

## Second Thoughts and Short Reviews Winter 2018/2019\_Part 1

by Brian Wilson and Dan Morgan

Reviews are by Brian Wilson unless signed [DM]

Autumn 2018/3 is [here](#) and Autumn 2018/2 is [here](#).

### ***Caveat emptor!***

I've recently noticed a considerable disparity between retailers in the price of CDs, DVDs and blu-rays. Leaving special offers aside, one dealer may be asking around £10-£11 for a CD which another dealer prices at over £16. That's as nothing, however, compared with illogical pricing for downloads. Why, for example, would you wish to pay £55.20 for a 16-bit download of the Hallé *Götterdämmerung*, without the booklet, when the CDs cost £27.75, currently on offer from the same dealer for £20.81? Hyperion will sell you the 16-bit version of this for £25.00 and additionally offer superior 24-bit for just a little more at £28.15, in both cases with the booklet.

To take just one example from this review: leaving aside special offers, the Mayr motets on Naxos can be found on CD for as little as £7.50 and for as much as £10. The mp3 download can cost more than the CD, at £7.89, or as little as £4.51 from a dealer who offers the lossless download for £5.42 and 24-bit for £7.89, best quality for exactly the same price as the other dealer's less than ideal mp3! Yet another provider offers even better value for the lossless download (£3.83) and 24-bit for £5.75! The answer is always to shop around.

I frequently have to warn that a particular recording is vastly over-priced as a download by comparison with the equivalent on disc – it's especially a problem with box sets, as in the case of the Arnold sets mentioned in my review of his Little Suites (below). It's also all too often the case that only the well-informed will make much of some music when it comes without notes.

These specific warnings apart, certain providers are serial offenders in offering albums to the unsuspecting at considerably inflated prices. Emusic.com comes with such a warning, though they do also offer some real bargains; with tracks at £0.42 each – less for certain monthly tariffs – a Bruckner or Mahler symphony is excellent value at £1.68, in mp3 but at full-strength 320kb/s, and maybe even with the booklet. One of my favourite recordings of Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* directed by Sergio Vartolo on Brilliant Classics can be downloaded from emusic.com for just £10.50, except that the CDs (no longer available) came with a large luxurious booklet, which is completely absent from the download.

I recently warned readers that emusic's offering of classical music had been drastically reduced, with very few labels on offer now. I hate it to seem that I'm pursuing a vendetta, but their vague offering of 'jam-tomorrow' still hasn't materialised, and I must also repeat my warning to be very careful in making purchases of recordings of music with many short tracks, especially from one of the few classical labels which they retain, Brilliant Classics – the Monteverdi is very much an exception.

Brilliant is a budget-price label, whose multi-CD offerings are especially good value. Their Vivaldi super box is particularly recommendable, but some of the shorter selection from it are also very tempting on CD: the complete Op.3 concertos, for example, in fine performances from L'Arte dell'Arco, for as little as £7.97. Try to buy that or the Op.4 set as a download from one dealer who charges £9.25 for the discs, and you'll find mp3 costing £15.98 and lossless for £19.17 with no booklet included. From emusic, in mp3 only and booklet-less, the cost is £15.54. From Qobuz the same sets in lossless sound cost £6.47 each; Op.4 from 7digital is £5.49, though again without the booklet in both cases.

The 3-CD set of Vivaldi's oboe concertos is even worse: it's reduced from £10.50 to £8.40 from Presto as I write, but costs £23.97 in mp3 and £28.77 in lossless from them – and again with no booklet. If you're happy with mp3, that's £5.49 from 7digital. Or the 2-CD set of Vivaldi's Op.2 violin sonatas, again less than £9 on CD, is £17.64 without booklet from emusic. Even Qobuz, who charge £6.47 for the other 2-CD sets, make this £10.79 for no logical reason.

The Brilliant Classics complete Vivaldi Op.1 to Op.12 box (around £38 on CD) comes, like Gaul, in three parts as a download; volumes 1 and 3 (no volume 2) from 7digital cost £8.99 each for almost 7 hours of music (mp3, no booklet). Yet volume 1 from emusic costs a whopping £53.76 and volume 3 £56.28 (again mp3, no booklet). I repeat that I'm not trying to pillory anyone – just warning readers to be careful in selecting a source for purchase in the minefield of pricing. Why pay £56 for mp3 of one third of what you can buy in superior quality on CD for £38?

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**Recommended**

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Reissue of the Month

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**Abendmusiken**

**Johann THEILE (1646-1724) Sonata duplex a 3 [5:26]**

**Diterich BUXTEHUDE (1637-1707) Sonata in C, BuxWV266 [8:48]**

**Philipp Heinrich ERLEBACH (1657-1714) Sonata No.5 for violin and viola da gamba in e minor [10:03]**

**Diterich BUXTEHUDE Sonata in G, BuxWV271 [9:32]**

**Johann Adam REINKEN (1637?-1722) Hortus Musicus IV in d minor [17:00]**

Ensemble Stravaganza [Louis Creac'h (violin Jean Frébrunet, second half of the XVIIIth century) / bow Solange Chivas, 2011); Robin Phato (bass viol 7 strings Judith Kraft, Paris, 2012 after Guillaume Barbey, 1687 / bow Craig Ryder); Vincent Maurice (theorbo Eric Stefanelli, 2000, after Tieffenbrucker); Chloé Sévère (positive organ by Johan Deblieck, 1997)]/Thomas Soltani (harpsichord Reinhard von Nagel, 2010, after N. & François Blanchet, Paris, 1730), Domitille Gilon (violin Louis Lagetto (1750) / bow Léonard Tourte (1750)

rec. Église Notre-Dame de Bon Secours, Paris, 17 to 20 October 2017. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

**MUSO MU025 [50:59]**



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It's not so long ago that I was not alone in welcoming a delightful recording of Buxtehude's *Abendmusiken* containing a mixed programme of choral and instrumental music as performed in Lübeck on Sunday evenings (**ALPHA287** – [Summer 2018/1](#)). Now Muso have released an all-instrumental collection which adds to two sonatas by Buxtehude music by his friends Theile and Reinken and one piece by the central-German composer Erlebach. The two Buxtehude works are different from those on Alpha, and these energetic performance by Ensemble Stravaganza, who live up to their name, also hit the right spot.

The only slight oddity – mention of Hamburg and the inclusion on the cover of a map of that city might lead the reader to believe that the *Abendmusiken*, begun by Tunder and developed by Buxtehude, were held in that city. It's Reinken whose music was performed there, while Erlebach never worked anywhere in North Germany.

An earlier incarnation of this ensemble, led by Gilon and Soltani, but with otherwise quite different personnel, recorded Habsburg court music by **BIBER, SCHMELZER, FROBERGER, WALTHER** and **MATTEIS** Junior for Aparté in 2011 (**AP041**, download only, or stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)).

That album – their recording debut? – is attractive, but there are even better performances of Biber's music, including several very fine versions of the Rosary or Mystery sonatas complete: only one of which, *The Crucifixion*, is included here.



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

***Per la Tromba & il Corno Da Cacci***

Suite in F (TWV 44: F16) for 2 horns, 2 oboes & bassoon [11:11]

Menuet (TWV 40: 110) à 2 Cornes de Chasse [1:12]

Concerto in F (attributed to Telemann) for 2 oboes & bassoon [7:05]

**Anonymous** [Rostocker] Suite in E-flat for trumpet, 2 oboes & bassoon [14:51]

**Maximilian FIEDLER (fl.1750)** Concerto à 3 in E-flat à Cornu de Chasse Primo, Cornu de Chasse Secondo e Basso vel Fagotto (2 horns & bassoon) [5:46]

**Georg Philipp TELEMANN** Concerto in D (TWV 43: D7) for trumpet, 2 oboes & basso continuo (bassoon, harpsichord) [14:56]

*Air de trompette* in C (TWV 41: C1) for trumpet & basso continuo (bassoon, harpsichord) [0:59]

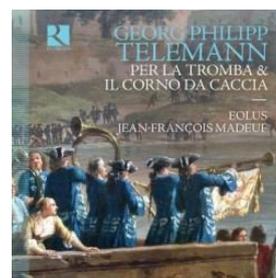
March in F (TWV 50: F43) for 2 horns, 3 oboes, bassoon & drum [2:15]

Ensemble Eolus [Jean-François Madeuf (trumpet & horn); Pierre-Yves Madeuf (horn); Elsa Franck & Johanne Maître (oboe); Jérémie Papasergio (bassoon); Elisabeth Geiger (harpsichord)] with Philippe Canguilhem (oboe); Jean Chamboux (drum)

rec. Centeilles, Église Notre-Dame, June 2018. DDD.

