

Second Thoughts and Short Reviews: Early Summer 2017

By Dan Morgan and Brian Wilson

Reviews are by Brian Wilson except those marked [DM].

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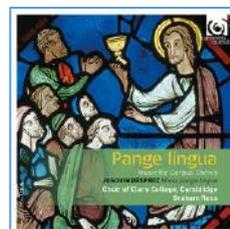
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Recording of the Month



Pange Lingua: Music for Corpus Christi is the latest of a distinguished series of recordings from Clare College Cambridge and Graham Ross, each based on a major Christian festival. Details and purchase links – [review](#) by Simon Thompson.



Corpus Christi is a celebration held on the Thursday after Trinity, instituted by papal decree in the fourteenth century and inspired by the doctrine of transubstantiation. As all versions of Protestantism rejected this comparatively recent doctrine, with Luther preferring a theory of consubstantiation and the Anglican compromise offering a 'pick your own' choice between a Eucharistic Real Presence and Calvinist and Zwinglian beliefs it died out except in Roman Catholic countries. It was not until 1928 that it was reinstated in the English Prayer Book and then only as a minor celebration in commemoration of the institution of Holy Communion, with the day not specified except that the service was not to be used on Maundy Thursday.

At the heart of the new release is **Josquin DESPREZ (c.1450/55?-1521)** *Missa Pange Lingua* (c.1515/21) with **Tomas Luis de VICTORIA**: *Lauda Sion salvatorem*; **Pierre DE LA RUE**: *O salutaris hostia*; **William BYRD**: *Cibavit eos*; **Edward BAIRSTOW**: *Let all mortal flesh keep silence*; **Pierre VILLETTE**: *O sacrum convivium*; **Olivier MESSIAEN**: *O sacrum convivium*; **Francis GRIER**: *Panis angelicus*; **Graham ROSS**: *Ave verum corpus* – a world premiere recording – **Gerald FINZI**: *Lo, the full, final Sacrifice* and **Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART** *Ave verum Corpus*. (Harmonia Mundi **HMM907688** – rec. June/July 2016 [78:18]). There's no SACD – a form now apparently totally abandoned by this and most other labels – so the 24-bit version from eclassical.com, with pdf booklet, will be especially attractive not just to audiophiles. The Mozart is billed as a bonus track so I presume it isn't included on the CD.

There's plenty of competition in the Josquin: the Tallis Scholars offer a superb bargain in the form of a 2-for-1 compilation, *The Tallis Scholars sing Josquin* (**CDGIM206**, with three other Masses and some shorter pieces – [review](#)). Those who prefer a Roman Catholic recording will find their need supplied by Westminster Cathedral and James O'Donnell on Hyperion **CDH55374**, mid-price CD – [review](#) – [DL Roundup](#) – or download with pdf booklet from hyperion-records.co.uk. Fans of the distinctive style of Marcel Pérès and his Ensemble Organum – I'm not in general – will find his account on an earlier mid-price Harmonia Mundi release (**HMG501239**).

With so much more on the new Harmonia Mundi, however, from the Sixteenth Century to the present, it's best to regard it not as a rival to those other versions but as an adjunct. The **Recording of the Month** accolade is for the series as a whole. With most of the 'red letter' festivals covered, there can't be many more to go.

Johannes TINCTORIS (c.1435-1511) Secret Consolations

O virgo miserere mei

Helas, le bon temps que j'avoie

O invida fortuna

Missa L'homme armé: Kyrie

Missa sine nomine 3: Gloria; Credo

Virgo Dei throno digna

Missa sine nomine 3: Sanctus



Missa sine nomine 2: Agnus Dei
Le souvenir [a 4]
Fecit potentiam
Le souvenir [a 2]
Robert MORTON *Le souvenir de vous me tue*
Francesco SPINACINO *Dung autramer*
Johannes TINCTORIS *D'un autre amer*
Alexander AGRICOLA *Dung aultre amer*
Johannes TINCTORIS *Vostre regart si tresfort m'a feru*
Anon. *Ou lit de pleurs tres agrevé*
Johannes TINCTORIS *De tous biens playne*
Le Miroir de Musique/Baptiste Romain
rec. Beuggen, Schloßkirche, June 2016
Texts and translations included
RICERCAR RIC380 [69:57] Reviewed from mp3 press preview.

Johannes TINCTORIS *Beatissima Beatrix*
Missa L'Homme armé
O virgo miserere mei
Fecit potetntiam
Lamentationes Jeremiae
Virgo Dei throno digna
Johannes de STOKEM (1445-1487) *Ave maris Stella*
Gloria de Beata Virgine
Anon. *Missa L'Homme armé: Sanctus*
Voces Æquales/Zoltan Mizsei
HUNGAROTON HCD32583 [74:56] Reviewed as lossless download from eclassical.com and as streamed from Naxos Music Library (NO booklet from either)



Johannes Tinctoris is remembered now, if at all, largely as a theorist but this **Ricercar** collection serves as a timely demonstration of his quality as a composer of both secular and sacred music, mostly in a quietly contemplative vein. With very good performances and recording and informative documentation, this should do much to re-establish his reputation. Even the cover image, van der Weyden's *Mary Magdalene reading* is just right.

The 256kb/s mp3 press preview sounds fine but music of this quality deserves better: I hope to be able to report on a lossless download or the CD in the near future.

There's no documentation at all with the **Hungaroton** from any source but it's well worth having along with the new Ricercar for the complete *Missa L'Homme armé*, of which only the *Kyrie* is offered by Le Miroir de Musique. It's also well worth having for the few pieces by Johannes de Stokem, the friend of Tinctoris.

Four pieces by Tinctoris feature on a collection entitled *Mundus et Musica: Instrumental Music in Spain and Flanders c.1500*. It's performed by the instrumental trio Qualia. Gary Higginson, though admitting that it's a somewhat specialist CD, thought the playing so fine and the repertoire so rare as to overcome even the short playing time (**Carpe Diem CD16294** [53:06] – download from eclassical.com – NO booklet).



