

Second Thoughts and Short Reviews Autumn 2017/1
By Brian Wilson and Dan Morgan

Reviews are by Brian Wilson except where marked [DM]

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In the process of changing PCs recently, I contrived to lose one of Dan Morgan's reviews, especially annoying because it's a Summer-themed album and now it's Autumn in the Northern Hemisphere. To make amends, I've placed it first:

Under the Sign of the Sun

Jacques IBERT (1890-1962)

Concertino da camera (1934) [12:05]

Henri TOMASI (1901-1972)

Concerto for alto saxophone (1949) [18:51]

Maurice RAVEL (1875-1937)

Pavane pour une Infante défunte (1899) [6:08] Trans. for soprano saxophone and strings by Tami Nodaira

Paule MAURICE (1910-1967)

Tableaux de Provence (Suite) (1948-1955) [14:20]

Florent SCHMITT (1870-1958)

Légende, Op. 66 (1918) [11:26]

Darius MILHAUD (1892-1974)

Scaramouche, Op.165c (Suite) (1930) [9:14]

Claude Delangle (saxophone)

Singapore Symphony Orchestra/Lan Shui

rec. 2004, Victoria Concert Hall, Singapore

BIS BIS-1357 CD [73:49] – from eClassical (mp3, 16- & 24-bit lossless). CD from [Amazon UK](#) –

[ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)

Previously reviewed by [Rob Barnett](#)



With autumn on the way this delightful collection should bring back memories of those lazy, contented days in the holiday sun. Indeed, this 2004 release reminds me of my recent [review](#) of *Flux*, the Ferio Saxophone Quartet's debut album; that, too, is a guaranteed pick-me-up. My initial encounter with Lan Shui and his splendid Singaporeans, in the form of [Seascapes](#), was also one of my earliest experiences of Super Audio discs. Musically and technically superb – with a chart-topping *La Mer*, no less – this maritime medley was one of my top picks that year.

Lan Shui's Debussy – he and the SSO have just released [Jeux](#)*, an album of his ballet music – is bold and colourful, and I expected much the same from this set of French pieces for sax and orchestra. Claude Delangle's warm, freewheeling response to Ibert's *Concerto da camera* – not to mention the orchestra's delightful ripostes – certainly bodes well. The recording, a 44.1kHz original, is detailed and

has plenty of body; oodles of atmosphere, too, especially in the melancholy middle movement of this ear-pricking opener. And what virtuosity from the soloist in Ibert's fleet-footed finale.

Highlights? Ooh, lots. Henri Tomasi's darkly soulful – and rhythmically supple – *Concerto for alto saxophone* is a real find; as for that dialogue between Delangle and harpist Gulnara Mashurova, it's a breath-baiting delight. The Ravel transcription works well, but it's the little-known composer Paule Maurice's five-movement suite, *Tableaux de Provence*, that sets the seal on this lovely selection. Deft, dancer and brimming with southern warmth, it finds everyone in rapt attendance, the recording – engineered by Thore Brinkmann – as natural and transparent as one could wish.

Florent Schmitt's languid *Légende* and Darius Milhaud's now jazzy, now gentle *Scaramouche* suite round off the programme. Goodness, if you're not in the holiday mood just yet you will be after this.

One for your playlist as the days grow shorter. [DM]

* See below [BW]

Guillaume de MACHAUT (c.1300-1377)

Sovereign Beauty

Orlando Consort

rec. 2015, St. John the Baptist Parish Church, Loughton, Essex DDD

HYPERION CDA68134 [63:26] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from hyperion-records.co.uk. For CD purchase and other details please see [review](#) by Mark Sealey.



In some ways I think Machaut's secular music less easy to connect with than his sacred works but, that said, there's no better introduction to the repertoire than this – apart from the Orlando Consort's earlier recordings of his music, all available as downloads and on CD from [Hyperion](#).

There's not much of the music of **Loyset COMPÈRE (c.1445-1518)** in the catalogue – he usually gets a walk-on part on other composers' albums* – so a new recording chiefly devoted to his *Missa Galeazescha*, composed for the Duke of Milan, is very welcome. I would have greatly preferred the Mass sections to have been performed serially, as in a liturgical celebration, rather than broken up with vocal and instrumental music by Loyset and his contemporaries, some of it secular in a predominantly sacred context, but the performances by Odhecaton, la Pifarescha, La Reverdie and Ensemble Pian&Forte, directed by Paolo da Col, are predictably very convincing.



I take this 2005 recording to be a reissue**, but it's none the worse for that. Texts and translations are included as well as valuable notes and even the cover shot, from Gozzoli's *Procession of the Magi* (unacknowledged in the booklet, so far as I can see) is appropriate: it was painted to flatter the Medici, whom Loyset's patron Duke Galeazzo Sforza strove to impress and outdo. The man on the white horse is generally believed to be Galeazzo. (**ARCANA A436** [65:12]) Reviewed from an mp3 press preview. CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto](#)

* The only other all-Compère CD that I know comes from the Orlando Consort on Hyperion **CDA68069** – [review](#) – [review](#).

** I can't, however, find an earlier release.

Bartłomiej PEKIEL (?–c. 1666)

Missa Secunda [23:08]

Ave Maria [3:00]

Sub tuum Praesidium [1:54]

Assumpta est Maria [3:13]

Missa Pulcherrima [31:24]

Magnum Nomen Domini [1:19]

Resonet in laudibus [1:21]

Aldona Bartnik (soprano); Matthew Venner (countertenor); Maciej Gocman (tenor); Tomáš Král, Jaromír Nosek (bass)/ Andrzej Kosendiak

rec. Red Hall of the Witold Lutosławski National Forum of Music, 31 May–2 June 2015. DDD

CD ACCORD ACD222 [66:18]



The sacred music of the Polish composer Pekieli has been a real find: by The Sixteen on Coro **COR16110** – [review](#) – and on two CDs from the Polish label Accord. If you already have the Coro, this first volume from Accord contains much less overlap with it than the second. By the time of Pekieli's death his music would have sounded old-fashioned in Italy, but that's where he derived his inspiration. Soothing music for a troubled world.

Dietrich BUXTEHUDE (1637-1707) Trio Sonatas, Op.1/1-7 are performed by Arcangelo on **ALPHA 367** [59:13]. Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#) and as mp3 press preview. CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)



The Op.1 Sonatas are less well represented than the Op.2 set; the only competition comes from Convivium on Hyperion **CDA67236**. Neither represents the most urgent baroque chamber music recommendation but the new album presents this attractive music persuasively, whereas Kirk McElhearn was unimpressed by the Hyperion – [review](#). The mp3 download can be found for as little as £4.99 from [Amazon UK](#) but the very good 24-bit is worth paying the extra.

A recording entitled simply **Dresden** features music composed for or performed at the court there in the early eighteenth century: **Johann Friedrich FASCH**: Quartet in g minor; Quartet with recorder in B flat; **Johann Josef QUANTZ**: Flute Sonata in g minor QV2:41b; **Johann David HEINICHEN**: Sonata for 2 oboes, bassoon and continuo in B flat, S257; **Antonio VIVALDI**: Sonata a4 in C, RV 801; **Georg Philipp TELEMANN**: Sonata for 2 oboes in c minor, TWV42:c4; **Arcangelo CALIFANO**: Sonata a 4 in C; **Antonio LOTTI**: Sonata a 4 'Echo'. The performers are Ensemble Zefiro/Alfredo Bernardini (oboe) (**ARCANA A438** [77:58] – reviewed as mp3 press preview). Recorded in November 2016, I had only just received this as I was closing, so I have had only one chance to listen to the mp3 press preview. First impressions suggest that this is as good as the other very fine recordings which Zefiro have given us on this label and Naïve, some of them well-merited reissues such as their Handel *Fireworks* and *Concerti a due cori* – [review](#) – [DL News 2016/4](#). See also my review of their Telemann *Ouvertures* in [DL News 2013/17](#).



George Frideric HANDEL (1685-1759)

Parnasso in festa, per gli sponsali di Teti e Peleo HWV 73 (1734)

David Hansen (countertenor) - Apollo, God of music, Orfeo's father

Robin Johannsen (soprano) - Clio, Muse of history

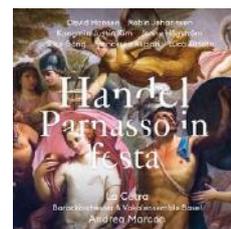
Kangmin Justin Kim (countertenor) - Orfeo, singer and poet

Jenny Högström (soprano) - Calliope, Muse of epic poetry, Orfeo's mother

Silke Gäng (mezzo) - Cloride, a huntress

Francesca Ascioti (alto) - Euterpe, Muse of lyric poetry and the flute

Luca Tittoto (bass) - Marte God of War



La Cetra Vocal Ensemble; Barockorchester and Vokalensemble Basel/Andrea Marcon
rec. partly live, Martinskirche Basel, October 2016. DDD
Texts and translations included

PENTATONE PTC5186643 SACD [44:12 + 72:23] Reviewed as 24-bit download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com. SACDs from Amazon UK – ArkivMusic – Presto

That the Hyperion recording of this pastiche *serenata**, composed for a royal wedding in 1734 and largely drawn from Handel's own music for *Athalia* (1733) is now consigned to the Archive Service or download (**CDA67701/2** – from hyperion-records.co.uk) suggests that there was not much demand for it, though I made it a [Recording of the Month](#). The performance by the King's Consort and Choir directed by Matthew Halls is first-rate.

