

Second Thoughts and Short Reviews Autumn 2019/2
By Brian Wilson, Dan Morgan and Johan van Veen

Reviews are by Brian Wilson except where otherwise stated.

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Hermannus Contractus (Hermann of Reichenau, 1013-1054)

The Miracle of the Century

Versiculus: Deus in adiutorum [0:42]

Responsorium: Eximie presul [4:37]

Introductio: Florem mirificum (instrumental) [1:54]

Hymnus: Florem mirificum [5:49]

Antiphona and Magnificat: Gaudeat tota virgo [6:39]

Responsorium: Studio igitur [3:43]

Lectio: Pater enim familias [1:44]

Responsorium: Prudens economus domini [3:28]

Invitatorium: Vigili corde dominum [7:34]

Lectio: Qui ait Narcissus [1:29]

Responsorium: Sancto presule precibus [2:58]

Lectio: Mane autem sancto episcopus [1:24]

Responsorium: Martyr sancta Dei [4:52]

Responsorium: Multis hic inde [5:18]

Responsorium: Beatus Magnus [1:52]

Responsorium: Veniens vir Dei Brigancium [1:39]

Responsorium: Cum Campidonum [3:34]

Antiphona ad Benedictus: Post transactum [6:01]

Sequentia: Grates honos hierarchia [7:19]

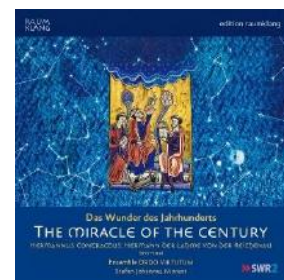
Sequentia: Ave preclaris maris stella (instr.) [3:24]

Antiphona: Alma redemptoris mater [2:27]

Ordo Virtutum/Stefan Johannes Morent

rec. Studio Franken, Stiftung Welterbe Reichenau, 2012. DDD.

raumklang RK3205 [78:27]



CD available from	

Some time ago, I discovered the music of Hermann on Armonico Consort’s *Naked Byrd 2* (Signum **SIGCD235** – [review](#)). If you haven’t yet

discovered that wonderful recording and its predecessor, SIGCD180, Hyperion have very inexpensive downloads: [Volume 1](#) for £6.99, [Volume 2](#) for £5.99, both with pdf booklet. They also offer their own recording of **Sacred and Secular Music from six centuries**, ranging from Hermann’s *Salve Regina* to Clément Janequin’s *Le chant des oiseaulx*. (Hyperion Helios **CDH55148**, The Hilliard Ensemble).

We haven't reviewed that Hilliard recording, except as a mention in another review, so I'll take this opportunity to bring it to your attention, along with the fact that it's available from hyperion-records.co.uk for £6.50 on CD or as a download with pdf booklet. The main *raison d'être* is that this is music which the Hilliards often included in their concerts, but that's no reason not to recommend a very fine collection.



As streamed or downloaded from Qobuz, there is no booklet with the Raumklang, but I believe that the CD offers the texts. In every other respect, however, it's very well worth having as the only complete recording devoted to Hermann. To call him remarkable would be an understatement: the name *contractus* indicates that he was twisted with some paralytic condition which left him hardly able to move or speak. Consigned by his rich parents to the monastery of Reichenau, where this recording was made, he flourished in learning of all kinds; like his near-contemporary Hildegard of Bingen, whose music also features on *Naked Byrd 2*, he was a true polymath, but the appeal of his music – like hers – extends far beyond scholarship. All of it is at least attractive; the best of it is almost as ethereal as the music of Hildegard.

***O gemma clarissima*: Music in Praise of St Catharine**

Jacob REGNART (1540/45-1599)

Ave Katherina martir [3:45]

Ludwig SENFL (1489/91-1543)

[*Ave Katherina martir*] / *Costi regis* [4:59]

Adrian WILLAERT (c.1490-1562)

O gemma clarissima [2:43]

Anon (Sarum chant)

Ave virginum gemma [1:06]

Jean MOUTON (before 1499-1522)

Ave virginum gemma virgo Katerina [5:04]

Anon (Sarum chant)

Virgo sancta Katherina græciæ gemma [0:23]

Nicolas GOMBERT (c.1495-c.1560)

Virgo sancta Katherina [2:58]

Anon (Sarum chant)

Virgo flagellatur cruciandi [2:18]

Pierre VERMONT (c.14905-c.1532)

Virgo flagellator [5:30]

Anon (early C16 'Annanburg' Choirbook 1/D/506)

[*Katherinæ collaudemus*] / *Fulta fide Katherina* [5:38]

Sarum Chant:

Nobilis et pulchra [1:21]

Walter FRYE (fl.c.1460-1474)

Kyrie 'Deus creator omnium' from Missa Nobilis et pulchra [7:19]

Sarum Chant:

Inclita sancte virginis Catherinæ [1:06]

Jacquet de MANTUA (1483-1559)

Inclita sancte virginis Catherinæ [4:25]

Giovanni Pierluigi da PALESTRINA (c.1525-1594)

Inclitæ sanctæ virginis Catherinæ [2:37]

Anon: (Copenhagen early 16th Cent, MS1848)

Ave virgo Katharina [4:36]

Sarum Chant:

Passionem gloriose [0:40]

Richard FAWKYNER (fl.c.1480)



Gaude rosa sine spina [15:26]

The Choirs of St Catharine's College, Cambridge/Edward Wickham

rec: June 2018 and March 2019, Chapel of St: Catharine's College, Cambridge. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

RESONUS CLASSICS RES10246 [71:54] For CD purchase see [review by Gary Higginson](#).

Music for Saint Katherine of Alexandria

Walter FRYE (d.1475)

Missa Nobilis et pulchra: Kyrie Deus creator omnium [6:16]

Gloria [6:27]

Thomas (?) BYTTERING (fl. 1410-1420)

En Katerine solennia; Virginalis concio; Sponsus amat sponsam [2:46]

Anon.

Gloria 'Virgo flagellatur' (reconstructed Philip Weller) [6:30]

Nobilis et pulchra (chant) [1:57]

Walter FRYE

Missa Nobilis et pulchra: Credo [6:07]

John DUNSTAPLE (c.1390-1453)

Gaude virgo Katherina [4:26]

Robert (?) DRIFFELDE (fl.1424-1468)

Sanctus & Benedictus 'Regnum mundi' [4:46]

Anon.

Virgo flagellatur [2:48]

Robert (?) DRIFFELDE

Agnus Dei 'Eructavit cor meum' [5:02]

Walter FRYE

Missa Nobilis et pulchra: Sanctus and Benedictus, Agnus Dei [12:34]

John DUNSTAPLE

Salve scema sanctitatis / Salve salus servulorum / Cantant celi agmina laudes [6:34]

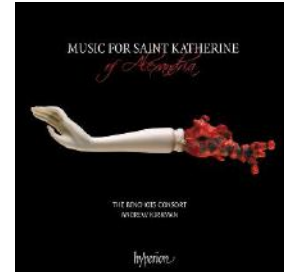
The Binchois Consort/Andrew Kirkman


rec. May 2018, Ascot Priory, Berkshire, United Kingdom. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

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

HYPERION CDA68274 [66:13] For CD purchase see [review by Gary Higginson](#)



Download CDA68274 from 

How could I not be interested in these two recordings of music in honour of St Catherine when my own *alma mater* is named after the saint – not the Cambridge college which features on Resonus, but the one at the other place with the ‘normal’ spelling, with an ‘e’ not an ‘a’. Founded as recently as 150 years ago – a blink of an eye in Oxford and Cambridge terms – and on its present site only since 1962, we can’t compete with the Cambridge namesake, founded in 1475, or its flourishing choirs – a main, mixed choir and an all-girls’ choir which sings the plainsong and some of the other items.

Lest the coincidence of name be thought to prejudice my judgment here, I should point out that the two colleges are not ‘twinned’ in the informal pairing arrangement: the Oxford Catz is linked with the even younger Robinson College. That leaves me free to agree with Gary Higginson’s praise of this recording: ‘the sound quality is fresh, open and well balanced and the voices lack obtrusive vibrato’ [review](#). Nor can I demur at the decision to end the programme with Fawkyner’s wonderful *Gaude rosa sine spina*, though, like GH, I think the Avie performance by Christ Church Choir, Oxford, which gives the music more time to breathe, just preferable. I wouldn’t want to be without that recording of music from the Eton Choir Book (*More Divine than Human*, **AV2167** – [review](#)) or the other recordings from that wonderful collection on Avie and from The Sixteen (on Coro) and Tonus Peregrinus (Naxos) – see [DL Roundup August 2012/2](#) – but that didn’t spoil my thorough enjoyment of the Resonus recording.

Catherine was such a popular saint that it's not surprising that so much music was composed in her honour. What is surprising is that there is so little overlap between these two recordings. Frye's *Missa Nobilis et pulchra*, which runs through the Hyperion, is represented only by its troped, or extended, *Kyrie* on the Resonus recording, one of several such in the Sarum Missal, this one in a mix of Greek and Latin. The Hyperion notes indicate that Catherine 'is the only saint (... with the exception of the Virgin Mary) to have spawned enough surviving English fifteenth-century pieces to fill a CD recording'; she has actually filled the better part of two.

The Frye *Kyrie* is taken at a faster pace on Hyperion, but such is the professionalism of the Binchois Consort that I never felt that it was too fast. On the other hand, though the all-male Binchois Consort produce a sound closer to that which would have been heard by Frye's contemporaries, I never felt that St Catharine's Choir was too large or too inauthentic for this music; having the plainsong sung by the female voices reminds us that Catherine was especially popular with nuns and that the music in her honour would have been sung in convents, with the lower parts transposed.

Like their other recent Hyperion recordings, the Binchois Consort recording has an added attraction in the form of late medieval alabasters, in this case of St Catherine. These accord uneasily with the gruesome modern image of a detached arm on the CD cover, but that's my only reservation in wholeheartedly recommending both these recordings. Ideally, you need the Resonus for the Fawkyner and the Hyperion for the complete Frye Mass and the Dunstaple. If it must only be one, I would regretfully set the Resonus aside in favour of the Hyperion, but bear in mind that the 16-bit download of the Hyperion costs £8.99 and that of the Resonus can be found for £7.99 – no booklet with the latter, but that can be obtained from the Resonus website. The 24-bit Hyperion, at £13.50, is a little pricier than the CD, available from Hyperion for £10.50.