Reviewed as streamed with booklet from [Naxos Music Library](http://Naxos Music Library)

**RICERCAR RIC397** [57:48] See [review by Curtis Rogers](#).



I made Camerata Köln's Telemann *Concerti da Camera* from CPO a **Recording of the Month** in December 2018 – [review](#). While the new Ricercar is enjoyable, the music on CPO digs deeper and is ultimately more recommendable.

**Joseph HAYDN (1732-1809)**

Symphony No. 26 in d minor 'Lamentatione' [16:30]

**Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791)**

Violin Concerto No.3 in G, K216<sup>1</sup> [23:35]

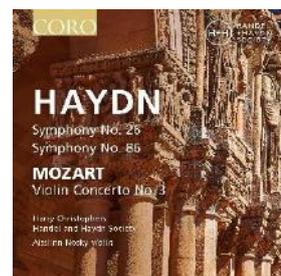
**Joseph HAYDN**

Symphony No.86 in D [29:01]

rec. live Symphony Hall, Boston, USA, 27 & 29 January, 2017. DDD.

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

**CORO COR16158** [69:12]



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**Joseph HAYDN**

Symphony No. 49 in f minor 'La Passione' [23:32]

**Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART**

*Sinfonia Concertante* for violin, viola and orchestra in E-flat, K364<sup>1, 2</sup> [27:53]

**Joseph HAYDN**

Symphony No.87 in A [27:41]

Aisslinn Nosky (violin)<sup>1</sup>, Max Mandel (viola)<sup>2</sup>

Handel and Haydn Society/Harry Christophers

rec. live Symphony Hall, Boston, USA, 26 & 28 January 2018. DDD.

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

**CORO COR16168** [79:14]



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These are the two most recent releases in Coro's series of live recordings of Haydn's 'Paris' symphonies with the Boston Handel and Haydn Orchestra conducted by Harry Christophers. Each release has added an earlier Haydn symphony and, initially, one of his violin concertos; latterly a Mozart work with violin. I can't imagine that the overlaps with Alpha's recent series of Haydn symphony recordings is deliberate, but it is instructive to compare, for example, No.26 from Kammerorchester Basel and Giovanni Antonini (**ALPHA678**, with Nos. 3, 30 and 79 – [Summer 2018/1](#)) with Christophers. Ditto No.49 from Antonini, this time with his own Il Giardino Armonico (**ALPHA670**, with Nos. 1 and 39 and Gluck *Don Juan*).

In both cases Christophers, though his tempi are only marginally slower than Antonini's, presents a more refined Haydn, with less storm and stress in the *Sturm und Drang* works. Overall, I imagine that most would prefer Antonini's extra degree of emotion, but Christophers makes me wonder if we haven't over-romanticised the storm and stress element, both in early Goethe, to whom the term properly belongs, and in Haydn. Listen to the way in which the H&H make the *allegro di molto* second movement of No.49 dance along, while the preceding *adagio* receives its due weight without sounding over-weighty. In the minuet and trio I thought Antonini a shade too unyielding – [DL News 2014/13](#) – and here Christophers is that important little bit to my liking.

Though the Boston players are a little less anguished than Il Giardino Armonico in No.26 and give the music a little more time to breathe, they don't miss the power of this work.

Most of the possible comparisons for the two 'Paris' symphonies come on complete sets of those six works, as from Sigiswald Kuijken with the OAE on super-budget Erato Veritas **5616592** – around £8.50 on two CDs and no need to spend more. (The only downloads I can find are more expensive, even in mp3.) There's a good deal to be said for a complete set – and for *this* complete set – but when the final volume of the Coro collection is complete, with Symphony No.85, 'La Reine' on board, these recordings will offer something far preferable to Simon Rattle's over-rated 'big band' Haydn with the Berlin Phil.

The Mozart fillers may not be the top recommendations, but they certainly don't detract from the value of these Coro releases. Coro 24-bit downloads, at £14.50, may be slightly more expensive than from other labels but they sound very well indeed – and you would hardly know that these recordings were set down live. If you don't mind mp3, that comes for a more reasonable £7.99.

Alternative suggestion for the 'Paris' symphonies: Nos. 82-84, Hyperion **CDH55123**; Nos. 85-87, **CDH55124**, Hanover Band/Roy Goodman, mid-price.

### Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791) Piano Concertos Volume 3.

Piano Concerto No.16 in D, K451 (1784) [22:24]

Piano Concerto No.15 in B-flat, K450 (1784) [24:39]

Quintet for Piano and Wind instruments in E-flat, K452 (1784) [23:31]

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet (piano)

Manchester Camerata/Gábor Takács-Nagy

Rachael Clegg (oboe)\*; Fiona Cross (clarinet)\*; Naomi Atherton (horn)\*;

Ben Hudson (bassoon)\*

rec. The Stoller Hall, Hunts Bank, Manchester; 9–11 April 2018. DDD.

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

**CHANDOS CHAN20035** [71:03]



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My benchmark for K450 comes from Alfred Brendel with the ASMF and Neville Marriner on a treasurable budget-price twofer with concertos nos. 9, 22, 25 and 27, a real bargain of bargains (Decca Duo 4425712). Fans of the fortepiano – fortepiano without tears in this case – will be well advised to check out Ronald Brautigam and Kölner Akademie directed by Michael Willens in K450 and K451 (**BIS-SACD-2064**, with Rondo in D, K382 – [review](#) – download from [eclassical.com](http://eclassical.com) with pdf booklet, in 16- [\$8.05] and 24-bit [\$12.88]).

My personal choice would be for the BIS, performances which I turn to even in preference to Brendel – Brautigam and others have converted me to the fortepiano, an instrument which I used to find it hard to accept, though its sound is what Mozart would have heard. For those who still find anything other than the modern piano unpalatable, however, the new Chandos will do very nicely – and there’s a very fine recording of the next two concertos, Nos. 17 and 18, from this team already in the can – [review](#). The addition of the quintet on Chandos is an added incentive.

Lovers of Mozart’s Piano Concertos should note that Chandos’ earlier, incomplete, series with Howard Shelley and London Mozart Players is on sale at attractive prices direct from [chandos.net](http://chandos.net), many on offer as I write at £2.50 per CD and lossless downloads reduced to £7.49.

### Johann Simon MAYR (1763–1845) Motets Volume 2

*Litaniae Lauretanae* in A for soprano, soloists, choir and orchestra (I-BGc 22/1) (c.1825) [12:18]

*Salve Regina* in F for basso concertante, soprano, alto, bass and orchestra (I-BGc 307/1) (c.1820) [3:55]

*Salve Regina* in F for soprano and orchestra (I-BGc 307/2) (c.1810) [7:19]

*O Virgo immaculata* for tenor and orchestra (I-BGc 59/8) (c.1800) [12:35]

*Regina caeli* in B-flat for tenor and orchestra (I-BGc 307/8) (c.1800) [4:22]

*Salve Regina* in F for soprano and orchestra (I-BGc 307/5) (c.1810) [6:54]

*Salve Regina* in B-flat for tenor and orchestra (I-BGc 307/3) (c.1830) [5:04]

*Laudem volo cantitare* in B-flat for bass and orchestra (I-BGc 59/7) (c.1820) [13:39]

*Ave Regina caelorum* in E-flat for soloists, choir and orchestra (I-BGc 307/10) (c.1830) [3:13]

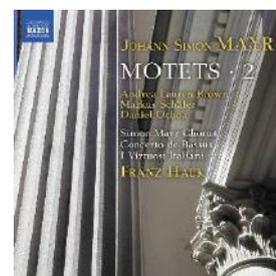
Andrea Lauren Brown (soprano), Johanna Krödel (alto), Markus Schäfer (tenor), Daniel Ochoa (bass); Simon Mayr Chorus; I Virtuosi Italiani/Franz Hauk

rec.23-26 April 2014, 5-8 June 2017, Asamkirche Maria de Victoria, Ingolstadt, Germany. DDD.

