

Second Thoughts and Short Reviews Autumn 2017/2
By Brian Wilson and Dan Morgan

Reviews are by Brian Wilson except those marked [DM]

With so many very fine recordings this month, choice of one **Recording of the Month** has been far from easy. DM has plumped for Widor, but BW has hesitated between Bach *Magnificat* (SDG), Blow (Hyperion) and because I hadn't expected much but was very pleasantly surprised, Jane Coop in Piano Concertos by Britten, etc (CBC/Skylark). In the end I chose all three. No doubt about my Discovery of the Month: Marco lo Muscio's Organ Music (Priory) or the Reissue of the Month – Beecham's Berlioz.

It's a consequence of there being so much new material that this edition has grown larger than usual, which means that it's even more important to remind readers to double-check that catalogue numbers and hyperlinks take you to the right place.

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Two box sets from the Outhere group cover a wide range of baroque music. On **Alpha 372**, 18 CDs for less than £40, *Les Maîtres du Baroque* offers 'A veritable treasure trove containing the indispensable works of the Baroque by today's leading artists.' The highlights are **Vivaldi's** *Gloria* performed by Le Concert Spirituel/Hervé Niquet and his *Four Seasons* (Gli Incogniti/Amandine Beyer); **Bach's** b minor Mass (Pygmalion/Raphaël Pichon), the Solo Cello Suites (Bruno Cocset), the Brandenburg Concertos (Café Zimmermann) and the Goldberg Variations (Céline Frisch); **Charpentier's** *Te Deum* (Le Poème Harmonique/Vincent Dumestre); **Purcell's** *Dido and Aeneas* (MusicAeterna/Teodor Currentzis); **Rameau** harpsichord pieces (Blandine Rannou) and **Albinoni** sonatas (Ensemble 415/Chiara Banchini).

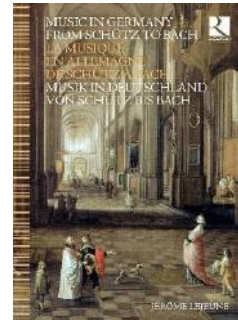


Most, if not all, of these have been around before, several of them in the mid-price Alpha Essential Baroque mid-price series, which may reduce the value of the set for experienced collectors, but it's a real bargain for beginners. To take a few examples: *The Four Seasons* on Alpha 312 – a [mixed reaction](#) from David Barker; a more enthusiastic response in some other quarters, including from me in [DL News 2015/9](#) – **Rameau** keyboard works on Alpha 309 (2 CDs) – [review](#) – [DL News 2015/9](#) – **Vivaldi** *Gloria* on Alpha 222 – [DL News 2015/11](#) – **Bach** Goldberg Variations – [review](#). The Café Zimmerman *Brandenburgs* were originally spread across six separate CDs of Bach concertos, brought together on a 6-CD set – [review](#). The two Bach short Lutheran Masses from Pygmalion – [review](#) – [DL News 2015/9](#) – are more recommendable than the same performers' account of the great b-minor Mass.

Only one CD, containing the **Albinoni** sonatas, Op.2, is contained on the press preview but the performances, taken from Zig-Zag ZTT090202 earned a deserved **Recording of the Month** status from Johan van Veen – [review](#). CD2, containing **Bach** Cantatas Nos. 12, 106 (*Actus Tragicus*), 131 and 150 in fine performances by Vox Luminis was released on Alpha 258 as recently as late 2016 – reviewed in [Christmas 2016](#) and now available in 16- and 24-bit lossless with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#).

A mixed bag, then, of period performances ranging from the sonorous to the fast and furious and with playing which sometimes requires a degree of tolerance, as in the Zimmermann *Brandenburgs*, but well worth the modest asking price. The lack of texts for the vocal items is most regrettable, even at this price. CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)

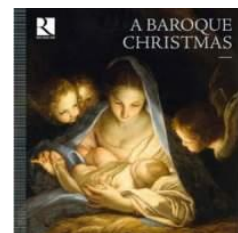
The other set, *Music in Germany – Schütz to Bach* (Ricercar **RIC109**, 8 CDs, around £44) – consists mainly of recordings from Vox Luminis, the Ricercar Consort and other distinguished baroque specialists, all curated by Jérôme Lejeune. CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)



There's some borrowing from elsewhere in the catalogue of the Outhere group and even a small degree of overlap with the 18-CD set above: *Der Gerechte kommt um* is borrowed from the Pygmalion recording of the **Bach** Lutheran Masses. Some items are even taken from Harmonia Mundi albums, though certainly none the worse for that: **Buxtehude** Cantatas, **Kuhnau** Biblical Sonatas, **Schütz** Italian Madrigals, *Israelis Brünnelein* and *Symphoniæ Sacrae*. Be warned, however, that Cantus Cölln's *Saul, Saul, was verfolgst du mich?* will make you want to seek out the award-winning complete 2-CD set from which it's taken (**HMC901850/51**, download only, in 16-bit lossless, from [eclassical.com](#)). It's the greatest pity that no download or streaming site offers the booklet for this Harmonia Mundi set.

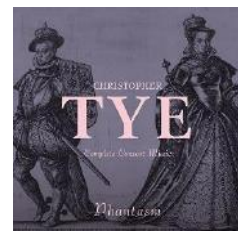
Again, the Ricercar press preview offers only CD1, a collection of music beginning with Luther's setting of *Ein'feste Burg* and including music by better-known composers such as **Prætorius**, **Scheidt**, **Schein** and **Hammerschmidt** and the less-known such as **Ahle** and **Altenburg**. The performances, mainly of Advent and Christmas music, by Vox Luminis/Lionel Meunier, La Fenice/Pierre Pierlot and the Ricercar Consort and Capella Ricercar are first rate. The preview is in mp3 only, and that at 192kb/s, but augurs well for the CD set, which comes with a very comprehensive set of notes housed in a hardback book but not texts, a serious omission in such a scholarly release. Even if you have some, or all, of the albums which have been raided for this release, these constitute such a small part of the whole as to be inconsequential. I do strongly recommend the Harmonia Mundi Schütz: not just the *Symphoniæ Sacrae* listed above but the Italian Madrigals (**HMG501686**, mid-price).

Not all the 'borrowings' are acknowledged in the booklet: Scheidt's *Angelus ad Pastores* was recorded by the same performers on RIC254 and reissued on *A baroque Christmas*, **RIC329**, 3 CDs¹, which also contains the same performance of Prætorius' *Es is ein Ros'entsprungen* as on the new 8-CD set. I suspect that a little more research would discover that more reissues were included: I wish that the record companies would be more open about such things as, indeed, Ricercar are in the case of the 3-CD Christmas set: 'The recordings that comprise this anthology were made ... between 1982 and 2009'. The Alpha set is also more forthcoming about recording dates.



¹ That Ricercar 3-CD set, for around £28, can be my first pre-Christmas recommendation for the festive season.

Christopher TYE (c.1505-1573) Complete Consort Music is performed by Phantasm on Linn **CKD571** [67:02] reviewed as an mp3 press preview and as a 24/96 download from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#). Also available in 24/192 format from [linnrecords.com](#). CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#).

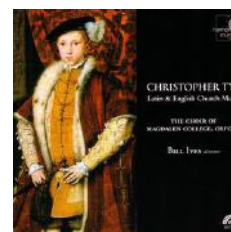


Tye's sacred music is reasonably well known, with recordings of his Masses *Euge Bone* and *Western Wind* available¹, but his instrumental music usually features only with that of others. It mostly consists of that peculiarity of Elizabethan music, the *In nomine*, and there are only two other recordings wholly devoted to these. I haven't heard the Gambo recording on

Musica Ficta, which Johan van Veen made a **Recording of the Month** – [review](#) – but another album on which the complete *In nomine* are performed by Hol Tol, Annette John (recorders) and the Boreas Quartett is not a direct competitor, with performances on recorders which sound beautiful – often ethereal – but are overall a little too bland. (CPO **7778792**, download in lossless sound with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#)).

Phantasm perform the music as a viol consort, which allows for greater variety. Even so, I don't recommend listening to the whole album at once; the idiosyncratic, even eccentric nature of the music, referred to in the excellent notes, doesn't quite come over in these otherwise very beautiful performances. The 24-bit recording, made at Boxgrove Priory in September 2016, is excellent – a little expensive at £15 but the only way to obtain better-than-CD quality now that Linn, like so many others, have ditched the SACD format.

Digging into the back catalogue, there's a very fine 2005 album of Tye's Latin and English sacred music, from Magdalen College Choir, Oxford, directed by Bill Ives, interspersed with some of the instrumental works played by the Byrde Recorder Consort, on Harmonia Mundi **HMU907396** [65:56]. It's download only – reviewed from [eclassical.com](#), NO booklet, even with the streamed version from [Naxos Music Library](#).



¹ Performed together by Westminster Cathedral Choir on Hyperion **CDA67928** – [review](#).

Orlande de LASSUS (1532-1594) We have several recordings of Lassus' settings of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, for Holy Week, but not of the associated **Responsories** for the second and third Nocturnes of Matins which he composed around 1580, probably for the ducal chapel of the Duke of Bavaria. I can't trace any other generally available recordings, but now, characteristically, Toccata have filled the gap with performances from Ars Antica and Marco Berrini. Actually, 'now' is not quite the right word: these performances were recorded as long ago as 2003.



Lassus' settings are far less dramatic than, say, those of Gesualdo, and the performances don't try to make them sound more vivid, but that's because he was obeying the injunctions of the Council of Trent and concentrating on making the words audible. The booklet contains not just the texts and translations but, as usual with Toccata, a scholarly but accessible essay on the music. (**TOCC0404** [53:02] – 24-bit download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#)). CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)

A Lute by Sixtus Rauwolf: French and German Baroque Music

Esaïas REUSNER (1636-1679) *Padoana* [6:57]

François DUFAULT (before 1604-c.1672)

Prelude; *Allemande*; *Courante 'La Superbe'*; *Courante*; *Sarabande*; *Gigue* [11:41]

Charles MOUTON (1626-after 1699)

Prelude '*La promenade*'; *Allemande 'Le dialogue des graces...'*; *Canaries 'Le Mouton'*; *Courante 'La Changeante'*; *Gaillarde 'La Bizarre'*; *Sarabande 'La Malassis'*; *Menuet 'La Ganbade'* [10:55]

David KELLNER (c.1670-1748)

Campanella (presto assai) [2:37]; *Courante* [2:18]; *Sarabanda* [2:33]; *Aria (largo)* [1:52]; *Giga* [2:29]; *Gavotte* [1:03]

'Mr PACHELBEL' (possibly Johann PACHELBEL, c.1653–1706)

Allemande 'L'Amant mal content' [3:32]; *Courante 'L'Amant soulage'* [2:43]; *Sarabande 'L'Amant soupirant'* [3:52]; *Gigue 'Raillerie des amans'* [2:37]

Silvius Leopold WEISS (1687–1750)



Prelude [0:42]; *Allemande* [3:23]; *Courante* [2:55]; *Bourrée* [2:55]; *Sarabande* [5:14]; *Menuet* [1:34]; *Gigue* [3:29]; *Ciacona* [5:05]

Jakob Lindberg (lute by Sixtus Rauwolf, Augsburg c.1590)

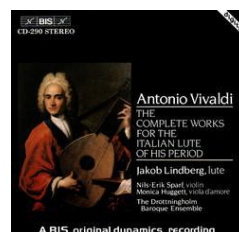
rec. May 2016, Länna Church, Sweden. DSD

BIS BIS-2265 SACD [81:50] reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com. SACD from Amazon UK – Presto

Baroque music played on a restored Rauwolf lute by Jakob Lindberg is almost self-recommending. The only reservation is that with around 60 other recordings to his credit, solo or in consort, much of it by composers better known than those included here, this may not be the best place to start. For the connoisseur, however, the new release is strongly recommended; without checking in detail, most of the pieces here are not otherwise available or are to be found on only one other recording.