Stefano BERNARDI (1577-1637)

Lux Aeterna - Ein Salzburger Requiem

Missa pro defunctis sex vocum (Requiem Mass) *Chorbücher* W.b.VI and W.b.XXXVIII, Salzburg, 1629) [41:57]

*Sinfonia Terza Concertata** [3:04]

Ad te, domine, levavi animam meam [2:47]

(*Offertorium* for 8 voices, *Chorbuch* W.b. XI, Salzburg, 1630)

*Sinfonia quarta concertata** [3:32]

Letanie a 4 concertate [8:51]

(*Rosarium Litaniarium Beatæ V. Mariæ*, edited by Lorenzo Calvo, Venice, A. Vincenti, 1626)

*Concertata** [2:33]

De profundis clamavi a te, Domine [5:27]

(*Psalmi Octonis Vocibus*, Venice, A. Vincenti, 1624)

Voces Suaves

Concerto Scirocco

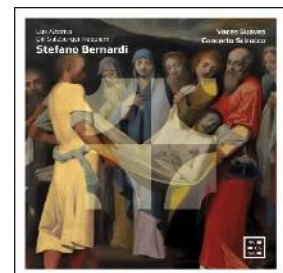
* *Concerti academici* [...] *a sei voci, Libro primo*, Op.8, Venice, A. Vincenti, 1615-1616

rec. 6-9 February 2019, Stadtkirche St. Martin, Rheinfelden (CH). DDD.

Pitch: a' = 465 Hz, Meantone temperament 1/4-comma

Texts and translations included

ARCANA A470 [68:15]



CD available from	

Music in the Venetian polychoral style by an Italian composer for the cathedral of Salzburg. Only a few of the shorter works are available on other recordings; this is the only version of the main work, a setting of the *Requiem* Mass that bears comparison even with the music of my two favourite composers of the period, Monteverdi and Schütz. Two years ago Voces Suaves and Concerto Scirocco brought us a fine recording of the music of Croce

– [review](#) – [Autumn 2017/3](#). This is, if anything, even finer. If you want to hear the music at its most beautiful, try the Offertory of the *Requiem* (track 4).

Facce d'Amore (Aspects of Love)

Francesco CAVALLI (1602–1676)

La Calisto (Act II, Scene 1) *Erme e solinghe cime... Lucidissima face* [3.39]

Giovanni Antonio BORETTI (c.1638–1672)

Eliogabalo (Act III, Scene 5) *Chi scherza con Amor** [2.57]

Claudio Cesare (Act II, Scene 1): *Sinfonia** [1.04]

*Crudo amor, non hai pietà** [1.17]

Giovanni BONONCINI (1670–1747)

La nemica d'Amore fatta amante: *Sinfonia* [3.14]

La costanza non gradita nel doppio amore d'Aminta: *Infelice mia costanza* [5.17]

Alessandro SCARLATTI (1660–1725)

Pirro e Demetrio (Act II, Scene 10) *Fra gl'assalti di Cupido** [2.05]

George Frideric HANDEL (1685–1759)

Agrippina HWV6 (Act II, Scene 5) *Otton, qual portentoso fulmine...* [1.03]

Voi che udite [4.51]

Giuseppe Maria ORLANDINI (1676–1760) / Johann MATTHESON (1681–1764)

Nerone (Hamburg 1723) (Scene 3): *Che m'ami ti prega** [4.32]

George Frideric HANDEL

Amadigi di Gaula HWV11 (Act II, Scene 5) *Pena tiranna* [5.41]

Muzio Scevola: Act III HWV 13 (Scene 7) *Spera, ché tra le care gioie* [3.58]

Orlando HWV31 (Act II, Scene 11) *Ah stiglie larve!... Vaghe pupille* [7.20]

Luca Antonio PREDIERI (1688–1767)

Scipione il giovane (Act III, Scene 4) *Dovrian quest'occhi piangere** [4.37]

Nicola MATTEIS (c.1670–after 1713)

Ballo dei Bagatellieri (excerpts) [7.10]

Francesco Bartolomeo CONTI (1681/2–1732)

Don Chisciotte in Sierra Morena (Act IV, Scene 6) *Odio, vendetta, amore* [4.10]

Luca Antonio PREDIERI

Scipione il giovane (Act I, Scene 12) *Finche salvo è l'amor suo** [6.20]

Johann Adolf HASSE (1699–1783)

Orfeo: *Sempre a si vaghi rai** [7.14]

*World-Premiere Recordings

Jakub Józef Orliński (countertenor)

Il Pomo d'Oro/Maxim Emelyanychev

rec. 15–21 March 2019, Villa San Fermo, Lonigo, Italy. DDD.

Texts and translations included

ERATO 9029542338 [76:26]



CD available from	

Erato can now field two first-class countertenors; on the strength of this release from Jakub Józef Orliński, Philippe Jaroussky

had better watch his back. Like Jaroussky, Orliński has a voice on the lighter side of the counter-tenor range, but less extreme, which will probably make him friends among those who find Jaroussky hard to adjust to. (I did at first, but it's well worth persevering.) In any case, there need be no rivalry in the case of this new recording: only some of the Handel is at all familiar and there's much that is receiving its first ever recording. Try the *Orlando* mad aria for Orliński at his most impressive.

With excellent support from Il Pomo d'Oro – hardly surprising – and good recording, only the small-font, white on a dark background, for the notes and texts lets this down.

Some time ago I mentioned with approval the first album from this team, *Anima Sacra*; I had only sampled it – I really must catch up with it (Erato **9029563374**).

Giovanni Paolo COLONNA (1637-1695)

Motetti a due e tre voci, Op.3 (1681)

Salve Pretiosum [5:15]

Advolate fideles populi [7:08]

Sonata VIII [2:53]

O Splendida Dies [8:08]

Giulio Cesare ARRESTI (1619-1701)

Sonata XVI - *Elevazione sopra il 'Pange lingua'* [2:34]

Giovanni Paolo COLONNA

Pulcra es [7:34]

Sonata VII [2:57]

E Libano Cæli [8:00]

Sinfonia sopra 'Ride tellus' [2:00]

Esurientes [5:33]

Sinfonia sopra 'Iubilet Cælum' [1:03]

Adeste superi [5:30]

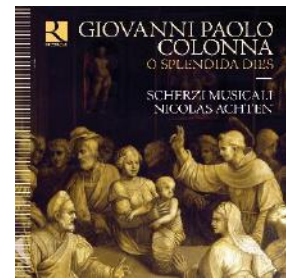
Scherzi Musicali/Nicolas Achten

rec. Église Saint Jean l'Évangéliste, Beaufays, November 2018. DDD.

A = 440 Hz, 7th-comma meantone.

Texts and translations included

RICERCAR RIC406 [58:40]



CD available from	

There are more recordings of the music of Colonna than I had expected. A few albums are devoted entirely to his music and he takes a

walk-on role in several others. There's even a 2-CD collection of his complete solo motets at budget price on Brilliant Classics (**94647**); no overlap between that and this Ricercar collection of his motets for 2 and 3 voices.

Johan van Veen made a CPO recording of his *Lamentations a Recording of the Month* (**555048-2** – [review](#)) and he also enjoyed a Tactus recording of his oratorio *Assalone* (Absalom) – [review](#). The new Ricercar recording may not be quite in the same league as that CPO album but I very much enjoyed hearing these performances of a composer whose music I scarcely knew. The vocal items, of a predominantly celebratory nature, are brought to us in accomplished performances, as also are the instrumental interludes. If you are already tired of endless Christmas 'musack' in the shops by the time that you read this, Ricercar's Colonna would be one of many possible antidotes.

Gottfried FINGER (c.1655–1730)

Music for European Courts and Concerts

Come all, with moving songs prepare, for solo voice and b.c. (Prologue from *The Loves of Mars and Venus*) (1696) [0:54]

Sonata a tre chori in C [6:21]

Sonata a 5 for oboe, strings and b.c. in B-flat [7:58]

Chaconne a 4 for strings and b.c. in G [3:43]

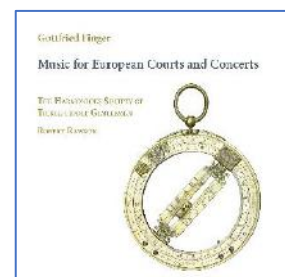
The Mourning Bride: Incidental music for 2 oboes, bassoon, strings and b.c. [8:19]

Sonata a 6 for 2 trumpets, timpani, strings and b.c. in C [4:50]

Chaconne a 5 for violin solo, strings and b.c. in G [2:38]

Concerto a 6 for oboe solo, 2 recorders, 2 horns and b.c. in F [9:40]



Fantasia for 2 oboes, bassoon, strings and b.c. in g minor [8:11]



Sonata a 6 for 2 trumpets, 2 oboes, 2 violins and b.c. in D [3:55]
 Sonata 9 for 2 oboes, bassoon, strings and b.c. in g minor [4:08]
Morpheus, gentle god for 4 solo voices, recorder consort and b.c. (from *Alexander the Great*, 1701) [5:53]

The Harmonious Society of Tickle-Fiddle Gentlemen/Robert Rawson
 rec. July 2018, St Mary the Virgin, Bishopsbourne, Kent. DDD.
 Texts included.

RAMÉE RAM1802 [66:47]

CD available from	
	

It's not long since I enjoyed a Chandos recording of the music of Gottfried Finger: the Violin Sonatas which he composed in London

performed by Duo Dorado on **CHAN0824** – [review](#). The new recording spreads its net rather wider in the form of vocal and (mainly) instrumental music for a variety of combinations. Don't take the 'European Courts' in the sub-title too literally: though the Moravian composer Finger drew on his experiences in continental Europe, it was in England, for the Chapel Royal of James II, later for the Earl of Manchester and London concerts that Finger made his mark.

If I appreciated the earlier Chandos recording, I enjoyed the new Ramée even more. The music is even more attractive and the performances all that we have come to expect from this delightfully-named group. Here they follow up their equally enjoyable recording of another foreign composer in London, Pepusch on an earlier Ramée recording (**RAM1109** – [review](#)). So that's two enjoyable opportunities in short order to get to know this unjustly neglected composer; it sounds as if the tickle-fiddlers enjoyed it immensely.

