

Second Thoughts and Short Reviews: Autumn 2018/2
By Brian Wilson and Dan Morgan

Reviews are by Brian Wilson unless signed [DM].

Autumn 2018/1 is [here](#) and Summer 2018 is [here](#).

Index:

BACH Secular Cantatas Volume 10_BIS
BRUCH Violin Concerto (*The Golden Age*)_Decca
ELGAR Music Makers; Spirit of England_Chandos
CARISSIMI *Ionas, Iob, Daniele*_CPO
HAUSEGGER *Aufklänge, Wieland*_CPO
LANGGAARD Symphonies Nos. 2 and 6_DaCapo
MAHLER Symphony No.2_BR Klassik
MESSIAEN *La Nativité du Seigneur*_King's
MONTEVERDI Vespers (1610)_PHI_Ramée
- *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse*_SDG (preview)
PARRY Symphony No.4, *Properpine*_Chandos
- Complete Quartets_Willowhayne Records
PETTERSSON Symphonies Nos 5 and 7_BIS
PURCELL Opera Suites_Capriccio
RACHMANINOV Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 4_DG
ROUSSEL Orchestral Works_Chandos
SCARLATTI, A *Requiem, etc.*_Arcana
SCHNITTKER *Peer Gynt*_BIS
SCHUBERT Octet_Harmonia Mundi_PHI
SCHUMANN String Quartets Nos. 2 and 3_Alpha
SHOSTAKVICH Symphony No.8_LSO Live
STRAVINSKY *Apollon, Œdipus*_LSO Live
SUPPÉ Overtures_BR Klassik_Chandos
TCHAIKOVSKY *Swan Lake*_Pentatone
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS Symphony No.1_Hyperion
- Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6_Onyx
WAGNER *Das Rheingold*_Hallé

Four Fantasies_Anna Federova_Channel Classics

Prologue: Music from Early Operas_Pentatone

The Trio Sonata through Two Centuries_London Baroque_BIS

Prologue

Claudio MONTEVERDI (1567-1643) *L'Orfeo: Toccata and Prologue Dal mio Permesso amato* (La Musica) [7.21]

Giulio CACCINI (1551-1618) *L'Euridice: Prologue – Io che d'alti sospir* (La Tragedia) [3.59]

Francesco CAVALLI (1602-1676) *La Didone: Sinfonia and Prologue Caduta è Troia* (Iride) [4.03]

L'Eritrea: Prologue Nelle grotte arimaspe (Iride) [3.29]

Stefano LANDI (1587-1639) *Il Sant'Alessio: Sinfonia and Prologue Roma son io* (Roma) [9.54]



Luigi ROSSI (1597-1653) *Il palazzo incantato ovvero La guerriera amante: Prologue Vaghi rivi* (La Pittura) [3.22]

Francesco CAVALLI *L'Ormindo: Sinfonia and Prologue Non mi è Patria l'Olimpo* (L'Armonia) [7.24]

Pietro Antonio CESTI (1623-1669) *Il Pomo d'Oro, Sinfonia and Prologue Amore et Imeneo* (La Gloria Austriaca) [6.12]

Alessandro STRADELLA (1639-1682) *Sinfonia a due violini e basso* [6.42]

Pietro Antonio CESTI *L'Argia: Sinfonia e Prologo De' gotici splendori* (Amore) [5.03]

Alessandro STRADELLA (1639-1682) *Prologo per musica. La Pace incatenata che dorme, si risveglia e dice: Con meste luci* [9.19]

Alessandro SCARLATTI (1660-1725) *Gli equivoci in amore, o vero La Rosaura: Sinfonia and Prologue Cessate, oh fulmini!* (Venere) [7.35]

Francesca Aspromonte (soprano)

Il Pomo D'Oro/Enrico Onofri

rec. Teatro delle Voci, Treviso, 19-22 December 2016. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

PENTATONE PTC5186646 SACD [74:29]

SACD available from			
Subscribers stream with pdf booklet from			

This is a slightly oddball concept that actually works very well: instead of an assemblage of arias or choruses, Onofri and his team give us the prologues of some of the earliest and some slightly later (up to 1690) operas, some well-known like the Monteverdi, others much less so. Actually, the concept works so well that I could have wished for more, such as the dramatic prologue to Monteverdi's *Ulisse*, where a naked human soul is depicted as the plaything of the gods. No matter: there's a new version of the complete opera on the horizon from John Eliot Gardner and his English Baroque Soloists on their own SDG label (**SDG730**, 3 CDs, mid-price). I've had time only to dip into this as a 24-bit download, with pdf booklet, from hyperion-records.co.uk – look out for a full review in due course.



The excellent performances and very good Pentatone recording add up to make *Prologue* very far from a dry academic exercise.

Claudio MONTEVERDI Vespers (1610)

I recently reviewed Philippe Herreweghe's second recording of the Vespers for his own PHI label, replacing his earlier Harmonia Mundi (**PHI29**). In [Spring 2018/3](#) I compared that recording with a new release from Linn, directed by John Butt. The Linn came to me in 24/96 format, in contrast to the PHI in mp3 at a mere 192kb/s, but I'm pleased to report that, having complained repeatedly about the poor quality of press previews from the Outhere group, I've now obtained lossless (16-bit wav) files of this recording, endearing it to me even more, though my reservations about the extra value of the Parrott (Erato) and King (Hyperion) recordings remain – the former at super-budget price and with music from *Selva morale* and the latter adding the second *Magnificat* and the Mass *In illo tempore*, also from the 1610 collection. (My thanks to Matt Groom of RSK Entertainment for his good offices in obtaining the lossless files.)

Herreweghe omits the opening fanfare which Monteverdi borrowed from his opera *Orfeo* and starts with the versicle and response for Vespers but a new recording, on another Outhere label, goes a step further, omitting that and all the *concertato* music on the basis of Monteverdi's own note which seems to imply that the music may be performed with organ accompaniment only, supplemented in places by harpsichord (one gut-strung, one brass-strung), bass sackbut, bass cornett and bass viol. There are losses – the instrumental *Sonata sopra sancta Maria* is omitted – and gains – a cleaner, leaner sound – but overall, whatever one may think of the premise, I liked this enough to recommend it as an alternative to the more traditional recordings, though in addition to one of them rather than as a replacement. My full review is currently on hold because of the very poor quality of the press review – with one track at 92kb/s, the worst ever – until I can hear the recording in better quality:



Claudio MONTEVERDI (1567-1643)

Vespero della Beata Vergine (Vespers, Venice 1610)

Version without concertato instruments

Ludus Modalis/Bruno Boterf (tenor)

rec. October 2017, Church of Saint Cybar, Pranzac, France, as a component of the Au Gré des Arts Festival.

Texts and translations included

RAMÉE RAM1702 [59:20 + 31:17]

Giacomo CARISSIMI (1605-1674) *Oratorio di Daniele Profeta*

Historia Ionæ [19:02]

Historia di Iob [9:47]

Oratorio de Daniele Profeta, parts I and II [18:03 + 13:36]

Historia di Ezechia [12:19]

WESER-RENAISSANCE Bremen/Manfred Cordes

rec. Sendesaal, Radio Bremen, 20-22 February 2009. DDD

Texts and translations included

CPO 7774892 [73:50] For CD purchase details please see [review](#) by Richard Hanlon.



Subscribers stream with pdf
booklet from

NAXOS
MUSIC LIBRARY

The only surprise in recommending this recording is that we had to wait so long for it – recorded in 2009, it was released earlier this year.

London Baroque have made many very fine recordings of the music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for Harmonia Mundi and BIS. Now BIS have assembled their contributions into an 8-CD box set and download with the title **The Trio Sonata through Two Centuries**, the former for around £55, the latter for a much more cost-effective \$39 (16-bit) or \$59 (24-bit) with pdf booklet from [eclassical.com](#)¹ (**BIS9050**). The recordings, initially released between 2003 and 2013 need no introduction, having received the highest praise in many quarters. Their Bach CD (not included) was a **Recording of the Month** for Kirk McElhearn – [review](#). Though Paul Shoemaker, had reservations about one volume, *The Trio Sonata in Seventeenth-century England* – [review](#) – that's very much against the grain of general opinion.