Though it's not certain that the music by 'Mr Pachelbel' is the famous Johann of that name, the suite included here seems to be identical with one on a collection of Pachelbel's *Geistliche Musik* (spiritual music) on Christophus **CHR77257** and nowhere else. David Kellner, whose name I must admit was new to me, has one Glossa recording devoted entirely to his lute music (GCD920112).

None of these pieces is dull, though they are not 'exciting'. Those in search of Lindberg in more extravert repertoire should try his 1985 **Vivaldi** album: two concertos and two trios for lute and other instruments, with members of the Drottningholm Ensemble (**BIS-CD-290**)¹. At 42 minutes, these authoritative performances make for a short CD, but the lossless download from eclassical.com compensates by costing just \$6.16. That's actually less expensive than a similar collection from L'Arte del'arco, though for around £7.50 that throws in a couple of works for mandolin (Brilliant **93810** – [review](#); see also [review](#) of 40-CD set, now superseded by 66-CD set **94840** – [review](#)).



Alternatively, if the music by Silvius Leopold **Weiss**² on this BIS collection tempts you to explore his music further, that other great modern exponent of the lute, Nigel North, offers his Sonata No.29 and music by **Vivaldi** and **Bach** on Linn **BKD006** – [DL News 2016/2](#). Jakob Lindberg offers the same sonata on an all-Weiss album (**BIS-CD-1524** – lossless download available from eclassical.com). BIS also have another CD (predictably labelled 'Weiss – Lute Music II', **BIS-CD-1534** – lossless download available from eclassical.com). For Volume 10 of the Naxos series devoted to Weiss and links to earlier volumes, please see my [review](#).

¹ You may need to download track 1 separately: as part of a zip download of the whole album it cut out for me after 0.57 but downloading separately solved the problem.

² There is at least one other composer named Weiss who composed for the lute.

A Fancy: Fantasy on English Airs and Tunes

Matthew LOCKE (c.1621/23-1677) Curtain Tune

Henry PURCELL (1659-1695) *The Virtuous Wife*, Z611: Overture

Giovanni Battista DRAGHI (c.1640-1708) Where are thou, God of Dreams!

Henry PURCELL Hornpipe

Giovanni Battista DRAGHI Must I ever sigh in vain?

Henry PURCELL I see, she flies me

MATTHEW LOCKE Lilk

Henry PURCELL Second music; O Solitude!

First Act Tune; 'Twas within a furlong of Edinboro' town

Samuel AKEYRODE (fl.1684-1704) From drinking of Sack by the Pottle

ANONYMOUS First music; Saraband; Second music

Louis GRABU (fl. 1665-1694) O Jealousy!

Henry PURCELL Curtain Tune; Ah me! To many deaths decreed



John BLOW A ground

Matthew LOCKE and **Christopher GIBBONS (1615-1675)** Fly, my children

Matthew LOCKE Canon a 4 in 2

Henry PURCELL See, even Night herself is here; Symphony

Matthew LOCKE The Descending of Venus

James HART (1647-1718) Adieu to the Pleasures and Follies

Rachel Redmond (soprano)

Le Caravansérail/Bertrand Cuiller (organ)

rec Théâtre de Caen, 25-27 November 2016. DDD.

Texts included

HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902296 [65:49] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com. CD from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto

Though this is Bertrand Cuiller's first recording for Harmonia Mundi, he already has a number of fine recordings to his credit for other labels, mostly Alpha and Mirare, solo or with ensembles such as Stradivaria and La Rêveuse. Of these we have reviewed:

- **Mirare MIR295** (3 CDs) music by **Purcell, de Brossard** and **Lawes**, with La Rêveuse – [review](#). For the Lawes album separately see [DL News 2014/8](#)
- **MIR214 Fontana** Sonatas – [DL News 2014/4](#)
- **MIR085 Bach** Keyboard Concertos Nos. 1, 4, 5 and 7 [DL Roundup April 2012/1](#) NB: Download only – the emusic link no longer applies, but the lossless download from eclassical.com comes in better sound and is complete with pdf booklet.
- **ALPHA197** Music by **Captain Tobias Hume**, with Les Basses Réunies [DL News 2014/12](#). The 7digital link no longer applies but eclassical.com have this in 16- and 24-bit sound, albeit without pdf booklet. Stream from Naxos Music Library with booklet.
- **ALPHA086 Byrd** Keyboard music 'Pescod Time'. Reviewed as lossless download from eclassical.com and as streamed from Naxos Music Library (NO booklet from either). Recently reissued at mid-price but with a less interesting cover on **ALPHA319**.

The new recording is just as desirable as those earlier releases: there's nothing particularly profound here but we are offered a very enjoyable romp through the music of restoration England. The performances are accomplished, the very fine solo singing especially noteworthy, and the 24-bit recording is very good.



RECORDING OF THE MONTH

John BLOW (1649-1708)

An Ode on the Death of Mr Henry Purcell and other works

Begin the Song! [22:13]

Chaconne a 4 in G [5:08]

Ode on the Death of Mr Henry Purcell [19:53]

Ground in g minor [4:14]

The Nymphs of the wells [10:29]

Sonata in A [5:44]

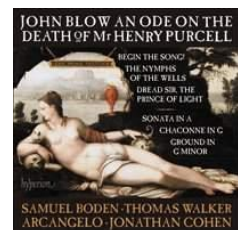
Dread Sir, the Prince of Light [8:53]

Emma Walshe (soprano), Zoë Brookshaw (soprano), David Allsop (countertenor), Nicholas Madden (tenor), Samuel Boden (tenor), Thomas Walker (tenor), William Gaunt (bass), Callum Thorpe (bass) Arcangelo/Jonathan Cohen

rec. St Jude on the Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London, 16-18 July 2015. DDD.

Texts included

HYPERION CDA68149 [76:22] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf and epub booklet from hyperion-records.co.uk. CD from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto



Hyperion's earlier recording of Blow's *Ode on the Death of Mr Henry Purcell* remains available from the Archive Service or as a download: The Parley of Instruments with Roy Goodman and Peter Holman recorded it (CDA66578 – from hyperion-records.co.uk). There it's coupled with works by other composers lamenting Purcell's demise; here it comes in the company of other music by the neglected Blow, much of it receiving its only recorded outing. Blow was Purcell's mentor and the music here reminds us how much he learned from the older composer – cf. the royal welcome songs reviewed below. Performances and recording – especially the 24-bit – make a very strong case for Blow.

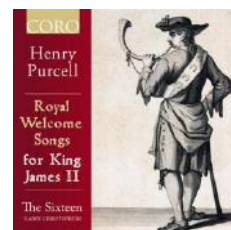
Henry PURCELL (1659-1695)

Royal Welcome Songs for King James II

Chacony in g minor, Z730 (c.1678) [4:30]
 When on my sick bed I languish, Z144 (1677-78) [4:50]
 True Englishmen drink, Z284 (1688) [1:06]
 Welcome Song: Ye tuneful Muses, Z344 (1686) [24:26]
 A New Irish Tune in G ('Lilliburlero') Z646 [0:54]
 God is gone up (Canon a 7) Z107 (c.1677-80) [1:07]
 A New Scotch Tune in G, Z655 [1:14]
 Save me, O God, Z51 (1677) [3:30]
 Welcome Song: Sound the trumpet Z335 (1687) [22:34]
 The Sixteen/Harry Christophers
 rec. St Augustine's, Kilburn, London, 8-10 June 2016. DDD.

Texts included

CORO COR16151 [64:02] Reviewed as streamed with pdf booklet from Naxos Music Library. CD from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto



When Purcell wrote these two Welcome Songs for James II, that unfortunate monarch had only a short time left on the throne before he was displaced in the 'glorious' events of 1688 by his estranged daughter Mary and her Dutch husband William. It's unpredictable, but welcome, that Coro should commence a series of the music of Purcell with these two works.

Whatever his own personal feelings about James, his brother Charles II before him, and William and Mary after him¹, Purcell dutifully turned out these Welcome Songs and Birthday Odes to order and the (anonymous) texts are formulaic – to quote the excellent notes – but that in no way diminishes their musical value.

The only other recordings of these two Welcome Songs come as part of Hyperion's box set of Purcell's *Complete Odes and Welcome Songs* (CDS44031/8 – [review](#) – recently re-packaged in a more manageable format). Some dealers confuse the issue by wrongly advertising another 'Sound the Trumpet' as Z344; it's an extract from another Purcell Ode, the much better-known *Come ye Sons of Art*.

The Hyperion is an essential adjunct to their other multi-CD set of Purcell's Sacred Music and it's available at a very attractive price on disc or as a download from hyperion-records.co.uk.² You don't have to listen to the whole set in one sitting, but the equally fine performances on the new Coro series as it is released, album by album, may prove more manageable.

¹ Handel continued the tradition with his sublime Birthday Ode for Queen Anne, *Eternal Source of Light Divine*, recorded on Obsidian **CD711** – [DL News 2014/6](#) and Hyperion **CDA66315** (Archive Service or download from hyperion-records.co.uk).

² Seven of the individual albums remain available as downloads or as CDs from the Archive Service.

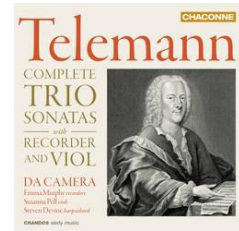
Georg Philipp TELEMANN (1681-1767)

Complete Trio Sonatas with recorder and viol

Da Camera [Emma Murphy (alto recorder, voice flute), Susanna Pell (treble viol, bass viol), Steven Devine (harpsichord)]

rec. Church of St Peter, Boughton Monchelsea, Kent, 1-4 February 2016. DDD.

CHANDOS CHACONNE CHAN0817 [77:16] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com.



This may not be the most essential Telemann but it's urbane music with charming and accomplished performances to match and the recording is very good. The 24-bit download is rather expensive at \$20.60 – UK purchasers will find chandos.net a little less expensive at £13.99, though the 16-bit costs much the same from both at current £/\$ rates.

Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750)

Musikalisches Opfer (Musical Offering), BWV1079 [52:49]

Goldberg Variations, BWV988 – Aria [2:23]

XIV Canons on the Goldberg Ground, BWV1087 [8:29]

Sonata in G for flute, violin, cello and keyboard, BWV1038 [7:39]

Members of the Bach Collegium Japan [Kiyomi Suga (flute), Ryo Terakado (violin I), Yukie Yamaguchi (violin II and viola), Emmanuel Balssa (cello)] /Masaaki

Suzuki (harpsichord)

rec. August 2016, Old Catholic Church, The Hague, the Netherlands. DSD.

BIS BIS-2151 SACD [72:12] Reviewed as 24-bit download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com. For release later on SACD.



I'll begin with a slightly abridged review of another recording of the *Musical Offering* which you may not have noticed because it was buried in a roundup of Outhere group recordings in 2015.

'There are almost as many ways to perform [the *Offering*] as there are recordings of it, some sparse, some more filled out, so I was interested to see how Enrico Gatti and Ensemble Aurora would handle it (Arcana **A384**) [62:20]). They opt for the sparse treatment, with just four instruments, violin, flute, cello and harpsichord. Many will prefer this, and it's very good of its kind, but I find it a little cerebral compared with my first encounter with this great work on a Supraphon recording where it was given a much fuller treatment by Milan Munclinger and Ars Rediviva (**SUA10072**). This was once available on CD (**SU0087-2**) and it makes a reasonable compromise between the sparsity of Ensemble Aurora and the over-heavy Bach interpretations of Karl Münchinger and his Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra¹ [though the latter is] much better than I recall and the 1955 recording still sounds good.

