

NAXOS RELEASES: LATE 2020

By Brian Wilson

It may be that I've been particularly somnolent recently, but a particularly fruitful series of Naxos releases in late 2020 has made me take notice of what I've been missing earlier this year, so I've included some of them, too.

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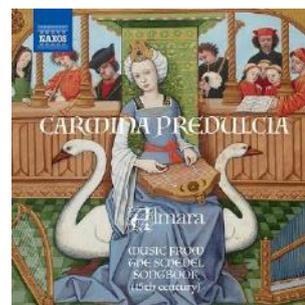
Carmina predulcia (C15 Songbook) [1]

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Heaven Full of Stars (contemporary choral) [13]

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Carmina predulcia ('very sweet songs') is a recording of music from the fifteenth-century *Schedelschen Liederbuch* (Schedel Songbook). The performers, **Almara**, seem to be new to recording; I certainly don't recall hearing this ensemble before, nor does there seem to be any other generally available recording of the music of this important Songbook, assembled by the Nuremberg doctor and humanist, Hartmann Schedel, in the 1460s; a true polymath, he also wrote a Chronicle of the World. There are over 100 pieces, with German, Latin and French texts (two works by Dufay included on the recording), in what is also known as the Munich Songbook, and the recording gives us ten of them.



That means that there is plenty more for another album, but it also raises the question why this is so short – at 34:36, there would have been room for twice as much music. One of the problems, I assume, was that Schedel was not a very adept copyist, so the music will have had to be thoroughly edited for performance.

For the curious there's a digitised version of the Songbook online – [here](#). I mention that because it's likely to be the academically curious to whom this recording appeals, though that doesn't mean that the general listener won't find something to enjoy. My review copy came without the booklet and [Naxos Music Library](#) currently offers only the back cover. However good your Late Middle High German is – and the diction is excellent – I was pleased to find [a link to the texts and translations online](#). An intriguing release, and proof that Naxos, who have given us some excellent recordings of late medieval music in the past, are still exploring new ground. **8.551440** – recorded Quintenquanten Studio, 01 August 2019. [34:36] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)

I've submitted a separate [review](#) of **Christmas Concertos** by **Arcangelo CORELLI**, **Pietro LOCATELLI**, **Francesco MANFREDINI**, **Giuseppe TORELLI** and **Antonio VIVALDI**, performed by **Concerto Copenhagen** directed by **Lars Ulrik Mortensen** (**8.574264** – recorded Copenhagen, January 2020 [48:15]). Taken on its own, this is an attractive release, but other recordings, including an earlier Naxos CD, offer more bang for your buck in two senses – rather more alert performances and more money on the CD, from Capella Istropolitana, a modern-instrument group, with strings a little rough and ready (not too much so, and with a sense of baroque style) by comparison with the high standards of the Copenhagen players.



For CD availability, please see review (link above).

Corelli's Band: Violin Sonatas

Giovanni MOSSI (c.1680–1742)

Sonata da camera in e minor, Op.6/9 (pub. 1733) [9:56]

Giovanni Stefano CARBONELLI (1694–1773)

Sonata da camera No.10 in g minor (date unknown) [9:53]

Arcangelo CORELLI (1653–1713)

Violin Sonata in C, Op.5/3 (pub. 1700) [11:29]

Giovanni MOSSI

Sonata in d minor, Op.1/1 (pub. 1716) [10:34]

Sonata in G, Op.1/3 (pub. 1716) [12:50]

Giovanni Stefano CARBONELLI

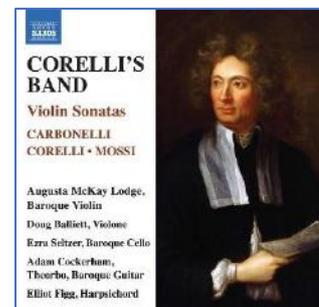
Sonata da camera No.9 in e minor (date unknown) [10:24]

Augusta McKay Lodge (violin), Doug Balliett (violone), Ezra Seltzer (baroque cello), Adam Cockerham (theorbo/baroque guitar), Elliot Figg (harpsichord)

rec. 25-26 January 2019, Samurai Hotel Recording Studio, New York. DDD.

Temperament and tuning: 1/6 comma meantone at 415Hz.

NAXOS 8.574239 [65:21] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)



Recordings of Corelli alongside the composers whom he taught or influenced are not uncommon, as in the case of the Christmas Concertos listed above. It's not the fashion nowadays to refer to anyone as the 'father' of a particular form – even Haydn is no longer hailed as 'father' of the symphony or string quartet – but, as I wrote recently in reviewing a Presto special reissue of Trevor Pinnock's Archiv

recording of his Op.6 concertos ([4749072](#)), Corelli was very influential in shaping the form of the *concerto grosso* and the violin sonata.

Augusta McKay Lodge and her team have made one of his Op.5 sonatas the backbone of a programme of music by Giovanni Mossi and Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli, both far less known than the composers whom we normally think of as Corelli disciples, such as Geminiani and Locatelli.

Reported to have been a pupil of Corelli, Carbonelli arrived in London around 1719, eventually converting to Anglicanism, changing his name to Carbonell, setting up as a wine merchant, marrying, and remaining active as a violinist until at least 1762. The great Dr Burney seems to have been less than fulsome in his praise, however, which may account, at least in part, for the failure of his reputation to survive. Burney was wrong, as three fine recordings of Carbonelli have shown: from Simon Standage and Friederike Chylek (*Italians in London*, Chandos CHAN0806) and on two Recordings of the Month from Bojan Čičić with the Illyrian Ensemble on Delphian (Nos. 1-6 on DCD34194 – [review](#) – Nos. 7-12 on DCD34214 – [review](#)).

Carbonelli is worthy of comparison even with Handel, who frequently worked with him, or with Corelli, whose Op.5 Sonatas provided the model for what seem to have been his only compositions. Vivaldi was also an influence; indeed, having heard the opening Vivaldi sonata on DCD34214, I was surprised to find myself attracted even more to the Carbonelli. I ascribed that, at least in part, to the wonderful performances. There's considerable agreement about the tempos for each movement between the two performances, with Čičić and his team giving the music very slightly more time to expand except in the final track on the new CD, the *Siciliana* finale of No.9, where Lodge observes more repeats. (The scores of all twelve sonatas are conveniently available online from [imslp.org](#). The new Naxos is good enough to tempt you to the complete Delphian recording.