The new recording was recorded, partly live, immediately before a performance in the Netherlands in November 2016 which drew enthusiastic reviews. Two years earlier a performance by Marcon and most of the same team in Halle was also very well received.

The work may be static – Thetis and Peleus whose nuptials are mentioned in the title don't even appear – but the music is what you would expect of Handel at one of his most productive operatic periods; it really doesn't matter that most of it was, typically for Handel, self-borrowed, mostly from music which had not then been heard in London.

If you have the Hyperion recording, there's no need to replace it – both are very good. If you don't, honours are about even between these two very fine recordings. At \$30.74 the 24-bit download is expensive when the SACDs are currently on offer for less than £20 and even for less than \$20, but the 16-bit is more attractively priced at \$20.49 and sounds fine. The Hyperion is available in 16-bit only at £16.99. Handel lovers should have one or the other of these recordings. At least stream from [Naxos Music Library](#) if you can.

* Not an opera, as some websites are describing it.

Anton REICHA (Antonín REJCHA) (1770-1836) is one of those talented but lesser-known musicians whose work tends to slip like small change down the backs of those capacious chairs labelled 'Haydn' and 'Mozart' and the even larger sofa labelled 'Beethoven'. A new 3-CD recording of his chamber and instrumental music on the Alpha label should help to rectify the problem. Quatuor Girard perform his String Quartet in E, Op.95/1 and Quintet in F, Op.92/1 (with Tanguy Parisot, viola) on CD1 [63:51]. Josquin Otal, Victoria Vassilenko and Dorde Radevski perform some of his piano music on CD2 [54:38] and Trio Medici perform his Piano Trio, Op.101/2 and Ha Bin Youn, Kacper Novak and Justine Metral his Trio for three cellos on CD3 [58:08]. The performers are all members of the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel and the performances were recorded there in February and April 2017. (**Alpha 369**). CD from Amazon UK – Presto



Nothing here is likely to change radically our thinking about Reicha's music but the performances confirm that he deserves to be better known. The Quartet and Quintet and the piano music are otherwise unavailable but this performance of the Piano Trio should encourage listeners to seek out the Supraphon CD on which the Guarneri Trio of Prague perform it and two other Piano Trios (**SU40572**).

The sound quality of the mp3 press download, despite being at a mere 192kb/s, is good enough to lead me to believe that the CD and lossless downloads will sound fine.

Don't overlook the ongoing Toccata series of recordings of Reicha's String Quartets from the Kreutzer Quartet: Op.48/1 and 2 **TOCC0022** – [review](#) and purchase link from MusicWeb – available to download

from eclassical.com – Op.48/3 and Op.49/1 **TOCC0040** – [review](#) and purchase link from MusicWeb – available to download from eclassical.com.

BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) Piano Trios – Volume 1

Piano Trio No.1 in E flat, Op.1/1 (c.1794) [30:01]

Piano Trio No.5 in D, 'Ghost', Op.70/1 (1808) [25:19]

Piano Trio in E flat, WoO38 (c.1790) [14:53]

TrioVanBeethoven [Clemens Zeilinger (piano), Verena Stourzh (violin), Franz Ortner (cello)]

rec. September 2016, Franz Liszt Zentrum Raiding, Burgenland, Austria. DDD.

GRAMOLA 99132 [70:12] Reviewed as lossless download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com For CD purchase details see [review](#) by David Barker. Also available (less expensively, with the trio's original cellist) as **98995** from eclassical.com



Volume 3

Piano Trio No.2 in G, Op.1/2 [32:42]

Allegretto in B-flat, WoO39 [5:18]

Piano Trio No.6 in E-flat, Op.70/2 [30:16]

TrioVanBeethoven

rec. November 2015, Franz Liszt Raiding, Burgenland, Austria

GRAMOLA 99117 [68:16] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com For CD purchase details see [review](#) by David Barker (*Recording of the Month*) and [review](#) and purchase details of Volume 4 by David Barker.



I really need only mention the availability of these recordings and refer you to David Barker's reviews. Both volumes run the gamut from the early Op.1 trios, the publication of which caused the breach with Haydn – for once, 'Papa' was wrong: they were worth publishing – to the trios of his middle period from the Op.70 set.

I also listened to Volume 2, not yet reviewed by David Barker. It contains a fine account of the masterpiece, the 'Archduke' Trio, Op.97, with the 'Kakadu' Variations and the *Allegretto* in E-flat, Hess 48, on Gramola **GRAM99032**, as streamed with pdf booklet from Naxos Music Library. Bargain-seekers with emusic.com subscriptions will find it there in 320kb/s mp3 – without booklet – for £2.52 or less. The jaunty finale of the *Archduke* is especially enjoyable.



Ludwig van BEETHOVEN

String Quartet No.9 in C, Op. 59/3 [31:20]

String Quartet No.14 in c-sharp minor, Op.131 [38:05]

Aris Quartett [Anna Katharina Wildermuth, Noémi Zipperling (violin); Caspar Vinzens (viola); Lukas Sieber (cello)]

rec. Festeburgkirche, Frankfurt am Main, April 2016. DDD

GENUIN GEN17478 [69:25] Reviewed as 24-bit download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com. CD from Amazon UK – Presto



This is my first encounter with the Aris Quartett, second-prize, Osnabrücker Musik, Special prize ProQuartet and audience-prize-winners at the 2016 ARD competition, which in earlier years has been the launch-pad for the likes of Jessye Norman, Christoph Eschenbach, Mitsuko Uchida and the Quatuor Ebène. The Special prize Genuin Classics, which they also won, included the making of this CD. In 2015 the prize had gone to Emalie Savoy, whose recording was hailed by Göran Forsling as 'spectacular' (GEN16436 – [review](#)).

The Aris have gone straight to the pinnacle of the strong quartet repertoire with Op.131, of which over 100 recordings are extant, including brilliant versions from the Takács Quartet, Belcea Quartet and Quartetto Italiano, all available as partial or complete sets of Nos. 1-16. The Takács complete set has just been reissued on CD + blu-ray audio + DVD, 9 discs for around £44 (Decca **4831317**). Alternatively, the set can be downloaded in mp3 or lossless from around £30. Bargain hunters should be aware that the ClassicFM Full Works reissue of the Lindays in No.12 (Op.127) and No.14 (Op.131) contains 86 minutes of very fine performances, available as a download from [Presto](#) for £4.95 (mp3) or £6.19 (lossless).



The Aris offer very powerful performances of both works, bringing out the prefiguring of the late quartets in Op.59/3 without overdoing the shock qualities – for Beethoven’s contemporaries and even for modern listeners – in Op.131. In fact, these performances soften the impact in the latter somewhat more than on many recordings. Tempi are generally a little on the fast side in the latter but never impetuous. A very fine release is crowned by a very good, close recording, especially in the 24-bit version, and by a very good set of programme notes on both the music and the performers.

I’m surprised to discover that this is not the Aris Quartett’s first recording: Amazon also offer Telos Music recordings of them in Zemlinsky and Bartók ([TLS224](#)) and Haydn, Reger and Hindemith ([TLS214](#)).

Felix MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Violin Concerto, Op.64 in e minor [25:07]

The Hebrides – Concert Overture, Op.26 [9:48]

Symphony No. 5 (‘Reformation’), Op.107 in D/d minor (new Breitkopf und Härtel edition, 2017) [26:40]

Isabelle Faust (violin); Freiburger Barockorchester/Pablo Heras-Casado
rec. Sala 1, Paul Casals, l’Auditori de Barcelona, March 2017. DDD

HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902325 [61:35] Reviewed as 24-bit download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#). CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)

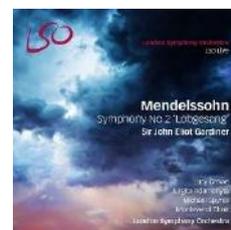


Symphony No. 2, Op.52 (‘Lobgesang’)

Lucy Crowe (soprano); Jurgita Adamontyè (mezzo); Michael Spyres (tenor);
Monteverdi Choir

London Symphony Orchestra/Sir John Eliot Gardiner

LSO LIVE LSO0803 SACD/BLU-RAY AUDIO [64:03] Reviewed as 24/96 download
with pdf and epub booklets from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#). CD from [Amazon UK](#)
– [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)



There are two kinds of authenticity at play here: Sir John Eliot Gardiner’s Monteverdi Choir are usually more at home in music closer to the time of their namesake and the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra don’t usually stray into romantic repertoire. Add the fact that Isabelle Faust uses minimal vibrato but with judicious *portamento* and you may think that this is not for you. Certainly, the solo playing doesn’t have the warmth of, say, Kyung-Wha Chung (Decca Legends **4609762**, with Bruch Violin Concerto and *Scottish Fantasy*), one version that for sure I shall continue to return to, as much for the *Scottish Fantasy* as for the better-known works. For Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto with the other traditional coupling, Tchaikovsky, I like Arabella Steinbacher with the OSR and Charles Dutoit (Pentatone – [review](#)). To these and other favourites the new version offers an attractive alternative.