I listened to the Munclinger again from Qobuz and I find myself, against the odds, still liking his performance after all these years despite all the changes which have taken place in the approach to Bach. Another older recording with a slightly fuller line-up, from the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Neville Marriner, still [sounds] well on a budget-price twofer (Decca Duo **4425562**, with *Art of Fugue*). Another middle-way recording, which I know several of my colleagues like, comes from an ensemble led by Michael Behringer on Hänssler **92.133** – see 5-star [review](#).

For Nicholas Jackson's attractive recording with his Concertante of London (Somm **SOMMCD077**) please see my [review](#). The recording by Ensemble Sonnerie which I recommended then (Virgin, now Erato) is download only.

Though the *Offering* used to be thought enough for one LP, it's rather short value on CD, so the Arcana recording adds the Sonata in G for violin and continuo, BWV1021, and the Trio Sonata in G, BWV1038.'

Having heard that Hänssler recording alongside the new BIS, I'd place it with the more minimal performances rather than among the middle-of-the-road. It employs a very similar single-instrument line-up to the new recording, the main difference being the use of both a fortepiano² – on which the

ricercar on the royal theme is stated at the outset – as well as harpsichord and a viola da gamba rather than a second violin or viola.

Apart from some minor differences in the order of the movements, the two interpretations are very similar. There is no ‘correct’ order of performance, but I liked the placing of the *ricercar a3* first on Haenssler, as by Gatti and his team on Arcana, followed by the *canon perpetuus* – placed on tracks 7 and 8 on BIS. Overall, the Haenssler offers a slightly more approachable performance than the marginally more cerebral BIS, but there’s very little to choose. I suggest that subscribers to Naxos Music Library should compare them, when the BIS becomes available there, before choosing which to download.

¹ But see my review of the *Magnificat* – below.

² Those following the excellent BIS series of CPE Bach’s concertos and solo keyboard works will know that several instruments were in use at the time: harpsichord, fortepiano and a strange hybrid called the tangent piano.

J. S. BACH from Durham

Toccatà, Adagio and Fugue in C BWV 564 [14:37]

Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend BWV 709 [2:56]

Trio super Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend BWV 655 [3:46]

Jesus Christus, unser Heiland BWV 665 [4:17]

Prelude and Fugue in A BWV 536 [6:34]

Erbarm dich mein, O Herre Gott BWV 721 [3:37]

Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g’mein BWV 734 [2:26]

Partite diverse sopra il Corale Sei gegrüset, Jesu gütig, BWV768 [19:03]

Canonic Variations on *Vom Himmel hoch da komm’ich her* BWV 769 [11:13]

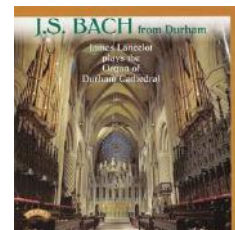
Fantasia super: Komm, Heiliger Geist BWV 651 [5:45]

James Lancelot (organ)

rec. Durham Cathedral, 2016. DDD.

PRIORY RECORDS PRCD1179 [74:14] Reviewed as 24/44.1 download from eclassical.com (NO booklet)

For CD purchase details see [review by John France](#).



The organ of Durham Cathedral may not be ideal for Bach but I’m not complaining when the result is as good as this. One not so small complaint about the download: at \$20 for the 24-bit version, this is not an inexpensive purchase: surely, we deserve the booklet at that price, especially as John France reports on its high quality. Even the streamed version from Naxos Music Library, usually reliable in this regard, fails to produce the booklet.

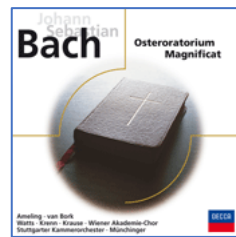


RECORDING OF THE MONTH

Johann Sebastian BACH: A splendid new SDG recording of the *Magnificat* uses the E-flat version, BWV243a, with the Christmas insertions, which reduces by over half the size of the still formidable competition. Chief among these is the Linn recording on which John Butt and his team reconstruct a Lutheran Christmas Vespers service (**CKD469: Recording of the Month** – [review](#)). I’m hard put to choose between two such splendid recordings, so I’m happy to let coupling and concept be your guide. Subscribers to Naxos Music Library can compare for themselves: the new SDG [here](#), the Linn [here](#).



I was surprised, on sampling the Münchinger recording of the D Major version [there](#) how light-footed it is: by 1970 he had moved on spectacularly from his earlier, rather four-square style and, with a strong team of soloists – including Elly Ameling – produced what was then probably the best recording and is still well worth hearing for those who prefer modern instruments. (Decca Eloquence **4767142**, with *Easter Oratorio*: download or stream only). One important reservation, however: no download comes with the texts and, even in mp3, all cost more than the £4.99 for which the CD used to sell – the least expensive comes from [Amazon UK](#).



The SDG programme opens with one of Bach's short **Lutheran Masses, BWV233 in F** – just a *Kyrie* and *Gloria*, in Latin, for high days, so possibly used at Christmas, and the festal theme continues with **Cantata No.151, Süßer Trost, mein Jesus kommt**, a Christmas-tide cantata which these performers have already recorded, with different soloists (**SDG127: Recording of the Month** – [review](#)). I listened to the new recording, **SDG728** [73:39], in 24-bit download from [eclassical.com](#) and [hyperion-records.co.uk](#), both of which come with pdf booklet containing texts and translations. The Hyperion is slightly less expensive for purchasers in £GB. CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)

Ignace (Ignaz) Joseph PLEYEL (1757-1831)

String Quartet in C, Op.41/1 [13:44]

String Quartet in F, Op.41/2 [15:32]

String Quartet in G, Op.42/1 [14:21]

String Quartet in B-flat, Op.42/2 [17:40]

The Authentic Quartet [Zsolt Kalló (violin), Balázs Bozzai (violin), Gábor Rác (viola), Csilla Vályi (cello) (period instruments)]

rec. Pécel Catholic Church, Hungary, 24-25 August 2015. DDD.

First recordings

HUNGAROTON HCD32783 [62:04]

Reviewed as 16-bit lossless download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#) and as streamed from [Naxos Music Library](#). For CD purchase details see [Recording of the Month review](#).



Pleyel's music was very popular in the last two decades of the eighteenth century but has since been obscured by that of his mentor Haydn, who reputedly thought highly of him, and Haydn's other erstwhile pupil Beethoven. These performances demonstrate the accuracy of their judgments.

Wrongly listed by some dealers as Ben331-2, 334 and 338, these works were probably composed in London, in friendly competition with Haydn, and not to be confused with his 'Prussian Quartets': Ben331-333 recorded by Pleyel Quartet Köln on CPO **777777-2**, Ben334-336 on **777551-2** – [review](#) – and Ben337-339 on **777315-2**. (In fairness, the confusion is understandable: Pleyel did write a lot of quartets and other music, as well as founding the Pleyel piano company).

For more of Pleyel's entertaining music in fine performances, try his Symphonies in B-flat and G and Flute Concerto in C (Naxos – [DL Roundup January 2012/2](#), with links to other Pleyel recordings on Naxos and Chandos, including the Chandos USB collection *Contemporaries of Mozart*). That Chandos USB collection of the equivalent of 24 CDs is good value at £155: individual downloads in lossless sound would cost just under £240, the discs around £250, and even mp3 would be almost £192. It was first released on two separate USBs at £99.99 each, now £80 each – [DL Roundup May 2011/2](#). ([CHUSB0018](#), with files in mp3 and lossless sound). The 5-CD selection, which also includes the Pleyel album, remains available ([CHAN10628](#)) but **NB**: even the mp3 download – and even more so the lossless download – costs more than the CD set! The single-CD introduction to the seriesw (CON0011) is no longer available. [Eclassical.com](#) have some of the single-CD volumes in 16- and 24-bit, but not the Pleyel:



Franz Anton HOFFMEISTER (1754–1812)

Symphony in G 'La festa della Pace 1791' [23:53]

Symphony in E [19:07]

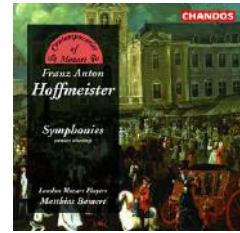
Symphony in D [18:33]

London Mozart Players/Matthias Bamert

rec. St Jude on the Hill, Hampstead, London; 25 & 26 April 2005. DDD.

CHANDOS CHAN10351 [61:43] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet

from eclassical.com. Subscribers stream from Naxos Music Library. See [review](#) (NB: Chandos recordings are no longer available from MusicWeb).



If you choose the 5-CD Chandos set, this recording, one of the last to be recorded, would be a very worthwhile extra purchase. Even in 24-bit garb it's not too expensive at \$16.59 (16-bit for \$11.06).

Two different Hoffmeister symphonies are recorded on CPO **777895-2** in fine performances directed by Howard Griffiths – [review](#). Despite what I wrote in [DL News 2015/9](#) and what some dealers advertise, this is not the same symphony in D as the one on Chandos. The invaluable Naxos Music Library does not make that mistake.

Christian CANNABICH (1731-1798)

Symphony in G (1760) [19:47]

Symphony in A (c.1762) [11:57]

Symphony in E-flat (c.1770) [13:55]

Symphony in C (c.1770) [10:01]

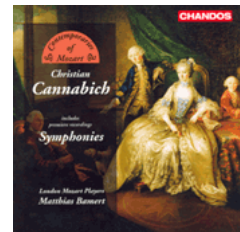
Symphony in D (c.1770) [11:09]

London Mozart Players/Matthias Bamert

rec. 24-25 October 2005, St Jude on the Hill, Hampstead, London

CHANDOS CHAN10379 [66:49] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com.

Subscribers stream from Naxos Music Library. See [review](#). (NB: Chandos recordings are no longer available from MusicWeb).



Cannabich is important as one of the Mannheim composers whose music was much admired by Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart. As the student of Johann Stamitz and tutor of Carl Stamitz, he forms a bridge between the first and second generations of the Mannheim School. Carl Stamitz's music is included in the 5-CD¹ set but this Cannabich album comes only on the 24-CD USB, or is very worthwhile on its own.

¹ Also separately on **CHAN9358**.

Josef MYSLIVEČEK (1737–1781)

Symphony in C, F26 [9:16]

Symphony in A, F27 [8:54]

Symphony in F, F28 [10:50]

Symphony in D, F29 [10:04]

Symphony in B-flat, F30 [10:09]

Symphony in G, F31 [10:54]

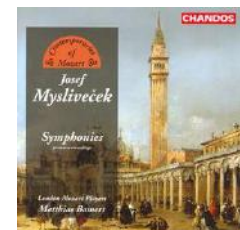
premiere recordings

London Mozart Players/Matthias Bamert

rec. All Saints' Church, Tooting, London; 10 and 11 December 2003. DDD.

CHANDOS CHAN10203 [60:27] Reviewed as lossless download from eclassical.com. (NO booklet).

Subscribers stream from Naxos Music Library with pdf booklet.

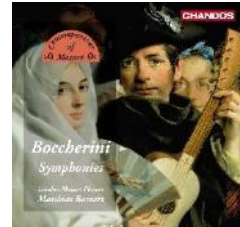


Another very worthwhile additional purchase to supplement the 5-CD set. Ground-breaking when it was released in 2004 – [review](#) – this remains the only generally available recording of most of these symphonies: F29 also appears on an Ars Produktion CD, with other works by Mysliveček (download

only). The *Sinfonias* on a Concerto Köln album, now available only as a [Presto CD](#) (DG Archiv **4776418**) and a further set of six *Sinfonias* performed by the Prague Chamber Orchestra on Supraphon appear to be different works.

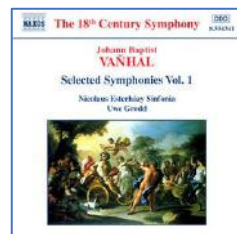
Much admired by his friend Wolfgang, Mysliveček's music has sometimes been mistaken for Mozart's. Nothing here is excelled by any of the latter's symphonies up to No.38: the performances and recording – 16-bit only – make the strongest possible case.