I haven't yet mentioned the Corelli sonata because I wouldn't recommend buying this CD for the sake of that work. It's not that I don't like the sonata – far from it – but there are other very fine recordings of his Op.5, and you may well already have one of them, notably the complete set, from Andrew Manze and Richard Egarr (Harmonia Mundi HMU907289/90, download only, around £15 in lossless sound) or Pavlo Beznosiuk and the Avison Ensemble (Linn CKD412, 2 SACDs – [review](#)). Bargain lovers are well served by two Naxos recordings – [review](#) of second, with link to its predecessor.

It might have been better to have omitted the Corelli from the new Naxos CD and concentrated on his successors. That's what Harmonia Mundi have done on a recent album featuring la Rêveuse in *London c.1720: Corelli's Legacy* (HMM905322). While Corelli has a walk-on part, his music is included there in an arrangement by Schickhardt, whose own Concerto, Op.19/2 is also on the menu. I downloaded that in 24-bit sound, with pdf booklet, from [eclassical.com](#); though I'm planning a separate review, I can say here that it's a very worthwhile adjunct to this Naxos recording. It reminds us, for example, that in addition to Italian composers such as Geminiani (Sonata in D, Op.1/4) and Haym (excerpt from *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*), English composers such as Babell were influenced by Corelli (Concerto for sixth flute in D, Op.3), as was Handel (Concerto a4 in d minor, Sonata in g minor, HWV436b).

Petri and Isfahani and Manze and Egarr deliver the Corelli with just violin and harpsichord, whereas Beznosiuk's accompaniment is more varied: cello, archlute/guitar and harpsichord/organ. It's perfectly correct to play the music penny plain, but I prefer the tuppenny coloured versions on Linn, just as I prefer the Carbonelli dressed up a little on the new CD and on Delphian. The larger forces employed on Naxos remind us that between Corelli's sonatas with extended instrumentation and his Op.6 concerti grossi there's a fine line; Charles Avison, from whom the Linn ensemble take their name, crossed that line when he composed a series of concertos based on Geminiani's and Scarlatti's sonatas. The Avison Ensemble rose to fame when they recorded those concertos, first for Naxos

(8.557905-06 – [review](#), 8.557553-54 – [review](#)), then for Divine Art (DDA21210 – [review](#), 21211 – [review](#), 21213 – [review](#) – [review](#)).

As there's no overlap between this new Naxos recording and the Harmonia Mundi, I'd go for both. If that sounds like a lot to lay out at once, remember that you can download the Naxos in lossless sound for around £5 – less, if you look out for special offers – and the Harmonia Mundi for around £10. But do also keep some savings in reserve for those Delphian recordings.

FREDERICK II (Frederick The Great): Flute Sonatas

Alessandro De MARCHI (b.1962)

Prelude in a minor [0:33]

FREDERICK II (Frederick the Great) (1712–1786)

Flute Sonata in a minor, SpiF14 [8:28]

Flute Sonata in C, SpiF82 [8:24]

Alessandro De MARCHI

Variations on *Tempo giusto* from Frederick II's Sonata in C [6:50]

Friedrich Wilhelm MARPURG (1718–1795)

Fughe e capricci, Op.1: I. *Preludio* [2:22]

FREDERICK II

Flute Sonata in c minor, SpiF84 [9:40]

Flute Sonata in A, SpiF114 [12:43]

Flute Sonata in F, SpiF118 [14:19]

Alessandro De MARCHI

Prelude in g minor [1:56]

FREDERICK II

Flute Sonata in g minor, SpiF116 [12:09]

Claudia Stein (flute); Andreas Greger (cello); Alessandro De Marchi (fortepiano)

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview.

NAXOS 8.574250 [77:34] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)



Frederick the Great was not only a ruler of musical sensitivity, employing CPE Bach and trying to catch out his father by setting him the task that became the *Musical Offering*, he was also no mean flautist, and even a more than decent composer for his favourite instrument. In a typically entrepreneurial spirit, Naxos have given us a generous selection of his sonatas, three of them receiving their first recordings. There are a few recordings of music written for the Prussian court, most recently on a very fine Channel Classics set, *Music for a King* (CCS41819), but not many dedicated wholly or largely to the king's own music, so this is very welcome.

The photos in the booklet make clear that the team employs a baroque cello and a fortepiano, but Claudia Stein, first clarinet of the Berlin Philharmonic, is not seen with a wooden flute of the period. That apart, I enjoyed hearing this programme, including the three pieces by Alessandro De Marchi, also receiving their first recordings. These are all in keeping with the music of Frederick himself – the longest, the *Variations* on tracks 8-11, based on the royal composer's own work. All in all, there's nothing here that would rank as outstanding, but it's all a very enjoyable replacement for the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis 1972 DG Archiv LP that I used to own, on which Frederick's music was performed alongside military marches of the period. The ensemble doesn't come with a grand name like the Schola, but that's no hardship; everything here is persuasively presented.

Michael HAYDN (1737–1806)*Missa Sancti Nicolai Tolentini*, MH109 (1768) [36:40]*Vesperæ Pro Festo Sancti Innocentium* (1774–87) (compiled by **Nikolaus Lang, 1772–1837**) [36:05]*Anima Nostra*, MH452 (1787) [5:56]

Jenni Harper, Emily Owen (soprano); Helen Charlston (mezzo)

Marko Sever (organ)

Lawes Baroque Players

St Albans Cathedral Girls Choir/Tom Winpenny

rec. 23 – 24 July 2019, St Saviour's Church, St Albans, Hertfordshire, UK. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

NAXOS 8.574163 [78:50] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#)

It's time that the 'other' Haydn, Joseph's brother and Mozart's friend and fellow sufferer at the hands of Archbishop Colloredo, received his due. Naxos have already done him some justice with recordings of his symphonies; Hyperion have recorded two of his Masses – see [Late Autumn 2016](#) – and Carus have given us two Masses composed, like the music on the new Naxos recording, for female choir. Brilliant Classics have the most complete offering, a 28-CD of his music in all formats, some of the music 'borrowed' under licence from Naxos (95885, or smaller segments as downloads). That said, these are the only recordings of the Nicolai Mass and the Vespers music.