Texts available online.

Reviewed as lossless press preview and from [Naxos Music Library](http://Naxos Music Library) with pdf booklet.

**NAXOS 8.573909** [70:25]



CD available from			
Stream from			

A year ago, I was enjoying Mayr’s *Miserere*, a premiere recording from this team, with one of his settings of the *Litaniae Lauretanae* in [Winter 2017/1](#) (Naxos **8.573782**). Göran Forlsing was equally pleased with the first volume of Mayr’s motets – [review](#) – so it was a no-brainer to request Volume 2, of music in praise of the Virgin Mary, for review. It’s just as delightful – in many ways one can imagine Mozart having written the music if he had lived until 1830. That’s not to claim that Mayr was a genius, but these settings are very good second division material and Hauk and his team have the Beecham-like knack of working magic on them.

**Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)***The Ruins of Athens* – Overture [5:13], Turkish March [1:37]

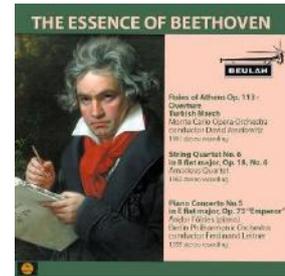
Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra/David Josefowitz – rec. 1961 ADD/stereo

String Quartet in B-flat, Op.18/6 [23:54]

Amadeus Quartet – rec. 1962/stereo

Piano Concerto No.5 in E-flat, Op.73 ‘Emperor’ [38:52]

Andor Foldes (piano); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra/Ferdinand Leitner – rec. 1959 ADD/stereo

**BEULAH 1PS41** [69:36]

Preferred download from

qobuz

How would you encapsulate *The Essence of Beethoven*, Beulah’s title for this release? With one of his mighty symphonies, the *Eroica*, the Fifth or the Ninth? (As per the story of the music student who told his tutor that Beethoven wrote three symphonies and named those three.) Or with one of the late quartets or piano sonatas? Beulah have given us another blockbuster, the *Emperor*, but there’s an element of lateral thinking in choosing Andor Foldes’ recording, when I might have gone for Wilhelm Kempff from a similar vintage (1961), also with the Berlin Philharmonic and Ferdinand Leitner<sup>1</sup>. [Reviewing the Eloquence reissue](#) of this same Foldes and Leitner performance of the *Emperor*, with No.1, I liked the earlier work and wished that Foldes had recorded the Mozart concertos, yet thought No.5 very accomplished but rather lacking in engagement with the music.

I was a little more impressed this time round, especially by the heartfelt slow movement, but it still wouldn’t have been my choice for the work. The other side of the coin is Rob Cowan’s description in Gramophone of the performance’s ‘unostentatious virtuosity’. Subscribers to [Qobuz](#) can try it for themselves. The Beulah transfer is very little inferior to the Eloquence reissue, made from the master tape.

The Amadeus Quartet’s Beethoven is still well worth hearing, though not perhaps as the main recommendation – I have a ‘Recommended’ review pending on the main site, for example, of the 6x2-CD live recordings of all the quartets from the Elias Quartet on the Wigmore Hall Live label. Direct comparisons are unfair, but the Elias gain by observing all the repeats in the outer movements of Op.18/6 and with a fuller (live) recording; though the transfer of the Amadeus is good, it’s rather thin by comparison. If this Beulah release whets your appetite, DG have released the Amadeus’ complete set of the Beethoven Quartets on 7 CDs plus blu-ray (**4835645**, around £38, currently on offer for £31).

Beulah have also given us the *Eroica* symphony in Sir Henry Wood’s vintage recording. Subscribers can try it as streamed from [Qobuz](#), which is also the [recommended download source](#). I’m afraid that I find the fizzy 1926 sound too off-putting, though Beulah have made a very good transfer of it. Wood takes the sixth Brandenburg concerto at a fairly sprightly rate but either the players are not up to maintaining this tempo or the 1930 recording muddles the detail too much – this time the transfer is not quite as good as that of the earlier *Eroica*. The sound is better again for the 1935 recording of the Toccata and Fugue, BWV565, complete with (metaphorical) bells and whistles and very enjoyable as a one-off.



<sup>1</sup> Concertos Nos. 4 and 5 DG Originals **4474022**, low-mid-price CD, or budget-price download.

**RECOMMENDED**

**Hector BERLIOZ (1803-1869)**

*Harold en Italie*, Op.16 [40:40]

*Les Nuits d'été*, Op.7, H.81B [29:38]

Tabea Zimmermann (viola), Stéphane Degout (baritone)

Les Siècles/François-Xavier Roth

rec. *Les Nuits d'été*: 15-16 August 2018, Alfortville, Maison de l'Orchestre national d'Île-de-France; *Harold en Italie* : 2-3 March 2018, Philharmonie de Paris. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

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

**HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902634** [70:23]



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**Hector BERLIOZ**

*Harold en Italie*, Op.16 [39:16]

*La Captive orientale*, Op.12 [7:46]

*Plaisir d'amour* [3:49]

**Carl Maria von WEBER (1786-1826)**

*Andante and Rondo Ungarese* [9:51]

*Aufforderung zum Tanz*, Invitation to the Dance, Op.65 (orch. Berlioz) [10:26]

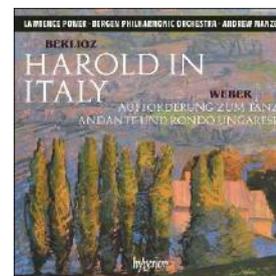
Lawrence Power (viola)

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra/Andrew Manze

rec. 4-7 May 2017, Grieghallen, Bergen. DDD.

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

**HYPERION CDA68193** [71:11]



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We already had several very good recordings of *Harold in Italy*, two of them with Tabea Zimmermann the soloist, as here: with Sir Colin Davis and the LSO (Alto **ALC1639**, budget-price; LSO Live **LSO0827**, *Berlioz Odyssey*, 6 SACDs and 10 CDs) and with Orchestre de Paris/Christoph Eschenbach (Bel Air **BAC016**, DVD, with *Symphonie Fantastique*). The LSO version is generally regarded as the best of Davis's three recordings – the earlier ones were with Yehudi Menuhin (EMI) and Nobuko Imai (Philips). It's certainly preferable to the other LSO Live recording with Valery Gergiev and Antoine Timestit on which the conductor seems to be trying too hard to play down his reputation for OTT performances and the recording balance often 'loses' the viola – [review](#). (Simon Thomson was a little more impressed: 'not bad' – [review](#).)

Nor did I engage over much with James Ehnes and Sir Andrew Davis on Chandos – [DL News 2015/5](#), so that left me very much in the market for a good modern recording in 24-bit sound and Hyperion and Harmonia Mundi have obliged within months of each other.

The USPs of the **Harmonia Mundi** are threefold: Zimmermann repeating and even excelling herself in the solo role, the employment of the period-instrument Les Siècles, whose recordings I have greatly enjoyed in the recent past, and the use of a baritone soloist in the coupling, *Les Nuits d'Été*. It's the

only version that I know with the baritone throughout, though Sir Colin Davis spread the songs across four distinguished soloists in 1969 (Phillips **4789299**, with *Lélio*, download only).

Even if the coupling were not attractive in its own right, this would be my preferred version of *Harold*; it arrived just in time for me to include it as my one recommended accolade in this round-up. The period instruments allowed me to hear detail that I had missed before and confirmed *Harold* as my favourite Berlioz, even in preference to the *Symphonie fantastique*, which Les siècles have already recorded (Actes Sud **ASM02**).

I shall not be abandoning Janet Baker's classic recording of *Nuits d'Été* with Sir John Barbirolli (Warner **5627882**, with *Cléopâtre* and excerpts from *Les Troyens*, download only, or 20-CD set) but I enjoyed hearing Stéphane Degout, who makes a strong case for a baritone performance – and that almost immediately after, by coincidence, having heard Janet Baker on the radio.