Richard PYGOTT (c.1485-1549) the 5-part *Missa Veni Sancte Spiritus* [40:39] and **John MASON (?-1548)** *O Rex gloriose* [11:34] are sung by Christ Church Choir, Oxford, directed by Stephen Darlington on Nimbus **NI5578** [52:20]. I [reviewed](#) this back in 2008 but I have three reasons for returning to it now. First, it's a reminder how important it is to back-up all downloaded music: despite my own advice I have lost track of this recording somewhere along the line. Second, I complained then about the lack of booklets with downloads and it's still the case that the best I could find was the back-cover image from [Naxos Music Library](#). My third reason is better news: whereas before some of the tracks from emusic.com were at a low bit-rate, everything is now offered at 320kbs and the download of this music for Cardinal Wolsey's college, now Christ Church, can still be obtained by subscribers for £1.26.



Since then we have had one other recording of Pygott's music, apart from his *Quod petis, o fili?* which features on a host of Christmas recordings. Blue Heron close a recording of Nicholas Ludford's *Missa Regnum Mundi* with Pygott's *Salve Regina* (**BHCD1003** – [DL News 2014/9*](#) – [review](#)). Sadly, apart from these three works, there's almost nothing left of the music of this highly accomplished choirmaster of Wolsey's and Henry VIII's choirs.

* I erroneously attributed all the music on that recording to Ludford. *Mea culpa*.

Carlo GESUALDO da Venosa (1566-1613) O Dolce Mio Tesoro

Sesto Libro Di Madrigali (Sixth Book of Madrigals, 1611) [75:15]

Hana Blažíková, Barbora Kabatková (sopranos); Marnix De Cat (alto); Thomas Hobbs, David Munderloh (tenors); Peter Kooij (bass); Thomas Dunford (lute)
Collegium Vocale Gent/Philippe Herreweghe

rec. 1-3 August 2015, Chiesa San Francesco, Asciano, Italy. DDD

PHI LPH024 [75:15] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from

[eclassical.com](#). Subscribers stream from [Naxos Music Library](#). For CD details see [review](#) by Stephen Greenbank.

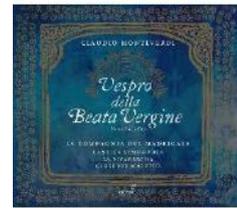


This recording on Philippe Herreweghe's own PHI label follows fairly closely on the heels of recordings of the same Sixth Book of Madrigals by la Compagnia di Madrigale (Glossa **GCD922801**) and Il Complesso Barocco directed by Alan Curtis (Pan PC10229) which I reviewed along with Books 5 and 6 from Delitiae Musicae on Naxos in [DL News 2013/8](#). I expressed a marginal preference for the Glossa but also recommended a selection from the madrigals of Gesualdo and his contemporaries from Concerto Italiano on Naïve **OP30486**. Another selection from Books 3-6, from Les Arts Florissants and William Christie, on Harmonia Mundi Gold **HMG501268** at mid-price, is also well worth considering. The Naxos recordings of all six books are now available in a super-budget-price box (**8.507013**, 7 CDs around £30); even so that would not be my first choice.

Claudio MONTEVERDI (1567-1643). I made a brief reference to a recording of *Pianto della Madonna* when it appeared last year but seem never to have elaborated on that brief note, perhaps because Johan van Veen later [reviewed](#) the Glossa recording which contained it in such detail and so enthusiastically (**GCD922805**). The *Pianto* is based on the *Lamento d'Arianna*, itself the only surviving portion of Monteverdi's lost opera *Arianna*, but secular and spiritual still went so comfortably hand in hand that you would never know that it had been adapted. The rest of the music is also well worth hearing in these very fine performances and the 24-bit download from [eclassical.com](#) is first-rate. It comes with pdf booklet containing texts and translations. Full details and CD purchase links from JV's [review](#).

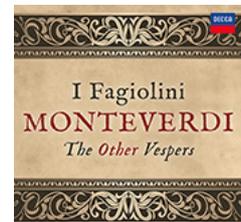


Emphatically as I agree with one colleague about that Glossa recording of Monteverdi, I fear that I find myself totally at odds with another about a more recent offering from that label, this time of the composer's celebrated **Vespers of 1610**. Despite some moments of real beauty on the new recording by Giuseppe Maletto and La Compagnia del Madrigale, you would hardly think the same singers had been involved in these ultra-slow, almost self-effacing performances. What Simon Thompson finds joy-inducing enough to make a Recording of the Month – [review](#) – seems to me an ineffably dreary parody of this glorious music. We may have come a long way since Anthony Lewis recorded this music for Oiseau-Lyre back in the early 1950s but you only have to compare his account of the first two psalms, *Dixit Dominus* and *Laudate pueri* with the new Glossa to appreciate the greater energy in his performance (available to download from Naxos Classical Archive, though not in the USA). Full details and CD purchase links from ST's [review](#).

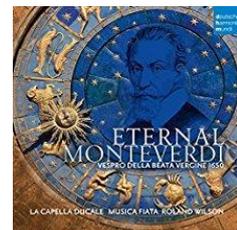


My top recommendations for the 1610 Vespers remain the King's Consort on Hyperion (**CDA67531/2**, with *Missa In illo tempore*) and Andrew Parrott with the Taverner Consort on Erato **5616622** (with excerpts from *Selva morale e spirituale*). Both these come with extra music – none on Glossa – and the Parrott is at budget price, albeit with very little documentation.

Monteverdi: the other Vespers is not the first recording of its kind, nor is it the first time that I Fagiolini and Robert Hollingworth have recorded the composer's music. It's quite possible to take Monteverdi psalm and *Magnificat* settings other than those included in the famous 1610 collection, add some works by his contemporaries, and concoct a programme of Vespers music. One of my favourite such collections, from the Gabrieli Consort and Players and Paul McCree, entitled *Venetian Vespers*, as it might have been celebrated in St Mark's in 1643, was recorded for DG Archiv in 1993 and remains available as a download or [Presto](#) special 2-CD set. The DG runs to about 96 very enjoyable minutes; the new recording is slightly shorter and though there are some overlaps in the music both of Monteverdi and his contemporaries, it is equally enjoyable. (Decca **4831654**. CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)). A different selection, with only one work by Monteverdi, was included on their earlier Decca recording *1612 Italian Vespers: Recording of the Month* – [review](#). In addition to Monteverdi the new recording includes music by **Castello, Donati, Frescobaldi, Giovanni Gabrieli, Palestrina, Usper** and **Viadana**. With the caveat that this music only *could* have been performed together at Vespers in San Marco late in Monteverdi's life this is a gloriously uplifting recording.