The *Missa Sancti Nicolai Tolentini*, composed in Salzburg, Michael Haydn's first large-scale choral work, bears many of the hallmarks of his older brother's Masses. It predates the arrival of Colloredo, who would never have encouraged such a long work – he liked to go off hunting after Mass.

I normally prefer Italian-style pronunciation of Latin in sacred music, but in Germany and Austria it was more normal in Michael Haydn's time – and still is – to use a hard 'c' and 'g' in words like *benedicimus*, *agnus* and *unigenite*, so the softer consonants here are incorrect. More to the point, the performance is charming rather than shattering, but that's probably what Haydn expected an all-female choir to sound like; in any case, there's no alternative, and I warmed much more to this recording second time around. Several of Tom Winpenny's organ recordings have come my way over the years – not always top choice, but usually a very good alternative; I'm pleased to hear this recording on which he has branched out in a new direction.

Not the ideal route to Michael Haydn's church music – that would be the *Requiem* and *Chiemsee-Messe* on Hyperion (above), but a welcome adjunct to it.

History of the Russian Piano Trio • 1**Alexander ALYABIEV (1787–1851)**

Piano Trio in E flat (1815) [10:04]

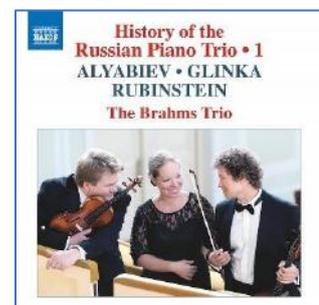
Piano Trio in a minor (1834) [18:43]

Mikhail GLINKA (1804–1857)*Trio pathétique* in d minor (1832) (originally for clarinet, bassoon and piano, arr. **Jan Hřimalý, 1844–1915**, for piano trio) [15:48]**Anton RUBINSTEIN (1829–1894)**

Piano Trio in g minor, Op.15/2 (18:51) [30:54]

The Brahms Trio

rec. 21–22 January, 3–4 June 2017 and 18–19 January 2018, The Large Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. DDD. Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview.

NAXOS 8.574112 [75:56] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)

Naxos never do things by half – witness the complete Villa-Lobos symphonies, now reissued as a set (below) and the fact that, although they already had a fine recording of the orchestral music of Novák, they have started a complete series from fresh (both reviewed below). I don't know what surprises their complete Russian Piano Trios will bring – 5 volumes are planned, with Volume 2 announced for January 2021, but not yet the contents – but they have made a good start with works that have hardly been over-recorded and certainly not in this coupling. The Rubinstein in particular has only one other generally available recording to its credit, a set of all five of his piano trios from Metronome – [review](#). I see from that review and a footnote that the performance of the g minor, five minutes shorter there, seems to have been subjected to a number of small cuts.

Alyabiev (sometimes transliterated Alyabyev) was a student of John Field, 'inventor' of the piano nocturne; his unfinished trio in E-flat, the first to be composed in Russia, is an urbane, well-crafted affair, with a piano part which would not have been out of place in a nocturne. For the second trio, which holds a pivotal place between classicism and romanticism – the date given by Naxos is slightly misleading; it may have been begun as early as 1817 – there are alternative recordings. The Borodin Trio recorded it for Chandos (CHAN8975, with Tchaikovsky), but neither that nor a Brilliant Classics release which contains that same recording seems to be widely available (93423, 4-CD set of Russian Piano Trios). There's also a recording of both on C-AVI; David Barker preferred that version of the a minor to the Borodin Trio recording (AVI8553338 – [review](#)).

Glinka is generally regarded as the first Russian composer of note, and the Brahms Trio, here making their debut for Naxos, give an attractive account of it and the Rubinstein. If the coupling appeals, this is a worthwhile purchase.

Robert and Clara Schumann: Music for Violin and Piano
Clara SCHUMANN (1819–1896)

3 *Romanzen*, Op.22 (1853) [10:10]

Robert SCHUMANN (1810–1856)

3 *Romanzen*, Op.94 (version for violin and piano) (1849) [13:21]

Fantasiestücke, Op.73 (version for violin and piano) (1849) [11:53]

Märchenbilder, Op.113 (version for violin and piano) (1851) [15:33]

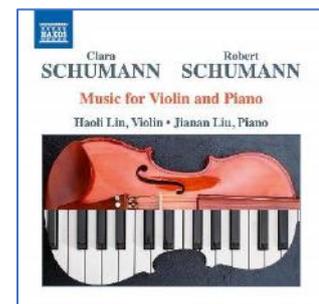
Violin Sonata No.3 in a minor, WoO2 (1853) [21:59]

Haoli Lin (violin), Jianan Liu (piano)

rec. November and December 2019, The 101 Studio, Guangzhou, China. DDD.

reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview.

NAXOS 8.579067 [72:54] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)

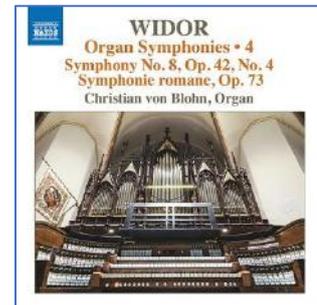


Gradually we are beginning to appreciate the talents of two nineteenth-century women whose reputation has been in thrall to that of husbands named Robert. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poetry is now much more highly valued than before, and her part in the achievement of Italian independence has been explored. Clara Schumann may not have played a political role, but recitals like this have reminded us of her considerable talent, whether on albums devoted entirely to her, or with Robert or Fanny Mendelssohn. Naxos have played a considerable part in her rehabilitation, not least with their recording of her Piano Concerto and Piano Trio on 8.557552: Recording of the Month – [review](#) – [review](#) – [review](#).

This recording of some of the *Hausmusik*, or domestic music that she and Robert composed between 1849 and 1853 serves further to enhance her reputation. There's nothing that catches the ear quite as readily as Robert's three Romances, but that's only because they are so much better known. The

only reason to bypass this new recording would be to obtain the Clara Schumann Piano Concerto recording or to choose the ECM New Series recording of all Robert's violin sonatas.