Henry PURCELL (1659-1695)

King Arthur or The British Worthy, Z.628 (1691)

Stefanie True (soprano – Priestess, Shepherdess, Syren, She)
 Caroline Weynants (soprano – Philidel, Nymph, Pan)
 Marcus Farnsworth (baritone – Grimbald, Aeolus, He)
 Zsuzsi Tóth (soprano – Shepherdess, Syren, Nymph, Venus)
 Sophie Junker (soprano – Cupid, Solo: Saint George, The Patron of our Isle)
 Olivier Berten (high tenor – Solo: How Blest Are Shepherds, Solo: How Happy the Lover, Trio: For Folded Flocks, Peasant)
 Sebastian Myrus (baritone - First Saxon Priest, Cold Genius, Sylvan, Nereid, Peasant, Trio: For Folded Flocks)
 Robert Buckland (tenor – Second Saxon Priest, British Warrior, Peasant)
 Jan Kullman (counter-tenor – Priestess, Man, Trio: For Folded Flocks)
 David Lee – Priestess, Man, Comus
 Daniel Egersema – Nymph
 Vox Luminis/Lionel Meunier



rec. January 2018, Amuz, Festival van Vlaanderen – Antwerp. DDD
 Texts included

Reviewed as lossless press preview.

ALPHA 430 [57:41 + 40:18] For CD purchase details, please see [review](#) by Dominy Clements.

Anna Dennis (soprano, Shepherdess, Siren)
 Mhairi Lawson (soprano, Saxon Priestess, Shepherdess, Nereid)
 Rowan Pierce (soprano, Cupid)
 Carolyn Sampson (soprano, Philidel, Siren, She, Venus)
 Jeremy Budd (high tenor, Shepherd, Fame)
 James Way (tenor, Saxon Priest, British Warrior, Shepherd)
 Roderick Williams (baritone, Grimbald, Comus)



Ashley Riches (bass-baritone, Saxon Priest, Cold Genius, Shepherd)
 Gabrieli Consort and Players/Paul McCreesh
 rec. St Silas the Martyr, Kentish Town, London, 14-18 January 2019. DDD.
 Texts included

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

SIGNUM SIGCD589 [53:25 + 44:13] For CD purchase details please see **Recommended** [review](#) by Simon Thompson.

The number of recordings, past and present, suggests that others have enjoyed Purcell's *King Arthur* as much as I do. A series of divertissements for Dryden's play, there's no Round Table, Camelot, Holy Grail or Arthur, but Merlin puts in an appearance, and there is much from the medieval Matter of Britain: there's even a dash of the kind of enchantment which we find in later Tasso- and Ariosto-inspired operas by Handel, Vivaldi and others.

No definitive score exists, so both new releases involve a considerable amount of editing, as explained in detail in the Signum booklet. As expected from a McCreesh enterprise, the development of Dryden's text and Purcell's music is explained. The Alpha booklet is much less detailed but more than adequate.

Hitherto I've been happy with the Erato recording from Les Arts Florissants and William Christie (**2564677434**, 2 CDs, around £13.50: Bargain of the Month – [review](#) – or **4509985352**, super-budget-price download, no booklet, or in a 4½-hour download, with *Dido and Æneas* and *The Fairy Queen* **2564692016**, around £19.50 in lossless sound, no booklet). There's also much to be said for Hervé Niquet and Le Concert Spirituel (**GCD921608**, single CD, around £13 – [DL Roundup March 2012/1](#)), while the recording by Anthony Lewis with the Philomusica of London and St Anthony Singers (Decca **4761552**, with *The Indian Queen*, download only, no booklet, around £11 in lossless sound) is of more than historical interest. Alfred Deller, with his Consort and Choir (Harmonia Mundi Gold **HMG50252/3**, 2 CDs, mid-price) is best regarded as a period piece only. The download of Trevor Pinnock's DG Archiv recording is available as **E4354902**.

None of these include the spoken dialogue, but they all serve to demonstrate that much of the music, 90+ minutes of it¹, can hold its own against *Dido and Æneas*. The Frost Scene (Act III scene ii) has consistently been admired and Charles Wesley was so impressed with the aria *Fairest Isle* from Act V that he composed the hymn 'Love divine' with that as its tune before Vaughan Williams replaced it with the more familiar *Down Ampney*. Wesley's admiration for an aria almost as enthralling as Dido's Lament is hardly surprising.

Dominy Clements gave a swings-and-roundabouts comparison with the Christie recording in his [review](#) of the Alpha. In particular he pointed to the greater drama which Christie gets from the Cold Genius. That's an important part of the work and it's true that Vox Luminis skates over it (no pun intended) but it's beautifully sung and the evocation of frost, which sounds so similar to Vivaldi's *Winter*, would grace any performance of that work just as well. England was undergoing a mini Ice Age, with ice fairs on the Thames, in Purcell's time. There's a musical picture of Winter in Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, too (Garden Fountain scene, Act IV). I listened to the Christie recording again immediately afterwards; it's more dramatic, but I found less to choose between them than Simon Thompson.

The Signum recording also makes rather less of this scene than Christie and I was a little less impressed with Rowan Pierce's Cupid. Nor do the strings, played softly, make as much of the evocation of frost as Christie's and Meunier's. Overall, with Ashley Riches' Cold Genius less impressive than that of Myrus (Alpha), this is not one of the glories of the new recording. Neither of the new recordings quite matches Christie or Gardiner in this respect. Overall, I'd rate Gardiner best of all here.

Can the new recordings match the best recordings of the other highlight, *Fairest Isle*? On Signum the instrumental introduction is almost as subdued as in the Frost Scene but Carolyn Sampson's account

of the aria is very beautiful, if a little too *sub fusc* for my taste. The Alpha instrumental introduction is more positive and, for my money, Zsuzsi Tóth comes much closer to an ideal Venus, if not quite as close as Véronique Gens with Christie.

I must point out that I find myself distinctly in the minority in my views on the Signum recording which has already received a 'Recommended' rating from Simon Thompson – [review](#) – a 5-star rating in the BBC Music Magazine and been made Recording of the Month in Gramophone. They all find much more than me in the singing of Carolyn Sampson ('a beautiful Fairest Isle' writes ST) and Rowan Pierce.

There are many good things, not least the scholarship that has gone into this production, for example, with some dubiously attributable music replaced by genuine Purcell from *Dioclesian*. Moreover, taken as a whole, the production holds together, whatever I may think about individual sections. The instrumental playing is first-rate and the 24-bit download sound outshines even the Alpha, though I'm not quite comparing like with like: I listened to the Alpha in 16-bit CD-quality wma. The booklet, too, is of very high quality.

I'm surprised to find myself less than wholly convinced, after McCreesh and his team's glorious achievement in evoking a twentieth-century Coronation – [Recording of the Month](#).

Please take my reservations in conjunction with Simon Thompson's opinion. Overall, however, if you have either the Christie or the Gardiner recording, both available attractively priced, I'd stay with that. If you don't have a version of *King Arthur*, my preference would be for the Alpha over the Signum.

¹ With a little more pruning than usual and sprightly tempi, Niquet (Glossa) gets the whole work on one 76-minute CD. Ignore providers who are asking anything from £19 to £30 for this CD.

Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750)

Organ Works Vol. 3

Prelude and fugue in C (BWV 531) [07:30]

Fantasia and fugue in c minor (BWV 537) [08:48]

Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr, chorale preludes (BWV 717, 711 & 715) [08:48]

Ach was soll ich Sünder machen, chorale partita (BWV 770) [12:11]

Toccatina in C (BWV 566a) [10:24]

Prelude and fugue in c minor (BWV 546) [10:58]

Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend, chorale preludes (BWV 709 & 726) [04:24]

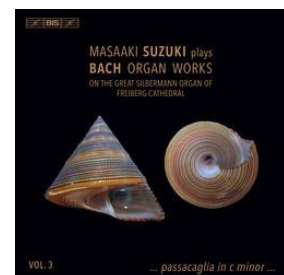
Passacaglia and fugue in c minor (BWV 582) [14:36]

Masaaki Suzuki (organ)

Recorded 2018 at the Dom St Marien, Freiberg, Germany

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




BIS-2421 SACD [79:07] For purchase details please see [review by Mark Rochester](#).



This third volume of what could well become a complete recording of Johann Sebastian Bach's organ oeuvre by Masaaki Suzuki comprises an interesting programme of much variety. At its core are some of Bach's most monumental pieces, especially the Passacaglia which closes the programme. We also hear some specimens of Bach's early compositions, which were written under the influence of the North German organ school, of which Buxtehude was the last great representative. It was a good idea to bring together several arrangements of two chorales, showing the different ways Bach treated the same material. The chorale partita BWV 770 is one of Bach's most popular organ works, but there are considerable doubts about its authenticity, as Albert Clement explains in his excellent liner-notes. That doesn't take anything away from its quality, and it allows Suzuki to demonstrate the wide range of colours of the Silbermann organ of 1714 in the Cathedral of Freiberg in Germany. It is a large instrument, and such an organ is needed for a convincing performance of the large-scale works. Suzuki is a brilliant organist, whose performances are in several ways different from those of his former

teacher Ton Koopman. He is more restrained in the addition of ornaments (and rightly so), and his tempi are generally a little slower. In the Passacaglia I could imagine a swifter tempo. Debatable is the change of registration within pieces, including the Passacaglia. This disc is a worthy sequel to the previous discs, and lovers of Bach's organ works should not hesitate to add it to their collection. [**Johan van Veen**]

And another review:

SACD available from	
	

If this third volume of Masaaki Suzuki's Bach organ works is even half as compelling as the [first](#) and [second](#), then JSB fans are in for a treat. Moreover, hearing Freiberg Cathedral's 1714 Silbermann - an experience that moved the heroine of George Eliot's *Middlemarch* to tears - is a joy in itself. Suzuki has chosen different instruments for this survey, from the restored Schnitger/Hinz of Martinikerk, Groningen, the Netherlands (Vol. 1), to the Marc Garnier of Shoin Chapel, Kobe, Japan (Vol. 2). Both are fine modern organs, very well recorded, but it's the imaginative, often revelatory, playing of Suzuki that really takes one's breath away.