The recording of the second symphony brings Gardiner’s LSO series of live recordings to a rousing conclusion. I have not yet heard Nézet-Séguin’s 3-CD new recording of all the Mendelssohn symphonies on DG, on offer at an attractive price, so it’s with the well-established LSO/Claudio Abbado set, also on DG (**4714762**, 4 CDs, with shorter works – [DL News February 2014/2](#)) at an even more attractive price, that I made my comparisons here and in the *Reformation* Symphony.

The Gardiner Second stands up well to the comparison, with the grandiose elements well brought out without neglecting the quieter sections – try *Ich harrete des Herrn* (I waited for the Lord, track 9) – and it's offered at a very attractive price if you just want a single recording of this work. On disc it comes as an SACD and blu-ray for around £13.50 but the Hyperion download costs only £6.50 (16-bit) or £9.75 (24-bit) and sounds very good in the latter format, though I imagine that the surround tracks on SACD might help render the acoustic a little more transparent.

The Harmonia Mundi *Reformation* symphony is released in time for the 500th anniversary of the event which it commemorates. * Again, I shall not be ditching Abbado or an old favourite from Wolfgang Sawallisch and the New Philharmonia (rec. 1966, now available only in a 14-CD Decca set). For a very fine alternative recording on period instruments, La Chambre Philharmonique conducted by Emanuel Krivine is worth considering alongside the new Harmonia Mundi. (Naïve **V5069**, with a sparkling Symphony No.4 – [review](#) – [DL Roundup June 2009](#)).

Two other Harmonia Mundi Mendelssohn recordings with Heras-Casado are well worth investigating: Symphonies Nos. 3 ('Scottish') and 4 ('Italian') with the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra on **HMC902228** – available in 16- and 24-bit downloads with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#) and Symphony No.2 ('Lobgesang') with the Bavarian Radio Choir and Orchestra on **HMC902151** – 16- and 24-bit downloads with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#). We seem to have missed Nos. 3 and 4 but Michael Cookson enjoyed No.2 – [review](#).



* Strictly, it was composed for the tercentenary in 1830 of the Augsburg Confession, which established Lutheran theology.

The obvious person to include in a *Triptych* of Piano Trios by female composers would have to be **Clara SCHUMANN (1819-1896)**. Her Trio in g minor, Op.17 (1846) is the most familiar work on a new recording by the Monte Piano Trio. The other works are **Amy BEACH (1867-1944)** Piano Trio in a minor, Op.150 and Piano Trio No.1, *Fantasy Triptych*, composed for them in 2014 by **Natalie KLOUDA (b.1984)**. The Monte Piano Trio perform these on Genuin **GEN17449** [54:38], as downloaded in 24-bit sound with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#). Stuart Sillitoe thought this 'excellent ... all round' – [review](#) and CD purchase details.



There's a problem with track 4, which conks out in both 16- and 24-bit downloads after 3:11. I have notified this and presume that it will be put right. The streamed version from [Naxos Music Library](#) is fine.

As it happens, the (paradoxically all male) Storioni Trio offer a similar programme: the **Clara SCHUMANN** Trio is coupled with **Rebecca CLARKE (1886-1979)** Piano Trio (1921) and **Alba Rosa VIËTOR (1889-1979)** Piano Trio in a minor (1951). (**ARS PRODUKTION ARS38162** [64:55] – download in lossless sound from [eclassical.com](#) (NO booklet and 16-bit only) or stream from [Naxos Music Library](#) (with pdf booklet).



Such duplication of works by female composers would have seemed most unlikely only a few years ago, especially as there are other recordings of Rebecca Clarke's Trio to throw into the mix, including a performance by the Lincoln Trio, which David Barker made a [Recording of the Month](#). (Cedille **CDR90000165** [63:32] with **Arno BABAJANIAN** Piano Trio and **Frank MARTIN** *Trio sur des mélodies populaires irlandaises* – 24-bit download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#)). For CD details see DJB's review (link above).

Antonín DVOŘÁK (1841–1904)

String Quartet No.12 in F, Op.96 ('American') (1893) [27:19]

String Quintet No.3 in E-flat, Op.97 ('American') [33:54]

Škampa Quartet with Krzysztof Chorzelski – viola

CHAMPS HILL RECORDS CHRCD110 [61:13] For details and CD ordering please see [review](#) by Leslie Wright.

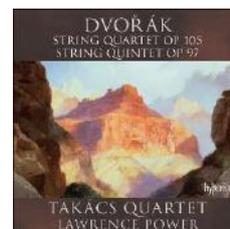


The Škampa Quartet has become a most reliable source for recordings of the Czech repertoire: pluralists by merit, their recordings on Supraphon, Wigmore Hall Live and now Champs Hill have all met with praise from all quarters as worthy successors to their mentors in the Smetana Quartet. Leslie Wright has already reviewed this release in very positive terms – link above – and I'm more than happy to agree with his assessment.

Of the many recordings of the 'American' Quartet – currently over 90 – a handful couple it with the 'American' Quintet but those which do so offer formidable competition, notably the Talich Quartet (La Dolce Volta – [DL News 2014/1](#)), the Janáček Quartet with the Vienna Octet in the Quintet (Eloquence **4802375**, 2 CDs – [review](#)) and the Keller Quartet at super-budget price (Warner Apex – [review](#)).

It's nigh impossible to choose a best buy from such fine recordings but the new Champs Hill is certainly among the best in both works.

Just to complicate matters – wouldn't you know – Hyperion are about to release the **Takács Quartet** in the **String Quartet in A-flat, Op.105**, and the **String Quintet in E-flat, Op.97**, with Lawrence Power (viola), thus duplicating half of the new Champs Hill release. (**CDA68142** [64:57] – 16- and 24-bit downloads with pdf and epub booklets from hyperion-records.co.uk). The recordings were made at Wyastone in May 2016.



The very striking cover shot and the availability of 24-bit at a price which won't break the bank are just two of the advantages of the Hyperion.

Antonín DVOŘÁK Piano Quartet No.2 in E-flat, Op.87 (B162) (1889) [37:41]

Josef SUK (1874-1935) Piano Quartet No.1 in a minor, Op.1 (1891) [22:59]

Josef Suk Piano Quartet

SUPRAPHON SU42272 [60:40] From [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto](#)



Juxtaposing the older composer's masterpiece with his son-in-law's Op.1 does the latter no favours, especially as the order on the album invites a sense of anti-climax. Nevertheless, the eponymous Suk Piano Quartet make a strong case for their namesake – perhaps a different coupling or a different playing order would have helped.

In the Dvořák, too, they offer an attractive performance, but my preference remains with the Domus recording of his two piano quartets (Hyperion **CDA66287** – one of my [Hyperion Top 30](#) recommendations).

I had barely written that 'the imminent release of a recording of both the Dvořák piano quartets from Alpha will have to be very good indeed to supersede the Hyperion' when it appeared: **Piano Quartets No.1 in D, Op.23 (B53) and No.2 in E-flat, Op.87 (B162)** into the mix. Miguel da Silva (viola) joins the Busch Trio [Mathieu van Bellen (violin), Ori Epstein (cello), Omri Epstein (piano)] on **Alpha 288** [71:04], reviewed as an mp3 press preview. This album, recorded between December 2016 and March 2017, is part of a planned series of recordings of Dvořák's chamber music with piano.



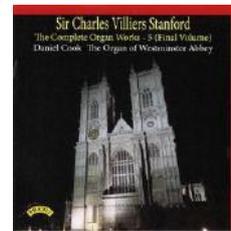
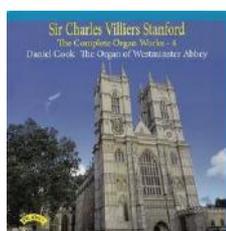
Not having knowingly encountered the Busch Trio before, I was surprised to find that their powerful and idiomatic performances present a strong challenge to Domus (Hyperion – see above). I should have read Claire Seymour’s generally enthusiastic [review](#) of their earlier Alpha recording of the Piano Trios Nos. 3 and 4 (‘Dumky’). When the new recording becomes available in 24-bit sound, as I anticipate that it will shortly from [eclassical.com](#), this could well be the first choice for a coupling of these two works. The mp3 press preview leads me to expect that the 24-bit will be first-rate, to match a very fine pair of performances.