Deutsche Harmonia Mundi enter similar territory with an album entitled **Eternal Monteverdi: Vespro della Beata Vergine 1650**. Monteverdi's Vesper psalms and Marian litany are interspersed with music by four talented contemporaries: **Giovanni RIGOTTI (1613–1648)**, **Alessandro GRANDI (1577–1630)** and **Massimiliano NERI (1623–1673)**. The singers and musicians of Capella Ducale and Musica Fiata are directed by Roland Wilson on **889853751327**. The singing and accompaniment may seem a trifle understated but this is a very satisfying release. CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto](#)

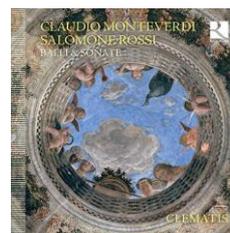


A Naïve recording from **Concerto Italiano** and **Rinaldo Alessandrini** conflates parts of the Vespers of 1610 with extracts from *Selva morale e spirituale* in a hypothetical Vespers for St Mark, the patron saint of Venice (**OP30557** – [DL News 2014/10](#))

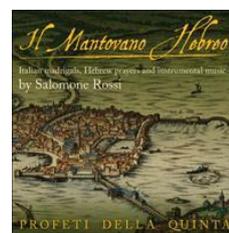
The Deutsche Harmonia Mundi album draws music from the posthumous 1650 publication of Monteverdi's *Messa a 4 voci e salmi*; otherwise the works in these collections come from his publication *Selva morale e spirituale*. One of the best recordings of these comes from **The Sixteen**, directed by **Harry Christophers**: the three separate CDs have just been reissued as a set, roughly as a 3-for-2 offer on disc or as a download. (**COR16156**: CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)). Stream

separate volumes from Naxos Music Library. The budget reissue of **Konrad Junghänel's** *Harmonia Mundi* 3-CD recording seems currently hard to come by.

I suspect that it's the name of Monteverdi on the label that will sell a new recording of *Balli e Sonate* from Ricercar but what makes it even more interesting is the more than secondary presence of music by **Salomone** or **Salamone ROSSI (1570-1630)**, a Jewish musician who overcame racial prejudice and captivated the Mantuan court before Monteverdi's arrival. (Not to be confused with Luigi Rossi, 1597-1653). There have been a few earlier recordings of his music but he's fully worthy to stand alongside his famous contemporary in this programme performed by **Clematis**, with **Zachary Wilder** (tenor) in some of the items, including Monteverdi's madrigal *Tempro la cetra*, *Il ballo delle Ingrate* and the *Balli and Sinfonie* from *Orfeo*. Rossi contributes mostly instrumental items but also the madrigals *Tirsi, mio caro Tirsi* and *Anima del cor mio*. **Lodovico VIADANA**, **Biagio MARINI**, **Giuseppino del BIALO** (*Fuggi, fuggi del questo cielo*) and **Gasparo ZANETTI** contribute one item each to this enjoyable programme – minor reservations about the singing apart – which I reviewed as an mp3 press preview and as streamed from Naxos Music Library. Texts and translations are included. (RIC377 [63:29]). CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#).



One of the best of those other recordings of Rossi's music comes on an album of 'Italian madrigals, Hebrew prayers and instrumental music' performed by Profeti della Quinta on **Linn CKD429** [60:03]. Lucy Jeffery gave this a warm welcome – [review and purchase details](#)* – and, having downloaded it in 24-bit sound, with pdf booklet, from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#) I can but add my agreement.



* The classicsonline link is defunct but subscribers can stream from [Naxos Music Library](#).

Profeti della Quinta, directed by Elam Rotem, also feature on a more recent release of music from the '**Carlo G**' **Manuscript**, dated c.1600-1620. Most of these virtuoso liturgical works from early 17th century central Italy are anonymous but ten are attributed to the mysterious 'Carlo G' the rest of whose name is smudged and illegible. Though the MS has now disappeared from public view this recording has been made with the assistance of Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. There's less controversy than usual about such matters as ornamentation – all spelled out note for note in the MS. Some music from the contemporary Chigi MS QIV is also included. The performances are convincing and enjoyable and the whole is well recorded in the church acoustic of Santi Eusebio e Vittorie di Peglio, April-May 2016. Subscribers to [Naxos Music Library](#) will find it there, with pdf booklet. (Glossa **GCD922516**). CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – CD and download from [Presto](#).



Passaggio: eine barocke Alpenüberquerung (a baroque crossing of the Alps) contains music from the courts of Modena, Bologna and Venice performed by Björn Colell (guitar, lute and theorbo) and Georg Kallweit (violin). The composers are **Johann Heinrich Schmelzer**, **Alessandro Piccinini**, **Biagio Marini**, **Angelo Bartolotti**, **Johan Vilsmayr**, **Mealli Pandolfo** and **Georg Muffat**. Attractive performances, well recorded, but one for baroque specialists rather than the general listener. (**Alpha 540** [66:38] reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#). Subscribers stream from [Naxos Music Library](#) with booklet). CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#).



I missed a collection of baroque sacred music entitled *Conversations avec Dieu* when it was released, but I'm pleased to have caught up with it belatedly. I came across it because **MONTEVERDI** has a walk-on part in the form of a short *Sinfonia*, as does **Georg Philipp TELEMANN (1681-1767)** with the opening cantata, but the main composers are **Andreas HAMMERSCHMIDT (1611-1675)**, **Heinrich SCHEIDEMANN (1595-1633)** and **Samuel SCHEIDT (1587-1654)**. Le Concert Etranger and Itay Jedlin offer near-perfect performances of some beautiful music on Ambronay **AMY045** – downloaded from eclassical.com in 24/96 sound, with pdf booklet containing texts and translations – [review](#) by Johan van Veen and details.