Those who prefer a soprano in *Nuits d'Été* should look to Véronique Gens with the Loire Orchestra and John Axelrod (Ondine **ODE1200-2**, with *Herminie* and Ravel *Shéhérazade* **Recording of the Month** – [review](#)). That's also available as a 24-bit download, from [eclassical.com](http://eclassical.com), albeit at 24/44.1.



Although I wasn't quite as impressed as Göran Fosling, who thought that it challenged Janet Baker and Regine Crespin, it's certainly a strong contender.

Had I been reviewing the **Hyperion** in the Summer of 2018, as I should, instead of letting it slip, I might well have been more enthusiastic. It's a lively performance, with most of the ingredients that I found missing from Gergiev and it may well be preferable for those who dislike period instruments, though I can assure them that they create no hardship on Harmonia Mundi. Some may find Andrew Manze's direction a little too brisk in places – I didn't – but the beauty of Lawrence Power's viola compensates, as does the very enjoyable closing arrangement of Weber's *Invitation to the Dance*.

Both recordings sound very well in 24/96 format; in both cases, it's well worth paying the little extra over the cost of the CDs or the 16-bit downloads.

As I was tidying up this review for publication on 6 January (Epiphany), I was reminded that Beulah's reissue of the 1960 Colin Davis Berlioz *L'Enfance du Christ* would make a strong recommendation if reissued as an album. I made the separate downloads, **23-33BX129**, a **Recording of the Month** in [DL News 2012/21](#) and they remain available but they are rather cumbersome to download in eleven sections and with each now costing £2.75 (\$3.53) they are unduly expensive when it can be downloaded on Double Decca **4434612**, with other music, for around £8 (mp3) or around £14 (lossless). The CD is deleted.

## Vienna

### Johann STRAUSS II (1825-1899)

Morning Papers, Op.279 (1864) [8:10]

Emperor Waltz, Op.437 (1888) [7:42]

By the Beautiful Blue Danube, Op.314 (1867) [8:12]

### Carl Maria von WEBER (1786-1826)

Invitation to the Dance, Op.65 (1819) [8:57]

### Josef STRAUSS (1827-1870)

Village Swallows, Op.164 (1864) [7:36]

### Richard STRAUSS (1864-1949)

Waltzes from *Der Rosenkavalier* (1910) arr. Fritz Reiner [8:41]

### Johann STRAUSS II (1825-1899)

Vienna Blood, Op.354 (1873) [8:56]



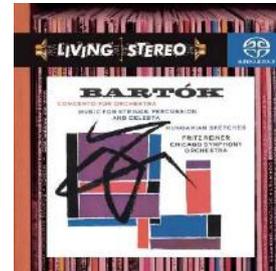
Roses from the South, Op.388 (1880) [8:41]  
 Treasure Waltz, Op.418 (from *The Gypsy Baron*) (1885) [8:07]  
 Thunder and Lightning, Op.324 (1868) [2:57]  
 Chicago Symphony Orchestra/Fritz Reiner  
 rec. Orchestra Hall, Chicago, USA, 15-16 April 1957; 25-26 April 1960. ADD  
**RCA LIVING STEREO G010000694745D** [77:59]

Download only: available from	Subscribers stream from
	

Michael Cookson, in welcoming this album when it was available on SACD, gave a detailed musical biography of Fritz Reiner, which it's superfluous for me to rehash – [review](#). I'll merely remind readers that he was born in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire, so it's not as surprising as it might seem that a conductor renowned for driving his orchestra hard should nevertheless produce one of the most idiomatic accounts of the music of the more leisurely music of the Strauss family. Listening to this on New Year's Eve left me thinking that this year's concert from Vienna would have to be very good to compete.

Even heard as streamed in mp3, the sound is remarkably good for its age, which means that it should be worth paying extra for at least the lossless download, if not the 24-bit versions – there's even 24/176.4 – though they are rather expensive. Beware of releases on other labels that you have never heard of, which offer only about half of the music, presumably transferred from the original LPs in quality which I can't vouch for. The Beulah transfers of seven of the 1960 recordings, 1BX276-3BX276 – [DL News 2013/11](#) – and 4BX276-7BX276 – [DL News 2014/14](#) would be competitive if released as an album.

In a very different vein, Reiner's recordings of the music of **Béla BARTÓK** remain very competitive, albeit that Sony have decided to split the Living Stereo SACD which contained the **Concerto for Orchestra, Music for Strings Percussion and Celesta** and **Hungarian Sketches** back into two albums, as per the original, short-value LPs (1955 and 1958).



It is, however, possible to stream the 76-minute album with all three works from Naxos Music Library and to download it from Qobuz (16-bit only, with pdf booklet). Again, I can't vouch for transfers on labels you have never heard of. This is early stereo but sounding amazingly good and the performances are competitive with Solti (Decca Eloquence, 2 CDs – [review](#)).

Download only: available from	Subscribers stream from
	

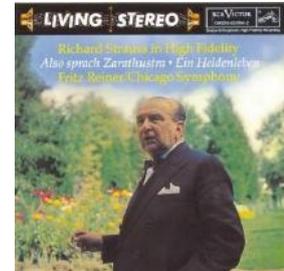
Valuable as these recordings are, there's one which is vital for me: the recording of **Johannes BRAHMS Violin Concerto** made by **Reiner** with **Jascha Heifetz** and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra remains top of the tree as the only recording I know that takes the opening movement at a pace which distinguishes it from the second. On most recordings we get two slow movements, but Heifetz and Reiner move things along so as to give us the necessary contrast between the two movements, without any sense of hurry. The only other recording I know that comes near was made by Henryk Szeryng with the LSO and Pierre Monteux (RCA, no longer available) on which the opening movement is more convincingly paced than his later recordings with Haitink and Doráti.



The alternative coupling with the Brahms on **RCA 100 Years of Music 09026614952** is the **TCHAIKOVSKY Violin Concerto**.

Download only: available from	Subscribers stream from
	

Then there's the other Strauss, **Richard STRAUSS**, whose *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and *Ein Heldenleben* were recorded by Reiner in, would you believe, 1954? Three of my colleagues reviewed the SACD – [review](#) – [review](#) – [review](#) – and though it's download or streaming only now, these classic performances remain very well worthwhile. Even as streamed in mp3, the sound is greatly superior to RCA's releases of these works which I owned on their £0.99 budget LP label. You will, however, not want to stream this one – the short gaps between tracks really ruin the effect, so I'm deliberately not giving the Naxos Music Library details.



Download only: available from	Also available on super-budget CD ( <i>Zarathustra, Don Juan, Bourgeois Gentleman</i> )
	

As for the **New Year's Day Concert 2019**, the Vienna Philharmonic conducted this year by **Christian Thielemann**, while the performances may not be quite in the same category as Reiner's or, indeed, the classic Karajan and Carlos Kleiber New Year's concerts of the past, it's all thoroughly enjoyable. I often think that the VPO could play this music in their sleep, but Thielemann left his mark, not least in the last scheduled item, Josef Strauss's *Sphärenklänge*, the Music of the Spheres.



I'm pleased that three items by Josef were included. Willi Boskovsky used to do his music proud – Josef is well represented on the 8-CD set of the Strauss family (Decca **4827558**, around £26)<sup>1</sup> and Marco Polo have a whole series of albums devoted to his music – but Thielemann also leaves the listener in no doubt that Josef is in many ways the most talented member of the family. With strong Wagner and Richard Strauss credentials, I wondered how Thielemann would fare in the lighter music, but even his statutory rendition of *The Blue Danube* doesn't sound hackneyed. (Sony **19075902822**, DVD and blu-ray to follow). Vinyl fans will pay around twice as much as the cost of the CDs, while the DVD will cost slightly less than the CDs and the blu-ray only slightly more.

Bargain hunters should check out two Warner anthologies mainly containing Boskovsky's recordings with his own Johann Strauss orchestra (*50 Best Waltzes and Polkas*, **0829242**, download only, around £5 in mp3, or £6 in lossless; *100 Best Waltzes and Polkas*, **0828892**, 6 CDs around £15, download around £9 in mp3, £12 in lossless – sadly, not including much Josef).

<sup>1</sup> There's plenty of Josef's music, too, on the shorter 5-CD *Ultimate Strauss Family* collection, now download only (**4780223**, around £11 for mp3, around £14 lossless).