CPO have a series of recordings¹ of the symphonies of **Luigi BOCCHERINI (1743-1805)** but another Chandos recording, on the USB but not the 5-CD set, offers a very fine introduction to his symphonic output, from the London Mozart Players and Matthias Bamert (**CHAN10604** – [review](#)). Three works are included: No.3 in G (G503), No.8 in G (G508), both from Op.12, and No.21 in G, Op.37/1 (G515). From [chandos.net](#), CD or 16- and 24-bit download with pdf booklet.

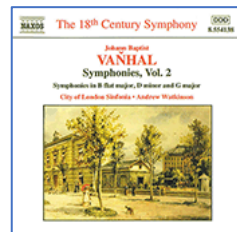


¹ Eight separate CDs or an 8-CD set.

Johann Baptist VAÑHAL (WANHAL) (1739-1813), who reportedly played string quartets with Haydn, Mozart and Dittersdorf in 1784, is another composer whose music is included on the 24-CD set but not on the shorter 5-CD selection. The LMP/Bamert recordings are also available separately but Naxos have explored his symphonic output further, with a variety of orchestras at a lower price (download target price £4.79/\$5.61). Volume 1 (**8.554341** – rec. 1998 [56:04]) includes *Sinfonias* in A (Bryan A9), C (C9), D (D17), and C (C11) performed by the Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia and Uwe Grodd. The performances are just a little more rough-and-ready than Bamert's but well worth hearing. Download from [eclassical.com](#) (NO booklet) or stream from [Naxos Music Library](#) (with pdf booklet). CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#) NB: Be sure to use this Amazon link; incomprehensibly, there's an alternative which was asking £38.56 when I checked!



Volume 2, entrusted to the City of London Sinfonia and Andrew Watkinson, contains Symphonies² in B-flat (Bb3), d minor (d2) and G (G11) on **8.554138** – rec. 1997 [49:51] – [review](#). Only the short playing time – tactfully not mentioned in the booklet or on the insert – presents something of a drawback. Subscribers stream from [Naxos Music Library](#), with pdf booklet. CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)



¹ The Penguin Guide's four stars are over-egging the pudding a little.

² Naxos are as ambiguous about the name *Symphony* or *Sinfonia* as Vaňhal and his contemporaries were.

The music of the two less famous members of that string quartet is combined on an attractive Hyperion recording of Concertos for Double Bass and Orchestra: **VAÑHAL** Concerto in D and **Carl Ditters von DITTERSDORF (1739-1799)** Concertos Nos. 1 and 2, both in D. The performances, from Chi-Chi Nwanoku, Swedish Chamber Orchestra and Paul Goodwin, make a strong case for the music and are well recorded. **CDA67179** – rec. 2000 [69:26] from [Hyperion](#) on CD and as a lossless download with pdf and epub booklets.

Another composer whose music is contained on the Chandos USB but not on the 5-CD selection is **Antonio SALIERI (1750-1825)** who, far from having hated Mozart enough to have poisoned him, seems to have admired him and assisted his career. The selection of his overtures and sinfonias on the USB is available separately on **CHAN9877** – from chandos.net – but, again, there is also a less expensive alternative from Naxos, first released in 1994 on Marco Polo, **(8.554838)** [57:44] – [review](#). You may not have heard of the orchestra, the Slovak Radio Orchestra, but Naxos then regularly took obscure central- and East-European players and gave them plenty of rehearsal time to make them competitive with their better-known rivals.



George(s) ONSLOW (1784-1853)

String Quintet No.20 in d minor, Op.45 [31:24]

String Quintet No.26 in c minor, Op. 67 [33:34]

Elan Quintet

NAXOS 8.573600 [64:58]

Reviewed as 24-bit download from eclassical.com and as streamed from Naxos Music Library, both with pdf booklet. For full details and CD purchase links see [review](#) and [review](#).



String Quintet No.10 in f minor, Op.32 [29:44]

String Quintet No.22 in E-flat, Op.57 [35:54]

Elan Quintet

rec. 20-23 August 2016, Auditorio de Rafelbunyol, Rafelbunyol, Valencia, Spain.

DDD

First recordings

NAXOS 8.573689 [65:38]

Reviewed as 24-bit download from eclassical.com and as streamed from Naxos Music Library, both with pdf booklet. CD from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto



Though he was hailed by Berlioz and Schumann as the natural successor to Beethoven in instrumental music, the Anglo-French composer George[s]¹ Onslow's music is little known today. On the basis of these quintets, his music captures less of the intensity of Beethoven's late chamber works than Schubert and Mendelssohn, except, sometimes in the slow movements. At times I found myself thinking more of the easy-going and easily enjoyed chamber music of Onslow's contemporary Spohr than of Beethoven.

That's not to disparage either Spohr or Onslow: I'm pleased that Naxos have embarked on another series devoted to a neglected composer. They are not quite treading where others fear to tread – CPO recorded some of these quintets a decade ago² – but they are doing so with what, on the basis of these first two volumes, is likely to be a winning combination of performance and recording at a reasonable price. 16-bit download prices start at around £4.50, with 24-bit for around £8: \$6.47/\$9.71 from eclassical.com. Naxos CDs no longer cost £3.99 but shop around and you should find them for less than £7, often on special offer for around £5.50.

Should the mention of **Louis SPOHR (1784-1859)** have prompted you to try his music, a good place to start would be with the Gaudier Ensemble, recorded in 1994 in the delightful **Octet in E** and **Nonet in F** (Hyperion **CDA66699** [60:23] – from hyperion-records.co.uk, 16-bit download with pdf and epub booklets and CD).

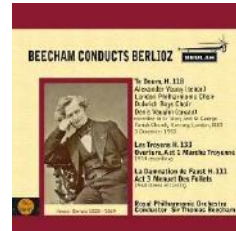


¹ Both English and French spellings appear to be correct.

² Not overlapping with the works on these Naxos recordings.

**REISSUE OF THE MONTH****HECTOR BERLIOZ (1803-1869)** I'm not given to hyperbole but I'm

happy to assert that the two greatest Berlioz interpreters were Sir Thomas Beecham and Sir Colin Davis. I'm pleased that much of Sir Colin's recorded Berlioz remains available on various labels but the Beecham Berlioz legacy is a little thin these days, apart from the unbeatable *Symphonie Fantastique* (Warner/EMI **0151822**). That CD also includes the *Trojan March* from *Les Troyens* but that's the only item duplicated by a new Beulah release:



Beecham conducts Berlioz, on which the main item is the *Te Deum*, recorded in 1953 with Alexander Young (tenor). London Philharmonic Choir, Dulwich Boys' Choir and Denis Vaughn (organ) with his own Royal Philharmonic Orchestra [45:46]. There are not too many available versions – the Philips/Davis is download only or entombed in a large box set – so the Beecham reissue is very welcome. Don't expect too much for December 1953 sound¹ in a work which makes great demands on the engineers, but the transfer sounds much better than I remember on LP or the 'electronic stereo' Sony reissue and the performance is classic.

The Overture [5:40] and *Trojan March* [4:37] from *Les Troyens* and *Menuet des Follets* [5:35] from *La Damnation de Faust*, the last recorded in stereo in 1960, complete a most enjoyable release. Beulah **10PDR4** [61:50]. Download from Qobuz (in lossless sound) rather than for the same price from iTunes (in mp3).

¹ Hailed by Alec Robertson in 1954 as 'one of the best choral recordings'. *Tempora mutantur et nos ...*

Johannes BRAHMS (1833-1897) The Complete Symphonies

Symphony No.1 in c minor, Op.68 [44:03]

Symphony No.2 in D, Op.73 [37:11]

Symphony No.3 in F, Op.90 [35:14]

Symphony No.4 in e minor, Op.98 [39:59]

Bonus: Brahms Entdecken (Discovering Brahms) with Thomas Hengelbrock. [43.18]

NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester/Thomas Hengelbrock

rec. live, Laeishalle, Hamburg, Germany, 22 May 2016

PCM Stereo, DTS5.1, Video 16:9, High Definition.

Notes in English, German and French.

Bonus Subtitles: German, English, Korean, Japanese.

UNITEL C MAJOR 741008 DVD [210 mins] Also available on blu-ray **741104**. For purchase details see [review](#).



Dave Billinge having written a [detailed review](#) of these recordings as an audio-visual experience on blu-ray, I'm concentrating on them as an audio experience, which is how I usually end up with DVDs and blu-rays after first experience, especially in the case of purely orchestral recordings. As such these two DVDs, retailing at around £23, compare well with CD sets of the Brahms symphonies, though audiophiles will prefer to spend a little more for the blu-ray, which has the added convenience of being complete on one disc, for around £28. You could even afford to add the classic Klemperer recordings – see below – target price £12.40 for the 4-CD set.

This 'Brahms Marathon' – all four symphonies – was performed in the NDR's old home, the historic Laeishalle in Hamburg, immediately before moving, as the NDR Elbphilharmonie, into their new home of that name. For those who wish to compare, they re-recorded two of the symphonies, Nos. 3 and 4, in their new home. (Sony **88985405082** – [review](#)).

I have yet to hear that release. My comparisons are the vintage Otto Klemperer with the Philharmonia, still my go-to versions, especially for No.4. (Symphonies, Overtures and *German Requiem*: Warner **4043382**). Among recent releases I like Riccardo Chailly with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra (Recording of the Month – [review](#) – [Download News](#)) and a surprise discovery of **Andris Nelsons** in all four symphonies with the **Boston Symphony Orchestra** on their own label. (**BSOCL1701** CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)). Warner should think seriously about making the classic Beecham recording of No.2 available more widely – currently on *Sir Thomas Beecham: The Later Tradition*, download only, around £22, this interpretation by a casual Brahmsian brought the house down.



It would be hard not to agree with Dave Billinge about the high quality of these Hamburg performances, with the sole proviso that I don't recommend emulating the audience who sat through all four in one day.

The finale is the crux of No.1. The lead up to the big Beethovenian tune and the tune itself –proto-Brahms despite the jokes about sounding like Beethoven's Tenth – needs plenty of time to expand, but not too much, and the end of the movement must lead us back powerfully from this land of lost content to the real world. Hengelbock gets the balance as well as any that I know, with the possible exception of Klemperer and Chailly, though he makes the NDR strings scamper just a little too fast in the faster sections. Overall a very satisfying start to the cycle.

No.2 comes close to matching the Beecham miracle, but my other test case comes at the other end of the cycle. The Fourth has always seemed to me the hardest to bring off well, though easy enough to perform decently. Only Klemperer has ever seemed to me to bring it off to perfection, though an EMI LP conducted by Rudolf Kempe (preserved on Testament **SBT1278**) and a budget-price IMP Pickwick CD conducted by Stanislaw Skrowaczewski (no longer available¹) have come very close.

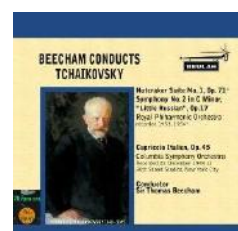
Nelsons and his Boston team come close to ousting even those three favourite performances, getting just about every aspect of this symphony just right, with very minor reservations, long forgotten when it comes to the finale. I'm even-handed about retaining applause on live recordings but I would have liked it here – if it didn't bring the house down, those Bostonians were missing a trick or three. Applause is, of course, retained on the Hamburg DVDs.

In his [review of this BSO set](#) John Quinn had some minor reservations, mainly concerning the broadening of the tempo mid-way through the first movement, but was otherwise enthusiastic about it and the whole set. The first time round I, too, was a little taken aback by that *rubato*, but I think mainly because Klemperer doesn't do it and it's easy to begin to think that one's favourite version is sacrosanct.