Maestro Corelli's Violins, with its nod towards a certain book and film, contains music not by the master himself but by his pupils: **Giuseppe VALENTINI (1681-1753)** Concerto for four violins, viola, cello, and continuo in a minor, Op.7/11; **Antonio MONTANARI (1676-1737)** Concerto for four violins, cello, and continuo in d minor, Op.1/2; Concerto for four violins, viola, cello, and continuo in E flat, Op.1/6; Concerto for four violins, viola, cello, and continuo in E, Op.1/7; **Giovanni MOSSI (c. 1680-1742)** Concerto for four violins, cello, and continuo in e minor, Op.4/11; Concerto for eight violins, cello, and continuo in g minor, Op.4/12 performed by Collegium Musicum 90 directed by Simon Standage (violin) on Chandos Chaconne **CHAN0818** [68:14]. Reviewed as 24-bit download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com. CD from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto. [Review](#) by Dave Billinge.

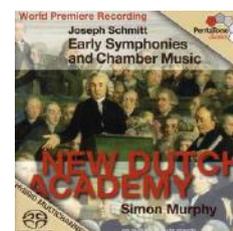


None of the music may match that of the maestro himself but it's well worth hearing when it's so well performed. There's a recording of six of Mantonari's Violin Concertos on Audax **ADX13704** – [review](#) – which duplicates Op.1/6 and 7 but this is the only available version of Op.1/2. There are several other recordings of the Valentini, including one by I Musici (Dynamic **CDS7752**) but only one other of the Mossi (**KuK110**).

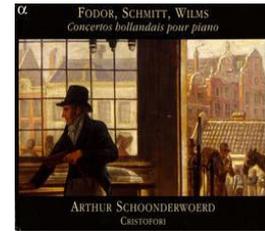
Grand Tour: Baroque Road Trip, performed by the New Dutch Academy directed by Simon Murphy brings more familiar fare: **George Frederic HANDEL** Aria *Tornami a vagheggiar*; **Georg Philipp TELEMANN** Concerto in G for viola, strings and continuo, TWV51G:9; **Antonio VIVALDI** Concerto in D for lute, strings and continuo, RV93; **Johann Sebastian BACH** Brandenburg Concerto no. 6 in B flat, BWV1051; **Unico van WASSENAER** Concerto Armonico No.1 in G (formerly attributed to Pergolesi); **Antonio VIVALDI** Concerto in C for flautino, strings and continuo, RV 443, and **George Frederic HANDEL** Aria *Brilla nell'alma*. Apart from a rather over-deliberate finale of the Bach, more *andante* than *allegro*, this programme of the great and the good of the baroque would appeal more to the beginner, who could hardly have a better single-CD introduction. (**PTC5186668** – download in 16- or 24-bit from eclassical.com or stream from Naxos Music Library, both with pdf booklet). CD from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto.



Those versed in the baroque and early classical highways and by-ways may be more interested in an earlier (2004) Pentatone recording from this team: **Joseph SCHMITT (1734-1791)** Early Symphonies and Chamber Music from around 1770 (**PTC5186039** [78:15]). We seem not to have reviewed this release, which I downloaded in 16-bit lossless from eclassical.com. The lack of a booklet is a serious handicap when the music and even the composer, dubbed 'the Dutch Haydn', are so little known. Fortunately Naxos Music Library, where subscribers can stream the music, come to the rescue with the [necessary](#). SACD from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto. A very worthwhile insight into an almost contemporary of Mozart's and a student of Haydn's, with first-rate performances and (live) recording.



More music by Schmitt, a Piano Quartet in C, Op.9/1, can be found alongside keyboard concertos by **Johann Wilhelm WILMS (1772-1847)** and **Carolus Antonius FODOR (1768-1846)**, both of whom, like Schmitt, moved to and composed in Amsterdam. Arthur Schoonderwoerd plays a tangent piano and fortepiano and is accompanied by Cristofori on another album from 2004: **Alpha 052** [66:00]. Reviewed as 16-bit lossless download from eclassical.com and as streamed from Naxos Music Library. There's NO booklet from either but I understand that it isn't very informative. The Pentatone is the one to go for first; some of the music on Alpha is less captivating.



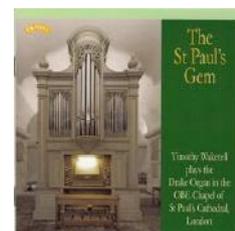
We were by no means wanting for recordings of **Antonio VIVALDI (1678-1741)** *Four Seasons*. Some of the best offer the whole Op.8 collection; not so the recent recording by Ars Antiqua Austria/Gunnar Letzbor (violin) but there are two special points to mention about it. Firstly the music has been rethought, with slower tempi than is usual from period-instrument performers, and secondly the programme is rounded off with a Violin Concerto in D by **František JIRÁNEK (1698-1778)** whose music has sometimes been mistaken for that of Vivaldi, with whom he may have studied. The notes in the booklet ably defend Letzbor's take on the music and include the sonnets which accompanied the publication of *The Seasons*. (Challenge Classics **CC72700** [68:28]). Reviewed as 24-96 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com.



The Italian Job is the latest in a distinguished line of recordings of the music of Vivaldi, his predecessors and contemporaries from Adrian Chandler (violin) and La Serenissima: **Antonio CALDARA (c.1671-1736)** *Sinfonia* for 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 trumpets, timpani, violin, strings and continuo in C; **Arcangelo CORELLI (1663-1713)** *Sinfonia to Santa Beatrice D'Este* for strings and continuo in d minor; **Giuseppe TARTINI (1692-1770)** Concerto for violin, strings and continuo in E, D 51; **Antonio VIVALDI (1678-1841)** *Concerto alla rustica* for 2 oboes, strings and continuo in G, RV151; Concerto for bassoon, strings and continuo in C, RV467; **Tomaso ALBINONI (1671-1751)** Concerto for 2 oboes, strings and continuo in F, Op. 9/3; **Giuseppe TORELLI (1658-1709)** *Sinfonia* for 4 trumpets, timpani, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 violins, 2 cellos, strings and continuo in C, G33. (AVIE **AV2371** [76:23]). The performances are self-recommending. CD from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto.