This opening salvo here is a quite magnificent Prelude & Fugue in the blazingly affirmative key of C, the heft of this Silbermann unmistakable from the start. The recording, produced and engineered by the ever-reliable Hans Kipfer, is equally impressive, with none of that fatiguing 'wall of sound' that spoils so many organ albums. (Those who like a great *wash* of sound will be delighted, though.) But it's not just about spectacle, it's about inner detail, Suzuki's control of Bach's complex counterpoint assured and authoritative. His performances are both lucid and nicely calibrated - quite an achievement on an instrument of this size and vintage - although there are one or two spots where clarity suffers a little.

I freely confess - no thumbscrews required - that while I'm an unrepentant organ fan I've always gravitated to works of the 19th and 20th centuries, with the odd foray into baroque repertoire. That's undeniably a blind spot for me, something I hope to overcome by listening to this Suzuki series. The upshot is that I've been captivated by this music in ways I scarcely thought possible. And that, surely, is the gift of first-rate performances/recordings, to persuade the doubters and satisfy the long converted. Suzuki's Bach - in all its forms - certainly does that.

Glorious playing and sound; a series to treasure. [**DM**]

Henri-Jacques DE CROES (1705-1786)

La Sonate Égarée - Six Trio sonatas Op. 5

Sonata I [09:42]

Sonata II [11:03]

Sonata III [10:12]

Sonata IV [08:35]

Sonata V [10:36]

Sonata VI [12:12]

BarrocoTout [Carlota Garcia (transverse flute), Izana Soria (violin), Edouard Catalan (cello), Ganaël Schneider (harpichord)]

rec. 2018, National Centre for Early Music, York, UK. DDD.

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

LINN RECORDS CKD 597 [62:19] For purchase details, please see review in [Summer 2019/1](#).



For a young ensemble there is no better way to make its debut than with a disc of music of fine quality which is largely unknown. Exactly that is the case here. Barrocotout comprises four players who met at the Brussels Conservatoire and together won several prizes, for instance in 2017 at the York Early Music International Young Artists Competition. That is easy to understand. They deliver either sensitive

or sparkling performances, depending on the character of a sonata or movement, of a set of six trio sonatas for flute, violin and basso continuo by the little-known Henri-Jacques De Croes, who was quite successful in bringing the orchestras of the courts of Thurn und Taxis in Frankfurt and of Charles of Lorraine in Brussels to a higher level. He held his ground as a composer too, as these sonatas demonstrate. They are written in the galant idiom, but there are also references to tradition in some movements dominated by counterpoint. What we get here is also more than easy stuff: some movements are unashamedly virtuosic, and one can imagine that some members of his orchestra in Brussels may have liked to play them. I encourage anyone who likes to hear something unfamiliar to investigate this disc. I am sure you will return to it regularly. And keep an eye on this fine ensemble. **[Johan van Veen]**

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Symphony No.7 in A, Op.92 [35:02]

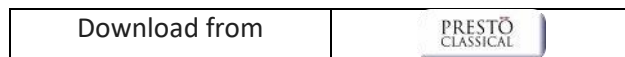
Symphony No.8 in F, Op.93 [24:05]

Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York/Bruno Walter

rec. 1951. ADD/mono

SONY G0100040582620 [59:08]

No.7 originally released as Columbia ML4414 (US)/Columbia 33CX1120 (UK), later Nos. 7 and 8 as Philips ABL3243 (UK).



Many waters have flowed since I owned this recording, identically coupled, on Philips

Classical Favourites. No.7 was originally released on its own, so the reproduction of the original cover has been rejigged slightly for this download. I always preferred the playing of the NYPO here to the Columbia SO remake and the performances are typically sane Bruno Walter, reminding us of the close relationship of these two works, but re-hearing it serves as a reminder that the thin 1951 sound leaves much to be desired. Did I enjoy streaming this from Naxos Music Library and would I do so again? Yes – not least for the fast tempo of the finale of No.7 without the NYPO ever in danger of coming off the tracks. Would I pay over £11 for the lossless download? No – and I see even less point in paying more still for 24/96 and even 24/192 versions; what isn't there can't be put there, however good the bit-rate.

The LSO/Josef Krips Everest recording from a slightly later vintage (1960, in very decent stereo) which I enjoyed ([DL News 2013/16](#)) remains available, but it's short value for around £8.50 in lossless or around £26 in 24-bit (**4803306669** download only). One download supplier is asking £25.99 even for 16-bit lossless!

Sony's other NYPO/Walter Beethoven recordings vary in price: Symphonies Nos. 3 and 5 are on sale for a reasonable £7.50 (CD), though the download is more expensive at £10.21 (**88765484522**). No.9 (download only) is as expensive as Nos.7 and 8 (**G0100040582964**). Ditto No.6, for a mere 38 minutes (**G010004085743Z**).

Hector BERLIOZ (1803-1869)

Symphonie fantastique - Épisode de la vie d'un artiste, Op. 14, H. 48 (1830; autograph score) [53:33]

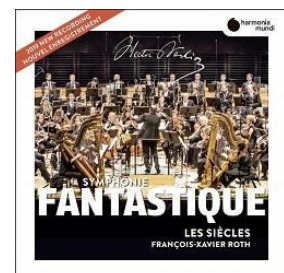
Overture *Les Francs-Juges*, Op. 3, H. 23 (1826) [12:12]

Les Siècles/François-Xavier Roth

rec. 2019, Maison de l'Orchestre national d'Île-de-France, Alfortville

Reviewed as 24/44.1 download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#).

HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902644 [65:45]



For CD purchase details see **Recommended** [review by Dan Morgan](#).

Only one reservation: I always prefer to have the filler placed first. Reviewers have been banging on about that ever since I started collecting records, but the companies only occasionally take notice.

Hector BERLIOZ (1803-1869)

Messe Solennelle, H20 (1824)

Adriana Gonzalez (soprano)

Julien Behr (tenor)

Andreas Wolf (bass)

Le Concert Spirituel Choir and Orchestra/Hervé Niquet

rec. June 2019, Chapelle Royale du Château de Versailles. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

Reviewed as mp3 press preview.

ALPHA 564 [51:17]



CD available from	

When his *Grande Messe des Morts* and his *Te Deum* are reasonably well known, it's surprising that the Berlioz *Messe solennelle* should be

something of a Cinderella. There's only one other recording of this uneven but powerful work on a single album, but it's a very good one with John Eliot Gardiner in charge of his Monteverdi Choir and the Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique (Philips **4830228**, with revised version of *Resurrexit* as an appendix, download only, no booklet). That's also included in an 8-CD + 1-DVD box set of Gardiner's Berlioz (Decca **4834687**, around £34 but on offer for £24.32) and Warner have borrowed it for their 27-CD Berlioz set (**9029561444**, currently on offer for under £50 – [Winter 2018-19/2](#)).

The new Alpha recording omits the second, longer version of *Resurrexit* but is, in every other respect, a strong challenger to the Gardiner. I was able to listen only to the mp3 press preview; that sounds pretty good, but the availability of a 24-bit download will give the Alpha greater appeal for many.

Anton BRUCKNER (1824–96)

Symphony No.3 in d minor 'Wagner Symphony', WAB103 (1889 edition, ed.

Nowak, Skrowaczewski)

London Philharmonic Orchestra/Stanisław Skrowaczewski

rec. live Southbank Centre Royal Festival Hall, London, 14 March 2014. DDD.

LPO LPO0084 [56:35]



Streamed from	
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Some time ago I found myself preferring this version of the 1889 edition to a more recent recording by Andris Nelsons with the Leipzig Gewandhaus

Orchestra (DG – [review](#)). Naxos Music Library have just caught up with this LPO recording, which has prompted me again to listen to it and renew my recommendation. If it's the 1889 text that you want, this is the one to have, as Michael Cookson and John Quinn reported in a joint [review](#). I should also mention Valery Gergiev's live recording, again of the 1889 edition, made in Sankt Florian (Münchner Philharmoniker **9305211251**). I liked that, too – [review](#) – but my overall preference remains for Osmo Vänskä's recording of the 1877 edition and 1876 *Adagio*, with the BBC Scottish SO (Hyperion **CDH55474**, available on CD and as a download from hyperion-records.co.uk), very good value at mid-price.

Gustav MAHLER (1860-1911)

Symphony No. 1 in D major (1888/1896)

Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks/Mariss Jansons
rec. live, 1-2 March 2007, Herkulesaal, MunichOriginally released as a bonus CD with the BR Klassik set *Welt und Traum* (900901)**BR KLASSIK 900179** [54:25] Reviewed as a 16-bit download; pdf booklet included. Previous review: [Ralph Moore](#)

CD available from	

This album caused some confusion when it was first reviewed on the main site, one reader insisting this was, in fact, a previously released Mahler 1 with the BRSO under Yannick Nézet-Séguin ([BR Klassik 900143](#)).

At first glance, the timings seem uncannily close, but Jansons' third movement clocks in at 10:11, Nézet-Séguin at a more leisurely 10:59. Besides, the Latvian's audible grunts in this section give the game away. That said, the performances *sound* remarkably similar as well. (Which begs the question: when a work is part of an orchestra's DNA - as this one is for the Bavarians - do conductors make much of a difference to the end result?) In fact, this 'new' Jansons album was first released as a bonus CD with an earlier Jansons/BRSO set entitled *Welt und Traum* (900901).

In his review, Ralph Moore was absolutely right to say there's little to choose between these two Mahler 1s, recorded live in the same hall seven years apart. Indeed, I was much impressed with this Jansons/BRSO First, which seems mercifully free of the mannerisms that afflict so many of his performances. Then again, I thought his recent Concertgebouw Seventh - similarly unencumbered - rather splendid ([RCO Live](#)). Be warned though, an eminent *Gramophone* critic said of the latter: 'It's not Mahler'.

Of course, Jansons is no stranger to the First, having recorded it in both Oslo (Warner) and Amsterdam (RCO Live). The first movement of this Munich account is admirably focused, yet full of wonder, the dancery second most beautifully sprung. If anything, his strange, half-lit funeral procession in the third is even more atmospheric than Nézet-Séguin's, both conductors superbly emphatic in the finale. As expected, the BRSO demonstrate why they're considered one of the world's great Mahler bands; both recordings are firm and fearless.

