sup> [20:43]

Symphony No.3 in c minor, Op.44 [34:58]

*Chout*, Op.21 bis (The Buffoon, complete ballet with narration)<sup>2</sup> [49:48]

*Rêves*, Op.6 (Dreams) [10:41]

Vadim Repin (violin)<sup>1</sup>

Simon Callow (narrator)<sup>2</sup>

London Philharmonic Orchestra/Alexander Lazarev

rec. live Southbank Centre, Royal Festival Hall, London, 28 November 1997 (Violin Concerto No.1, *Chout* and *Rêves*) and 30 November 1997 (Symphony No.3). DDD.

**LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA LPO0107** [55:49 + 60:41] (2 CDs for around the price of one).



CD available from	

A DG release includes Lisa Batiashvili's recording of both Prokofiev violin concertos, with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Yannick Nézet-Séguin

(**4798529**, *Visions of Prokofiev*, with excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cinderella* and *Love for Three Oranges*). John Quinn thought these performances classy – [review](#) – and my only reason not to make them my benchmark would be the bitty nature of the programme, with three short extracts from the three ballets instead of a substantial filler, and the very poor excuse for a booklet of notes, sadly par for the course in recent years with personality-oriented DG and Decca releases. That means that I continue to prefer Kyung-Wha Chung's and André Previn's classic recording (Decca **4767226**, with Stravinsky Violin Concerto, [Presto special CD](#), or **4250032**, download only). Lazarev can compare with the best, but, while it's fine to have Concerto No.1 as part of a concert, on CD I really want it to be paired with No.2, so it's back to Chung or Batiashvili.

Again, if you have Neeme Järvi's SNO recordings of all seven Prokofiev symphonies (Chandos **CHAN10500(4)X**, currently reduced by Presto from £17.50 to £14.87: the download is more expensive even than the regular price) or his coupling of Nos. 3 and 4 (**CHAN8401**, download, around £10 in lossless), you may not want this recording of No.3, good as it is.

Recordings of the complete ballet *Chout*, as opposed to the Suite, are rare. This is not the first, as I have seen stated in some places – not so claimed by LPO – but there are only two current rivals, on CPO and on Melodiya, the latter on a single release or in a multi-CD set – [review](#). While it's very amusing to hear Simon Callow's funny accents once or twice, as with Peter Ustinov's *Háry Janos*, I sound find myself wanting to return to the suite.

If you don't share my reservations about wanting the concertos and symphonies together, this is an attractive release. But beware of dealers charging more for the download.

### Pan-American Reflections

**Aaron COPLAND (1900-1990)**

Symphony No.3 (1944-1946) [40:57]

**Carlos CHÁVEZ (1899-1978)**

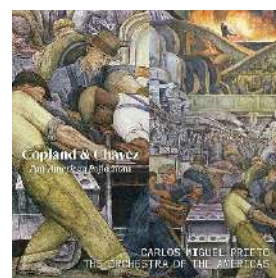
Symphony No.2 'Sinfonía India' (1935-1936) [11:29]

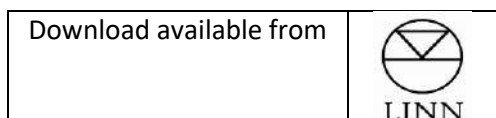
The Orchestra of the Americas/Carlos Miguel Prieto

rec. live, 14-15 July 2018, The Krzysztof Penderecki European Centre for Music, Łusławice, Poland

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

**LINN CKD604** [52:37] For purchase details please see review by [John Quinn](#).





My love of the Copland goes right back to the composer's own Everest recording with the LSO, as released in the UK by World Record Club. It was one of their special series, all of which had a wood-grain effect on the cover, and it was

indeed special. It remains available on CD for around £7, or as a download for around £8.50 in lossless sound<sup>1</sup> (CD: Everest **EVERCD002**, with *Billy the Kid*; download: **4803306631**, Symphony only – [review](#) of earlier reissue). It remains my benchmark despite the availability of some very fine more recent recordings, not least because Everest recordings were always among the best aurally.