Charles Marie WIDOR (1844-1937) Organ Symphonies 4: Organ Symphony No.8 in B, Op. 42/4 (1901 version) [50:36]; **No.10** in D, *Symphonie romane*, Op.73 (1900) [30:22] – Christian von Blohn, rec. organ of St Joseph's Church, Sankt Ingbert, Germany, 3 October 2019 **NAXOS 8.574207** [81:27] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)



This is not likely to be your main point of entrance to Widor unless you already know his most popular organ symphonies. If you have already entered via the main portal – the Toccata from his Organ Symphony No.5, or the whole of that work – you may well be considering this side entrance.

If, however, you have come that far with Widor, you could choose the complete set of his organ symphonies from Joseph Nolan (Signum SIGCD596, 8 CDs); Dominy Clements called the final volume of the separate releases 'a rather special jewel with which to top its distinguished crown' – [review](#). That costs around £46, but considerably less as a download from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#), £30 in lossless sound, and it enshrines the sound of Cavallé-Coll organs, mostly at La Madelaine.

If, however, you wish to choose single albums, Naxos have changed horses in mid-journey, from Wolfgang Rübsam on the earlier volumes to Christian von Blohn on Volume 3 (Nos. 7 and 'Gothique', 8.574206) and now for No.4. On an earlier recording which ended with *the* Widor Toccata, Glyn Mon Hughes considered von Blohn 'adequate'. On another recording of French organ music, again containing *the* Toccata, he was judged a little too slow in faster movements and a little hasty in the slower ones – [review](#). Comparing him with Nolan in No.8, that again seems to be the case; detailed comparison confirmed my feeling that all the movements had a slight sense of sameness.

It's not just a matter of tempo, though the differences between the movements seem to have been ironed out somewhat; perhaps it's more to do with the 'French' sound which Nolan is able to obtain. The Sankt Ingbert instrument is a mighty multi-faceted machine – full spec included in the booklet – but it doesn't quite hit the spot for Widor.

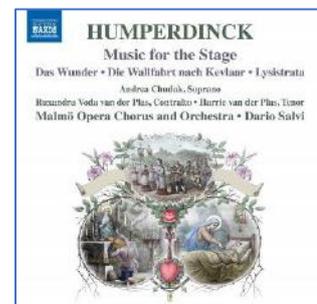
If you have been following the earlier recordings in this series, from Rübsam, the new volume would be a logical successor, but if you have got beyond the Widor basics, I recommend going flat out for the Nolan complete set. If you're not ready for that big plunge, Nolan's recording of No.8 is on SIGCD337, with No.7, and his 'Romane' is on SIGCD347, with No.9, 'Gothique'.

Engelbert HUMPERDINCK (1854–1921) Music for the Stage

Die Heirat wider Willen, Act II (*In die Bastille!*) – Prelude (1905) [5:29]
Der Kaufmann von Venedig (The Merchant of Venice, 1905) [20:21]
Das Wunder (1912) – Suite (arr. **Adolf LOTTER, 1871–1942**)* [21:12]
Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar – Ballade (original 1878 version)* [15:15]
Lysistrata – Incidental Music (1908)* [10:38]

Andrea Chudak (soprano); Ruxandra Voda van der Plas (contralto); Harrie van der Plas (tenor); Malmö Opera Chorus and Orchestra/Dario Salvi rec. 13–17 August 2019, Bengt Hall-salen, Malmö Opera, Sweden. DDD. Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview

NAXOS 8.574177 [73:23] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)



How many works by Engelbert Humperdinck can you name – the original, not the pop star? Well ... *Hänsel und Gretel* ... *Königskinder* ... Despair not – most of the music here, marked with * in the heading, is receiving its first recording. Does that mean that it wasn't worth bothering with? Not at all – though there are no undiscovered masterpieces here, no 'mute inglorious Milton', but all the music is attractive – approachable, but by no means facile – and the performances persuasive. I've nothing to compare most of it with, but it's unlikely to be bettered in the near future. Another groundbreaking Naxos success and a worthy follow-up to their earlier releases of Auber, again with Dario Salvi at the helm – [review](#) – [review](#).

If you are looking for the classic (1953) Schwarzkopf / Grümmer / Karajan recording of *Hänsel und Gretel*, Naxos can oblige there, too (Naxos Historical 8110897/8).

Florent SCHMITT (1870–1958)

La Tragédie de Salomé – Symphonic Poem, Op.50 (1910) [26:32]
Musique sur l'eau, Op.33 (version for voice and orchestra) (1898)* [5:44]
Oriane et le Prince d'Amour – Suite, Op.83bis (1934–37) [17:45]
Légende, Op.66 (version for violin and orchestra) (1918)* [10:23]

*World premiere recording

Susan Platts, (mezzo), Nikki Chooi (violin)

Women's Choir of Buffalo

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra/JoAnn Falletta

rec. 4 March 2019 and 8 March 2020, Kleinhans Music Hall, Buffalo. DDD.

Text and translation included.

NAXOS 8.574138 [60:39] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)



It's been some time since Dan Morgan made the earlier Naxos / JoAnn Falletta recording of Schmitt's two suites from *Antoine et Cléopâtre* a Recording of the Month – [review](#). Paul Corfield Godfrey also enjoyed that recording – [review](#). There are some fine recordings of *Salomé*, from Yan Pascal Tortelier (Chandos CHSA5090 – [review](#)) and Thierry Fischer (Hyperion CDA67599). If I prefer these, it's mainly because of the coupling – Psalm 47 on both – and the availability of the Chandos on SACD. Dan Morgan and I compared these and other recordings, including some of the complete ballet from which the symphonic poem was excerpted, in [June 2011 DL Roundup](#). The Janowski on Apex, which Dan preferred, is no longer generally available on CD; it's available, however, as a download – no booklet, and no longer budget price. Speaking of which, it's advisable to shop around for Naxos CDs, with prices from different dealers ranging from under £7 to over £10 and downloads from under £5 to around £8. Set aside Psalm 47, and the new Naxos is well worth considering – and less expensive.