CD available from		
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**Arrigo BOITO (1842-1918) Mefistofele** (1868, 1876)

I had hoped that the centenary of Boito's death might have brought us a recording of his *Mefistofele* to allow us finally to put the Tullio Serafin recording to bed (Decca **4400542**, 2 CDs, mid-price). Recorded in 1958, with Renata Tebaldi, Mario del Monaco and Cesare Siepi, it will have to continue to serve, with all its rough edges.

A partial replacement has appeared in the form of the Prologue, sung by Riccardo Zanatella (baritone) with the Chicago Symphony Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Riccardo Muti on their in-house label CSO RESOUND (**CSOR9011801**). It's part of a recital entitled *Italian Masterworks*, with music by **VERDI**, **PUCCINI** and **MASCAGNI** as well as Boito, and for me it's the highlight of an enjoyable album to which Dan Morgan has awarded the **RECOMMENDED** accolade – review pending. I join him in the (probably forlorn) hope that we might see a complete recording of *Mefistofele* from Muti. Subscribers can sample from [Naxos Music Library](#) – no booklet there or from any download source.



### Sir Edward ELGAR (1857-1934)

The Wand of Youth (Music to a child's play) (1908)

- Suite No.1 Op.1a [20:21]

- Suite No.2 Op.1b [21:17]

*Salut d'amour* (*Liebesgruß*), Op.12 (1888) [3:31]

Nursery Suite (1930) [24:13]

*Chanson de Nuit*, Op.15 No.1 (1889-90?) [4:32]

Hallé Orchestra/Sir Mark Elder

rec. 2015/17, Hallé St Peter's Ancoats, Manchester, UK

Reviewed as 24/44.1 download with pdf booklet from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#).

**HALLÉ CDHLL7548** [71:18] For CD purchase details see reviews by [Ralph Moore](#) and [Michael Cookson](#).



Download (lossless or 24-bit) from



Stream from



Eduard van Beinum's recording of the *Wand of Youth Suites*, which introduced me to the music on an Ace of Clubs recording, coupled with Anthony Pini in the Cello Concerto, remains available on Eloquence **4804249**. It's come up sounding much better than I recall, but it inevitably shows its late-78-era age.

A mid-price Chandos album from Bryden Thomson with the Ulster Orchestra in *Wand of Youth* and *Nursery Suite*, with *Dream Children* from the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Norman del Mar offers good performances in more modern sound. (**CHAN10422** – CD or download, mp3 and lossless, with pdf booklet, from [chandos.net](#)). For some unknown reason, I found that I had half the tracks from that album in mp3 and half in lossless wma, so I took the opportunity to download the whole album in lossless flac to listen to it and enjoy it again.

The Chandos costs around or £7.99 as a lossless download, exactly the same price as the Hallé, and there's very little to choose between them in that format in terms of performance or recording. For a little more, however, at £9.00, the Hallé also comes in 24/44.1 format and the extra cost brings these very fine performances in even better sound if you turn the volume slightly higher than usual. None of this is great music, nor is it even Elgar's best, but it's all very enjoyable and both albums will allow you to enjoy it.

The equally enjoyable 1990 Mackerras recording of the *Wand of Youth* suites, with 29 minutes of excerpts from *Starlight Express* and *Dream Children*, remains available as a [Presto special CD](#) or as an inexpensive download (Decca **433142**). Vernon Handley's more complete 78-minute recording of the

charming *Starlight Express* is now download only and more expensive than when it was a budget CD (Classics for Pleasure **5859072**), so the 2-SACD more complete still recording from Sir Andrew Davis is your best choice (Chandos **CHSA5111** – [review](#) – [review](#) – Recording of the Month: [DL News 2012/21](#)).

Discovery of the Month

**Felix WOYRSCH (1860-1944)**

Symphony No.4 in F, Op.71 [34:09]

Symphony No.5 in D, Op.75 [21:03]

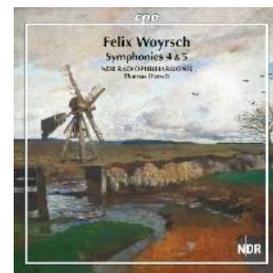
*Faust*: Garden Scene [5:26]

NDR Radiophilharmonie/Thomas Dorsch

rec. 9-13 February 2015, Großer Sendesaal des Landesfunkhaus Hannover.

DDD.

**CPO 555063-2** [60:44]



CD available from		
	Stream from	

If you can imagine a contemporary of Mahler whose music seems still to breathe the spirit of the previous century, that's Woysch. Though CPO have made a speciality of his music – [review](#) of Symphony No.2 – this is my first encounter with it. It's not one of the highways of music – certainly not of musical development – but it's a very interesting byway, enjoyable to travel in these well-recorded performances.

The only recording ever of Symphony No.1 is long deleted, but in addition to that version of No.2, CPO offer No.3 and *Böcklin Phantasien* on **777923-2**.

**Gustav HOLST (1874–1934) Orchestral Works, Volume 4**

A Winter Idyll, H31 (1897) [9:30]

Symphony in F 'The Cotswolds', Op.8, H47 (1899-1900) [23:42]

Invocation for cello and orchestra, Op.19/2, H75\* ('A Song of the Evening') (1911) [7:44]

A Moorside Suite, H173 (for brass, arranged for string orchestra by the composer) (1928) [14:05]

*Indra*, Symphonic Poem for orchestra, Op.13, H66 (1903) [15:19]

*Scherzo*, H192 (1933-34) [5:52]

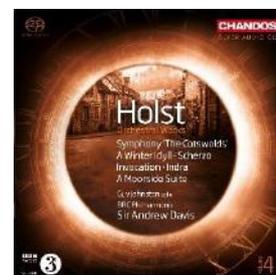
Guy Johnston (cello)\*

BBC Philharmonic/Sir Andrew Davis

rec. MediaCityUK, Salford, Manchester; 24 January 2018 (A Winter Idyll, Invocation, A Moorside Suite, Scherzo) and 28 January 2018 (other works). DDD/DSD.

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

**CHANDOS CHSA5192 SACD** [77:02]



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By some fluke, I seem to have started two reviews of this recording before submitting the version which appeared in November 2018 – [review and SACD purchase link](#). Rather than waste the shorter second version, here it, slightly tweaked, is as a reminder of the value of the album.

Volume 4 of a series initiated almost ten years ago by Richard Hickox, brings us a collection of mostly little-known works. There are, nevertheless some fine recordings of several of them:

- *Winter Idyll, Cotswold Symphony* and *Indra* on Naxos **8.572914** (Ulster O/JoAnn Falletta – [review](#) – [review](#))
- *Winter Idyll, Indra* and *Invocation* on Lyrita **SRCD.209** (LSO/David Atherton – [review](#))
- *Invocation* on Hyperion **CDA68077** (Steven Isserlis, Philharmonia/Paavo Järvi, with Elgar and Walton Cello Concertos – [review](#) – [DL News](#))
- *Scherzo* on Chandos **CHAN10911**, a valuable collection of his music including *Egdon Heath* at mid-price from the LSO and Richard Hickox – [review](#).

All of these except the Hyperion are all-Holst collections. The headline news is that, while all are well worth considering – the Isserlis recording mainly for the Elgar and Walton – the new recording is at least their equal in performance terms and superior recording-wise, especially in the 24-bit download and therefore, I assume, from the HD layers of the SACD. Even if you choose the mp3 for reasons of economy<sup>1</sup>, that sounds pretty good, too: I downloaded that as well as the 24-bit, to play on the Roberts player in the kitchen, and if you can't afford the 16- or 24-bit lossless versions, the mp3 sounds pretty good even on a good system.

Best of all, the Chandos engineers have achieved very fine sound quality without the exaggerated dynamic range which has mitigated my enjoyment of so many of their recent recordings – all very well in my study, away from the neighbours, but a problem for considerate late-night listening in the lounge. This time there's no problem of that sort, just natural sound at any volume level to bring out the quality of the performances.

Despite its attractive title, the *Cotswold Symphony* may not be as immediately appealing as Holst's other geographically inspired work, his *Somerset Rhapsody* on **CHAN10911** – details above – but it receives strong advocacy here.