¹ Confusingly, there's another [eclassical](#) link where the price shoots up to \$124.29 for 24-bit!

CDs available from			
Reviewed in 24-bit sound with pdf booklet from	 High-quality classical download store		

Henry PURCELL (1659 -1695)

Opera Suites:

The Fairy Queen, Z629 [32:00]*The Prophetess*, Z627: *The History of Dioclesian* [12:22]*King Arthur* [18:49]*The Indian Queen: Symphony* [5:15]

Academy of St Martin in the Fields/Sir Neville Marriner

rec. St. Judes, London, 20-22 October 1994. DDD

CAPRICCIO ENCORE C8001 [68:43]

CD available from			
Reviewed in lossless sound with pdf booklet from	 High-quality classical download store		

This review was intended for the main pages some time ago but seems never to have got there. I've had to scan the printed version and put it through OCR to retrieve it.

The way to enjoy Purcell's operas — more accurately semi-operas — without tears is to listen to these orchestral suites, made after his death, probably by his brother Daniel, at his widow's request. Even purists who insist on the whole opera rather than bleeding chunks will find themselves humming or singing along. In any case, Purcell's music is better suited to excerpting than most composers in the form of the suites.

Unless you insist on period instruments, I can't imagine the suites being better performed than on this reissue of a CD first released in 1995. Detailed comparison with Tafelmusik and Jeanne Lamon in a slightly more substantial selection of Purcell's *Ayres for the Theatre* on their own label (**TMK1010CD**) would probably give the advantage to the latter, especially if you prefer period instruments, but there's no lack of period style from Marriner and his team, even though they employ modern instruments

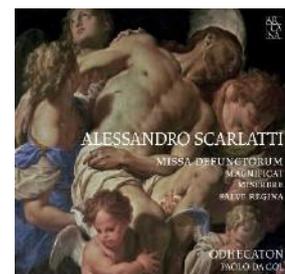
Whether you choose the Capriccio reissue or the Tafelmusik, there's a great deal of foot-tapping music on both and both are well recorded. Sample either and you will probably want to buy. Then you may well want to move on to a collection of music from Purcell's other works from The Parley of Instruments and Peter Holman on Hyperion Helios in smaller-scale performances on original instruments to rival the Capriccio and Tafelmusik recordings **CDH55010**: download from [Hyperion](#) for £6.50 — [review](#) — or their 3-CD set of *Complete Ayres for the Theatre* (**CDS44381/3** — [review](#): download from [Hyperion](#) for £13.50).

Alessandro SCARLATTI (1660-1725)*Missa Defunctorum a 4 voci e basso continuo (Requiem, c.1717)* [35:42]*Salve Regina a 4 voci con violini e basso continuo* (circa 1697) [9:17]*Miserere mei, Deus a 9 voci in doppio coro* (1708) [9:37]*Magnificat a 5 voci e basso continuo* (before 1715) [21:57]

Odhecaton/Paolo Da Col

rec. Oratorio degli Angeli Custodi, Lucca, Italy, 5-8 December 2015.

Texts and translations included.

ARCANA A398 [76:35] Reviewed as mp3 press preview from [outhere-music.com](#).



Like the recording of Purcell Suites (above), this was intended for the main pages long ago – I actually promised it in another review – but was lost when I changed computers and had to be reconstructed by scanning the printout I had made to proof-read.

This seems to be the only current recording of Alessandro Scarlatti's *Requiem*. It sounds very old-fashioned for 1717; though hardly deserving of the description 'featureless [and] dull' applied by Robert Craft when it was performed at Stravinsky's funeral, it is certainly less adventurous than the music of Gesualdo composed a century earlier, which so fascinated Stravinsky. In fact, though the work is much influenced by plainsong and the polyphonic music of the sixteenth century, a kind of updated *stile antico*, the notes rightly point to a number of advanced harmonic choices.

The *Salve Regina*, too, sounds more like music from a century before, though no worse for that; it's much more uplifting than some settings of this text in which the 'poor exiled children of Eve' call upon the Virgin Mary for help. The recordings by Odhecaton that I have encountered before have been of earlier music; perhaps because of their expertise in the older repertoire, on this Scarlatti recording, too, I enjoyed their performances. The *Requiem* and the penitential psalm *Miserere* are as serious in tone as the works demand, with a much lighter tone in the *Salve Regina* and *Magnificat*, the latter rounding off the programme metaphorically and literally on an excellent note.

Odhecaton are a comparatively large ensemble, as required for the 9-part double-choir setting of the *Miserere*, but don't expect the double-choir to sound as spectacular as Monteverdi and don't expect a setting as florid as Allegri's famous setting, which grew more elaborate and added more top notes with each generation. A quotation in the booklet indicates how neither the Scarlatti nor the Anerio settings satisfied the Sistine Choir once they had assimilated the Allegri *Miserere*. Modern listeners who feel that the Allegri has become a bit over-exposed may well find the *Miserere* on this recording a welcome change.

Not only does this release fill a gap in the catalogue; all the music is well worth hearing in these persuasive performances.

Jean-Philippe RAMEAU (1683-1764)

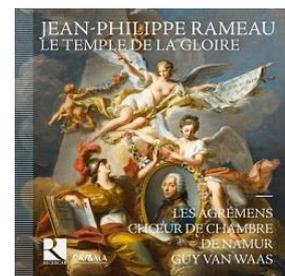
Le Temple de la Gloire

Les Agrémens; Chœur de Chambre de Namur/Guy Van Waas rec. 2014

RICERCAR RIC363 [57:09 + 67:28]

Not the most urgent Rameau recommendation, but well worth at least streaming.

For details and purchase links please see [review by Brian Wilson](#). See also Stuart Sillitoe's [review](#) of Nicholas McGegan's recording (Philharmonia Baroque **PBP10**).



1700

Works by **VIVALDI, GEMINIANI, LOCATELLI, DURANTE** and others

Concerto Italiano/Rinaldo Alessandrini rec. 2017

NAÏVE OP30568 [65:03]

Lively performances and recordings, likely to encourage the listener to explore this repertoire further.

For details and purchase links please see [review by Brian Wilson](#).



Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750)

Secular Cantatas X: 'Cantatas of Contentment'

Angenehmes Wiederau, freue dich in deinen Auen, BWV30a [35:42]

Ich bin in mir vergnügt BWV204 [30:20]

Carolyn Sampson (soprano), Robin Blaze (counter-tenor), Makoto Sakurada (tenor), Dominik Wörner (bass), Bach Collegium Japan/Masaaki Suzuki
rec. 2017, Saltama Arts Theatre Concert Hall, Japan. DSD.

BIS BIS-2351 SACD [66:11] For SACD purchase links please see [review by Roy Westbrook](#).



Reviewed in 24-bit sound with pdf booklet from	 High-quality classical download store
--	---

Finis coronat opus – the end crowns the work, not, maybe with Bach’s masterpieces in the cantata format, which Suzuki and his team have already given us, but two very enjoyable works. Bach’s librettist’s word in BWV30a, *angenehm*, pleasant or agreeable, sums up the whole album. Now we have all of Bach’s sacred and secular cantatas from this team, an enterprise which no other single conductor has achieved. While there are other very fine accounts of the complete sacred cantatas, from Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Gustav Leonhardt (Warner) and John Eliot Gardner (SDG), no-one else to my knowledge has attempted to record the complete secular equivalents. I don’t, for example, recall anyone else recording BWV30a.