That earlier recording of the two Piano Trios (**Alpha 238**) is already available in 24-bit sound, with pdf booklet, from [eclassical.com](#). Performances challenge those of the Smetana Trio (Supraphon **SU38722**) with very fine recording. Neither the Supraphon nor the very fine Florestan Trio (Hyperion **CDA66895**) comes in 24-bit sound: the Hyperion can be ordered on CD from the Archive Service or downloaded in 16-bit sound with pdf and epub booklets from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#). For the Florestan and Smetana Trio versions, together with the Chandos 2-for-1 set of all four Dvořák Trios (**CHAN241-24**, Borodin Trio), please see [October 2008 Download Roundup](#).



Sir Charles Villiers STANFORD (1852–1924)

The recording companies have been doing well by Stanford recently. Hyperion have added a very fine recording of his choral music to their already capacious list of his works and Priory have completed their 5-volume series of his organ music with recordings by Daniel Cook from Westminster Abbey:



- Volume 4 **PRCD1161** – for details please see [review by John France](#) Reviewed as 24/44.1 download from [eclassical.com](#); Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#) (NO booklet from either)
- Volume 5 **PRCD1174** – for details please see [review by John France](#) Reviewed as 24/44.1 download from [eclassical.com](#); Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#) (NO booklet from either)

I liked both volumes as much as John France (links above), apart from the absence from streamed and downloaded versions of the booklets, which I understand to be first-rate. It’s especially unusual for Naxos Music Library not to include the booklets. With the 24-bit versions costing \$19.78 (Volume 4) and \$21.19 (Volume 5) the lack is particularly regrettable. UK readers may find the downloads from Presto – [Vol.4](#) – [Vol.5](#) (mp3, 16- and 24-bit) less expensive, but they also seem to be devoid of the booklet.

Volume 4 is particularly valuable for the only current recording of Stanford’s final organ sonata; even Anthony Payne’s enterprising Marco Polo included only Nos. 2-4. Much of the music on Volume 5 is also new to the catalogue.

The absence of booklets with downloads of the Priory contrasts with the two Resonus recordings of Stanford’s music, from Tom Winpenny (**RES10104** – [DL Roundup](#)) and Simon Nieminski (**RES10130** – [DL News 2014/11](#)), both download only, both warmly welcomed by me and both provided with excellent booklets.

FOERSTER, JANÁČEK and HAAS: Music for Wind Instruments

Josef Bohuslav FOERSTER (1859-1951)

Wind Quintet in D, Op.95 [19:21]

Pavel HAAS (1899-1944)

Wind Quintet, Op.10 [13:58]

Leoš JANÁČEK (1854-1928)

Mládí (Youth), for wind sextet [17:22]

Belfiatio Quartet

rec. Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren in Prague, Vinohrady, 10-14 February, 2017. DDD

SUPRAPHON SU42302 [50:42]

For CD purchase details please see [Recording of the Month review](#).



There are plenty of fine recordings of *Mládí* in the catalogue but only two others of the Foerster Quintet: a recent Genuin recording of the three works here plus Zemlinsky – [review](#) – and an elderly BIS recording (**BIS-CD-612**). As well as the Genuin, there are four other recordings of the Haas, one download only. It's a shame that the Genuin recording just came out before the Supraphon – like London 'banana' buses, recordings sometimes travel in bunches – but the inclusion of the Zemlinsky there adds only just over four minutes to the total.

Even if you already have a good recording of *Mládí*, perhaps on a very recommendable Double Decca two-for-one with the *Sinfonietta*, *Taras Bulba*, etc. (**4482552**) these versions of the Haas and Foerster are well worth investigating. Foerster, especially, is an unjustly neglected composer; his *Easter Eve Symphony* is particularly enjoyable. The Supraphon recording of that is no longer available – [DL Roundup October 2008](#) – but there's a recommendable Naxos version – [review](#).

As for the new Supraphon release, I need only say that I share [Gwyn Parry-Jones' enthusiasm](#).

Gustav MAHLER (1860-1911) Symphonies No.1 ('Titan') and No.3

Some time ago I reviewed a 2-CD Decca Eloquence set of these works on which Zubin Mehta conducted the Israel PO (No.1) and Maureen Forrester with the LAPO (No.3) on **4801133** – [review](#). Though I thought that budget twofer well worth considering at the price, neither performance is quite in the top rank and I must admit that I still turn to Rafael Kubelík on DG Originals (1968) for my preferred account of No.1, not least because it also contains a first-rate account of *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (**4497352**). Vinyl addicts prepared to pay more than twice the price of the CD will find it on **4794703** (without the Dieskau filler).

I thought Mehta's No.3 better than his No.1 and, since I have yet to plump for my Desert Island version of this elusive work, well worth hearing. I have yet to absorb Bernard Haitink's live Bavarian recording, which Michael Cookson made a [Recording of the Month](#); that may well do the trick. Dan Morgan certainly didn't think much of Jaap van Zweden's live Dallas recording – [review](#) – though others were more impressed.

Now another **Decca Eloquence** twofer brings us the same coupling in performances by the **LSO** and **Sir Georg Solti**, with **Helen Watts** in No.3. I imagine that many will prefer this to the earlier Mehta which, in any case, seems to be unavailable except as a download. I'm not sure that I rate Solti in No.1 quite as highly as the Penguin Guide's 4-stars would imply, but there's real power in both symphonies, though there's tenderness where appropriate, too.



When No.3 was released in 1969, Edward Greenfield, with memories still raw of an overdriven Solti performance of the finale in the Festival Hall, found a lack of magic in that movement on the recording, too. Certainly, Solti is on the fast side in this movement – about the fastest that I can find with a quick spot check – but he seems to me to remain faithful to all Mahler's indications, except, perhaps, in the

etwas bewegter section where the comparative and the modifier *etwas* beg a question which Solti doesn't quite answer. The final section is marked *Langsam. Tempo I.* and here, too, Solti is perhaps a shade too hasty, but the end justifies the means.

After that, the opening of No.1 is in danger of sounding a little tame: best leave it even longer than the fairly generous gap which Eloquence give us. Better still, play it on its own and it comes very close to challenging Kubelík.

The recordings have come up sounding very well.

Overall, I recommend streaming these performances before purchase if you can: at the time of writing Qobuz had them but not Naxos Music Library. Don't, however, pay more to download than the modest cost of the 2-CD set: target price £10.60. From [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto](#)

(Achille-) Claude DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

Jeux, poème dansé en un acte (L133/136) (1912/13) [18:46]

Khamma, légende dansée (L132/125) (1911/12) [21:40]

La Boîte à joujoux, ballet pour enfants (L136/128) (1913) [33:45]

Singapore Symphony Orchestra/Lan Shui

rec. November 2014 (*Khamma; La Boîte à joujoux*); November 2015 (*Jeux*)

Esplanade Concert Hall, Singapore. DSD.

BIS BIS-2162 SACD [75:18] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#). CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)



Benchmark (*Jeux*): Concertgebouw/Bernard Haitink: Decca Duo **4387422** (budget price 2-CD set, with *Images, La Mer, Faune*, etc.). [Review](#) of Eloquence release, differently coupled with recordings by van Beinum and Monteux.

To bring together Debussy's three ballets was an excellent idea – matched, I believe, only by Naxos's Jun Märkl complete Debussy – [Recording of the Month](#) – though Eloquence couple Ansermet's *Khamma* and *Boîte* (**4800130** – [review](#)) and Chandos have Jean-Efflam Bavouzet's recording of the three works in the versions for the piano (**CHAN10545**).

The secret of the success of Haitink's *Jeux* lies for me in the echoes which he finds of Debussy's other, better-known music without it sounding like a pastiche. His 2-CD set also offers a very fine inexpensive introduction to Debussy, as does Jun Märkl, either on the complete set (above) or on Volume 1 which contains *La Mer, Faune, Jeux* and *Children's Corner* (**8.570759** [73:06] – reviewed as lossless download from [eclassical.com](#), NO booklet).

Lan Shui also brings out the parallels between *Jeux* and Debussy's other music, notably *La Mer*, without seeming to detach passages from the score as a whole. In neither version is the plot of the ballet apparent just by listening: for that you need to read the synopsis in the notes, which is perhaps one reason why the work was so soon eclipsed by *The Rite of Spring*. But then Debussy is quoted in the notes as saying that we only need to listen and he was not very enthusiastic about the scenario: a boy and two girls searching for a lost tennis ball.