<sup>1</sup> £7.99 from [chandos.net](#), with 16-bit at £9.99 and 24-bit stereo or surround for £13.99. That makes the download more expensive than the SACD – an economic paradox which continues to perplex. Even more perplexingly, volumes 1 and 2 cost just £11.99 for 24-bit, perhaps because they are at 24/48, rather than 24/96.

**Zoltán KODÁLY (1882-1967)** Concerto for Orchestra [22:16]  
Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra/Zoltán Kodály – rec. 1962 ADD/stereo  
**Béla BARTÓK (1881-1945)** Concerto for Orchestra [37:04]  
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/Rafael Kubelík – rec. 1959 ADD/stereo  
**Rodion SHCHEDRIN (b.1932)** Concerto for Orchestra No.1 'Mischievous Folk Ditties' [7:43]  
Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra/Kiril Kondrashin – rec. 1963/stereo  
**BEULAH 1PS35** [67:05]



Download or stream from

qobuz

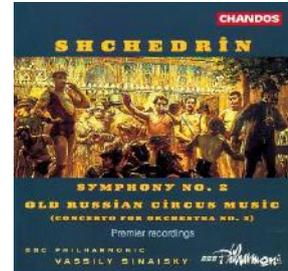
This Beulah reissue gave me a sense of déjà-vu – had I written a review and mislaid it? Then the coin dropped: Pentatone have just released a new recording of the Bartók and Kodaly concertos in performances conducted by Jakub Hrůša (**PTC5186626** – [review](#)). Leaving that aside for the moment, there are just two versions of the Bartók of this vintage that I would have chosen – Reiner (RCA, above) and this rather less extrovert but very valid account from Kubelík. It was originally released by EMI (ALP1744) but I owned the World Record Club reissue, my enjoyment of which was spoiled only by rather noisy surfaces. I'm pleased to report that there is no hint of surface noise on the Beulah transfer, where this fine performance sounds much better than I recall. Full marks.

Hrůša makes a strong case for the Kodály – indeed, his recording is recommendable for that rather than the Bartók – but it's very valuable to have the composer's own take on it, not necessarily definitive

but well worthwhile. It's also available on a Hungaroton 2-CD set, which I haven't heard but doubt if it sounds any better than the very fine Beulah transfer.

I didn't know the Shchedrin, but it's a typically quirky piece which receives an appropriate performance and recording.

For more in this vein, there's **SHCHEDRIN Concerto for Orchestra No.3**, 'Old Russian Circus Music', coupled with the much meatier music of his **Symphony No.2** in performances by the BBC Philharmonic and Vasily Sinaisky on Chandos **CHAN9552** [79:21] recorded in 1996 and available on CD and in mp3, 16- and 24-bit downloads from [chandos.net](http://chandos.net). Both are premiere recordings.



Full marks to Chandos for placing the less important work first, something I seem to be nagging on about all the time.

#### Reissue of the Month

#### Ivor NOVELLO (1893-1951)

*Glamorous Night* [24:08]

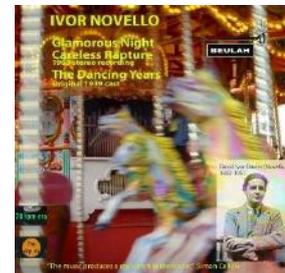
*Careless Rapture* [20:15]

Patricia Johnson (mezzo); The Linden Singers; New World Show Orchestra/Kenneth Alwyn – rec. 1963 ADD/stereo

*The Dancing Years* (original 1939 cast) [25:39]

Ivor Novello, Mary Ellis, Olive Gilbert, Roma Beaumont, Dunstan Hart; Drury Lane Theatre Orchestra/Charles Prentice – rec. 78s 1939 ADD/mono

**BEULAH 2PDR19** [69:57]



Preferred download from

qobuz

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be; with the fading away of the pre-war generation who revelled in Ivor Novello's music – *The Dancing Years* was the last show at Drury Lane before the balloon went up – there seems to be less interest in the music of the 1930s today. And yet ... endless repeats of *Dad's Army* and *Poirot*, with its *art deco* sets, still command a faithful audience on TV and I'm as hooked as anyone – especially the earlier ITV programmes with the Sir Nigel Gresley train at the opening and the haunting music, both inexplicably dropped later. Those craving an extended version of the music will find *Poirot Variants* on a Chandos album of Christopher Gunning's film and TV music (**CHAN10625** – [review](#) – [review](#) – [DL Roundup December 2010](#)).

Like Charles Trenet's music (below), Novello's operettas are well crafted, if now rather sentimental sounding, and there should still be a place for them. The recording of *The Dancing Years* requires a little tolerance, but that of the other items doesn't.

Naxos offer this recording of the items from *The Dancing Years* with 1948 recordings of music from *The King's Ransom*, but most will prefer this Beulah release, which has the field to itself in the 1963 items. Lovers of Novello should snap it up. Though it's not part of my regular repertoire, this has to be my pick of the Beulah reissues this month.

I must take this opportunity to try to make some amends for my very brief reference to Beulah's achievement of 25 years of releases. Without using the word 'curmudgeonly', our editor has gently chided me for the shortcoming. Best to refer you to the catalogue on their [website](#) to browse their many recordings for yourself.

**Voices from The East****Boris Mikolayovich LYATOSHYNSKY (1895 – 1968)**

Symphony No.3 in b minor, Op.50: 'Peace shall defeat War': To the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the October Revolution (1951) [44:35]

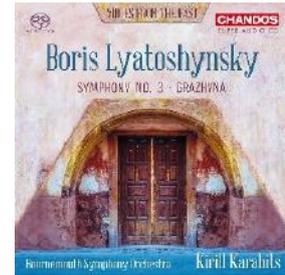
*Grazhyna*, Symphonic Ballad after Adam Mickiewicz, Op.58 (1955) [18:38]

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra/Kirill Karabits

rec. The Lighthouse, Poole, Dorset; 15 and 16 May 2018. DSD.

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

**CHANDOS CHSA5233 SACD** [63:23]



CD available from			Download from	
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Comparative recording: Symphonies Nos. 2 and 3, Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestra/Theodore Kuchar, Naxos **8.555579** – [review](#) – [review](#) – from Marco Polo 8.223540, rec. 1994.

The older Naxos recordings may be more 'authentic' – Lyatoshytsky's music was influenced by Ukrainian folk songs – but while they offer very attractive bargains, they can't compete in terms of performance and recording with the new Chandos, available as it is on SACD and in 24/96 download format. The latter even includes a surround version, though why that should cost £19.99, or the 24/96 stereo £13.99, when the SACD is on sale for less is beyond my understanding. BIS may charge more for 24-bit from their eclassical.com site – usually after a short period when it's offered for the same price as 16-bit – but at least they offer surround for the same price as the 24-bit stereo.

The Third Symphony is a rather rambling piece, but I like rambling Russian symphonies, as witness the Balakirev Symphony No.1 in the right hands – preferably Beecham's if you can find it – and there are some impressive moments here. But it's not music to hear last thing at night – I listened then for the first time and it didn't hang together; only later, on second hearing, did I enjoy hearing it.

If you feel a bit hectored by the symphony – though the use of the original ending in place of the Sovietised revised version helps – the fine account of *Grazhyna* should put things right. Excellent recording and documentation round off an attractive release. Perhaps the same team will now oblige with the Fourth Symphony; meanwhile that's available from Kuchar, with No.5, on Naxos **8.555580**.

Dan Morgan didn't share my transition from being unimpressed:

The Ukrainian composer Boris Lyatoshytsky is hardly a household name, but then he appears to be one of those obscure Soviet hacks who spent his career churning out patriotic Party pleasers. Then again, one might think the same of his compatriot Kara Karayev, who came to my attention with a Kirill Karabits/Bournemouth Symphony recording of his ballet, [Seven Beauties](#) (Chandos). Indeed, I was so utterly seduced by the quality of Karayev's music, as well as the fine playing and sound, that I made the album one of my 2018 Recordings of the Year.

Lyatoshytsky was certainly versatile, with a number of works spanning most genres, yet his discography remains pitifully small. Among the meagre offerings are three Naxos releases, pairing Symphony No. 1 and *Grazhyna*, Nos. 2 & 3 and Nos. 4 & 5, all with the Ukrainian State SO under Theodore Kuchar; [David Barker](#) reviewed them in a triple bill in 2014. Kuchar's account of the celebratory Third is vivid and vacuous; in effect, the musical equivalent of an exhortational Socialist Realist poster. Yes, this robustly recorded performance has its moments, but they're few and far between.