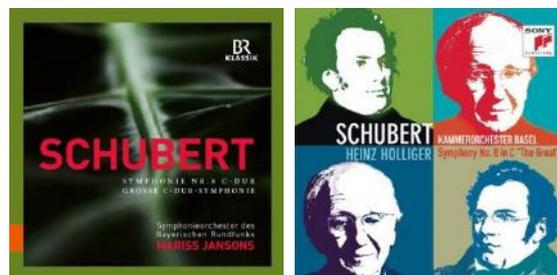
I’m certainly not going to discard the Oiseau Lyre/Decca recording of the *Coffee and Peasant Cantatas*, with Emma Kirkby and Christopher Hogwood (4176212), but Suzuki’s ten SACDs are now the go-to source for the whole deal.

Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

Symphony No. 8 (9) in C, D944: 'Great C major Symphony' (1825-26) [60:22]

Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks/Mariss Jansons
rec. live Herkulesaal der Residenz, Munich, 1-2 February 2018. DDD.

BR KLASSIK 900169 [60:22]



Die Zauberharfe (The Magic Harp), D644: Overture [10:19]

Symphony No.9 in C, D944 'The Great' [60:32]

Basel Chamber Orchestra/Heinz Holliger

SONY 19075814382 [70:52]

Jansons CD available from		
Holliger CD available from		

Any new recording from **Mariss Jansons** raises the question: will this be one of his special events, in which case it’s likely to be very special, or one of his routine run-throughs which have led my colleague Dan Morgan to dub some of his recordings the work of Marmite Jansons?¹

If there’s one work in which conductor and orchestra can really make or break the whole thing, it’s the ‘Great’ C major symphony, a monumental work deliberately composed to match Beethoven’s Ninth, itself premiered in 1824, the year before Schubert began work on his final symphony. It was to be a

work far excelling anything he had written before, even if one assumes, with reason, that he had actually completed the 'Unfinished'. Alas, it was never to be publicly performed in his lifetime, and even when it finally received a performance from Mendelssohn some of the players reportedly laughed at what still seemed too 'advanced' in style in 1839.

Even now, no-one quite knows what number to give it. Because 'Number 7' was long left vacant for a supposed 'Gmünden-Gastein' symphony, sometimes believed to be an orchestration of the *Grand Duo*, Anglophones numbered the 'Unfinished' 8 and the 'Great C major' 9, but in German-speaking countries the numbers 7 and 8 are applied respectively. We need a definitive decision to end the confusion, such as that which transformed Dvořák's five acknowledged symphonies into the nine which he actually wrote.

The Karl Böhm recording from which I got to know this work survives as a download, coupled with No.8, as a Presto special CD, and in the set of all the Schubert symphonies (DG **4713072**, 4 CDs, around £21 – [review](#)). Of more recent versions, there's Sir Charles Mackerras, in period mode with the OAE (Erato **5618962**, budget-price, download only, with Nos. 5, 8 in the Newbould putative completion, and *Rosamunde*) and with the modern instruments of the Philharmonia (Signum **SIGCD133** – [review](#) – [DL News 2016/3](#)). All three are very worthwhile.

Like the new Jansons, the Signum stems from a live performance, as does one of Claudio Abbado's last and finest contributions to the recorded repertoire, with Orchestra Mozart, a very special recording which earned high praise from [Michael Cookson](#) (Recording of the Month) and [John Quinn](#). Vinyl fans – include me out – will be delighted to know that for over 50% more than the CD, that recording is also available on LP.

Without being overtly programmatic, like Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony or Smetana's *Má Vlast*, or including the actual sounds of nature like Mahler's First Symphony, or advertising itself in its title, like Dvořák's *In Nature's Realm*, Schubert's Ninth is open-air music, redolent of his beloved countryside. It would not be difficult, I think, to produce a DVD of scenes from the vicinity of Gastein, perhaps interspersed with some romantic paintings (Caspar David Friedrich?) with the Ninth, composed there, as its soundtrack. The new Jansons might not make that ideal soundtrack – for me that might be the Abbado or one of the Mackerras recordings – but it's a strong contender and it's well recorded.

The notes in the booklet are enlightening – I'm interested to see that the writer, quoting from one of Schubert's letters, has noted the same pictorial quality in the music that I've mentioned – but the assumption that Schubert's illness was caused by syphilis is too unquestioning in the light of modern research. Once too naughty to be mentioned in books on Schubert, like Arthur Hutchings' in the Dent Master Musician series (1945), where the word doesn't even feature in the Index, syphilis is now no longer unhesitatingly accepted as the cause of the composer's death.

Lovers of period instruments will be interested in the **Heinz Holliger** recording. This was released just as I was completing this round-up and I've had time only to hear the filler, the *Zauberharfe* Overture, later re-used for *Rosamunde*, which, I'm delighted to note, has been placed first. If the Symphony is up to the same standard, this is a strong contender.

¹ See his review of Jansons' Bruckner Symphony No.8 in [Summer 2018](#).

Franz SCHUBERT

Octet in F, D803 [61:00]

5 Minuets, D89/3 and D89/5 (transcribed for octet) [5:21 + 3:50]

Isabelle Faust (Stradivarius violin 'Sleeping Beauty', 1704)

Anne Katharina Schreiber (violin anon., Holland, c.1700)

Danusha Waskiewicz (viola anon., Bohemia, c.1860)

Kristin von der Goltz (cello anon., Vienna, c.1800)

James Munro (double bass G. Panormo, London, 1827)

Lorenzo Coppola (clarinets) [11-key B flat clarinet after A. Rorarius (Vienna, c.1820); copy by Agnès Guérout (Paris, 2010); 6-key C clarinet after J. B. Merklein (Vienna, c.1810); copy by Agnès Guérout (Paris, 2010)]

Teunis van der Zwart (horn Courtois neveu aîné, Paris, 1802)

Javier Zafra (bassoon W. Triebert, Paris, 1805)

rec. Teldex Studio, Berlin, 2017. DDD.

Reviewed as 24-bit download with pdf booklet from eclassical.com.**HARMONIA MUNDI HMM902263** [70:06] For purchase links please see [review by Simon Thompson](#).

Octet in F, D803 [57:35]

Quartettsatz in c minor, D703 [9:45]

Edding Quartet; Northernlight

[Baptiste Lopez (violin), Caroline Bayet (violin); Deirdre Dowling (viola); Ageet Zweistra (cello); Damien Guffroy (double bass); Nicola Boud (clarinet); Julien Debordes (bassoon) Nicolas Chedmail (horn)]

rec. 6-9 January 2014; Flagey Studio 4, Brussels. DDD.

Reviewed from press preview.

PHI LPH015 [67:16]

If Schubert's String Quintet is one of my favourite chamber works for its intensity of emotion, the Octet is up there, too, for sheer delight, excelling even Beethoven in rare unbuttoned mood in his Septet, which was Schubert's model, though not without some typically Schubertian moments of wistfulness. I think I would even choose it for my Desert Island in preference to the 'Trout' Quintet.

There are many fine recordings of this music, notably from the Vienna Octet (Decca **E46668502**, mid-price, with Spohr or budget-price Alto **ALC1227**, with *Quartettsatz* and Vienna Dances – [review](#)) and, another favourite of mine, Music from Aston Magna (Harmonia Mundi **HMX3950749**, super-budget download – [review](#)).

Both new recordings score by offering period instrument performances. Both would do very nicely for that Desert Island but neither quite scores in preference to those older recordings or, indeed, the Gaudier Ensemble on mid-price Hyperion (**CDH55460** – [DL News 2013/15](#)). Both also add extra works by Schubert, but these would have been better placed first.

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-56)

String Quartet No.2 in F, Op.41/2 (1842) [26:07]

String Quartet No.3 in A, Op.41/3 (1842) [31:25]

Elias Quartet [Sara Bitlloch (violin); Donald Grant (violin); Martin Saving (viola); Marie Bitlloch (cello)]
rec. live, May 2016, Potton Hall, Suffolk, UK
Reviewed as mp3 press preview.

ALPHA280 [57:34] For details and purchase links see [review by Claire Seymour](#).