The C-Major sound is good, as heard through an audio system. If you can't combine picture and decent sound I recommend forgoing the picture – it's well worth having a blu-ray or DVD player or even a lap-top plugged into you sound system for this purpose. I find it preferable even to watching with the sound emanating from the TV sound-base.

¹ His remake for Oehms is rather short value on a full-price CD (**OC410**) but well worth downloading from eclassical.com for a reasonable \$7.48, with pdf booklet – [DL News 2014/1](#).

Pyotr Ilyich TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893) There are several available recordings of Sir Thomas Beecham's Tchaikovsky, but not, it seems of **Symphony No.2** in c minor ('Little Russian'), Op.17, recorded in 1953 with his Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Beulah **11PDR4** [76:45] – at present only from iTunes (mp3) but watch the [Beulah](#) website for availability in better lossless sound for the same price).



It's a sensitive, even restrained, performance and well worth hearing although there are far more recordings now (around 90) than when the recording was made and hailed as something a rarity. One of the best of these, conducted by Claudio Abbado, was recently reissued on a DG Eloquence twofer – by far the best of a very mixed bunch of Tchaikovsky twofers on that label – [review](#).

The symphony is preceded by the *Nutcracker Suite*, Op.71a, recorded in 1954, and the programme is rounded off with *Capriccio Italien* recorded in 1949. In all the music Beecham works his usual magic and the recordings have transferred well, all sounding good for their age – the symphony much better than I remember it from the Philips GBL reissue¹ and the *Nutcracker* very good indeed considering its age. Even if you have this ethereal version of the *Nutcracker* music as the coupling for Beecham's recording of Symphony No.4, the new release is well worth having.

¹ Many of the Beecham LPs on that label did little justice to the performances.

Antonín DVOŘÁK (1841–1904) The Busch Trio recording, with Miguel da Silva, of **Piano Quartets Nos. 1 and 2 (Alpha 288)**, reviewed in [Autumn 2017-1](#), is now available as a 16- or 24-bit download, with pdf booklet, from [eclassical.com](#). These powerful performances, now sounding much better than the mp3 press preview, offer a serious challenge to Domus on Hyperion.

The Alpha release of the **DEBUSSY and RAVEL String Quartets** which I reviewed in [Autumn 2017/1](#) from an mp3 press preview is now available in much better 16- and 24-bit lossless sound with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#).



RECORDING OF THE MONTH

Charles-Marie WIDOR (1844-1937)

Suite Latine (1932) [34:15]

Trois Nouvelles Pièces, Op. 87 (1934) [13:53]

Bach's Memento (1925) [24:43]

Marche Americaine (1876) [5:49]*

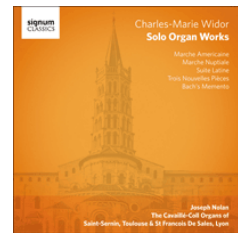
Conte d'Avril: No. 6 – Marche Nuptiale (1890) [5:49]*

Joseph Nolan (organ)

rec. 2013, Saint François-de-Sales de Lyon*; 2015, Basilique Saint-Sernin, Toulouse

Pdf & ePub booklet included

SIGNUM RECORDS SIGCD438 [82:39] - from [Hyperion-records.co.uk](#) (mp3, 16- & 24-bit lossless). CD available from [AmazonUK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#). Previous reviews: [Dominy Clements](#) and [Stuart Sillitoe](#)



Mention Widor and most people think of his monumental organ symphonies, especially the show-stopping *Toccata* from No. 5. Collectors should certainly investigate Joseph Nolan's traversal of all ten; I [reviewed](#) the third in the series, and my colleagues have been very complimentary about the rest. This new twofer – Hyperion have priced the 24/96 download at £12 – brings together the composer's less-well-known solo organ pieces. Such 'mop-ups', issued in the interests of completeness, often lack interest; I'm pleased to report that's *not* the case here.

Nolan plays two instruments here: the 1888 Cavallé-Coll in the Basilique Saint-Sernin, Toulouse, and the 1880 one in Saint François-de-Sales de Lyon. As it happens, I first heard the latter on an [Alba SACC](#) of Widor's Organ Symphonies 3 and 8; superbly played by Jan Lehtola and expertly engineered by Mika Koivusalo, it's one of my desert-island organ discs. What really comes out in that recording, though, is the tractable nature of that instrument, surely one of M. Aristide's finest.

Given that the Basilique Saint-Sernin's organ sits in one of Europe's largest Romanesque churches, you'd expect some acoustic issues. If there are any, you wouldn't know it; indeed, Mike Hatch's splendid recording – warm, detailed and suitably spacious – is as good as it gets. The filigreed writing of the *Suite Latine* is a joy to hear, the whole piece full of charm and character. Clearly, this is a very refined instrument, and that makes it an ideal choice for such discreet repertoire. Only the final

movement, *Lauda Sion*, is comparatively bold; as for the others, they're imbued them with a gentle radiance that's utterly beguiling.

What a fine organist Nolan is, and how judicious in everything he does. His reading of the *Trois Nouvelles Pièces* is a case in point; the playing is poised and proportionate, and the recording has a rare and telling transparency that invites one to marvel at the music's inner workings. Unalloyed pleasure, this, and worth the price of admission alone. There's more to caress the ear and lift the heart in the light-touched loveliness of *Bach's Memento*, the *Aria* especially. Also, the fantail of colours splayed here is just exquisite.

This album isn't just about charm and subtlety, though. For instance, the two marches – recorded in Lyon and engineered by Andrew Mellor – are clearly showpieces; the American one has plenty of brass and brio, and the wedding procession – last heard to thrilling effect on the mighty Steinmeyer of Trondheim's [Nidaros Cathedral](#) – is nicely sprung. The latter builds to a joyful, peeling close, a fitting end to both the album and the series. Ateş Orga's lucid liner-notes are an added bonus.

Epiphanies aplenty; quite possibly a Recording of the Year. **[DM]**

Richard STRAUSS (1864 -1949)

Also sprach Zarathustra Op.30, TrV176 (*Tondichtung* – Tone Poem) (1896) [32:53]

Gustav MAHLER (1860 -1911)

Totenfeier (*Sinfonische Dichtung* – Symphonic Poem) (1888) [22:49]

Sinfonisches Präludium für Orchester, WAB *deest* (Symphonic Prelude for Orchestra) (Reconstructed by **Albrecht Gursching**) (1876) [08:54]

Tobias Berndt (organ: Seifert organ of the St. MatthiasKirche, Berlin-Schöneber)

Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin/Vladimir Jurowski
rec. Haus des Rundfunks, RBB Berlin, June 2016. DSD.

PENTATONE PTC5186597 SACD [64:46] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#) For SACD purchase see [review](#).



There are any number of fine recordings of *Zarathustra*, notably from Fritz Reiner with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (+ *Don Juan*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* Suite, RCA/Sony **88697712632**, budget price – [review](#) – [review](#) – [review](#) of earlier SACD reissue); Berlin PO/Herbert von Karajan (+ *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Don Juan*, *Dance of the Seven Veils* DG Originals **4474412** or 2-CD budget set **E4642812**) and CBSO/Andris Nelsons (+ *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel* Orfeo C878141A: **Recording of the Month** – [review](#) – [review](#)) Download from [eclassical.com](#) or stream from [Naxos Music Library](#). NO booklet from either).

By no means least, there's William Steinberg's Boston recording, with HOLST *The Planets* at mid-price on DG Originals **E4636272**. That can be downloaded for as little as £4.99 (mp3), though the quality of the Linn high-res download ([Download of the Month](#) but no longer available from Linn) suggests that the 24/96 version may be worth the extra expenditure (target price in 24-bit £9.08).

Arch-Straussian Rudolf Kempe's recording with the Dresden Staatskapelle on single- and 2-CD releases – [DL News 2013/2](#) – are now download only: the Sainsbury's and HMV download links listed there are defunct.* There is, however another Kempe recording with the SW German Radio Orchestra (+ BARTÓK *Miraculous Mandarin* Suite) Hänssler **CD94.220** – [review](#) and that is available as a lossless download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#).

Taking just the Nelsons recording from those listed above confirms my first impression that the new recording is just too anaemic: though there's impressive energy at times, it emerges only fitfully and the overall impression is that *Zarathustra* sounds too often like the more purple passages of

Rosenkavalier – which is not at all intended to disparage that opera, but it's not the way to treat *Zarathustra*. Nelsons keeps the music moving where Jurowski too often lets it lag, yet he gives the more beautiful passages their full due. Nor does the Pentatone recording, though in 24-bit format, match the Orfeo, albeit in 16-bit only. My only reservations about the latter concern the lack of booklet with the download or streamed version and the fact that *Don Juan* intrudes a little too quickly on the end of *Zarathustra*.

Mahler's *Totenfeier* was an early draft of the opening movement of his Second Symphony. It's certainly just about worth performing as a separate work, though less so than the *Blumine* movement which Mahler dropped from his first symphony. Whether it's 'far more honest and genuine' than the final version, as asserted by Vladimir Jurowski in the notes, is another matter: I'm not even sure what those two epithets are supposed to mean in this context.

Totenfeier is something of a Jurowski speciality: it's the companion to his 2012 recording of *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Signum **SIGCD259**). John Quinn – [review](#) – though enjoying *Geselle*, thought the tempo on that recording too fast at several crucial moments and it's significant that Pierre Boulez – see below – takes things more slowly at those points. Michael Cookson was more appreciative of the recording as a whole – [review](#) – as was Leslie Wright – [review](#) – though, like all concerned, he was unimpressed by the short length of the album. The short time is taken care of by the pricing, especially of the download from [Hyperion](#): £4.85 in 16-bit or £5.45 in 24-bit, both with pdf booklet. *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* can be downloaded separately for £2/2.25. Now that *is* worth having, though as a supplement to, not a replacement for Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (DG Originals **4779375**, with *Kindertotenlieder*, etc., or **4497352**, with the classic Rafael Kubelík Symphony No.1).

Pierre Boulez recorded *Zarathustra* and *Totenfeier* in Chicago (DG **4576492**, download only or [Presto special CD](#)). His generally more sedate pace for *Zarathustra* is more effective than Jurowski's on either album: though his *Zarathustra* is not competitive, it is possible to download his *Totenfeier* separately from [Presto](#).

This is the only current (ever?) recording of the very early Symphonic Prelude. Surely a *prelude* should precede the main works? In any event, it adds little to the proceedings.

As I was completing this review for the main MWI pages I received Dan Morgan's [review](#) for editing and he is no more enthusiastic than I have been.

* Several of the links for recommendations for *Zarathustra* in [DL News 2013/14](#) are also inoperative now: Classicsonline have also joined the list of defunct sites, though most of what they offered and more remain available for streaming from Naxos Music Library. Links for theclassicalshop.net will take you to the main page for its Chandos successor.

Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)

Symphony No.6 in e minor (1944-48) [32:23]

Symphony No.4 in f minor (1931-35) [32:30]

rec. 10 November 2016 (Symphony No.6); 7 April 2016 (Symphony No.4),
Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

Hallé Orchestra/Sir Mark Elder

HALLÉ CDHLL7547 [64:55] Reviewed from lossless press preview with pdf booklet. CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto](#)



In the [previous edition](#) I previewed Martyn Brabbin's recording of the 1920 edition of VW's *A London Symphony*, due for release by Hyperion in November, which compares well with other recordings of that work on Dutton (also the 1920 edition), Sir Mark Elder (Hallé) and Sir Andrew Manze (Onyx), both of whom give very fine accounts of the revised version. None of these quite ousts from top spot Richard Hickox's Chandos recording of the manuscript version, which predates even the 1920. It's

available separately but also with the other symphonies, except Nos. 7 and 9, on a USB stick for £40 (**CHUSB0008** – from chandos.net).