Aided by excellent playing and a very good recording, Kiev-born Karabits delivers a far more nuanced

and coherent Third. Alas, he's not a miracle worker, so there's no disguising the rambling bombast of the piece, which, like others of its ilk, deals in rhetorical flourishes and very little else. That said, I doubt you'll hear this symphony better executed than it is here, the quieter moments especially engaging. Ditto the single-movement symphonic ballad, *Grazhyna*, which reveals rather more subtlety and character under Karabits than it does under Kuchar.

A laudable attempt to bring Lyatoshynsky's output to a wider public; what a pity these scores are so dull. [DM]

### George ANTHEIL (1900-1959)

*Archipelago (Rhumba)* (1935) [6:01]

Symphony No.3 *American* (1936-41, rev. 1946) [24:47]

*Hot-Time Dance* (American Dance Suite No.1; *Election Dance*) (1948) [4:33]

Symphony No.6 *after Delacroix* (1947-48, rev. 1949-50) [26:12]

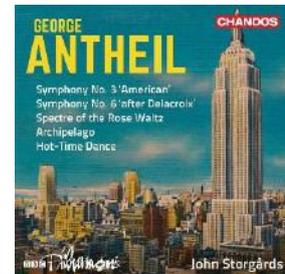
*Spectre of the Rose – Waltz* (1946, re-orch. 1947) [4:53]

BBC Philharmonic/John Storgårds

rec. 12-13 February 2018, MediaCity UK, Salford. DDD.

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

**CHANDOS CHAN10982** [66:52] For CD purchase details see [review by Rob Barnett](#).



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I almost passed this by, forgetting that the symphonies are very different from what Rob Barnett calls the 'wild and whacky' Antheil in his review (link above). I should have remembered enjoying and recommending Volume 1 of this Chandos series, with Symphonies 4 and 5 – [Summer 2017/1](#). In fact, I'm glad that I read Rob's review and downloaded the album. Shades of Milhaud's *Le Bœuf sur le Toit* are to be found in the opening *Archipelago*, hints of Copland Symphony No.3 and an interest in Sibelius and Shostakovich is apparent in the Sixth Symphony – and neither is the worse for that, though Antheil's symphonies are less focused than the music of those composers.

The performances present the music in the best light, aided by good recording. As before, there is no SACD, so the 24-bit download from [chandos.net](http://chandos.net) or [eclassical.com](http://eclassical.com) is the only way to obtain better-than-CD sound; the latter is probably very slightly better value for \$ purchasers. If streaming this – or any album – from Naxos Music Library, always resist the iTunes purchase link to what is likely to be less than full bit-rate mp3. If you want mp3, go for the full-fat version from [chandos.net](http://chandos.net).

### Gerald FINZI (1901 – 1956)

Cello Concerto in a minor, Op.40 (1951–52, 1954–55)<sup>1</sup> [37:31]

Eclogue in F for piano and orchestra, Op.10 (late 1920s, revised 1952)<sup>2</sup> [9:14]

Nocturne in c sharp minor (New Year Music), Op.7 (1926, revised 1940s, 1950) [10:03]

Grand Fantasia and Toccata in d minor for piano and orchestra, Op.38 (Grand Fantasia: 1928, revised 1947, 1953; Toccata: 1953)<sup>2</sup> [13:28]

Paul Watkins (cello)<sup>1</sup>

Louis Lortie (piano)<sup>2</sup>

BBC Symphony Orchestra/Sir Andrew Davis

rec. Watford Colosseum; 3 and 4 February 2018. DSD.

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

**CHSA5214 SACD** [70:40] See reviews by [Jonathan Woolf](#) and [John Quinn](#).



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There were already four first-rate recordings of the Cello Concerto, two of them from Chandos:

- Yo Yo Ma and Vernon Handley (Lyrita **SRCD.236** with Clarinet Concerto: **Recording of the Month** – [review](#) – [review](#) – [review](#))
- Tim Hugh, Northern Sinfonia and Howard Griffiths (Naxos **8.555766** with *Eclogue* and Grand Fantasia and Toccata, Peter Donohoe (piano) – [review](#))
- Chandos's own earlier recording with Raphael Wallfisch and Bryden Thomson (**CHAN9949**, with Leighton Cello Concerto). This is the only recording of the Leighton, but there is an alternative coupling with his Symphony No.3 on **CHAN10307**, also mid-price.
- Wallfisch on Chandos again, with Vernon Handley (**CHAN10425**, mid-price, with Violin Concerto – [DL News 2016/1](#) or **CHAN241-56**, budget price, with *British Cello Concertos*). For some reason, I had CHAN10425 only in 16-bit format; the 24-bit from [chandos.net](http://chandos.net) will give you more bang but for more bucks (£11.99 as against £7.99).

As if it were not difficult enough already to choose, Paul Watkins and Sir Andrew Davies add a fifth, and in SACD, too. I intended to review this quite some time ago but the only download originally available was 16-bit lossless and by the time that I had remembered to return for 24-bit, my colleagues had beaten me.

That means that I can be very brief: either Wallfisch or Hugh will amply satisfy those seeking an inexpensive performance but the combination of fine performances and 24-bit or SACD sound places the new Chandos top of the pile. I must, however, raise the old chestnut from my preamble to these reviews – why must the 24-bit download cost more than the SACD when there is no physical cost involved in providing it?

It also illustrates my point about variation in CD and SACD pricing: it's £11.50 direct from Chandos; the regular price from one dealer is £12.75, currently reduced to £10.50; £12.83 reduced to £11.18 from a second; £14.98 from another dealer, with one hopeful asking £15.25 for a used copy on the same site. Logic?

### Charles TRENET (1913-2001)

Under the generic title *La Mer*, Beulah have assembled 12 classic studio recordings of Trenet's music on **1PS31** [71:37]. I make no apologies for including this release in a mainly classical round-up; it's well-crafted music and the performances, from Orchestre Guy Luybaerts, with Charles Trenet himself singing and Chœur Raymond Saint-Paul in some items, do it full justice. Best of all, I knew only a few of the items included here and was pleased to get to know the others, all in good transfers of the early 1960s originals.



Reportedly, the audience noise on the original Columbia release was distracting. Thankfully, some of it seems to have been edited out of the very good Beulah transfer along with Trenet's introductions, though that for *La Mer* has been retained where I didn't find the audience troublesome.

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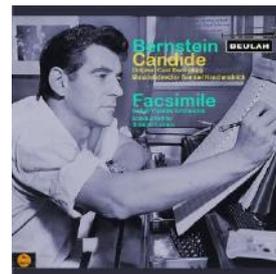
## Reissue of the Month

**Leonard BERNSTEIN (1918-1990)***Candide* (1956) [51:40]

Original cast recording: Robert Rounseville (vocal), Thomas Pyle (vocal), Robert Mesrobian (vocal), Irra Petina (vocal), Norman Roland (vocal), Max Adrian (vocal), William Olvis (vocal), Barbara Cook (vocal), George Blackwell (vocal), William Chapman (vocal) Martin Beck Theatre Orchestra/Samuel Krachmalnick – rec. 1956. ADD/mono

*Facsimile* – ballet (1946) [18:43]

Ballet Theatre Orchestra/Joseph Levine – rec. 1955. ADD/mono

**BEULAH 1PS33** [70:23] Preferred download from Qobuz (when available)

Sony's reissue of the original cast *Candide* recording is now download only, comes without coupling and costs more than this Beulah transfer, which contains a considerable coupling. The recording is bright and a trifle brash but very tolerable.

Leonard Bernstein's own recordings of *Facsimile* feature on a number of Sony and DG single and multiple releases, but I believe that this is the only currently available version of Joseph Levine's recording with the Ballet Theatre Orchestra, released on Capitol in 1956, though Naxos Classical Archives have these performers' version of *Fancy Free* (**980305** with Copland *Rodeo* – Dance Episodes). Levine's interpretation is lighter, more balletic than the composer's own and the recording has come up needing little tolerance.