Subscribers stream with pdf
booklet from



My expectations were high: this recording not only received an enthusiastic review from Claire Seymour (link above); it was also a Gramophone Editor's Choice. Moreover, Volume 1 of the Elias Quartet's Beethoven from Wigmore Hall was my *Recording of the Month* in April 2015 – [review](#) – though I failed to keep my promise to follow the other volumes in the series. *Mea maxima culpa*.

The obvious comparison is with the Doric Quartet, who fit all three Schumann quartets on one CD (Chandos **CHAN10692** – [review](#) – [review](#) – download in mp3, 16- and 24-bit lossless from [chandos.net](#)). The Harmonia Mundi recording, again of all three quartets, by the Eroica Quartet is now download only (**HMU907270**). Any one of these three recordings can be recommended, though the extra music on Chandos and Harmonia Mundi is certainly an incentive; the Alpha is rather short value for full-price.

My review copy of the new Alpha release came at a miserable 192kbs. Outhere can do much better – other press previews in the same batch were at 320kbs. They really cannot expect reviewers to say much about recording quality from such miserly quality. (But see my review of the Monteverdi Vespers above for better news.)

Joseph HAYDN (1732-1809)

Cello Concertos Nos. 1 and 2

Arnold SCHOENBERG (1874-1951)

Verklärte Nacht

Trondheim Soloists/Alisa Weilerstein (cello) rec. 2018

PENTATONE PTC5186717 SACD [73:00]



Oddities of coupling apart, a very fine first recording for Alisa Weilerstein for Pentatone with her Trondheim Soloists.

For details and purchase links please see [review by Brian Wilson](#).

Hector BERLIOZ (1803-1869)

Grande Messe des Morts

Bror Magnus Tødenes (tenor); Bergen PO & Ch/Edward Gardner rec. live 2018

CHANDOS CHSA5219 SACD [80:54]



Gardner's *Requiem* lacks scale, character or ambition; disappointing sound, too.

For details and purchase links please see [review by Dan Morgan](#).

Richard WAGNER (1813-1883)

Das Rheingold - music drama in one act (1869)
Woglinde: Sarah Tynan (soprano)
Wellgunde: Madeleine Shaw (mezzo-soprano)
Flosshilde: Leah-Marian Jones (mezzo-soprano)
Alberich: Samuel Youn (bass-baritone)
Wotan: Iain Paterson (bass-baritone)
Fricka: Susan Bickley (mezzo-soprano)
Freia: Emma Bell (soprano)
Fasolt: Reinhard Hagen (bass)
Fafner: Clive Bayley (bass)
Donner: David Stout (baritone)
Froh: David Butt Philip (tenor)
Loge: Will Hartmann (tenor)
Mime: Nicky Spence (tenor)
Erda: Susanne Resmark (mezzo-soprano)
The Hallé/Sir Mark Elder



rec. live 27 November 2016 and in rehearsal, The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. DDD.

Plot synopsis in the notes; libretto and English translation can be downloaded free from the Hallé website

Reviewed as 24/44.1 download with pdf booklet from hyperion-records.co.uk.

HALLÉ CDHLD7549 [3 CDs: 166:20] For CD purchase links please see [review](#) by Ralph Moore

Some aspects of this release have divided opinion, not least Samuel Youn as Alberich – too light for some, but masterful and multicoloured for others. Ralph Moore sees both sides of the coin: ‘perhaps a tad light for Wagner, but his singing is incisive and he is an excellent vocal actor’. Iain Paterson’s Wotan is also controversial: just right for some, but a little too inclined to the wobble which for some will mar parts of this recording, beginning with the encounter with the Rhine Maidens at the very outset.

Overall, this is a *Rheingold* to which I shall return, but not one to displace existing recommendations, notably Solti, whose recording is available separately on two mid-price CDs (Decca **4555562** – [review](#) of alternative reissue, no longer available), but much better in the form of the whole *Ring* cycle on a single blu-ray audio disc in a hardback book (**4786748: Recording of the Month** – [review](#)). Alternatively, Jaap van Zweden’s recording on Naxos, CD (**8660374/5**) or blu-ray audio (**NBD0049**): the blu-ray is slightly less expensive than the CDs. Those in search of a DVD version will find that the Frankfurt Ring doesn’t take too many visual liberties (available only in box set of 8 DVDs, Oehms **OC999**).

If your player muddles the tracks on the Hallé download because it looks first for the artist information, which varies from track to track on this download, the solution is to cut the information on each track down to ‘Mark Elder: The Halle Orchestra’. Do it carefully, having backed up all the tracks as a precaution. Alternatively, most players, like MusicBee, can be adapted in ‘settings’ to look for the album rather than the artist. (I haven’t managed to do this with my Sony Walkman, but I can’t anyway imagine playing a Wagner opera while on the move.

The libretto, which could easily have been included with the pdf booklet for the download, has to be obtained separately.

Franz von SUPPÉ (1819–1895)**Overtures***Die schöne Galathée* (The Beautiful Galatea) (1865) [7:21]*Dichter und Bauer* (Poet and Prasant) (1846) [9:14]*Boccaccio* (1879) [7:17]*Leichte Kavallerie* (Light Cavalry) (1866) [6:41]*Banditenstreiche* (The Jolly Robbers) (1867) [6:19]*Pique Dame* (Queen of Spades) (1864) [7:19]*Die Frau Meisterin* (The Lady Mistress) (1868) [7:11]*Ein Morgen, ein Mittag, ein Abend in Wien* (Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna) (1844) [8:07]

Münchner Rundfunkorchester/Ivan Repušić

rec. 2018, Studio 1, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Munich

BR KLASSIK 900326 [59:29] Reviewed as a 16-bit press download; booklet included

CD available from			
Subscribers stream with pdf booklet from			

It's spooky. For days I had Suppé's *Light Cavalry* overture cantering through my mind when this new collection appeared. It was all the excuse I needed to dig out Charles Dutoit's album, recorded with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal in the 1980s ([Presto Decca](#)). Supremely well played, it's also a reminder of happier times – the debonair Dutoit is pictured on the CD booklet, smiling broadly – when he and the OSM produced a raft of memorable discs. It was the early days of digital, too, and as a fledgling collector and hi-fi nut I snapped up many of these releases. They sound as remarkable now as they did then, even if they show a little 'edge' at times.

This Munich recording, which is almost identical to the Montreal one, is directed by Ivan Repušić, who's new to me. He starts the show with a spirited account of *The Beautiful Galatea*. Not quite as infectious as Dutoit, perhaps, and the horn playing isn't as supple, but otherwise it's a very decent performance. In fact, there's a lot to like here, with enthusiastic playing and full, warm sound. However, in a few pieces, such as *Light Cavalry*, I really missed the OSM's high-stepping *hauteur*. The Munich brass are glorious at the start of *Poet and Peasant* though, the wistful solo beautifully done. A bit more theatricality would be welcome, but I'm just being picky. And Repušić isn't without humour, especially in *The Jolly Robbers*. As for *The Lady Mistress*, rarely heard, it's more attractive here than it is on the variable disc from Sir Neville Marriner and the ASMF ([Warner](#)).

Repušić's dance rhythms are nicely sprung – *Queen of Spades* is a delight – and there are terrifically imperial moments in *Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna*. Alas, it's too just too rushed, so articulation – one of Dutoit's strongest suits – is compromised. Interestingly, the OSM play with a disciplined flamboyance – more French than Austrian – that makes these potboilers seem a lot better than they are. Factor in John Dunkerley's brightly lit but very atmospheric recording and you have a Suppé collection to die for. Still, this entertaining newcomer is most welcome.

Enthusiasm and excitement aplenty; Dutoit adds suavity and style, though. **[DM]**

A 2013 collection of **Suppé Overtures and Marches** from the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Neeme Järvi (Chandos **CHSA5110**) provoked a mixed reaction. Rob Barnett recommended with confidence – [review](#) – as did Simon Thompson – [review](#) – and Gary Higginson with a few caveats – [review](#) – but Dan Morgan thought it dispiriting; I tended to agree about the lack of oomph – joint review in [DL News](#) – and John Sheppard shared some of that disappointment – [review](#). One to sample from [Naxos Music Library](#) if you can, where you can also stream the [Dutoit](#) for comparison.