Forget the plot and listen to the music and this is a very enjoyable release: sensitive performances, with drama in *Khamma* and fun in *Joujoux* to match Lan Shui's earlier BIS *La Mer* and very well recorded. But then Märkl also offers very fine accounts of these works, albeit differently coupled, and his and the classic Haitink recordings come at a considerable price premium over the BIS.

Claude DEBUSSY String Quartet in g minor, Op.10 [27:49]
Maurice RAVEL (1875-1937) String Quartet in F, M35 [29:49]
Ernest CHAUSSON (1855-1899) *Chanson Perpétuelle* [7:19]

Quatuor van Kuijk [Nicolas Van Kuijk, Sylvain Favre-Bulle (violins); Grégoire Vecchioni (viola); François Robin (cello)]; Kate Lindsey (mezzo); Alphonse Cemin (piano)

rec. December 2016.

Text and translation (Chausson) included

ALPHA 295 [64:58] Reviewed as mp3 press preview



It's rather unfair to ask of any new recording that it should recapture the moment when I first fell in love with a piece of music, but in the case of the Debussy and Ravel quartets it's almost impossible to forget the Vlach Quartet on Supraphon which I rushed out and bought the morning after hearing the Ravel performed in the Hollywell Music Rooms in Oxford. I almost wore out that LP, especially as my brother-in-law kept borrowing it. It had a shadowy impressionist cover image of several men in top hats; for its later CD incarnation that changed to a more startling piece of Modern Art.

I recently revisited the Vlach Quartet's recording as a download and I'm pleased to see that it retains its magic – a pair of ripe and fulsome accounts, blending power and sensitivity, and it's become my version of choice, still sounding well in digital form, alongside more recent versions such as that from the Belcea Quartet (Warner – download only), the Takács Quartet (Hyperion, Debussy with Franck Piano Quintet), Quatuor Ébène (Erato), the Dante Quartet (Hyperion) and the Talich Quartet (La Dolce Volta).

Like the recording of the Debussy by the similarly named Kuijken Quartet – [DL News 2016/4](#) – the new recording by BBC New Generation artists falls a little short of the magic of the best of these recordings, though by so little that it still gives a very good idea of the quality of these wonderful works. The Chausson very much seems like an orphan left-over added at the last minute: it's far less relevant than the extra works on those other recordings which contain more than just the Debussy and Ravel.

Not having heard the latest incarnation of the **Talich Quartet's** February 2012 recording of the Debussy and Ravel Quartets (**LDV08**) [60:03] I downloaded it in 24-bit sound with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#). I think I may have been put off before by the cover shot of a toy dog – how is that relevant?



Forget the dog and these are performances to match the very best and the 24-bit sound is first-rate.

Maurice RAVEL (1875-1937) *L'heure espagnole* [49:38]

Emmanuel CHABRIER (1841-1894) *España* [6:33]

Gaëlle Arquez (mezzo – Concepción); Julien Behr (tenor – Gonzalve); Mathias Vidal (tenor – Torquemada); Alexandre Duhamel (baritone – Ramiro); Lionel Lhote (baritone – Don Iñigo Gomez)

Münchener Rundfunkorchester/Asher Fisch

rec. live München, Prinzregententheater, 22-24 April, 2016. DDD

Detailed synopsis but no texts

BR KLASSIK 900317 [56:11] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#).

Subscribers stream from [Naxos Music Library](#). CD details and [review](#) by Michael Cookson.



Michael Cookson was impressed – link above – but for my money the classic Lorin Maazel recording holds its place at low-mid-price (DG Originals **E4497692**, with *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*, etc.) I didn't believe that the Naxos release of *L'Enfant* ousted it from top place – [DL News 2015/10](#) – though it offers a worthwhile alternative, as does this recording of *L'Heure*. After the main work, the Chabrier seems irrelevant.

British Cello Sonatas

John IRELAND (1879-1962) Cello and Piano Sonata in g minor (1923) [20:13]

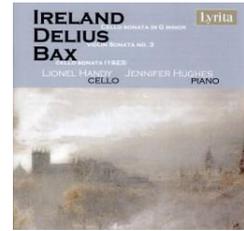
Frederick DELIUS (1862-1934) Violin and Piano Sonata No.3 (1930) (transcribed for cello and piano by Lionel Handy) [17:56]

Arnold BAX (1883-1953) Cello and Piano Sonata (1923) [32:43]

Lionel Handy (cello); Jennifer Hughes (piano)

rec. Recital Room, Royal Academy of Music, July 2016

LYRITA SRCD.361 [70:52] Reviewed as lossless press preview. Order CD from [Wyastone](#) with code MusicWeb10 for 10% discount.



We already had several fine recordings of the Ireland Cello Sonata, including Alexander Baillie and John Thwaites (Somm **SOMM2512**, 2 CDs, with Rubbra, Bridge, etc.) and Alice Neary and Benjamin Frith (Naxos **8.572497**, with Ireland Violin Sonatas 1 and 2 – [review](#) – [review](#) – [DL Roundup](#)). Lyrita have their own very fine earlier recording on a 3-for-2 release of Ireland's Chamber Music (**SRCD.2271**). Rob Barnett made this a **Bargain of the Month** – [review](#) – and Jonathan Woolf – [review](#) – and John France – [review](#) – were equally appreciative. (The MusicWeb purchase links no longer apply: purchase this and all Lyrita CDs direct from [Wyastone](#) and obtain 10% discount with the code MusicWeb10).

I wouldn't consider the new recording quite as essential a purchase as John France – [review](#) – and Stephen Greenbank – [review](#) – but the performances and recording do the music full justice. Maybe it's just that I prefer the original version of the Delius: the complete Sony recording of his three violin sonatas, performed by Tasmin Little and Piers Lane, which Rob Barnett made [Bargain of the Month](#) is now download only – from [Presto](#).

Igor STRAVINSKY (1880-1971)

The Firebird: complete ballet music (1910) [47:01]

Symphony of Psalms (1930) [21:01]

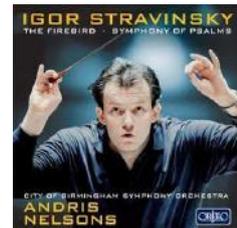
CBSO Chorus;

City of Birmingham SO/Andris Nelsons

rec. July 21-27, 2009, Symphony Hall, Birmingham. DDD

ORFEO C804101A [68:02] Reviewed as lossless download from [eclassical.com](#)

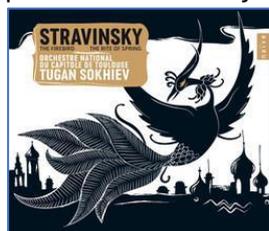
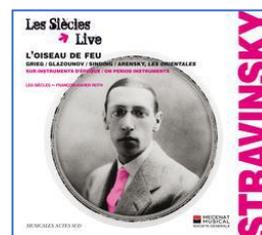
(NO booklet) and as streamed from [Naxos Music Library](#) (back cover insert only). CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)



I'm a long-standing admirer of Andris Nelsons but competition is very fierce in *Firebird* and I don't think this recording, though with some fine playing, quite matches the best versions available. Stravinsky's own stereo recording from 1960/1961, with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra, coupled with *Rite of Spring*, remains the version which I take out of the CD collection most often and it would still be my top recommendation, though it's now download only (**SMK89875**). It's not just nostalgia, though I can still smell the unmistakable odour of the OU record library LP on which I first heard that recording of *Rite*, with Stravinsky multi-bespectacled on the cover and a talk by the composer *A propos of Le Sacré*. You can also download the 2-CD version which coupled the 1960s recordings of *Firebird* (Suite only) and *Rite* with the earlier 1940s New York recordings.

Of more recent recordings, Dan Morgan was disappointed with Ludovic Morlot's *Firebird* on the Seattle Symphony's own label and was not impressed by the contemporary work with which it's coupled – [review](#). I was more impressed by Gerald Schwarz' slightly cool recording (Naxos) in [DL News 2014/9](#) and I'm sorry to see that Yakov Kreizberg's Monte Carlo recording of *Firebird*, *Petrushka* and *Rite* remained for such a short time in the catalogue – [Recording of the Month](#) – though [Qobuz](#) still have it for streaming or downloading, with booklet.

There's a very interesting version from the period-instrument ensemble Les Siècles and François-Xavier Roth on Musicales Actes Sud **ASM06** – the CD appears to be out of stock but it's available to download as ASM506 [59:57] from eclassical.com (NO booklet). The coupling is a confection ballet with music by Arensky, Glazunov, Grieg and Sinding, *Les Orientales*. That's merely an interesting *pot-pourri* but the *Firebird*, as close as possible to how it would have sounded when first performed, is as well worth hearing as the same performers in *Rite of Spring* (**ASM15** – [DL News 2014/9](http://DLNews.com)).