Hickox didn't live to complete the series but those symphonies which he recorded include No.4 (with Mass in G and Six Songs, **CHSA5003**) and No.6 (with No.8, **CHSA5016**). The mantle has now fallen to Sir Andrew Davis, whose earlier version of No.6 is one of my benchmarks alongside those Hickox recordings: it has the advantage not only of being a very fine performance, with excellent fillers – *The Lark Ascending* and the *Tallis Fantasia* – but also of coming at super-budget price (Warner Apex **0927495842**).

The new Hallé release contains very fine live accounts of both works. They may not be quite the best, but if the coupling appeals, the new recording is well worth having. The performance of No.6 which opens the proceedings lacks just a little of the power imparted by Sir Andrew Davis (Warner budget-price **0927495842** with *Tallis Fantasia* and *Lark Ascending* or complete box set – see review below) or by Sir Adrian Boult (preferably his mono Decca recording, but also his EMI stereo remake). Those who believe that the wartime credentials of this symphony have been over-played may prefer it to have the edge taken off very slightly – but *only* very slightly.

In No.4, too, those who find the work too stark in other hands – not least the composer's own, as preserved on Naxos Historical **8.111048** – may find Elder's interpretation more amenable. Here again, though, I stress that the new Hallé is by no means lacking in intensity.

Ralph Vaughan WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

Sinfonia Antartica (Symphony No.7) (1949-51)* [41:40]

Four Last Songs (orch. Anthony Payne)† (1954-58) [9:48]

Concerto for two pianos and orchestra‡ (1926-31, arr. 1946) [25:55]

Mari Eriksmoen (soprano)*

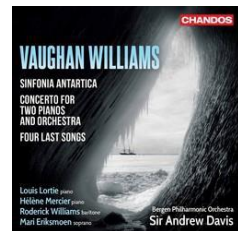
Roderick Williams (baritone)†

Hélène Mercier (piano); Louis Lortie (piano)‡

Bergen Philharmonic Choir; Edvard Grieg Kor*

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra/Sir Andrew Davis

CHANDOS CHSA5186 SACD [77:47] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com.
CD from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto



What a good time this is for fans for Vaughan Williams' symphonies with the Andrew Manze series in its infancy on Onyx, a new recording of the 1920 edition of the *London* Symphony from Martyn Brabbins on Hyperion, the Hallé series nearing its conclusion – above – and the final episode of the Chandos series, begun by Richard Hickox and completed by Sir Andrew Davis.

This is, in fact, the second Chandos series of the VW symphonies: the first, with Bryden Thomson directing the LSO, is available complete on **CHAN9087** (5 CDs, around £50) and *Antartica* remains available separately on **CHAN8796** (with *Toward the Unknown Region*). Reviewing the USB set of Richard Hickox's incomplete VW series¹, I included Thomson's accounts of the *London* Symphony, *Antartica* and No.9 – [review](#). I found his *Antartica* a little too under-powered most of the time and often simply too slow. Sir Adrian Boult on his 1950s mono recording, still my benchmark, keeps the music moving better than either Chandos version but the sound requires a degree of tolerance and not everyone likes to hear the poetry which VW inserted at the head of each movement, even though impeccably intoned by John Gielgud.

Sir Andrew Davis has, of course, recorded all the VW symphonies before, now gathered together in a bargain box from Warner Classics (**2564698483**). No.6 from that set is superb, also available at budget price, with *The Lark Ascending* and the *Tallis Fantasia* (Apex **0927495842**) but Christopher Thomas had some reservations about the *Antartica* – [review](#) of earlier release; not, as it happens, about the first-rate recording but about the performance. I haven't been able to hear that earlier recording but I note

that the tempi are now slightly brisker in the first three movements, with the *Intermezzo* given a little more space to breathe.

Predictably enthusiastic reviews of the new SACD have begun to be posted, so I'm swimming somewhat against the tide in expressing a few reservations. They mainly concern the very wide dynamic range of the recording: set the first movement at a comfortable level – and even then the wind machine is rather understated – and the louder passages in later movements are simply too loud for domestic listening. It's not too bad sitting in my study but it's impossible to find a comfortable listening level in the lounge with neighbours to consider or on headphones without risking hearing damage. If you heard the extract from the first movement on BBC Radio 3 Record Review, set at an optimal level by the engineers, you may well wonder what I'm complaining about, but stream the whole symphony from [Naxos Music Library](#) and you should hear what I mean. It may suit you, but it spoils my enjoyment of an otherwise very fine performance. I found that I had to boost the volume of the earlier recording of Symphony No.9 and *Job* – [review](#) – but don't recall having to adjust it thereafter.

The old Boult Decca may sound dated, though not badly so, and it's available only to download or stream, either on Eloquence **4611162**, with Symphony No.8 or in the box set of all the symphonies (Decca **473412** – [review](#)) but it remains my version of choice. A very decent mp3 transfer of all nine symphonies from this set on Classical Masters remains available from [Amazon UK](#) for £6.89. Don't be put off by the fairy on the garish cover.

The orchestrated *Four Last Songs* are a valuable addition to the catalogue and the 2-piano version of the Piano Concerto is very well performed. If you don't expect to be troubled by the problem of getting the right volume level – something which I'm not alone in having complained about before – there's no need to hesitate.

¹ Still available from [chandos.net](#) equivalent to 6 CDs for £40.

Sergey RACHMANINOV (1873-1943)

Piano Concerto No. 2 [33:25]

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43 (1934) [22:54]

Anna Vinnitskaya (piano)

NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester/Krzysztof Urbański

rec. 2016, Rolf-Liebermann-Studio, Hamburg

ALPHA 275 [56:19] Reviewed as mp3 press preview and 24/44.1 download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#) For CD availability see [review by Dan Morgan](#).



Of two recent recordings of Piano Concerto No.2, Dan Morgan – link above – much preferred this to a Naxos album with Boris Giltburg as soloist with the RSNO and Carlos Miguel Prieto, though not as a replacement for earlier recommendations. Of these Vladimir Ashkenazy and André Previn in all four concertos (budget-price Double Decca **4448392**) take some beating for value, while Stephen Hough with the Dallas SO and Andrew Litton is also highly recommendable, again in all four concertos, plus the *Paganini Rhapsody* (Hyperion **CDA67501/2**: [Recording of the Month](#) – [review](#)).

Bargain lovers looking for just the concerto and Paganini Variations will find a very decent account of both on a Naxos CD which I bought when they cost £3.99, scabbled together in a browser in Woolworths: Jenő Jandó with the Budapest SO/Györgyi Lehel (**8.550117**). It costs a little more now, though not if downloaded for around £5.

Recent recordings by Katia Buniatshvili (Nos. 2 and 3, Sony – [review](#)) and Vanessa Bonelli Mosell (No.2 and Corelli Variations, Decca – [review](#)) each have several good points but neither is special enough to oust Ashkenazy and Hough – [Spring 2017/2](#).

Another benchmark for the *Paganini Rhapsody* remains the classic recording made by Julius Katchen and Sir Adrian Boult with the RPO in 1954, which can be downloaded in lossless sound from eClassical.com. (Naxos Classical Archives **9.80648**, with Dohnányi *Nursery Variations*). That still sounds reasonably well, though in mono. The same artists' 1960 stereo remake seems to have disappeared from the scene.

Sergei RACHMANINOV (1873-1943)

Symphony No. 1 in D minor, Op. 13 (1895) [43:20]

Philharmonia Orchestra/Vladimir Ashkenazy

rec. live, November 2016, Royal Festival Hall, London

Pdf booklet included

SIGNUM SIGCD484 [43:20] – from [eClassical](http://eClassical.com) (mp3, 16- & 24-bit lossless). CD available from AmazonUK – Arkivmusic – Presto



It's good to hear the Philharmonia and their conductor laureate, Vladimir Ashkenazy, 'Live in Concert'. For me, the highlight of their early partnership was a sweeping, sonorous Sibelius cycle for Decca; the Fourth Symphony is especially memorable, and their spirited accounts of *Finlandia* and the *Karelia Suite* are among the best I know. Ashkenazy has also recorded the Rachmaninov symphonies, first with the Concertgebouw (Decca) and then with the Sydney Symphony (Exton). The 16-bit download of that Australian set – which includes all the orchestral music – costs £55 from Presto; the Dutch one, topped up with the *Isle of the Dead* and *The Bells*, is very good value at around £20 (Presto again).

On the prickly subject of download pricing, eClassical's per-second charging model really comes into its own where playing times are short. From them, 43 minutes of high-res music costs just £5.80¹; compare that with £7.50 from Hyperion and a whopping £14 from Presto. There are no discounts for CD buyers, with the disc pitched at full price (around £12).

I've reviewed several recordings of Rachmaninov's Op. 13 in recent year, some more recommendable than others. I was quite impressed with Leonard Slatkin and the Detroit Symphony (Naxos) and, after a while, I warmed to Lan Shui's performance with the Singapore Symphony (BIS). And then there's Vasily Petrenko and the RLPO, much praised on these pages and elsewhere; alas, I felt their reading of the piece offers 'plenty of brawn but very little brain' (Naxos). As for Valery Gergiev and the LSO on the orchestra's own label, Brian Wilson's lukewarm review of their Op. 13 rather confirms my reservations about that cycle in general and Gergiev in particular.

Ashkenazy has always struck me as a thoughtful pianist and conductor, and one who shies away from vulgarity and/or unnecessary flamboyance. That's certainly true here; this is a solid and very idiomatic performance, nicely detailed in quieter passages and thrilling in the louder ones. The Philharmonia sound warm and weighty – terrific brass, timps and tam-tam – and they respond with alacrity to Ashkenazy's firm, unfussy direction. And goodness, what a thumping finale! Any caveats? Very few, although I agree with Paul Corfield Godfrey who, in his concert review for *Seen and Heard*, felt the slow movement could have been more lyrically done.

Not in the same league as Ashkenazy's Concertgebouw version, but still worth a shot; more, please. **[DM]**

¹ Dan's conversion of \$7.80. That's an introductory offer of the 24-bit at the same price as 16-bit. The Hyperion download costs just £4.99 in 16-bit, so better value for that format and probably for 24-bit when the eClassical.com offer ends. [BW]

Having been somewhat underwhelmed when I first listened to this recording, I tried it again in the light of Dan's review and, though my priorities remain as before, not least the earlier Ashkenazy Double Decca twofer which Dan mentions, I enjoyed it much more the second time around. It's a more thoughtful but less exciting account than the CBS Ormandy LP from which I got to know the work, now

an inexpensive download only, with Nos. 2 and 3 and *Vocalise* (CD [review](#)) but Ashkenazy is more idiomatic than I first thought. [BW]

Gustav HOLST (1874-1934) If you want to hear how Holst thought his music should sound, a Beulah release of his own 78 recordings should prove enlightening. We already had a Naxos transfer – [review](#) – [review](#) – of the 1926 Columbia recording of *The Planets*, Op.32 [42:19], and the Marching Song, with the LSO, but Beulah have gone one better and coupled *The Planets* with *Beni Mora*, Op.29/1 [14:03] and *Two Songs without Words* [7:22] (both 1924). Beulah **1PS19** [63:46] – from [iTunes](#) (mp3) or, preferably, wait for availability of lossless for same price from Qobuz.



I'm not always convinced that composers' 78 recordings of their own music accurately represent their intentions: sometimes tempi seem to be determined by the length of 78 sides, but Holst's fast *Mars* seems not to have been a case in point: at 6:08 it's within the compass of two 4-minute sides. Overall, this offers an interesting but not essential insight, especially as the Naxos alternative includes Vaughan Williams' own fiery recording of his Fourth Symphony.