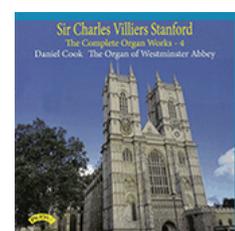


On a programme entitled *The St Paul's Gem* Timothy Wakerell plays the 2012 Drake organ in the OBE Chapel of St Paul's Cathedral in music well suited to the instrument, ranging from **John BULL** *Bull's Goodnight*, via **Dietrich BUXTEHUDE** Toccata in d minor, BuxWV155, **Jan SWEELINCK**, **Georg BÖHM**, **JS BACH** Toccata and Fugue in F, BWV540, Trio, BWV664, **CPE BACH** Organ Sonata in F, Wq70/3, H84, **Johannes BRAHMS** Chorale Prelude Op.122/10 and **Camille SAINT-SAËNS** Improvisations, Op.150 to **Niels GADE** *Tonstücke*, Op.22/1. (Priory **PRCD1130** [75:36] – reviewed as 24-bit download from eclassical.com and as streamed from Naxos Music Library; NO booklet from either). Sheer delight apart from the lack of a booklet but an article on the St Paul's website helps put the organ into context. I'm pleased to see Priory recordings beginning to appear in 24-bit sound from eclassical.com.



Sir Charles Villiers STANFORD (1852-1924) The Complete Organ Works Vol. 4

- Three Idylls, Op.194: No. 1 – By the Seashore [5:30]
- Chorale prelude (Little Organ Book) [2:33]
- Prelude and fugue in e minor [10:30]
- Organ Sonata No.5, Op.159 [21:40]
- Four Intermezzi for organ, Op.189 [22:57]



Installation March, Op.108 [10:45]
Daniel Cook (organ of Westminster Abbey)
rec. Westminster Abbey, August 2015. DDD
PRIORY PRCD1161 [73:55]

Reviewed as 24/44.1 download from eclassical.com and as streamed from Naxos Music Library (NO booklet with either). For details please see [review by John France](#).

Things seem really to be looking up for Stanford's music in general and for his organ works in particular. This is the fourth volume in the Priory series, all performed by Daniel Cook on a variety of organs, and Volume 5 is already announced. Performances and recording are excellent but the lack of a booklet from any download or streaming source is regrettable.

For those not seeking completeness two selections of Stanford's organ music on Resonus are well worth considering: a revealing and enjoyable selection from Tom Winpenny on the organ of Queens' College, Cambridge (**RES10104** – [DL Roundup June 2011/1](#)) and a second, equally fine volume from Simon Nieminski (**RES10130** – [DL News 2014/11](#)).

Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

A Sea Symphony (1903-1909)

Katherine Broderick (soprano), Roderick Williams (baritone)

Hallé Choir, Hallé Youth Choir, Schola Cantorum, Ad Solem/James Burton

Hallé Orchestra/Sir Mark Elder

rec. live, 29 March 2014 and in rehearsal, Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

Pdf booklet includes sung texts (English only)

HALLÉ CDHLL7542 [70:16] – from Hyperion (mp3, 16- & 24-bit lossless). CD

from MusicWeb International. Disc reviewed by [John Quinn](#) (Recording of the Month)



First off, it's good to see that Hyperion are now offering the Hallé catalogue as part of their excellent download service. And second, the glowing reviews of Sir Mark's emerging Vaughan Williams cycle have prompted me to take the plunge with *A Sea Symphony*. Sir Adrian Boult's inspired – and inspiring – 1968 account (EMI-Warner) has been my benchmark for nigh on forty years. In that time, I've heard the first Boult (Decca), André Previn and Leonard Slatkin (RCA), Bernard Haitink (EMI-Warner) and Robert Spano (Telarc), all of which have been found wanting; that goes for the sound, too.

I did, however, download Richard Hickox's LSO recording from Chandos.net, not least because I was keen to hear Gerald Finley in those wonderful baritone solos. I'd also hoped for high-res files, as this is an SACD, but for some reason Chandos have stuck with 16/44.1 for the download. In any event, I found this a disappointing performance. Quite apart from the restricted Barbican acoustic, soprano Susan Gritton sounds much too thin at times; and Finley doesn't make the greatest impact, either. The choral singing is splendid, though, and Hickox is a fairly reliable steersman. But, unlike Boult, he doesn't always manage to avoid the doldrums.

At least Hickox offers a decent filler, *The Wasps* overture; Elder isn't so generous, but that hardly matters if the symphony gets a decent outing. And does it? That panoramic opener is certainly thrilling, and there's something of the sweep that I miss with Hickox. And although baritone Roderick Williams seems a tad overwhelmed at the start, he sings with a focus and fervour that I'd have expected from Finley. As for soprano Katherine Broderick, she's more imperious than Gritton in 'Flaunt out, O sea', but she's not always steady. In short, Elder's soloists are outclassed by Boult's radiant duo, Sheila Armstrong and John Carol Case, both of whom embrace and illuminate Whitman's glorious lines in ways that their rivals seldom do.

Allowances must be made for the fact that the Hallé recording was made in concert, and 'patched' from rehearsals, but even so it doesn't always convey the *frisson* of a live event. As for Elder's choirs,

they're not as finely blended as Hickox's LSO forces or as weighty and passionate as Boult's LPO singers. That said, in full sail Elder can be mighty impressive, the dash of waves and drench of spirit superbly evoked. His louing *Largo sostenuto* ('On the beach at night alone') is splendid, as is Williams's account of that grave solo. Now this is the kind of rapt intensity that makes Boult so unforgettable.

Part 3, 'The waves' isn't so quite so memorable – Boult is far more dynamic – but Part 4, 'The explorers', has a fierce concentration that's really quite gripping. Indeed, the choruses are at their best here, and while the soloists sing well in 'O we can wait no longer', they don't quite match the purity of Boult's pair at this point. I say not quite, because they're still very fine. What a pity, then, that the Hallé recording is so average, with distant perspectives and a lack of bite in the climaxes; this was also an issue in their account of Shostakovich's *Leningrad*, which I [reviewed](#) a while back. In my experience, other own-labels offer better and more consistent audio quality. In this case, I'd stick with the 16-bit download, as the 24-bit one simply isn't worth the extra.

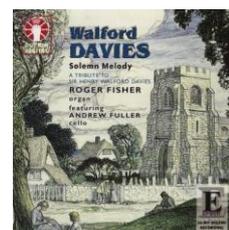
Fitful, lacks Boultian surge; dull sonics. [DM]

On a more positive note, Andrew Manze's recording of **VW's Symphonies Nos. 2 and 8**, which I reviewed in mp3 in [DL News 2016/6](#), is now available in 16- and 24-bit lossless, with pdf booklet, from [eclassical.com](#). I hope that the new album of Nos. 3 and 4 will follow shortly – and with the correct opening to the finale of No.3: the emusic.com download comes with silence where the solo voice – in this case the optional tenor alternative – should be and has been withdrawn *pro tem*.