Not a mandatory purchase if you already own the Nézet-Séguin; I'm delighted to have it, though. [DM]

Like to the Lark**Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)**

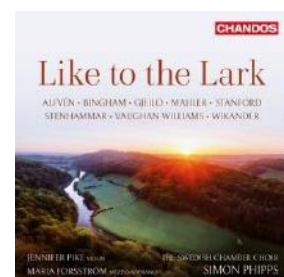
Rest (1902) [4:12]

Three Shakespeare Songs (1951) [6:58]

The Lark Ascending (1914, revised 1920)* (arr. **Paul DRAYTON** b.1944) [15:29]**Judith BINGHAM (b.1952) – Sir Charles Villiers STANFORD (1852–1924)**

The Drowned Lovers (1998, revised 2009)† [5:33]

The Blue Bird, Op.119/3 (1910) [3:44]

Wilhelm STENHAMMAR (1871–1927)Three Choral Songs (*Tre körvisor*) (1890) [6:38]**Hugo ALFVÉN (1872–1960)***Uti vår hage* (In Our Meadow) (1923) [2:34]*Limu, limu, lima* (1923) [1:26]**David WIKANDER (1884–1955)***Kung Liljekonvalje* (King Lily of the Valley) (1919) [3:50]




Gustav MAHLER (1860 – 1911)*Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* (1901)[†] [6:24]**Ola GJEILO (b.1978)***Serenity (O magnum mysterium)* (2010)* [6:37]Maria Forsström (mezzo)[†]

Jennifer Pike (violin)*

The Swedish Chamber Choir/Simon Phipps

rec. Årstads Kyrka, Heberg, Sweden; 4 and 5 May & 15 and 16 June 2019. DDD/DSD

Reviewed as CHAN5255, 24/96 download with pdf booklet from chandos.netText of Meredith's *The Lark Ascending* included.**CHANDOS CHSA5255 SACD** [63:54]

CD available from	
	

Hard on the heels of Andrew Manze's recent release of miscellaneous Vaughan Williams, a supplement to his complete symphonies for

Onyx (**ONYX4212**), here comes yet another recording of *The Lark Ascending*. Simon Thompson thought that an ideal one-stop shop for some of VW's most popular music – [review](#) – and I also thought these very idiomatic and sympathetic performances of beautiful music, very well played and recorded. (My review is pending and should be available by the time that you read this.)

This time, however, there's a difference: this is *The Lark Ascending* arranged for violin and choir, mostly wordless but with Meredith's text discreetly underlying the middle section. It still sounds beautiful – though I frequently wonder why Classic FM listeners prefer it to VW's *Tallis Fantasia*, *Greensleeves Fantasia* and *Five Variations of Dives and Lazarus*, all also included on the Manze recording I don't wish to deny that. I certainly want to hear it again in this version, but it wouldn't be my Desert Island choice; though it treads just the right side of sounding cloying, I miss the intricacies of the original instrumentation.

If *The Lark* works for you in this arrangement – sample it first – the rest of the programme should also appeal.

Charles IVES (1874-1954)

Symphony No.3 'The Camp Meeting' [23:41]

Symphony No.4 [31:19]

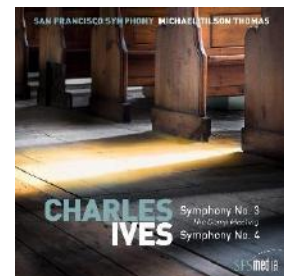
With the hymns used in each symphony.

San Francisco Symphony Chorus

San Francisco Symphony/Michael Tilson Thomas

rec. Davies Symphony Hall—a venue of the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center, City and County of San Francisco, 10-12, 16-18

November 2017.

SFS MEDIA 2193600762 [68:42]

This is included because it's the first album that I tried out from the new free version of the streaming service Idagio, for which you can sign up at idagio.com. It will certainly give you a serviceable idea whether or not to stream in better quality, but the price to pay is an occasional hint that you should sign up for the better, paid service. It's not as annoying in that respect as Spotify – much gentler than that – and the bit-rate (not specified) gives a fair idea of the quality of the recording; I'm not sure, though, how it would sound 'raw' from your phone or computer, because the Cyrus Soundkey tidies up even low-bit-rate offerings.

You get some basic details of the music, but not the booklet – I had to go to Naxos Music Library and Qobuz for that.

Michael Tilson Thomas's earlier forays into the music of Ives have all been well received, both on the SFSO own label and on Sony. I liked their DVD performance and analysis of the *Holidays Symphony* – [review](#) (now **SFS0024**) and I enjoyed the new album, too. Whether you choose the free Idagio or the nag-free Naxos Music Library is your call.

RECOMMENDED

Manuel De FALLA (1876-1946)

El sombrero de tres picos (The Three-Cornered Hat, Ballet 1916-19)

El amor brujo (Love, the magician, Ballet 1919-25) [37:28]

Carmen Romeu, (mezzo), Marina Heredia (cantaora) [24:48]

Mahler Chamber Orchestra/Pablo Heras-Casado

rec. April 2019, Barcelona, Auditori. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

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

HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902271 [62:16]



CD available from	

With their earlier recording of *El sombrero* now download only, the Harmonia Mundi catalogue was ready for another recording. That earlier

version, with Josep Pons conducting the Orquesta Ciudad de Granada, and coupled with *Noches en los jardines de España*, remains well worthwhile as a download. The coupling, too, with Josep Colom as soloist, is also well worth considering – in [2014/2](#) I thought both performances good and well recorded – but most potential buyers will, I presume, prefer the *El amor brujo* on the new album.

With the same coupling, Charles Dutoit's Montréal recording presents the obvious comparison (Decca **4100082**, Presto special CD or download). Dutoit's *Sombrero* is also available on a budget-price Double Decca twofer, with *Amor* from Raphael Frübeck de Burgos, *Noches en los jardines* with Alicia de Larrocha as soloist, and other very worthwhile Falla recordings (**4661282** – [review](#)). Also on a two-for-one offer, there's Burgos's earlier (1963) *Sombrero*, with Carlo Maria Giulini's *Amor* and other Falla works (Warner **2375952**, download only: **Recording of the Month** – [review](#)). See also my thoughts on Juanjo Meno's *Sombrero* and other Falla works on Chandos **CHAN10694**, in [February 2012/2](#).

Those older recordings remain very worthwhile – if you have one or more of them, there's no need to kick yourself – but for quality of performance and recording – the latter outshining even Dutoit's early digital recording – the new album goes to the top of the tree. This is about the liveliest recording of *Sombrero* that I've heard, though Heras-Casado never rides roughshod over the more delicate sections, and *Amor* is not far behind. At present the 24-bit download from eclassical is the same price as the 16-bit, \$13.33. Even when it reverts to its higher price, that still compares well with what others are charging, around £15.

Sergei PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)

Alexander Nevsky, Op. 78a (1939) [36:58]

Pushkiniana (compiled & edited by Gennadi Rozhdestvensky, 1962) [20:03]

Hamlet, Op. 77 – Ghost of Hamlet's father (1937-1938) [6:19]

Ivan the Terrible, Op. 116 – Dance of the Oprichniks (1942-1946) [2:15]

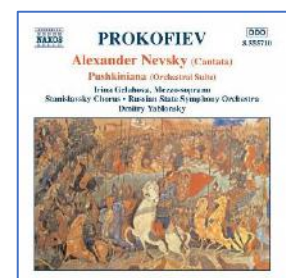
Irina Gelahova (mezzo)

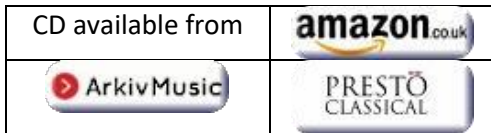
Stanislavsky Chorus

Russian State Symphony Orchestra/Dmitry Yablonsky

rec. 2002, Studio No. 5, Moscow State Broadcasting House

NAXOS 8.555710 [65:34] Reviewed as a 16-bit download; pdf booklet included. Previous review: [Colin Clarke](#)





As a long-time admirer of Prokofiev's great cantata, *Alexander Nevsky*, I read Ralph Moore's recent [MusicWeb survey](#) of available recordings with considerable interest. I quite agree with his first choice - Claudio Abbado and the

LSO on Deutsche Grammophon - but realised the joint winner, featuring an all-Russian cast led by Dimitry Yablonsky, had passed me by. (This was the conductor's second recording of the piece; Ralph gives the first short shrift.) Given that I've enjoyed much of Yablonsky's work - his superbly remastered [Shostakovich collection](#) is a particular favourite - I felt this was a *Nevsky* I simply had to hear.

First impressions are entirely positive, the opening more darkly beautiful than usual, with all the inner detail that other performances, perhaps too intent on spectacle, tend to miss. Indeed, that applies to this reading as a whole, which is much more *musical* than one might have expected from native forces. It helps that balances are sensible, so the recording never sounds too upfront for comfort. And while Yablonsky's 'Battle on the ice' isn't as visceral as some, his thoughtful, unhurried approach is still pretty exciting.

True, mezzo Irina Gelahova doesn't efface memories of Elena Obraztova (Abbado) or Linda Finnie (Neeme Järvi) but her lament is both steady and intensely moving. Happily, the Stanislavsky Chorus never becomes raucous in the big moments or mawkish in the quiet ones. The couth, nicely calibrated orchestral contribution is also impressive, though Yablonsky must take some of the credit for that. As for the jubilant chorus at the end, it's all the more satisfying for being so judiciously done. Yes, Ralph's right, this *Nevsky* really is up there with the best.

In his original CD review Colin Clarke was even more enthusiastic about the fillers. *Pushkiniana*, the most substantial one, is a selection of music Prokofiev penned for a proposed theatrical production of *Eugene Onegin* and a film of *Queen of Spades*, neither of which came to fruition. In 1962 the late, great Gennady Rozhdestvensky compiled and edited the material to create *Pushkiniana*, a veritable feast of good tunes. The playing is beautifully nuanced, and the sound is utterly embraceable. The deft little Polonaise (tr. 10) is a special delight, the Polka (tr. 12) and Mazurka (tr. 13) reminiscent of Shostakovich at his genial best.