Havergal BRIAN (1876-1972)

Symphony No.8 in b-flat minor (1949) [23:20]

Symphony No.21 in E-flat (1963) [23:19]

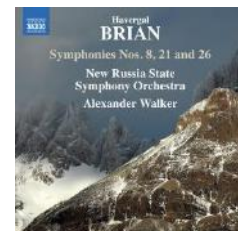
Symphony No.26 (1966)* [17:48]

New Russia State Symphony Orchestra/Alexander Walker

* world premiere recording

rec. 8-11 September 2016, Studio 5, Russian State TV and Radio, KULTURA, Moscow. DDD.

NAXOS 8.573752 [70:26] Streamed with pdf booklet from [Naxos Music Library](#). CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)



Most of Naxos' earlier Havergal Brian releases were reissues from their sister label Marco Polo – and none the worse for that – but this new album, like its predecessor on **8.573408** (Nos. 6, 28, 29 and 31 – [review](#)) is a new recording made in Moscow. The inclusion of the first recording of Symphony No.26, completing the commercial availability of all Brian's symphonies, makes it mandatory for all followers of his music. A first hearing – all that I had time for as I was pulling this roundup together – suggests that everything else about this new release is very worthwhile. The streamed sound is good, but I'll wait for the 24-bit download which, I hope, will appear soon from eclassical.com, for a final verdict.

I mentioned in [DL News 2015/4](#) that the eclassical.com 16-bit download of the previous volume was more expensive than that from classicsonline.com but the latter site is currently inoperative and the [eclassical.com](#) download now costs a very reasonable \$6.99 in 16-bit and \$10.48 in 24-bit, with pdf booklet.

Though Brian's music failed to make its mark until very near to the end of his life, and then only in small measure, because it didn't meet the fashionable *avant-garde* requirements, that doesn't mean that it's facile. Far from it, as these performances amply demonstrate.

Sergei PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 16 (1923) [33:55]

Piano Concerto No. 5 in G major, Op. 55 (1931-1932) [23:43]

Olli Mustonen (piano)

Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra/Hannu Lintu

rec. 2016/17, Helsinki Music Centre, Finland

Pdf booklet included



ONDINE ODE 1288-2 [57:32] – from [eClassical](#) (mp3, 16- & 24-bit lossless). CD available from [AmazonUK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)

I've heard or reviewed several recordings of Prokofiev's piano concertos in recent years, none of which comes even close to displacing old favourites. At random, Yuja Wang in No. 2 ([Deutsche Grammophon](#)), Vadym Kholodenko in Nos. 2 and 5 ([Harmonia Mundi](#)), Nareh Arghamanyan in No. 3 ([Pentatone](#)) and Denis Matsuev, Alexei Volodin and Sergei Babayan in Nos. 3, 4 and 5 respectively ([Mariinsky](#)). As for Beatrice Rana's No. 2, I could scarcely believe that [Michael Cookson](#) and I had listened to the same recording. Indeed, it contains some of the most vulgar, self-seeking pianism I've heard in ages.

For years now my benchmark for these works has been Michel Béroff's scintillating cycle from the 1970s, with Kurt Masur and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra; that [EMI-Warner](#) set, in bright, bracing sound, is available as a 16-bit download from [Qobuz](#). Volatile, witty and irrepressible, these performances are hugely *entertaining*, a quality that's sorely lacking in so many recent recordings. No, the old 'uns are still the best 'uns, as I discovered when, rather late in the day, I discovered Melodiya's Vladimir Krainev/Dmitri Kitaenko set from the 1970s/80s (not to be confused with their Frankfurt remake for Warner). Those edgy, original and sometimes outrageous Moscow readings, in fair to good sound, can also be had as a 16-bit [Qobuz](#) download.

I had hoped this all-Finnish offering – the second in the Mustonen/Lintu series – would break the drought. Minutes into No. 2, I knew succour was still some way off. Goodness, what ponderous, po-faced Prokofiev this is, and how oppressive the recording. I sense the pianist is trying his best, especially in the ruminative moments of No. 2, but he and Lintu aren't on the same page, as it were. No. 5 is no better; here, too, the music resolutely refuses to come alive. Indeed, dipping into Béroff and Krainev one realises – with a jolt – just how joyless this Ondine pairing really is. I had contemplated reviewing their earlier album – ODE 1244-2 – but after hearing this one I think I'll pass.

Dull, dead-pan performances in disappointing sound; the drought continues. [DM]

Having listened to these performances just before I received Dan's review, I can only add how much I agree with him. At times I even wondered whether these were the Prokofiev concertos that I knew – had some gremlin got into the works and downloaded a completely different album? To the versions recommended by Dan, bargain hunters will find some very decent performances of these same two concertos performed by Kun Woo Pang, the Polish radio SO and Antoni Wit on Naxos **8.550565**. Nos. 1, 3 and 4 from the same artists are on **8.550566**. [BW]

Alexander MOSOLOV (1900-1973)

Zavod (Iron Foundry), Op.19 (1926-7) [3:23]

Piano Concerto No.1, Op.14 (1927) [24:51]

Stal' – the Tractor's arrival at the Kolkhoz (1926-7) [3:58]

Legend for cello and piano, Op.5 (1924) [6:19]

Piano Sonata No.1 in c minor, Op.3 (1924) [12:26]

Four Newspaper Announcements (1928) [4:14]

Steffen Schleiermacher (piano), Ringela Riemke (cello), Natalia Pschenitschnikova (soprano)

Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin/Johannes Kalitzke

rec. 2014, Haus des Rundfunks, Studio Brits, Berlin

CAPRICCIO C5241 [55:09] Reviewed as lossless download from [eClassical.com](#) (NO booklet) and as streamed from [Naxos Music Library](#) (with pdf booklet)



I've included this as an example of the kind of Soviet realism music of the early years after the October Revolution, the centenary of which will soon be upon us (actually in November by the modern calendar). Stephen Barber – [review](#) – enjoyed the album more than Rob Barnett – [review](#). *Zavod* is rather hard to enjoy, but, then I don't like Prokofiev's most brutalist music and this is in a similar vein.

It's mercifully short, however. The major work, the Piano Concerto, is hardly a masterpiece but it's well worth hearing at least once: those with access to Naxos Music Library should try it there, with booklet, before purchasing the download, which comes *ohne* booklet, or the CD.



RECORDING OF THE MONTH

English Piano Concerti

Benjamin BRITTEN (1913-1976) Piano Concerto in D, Op.13 (rev.1945)

[33:42]

Alan RAWSTHORNE (1905-1971) Piano Concerto No.1 [18:53]

John IRELAND (1879-1962) *Legend* for Piano and Orchestra [11:51]

Gerald FINZI (1901-1956) *Eclogue* for piano and strings [10:00]

Jane Coop (piano); CBC Radio Orchestra/Mario Bernardi

SKYLARK MUSIC SKY1702 [75:03] CD from [ArkivMusic](#). Subscribers stream from [Naxos Music Library](#) (NO) booklet). Download as **CBC SM5208** from [Presto](#)



With recommendable versions of all these works in the catalogue, I started without particularly high hopes for this CBC recording, now transferred to the Skylark label: for Britten there's Howard Shelley (Chandos **CHAN10764**, with Violin Concerto – [review](#)) and Steven Osborne (Hyperion **CDA67625**, with Diversions and *Young Apollo* – [Recording of the Month](#)); for Rawsthorne, Malcolm Binns (Lyrita **SRCD.2345**, a splendid super-budget-price collection of British Piano Concertos – [review](#) – [review](#)); Ireland's *Legend* is also on that Lyrita collection (with Erich Parkin) as is the beautiful Finzi *Eclogue* (Peter Katin). Buy that 4-CD set and you'll also be in possession of some other very fine recordings. The MusicWeb purchase web for Lyrita no longer applies but buy direct from [Wyastone](#) for a 10% discount with the code MusicWeb10.

All that seems like insurmountable odds for Jane Coop, yet I was very impressed with her performances. If, for any reason, you have resisted the recommendations listed above – why would you not want the Lyrita set, unless you already had some of the recordings? – the CBC or Skylark release is well worth considering. If you don't wish to duplicate, at least stream it from Naxos Music Library if you can. It's also available inexpensively for emusic.com subscribers – [here](#). I see that [eclassical.com](#) offer a number of concert recordings in which Coop has participated and [Presto](#) have a number of downloads of her recordings for CBC and Centrediscs.

From the Movies

Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

The Gadfly Suite (1955) [47:50]

Georgy SVIRIDOV (1915-1998)

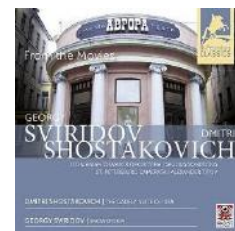
The Snowstorm (1964) [27:54]

Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra/Saulius Sondeckis (*Gadfly*) & St Petersburg

Camerata/Alexander Titov (*Snowstorm*)

rec. Vilnius, 1995 & St Petersburg, 2002

CUGATE CLASSICS CGC026-2 [75:56] – from [Qobuz](#) (16-bit lossless). CD from [AmazonUK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)



Shostakovich's film music rarely disappoints, and the various collections from Chandos and Naxos are well worth exploring. The suite fashioned from the score he wrote for Aleksandr Fajntsimmer's 1955 film, *The Gadfly*, is no exception. It's given here by the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra and Saulius Sondeckis, both of whom are unknown to me. I didn't expect anything special, but this is actually a terrific performance, full of charm and *chutzpah*. The playing is very accomplished and the mid-nineties sound is clean and couth, the latter especially welcome in the score's noisier parts. As for the quieter ones – the *Contradanse*, *Intermezzo* and *Nocturne* – they're disarmingly done. And while this version doesn't supplant old favourites, I'm delighted to have it in my collection.

I only know Shostakovich's compatriot and near contemporary Georgy Sviridov, through his choral works, so the music he wrote for Vladimir Basov's 1964 film, *The Snowstorm*, is an intriguing detour for me. (Actually, its Russian title, *Метель*, is more properly translated as *The Blizzard*.) Featuring dances, a romance, seasonal sketches, a wedding and a laugh-out-loud *oompah* of a military march, there's no shortage of variety or incident. The opening *Troika* has impressive breadth, and what follows has plenty of colour and rhythmic vitality. The playing is disciplined, the sound is full-blooded, and while some might find the writing oversweet at times, *The Snowstorm* is still a most attractive and entertaining score.

A delightful surprise; go on, treat yourself. [DM]

Alan HOVHANESS (1911-2000) *Mysterious Mountains*

Symphony No.2, Mysterious Mountain, Op.132 (1955) [19:23]

Symphony No.50, Mount St Helens, Op.360 (1981) [29:16]

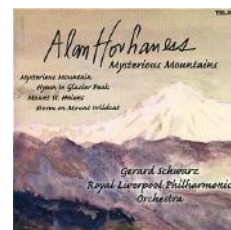
Symphony No.66, Hymn to Glacier Peak, Op.428 (1991) [18:38]

Storm on Mount Wildcat Op.2/2 (1931) [3:37]

Royal Liverpool PO/Gerard Schwarz

rec. Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, 9 August 2002

TELARC 80604 [71:45] CD from ArkivMusic. (NB: please note different catalogue number in PSH's review: this is as listed by ArkivMusic).



The SACD which [Rob Barnett](#) and [Paul Shoemaker](#) reviewed with enthusiasm is now deleted in the UK, with prices of £50+ being asked. It can be downloaded in very decent (320kb/s) mp3 from emusic.com by subscribers for a very reasonable £4.20 or less. Non-subscribers will find the album for £4.99 at 7digital.com.

Gerard Schwarz's earlier recordings of Hovhaness remain available on Delos, with some transferred to Naxos, but none of these exactly matches the Telarc programme and this RLPO recording of *Mount St Helen's* is preferable to his earlier version. There are no notes with the download but the two MWI reviews of these first-rate performances should help. If this is your first encounter with Hovhaness be prepared to be amazed that the musical establishment shut such an original composer out for so many years.