It's hardly surprising that Supraphon have brought us some of the only recordings of the music of their compatriot **Bohuslav MARTINŮ (1890-1959)**. On **SU4198-2** [68:08] we have oddly named *The Legend of the smoke from potato tops*, H360 (1956) and three other cantatas: *The Opening of the Springs*, H354 (1955), *Romance of the Dandelions*, H364 (1957) and *Mikeš of the Mountains*, H375 (1959). The Prague Philharmonic Choir conducted by Lukáš Vasilek are accompanied by various small instrumental ensembles on an enthralling album recorded in the Rudolfinum in Prague in October and December 2015. Only the Czech narration in *Opening of the Springs* is something of a bore for Anglophone listeners. Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#) though, unfortunately, without the texts. CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto](#). This effectively replaces the earlier Pavel Kühn Supraphon CD of three of these works, the only other recording generally available.



The music of **Sir Henry Walford DAVIES (1869-1941)** is somewhat out of fashion now except on anthologies of Christmas music, where he features quite frequently. It's left to enterprising companies such as EM Records and Dutton to bring us recordings of anything else. The former offer his **Sonata for violin and piano in E-flat** alongside music by **Gustav Holst** and **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (**EMRCD006** – [review](#) – [review](#)) and Dutton Epoch give us his once ubiquitous **Solemn Melody** in a luscious arrangement for cello and organ and other organ music by him together with works by **Harold Darke**, **Joseph Jongen**, **Sir Hubert Parry** and **George Thalben Ball**, played by Roger Fisher (organ) on **CDLX7108**. Christopher Howell – [review and details](#) – congratulated Dutton on making a real listening experience out of what might seem barrel-scraping. It's taken me 16 years to catch up in expressing my agreement. There may be everything here but *The Lost Chord* but it makes for excellent quiet listening. The Crotchet link in CH's review is redundant: the CD is now also available from [Presto](#).



George ENESCŪ (1881-1955) The Three Symphonies

Symphony No. 1 in E flat major, Op. 13 (1905) [35:09]

Suite No. 3 in D major, Op. 27 'Villageoise' (1937-1938) [30:44]

Romanian Rhapsody in D major, Op. 11 No. 2 (1901) [14:04]

Symphony No. 2 in A major, Op. 17 (1912-1914) [57:34]

Symphony No. 3 in C major, Op. 21 (1916-1918) [54:51]
Romanian Rhapsody in A major, Op. 11 No. 1 (1901) [12:57]
Leeds Festival Chorus/Simon Wright (chorus master)
BBC Philharmonic/Gennady Rozhdestvensky
rec. 1995-1997, Studio 7, New Broadcasting House, Manchester, UK
Pdf booklet included
CHANDOS CHAN10984 [199:54] – from Chandos.net (mp3 and 16-bit lossless)

I missed these when they first appeared in the late 1990s, so this reissue – as part of Chandos's Classic series – is most welcome. The only other complete set is Lawrence Foster's on EMI-Warner. Christopher Webber, who [reviewed](#) it for MWI in 2005, described Enescu as a 'towering and underprized master'; I wouldn't go that far, but there's no doubt he was a very accomplished composer, some of whose works – the Romanian Rhapsodies, for example – have become classics.

This is just the kind of repertoire that Gennady Rozhdestvensky does so well, and partnering him with the BBC Phil in the now demolished Studio 7 at New Broadcasting House was a shrewd move. Certainly, Symphony No. 1 is played with all the breadth and brio it demands. This conductor gives the music plenty of room to breathe, and the combination of fine engineering and a pleasing acoustic gives the performance a warmth and weight that's simply marvellous. I've yet to hear anything this good from the orchestra's new home at MediaCity.

Symphony No. 2, completed almost a decade later, has an open-hearted character that's hard to resist, especially when it's so well shaped and paced. The playing is splendid, whether in gregarious passages or reflective ones. And what a pleasure it is to hear natural balances that present the music in such a convincing way. Admittedly, this hour-long symphony isn't as tightly knit as its predecessor; for me at least it starts to unravel in the second half. In mitigation, there's much to savour – the transparent loveliness of the *Andante giusto*, for instance – and one never queries the standard of music-making here.

Symphony No. 3 includes a wordless choir in the finale. At times the work reminds me of orchestral Casella – Op. 13 was dedicated to him – but otherwise the composer's own 'voice' is unmistakable. Rozhdestvensky draws refulgent sounds from his players; moreover, there's a strong pulse, especially in the *Moderato*. I fancy there's more than a hint of Scriabin in the flowing, transcendent finale, capped by ecstatic singing. And what a quietly radiant close.

The fillers are attractive, the five colourful village scenes of Op. 27 in particular. As for the Romanian Rhapsodies, I've heard more propulsive accounts of No. 1; that said, they're nicely done. None of this is great music, but I can't imagine more sympathetic performances than these. I've not heard Hannu Lintu's Ondine cycle, which has yet to appear as a complete set. However, on the evidence of this [review](#) it might be worth considering when it does.

Vintage Chandos; recommended. **[DM]**

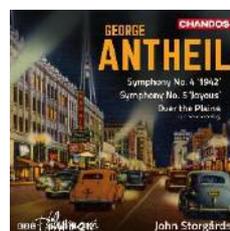
The original separate releases from Chandos remain available as downloads: No.3 and Romanian Rhapsody No.1 can be obtained for as little as £1.68 by subscribers to emusic.com (NO booklet) or streamed from Naxos Music Library (with booklet).

In addition to the three completed symphonies, CPO have recordings of No.4 (**777966-2**, with Chamber Symphony and *Nuages d'Autonne sur les Forêts* – NDR Philharmonie/Peter Ruzicka [62:09] – reviewed as download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com) and No.5 (**777823-2**, with *Isis* [60:39] – [review](#): download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com). Both were completed by Pascal Bentiu.