One might expect rude Russian brass playing of the kind associated with orchestras of the Soviet era, but they sound so sophisticated in *Nevsky* and *Pushkiniana*, as indeed they do in the dark, slow-building tension of the excerpt from *Hamlet*, another film that was never made. Moreover, I must commend the conductor for his natural phrasing and his ear for telling details and apt sonorities. It certainly helps that the album - engineered by Alexandr Karasev - is superb from start to finish. But, as if to reward themselves for their good behaviour, Yablonsky and his orchestra let rip with a wildly exciting account of the 'Dance of the oprichniks' from *Ivan the Terrible*. The eminently readable notes are by Richard Whitehouse.

A top-notch *Nevsky* and three fab fillers; a belated but very welcome find. [DM]

Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

Incidental music to *Klop* (The Bedbug), Op. 19 (1929) [28:39]

Lyubov' i nenavist (Love and Hate), Op. 38 (1935; film score reconstructed by Mark Fitz-Gerald) [30:10]

Mannheim Opera Choir




Rheinland-Pfalz State Philharmonic/Mark Fitz-Gerald

rec. 2019, Philharmonie, Ludwigshafen, Germany

World premiere recordings

NAXOS 8.574100 [58:54] Reviewed as a 16-bit download; includes pdf booklet with sung texts (transliterated Russian & English)



CD available from	
	

Although I was bitten by the Shostakovich bug more than forty years ago, I only came to the composer's more peripheral scores in the last ten. The conductor-arranger Mark Fitz-Gerald, celebrated for his Berlin Filmharmonics in

the 1980s and for his live accompaniment of silents, was certainly the right man to undertake this important Shostakovich series for Naxos. Apart from the album under review, he's recorded the following (links to MWI reviews in brackets): *Alone* ([8.570316](#)); *The Girlfriends, Rule, Britannia, Salute to Spain* ([8.572138](#)); *New Babylon* ([8.572824-25](#)); and *The Gadfly* ([8.573747](#)). I've heard them all, and I firmly believe they're valuable additions to the DSCH discography. That said, I was mildly disappointed by Fitz-Gerald's *Gadfly*, but more about that later.

Shostakovich's incidental music for *The Bedbug*, a subversive comedy by Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930), is typical of the genre, with a selection of marches and waltzes, a foxtrot and a chorus. Given the play's sharply satirical tone, one might expect acerbic music to match. Alas, that's not the case, the work's fifteen numbers - three missing ones newly orchestrated by Fitz-Gerald - are surprisingly tame in both style and execution. The comic potential of those brass slides and raspberries in particular is never quite realised, and other witty turns seem to pass unnoticed. As for the vocal contributions, tenor and male choir, they're rather rough, although I suppose one could argue that's more 'authentic' in this context.

This brings me to the Rheinland-Pfalz State Philharmonic, which also featured in Fitz-Gerald's disappointing *Gadfly*, where, at times, I felt the players weren't entirely comfortable with the material. (How very different from the propulsive and totally engaged Frankfurt RSO in *Alone* and the Basel Sinfonietta in *New Babylon*.) That *Gadfly* sound, like this newcomer, isn't very immediate, and that doesn't help. And if you'll pardon the pun, both albums - *The Bedbug* especially - lack bite.

Even less satisfactory is Fitz-Gerald's reconstruction of the score Shostakovich penned for Albert Gendelshtein's film, *Love and Hate*, set in a village in the Donetsk Basin. The notes point to hints of middle-period Shostakovich here, but I struggled to hear it; there isn't much evidence of the composer's characteristic sonorities, while the mezzo and wordless female chorus seem curiously detached from the proceedings. Given the scant musical rewards here, it was at least a pleasure to read the exhaustive liner-notes - with cued synopses - by Gerard McBurney and John Leman Riley.

Musically and technically the weakest of Fitz-Gerald's series to date; then again, we may be scraping the bottom of the barrel here. **[DM]**

John WILLIAMS (b.1932)

Across the Stars: Film Music arranged for Violin and Orchestra

Rey's Theme (from *Star Wars* Episode VII: The Force Awakens) [3:16]

Yoda's Theme (from *Star Wars* Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back) [3:34]

Hedwig's Theme (from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*) [6:03]

Across the Stars (from *Star Wars* Episode II: Attack of the Clones) [5:17]

Donnybrook Fair (from *Far and Away*) [3:53]

Sayuri's Theme (from *Memoirs of a Geisha*) [4:43]

Night Journeys (from *Dracula*) [5:38]

Sabrina's Theme (from *Sabrina*) [4:58]

The Duel (from *The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn*) [4:23]

Luke and Leia (from *Star Wars* Episode VI: Return of The Jedi) [5:01]

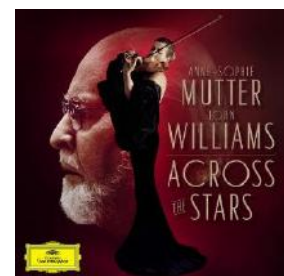
Nice to Be Around (from *Cinderella Liberty*) [4:02]

Schindler's List: Theme [4:12]




Anne-Sophie Mutter (violin)

The Recording Arts Orchestra of Los Angeles

John Williams



rec. 13 April 2019, Barbra Streisand Scoring Stage, Sony Pictures Studios, Culver City, California. DDD.
DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 4797553 [55:00]

CD available from	
	

Take a series of selection of John Williams' film music, arranged for violin and orchestra, let Anne Sophie Mutter and the composer perform

it, record in the aural equivalent of Cinemascope, put it out on CD, two LPs, and as a download and the results are exactly what you probably expect. I really enjoyed it; others will think it slush. There's also a CD+DVD de Luxe edition, which I haven't seen – and DG alone know why it takes two LPs to fit 55 minutes of music and charge £30 for the privilege. Even the downloads tend to be more expensive than usual, though the CD sells for the usual £13 or so, reduced to £10.99 by Amazon UK as I write.

The booklet is the one disappointment – predictably, I suppose, it's more bling than substance.

Harri AHMAS (b.1957) Organ Music

Four Bagatelles for horn and organ (2004) [21:13]

Chorale e Fughetta (1980) [5:20]

Hymnus interruptus (2013) [11:06]

Sonata for Organ (2015) [24:03]

Petri Komulainen (horn)


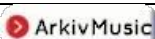

Jan Lehtola (organ of St Paul's Church, Helsinki, organ of Turku Cathedral)

First recordings

rec. 12–13 June 2006, St Paul's Church, Helsinki (Four Bagatelles), 22 May 2018, Turku Cathedral, Finland. DDD.

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

TOCCATA TOCC0525 [61:51]

CD available from	
	

The booklet describes Ahmas as a 'painter of deep waters and dark tons', and that's a spot-on description of his music here, though the

music also sounds mysterious and ethereal for much of the time. Despite its all having been composed in this century, I found it much more approachable than, for example, the Naxos Boston Symphony Commissions (below). Once again, we are in Toccata's debt for bringing us these works, all receiving their first recordings, all convincingly performed and well recorded and complete with Toccata's habitually excellent notes.

Boston Symphony Commissions

Eric NATHAN (b.1983)

the space of a door (2016) [11:31]

George TSONTAKIS (b.1951)

Sonnets – Tone Poems for English Horn and Orchestra (2016) [24:45]

Timo ANDRES (b.1985)

Everything Happens So Much (2016) [11:36]

Sean SHEPHERD (b.1979)

Express Abstractionism (2017) [13:37]

Robert Sheena (cor anglais)

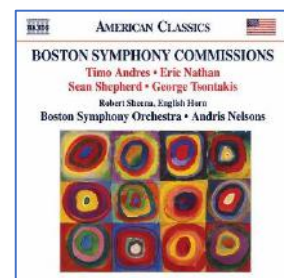
Boston Symphony Orchestra/Andris Nelsons

rec. 11–13 February 2016, 8, 10–12 and 15, 17–19 November 2016, 8–10 February 2018, Symphony Hall, Boston, MA, USA. DDD.

NAXOS AMERICAN CLASSICS 8.559874 [61:36]

Streamed from	
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Chairman Mao, asked what he thought about the French Revolution, famously said that it was too soon to tell. My



examiners in English at Oxford in the early 1960s were obviously of the same opinion; the study of Vergil's *Aeneid* in the original Latin was deemed more relevant than anything written in English later than Swinburne – and even he was judged to be dangerously modern. In the case of most contemporary music, I'm with Chairman Mao – I'm including this recording partly because I've been asked by the distributors to consider it as one of my top choices for 2019. It won't be one of my Recordings of the Year, but I did enjoy much of it and I suspect that I could really get 'into' it with a little perseverance. Mainly I'm listing it here as something which you may well wish to explore, perhaps via the Naxos Music Library.

Mario Lanza sings Italian Opera

Mario Lanza (tenor); Elaine Malbin; Licia Albanese
RCA Orchestra/Constantine Callinicos; Ray Sinatra; Ray Heindorf
rec. 1950-1952. ADD/mono
BEULAH 1PS53 [75:12] Coming soon from eavb.com. Download preferably from Qobuz when available.



Mario Lanza had – still has for many people – a valued place in popularising some of the big numbers of Italian opera: one step up, as it were, culturally from Josef Locke ‘the people’s tenor’ and perhaps one step down from the later Three Tenors, especially Luciano Pavarotti. It was, and is, all too easy to turn one’s nose up at the achievements of a singer who couldn’t read music, but his records sold 350,000 copies as late as the 1990s and he won acclaim from serious reviewers: following his release of extracts from *Andrea Chénier*, two of them included on this Beulah release, John Freestone wrote in Gramophone of the likelihood of his becoming ‘a power in the land of tenors’.

The earliest of these recordings, *Celeste Aida*, first appeared along with *Voi lo sapete* (not included here) on 78s. AR (Alec Robertson) thought it ‘grievous that so opulent a voice ... should be wasted in a mere display of physical prowess’. I was less worried about the waste and more impressed by the singing than I expected – it’s quite some time since heard Lanza. As usual, Beulah have brought up these recordings to sound well.