I had already made the Ivor Novello *Reissue of the Month*, but this must share the accolade with it – a double whammy for Beulah.

**Ruth GIPPS (1921-1999)**

Symphony No.4, Op.61 (1972) [31:58]

*Knight in Armour*, Symphonic Poem, Op.8 (1940) [9:53]

Symphony No.2, in B, Op.30 (1945) [20:57]

*Song for Orchestra*, Op.33 (1948) [6:03]

BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Rumon Gamba

rec. 2018, BBC Hoddinott Hall, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, Wales. DDD.

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

**CHANDOS CHAN20078** [69:20] For full details and purchase links, please see [review by Rob Barnett](#) and [John Quinn](#).



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I caught up with this release rather late in the day; having missed Rob Barnett's and John Quinn's reviews, it was hearing some of it on Radio 3 that caught my attention in a major way. In fact, I've been even more heedless than I thought; Symphony No.2 was recorded by the Munich Symphony Orchestra and Douglas Bostock and released back in 1999 by Classico (**CLASSCD274**, with Arthur Butterworth Symphony No.1, now available only as part of super-budget 10-CD set of *British Symphonic Collection*, **233316**, unbelievable value at £10.49 from [Amazon UK](#), where some hopeful sellers are asking more than that for the single CD!).

I had also forgotten that Gipps's *Horn Concerto* is available from Lyrita (**SRCD316**, with Arnold, Jacob, Bowen and Vinter; or *Celebrating 50 Years* **SRCD2337**, 4 CDs for around £18).

The Chandos is the Gipps recording to start with; be warned, however, that it's likely to set you off in pursuit of the others.

**Malcolm ARNOLD (1921-2006)**

Little Suite No.1, Op.53 [8:32]

Concerto for 28 Players, Op.105 [20:23]

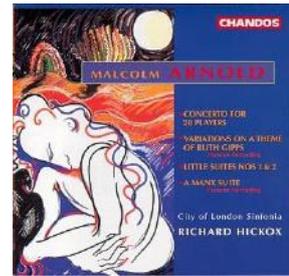
Little Suite No.2, Op.78 [8:43]

Variations for Orchestra on a Theme of Ruth Gipps, Op.122 [11:11]

A Manx Suite (Little Suite No.3), Op.142 [9:05]

City of London Sinfonia/Richard Hickox

rec. St Jude's Church, London; 12–13 July 1996. DDD.

**CHANDOS CHAN9509** [58:31] See [review by Rob Barnett](#).

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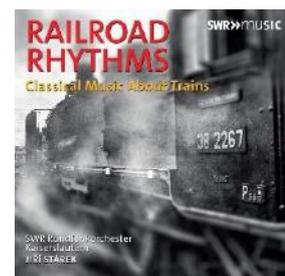
This release included several premieres and remains the only recording of these pieces, including the Gipps variations. Other works, including the *Concerto for 28 Players*, are available only in the Sony set of Arnold's complete Conifer recordings (**88875181702**, 11 CDs, super-budget price on CD, but ridiculously expensive as a download) or Volume 2 of Decca's *Malcolm Arnold Edition* (**4765343** download only and, again, over-expensive).

These are byways in the Arnold discography, but enjoyable byways; the music is the composer's typical mix of the jaunty and the pensive. You would probably pick out the Little Suites as by Arnold in a blind listening test, but the Concerto digs rather deeper – more inward and darker, but that's almost as familiar as the other side of a composer who went through some very tough patches. Ruth Gipps' theme gives Arnold the chance to expand again from his inward mood, though the variations are far from facile.

This is a very useful appendix to the Hickox recordings of the Arnold Symphonies, completed by Rumon Gamba (**CHAN10853**, 4 CDs, budget price, or separately: *Recording of the Month* – [review](#)) and Arnold's Film Music, Volume 1 (**CHAN9100**). My only reservation would be that it might – should – reappear soon in Chandos' lower-price Hickox edition.

**Railroad Rhythms: Classical Music about Trains****Hans Christian LUMBYE (1810-1874)** *Kjøbenhavns Jernbanedamp Galop* (Copenhagen Steam Pleasure Railway) [4:18]**Aaron COPLAND (1900-1990)** *John Henry* [4:10]**Alois PACHERNEGG (1892-1964)** *Unter Dampf: Ein Zug fährt vorüber* [1:49]**Jacques IBERT (1890-1962)** *Paris, Suite Symphonique pour orchestra: La Métro* [2:12]**Vincent d'INDY (1851-1931)** *Poème des Rivages*, Op.77: III. *Horizons verts, Falconara* [9:05]**Eduard STRAUSS (1835-1916)** *Bahn frei! Galopp*, Op.45 [2:04]**Antonín DVOŘAK (1841-1901)** *Humoresque in G flat*, B.187, Op.101/7 [3:46]**Heitor VILLA-LOBOS (1887-1959)** *Bachianas Brasileiras No.2 for orchestra: IV. Toccatina: O trenzinho do Caipira* (The Peasant's Little Train) [5:19]**Eduard STRAUSS** *Mit Dampf! Polka Schnell*, Op.70 [2:26]**Silvestre REVUELTAS (1899-1940)** *Música para charlar: No. 1. Construction of the Railroad* [5:17]**Hilding ROSENBERG (1892-1985)** *Resa till Amerika* (Journey to America) *Railway Fugue* [7:10]**Johann STRAUSS II (1825-1899)** *Vergnügungszug, Polka schnell*, Op.281 [3:22]**Leonard BERNSTEIN (1918-1990)** *On the Town*, Act II: *Subway Ride and Imaginary Coney Island* [4:16]**Arthur HONEGGER (1891-1955)** *Movement symphonique No.1 'Pacific 231'* [7:14]

South West German Radio Kaiserslautern Orchestra/Jiří Stárek

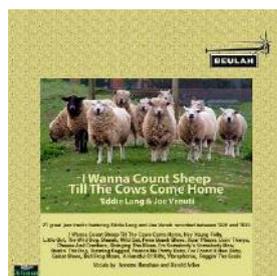
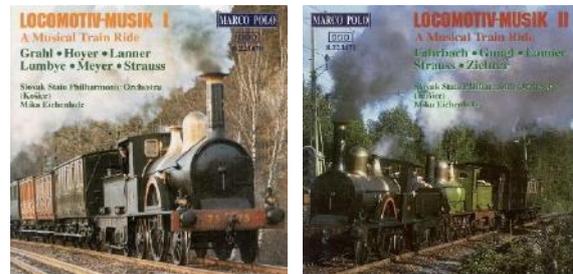


rec. October and December 2005 and February 2006. Previously released as Hänssler 93:187  
**SWR MUSIC SWR19401** [61:46]

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Not quite everything here is connected with trains – I’m not sure what the arrangement of the Dvořák *Humoresque* contributes – but the other items are apt and not wholly predictable, and the whole programme is enjoyable. The most fun comes from the first item – a musical evocation of a pleasure journey on Copenhagen’s then very short steam railway – and Villa-Lobos’s *Little Train*, and the most dramatic is the final Honegger representation of a mighty Pacific 2-3-1 locomotive. It’s no surprise to see music by the Strauss family who composed a large number of works with railway titles, including Johann II’s fast polka *Express*, performed at the 2019 New Year’s concert in Vienna. Not essential but fun.

Those in search of an even larger collection of railway-themed music should investigate two Marco Polo recordings from 1992: *Locomotiv Musik I* and II, **8.223470** and **8.223471**, both download only or stream from Naxos Music Library – [here](#) and [here](#). They are somewhat over-priced on Marco Polo and should, surely, be reissued on the less expensive Naxos label.



***I wanna count sheep till the cows come home*** contains a selection of 21 jazz tracks recorded by Eddie Lang and Joe Venuti between 1926 and 1933, with vocals by Annette Hanshaw and Harold Arlen (**BEULAH 1PS34**).

Preferred download from .

**Billie Holiday** is the star of a collection entitled *Summertime* (**BEULAH 1PS28**, rec. 1936-1958). She’s accompanied by Artie Shaw (clarinet) and Buck Clayton (trumpet) in the title track and about half of the items and by Ray Ellis and his Orchestra in the others.

Preferred download from .

Both of these reissues should find ready takers.