George ANTHEIL (1900-1959) The self-proclaimed 'Bad Boy of Music' is notorious for his *Ballet Mécanique* but his symphonies are much less controversial. Sir Eugene Goossens recorded his **Symphony No.4 '1942'**, W177, with the LSO for Everest and that remains available as a download and for streaming, either with **Ginastera** Ballet Suite *Estancia* on Prominence Records* or with **Copland** *Statements for Orchestra*, conducted by Copland himself (Mangora Classical – see Rob Barnett's [review](#) of the same coupling on an Everest CD no longer available in the UK).



That still sounds well even though I take it that the transfers are from LP rather than master tapes but for most readers it will have been superseded by the new Chandos release, billed as Volume 1 in a new series of Antheil's music from the BBC Philharmonic and John Storgårds set down in 2015 and 2016: **Over the Plains** (first recording) [7:34]; **Symphony No.4** [33:49] and **Symphony No.5 'Joyous'** [24:02] (**CHAN10941** [65:00]). As there is no SACD – even Chandos seem to be shying away from the format – the only way to obtain better-than-CD quality is to choose the (very good) 24-bit download from chandos.net or eclassical.com. At current exchange rates the prices are almost identical and both offer the pdf booklet.



Shostakovich is usually named as the chief influence on No.4, though there's more than a touch of Charles Ives, too. Prokofiev is also an influence, especially in No.5, with a dash or two of Copland as well, but it's all well integrated into the Antheil sound picture and the performances do it full justice. Strongly recommended. [Review](#) and [review](#) also contain purchase links.

* This performance of the Ginastera is still available on an Everest CD, with *Panambi* and music by Villa-Lobos (**EVERCD012**).

Sergei PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)

Symphony No. 6 in E-flat minor, Op. 111 (1947) [40:45]

Symphony No. 7 in C sharp minor, Op. 138 (1952) [32:05]

Netherlands Radio Philharmonic/James Gaffigan

rec. 8-10 June 2015 (No. 6), 29-31 October 2012 (No. 7), Studio 5, MCO, Hilversum, The Netherlands

Pdf booklet included

CHALLENGE CLASSICS CC72714 SACD [72:50] – from eClassical (mp3, 16- & 24-bit lossless). SACD available from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto



New Yorker James Gaffigan is new to me, but a quick trawl of MusicWeb's archives reveals that he's been conducting for a while now. Most comments aren't encouraging, though. One of the least complimentary [reviews](#), of a Seattle concert in 2010, speaks of 'haste and superficiality', and William Hedley's [review](#) of a 2015 Warner CD of the Korngold and Britten Violin Concertos doesn't even mention the conductor's contribution. Then, in his [Spring 2017](#) roundup, Brian Wilson was lukewarm about Gaffigan's Prokofiev symphonies, in this case Nos. 1, 5, 6 and 7. He listened to the 16-bit version of the last two; I auditioned the DXD one. (More on that later.)

At the moment, my go-to recording of the Sixth is Sakari Oramo's with the Finnish Radio orchestra on Ondine (eClassical). It's bright, witty and superbly characterised, qualities you simply won't find in Gaffigan's performance. The latter's first movement is sluggish, and the rather distant recording does little to point up Prokofiev's more piquant sonorities. Otherwise, the engineering, by a company called Northstar, is adequate. As for the playing, it's fair to middling, but that's hardly enough in such vibrant and virtuosic repertoire.

Gaffigan's Seventh, recorded three years earlier, is just as disappointing. Indeed, it's hard to imagine a duller, more literal reading than this; there's no hint of a subtext and very little sense of purpose. My

recommendations? Dimitri Kitaienko and the Gürzenich-Orchester Köln on Phoenix ([eClassical](#)), or Valery Gergiev and the LSO on Philips ([Presto](#)). Avoid Gergiev's Mariinsky remakes, though, as they are variable to say the least. Of course, it's possible to cherry-pick from the Phoenix and Philips sets, but those in search of the 'full house' should consider investing in one or both; they offer strong, idiomatic performances that leave Gaffigan's in the shade.

Now the issue of DXD downloads. In his Gaffigan review Brian made the point that 'ordinary' high-res options – up to 24/96 – should be available too, as not all media players or DACs will support 24/352.8 playback. At the very least, eClassical should warn potential purchasers of this. As an aside, these are very large files; the Gaffigan comes in at 6Gb, Iván Fischer's recent [Mahler 3](#) – from Channel Classics – at a whopping 9Gb. In the latter, the sonic results are simply stunning; Challenge's DXD recording isn't even in the ball park.

Drab; look elsewhere. [DM]

Aaron COPLAND (1900-1990) Symphony No.3 (1946). Among the many fine recordings of this work I still tend to return to Copland's own recording with the LSO on Everest, from which I got to know it on a World Record Club LP more than 50 years ago (**EVERCD002**, mid-price, with *Billy the Kid* – [review](#) – [review](#) of earlier release). My most recent thoughts can be found in a [review](#) of a 2015 Pentatone SACD release.



The new Naxos performance from the Detroit SO and Leonard Slatkin, is well up with the best, especially as it offers the original uncut version of the finale. The coupling, *Three Latin American Sketches*, may be less well-known and less immediate in appeal than *Billy the Kid* on Everest, also the coupling on an earlier Naxos release on which the New Zealand SO is conducted by James Judd – [review](#) – but it certainly doesn't detract from the appeal of this new CD, reviewed as a 24-bit download in very good sound with pdf booklet from [eClassical.com](#). Subscribers stream from [Naxos Music Library](#).

Dan Morgan thought this a 'hyper-bold account ... superbly recorded.' [Review](#) and purchase links.

Olivier MESSIAEN (1908-1992)

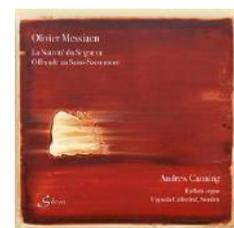
La Nativité du Seigneur [59:04]

Offrande au Saint-Sacrement [6:23]

Andrew Canning (organ)

rec. September 2016, Uppsala Cathedral, Sweden

SHEVA SH163 [65:27] Reviewed as 24-bit download with pdf booklet from [eClassical.com](#). CD available for £11.50, post free, from [MusicWeb-International](#).