Caruso 1873

Lucio DALLA (1943–2012) *Caruso* [5:15]

Gioachino ROSSINI (1792–1868)

Domine Deus [5:17] from *Petite Messe solennelle*

George Frideric HANDEL (1685–1759)

Frondi tenere ... Ombra mai fu 3:57 from *Serse* HWV 40 (Act I – Serse)

Antônio Carlos GOMES (1836–1896) *Mia piccirella* [3:46] from *Salvator Rosa* (Act I – Gennariello)

Giovanni Battista PERGOLESI (1710–1736) *Tre giorni son che nina* [2:57]

attr. **Louis NIEDERMEYER (1802–1861)** *Pietà, Signore* [4:54]

Anton RUBINSTEIN (1829–1894) *Ô Lumière du jour* [4:04] from *Néron* (Act II – Néron)

Teodoro COTTRAU (1827–1879) *Santa Lucia* [4:13]

Giacomo PUCCINI (1858–1924) *Vecchia Zimarra* [2:29] from *La Bohème* (Act IV – Colline)

Antônio Carlos GOMES *Sento una forza indomita* [4:52] from *Il Guarany* (Act I – Pery & Cecilia)

Pyotr Ilyich TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893) *Sérénade de Don Juan* Op.38/1 [3:21] (Sung in French)

Jules MASSENET (1842–1912) *Élégie* [3:52]

Helen RHODES (aka Guy d’Hardelot) (1858–1936) *Parce que* (Because) [2:34]

Giuseppe VERDI (1813–1901)

Qual voluttà tras correre [4:18] from *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* (Act III – Oronte, Giselda, Pagano)

Emanuele NUTILE (1862–1932) *Mamma mia che vo’ sapé?* [3:37]

Georges BIZET (1838–1875)

Mi par d’udir ancora [3:23] from *Les Pêcheurs de perles* (Act I – Nadir, sung in Italian)



Ruggero LEONCAVALLO (1857–1919) *Mattinata* [1:56]

Francesco CILEA (1866–1950)

No, più nobile [2:52] from *Adriana Lecouvreur* (Act IV – Maurizio) (Arr.: **Enrico Caruso**)

Jules MASSENET *Chiudo gli occhi* 2:51 from *Manon* (Act II – Des Grieux, sung in Italian)

Vintage Bonus: Ernesto De CURTIS (1875–1937) *Tu ca nun chiagne* [2:25]



Roberto Alagna (tenor) Aleksandra Kurzak (soprano) Rafał Siwek (bass) Stéphanie-Marie Degand (violin) Julien Martineau (mandolin) Nicolas Montazaud (percussion)

Orchestre National d'Île-de-France /Yvan Cassar (piano)

rec. La Maison de l'Orchestre National d'Île-de-France, June 27 – July 11, August 27–29, 2019. DDD.

Texts not included

SONY CLASSICAL 19075950482 (G0100040715191, download) [72:12]

CD available from	
	

I enjoyed hearing this recording – but with lots of caveats. Purists should avoid the Rossini, Handel and Pergolesi by a long mile: this is the

music in the style of Caruso, with everything sung *can belto* as if it were *Santa Lucia*. (That's included, of course, complete with mandolin.) Though Alagna doesn't try to imitate Caruso, he does enter into the spirit of his great predecessor, with plenty of Italian sentiment laid on. By the standards of modern singing he almost shouts his way through some of the items. I know that we've been told for as long as I remember how inferior modern singers are to the greats of the past and, of course, the poor quality of the recordings of the likes of Caruso makes it hard to judge what they really sounded like, but there are gains as well as losses, especially in singing the music of the baroque and classical periods.

For all my reservations – not least the omission of the texts in a full-price release – I shall return to this from time to time. There is even a 2-LP release for those who really want to indulge in nostalgia.

Christmas Music

RECOMMENDED



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 comprobaris / 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 syng 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]

CD available from	
	

This has to be my Advent and Christmas choice this year. A confirmed fan of the Gothic Voices in their earlier incarnation when they recorded


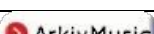

for Hyperion – recordings which are still available and well worth investigating, though some are download or Archive Service CD only – I was delighted when they re-formed and began recording for Linn. As of old, they eschew dressing the music up for a modern audience: there are just four first-rate voices at play here, with no cornetts, sackbutts or even an organ, and the results are as pure and perfect as on those earlier recordings. Only those in search of folksy ‘jolly japes’ will be disappointed.

As an English specialist, Christopher Page kept the Voices on track diction- and pronunciation-wise and the new team are no less accurate in that respect. I take their French style ‘u’s in the Latin texts on trust. The new Voices, however, are not clones of the old: they now take a broader view of the Power *Sanctus* than their predecessors on *The Service of Venus and Mars* (**CDH55290** – [review](#) – [review](#)). The recording is very good and Julian Podger’s notes in the booklet are very nearly the equal of those which Page contributed to the Hyperion series.

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](#)).

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CD available from	
	

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. The performers are such stalwarts of the Alpha repertoire as Les Musiciens de Saint-Julien and Le Poème Harmonique and though the selection looks slightly thrown together, it’s all enjoyable.



I can, however, see much less reason for most of the items on CD2: snippets from the classical repertoire, some of which is very tenuous in its link to the festive season. An excerpt from Bach’s *Magnificat* is relevant, but why movements from a violin partita, a Brandenburg Concerto, etc. And what is Vivaldi’s ‘Spring’ concerto doing here? Only Corelli’s ‘Christmas’ concerto, Op.6/8, is presented complete and the whole thing is something is a bit of a dog’s dinner, especially as the booklet seems to be devoid of texts and notes, at least in my press preview download, and it’s not even a budget reissue. The physical product apparently comes complete with a pop-up Christmas tree – no comment.

Better to go for Alpha 266, the source of the best part of this 2-CD collection, which Johan van Veen enjoyed – [review](#).



Noëls Baroques a Versailles

Pierre DANDRIEU (1664-1733) *Laissez paître vos bêtes* [10:39]

Claude BALBASTRE (1724-1799) *Où s'en vont ces gays bergers* [4:32]

Joseph est bien marié [5:17]

Or nous dites Marie [6:44]

Jean-François DANDRIEU (1681-1738) *Vous qui désirez sans fin* [6:37]

Louis-Claude DAQUIN (1694-1772) *Quand le sauveur Jésus Christ* [7:57]

Une jeune pucelle [10:13]

Claude BALBASTRE *A la venue de Noël* [5:04]

Michel CORRETTE (1707-1795) *Tous les bourgeois de Châtres* [5:18]

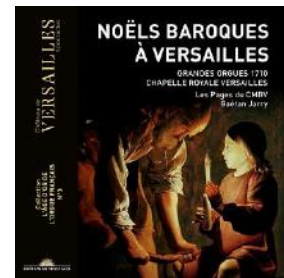
Louis-Claude DAQUIN *Qu'Adam fut un pauvre homme* [7:57]

Les Pages du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles/Gaétan Jarry (organ)

rec. Chapelle Royale de Versailles 23-25 June 2019. DDD.

Organ specification, texts and translations included.

CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES SPECTACLES CVS025 [70:40]



Another – new – 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.

If you're happy just with the instrumental arrangements, you could do much worse than an attractive recent Hortus recording of *Treize Noëls français*, played by Daniel Meylan on the organ of the Basilique de Saint-Maximin. (**EDITIONS HORTUS 173 (36934)** from some dealers) [71:58]). My review is pending on the main pages.



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]

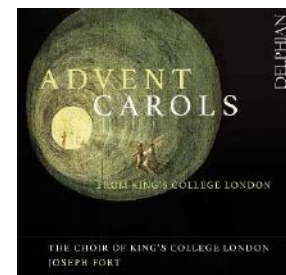
Antiphon: *O Emmanuel* [0:45]

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.

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

Texts and translations included.

DELPHIAN DCD34226 [64:56]

CD available from	
	

Delphian regularly provide us with a recording of music for Advent. This year it comes from King's College – no, not that one, King's London.

Their Advent Sunday service is very popular and this recording encapsulates the essence of it. The music ranges from the traditional Advent prose 'Drop down, ye heavens' and the 'O' Anthems, arranged for a mixed choir, via the likes of Palestrina's *Canite tuba* and Lasso's *Ad te levavi animam meam* to several works by modern composers with links to King's London, including George Benjamin's *'Twas in the year that King Uzziah died*.

Four works are receiving premiere recordings: Philip Moore's *Sancte et sapienter*, Joel Rust's *O radix Jesse*, Cecilia McDowall's *Advent Moon* and Kerensa Briggs' *Magnificat* (Gloucester Service). Traditionalists need have no fear – they are all unmistakably modern but with a sense of continuity with the past. The last three tracks offer the antiphon to the Magnificat *O virgo virginum*, Briggs' *Magnificat* and, to round off the collection beautifully, Hildegard of Bingen's *O frondens virga*.

This mixed choir sounds different from its older Cambridge namesake but in its own terms it can give its better-known rival a very good run for its money in a programme that inevitably sounds less familiar than most Christmas offerings. Sometimes the familiar is comforting, but sometimes, too, it can sound hackneyed. And honours are about even with a similar very fine collection of music for Advent from Merton College Oxford, released by Delphian in 2012 (**DCD34122** – [review](#)).



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'

Río río 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.**HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902312** [64:15]

CD available from	
	

It's that time of the year again when labels release their Christmas discs. With any luck, we get the opportunity to hear some stuff that

goes beyond the obvious, such as Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. That is certainly the case with Stile Antico's annual Christmas disc, for which it has turned to music of the Spanish renaissance. That is praiseworthy, as – apart from some pieces by the three main composers of that period: Morales, Guerrero and Victoria – the largest part of the music written during the Spanish 'Golden Era' is hardly known. The programme opens and closes with motets by two of the greats: Victoria's famous *O magnum mysterium* and Morales' *Cum natus esset* respectively. The thread of the programme is the *Missa Beata Dei genitrix Maria* by Alonso Lobo, based on a motet by his teacher Guerrero. The latter is not strictly connected to Christmas, but to the Nativity of the Virgin. But as Mary became the mother of Christ, it is not illogical to include this motet and the mass in a programme like this.

This is the kind of repertoire Stile Antico is used to. Of a different nature are the *villancicos* and the *ensalada*, which are closely connected to popular music, and whose texts are a mixture of the sacred and the secular. Such pieces are mostly performed with instruments, but a strictly vocal performance is certainly possible. However, Stile Antico's performances are a bit too sophisticated. It's probably better to leave such music to Spanish musicians. The liturgical music comes off much better. In particular Morales's Epiphany motet, which includes some dramatic elements, is very well done. [**Johan van Veen**]

Before listening to their new recording, I reminded myself of Stile Antico's 2015 Christmas offering of renaissance Christmas music, *A Wondrous Mystery* (**HMU807575** – [review](#) – [review](#)). That's a collection of Flemish and German music for the period, centred on Clemens Non Papa's Mass *Quidnam vidistis, pastores*; I enjoyed it very much, even with a rival recording of the Mass by the Tallis Scholars – [DL News 2015/10](#) – and was very pleased to revisit it. It's mostly in the kind of high style which, as Johan van Veen indicates, is Stile Antico's meat and drink – though that doesn't mean that it's beyond the appreciation of us ordinary mortals. Composers like Clemens and Prætorius had the knack of sublimating the popular and still leaving their music approachable.