Vítězslav NOVÁK (1870-1949)

V Tatrách (In the Tatra Mountains) – Symphonic Poem, Op.26 (1902) [16:30]

Lady Godiva – Overture, Op.41 (1907) [15:40]

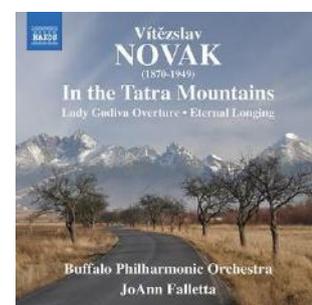
O věčné touze (Eternal Longing), Op.33 (1905) [20:37]

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra/JoAnn Falletta

rec. Kleinhans Music Hall, Buffalo, New York, 6 June, 2016 and 18 March, 2016. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview.

NAXOS 8.573683 [52:47] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)



I missed this when it was released, perhaps because I thought that no other recording could hold a candle to the Czech performances (Ančerl, in dated 1950 sound, and Šejna, 1966). Rob Barnett liked this Naxos coupling of two of Novák's strongest tone poems – [review](#) – while retaining Šejna as a special recommendation. The Šejna now comes with the two tone poems coupled with the *Moravian-Slovak Suite*, download only – [July 2011/2](#). There's an unbelievably inexpensive download from [uk.7digital.com](#): £2.49 in lossless sound.

There's a very special case to be made for Czech musicians in this music, and for Šejna in particular – as RB notes, his *V Tatrách* is as visionary as Beecham's recording of Delius' *Song of the High Hills* – but JoAnn Falletta and her Buffalo team come surprisingly close, and the recording is very good.

It's never been the Naxos way to rest on their laurels, so now they have followed up this attractive American recording with the first of a projected series from the Czech Republic:

Vítězslav NOVÁK Orchestral Works 1

Jihočeská suita, Op.64 ('South Bohemian Suite') (1936–37) [29:24]

Toman a lesní panna, Op.40 ('Toman and the Wood Nymph') (1906–07) [26:42]

Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra/Marek Štílec

rec. 29–31 October 2019, Reduta Hall, Olomouc, Czech Republic. DDD

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview.

NAXOS 8.574226 [56:06] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#)



There's much less competition than for the two main works on the earlier recording: the attractive *South Bohemian Suite* is otherwise available only from Douglas Bostock and the Carlsbad Orchestra on Alto ALC1199, a budget-price CD with *In the Tatras*, formerly a ClassicO recording. Nor are there too many recordings of *Toman and the Wood Nymph*: recently from Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra/Jakub Hrůša (Supraphon SU42842, with Piano Concerto – [review](#)), an older Supraphon from Czech RSO/Pavel Kühn (VT099-2, download only, with *On Moravian Folk Verse*) and on Chandos from the BBC Philharmonic and Libor Pešek (CHAN9821, with *Lady Godiva* and *De Profundis* – 5-star [review](#)).

Toman a lesní panna is a passionate work, the story of a young man's infatuation with a wood nymph on Midsummer's Eve. Marek Štílec gives the music a little more time to expand than Hrůša, without losing any sense of passion, so the choice of coupling could be your deciding factor.

It's some time since Naxos released their six separate CDs of the **Symphonies** of Heitor VILLA-LOBOS (1887-1959). If you missed them then, they are now available as a set for around £29 (**8.506039** – CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – [ArkivMusic](#). Stream individual volumes from [Naxos Music Library](#)), but that's still rather more expensive than downloading them separately for as little as £3.79 each in lossless sound. When I [reviewed](#) No.10 'Amerindia', a hybrid symphony-oratorio, I thought the enthusiastic performance and recording well worth hearing. I also enjoyed the first of the series, Nos. 6 and 7 – [review](#), and I've enjoyed dipping into the rest of the set, as streamed in 24-bit sound.



The performances by **São Paulo Symphony Orchestra** and **Isaac Karabtchevsky**, even of the earliest, Nos. 1 'O Imprevisto' (1916) and 2 'Ascensão' (1917-44), are persuasive. The only complete rival, from the SWR Symphony Orchestra and Carl St Clair on CPO 777516-2, costs around twice as much.

Last November Naxos added to their tally of Villa-Lobos recordings with an album containing his **Guitar Concerto, Harmonica Concerto, Sextuor mystique** and **Quintet for flute, harp and string trio**. Manuel Barrueco (guitar), José Stanec (harmonica), the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra and Giancarlo Guerrero are the principal performers. (**8.574018** [61:02]). We seem to have missed that, but it's especially welcome for the Harmonica Concerto, of which there are not too many recordings. Julian Bream with the LSO and André Previn remains my benchmark for the Guitar Concerto – short value at 44 minutes and download only, at a price which doesn't really compensate for the playing time (Sony **G010002996211G**).



Erich Wolfgang KORNGOLD (1897–1957)

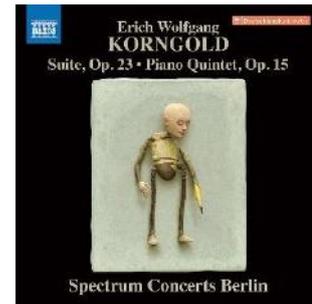
Suite, Op.23 (1930) [34:28]

Piano Quintet in E, Op.15 (1921) [30:47]

Spectrum Concerts Berlin/Frank S. Dodge

rec. 25–26 and 26–27 November 2019, Jesus-Christus-Kirche, Berlin. DDD.

NAXOS 8.574019 [65:27] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – [ArkivMusic](#) – stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)



Comparative recordings (Piano Quintet):

- Chandos CHAN10707 Doric String Quartet; Kathryn Stott (piano) (with Sextet) – [review](#) – [review](#) – [April 2012/1](#). That competes with an equally fine recording of the Sextet, coupled with Schoenberg *Verklärte Nacht* on Hyperion (now CDH55466, £6.50 on CD or download from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#)).
- Hyperion CDA68290 Piers Lane (piano); Goldner Quartet (with Bartók Piano Quintet) – [review](#) – [review](#).

I missed the Hyperion recording when it was released earlier this year, perhaps side-lined by Chandos' superb Korngold releases with John Wilson, but it's good to see not only that Korngold's chamber music is receiving attention, as well as orchestra, and that the attention is coming from more than one quarter, with Chandos already in the field with their Doric Quartet recording.