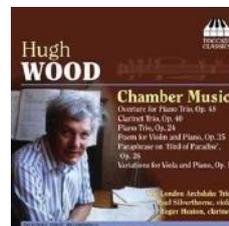
Marc Rochester almost ran out of superlatives in his [review](#) of this recording, with two exceptions in the case of the low level of the recording and the inadequate booklet. I'm in agreement about the high quality of the performance and I did have to turn up the volume considerably but I suspect that the 24-bit download sounds better in that and other respects than the 16-bit CD. It comes complete with the booklet which is indeed rather sparse; it does, however, contain a detailed specification of the organ and for that I can forgive much.

Hugh WOOD (b.1932) is one of those contemporary composers whose music, while not facile or deliberately ingratiating – indeed, often quite difficult – is anchored in the mainstream of Western composition. It's not just the fact that he was born, some years earlier, a mere ten miles from myself and studied at the same university that means that I can relate to his output, though usually after a period of gestation.



NMC have released a number of his works, including the **Violin Concerto**, Op.17 (1972), and **Cello Concerto**, Op.12 (1969). Manoug Parikian (violin) and Moray Welsh (cello) are the soloists with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic directed by David Atherton, originally released on Unicorn Kanchana in 1978 (NMC **D082** [53:00]). This is a good place to start; as Hugh Culot [writes](#), this music is too good and too honest to be forgotten. Subscribers stream, with pdf booklet, from [Naxos Music Library](#). CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#).

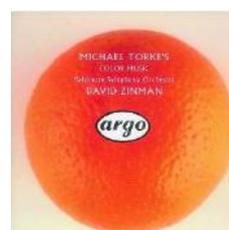
Perhaps an even better introduction can be found on a Toccata album of his **Chamber Music** performed by the London Archduke Trio with Roger Heaton (clarinet), first recordings made in the composer's presence ([TOCC075](#) [79:31]). As Gary Higginson writes in his detailed [review](#), this is well worth searching out. GH's review also contains a purchase link to MusicWeb's Toccata page where the CD can be purchased at an attractive price – less expensive, for example, at current exchange rates than the [eclassical.com](#) download, which comes without the necessary booklet. Subscribers stream from [Naxos Music Library](#), but as usual I recommend eschewing the invitation to download from iTunes in mp3 and without booklet.



Wood's **Piano Concerto, Op.31**, is available as a download coupled with **Lou HARRISON (1917-2003) Concerto for Piano and Orchestra**. The Wood was first released by Collins Classics in 1993 on a very short CD, the Harrison on an even shorter Sound Circus CD in 2000. Joanna MacGregor is the soloist with the BBCSO and Sir Andrew Davis in the Wood and with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Siân Edwards in the Harrison. The Harrison is the more approachable work and it receives a first-rate performance but the Wood, played here by its dedicatee, a former student of Wood's at Cambridge, is more immediate in its appeal than the Violin and Cello Concertos. Download for £4.49 (mp3) or £4.99 (lossless) from [7digital.com](#). Stream, with **Harrison BIRTWISTLE Antiphonies** and *Harrison's Clocks*, from [Naxos Music Library](#). No booklet with either.



Michael TORKE (b.1961) is blessed (or should that be cursed?) with synaesthesia, which makes him acutely aware of the colour of a piece of music or even of a specific key. Though vaguely aware of this, I hadn't heard his colour-based compositions until I chanced upon his fascinating *Bright Blue Music* on Radio 3. That's performed by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Zinman along with *Ecstatic Orange, Green, Purple* and *Ash* on an Argo recording from 1990 and available to download or as a special CD from [Presto](#).



The reissue on Decca C20 Classics (**4784580**) added two other Torke works, *Adjustable Wrench* (London Sinfonietta/Kent Nagano, rec.1989) and *Javelin* (Atlanta SO/Yoel Levi, rec.1995). Both can be streamed by subscribers to [Naxos Music Library](#). Not only are these the sort of performances to win friends for the composer, they place *Bright Blue* more appropriately in context than immediately after Corigliano's First Symphony on a recent Naxos recording – [review](#) – [review](#).

Recording of the Month

7Visions

Alfred BRUNEAU: *Geneviève* (1881): *Introduction, récitatif et air de Geneviève* [6:28]

César FRANCK: *Les Béatitudes* (1879): *Mater dolorosa* [3:19]

Louis NIEDERMEYER: *Stradella* (1837) *Récit et air de Léonor* [3:55]

Benjamin GODARD (1882): *Les Guelfes: Prélude et air de Jeanne* [8:11]

Félicien DAVID: *Lalla-Roukh* (1862) *Air de Lalla-Roukh* [2:59]

Henry FÉVRIER: *Gismonda* (1919): *Air de Gismonda* [4:45]

Camille SAINT-SAËNS: *Etienne Marcel* (1879) *Récit et air de Béatrix* [5:03]

Jules MASSENET: *La Vierge* (1880) *Le dernier sommeil de la Vierge* [2:54]
Extase de la Vierge [5:02]



Fromental HALÉVY: *La Magicienne* (1858) *Récit et air de Blanche* [5:35]

Georges BIZET: *Clovis et Clotilde* (1857) *Prière de Clotilde* [2:16]

César FRANCK: *Rédemption* (1874) *Air de l'Archange* [3:17]

Véronique Gens (soprano); Munich Radio Orchestra/Hervé Niquet:

Texts and translations included

ALPHA 279 [55:43] Reviewed as press preview (mp3) CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#).



My end is my beginning: I close as I began with a Recording of the Month.

If you had any residual doubts about Véronique Gens' transition from the baroque to later repertoire, this supremely accomplished recital should mean that you will doubt no more. It may be little-known repertoire but that doesn't preclude a strong recommendation, nor does the fact that the notes in the booklet are generic rather than specific. As with other press previews from the Outhere stable even the low-grade mp3 sound is more than acceptable but I eagerly eclassical.com offering something better.

The new album encouraged me to catch up with Véronique Gens' earlier sortie into the nineteenth and twentieth repertoire with **Berlioz's *Herminie*** and ***Les Nuits d'Été*** and **Ravel's *Shéhérazade*** with Orchestra National des Pays de Loire and John Axelrod, recorded in 2000, 2009 and 2010 by Oehms and released with texts and translations on **ODE1200-2**. Göran Forlsing thought this even challenged Régine Crespin and Janet Baker in *Nuits d'Été* – [Recording of the Month](#). While I wouldn't go quite that far, it's certainly well worth hearing. Reviewed as download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#).