With five Suppé items included from the Vienna Phil, Sir Georg Solti's Decca twofer *Famous Overtures* (4609822) is now download only. His older (mono, some from 78s) LPO recordings of four of them, with Beethoven, Rossini and Verdi, can be found on Decca Eloquence 4806588.

Pyotr Ilyich TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

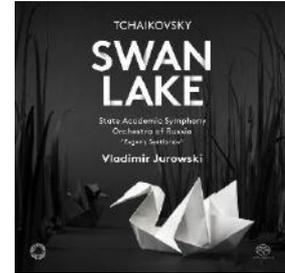
Swan Lake, Op. 20 (1875-1876)* [151:46]

State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia 'Evgeny Svetlanov'/Vladimir Jurowski

rec. 2017/18, Philharmonia 2, Rachmaninov Hall, Moscow

*Premiere version (1877)

PENTATONE PTC5186640 SACD [71:54 + 79:52] Reviewed as a 16-bit press download; booklet included



I've really been looking forward to this, as we need an up-to-date recording of Tchaikovsky's glorious, multi-hued score. (Neeme Järvi's 2012 Bergen account for [Chandos](#) wasn't it.) Ernest Ansermet's classic OSR version, recorded for Decca sixty years ago, may be severely cut, but it's still a firm favourite. It was recently reissued by [Major Classics](#). Close behind are the full-length Charles Dutoit/OSM set (also Decca) and John Lanchbery's complete Philharmonia one (Warner). That was before I finally got round to Evgeny Svetlanov's 'simply unforgettable' [Melodiya](#) performance, now remastered. Not surprisingly, it was a Recording of the Month.

Ansermet, Lanchbery and Svetlanov share one important attribute: theatrical experience. Why should that matter? Well, for a start they bring a degree of give and take to their ballet recordings, a powerful sense of a volatile and evolving drama. There's a necessary suppleness, too, coupled with an intuitive feeling for phrase and tempo. Moreover, they're keenly aware of the music's topography – its peaks especially – which, in turn, makes for an eventful and rewarding journey. Dutoit and the Previn/LSO set (Warner) come pretty close, though.

By now, you've probably guessed where I'm going with this. I find Vladimir Jurowski extremely variable, as shown by his recent *Zarathustra* ([Pentatone](#)) and *Alpenhornfonie* ([LPO](#)); one is dire, the other splendid. Minutes into this *Swan Lake* and I knew exactly where it belonged. Goodness, could there be a more po-faced performance than this? Rhythms are foursquare, pacing is diffident and there's absolutely *no* sense of theatre.

Catastrophically, Tchaikovsky's dramatic landmarks – the famous set-pieces – are reduced to mere undulations in an otherwise featureless plain. Any positives? Immaculate playing and good sound. Alas, that doesn't begin to atone for Jurowski's lacklustre response to this most varied and vital of scores. (For anyone who may be interested, these forces have also recorded *The Sleeping Beauty* for ICA Classics; I daresay a Pentatone set of *The Nutcracker* will appear in due course.)

More turkey than swan; just awful. [DM]

DISCOVERY OF THE MONTH

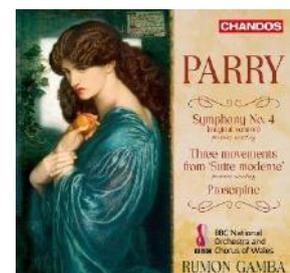
Sir Charles Hubert Hastings PARRY (1848-1918)

Symphony No.4 (original version, 1889, ed. Jeremy Dibble: Premiere recording) [43:25]

*Proserpine** (1912, arr. Jeremy Dibble for chorus and orchestra) [10:57]

Movements from *Suite moderne* (1886, 1892, ed. Jeremy Dibble: Premiere recording) [20:18]

BBC National Chorus of Wales (ladies)*



BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Rumon Gamba
 rec. 27-29 June 2017, BBC Hoddinott Hall, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff. DDD.
CHANDOS CHAN10994 [74:59]

CD available from			
Reviewed in 24-bit sound with pdf booklet from			

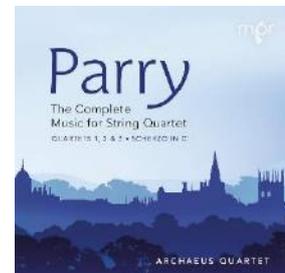
Chandos already had the Parry symphony repertoire pretty well sewn up with their cycle recorded by Matthias Bamert and the LPO, recorded 1990 to 1992 (Symphonies 1-5 **CHAN9120** – [DL Roundup July 2011/2](#): 3 CDs around £37, currently on offer from Presto for £30.50, or download from [Chandos](#) for £29.97; Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4 **CHAN8896**). Now they doubly secure their Parry credentials by offering the reconstructed original version of No.4, considerably different from the work which emerged after revisions in 1904 and 1909.

I caught part of this recording on Radio 3 and at first thought the *nobilmente* episodes came from an Elgar work that I didn't know or had forgotten, which is both a comment on the holes in my musical knowledge and a compliment to the music and performance. Elsewhere, unsurprisingly, it's Brahms that springs to mind, with Elgar again, in lighter mode, in the short Shelley-inspired ballet *Proserpine*.

The one thing that wasn't apparent from Radio 3 on the small kitchen radio was the recording quality – first-rate in 24-bit format – and the notes, both well up to the highest Chandos standard.

Parry seems not to have commercial appeal – the very worthwhile Naxos recording of the second symphony appears to be download only now – but I really hope that this new recording will succeed, even if you already have the Bamert set. If you are uncertain, subscribers to Naxos Music Library can compare the two versions [there](#).

Staying with **PARRY**, let me recommend his complete works for **String Quartet** recorded by the **Archaeus Quartet** in November 2017, recently released on Willowhayne Records: Quartets 1-3 and Scherzo in C on **MPR102**, 2 CDs [44:15 + 37:23]. CDs or download from [Presto](#).



The Archaeus Quartet, who have done much to sponsor the less-familiar repertoire as, for example, in their recording of the York Bowen quartets (BM, reissued by Naxos – [review](#)), give us good, slightly understated performances.

[As I was tying up this set of reviews, Rob Barnett's appreciative [review](#) of the Symphony, etc., appeared. I didn't feel the need to recast what I had written, as we are closely in agreement, even down to noting the Brahms influences and the similarities to Elgar in both *nobilmente* and more unbuttoned modes.]

Sir Edward ELGAR (1857–1934)

The Music Makers, Op.69, Ode by Arthur O'Shaughnessy for contralto solo, chorus, and orchestra (1912)¹ [36:47]

The Spirit of England, Op.80, Three poems by Laurence Binyon for tenor or soprano solo, chorus, and orchestra (1915–17)² [25:05]

- The Fourth of August [6:53]; To Women [5:51]; For the Fallen [12:21]

Dame Sarah Connolly (mezzo)¹

Andrew Staples (tenor)²

BBC Symphony Chorus; BBC Symphony Orchestra/Sir Andrew Davis
 rec. Watford Colosseum, 14 and 15 April 2018. DSD.

Texts included



Reviewed as 24/96 download with pdf booklet from chandos.net. Also available in mp3, 16-bit and 24-bit surround and from 2 November 2018 on SACD.

CHANDOS CHSA5215 SACD [61:56]

This is a timely release just in time for the commemoration of the centenary of the end of World War I. My full review is pending on the main pages but, in brief, I find *The Spirit of England*, a work which Andrew Davis was surprised to like so much, superior to the introspective *The Music Makers*. Downloaders can choose to obtain it separately, which would be my choice, or there are several fine versions, from Dutton (**CDLX7172**, with Ivor Gurney's *War Elegy*, etc. – [review](#)), Somm (**SOMMCD255**, with *Carillon*, *Arthur*, etc. – [review](#) – [review](#)) and an earlier Chandos offering conducted by Sir Alexander Gibson (**CHAN6574**, with *Coronation Ode*, budget-price CD or download from chandos.net for £4.99 – [DL Roundup August 2012/1](#)).