Firebird and *Rite* are united on a well-liked coupling from Tugan Sokhiev with the Toulouse Capitole Orchestra (Naïve **V5360**). Simon Thompson made this a Recording of the Month; [John Quinn](http://JohnQuinn.com) and [Michael Cookson](http://MichaelCookson.com) also liked it. Download as V5192 in lossless sound from eclassical.com (NO booklet)

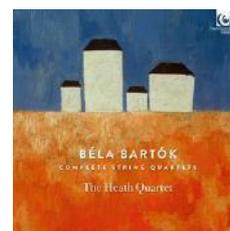
Béla BARTÓK (1881-1945)

Complete String Quartets

The Heath Quartet

rec. 2016, Wigmore Hall, London

HARMONIA MUNDI HMM907661.62 [76:50 + 80:44] Reviewed as 24-bit download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com and as streamed from Naxos Music Library.



It's not just the basic repertoire where the market is becoming very crowded. Not that I'm complaining about choice but we already had outstandingly good recordings of the Bartók quartets from the Takács Quartet (Decca), my own first choice, the Emerson Quartet (DG **4776322**, mid-price), the Végh Quartet (their 1954 recording recently reissued by Praga Digitalis **PRD250358**, mid-price), the Belcea Quartet (Warner, download only) and the Tokyo Quartet (Australian DG Eloquence **4807120**, budget price). Harmonia Mundi themselves released as recently as October 2016 a recording by the Jerusalem Quartet of Nos. 2, 4 and 6, which I take to be the harbinger of a further volume of the odd-numbered works (**HMC902235**).

Unbelievably, some boojum at Universal has ruled that the Takács shall be available only in one of their unmanageable and ultimately self-defeating box sets. Why would anyone wish to pay out for their *Complete Bartók* (**4789311**, 32 CDs), a parcel too large to be put through even a large letter-box, and duplicating recordings which collectors probably already own, from the likes of Georg Solti and Iván Fischer? Search around and you may still find a dealer offering the 2-CD set; 7digital.com have the set as a download (mp3 and lossless) and subscribers can stream from [Naxos Music Library](http://NaxosMusicLibrary.com).

For some reason, having got this off my chest several weeks ago, I got writer's block on continuing the review, so I'm pleased that Simon Thompson has broken the block by marking the new release a Recording of the Month, second only to the Takacs, which allows me simply to agree in both regards, to note that the 24-bit sound is very good and to note that the eclassical.com download was available in 24-bit at the same price as 16-bit at the time of writing - a very reasonable \$15.74.

Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

Symphony No. 5 in d minor, Op.47 (1937) [50:42]

Samuel BARBER (1910-1981)

Adagio for Strings (1936) [9:21]

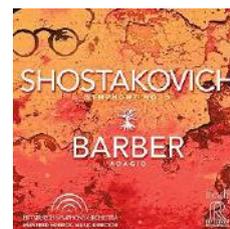
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra/Manfred Honeck

rec. live, 7-9 June 2013 (Shostakovich) & 11-13 October 2013 (Barber),

Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts, Pittsburgh

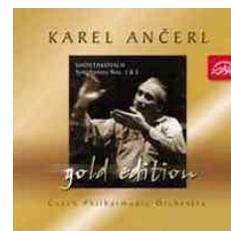
Pdf booklet included

REFERENCE RECORDINGS FR-724 SACD [60:08] From [Amazon UK](http://AmazonUK.com) – [ArkivMusic](http://ArkivMusic.com) – [Presto](http://Presto.com)



Dan Morgan was not greatly taken with this new recording. Having edited his [review](#), I tried out the streamed version from [Naxos Music Library](#) but didn't get beyond the first movement. It's not just a matter of tempo; though it's slower than most, [Andris Nelsons](#) shows how it can be taken even slower without sounding lethargic, as Honeck does. Nor does the recording match what we usually expect from Reference Recordings – it's all rather *sub-fusc*.

To remind myself how the first movement can be taken at a more exciting pace without missing any of the poetry of the quieter moments, I turned to the version from which I first got to know Shostakovich's Fifth, from Karel Ančerl and the Czech Philharmonic (rec.1961), once available on Classics for Pleasure for 12/6 (£0.67) and now on Supraphon Gold **SU36992**, with Symphony No.1, around £10, and still sounding well for its age.



That CFP recording was replaced in my collection with André Previn's 1965 LSO recording for RCA, still my go-to version on CD – remarkably I could lay my hands on it immediately without having to rummage in vain at the back of the cupboard, which proves that it gets a fairly regular outing. At 17:22, as opposed to Ančerl's 14:19, Previn adopts almost the same tempo as Honeck without any of the lethargy. Surprisingly it's available only as a download at present, coupled with the *Hamlet Suite* (**82876554932**).



If neither of these older recordings is to your taste, there's Vasily Petrenko with the RLPO on a budget-price Naxos release – see [April 2010 DL Roundup](#), with link to other MWI reviews, including a **Recording of the Month**. The classicsonline.com link is no longer valid: download now in 16- or 24-bit with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#).

We seem not to have reviewed Mstislav Rostropovich's LSO Live recording. It's not one of his best offerings – at times illuminating, at others perverse – but it's well worth streaming from [Naxos Music Library](#), complete with booklet. It's available to download in 16- and 24-bit sound from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#). At £5.50/£8.25 it won't cost an arm and a leg to listen in better sound than the streamed version, though the Barbican recording is a little too close. SACD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)



Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975) Cello Concerto No.2 in g minor, Op.126 [33:03]

Bohuslav MARTINŮ (1890-1959) Cello Concerto No.2, H304 [31:10]

Christian Poltéra (cello)

Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin/Gilbert Varga

rec. Jesus-Christus-Kirche, Berlin, 2016. DDD/DSD.

BIS BIS-2257 SACD [64:16] Reviewed as 24/96 stereo download with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#). (Also available in 24-bit surround sound). For SACD purchase links see [review](#) by Young-Jin Hur.

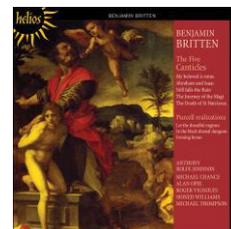


Though it's less popular than its predecessor, Shostakovich's second cello concerto nevertheless has some 45 recordings to its name. Most of the best combine the two concertos and one of these, from dedicatee Mstislav Rostropovich, with Gennady Rozhdestvensky (No.1) and Evgeny Svetlanov (No.2) has just been reissued by Warner at mid-price (9029589222 – [review](#) of box set: see CD31). To my surprise Christian Poltéra finds even more power in No.2 than Rostropovich and almost persuades me that it's a greater work than No.1.

Benjamin BRITTEN (1913-1976)

Peter Pears may be *the* man for Britten's music but what if you don't like the timbre of his voice? I'm not a great fan and, in any case, if you are looking for the complete **Canticles**, only his recordings of No.2 and No.5 are available in stereo and not on the same album, while his mono recordings of Nos. 1-3 are available to download inexpensively on Naxos Historical **9.81123**. All are, of course, accompanied by Benjamin Britten, with John Elwes (alto) and Barry Tuckwell (horn) on the mono recordings and Norma Proctor (contralto) on the stereo.

No.2, *Abraham and Isaac*, is the masterwork here, with its prefiguring of a similar theme in the *War Requiem* but the complete set of five can be found on a mid-price Hyperion Helios album (**CDH55244**), on Signum **SIGCD317** and, again at mid-price, from Wigmore Hall Live (**WHL0064**). This last, an excellent recording with Mark Padmore (tenor), very ably accompanied, was a **Recording of the Month – review**. The Helios recording, with Anthony Rolfe Johnson (tenor) can be downloaded for £6.50 from hyperion-records.co.uk and the Signum with Ben Johnson (tenor) for £6.99 from hyperion-records.co.uk, both in 16-bit only and both with pdf booklet. The Helios comes with three bonus Purcell works, which makes it *primus inter pares*; otherwise there is very little to choose among these very fine recordings.



Indian Classical Ragas

Raga Shyam Shree [20:59]

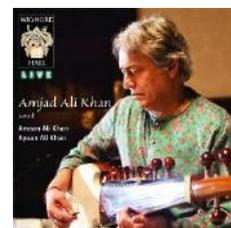
Raga Pilu [15:31]

Raga Kirwani [25:53]

Amjan Ali Khan (sarod); Amaan Ali Khan (sarod); Ayaan Ali Khan (sarod); Satyajit Talwalkar (tabla)

Rec. live Wigmore Hall, London, 8 April 2010. DDD.

WIGMORE HALL LIVE WHLIVE0047 [62:23] From Amazon UK – Presto



Last time I recommended a pair of East-meets-West albums featuring Amjan Ali Khan. This Wigmore Hall recording is more authentic, though the music is still cut down to manageable proportions for a Western audience. If you were enthralled by the Ravi Shankar/Philip Glass composition from the 2017 Proms, *Passages*, or liked Ravi Shankar's albums with the Beatles and Yehudi Menuhin and wish to explore Indian music further, this could be the ideal next step. Best of all, subscribers to emusic.com can download this for just £1.26, though without the booklet, which doesn't seem to be available with any download.