Don't be put off by the horrible cover of the Naxos recording; somebody must have thought it was clever to make child's pencil and eraser into a hideous manikin – you can just make out the writing on the body 'from ...', so it was a present. There's an equally hideous skeleton figure on the companion recording of the Piano Trio and Sextet.

The Suite takes us on a journey through music from Bach (the opening Prelude and Fugue, very much Bach from a later perspective) to the early twentieth century. The piano left-hand part reveals that it was one of the works composed for Paul Wittgenstein, brother of the philosopher, who lost his right arm in World War I. It's a bit meandering, but the Quintet is a more substantial work, a tuneful piece, but with deeper underlying currents, reminding us that 1921 in Germany was hardly the happiest of times.

Spectrum Concerts have made some distinguished recordings for Naxos, including a Dohnányi album which Colin Clarke thought highly musical – [review](#) – and one of Hindemith which Bob Briggs found essential listening – [review](#). Those are both of music roughly contemporary with the Korngold, so it's hardly surprising that Spectrum Concerts make a good case for these two works, both far removed from his more famous film music. I'd still recommend the Chandos recording of the Korngold Violin Concerto and Sextet (CHAN20135) and the Hyperion Quintet, both of which narrowly missed my Recordings of the Year selection, but the Naxos offers a very good alternative to the latter.

*

Having edited and converted Dan Morgan's [review](#) (with CD purchase details) of **George GERSHWIN's Concerto in F** in the new critical edition by Thomas Freeze, I was keen to hear it myself. I was not disappointed – far from it. Dan's loyalty to the André Previn recording (EMI/Warner), alongside the new Naxos from **Kevin Cole** (piano), the **National Orchestral Institute Philharmonic** and **David Alan Miller** is matched by my own reluctance to eject even older recordings from Eugene List and Howard Hanson (with *Rhapsody in Blue* and *An American in Paris*, Regis RRC1386 – [May 2012/1](#) – or Alto ALC1247, with the same coupling – [review](#)). Both of these used to be available as super-budget CDs and the Alto can still be obtained for around £6.25, but the Regis is now download only and no longer inexpensive – someone is asking £75.91 as I write. I shall keep the List, but I suspect that the new Naxos will replace it as my version of choice – as it will the earlier Naxos recording from Orion Weiss and JoAnn Falletta, though I liked that rather better than most of my colleagues – [April 2012/1](#). [ArkivMusic](#)



William WALTON (1902–1983): Chamber Works with Violin and Piano

Piano Quartet (1918–19, rev. 1974–75) [28:53]

Toccata for Violin and Piano (1922–23) [14:31]

2 Pieces for Violin and Piano (ed. **Hugh Macdonald**) (c.1944–50) [5:58]

Violin Sonata (1947–49) [25:22]

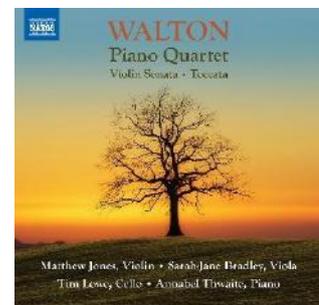
Matthew Jones (violin), Sarah-Jane Bradley (viola), Tim Lowe (cello), Annabel Thwaite (piano)

rec. 1 and 2 April and 19 June 2019, Milton Court Concert Hall, Guildhall

School of Music & Drama, London. DDD

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview.

NAXOS 8.573892 [75:00] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)



Benchmark recordings:

- (Piano Quartet and Violin Sonata): The Nash Ensemble (Hyperion CDA67340, with *Anon in Love*, etc.) Recording of the Month – [review](#).
- (Piano Quartet): Maggini Quartet, Peter Donohoe (piano) (Naxos 8.554646, with String Quartet). See [May 2012/1](#) for a comparison of these two fine recordings.

There are two very fine recordings of the Piano Quartet already in the catalogue, the Hyperion almost identically coupled with the Naxos, which is now competing with its own sibling. When I compared those earlier recordings, the Hyperion had fallen into the half-price 'please buy me' category; at the time of writing, it's again available on CD and as a lossless download from [hyperion-records.co.uk](#) for £5, about the same price that you might expect to pay for the Naxos as a lossless download.

The new recording comes from an ensemble without a corporate name, but none the worse for that. They are a little faster than the Nash Ensemble in some movements, a little slower in others, but there's very little in it. What matters is their clear commitment to the music, which contributed to my enjoyment of this recording. I'd still be inclined to choose the Nash Ensemble by a small margin, but effectively your choice of filler could be the deciding factor – the adventurous *Toccata* and the *Two Pieces* are persuasively performed by the Naxos team. On the other hand, if you already have the Maggini recording on the earlier Naxos, the Violin Sonata and Two Pieces can be found on a Tasmin Little / Piers Lane recording (British Violin Sonatas 1, Chandos CHAN10770 – [review](#)).

Mieczysław WEINBERG (1919-1996)

Clarinet Concerto, Op.104 (1970) [29:26]
 Clarinet Sonata, Op.28 (1945) [20:11]
 Chamber Symphony No.4 for clarinet, triangle, and strings, Op 153 (1992) [33:07]

Robert Oberaigner (clarinet); Michael Schöch (piano)
 Dresden Chamber Soloists/Michail Jurowski
 rec. 2019, Haus der Musik, Innsbruck, Austria; Lukaskirche, Dresden, Germany. DDD.

Reviewed as streamed in 24/96 sound.

NAXOS 8.574192 [83:08]

For CD purchase details please see [review by Leslie Wright](#): ‘Robert Oberaigner, principal clarinet of the great Dresden Staatskapelle, is a most distinguished exponent of these Weinberg scores’.

Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#).



Like most of Weinberg’s music – and Naxos have brought us most of it – this is not easy listening, but these idiomatic performances will please his many admirers. Others should persevere, especially those already fans of Weinberg’s contemporary and friend Shostakovich, perhaps trying this and the other Naxos recordings of Weinberg from Naxos Music Library.