The cover of the new recording shows an industrialised America – the Detroit motor industry – whereas Copland's music for me resounds with the wide-open spaces, just as much in this performance as on the best recordings of the work. It's a powerful work, but the power comes from its being related in Copland's mind with the end World War II rather than from the power of industry. It's also rather short value and, though it's available in 24-bit, there's no SACD equivalent, as there is with John Wilson's more generously coupled and very fine Chandos recording (**CHSA5225** – [review](#) – [review](#) – [Autumn 2018/3](#))

<sup>1</sup> Qobuz are asking a ridiculous £25.99 (16-bit) or £29.99 (24-bit).

### Cinema Classics

#### Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

*The Gadfly*, Op.97a [42:04]

USSR Cinema Symphony Orchestra/Emin Khachaturian  
rec. ADD/stereo, 1962.

#### Williams WALTON (1902-1983)

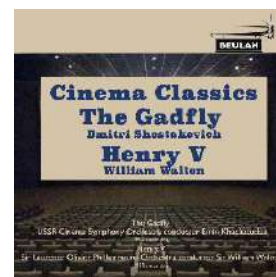
*Henry V*: excerpts [27:26]

Sir Laurence Olivier

Philharmonia Orchestra/William Walton

rec. ADD/mono, 1946. Reissued on LP, 1959.

**BEULAH 1PS56** [69:31]



Due shortly – check [eavb.co.uk](http://eavb.co.uk) and choose Qobuz download in lossless sound at the same price as mp3 from others.

This recording of the *Gadfly* suite, first released in the UK on EMI ASD3309, has generally been regarded as the one to have. With first-rate and sympathetic playing from the USSR Cinema SO, the sound, too, was a cut above most of the recordings then emanating from the Soviet Union – even EMI couldn't always make much of them and Melodiya's own MK releases sounded as if they had been pressed on sand-paper. With this recording, though recently available on budget-price Classics for Pleasure, now out of the catalogue, except on a label I have never heard of, the Beulah reissue is most welcome.

42 minutes was about par for the course on LP, but the new release adds a generous selection of Walton's *Henry V* music, conducted by the composer, with Laurence Olivier in a variety of roles, recorded in 1946. That's even more a classic than the Shostakovich and it's otherwise available only as a quite expensive download or on Alto **ALC1026** (with *Façade* and *Orb and Sceptre* – [review](#)). The sound is good for its age, although, inevitably, dry.

My only reservation is my liking for the longer (67-minute) recreation which Chandos recorded with Christopher Plummer as the narrator, the ASMF and Neville Marriner, and in more modern sound quality. The reissue on **CHAN10437** – [review](#) – can be obtained for around £7 on CD, and the 24-bit download is reduced as I write from £11.99 to £8.39 from [chandos.net](http://chandos.net). The 24-bit is marginally preferable to the 16-bit wma from which I made that review.



**Witold LUTOSŁAWSKI (1913–1994)**



Twenty Polish Christmas Carols for soprano, female choir and orchestra [40:05]

*Lacrimosa* for soprano, choir and orchestra [3:37]

Five Songs [10:39]

Olga Pasichnyk (soprano), Jadwiga Rappé (alto)

Polish Radio Chorus, Kraków

Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra (Katowice)/Antoni Wit

rec. Grzegorz Fitelberg Concert Hall, Katowice, 3-5 December, 2001 and 15 January, 1997

**NAXOS 8.555994** [54:22]



Stream from	
-------------	--

Your Polish may not be that hot, but you will recognise some of these carols in other clothing. This is a much more amenable recording than the version for tenor and piano

which I reviewed some time ago (**DUX0383** – [review](#)), and it offers another quarter of an hour of music – it’s still rather short, but not as short as the Dux, and it comes at budget price, especially if you choose the lossless download, with pdf booklet, for £3.79. In any event, the Dux is not now generally available.

**John WILLIAMS (b.1932)**

**Music from the *Star Wars* Saga – The Essential Collection**

Members of the Slovak Philharmonic Choir,

The Slovak National Symphony Orchestra/Robert Ziegler

Download only

**SONY G0100041858264** [80:47]



Stream from	
-------------	--

This is a generous download-only selection of music from the *Star Wars* films. It

should appeal to fans of John Williams’ music, but it comes at rather a high price, as much as £11.52 for lossless, and there’s no booklet. Best to stream from Naxos Music Library.