Evensong from Oxford

Sir (Charles) Hubert PARRY (1848-1918) Chorale Prelude for Organ *Christe redemptor omnium* [3:51]

Sydney WATSON (1903-1991) How Sweet the Name of Jesus [5:47]

Bernard ROSE (1916-1996) Versicles and Responses [1:24]

Sir Frederick Gore OUSELEY (1825-1889) Psalm 12: Help, Lord [3:46]

Sir Walter PARRATT (1841-1924) Psalm 13: How long wilt Thou forget me [3:02]

Sir Thomas ARMSTRONG (1898-1994) Psalm 14: The Fool hath said in his Heart [5:02]

First Lesson (Book of Haggai: 2, 6-9) [0:47]

Sir John STAINER (1840-1901) Hymn: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy [1:51]

Sir (Charles) Hubert PARRY *Magnificat* (The Great Service) [8:48]

Second Lesson (Letter of Paul to the Ephesians: 2, 10-22) [0:47]

Sir (Charles) Hubert PARRY *Nunc Dimittis* (The Great Service) [3:53]

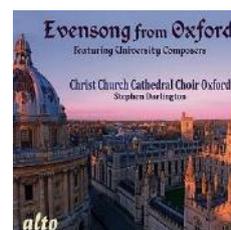
Creed [0:53]

Bernard ROSE Responses, Lord's Prayer and Collects [6:54]

Sir William HARRIS (1883-1973) Bring us, O Lord God [4:21]

Prayers [1:33]

Basil HARWOOD (1859-1949) Hymn: Let all the World [1:49]



Sir William WALTON (1902-1983) Coronation *Te Deum* [10:44]

The Grace [0:11]

Bernard ROSE Responses and Dismissal [0:28]

Kenneth LEIGHTON (1929-1988) *Paeon* (organ) [4:47]

Clive Driskill-Smith (organ)

Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford/Stephen Darlington

rec. Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, March 2002. DDD.

Texts not included.

MUSICAL CONCEPTS ALTO ALC1349 [70:47] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – [Presto](#)

The *raison d'être* of this CD is straightforward: a service of Evensong from one of the best-known Oxford and Cambridge choirs, in this case from Christ Church which features both as a college chapel and as the diocesan cathedral. All the music included is from composers who had Oxford associations. Formerly available on the Griffin label (GCCD4035), it now makes an attractive super-budget offering from Alto, for around £5.50. *Caveat emptor*. Shop around: some dealers are asking over £7.50 on CD, 'reduced' in one case from £9.82, and only pence less for the mp3 download, *sans* booklet.

The back cover quotes some very positive words purporting to come from MusicWeb International and some dealers have carried the quotation over to their sites, but, in fact, that [review](#) is of another, slightly later, album of hymns, albeit from the same performers and on the same label – Griffin, from whom this Alto reissue is licensed.

Though the quotation may not be strictly applicable, however, I did very much enjoy this compilation, not least because it reminds me of Evensong at 'the House', as Christ Church is known, as an undergraduate and post-grad. The prospect of Palestrina *et al* at the Choral Eucharist also frequently took me away from the bells and smells of High Mass at Pusey House.

At 71 minutes, this is a bit over-long for a typical Evensong but in all other respects it's quite possible to sit back and imagine being led to a pew by the usher – wear your MA gown and you get a place between the choir and the high altar – to enjoy the proceedings. With the set psalms and the canticles, all rounded off with Walton's Coronation *Te Deum* – normally sung at Mattins rather than Evensong – this is much more varied than the Griffin hymn collection, which remains available. This Alto reissue is almost self-recommending at its new price, alongside the many recordings which Christ Church and Darlington have made for various labels, not least the volumes of Avie's Music from the Eton Choirbook.

Comparisons are not particularly helpful in the case of such collections. In any case, there is not much direct competition. James O'Donnell directs Westminster Abbey choir in the evening canticles from Parry's Great Service on Hyperion **CDA68089**, an all-Parry collection which John Quinn thought magnificent: *Recording of the Month* – [review](#). I enjoyed that recording too – an important tribute to a composer still too little known – [DL News](#) – but the singing on Alto is also likely to make new friends for the composer.

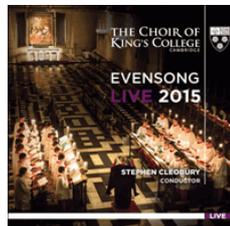
There are more than 20 recordings of Walton's Coronation *Te Deum*, including strongly competitive accounts on all-Walton programmes from Polyphony and Stephen Layton (Hyperion **CDA67330**) and the choir of St John's, Cambridge/Christopher Robinson at budget price (Naxos **8.555793** – [review](#)). Oddly, we seem to have reviewed the Hyperion only among the recordings of film music, so I must point out that it's available from hyperion.records.co.uk for just £6.50 to download in lossless sound, with pdf booklet containing texts, or on CD, at the time of writing.

Christ Church is not an ideal recording venue – Nimbus used to bus the choir down the road to Dorchester on Thames – but the rather distant recording captures the atmosphere well. It benefits from a volume lift.

The booklet contains notes on the composers and the music but contains no texts. Search out your old copy of the 1662 Prayer Book for most of those. The date is given as March 2002; the three psalms are prescribed for Evensong on the 2nd., so I presume that the recording was made on the Saturday in the second week of Lent that year.

A quietly satisfying record of a fine choir about its regular business.

Even-handedness compels me to mention two similar and equally desirable collections from the 'other place': *Evensong Live, 2015* and *2016* from **King's College, Cambridge**, directed by Stephen Cleobury, on their own label (**KGS0011** and **KGS0015**), the latter very positively [reviewed by John Quinn](#). Both of these, which offer the music only, no readings, can be downloaded inexpensively in 16- or 24-bit sound from hyperion-records.co.uk. If you are just in the market for one of the King's recordings, start with 2015 and you'll probably be tempted to come back for 2016.



A word of warning: for many years I have been using Winamp to play downloaded music in the study and, even though it is a little idiosyncratic in Windows 10, it still does the job very well. Lately I have also been using the Groove player which came with my computer and finding that it too does a good job, but several of the tracks on *Evensong 2015* made the sound break up slightly in places like an LP cartridge not quite up to the job, whereas Winamp presented no problem. Nor did the built-in player which came with my Chromebook and which I use to play music in the lounge via an Arcam Blink connected to my audio system.

Reformation 1517-2017

Martin LUTHER (1483-1546) *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* [0:50]

JS BACH (1685-1750) arr. **WF BACH (1710-1784)** Cantata No.80 *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV80 [24:50]

Johann CRÜGER (1598-1662) *Nun danket alle Gott* [0:37]

JS BACH Cantata No.79 *Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild*, BWV79 [14:12]

Georg NEUMARK (1621-1681) *Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten* [0:40]

Felix MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847) *Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten*, MVW:A7 [11:54]

Martin LUTHER *Mit Freud und Freud ich fahr dahin* [0:45]

Johannes BRAHMS (1833-1897) *Warum ist das Licht gegeben?* Op.74/1 [10:37]

William CROFT (1678-1727) *O God, our help in ages past* [0:31]

Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958) *Lord, thou hast been our refuge** [8:04]

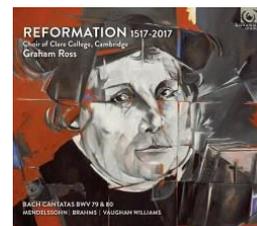
Mary Bevan (soprano), Robin Blaze (countertenor), Nicholas Mulroy (tenor), Neal Davies (bass)
Holly Holt (soprano)*; Catherine Clark (mezzo)*; Jackson Riley (tenor)*; Christopher Holliday (bass)*
Frances Norbury (oboe), Rachel Chaplin (oboe da caccia), Paul Sharp (trumpet)*, Nicholas Morris (organ)*, Margaret Faultless (violin)

Choir of Clare College Cambridge; Clare Baroque/Graham Ross

rec. 2 and 4 April 2017, St John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood, London

Texts and translations included

HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902265 [73:10] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com. For CD purchase details see review by [John Quinn](#)



This is longer than the usual 'short review' format, having been almost completed as a full review for the main MusicWeb pages before [John Quinn](#) beat me to it.

In Sellar and Yeatman's parody of History textbooks, *1066 and All That*, events are either 'a good thing' or 'a bad thing'. I can't remember what they thought of the Reformation, though I recall that there was a chapter on the 'Disillusion [sic] of the Monasteries'. In many respects it was 'a good thing', even for the Roman Church, which took the opportunity to reform itself – the Vatican only a few years ago

acknowledged that Luther had interpreted SS Paul and Augustine correctly – but it swept away works of art, literature and music of great beauty.