John RUTTER (b.1945)

Anthems, Hymns and Gloria for Brass Band

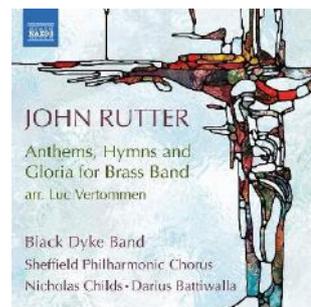
Two Hymns of Praise (1974):
 No. 1. Now thank we all our God [4:25]
 No. 2. All creatures of our God and King [4:01]
 A Clare Benediction (1998) [2:58]
 What Sweeter Music (1987) [4:22]
Requiem: Pie Jesu (1985) [3:21]
 As the Bridegroom to His Chosen (1989) [2:58]
 Go Forth into the World in Peace (1988) [2:30]
 Distant Land (A Prayer for Freedom) (1991) [4:48]
 The Lord Bless You and Keep You (1981) [2:50]
 All Things Bright and Beautiful (1983) [2:49]
 For the Beauty of the Earth (1980) [3:44]
 This is the Day (2011) [4:38]
Gloria * (1974) [18:10]

All works arranged by **Luc VERTOMMEN (b.1968)**

World Premiere Recordings
 Richard Marshall (cornet solo)
 Black Dyke Band; Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus */Nicholas Childs, Darius Battiwalla
 rec. 4 July and 17 October 2019, Morley Town Hall, West Yorkshire and 21 October 2019, St Oswald’s Church, Sheffield, South Yorkshire. DDD.

Reviewed as streamed in 24-bit sound.

NAXOS 8.574130 [62:11] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)



A timely release just before Christmas, when brass band music is as traditional as the Nine Lessons and Carols from King’s on Christmas Eve. Rutter’s ever-popular, yet never hackneyed music lends itself well to the treatment and Black Dyke Band do the honours with their usual aplomb, likewise the Sheffield singers in the *Gloria* which closes the programme.

Heaven Full of Stars**Ēriks EŠENVALDS:** Stars [4:46]**Jonathan DOVE:** Seek him that maketh the seven stars [6:31]**Ēriks EŠENVALDS:** *O salutaris hostia* [3:31]**Patrick GOWERS:** *Viri Galilæi* [7:54]**Philip STOPFORD:** *Ave Maria* [3:59]**Cecilia McDOWALL:** *Aurea luce* [5:57]**Rihards DUBRA:** *O crux ave* [2:19]**Roxanna PANUFNIK:** *Deus est caritas* [4:10]**Will TODD:** Christ is the Morning Star [5:03]**John RUTTER:** For the beauty of the earth [4:04]**Paul MEALOR:** *Ave maris stella* [4:05]**Judith WEIR:** Like to the falling of a star [3:18]**Eric WHITACRE:** *Lux aurumque* [3:22]**Gabriel JACKSON:** Creator of the stars of night [4:33]**Bob CHILCOTT:** Salisbury Motets [16:41]

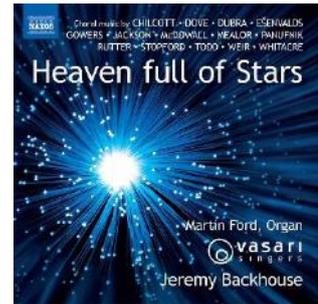
Martin Ford (organ); Muriel Daniels (cello); Sarah Mistry (bell)

Vasari Singers/Jeremy Backhouse

rec. 18–20 October 2019, Chapel of St Augustine, Tonbridge School, Tonbridge, Kent. DDD

Texts included.

Reviewed as streamed in 24/96 sound

NAXOS 8.574179 [81:21] For CD purchase details, please see reviews by [John Quinn](#) and [Gwyn Parry-Jones](#). Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#).

I had a distinct sense of déjà-vu in coming to this recording, convinced that I had written about it, then shelved my review to be included in a retrospective when two colleagues got their reviews ahead of me. It seems to have been a false memory – I can find no trace of having written anything of the sort, though similar albums have come my way and been written about in recent years, including an all-Ešenvalds programme on Signum, which also includes *Stars: There will come soft Rains* (SIGCD603 - [Winter 2019-20/3](#)). I'd be loth to choose between that album and this Naxos recording, especially when it's just the one work common to both.

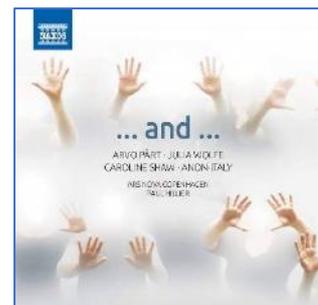
...and...

Caroline SHAW (b.1982)

and the swallow [3:37]

Anon (C.13) *Laude di Cortona**Venite a laudare* [3:24]**Julia WOLFE (b.1958)**

Guard my tongue [7:32]

Laude di Cortona*Cristo e nato* [6:18]*Laude novella sia cantata* [4:18]**Arvo PÄRT (b.1953)***Drei Hirtenkinder* (2014) [1:26]*Kleine Litanei* (2015) [5:20]*Virgencita* (2012) [6:32]***Laude di Cortona****Oi me, lasso, è freddo lo mio core* [4:05]*Altissima luce* [3:29]*Sia laudato San Francesco* [3:13]**Arvo PÄRT**

Habitare fratres in unum (2012) [2:54]

Alleluia tropus (2008) [4:03]

And I heard a voice... (2017) [5:20]

Ars Nova Copenhagen/Paul Hillier

rec. 26-27 January, 24 June 2019 and 8 January 2020, Garnisonskirken, Copenhagen. DDD.

Texts and translations included.

NAXOS 8.574281 [62:48] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)

The contemporary music here is interspersed with six excerpts from the thirteenth-century *Laudario di Cortona*, arranged by Paul Hillier. Sung originally by members of a confraternity in a town with connections to St Francis, the music was discovered by accident, hidden under a stairwell in a space used for wood, coal and a pigeon roost, in 1876. These vernacular hymns would have been sung as an adjunct to the Latin liturgy for particular times of the church year or feasts of the Virgin Mary and other saints. They range from simple monophonic settings to early polyphony. Reviewing a 4-CD set from Brilliant Classics, I asked if a set of devotional pieces of music, sung in the vernacular to supplement the Latin of the official liturgy in medieval Italy could possibly appeal to a modern audience in our secular society? The answer was a definite affirmative, especially when it's as beautifully performed and recorded as it is here; even better when the whole well-filled 4-CD Brilliant set can be yours for less than you might expect for one CD. The new Naxos is not quite that inexpensive, but it does give the listener the chance to hear a selection of this music without committing to five hours in one go – not that I recommend listening to the Brilliant Classics CDs in one session.