Fans of Chandos's series of recordings of **Aaron COPLAND** will be pleased to note that the third volume is now available to download from chandos.net and will be released in early November on **CHSA5222 SACD**. The contents are *Connotations*, the Third Symphony in its original version, *Letter from Home* and *Down a Country Lane*. (BBC Philharmonic/John Wilson – rec. March 2018 [66:09]).

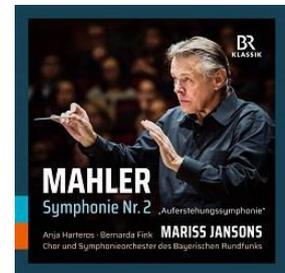
Gustav MAHLER (1860-1911)

Symphony No. 2 ('Resurrection') [80:52]

Anja Harteros (soprano), Bernarda Fink (alto); Bavarian Radio Ch & SO/Mariss Jansons rec. 2011 **BR KLASSIK 900167** [80:52]

Inexplicably and irretrievably dull; avoid.

For details and purchase links please see [review by Dan Morgan](#). For a very different view of this recording, please see [review by Michael Cookson](#).



Albert ROUSSEL (1869-1937)

Suite in F, Op.33 (1926) [13:31]

Pour une fête de printemps, Op.22 (1920) [11:12]

Évocations, Op.15 (1910–11)* [45:35]

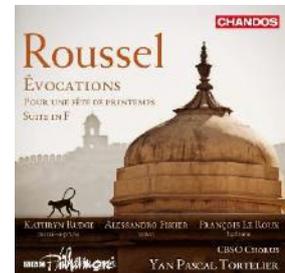
Kathryn Rudge (mezzo), Alessandro Fisher (tenor), François Le Roux (baritone)*

CBSO Chorus*

BBC Philharmonic/Yan Pascal Tortelier

rec. Symphony Hall, Birmingham (live): 7 April 2017 (*Évocations*); MediaCityUK, Salford, Manchester: 8 September 2017 (other works)

CHANDOS CHAN10957 [70:45]



CD available from		
Reviewed in 24-bit sound with pdf booklet from		

Another Roussel feather in Chandos's cap – see [review by Stephen Barber](#). They already had very fine recordings of Roussel's two best-known works, the complete ballets *Bacchus et Ariane*, Op.43, and *Le Festin de l'Araigné*, Op.17, also performed by the BBC Philharmonic and Yan Pascal Tortelier (**CHAN9494** [68:08] – rec. March 1996, reviewed as 24-bit download with pdf booklet from chandos.net; reviewed alongside Naxos recording of *Le Festin* in [DL Roundup February 2012/1](#)).

Neeme Järvi's recording with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra of Roussel's Fourth Symphony, Op.53, and Sinfonietta, Op.52, with Darius Milhaud's *Suite Provençale*, Op.152b, on Chandos **CHAN9072** may seem marginally less recommendable in that the coupling is a good but not outstanding performance

of Claude Debussy's oft-recorded *La Mer*, but the download from chandos.net is available at the attractive price of £4.99 in mp3 or lossless sound – [DL News 2014/5](#). The CD is deleted but may be ordered from the Archive Service.

Alternatively, the Järvi Fourth Symphony is coupled with the Third – one of Rousset's finest works – the Sinfonietta and the second suite from *Bacchus et Ariane* on **CHAN7007** [69:19], a mid-price download from chandos.net. Again, the CD is available only from the Archive Service or to download, suggesting that Chandos may be intending to ask Tortelier to record more of Rousset's music to replace it, a welcome proposition.

Ralph VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

[A Sea Symphony](#) (1903-09) [67:40]

Darest thou now, O soul (1925) [3:12]

Elizabeth Llewellyn (soprano)

Marcus Farnsworth (baritone)

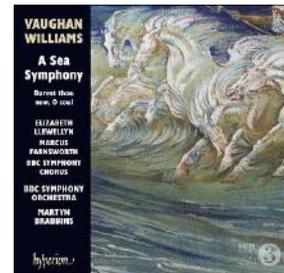
BBC Symphony Chorus

BBC Symphony Orchestra/Martyn Brabbins

rec. 2017, Blackheath Concert Halls, London. DDD

Texts included

HYPERION CDA68245 [70:53] For CD purchase links please see [review by John Quinn](#).



Reviewed in 24-bit sound with pdf booklet from

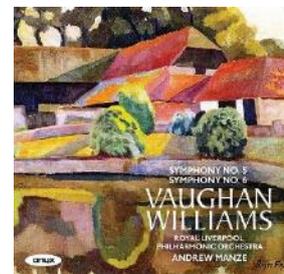


So far, the two ongoing series of VW symphony recordings have been largely complementary, so I'm pleased not to have to plump. When, inevitably, both are complete and probably released as box sets, the choice will be invidious. To date Hyperion and Brabbins have released very fine accounts of the 1920 edition of the 'London' Symphony (**CDA68190** – [review](#) – [Autumn 2017/1](#)) and the Viola Concerto, with Lawrence Power as soloist (**CDA67839**, with McEwen Viola Concerto – [review](#) – [DL Roundup](#)).

Andrew Manze's series with the RLPO has so far given us Nos. 2 (the usual revised edition, so complementary to the Brabbins) and 8; 3 and 4; and 5 and 6. The unavoidable comparison is looming, however, with the imminent release of their 'Sea' Symphony (**ONYX4185**, with *The Lark Ascending*), so you may wish to wait and see. On the other hand, Brabbins and his team are on winning form in this work. Any performance must make sense of the piece as a symphony, not just a connected series of choral pieces, as Sir Adrian Boult did on his classic mono recording (Symphonies 1-9, Decca **4732412**, download only, or No.1 Decca Eloquence **4501442**, download only). This Hyperion does that, and does so in splendid full-fat recording, a real plus when such large forces are involved. The 24/96 download sounds especially fine and, at £13.50, costs little more than the CD. I really didn't want the short filler, which destroys the mood at the end; if it couldn't be placed at the beginning, better leave it out.

Incidentally, I don't think I have mentioned Manze's accounts of the contrasting **Nos. 5 and 6** in these pages (**ONYX4184**), but [John Quinn](#) and [William Hedley](#) have given their slightly different reactions. Subscribers to [Naxos Music Library](#) can judge for themselves there.

The download from [Qobuz](#), with pdf booklet, is exceptionally good value (16-bit £5.76, 24-bit £8.72).



Siegfried von HAUSEGGER (1872–1948)

Aufklänge: Symphonische Variationen über ein Kinderlied [31:16]

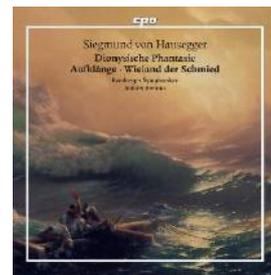
Dionysische Phantasie: Symphonische Dichtung für großes Orchester [19:30]

Wieland der Schmied: Symphonische Dichtung für großes Orchester [17:35]

Bamberger Symphoniker/Antony Hermus

rec. Konzerthalle Bamberg, Joseph-Keilberth Saal, 2-4 January 2013, 8-9 April 2014. DDD.

CPO 777810-2 [68:34] For CD purchase details see [review by Rob Barnett](#) and [review by Nick Barnard](#).



Subscribers stream with pdf booklet from	NAXOS MUSIC LIBRARY
---	-------------------------------

I missed this when it was released in the Summer of 2017. Indeed, I seem to have by-passed Hausegger’s music entirely; his was not much more than a name to me despite CPO’s advocacy of his music over the last ten years. This fine release encourages me to explore further.

How could I have resisted music as evocatively named as *Wieland der Schmied*? Wieland, or Weland in Anglo-Saxon, Völundr in Old Norse, forged Siegfried’s sword *Gram* or *Nothung* and Beowulf’s armour, and the many duplicates which he made of his ring may have inspired Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*. Hamstrung by King Niðhad, he murdered his sons, made goblets of their skulls, and raped their sister before making his escape on eagle’s wings. Some guy!