By the time that Queen Elizabeth took a stand against Calvinistic Puritanism, with music and ceremony in her Chapel Royal, much had been lost. If Shakespeare had not ignored the 39 Articles, which banished the 'Romish doctrine of Purgatory' and hinged *Hamlet* on a purgatorial ghost, we would never have had one of his greatest plays.¹

Fortunately for Lutheran Germany, Martin Luther himself loved music – not just the simple chorales and motets which he composed but the polyphony of many of the composers of the time, especially Josquin des Prés, so it's hardly surprising that the 500th anniversary of Luther's 95 Theses has brought forth a number of recordings. It's very appropriate that, when Bach was often viewed by his contemporaries as directly inspired by Luther, two of his cantatas for Reformation Day form the main peg on which the concept has been hung. With so many very fine versions of these, my comparative versions are:

- (Cantata 79) COR16120 – The Sixteen/Harry Christophers (with Lutheran Masses BWV234 and 236) – [review](#)
- (Cantatas 79 and 80) SDG110 (2 CDs) – Monteverdi Choir/Sir John Eliot Gardiner (with Cantatas 5, 48, 56, 90 and 192) – [review](#)
- (Cantata 80) BIS-CD-1421 – Bach Collegium Japan/Masaaki Suzuki (with Cantatas 5 and 115) – [review](#)

In its earliest form (No.80a, lost) Cantata No.80 seems to have been composed for Lent at Weimar (c.1715) but there were no cantatas in Lent at Leipzig, so Bach transformed it into a Cantata for Reformation Day, initially as No.80b, which exists in fragmentary form, before it arrived at its final form around 1731. But that's not the end of the story: Bach's son Wilhelm Friedemann revived it at Halle with added timpani and trumpet parts and these, included in early printed editions, have been retained for the new Harmonia Mundi.

Masaaki Suzuki and John Eliot Gardiner stay with Bach's own final revision but I enjoyed hearing the 'inauthentic' version here, as I also enjoyed the performance of No.79.

The other major work, the Mendelssohn, has far fewer recordings, so this is particularly welcome, as also is the Brahms. Brahms is not at his best in sacred music for me – the *German Requiem*, I fear, is relegated to the status of Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* – but Graham Ross and his team make a good case for it, as, indeed, for the rest of the programme. With very good recording, especially in 24-bit, I'm happy to echo JQ's praise for this release.

¹ The great authority on the subject in Protestant countries was Ludwig Lavater's *Of ghostes and spirites walking by nyght, and of strange noyses, crackes, and sundry forewarnynges, which commonly happen before the death of menne, great slaughters & alterations of kyngdomes*. According to Lavater ghosts must be from Hell or, rarely, from Heaven.

Advance Notice

Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

A London Symphony (1920 version) [51:51]

Sound Sleep^{1,2} [5:28]

Orpheus with his Lute¹ [2:36]

Variations³ [12:27]

Elizabeth Watts (soprano)¹; Mary Bevan (soprano)²; Royal College of Music Brass Band³

BBC Symphony Orchestra/Martyn Brabbins

rec. Henry Wood Hall, London, November 2016. DDD.



HYPERION CDA68190 [72:22] Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf and epub booklets from hyperion-records.co.uk. Due for release on CD and download 27 October 2017.

Several recordings of the 'London' Symphony are very special: most recently Andrew Manze with the RLPO blew some of the cobwebs off the conventional final edition together with a fine account of No.8 (**ONYX4155: *Recording of the Month*** – [review](#) – [review](#)). Most special of all is the unique recording of the original 1913 version made by Richard Hickox with the LSO for Chandos (**CHAN9902**, with **Butterworth *Banks of Green Willow*** – [review](#) of USB version, with links to other MusicWeb reviews).

This is only the second recent modern recording of the 1920 edition, also available as performed by the RSO with Martin Yates on Dutton (**CDLX7322** – [review](#)); it's slightly longer than the final version, but still some ten minutes shorter than the Hickox recording of the 1913 – Yates takes 48:41, Brabbins 51:51. The chief difference between what they give us and what we hear from Manze and other recordings lies in subtle differences in scoring.

I liked the Dutton recording, not least for the coupling – see below – but first impressions are that the new Hyperion now also joins a select but significant group of recordings of this symphony, a work with which I've been in love ever since I heard the Barbirolli recording on Pye. In case you think that the cover shot of the busy Thames, rather than the usual Monet of the Houses of Parliament seen through an impressionist mist, means that Brabbins skimps on the meditative aspects of the work, that certainly is not the case. None of his tempi are over-driven: mostly he takes a slightly airier view of the work than usual and the BBC SO support him with some wonderful playing, especially as heard in the 24-bit version.

Most recordings of the 'London' symphony give us a fairly substantial filler. Manze adds a whole symphony, Yates includes the Piano Concerto in its (preferable) 2-piano format, an extra incentive for me. Sir Mark Elder completes the symphony with a fine account of the Oboe Concerto (Hallé **CDHLL7529: *Recording of the Month*** – [review](#) – [review](#)). Having previously heard only an mp3 version of this – [DL Roundup December 2011/1](#) – I downloaded the 24/44.1 version from hyperion-records.co.uk. The emusic mp3 is a real bargain but the download from Hyperion in much better sound costs only £7.99 (16-bit) or £9.00 (24-bit) and comes with the booklet in pdf and epub formats.

Bernard Haitink, whose recording is now download only, and rather expensive, offers the wonderful *Tallis Fantasia*. You may well have a good recording of that – Barbirolli, for example – but Haitink's Warner box set of all the VW symphonies and fillers is well worth considering at the attractive price of around £22 (**9847592** – some slightly 'heretical' interpretations but overall [recommended by Rob Barnett](#)). The shorter works on Hyperion are less enticing, and I would have preferred to have had them placed as an *entrée* than for afters, but I enjoyed hearing them.

Discovery of the Month

Carl VOLLRATH (b.1931) *Warrior Monks: Music for wind and percussion*

Dragon Land [18:37]

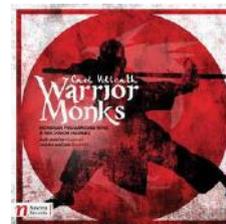
The Land of Lanterns [15:32]

And Bugles Sang [24:35]

Aleš Janeček (clarinet), Ondřej Jurčeka (trumpet); Moravian Philharmonia Wind and Percussion Ensemble/Petr Vronský; Stanislav Vavřínek

rec. June and November 2016 and April 2017, Olomouc, Czech Republic. DDD.

NAVONA NV6102 [58:44] Reviewed as 24-bit download from eclassical.com.



It's not often that someone like me, suspicious of all contemporary music, finds a composer not only to tolerate but to like. On the basis of this programme, where the music is lightly influenced by Chinese culture, Carl Vollrath is a real discovery. Try the streamed version from Naxos Music Library, as I did, and you'll at least be tempted by the download, in superior 16- or 24-bit lossless sound. The 'booklet'

offered by both NML and eclassical.com turns out to be simply the cover page, albeit with a link to notes from [Navona](#).

Pending on the Main Pages

Two recordings which I'm reviewing for the main MusicWeb pages but which are too good not to recommend briefly here:

Claudio MONTEVERDI (1567-1643)

Vespro della beata Vergine (Vespers, 1610) [93:40]

Joanne Lunn, Esther Brazil (soprano);

Amy Liddon, Roy McCleery (alto);

Joshua Ellicott, Matthew Long, Nicholas Mulroy, Peter Harris (tenor)

Peter Harvey, William Gaunt (bass)

Dunedin Consort

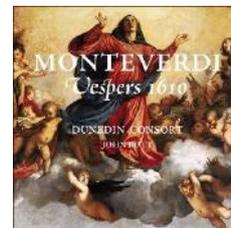
His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts/John Butt

rec. Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh, 6-9 March 2017. DDD.

Pitch a'=466Hz, 5th comma meantone tuning.

Texts and translations included

LINN CKD569 [52:54 + 40:46]



Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf and epub booklets from hyperion-records.co.uk. Also available on CD and in 24/192 download from linnrecords.com.

Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750) Cantatas for Bass

Cantata No.21: *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*, BWV21: *Sinfonia* [3:05]

Cantata No.56: *Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen*, BWV56 [18:28]

Oboe d'amore Concerto in A, BWV1055 [14:07]

Cantata No.82: *Ich habe genug*, BWV82 [20:52]

Matthias Goerne (baritone), Katharina Arfken (oboe and oboe d'amore);

Freiburger Barockorchester/Gottfried von der Goltz (violin)

rec. Teldec Studio, Berlin, February 2017. DDD

Texts and translations included

HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902323 [56:32]



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

I'll simply say here that I'm considering both for **Recording of the Month** status.