For the Naxos Classical Archives reissues of some early (mono) recordings of Hovhaness and others, see Rob Barnett's [overview](#). Alas, since that was published classicsonline.com has ceased to function – temporarily, we hope – as has free access to back Gramophone reviews: it's now a subscription service. UK subscribers to Naxos Music Library can still stream Naxos Archives there: I can't give you links because my press access comes from Naxos US where these releases are still ©. Eclassical.com offers Naxos downloads at reasonable prices.

Einojuhani RAUTAVAARA (1928-2016)

Rubáiyát - song-cycle for baritone and orchestra (2015) [18:10]

Into the Heart of Light (Canto V) for string orchestra (2012) [13:05]

Balada for tenor, mixed choir and orchestra (2014) [16:55]

Four Songs from the opera Rasputin (2012) [10:41]

Gerald Finley (bass-baritone)

Mika Pohjonen (tenor)

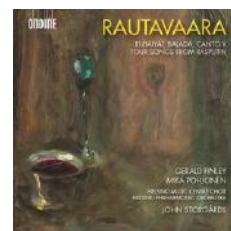
Helsinki Music Centre Choir

Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra/John Storgårds

rec. 2015, Helsinki Music Centre, Finland

Pdf booklet includes sung texts

ONDINE ODE 1274-2 [59:29] – from eClassical (mp3, 16- & 24-bit lossless). CD from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto. Previous reviews: [Rob Barnett](#) (Recording of the Month) and [John Quinn](#)



I may have lambasted Ondine elsewhere in this issue of ST&SR – the Mustonen/Lintu Prokofiev 2 and 5 – but I have nothing but praise for their ongoing commitment to the music of Einojuhani Rautavaara. I've heard or reviewed several instalments in that invaluable series, but the undoubted highlight is **ODE 1178-2**, which couples the cello and percussion concertos. In superlative sound, it boasts top-notch soloists – Truls Mørk and Colin Currie, no less – plus fine support from the Helsinki Phil under John Storgårds. Not surprisingly, the CD was one of my [top picks](#) for 2012. The 24-bit download, available from [eClassical](#), is very good too. And yes, a Pdf booklet *is* included.

As for the Canadian bass-baritone Gerald Finley, he seldom disappoints. His [Shostakovich](#) – also for Ondine, with the Helsinki PO under Thomas Sanderling – is very distinguished, but if I were to take just one of his recordings to my desert island it would have to be Volume 2 of his Hyperion Ives series, [Romanzo di Central Park](#), with pianist Julius Drake. That was one of my Recordings of the Year in 2008. The Shostakovich can be downloaded from [eClassical](#), the Ives from [Hyperion](#); both come with digital booklets.

As expected, Finley's in good voice in the *Rubáiyát* cycle, although he's placed quite far back. The upside is that Rautavaara's luminous scoring is very much to the fore. However, it's the sensitive, beautifully nuanced singing – plangent, not plaintive – that's most affecting. As for the Finnish orchestra and conductor, they're in rapt attendance throughout. Happily, the recording here, and in the string orchestra piece *Into the Heart of Light*, is both detailed and spacious; in short, it's a world away from that airless Mustonen/Lintu release.

After all that gentle, rather English, soundscape comes *Balada*, which includes tenor Mika Pohjonen and the Helsinki Music Centre Choir. It, too, has a sustained loveliness that's very hard to resist. Ditto the four songs from Rautavaara's last opera, *Rasputin*, presented here in a version for choir and orchestra. These are all late works, bathed in a warm, autumnal glow that surely befits a composer near the end of a long and fruitful life.

Radiant scores, beautifully played, sung and recorded; for fans and curious listeners alike. **[DM]**

Philip SAWYERS (b.1951)

Symphony No.3 (2015) [38:31]

Songs of Loss and Regret (2013)* [24:06]

Fanfare (2016) [3:47]

April Fredrick (soprano)*

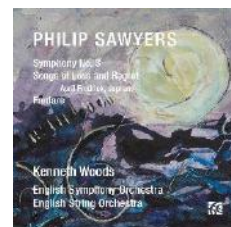
English Symphony Orchestra

English String Orchestra/Kenneth Woods

rec. 26 February 2017, Wyastone Concert Hall and 7 October 2015, Hereford Cathedral*. DDD.

Texts included

NIMBUS ALLIANCE NI6353 [66:54] Reviewed as lossless press preview. CD from [Nimbus](#): 10% discount using code MusicWeb10.



Nimbus Alliance have already released Sawyer's Symphony No.1, etc. (**NI6129** – [review](#)), Symphony No.2 and Cello Concerto (**NI6281** – [review](#) – [reviews](#) – [review](#)) and Violin Sonatas (with Elgar, **NI6240** – [DL News 2013/15](#)). Inspired by the reviews of NI6281 I downloaded and enjoyed it, though I didn't find it or the Violin Sonatas especially memorable, particularly as the latter are oddly coupled with the Elgar.

The new release I found much more amenable, by which I certainly don't mean comfortable. The symphony is a gritty, often powerful work yet, though composed in 'twelve-tone pyrotechnics', those who find post-Schoenberg musical language indigestible should not have too much trouble with that or the very moving *Songs of Loss and Regret*. The heart of the symphony is an *adagio* movement which simultaneously conveys despair and consolation. The songs include music worthy to be mentioned in the same breath as Britten's *War Requiem*, with which it shares a setting of Wilfred Owen's *Futility*,

and the opening *Shropshire Lad* setting (*Into my heart an air that kills*) is in no way overshadowed by more famous Housman settings – Butterworth, Gurney, VW, etc¹.

Very fine performances, excellent recorded, but ought the substantial *Fanfare* not to have been placed first? Very fine notes complete a recommended release. If still in doubt that such recent music can appeal to traditionalists, subscribers to [Naxos Music Library](#) should try it there, complete with booklet.

¹ I have somehow missed the 2-for-1 Hyperion Dyad recording of all the *Shropshire Lad* poems in musical settings or as read (**CDD24044: *Bargain of the Month*** – [review](#)). It's available on CD or as a download from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#). CW Orr's accomplished setting of *Into my heart an air that kills* sounds somewhat conventional after Sawyers'.

Brett DEAN (b. 1961)

Dramatis Personae for trumpet and orchestra (2013) [31:08]

Luca FRANCESCONI (b. 1956)

Hard Pace: Concerto for trumpet and orchestra (2007) [26:28]

Håkan Hardenberger (trumpet)

Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra/John Storgårds

rec. 2014/15, Gothenburg Concert Hall, Sweden

Pdf booklet included

BIS BIS-2067 SACD [58:30] – from [eClassical](#) (mp3, 16- & 24-bit lossless). SACD available from [AmazonUK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#). Previous review: [Dave Billinge](#)



I've not knowingly heard anything by either of these composers, but I am very familiar with Håkan Hardenberger – whom I first heard in [Prières sans paroles](#), a mouth-watering feast of French music for trumpet and organ – and I'm always happy to renew my acquaintance with the ever-reliable and eclectic John Storgårds. Factor in the prospect of top-notch engineering from stalwarts Marion Schwebel and Matthias Spitzbarth, and we should be in for quite a ride.

Brett Dean, who hails from Brisbane, is well represented in the BIS catalogue, and listening to his trumpet concerto certainly made me want to hear more of his work. From its ultra-quiet opening, *Dramatis Personae* presents a range of ear-tweaking 'characters', all built around Hardenberger's taut, often transported trumpet. The standard of writing and playing – goodness, these Gothenburgers are in fine fettle – can't fail to impress, either; and if that isn't praise enough, Storgårds reminds us what a strong, steady and versatile baton waver he is. The concerto's big, rattling finale, superbly controlled and so cleanly articulated, is an absolute cracker.

Born in Milan, Luca Francesconi studied with avant-gardists Karlheinz Stockhausen and Luciano Berio – and it shows. That said, *Hard Pace* is rarely hard going, even at its most challenging. The piece includes three 'electronic soundscapes', artfully blended into the overall canvas, but I was struck most by the range and subtlety of Francesconi's orchestral palette. The net result is a very compelling work, whose coherence and sense of purpose is never in doubt. Once again, though, it's Hardenberger who deserves the highest praise; is there anything he can't do, any technical hurdle that he can't clear? As a bonus, the sheer zest and zing of his playing is well caught by the respective engineers.

Bravura pieces, with playing and sound to match; go on, be bold. **[DM]**



DISCOVERY OF THE MONTH

Marco lo MUSCIO (b.1971) Organ Music

Éowyn's Memories (For Nadiya) [4:48]

Trittico Toscano [8:36]

Canzona 'Homage to Gubbio' [4:21]

Vocalise No.5 (For Nadja) [3:58]

Concert Variations on 'Greensleeves' [10:12]

In Memoriam Teodosia [3:07]

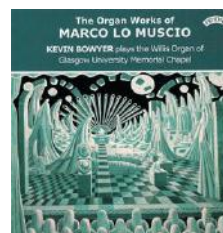
Blue Prelude [2:13]

Ostinato [2:31]

Via Crucis: Stations of the Cross [29:15]

Kevin Bowyer with Marco lo Muscio, four hands, in *Ostinato* (Willis Organ of Glasgow University Memorial Chapel)

PRIORY PRCD1170 [69:01] Reviewed as 24-bit download from eclassical.com and as streamed from Naxos Music Library (NO booklet from either). CD from Amazon UK – Presto



Marco lo Muscio's organ music has appeared on other Priory releases but this is the first album entirely devoted to his works and it offers a wide range of forms and moods. The lack of a booklet from any download source – apparently replete with detailed notes – is a serious handicap because it means that I can't tell you much about the music, not even if 'for Nadiya' and 'for Nadja' are dedicated to the same person. I can, however, say that I enjoyed this delightful recital of mainly reflective music. The opening Tolkien-inspired music tempts me to explore lo Muscio's other similarly inspired music. The presence of the composer himself on one track and the advocacy of Kevin Bowyer playing 'at home' both suggest that these are authoritative performances. The 24-bit download sounds excellent.

Coming Soon: My pick of the Wyastone Estate November 2017 releases is **Sir Arnold BAX (1883-1953) Symphony No.2** (BBCSO/Sir Eugen Goossens, BBC mono recording, 3 November 1956) and **Winter Legends** for piano and orchestra (John McCabe; BBC Northern SO/Raymond Leppard, rec. stereo 6 October 1978) on **Lyrity REAM.1137** [79:41] – reviewed from press preview. Order from Wyastone with code MusicWeb10 for 10% discount. These releases from the Itter archive may not be essential, in that we have fine recordings of both works¹, but these idiomatic performances are well worth the modest mid-price asked for the series and they complement Symphony No.6, etc. on Lyrity **SRCD.296** – [review](#) – [review](#) – and Symphonies Nos. 1 and 7 on **SRCD.232** – [review](#). Symphony No.1 is also available on the Lyrity budget-price 4-CD set of British Symphonies (**SRCD.2355: Recording of the Month** – [review](#) – [review](#) – [review](#) – [Retrospective Autumn 2016](#)).



¹ The symphony from the LPO and Myer Fredman (Lyrity **SRCD.233**, with No.5 – **Recording of the Month** – [review](#)) or, better still, Vernon Handley with the BBC Philharmonic (Bax Complete Symphonies, Chandos **CHAN10122**, 5 CDs, budget price – [review](#)). The link to the classicalshop.net in [DL News 2013/10](#) should now be replaced with this to chandos.net where the 24-bit download is now rather more reasonably priced but some dealers are still asking more for even the mp3 download than the cost of the CD set. Bargain seekers are well served by RSNO/David Lloyd-Jones (Naxos **8.554093**, with *November Woods* – [review](#) – [review](#) – [review](#)). Margaret Fingerhut with the LPO and Bryden Thomson in *Winter Legends* comes on a budget-price twofer from Chandos (**CHAN10209X** – [review](#)).