With the new recording of Spanish music, there is a greater mingling of high polyphony and the more popular, sometimes from the same composer. At the heart of the programme is Alonso Lobo's Mass *Beata Maria genitrix*, a beautiful work based on a motet by Guerrero, also recorded. There is only one other current recording of the Mass, from The Queen's College, Oxford (**Guild GMCD7323**). I enjoyed that recording – [review](#) – but Stile Antico have a slight edge over it. Less enjoyable is the way that the Mass and the other polyphonic works are interspersed with the more popular items: the Guerrero who wrote the villancico *A un niño llorando* was the same person, but wearing a very different musical hat. Much better to have had another album with the more popular works, something like Cappella de la Torre's *Feliz Navidad*, which I thought 'thoroughly delightful' (**Coviello COV20811**). [**BW**]



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]

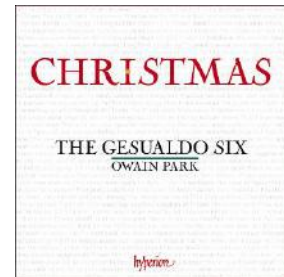
The Gesualdo Six/Owain Park

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

HYPERION CDA68299 [74:17]



Old and new Christmas music here on an album which many will find ideal if they are just looking for one new Christmas purchase this year, though for others it will fall between too many pairs of stools – none of the sheer jollity of the season, for example. All the music receives beautiful performances – again, perhaps, a little too ‘perfect’ for some tastes, as in this version of *In dulci jubilo*, with everything in place – recorded with great clarity.

Those who shared Claire Seymour’s delight in Hyperion’s recording of Owain Park’s own music – [review](#) – will be equally pleased to find one of his compositions here. A contemporary composer he may be, but he and his Gesualdo Six are equally successful with the older music, as he was as one of the organists in Hyperion’s recording of Stanford’s music – [review](#).

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.

Late Additions

Olivier MESSIAEN (1908-1992)

Le Tombeau resplendissant (1931) [16:42]

Les Offrandes oubliées, méditation symphonique (1930) [9:48]

Un sourire (1989) [10:35]

L’Ascension - Quatre meditations symphoniques (1932/33) [27:17]

Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich/Paavo Järvi

rec. live, January and April 2019; studio, January 2019 (*Un sourire*),

Tonhalle Maag, Zürich. DDD.

Reviewed as press preview

ALPHA CLASSICS 548 [64:48] For purchase details, please see **Recommended** [review by Michael Cookson](#)



I had been hoping to obtain a lossless download – the Outhere group continue to believe that mp3 is good enough for reviewers to be getting on with – but MC’s review from CD covers the recorded sound aspect. And, indeed, at 299kb/s, almost the full 320kb/s that mp3 runs to, this didn’t fall as far short as some of the ridiculously poor bit-rates that Outhere sometimes send out.

Even early Messiaen, which is what we mostly have here, is not easy to perform or to listen to, but Paavo Järvi, not someone I readily associate with Messiaen, and the Tonhalle Orchestra do well in both respects. In many respects, I prefer *L’Ascension* on the organ – Olivier Latry on DG **4714802**, 6 CDs, at

full price and Tom Winpenny a very satisfactory budget-price alternative on Naxos **8.573471**¹ – but this Alpha recording of the orchestral version makes a good alternative.

¹ See DM's [review](#) and [DL News 2016/4](#) for alternatives.

Maurice RAVEL (1875-1937)

La valse, M.72 [12:46]

Benjamin ATTAHIR (b.1987)

Adh-dhohr, concerto for serpent and orchestra (2017)

I. [*Selvaggio*] [10:37]

II. [*Jeratico*] [12:36]

Maurice RAVEL

Rapsodie Espagnole, M.54

I. *Prélude à la nuit* [4:17]

II. *Malagueña* [2:11]

III. *Habanera* [2:58]

IV. *Feria* [6:34]

Patrick Wibart (serpent)

Orchestre National de Lille/Alexandre Bloch

rec. October 2018, Auditorium du Nouveau Siècle, Lille (France). DDD.

Reviewed as press preview

ALPHA 562 [51:59]



Another mp3 press preview which I haven't been able to obtain in lossless sound.

La Valse, which unpacks the form which it represents until it falls apart, is not my favourite Ravel, but *Rapsodie Espagnole* – wrongly labelled 'Symphonie Espagnole' on the download tracks: that's a work by Lalo – certainly is one of my favourite Ravel works and Pierre Monteux's 1961 recording, one of the fillers for his superb *Daphnis et Chloë*, is my benchmark for it (Decca Originals **E4757525**). Direct comparison is pointless; if you want the best *Daphnis* available, you will of necessity obtain the Monteux *Rapsodie*. If, on the other hand, the new Alpha programme appeals, Alexandre Bloch, though sounding a little less involved, still turns in an idiomatic performance.

If you don't get too involved in the pretentious *Dialogue additionel* in the booklet, which goes with *Adh-dhohr*, it's an enjoyable work; using that strange archaic instrument the serpent as a soloist works surprisingly well. Commissioned by the Lille orchestra, the piece is effectively a concerto for orchestra. Played here by its commissioners, it certainly deserves repeated hearing.

A fourth volume of **Glenn Miller** recordings is due shortly from Beulah on **4PS39** [73:26]. Recordings from 1942, with the Glen Miller Orchestra include *American Patrol*, *Kalamazoo* and *Serenade in Blue*. In 1943 and 1944 Miller recorded with The American Army Air Force Orchestra, including *St Louis Blues March*, *Oh, What a beautiful Morning*, *Long Ago and far Away* and *Victory Polka*. It's all as desirable as the first three volumes, **1PS39** to **3PS39**.



Check for availability at eavb.co.uk and choose the Qobuz download, when available – in lossless sound for the same price that others charge for mp3.

The Rich Voice of Marian Anderson, coming soon from Beulah includes a selection of classical music – **BRAHMS** *Alto Rhapsody*, *Immer leise wird mein Schlummer* and *Four Serious Songs*, with **BACH** *Erbarme dich* from the *St Matthew Passion* and **HANDEL** *He shall feed his flock (Messiah)* – with a selection of spirituals. The recordings were made between 1939 and 1961. (**1PS54** – check eavb.co.uk

for availability and choose Qobuz when available for lossless sound at the same price as mp3 elsewhere.)

By the time that Anderson recorded the *Alto Rhapsody* in 1952, with Fritz Reiner, time had robbed some of the rich timbre, and the reviewers were still too taken with Kathleen Ferrier's recording to recommend the recording. Regular readers will know that I hold a heretical aversion to 'Kath's' voice, at least as preserved on record. I'm sure that the 1952 recording has more body than the 1939 with Eugene Ormandy, but the latter – a classic of the gramophone – is wisely chosen for this reissue. Inevitably, the sound is somewhat boxy, but it's good enough to remind us what a wonderful voice Anderson possessed, and all but the tiniest degree of swish has been cleaned up without preventing us from appreciating the voice.

The Beulah reissue is worth its modest price for the *Alto Rhapsody* alone, but the rest of the programme is worth having, too. The great Alec Robertson, no less, thought Anderson more effective in classical repertoire than in spirituals. I may be inclined to agree, but I'm not complaining about her singing here.

Polish Piano Music

Juliusz ZARĘBSKI (1854-1885) Piano Quintet in g minor, Op.34 [36:46]

Władysław Szpilman (piano); Warsaw Quartet

Frédéric CHOPIN Tarantella in A-flat, Op.43 [3:30]

Vlado Perlemuter (piano)

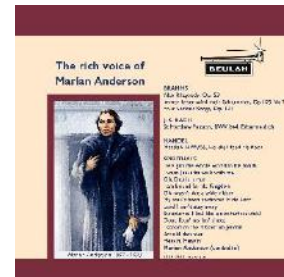
Piano Concerto No.1 in e minor, Op.11 [38:12]

Noel Mewton-Wood (piano)

Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra/Walter Goehr – released 1953.

ADD/mono

BEULAH 1PS48 [78:29]



Download from [qobuz](#)

The *pièce de résistance* here is the Zarębski Quintet. The composer was a distinguished pupil of Liszt; the romantic influence is clear, but the quintet is not derivative in style. Overall, it's a most impressive piece which doesn't outstay its 37 minutes. There are recent recordings from the re-formed Warsaw Quintet (**DUX0530**, download only, with Bacewicz: Piano Quintet No.1) and the Szymanowski Quartet with Jonathan Plowright (Hyperion **CDA67905**, with Żeleński: Piano Quartet in c minor, Op.61 – [review](#) – [review](#)). I thought the Hyperion scored 19+/20 and it's available inexpensively as a download from [Hyperion](#): £6.50 in 16-bit lossless and £9.75 in 24-bit.

I'm not sure of the date of the recording by the original Warsaw Quartet, as reissued on Beulah – I believe that it derives from a live broadcast – but the transfer, while obviously not the equal of the Hyperion, is much more than adequate. The performance gives the music a little more time to breathe than the Hyperion and the playing is excellent: Szpilman was a fine pianist and the Warsaw Quartet included such luminaries as Bronislaw Gimpel. The 3-CD BMG reissue which includes this recording – [review](#) – [review](#) – is now download only.

The Mewton-Wood Chopin, released by Nixa in 1953, was highly regarded in its day, and its reissue is an important reminder of the delicate beauty of that performance. The recording is what you would expect for its date – not nearly as firm as the (live) Zarębski recording, but perfectly tolerable, with a little allowance; the piano sound is much better than that of the orchestra. If you have Stefan Askenase's Chopin Second Piano Concerto (DG **4779082**, download only, or Beulah **1PS59** – [review](#)), this version of No.1 would be the ideal match.

As always, choose the Qobuz download for lossless sound at the same price that others charge for mp3. Ditto the Askenase Chopin – [here](#).