The concept could work two ways: either the modern music could be as approachable as the *Laude*, the present-day end of a demonstrable continuum, or in contrast with the earlier works. The opening Caroline Shaw work, a setting of Psalm 84, brings us clearly into the realm of those composers who engage easily with the listener, like Arvo Pärt, to whom much of this collection is devoted. I have to admit to a real penchant for Pärt and his like, and, with Paul Hillier in charge of the Ars Nova, there's no danger that we shall forget the grounding of his music in the inherited past. They have given us a whole 3-CD set of Pärt (*Harmonia Mundi HMX2908730.32*, budget price), which Dominy Clements thought hard to beat – [review](#) – but the six works here supplement it rather than supplant it.

If you can afford only one of the two albums, this and *Heaven full of Stars*, I incline slightly to ... *and ...* but it would be a shame not to go for both. At least try to stream both from Naxos Music Library.

***Stille Nacht: Christmas Carols for Guitar* arranged by Rossini HAYWARD (b. 1981)**

Ihr Kinderlein, kommet [1:33]

El noi de la mare [3:01]

In dulci jubilo [3:13]

Coventry Carol [2:32]

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen [1:44]

The First Nowell [3:10]

Stille Nacht [2:11]

Les Anges dans nos campagnes [2:37]

I Saw Three Ships [2:11]

We Three Kings [5:11]

Forunderligt at sige [2:15]

Entre le bœuf et l'âne gris [2:14]

Jul, jul, strålande jul [3:09]

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen [2:34]



Leise rieselt der Schnee [1:46]

Tu scendi dalle stelle [2:55]

Once in Royal David's City [1:51]

O Tannenbaum [2:42]

Christmas Bells [5:54]

Rossini Hayward (guitar, voice and percussive effects)

rec. 13 March, 17 April and 14 June 2020, Tonstudio Katzer, Nürnberg. DDD.

Reviewed as lossless (wav) press preview.

NAXOS 8.574269 [53:15] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)

The title of this collection reminds us that the original *Stille Nacht* was performed with guitar accompaniment – mice and flooding had put paid to the village organ. Though it's hardly my top recommendation for Christmas 2020 – my survey of those is coming your way soon – it's enjoyable.

The Art of Classical Guitar Transcription

All works arr. **Christophe DEJOUR (b.1968)**

Carlo GESUALDO (1566–1613)

Canzon Francese del Principe (date unknown)* [6:02]

Johann Sebastian BACH (1685–1750)

Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in d minor, BWV903 (before 1723) [15:22]

Alban BERG (1885–1935)

Piano Sonata, Op.1 (c.1908–09, rev. 1926)* [14:03]

Béla BARTÓK (1881–1945)

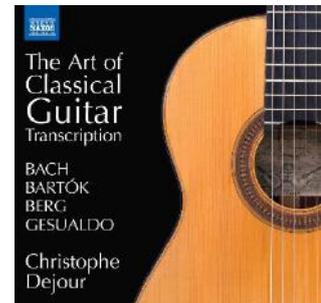
Sonata for Solo Violin, BB124 (1944)* 28:32

* World premiere recording

Christophe Dejour (guitar)

rec. 8 June, 17 August, 21 September and 9 November 2019, Hørsholm Kommunale Musikskole Studio, Denmark. DDD.

NAXOS 8.574259 [64:16] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)



It's some time since Naxos released Christophe Dejour's arrangements for three guitars of music by Albéniz, which Kevin Sutton recommended especially to lovers of the guitar (8.557064 – [review](#)). Albéniz is almost a natural for guitar transcription, as is Granados (8.557709 – [review](#)) but the new recording is more adventurous: Bach has been done before, especially his lute suites, but the other transcriptions here are world premieres. Predictably, the Bach goes well, though it was written not for the lute but for the keyboard. The Gesualdo is a bit of a misfire – it's hard to reproduce all the intricacies of this intriguing composer's music for the guitar – and I'm not sure why you would want the Berg and Bartók in transcription. They work well enough, but there is so much more material specifically for the guitar, or suitable for the guitar, that I would have preferred to hear Dejour play.

David GOMPPER (b. 1954)

Cello Concerto (2019) [22:46]

Double Bass Concerto (2018) [26:52]

Sunburst, Moonburst & Starburst: Moonburst (2018) [10:34]

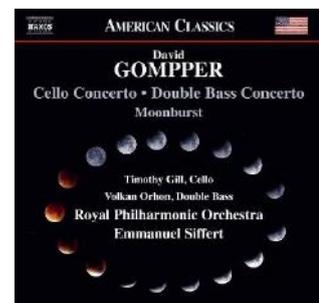
Timothy Gill (cello)

Volkan Orhon (double bass)

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/Emmanuel Siffert

rec. 12 December 2019, Henry Wood Hall, London and 7 January at Cadogan Hall, London. DDD.

NAXOS AMERICAN CLASSICS 8.559855 [60:19] CD from [Amazon UK](#) – [Presto Classical](#) – Stream from [Naxos Music Library](#)



I opened this survey with a typical act of Naxos entrepreneurship in the field of early music; I close with their latest album of the music of David Gompper, world premiere recordings of music still metaphorically smoking with the composer's inspiration. While I may be more naturally inclined to the Fifteenth than to the Twenty-first century, I found a great deal to appreciate and enjoy in Gompper's music to the extent that I intend to try the other Naxos recordings, of his Violin Concerto (8.559637 – [review](#)) and Double Concerto and Clarinet Concerto (8.559835). The latter is of especial interest because it includes *Starburst*, the first part of a trilogy which is continued on the new recording by *Moonburst*. Reviewing the Violin Concerto, Byzantion thought it possessed 'invention, excitement, variety and breadth of appeal' and that's true of the two new concertos. They haven't yet 'grown' on me, but I expect that they will, especially as the RPO and Emmanuel Siffert are now on their third Gompper recording, so well used to the idiom.