Sergei RACHMANINOV (1873–1943)

Destination Rachmaninov: Departure

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No.2 in c minor, Op.18 [35:15]

Suite from J. S. Bach’s Partita for Violin in E, BWV1006: Transcription for piano [8:13]

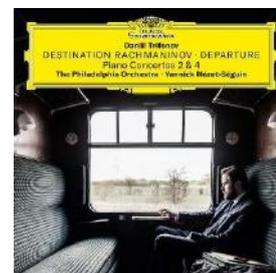
Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No.4 in g minor, Op.40 [26:35]

Daniil Trifonov (piano)

The Philadelphia Orchestra/Yannick Nézet-Séguin

rec. Philadelphia, Kimmel Center, Verizon Hall, 1 October 2015 (Concerto No. 4, live), 12 April 2018 (Concerto No. 2, Partita)

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 4835335 [70:03] Also available on LP **4835362**.



CD available from			
-------------------	--	--	--

On the face of it, this ought to be an attractive proposition: a pianist who has already given us some fine Rachmaninov recordings (Paganini, Chopin and Corelli Variations, etc., **4794970**, also with Yannick Nézet-Séguin – [review](#); Piano Trios, etc., **4796979**, with Gidon Kremer and Giedrė Dirvanauskaitė – [review](#)) teamed with an orchestra with long-standing credentials dating back to the composer himself.

Forget about all the hoop-la about a Rachmaninov journey, with Daniil Trifonov on the cover sitting like Sherlock Holmes or Hercules Poirot in a vintage train compartment or in the booklet standing on a platform or sitting in the guard’s van with his luggage¹ and just enjoy some excellent performances, very well recorded. Don’t expect the performers to go over the top in the second concerto – as Trifonov points out in the booklet, this is a work inspired as much by the classical tradition as the romantic – but that’s the strength of this recording. The (live) recording of the fourth concerto is very welcome – it’s a much better work than its neglect suggests.

The coupling suggests that DG will shortly be giving us these performers in the two other concertos, something of a disappointment for those looking for the traditional coupling of Nos. 2 and 3, and

necessitating the purchase of another full-price CD (or LP!), but introducing listeners to two other concertos which they may warm to.

Those in search of a bargain still have the classic Vladimir Ashkenazy; LSO/André Previn set of all four concertos on a Double Decca 2-for-1 (**4448392**). For Concerto No.2 with the Paganini Variations, Dan Morgan liked the 2017 Alpha release with Anna Vinnitskaya as soloist (**ALPHA275** – [review](#)). Of the versions between those two in date, the Hyperion 2-CD set of all four concertos plus the *Paganini Variations* with Stephen Hough and Andrew Litton in Dallas is well worth putting on your shopping list (**CDA67501/2: Recording of the Month** – [review](#) – [review](#) – [review](#)).

The classic account of Nos. 1 and 4 by Philippe Entremont, the Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy remains available in several download couplings. I would recommend it to anyone with cherished versions of Nos. 2 and 3 and wishing to add the other two concertos, except that the CD-quality download is now a good deal more expensive than the disc when it was last available on Sony's budget-price label.

¹ For some unfathomable reason, Amazon appear to think these important enough to show on their website instead of the usual rear insert of the CD.

Igor STRAVINSKY (1882–1971)

Œdipus Rex (1927, rec. 1948) (in Latin, with French narration) [49:01]

Apollon musagète (1928, rec. 1947) [30:12]

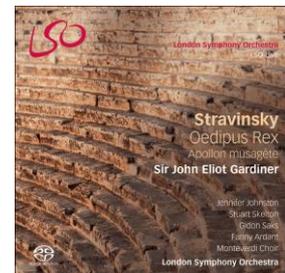
Jennifer Johnston (mezzo) - Jocasta; Stuart Skelton (tenor) - Oedipus; Gidon Saks (bass-baritone) - Creon; Fanny Ardant – narrator; Monteverdi Choir;

London Symphony Orchestra/Sir John Eliot Gardiner

Rec. live 25 April and 1 May 2013, the Barbican, London. DSD

Text and translation included.

LSO LIVE LSO0751 SACD [79:13] details of SACD purchase links see [review](#) by John Sheppard.



Reviewed in 24-bit sound with pdf booklet from



I have to admit that *Œdipus* leaves me unmoved; as for the *Apollon* coupling, it certainly makes for a well-filled album, but I found myself rather less involved than with the ASMF and Neville Marriner on an Argo recording well deserving to be reissued separately¹ or Simon Rattle and the CBSO, a marvellous bargain on a super-budget twofer (Warner **9677112**, with *Rite of Spring*, *Petrushka* and *Firebird* – [review](#) – [review](#) of earlier release).

There are one or two oddities about the translation in the booklet: for example, where the narrator says that *Œdipus* is proud of his ability to understand enigmas, the translation gives him ‘skill in dealing with the powers of darkness’, not the same thing at all.

¹ it’s available in an 8-CD set of *20th Century Classics* (Decca **4782759**, download only: subscribers can stream from Naxos Music Library).

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

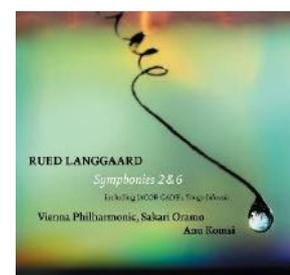
Rued LANGGAARD (1893-1952)

Symphonies Nos. 2 & 6

Upaaagtede Morgenstjerner

Vienna PO/Sakari Oramo rec. 2017/18

DACAPO 6.220653 SACD [70:00]



Two fine symphonies, very well played and recorded; a cheer-raising, hat-tossing event for all Langaardians.

For details and purchase links please see [review by Dan Morgan](#).

Dmitri SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)

Symphony No.8 in c minor, Op.65 (1943) [65:08]

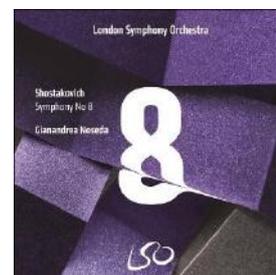
London Symphony Orchestra/Gianandrea Noseda

rec. live 8 April 2018. DSD.

LSO LIVE LSO0822 SACD [65:08]

SACD from			
Reviewed in 24/96 sound with pdf booklet from			

If you were a Soviet composer and wanted to upset that nice man ‘Uncle Joe’ Stalin, a pretty good way to go about it would be to fail – or refuse – to give him, as the tide of war was turning in 1943, the heroic symphony that was expected from the composer of its predecessor, the ‘Leningrad’. The last thing that the dictator wanted to be reminded of was the huge cost in human lives and suffering. Even worse was to come when the light-toned Ninth failed to celebrate Stalin’s victory, but the despairing Eighth certainly was not what had been expected. Perhaps Shostakovich thought he could get away with appearing to be on message, as he had with the Fifth, by superficially lightening the mood in the *allegretto* finale.



It’s appropriate that the LSO should have scheduled this episode in Gianandrea Noseda’s series of Shostakovich symphonies in the centenary year of the end of World War I; its mood reflecting the pity of war is entirely appropriate and I’m pleased that the SACD and download have been released so soon after the performance and hard on the heels of the Fifth (**LSO0302**). Noseda is well aware of the danger of over-stating the power of the music, rather letting it speak for itself in a performance to rival that of Vasily Petrenko with the RLPO (Naxos **8.572392** – [review](#)) and even Andris Nelsons with the Boston SO (DG **4795201**, with Nos. 5 and 9 – [review](#) – [review](#) – [review](#)).

Petrenko is very good value at budget price; Nelsons comes on a 2-CD set offered for the equivalent of mid-price. The LSO Live label used to be offered at lower-mid-price, even on SACD and sometimes with blu-ray audio, but recent releases have been at full price, giving the Hyperion download a useful price advantage (£6.50 for 16-bit, £9.75 for high-definition 24-bit). As heard in the higher format, equivalent to the stereo layer of the SACD, the Barbican acoustic didn’t prove too troublesome.

Don’t overlook Dan Morgan’s review of the budget Alto reissue, with corrected pitch, of Evgeny Mravinsky’s recording with the Leningrad Phil ([Spring 2017/2](#)).

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

Olivier MESSIAEN (1908-1992)

La Nativité du Seigneur

Richard Gowers (organ) rec. 2017

KINGS COLLEGE KGS0025 [67:36]

A remarkably perceptive and profoundly moving performance; superlative sound, too.



For details and purchase link please see [review by Dan Morgan](#).

BW is working on a joint review of this with Tom Winpenny's recording of Messiaen's *Livre d'Orgue* (Naxos **8.573845**). First thoughts that Gowers is simply too slow are beginning to yield with repeated hearing: watch the main review pages for final thoughts. Winpenny's recording is his best in this Naxos series to date – well worth considering.

Allan PETERSSON (1911-1980)

Symphony No. 5 (1960-1962) [40:46]

Symphony No. 7 (1966-1967) [41:14]

Norrköping Symphony Orchestra/Christian Lindberg

rec. 2017, Louis de Geer Concert Hall, Norrköping, Sweden

BIS BIS-2240 SACD [82:48]

Previous review: [Rob Barnett](#)



SACD from			
Reviewed in 24-96 sound with pdf booklet from			

BIS have recorded these two symphonies before: No. 5, with Moshe Atzmon and the Malmö SO ([BIS-480](#)), No. 7 with Leif Segerstam and the Norrköping orchestra ([BIS-580](#)). With the exception of Nos. 3 and 15 – Segerstam again – Christian Lindberg has steered the rest of this series very well indeed, as the MusicWeb reviews will surely testify. This important enterprise comes to an end in 2019, with Lindberg's 'completion' of the composer's final symphony (No. 17). As for the competition, there's a not-quite-complete CPO set ([777 247-2](#)), with a number of conductors and ensembles. Having heard some of the individual releases, I'd say the box is well worth investigating.

This new recording of the Fifth, superbly engineered by Jeffrey Ginn, is quite a challenge, albeit one that confirms the originality and strength of Pettersson's symphonic writing. It may be stark, but there are flashes of lyricism that seem all the lovelier for being surrounded by such an uncompromising soundscape. And, as expected, the playing of this fine Swedish band is beyond reproach. That said, Atzmon's account, coupled with the Viola Concerto conducted by Lev Markiz, is less vociferous, which some listeners may prefer. Indeed, one could argue that Lindberg's way is a tad extreme – bipolar, even – and he misses some of the music's humanity. Nobuko Imai gives a fine performance of the concerto. Both works, presented as single tracks, are attractively recorded.

The Seventh, a breakthrough for Pettersson, is no less assured, with Lindberg as powerful and coherent as ever. In fact, it's that grasp of the work's architecture that impresses most, the score's wilder moments jostling with beguiling sonorities, teasing rhythms and mesmeric refrains. This is certainly a more accessible work, so it's a good way into this composer's daunting oeuvre. Stephan Reh's very tactile recording is excellent. The sound on Segerstam's Seventh, paired with the Eleventh, is good, if not quite in the same league as this newcomer. Ditto the performance, although I found much to enjoy here and in the partnering piece. Both are presented as single tracks.

Rivals notwithstanding, this is a fine addition to the Pettersson discography; top-notch sound, too. **[DM]**

DISCOVERY OF THE MONTH

Alfred SCHNITTKE (1934-1998)

Peer Gynt - Ballet by John Neumeier, freely based on Ibsen's play (1985-1987) [126:48]

Appendix: *Anitra* (1989) [2:08]

Mårten Landström (piano)

Orchestra of the Royal Opera, Stockholm/Eri Klas

rec. 1994, Nacka Aula, Stockholm

BIS BIS-677/8 CD [130:11]



CDs available from			
Reviewed in lossless sound with pdf booklet from			

BIS have championed the music of several 20th- and 21st-century composers – Kalevi Aho, Vagn Holmboe, Allan Pettersson, Jean Sibelius and Eduard Tubin spring to mind – to which must be added their indispensable Schnittke series. Buried in that catalogue of forty-plus releases is the *Peer Gynt* ballet, a work I wasn't even aware of until recently. Like most, I associate this title with the two suites Grieg fashioned from his incidental music to Ibsen's eponymous play, rather than a work of modern dance by the American choreographer John Neumeier. At least Eri Klas, the Estonian conductor, is more familiar: his Stockholm Phil recording of Schnittke's Symphony No. 3 impressed me a great deal ([BIS-477](#)).

Neumeier, who included Schnittke's First Symphony in his ballet based on Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, approached the composer for a bespoke, full-length score for *Peer Gynt*. I expected an uncompromising score, so I was delighted to discover that it is, in fact, eminently accessible. Stravinsky's shade may haunt the music at first – how could it not? – but thereafter Schnittke is very much his own man. Frankly, I was astonished at the originality of this tightly knit piece, whose fantail of lovely colours is at once subtle and striking. Perhaps most important, as confirmed in the liner-notes, is the truly symphonic nature of Schnittke's writing.

No sooner had I listened to the entire ballet than I had to hear it again. There's just so much to marvel at, including some fabulous percussion, a rollicking piano part, a thrilling passage for organ, and a very effective pre-recorded choral insert. As if that weren't enough, at the end there's a profound sense of reward. I was simply bowled over by the playing of this opera band, for they deliver the music with a passion and polish that would be hard to beat. Much of the credit for this lies with Klas, who never puts a foot wrong. And, to top it all, this is a magnificent recording – full, warm and finely detailed – naturally and atmospherically engineered by Ingo Petry. The booklet's cued synopsis is a welcome bonus. (The appendix, *Anitra*, is a dance for Act 2 that Schnittke supplied at the rehearsal stage.)

My store of enchanted objects has increased by one; what a find! **[DM]**

Ray Chen (violin)

The Golden Age

London PO/Robert Trevino, Made in Berlin Qt rec. 2017

DECCA 4833852 [53:23]



Heart and soul **BRUCH Violin Concerto** and very enjoyable Heifetz and Kreisler arrangements, but do the two halves hang together?

For details and purchase links please see [review by Brian Wilson](#).

The Lully Effect

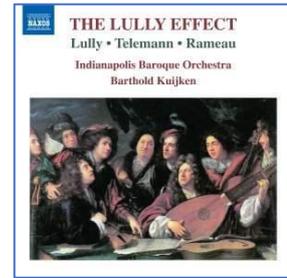
Works by **LULLY, RAMEAU & TELEMANN**

Indianapolis Baroque O/Barthold Kuijken rec. 2013

NAXOS 8.573867 [62:47]

One way or another, you should try to hear these revelatory performances of fine music.

For details and purchase links please see [review by Brian Wilson](#).



A Walk with Ivor Gurney

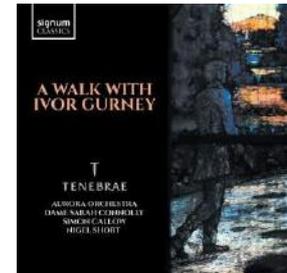
Works by **BINGHAM, GURNEY, HOWELLS & VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

Dame Sarah Connolly (mezzo); Simon Callow (narrator); Tenebrae; Aurora O/Nigel Short rec. 2018

SIGNUM SIGCD557

Not quite a definitive replacement for the Willcocks *Oxford Elegy*, but it comes pretty close, and there's plenty more fine music making here, too.

For details and purchase links please see [review by Brian Wilson](#).



Anna Fedorova (piano)

Music by **Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915); Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849); Robert Schumann (1810-1856); Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

Four Fantasies rec. 2018

CHANNEL CLASSICS CCS41318 [72:50]

Accomplished playing, undermined by expressive reticence; odd programme, too.

For details and purchase links please see [review by Dan Morgan](#).

