

November 2012

GRAMOPHONE *Choice*



Informed by our unrivalled panel of critics, we choose the month's must-hear recordings



Recording of the Month

'Andsnes and the Mahler CO players are already finishing one another's musical sentences like an old married couple'

BEETHOVEN

Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 3

Mahler Chamber Orchestra / Leif Ove Andsnes *pf*

Sony Classical 88725 420582

► HARRIET SMITH'S REVIEW IS ON PAGE 40



GERSHWIN. RAVEL. SAINT-SAËNS

Piano Works

Benjamin Grosvenor *pf*

RLPO / James Judd

Decca 478 3527DH

'After Grosvenor's astonishing solo debut album comes his first concerto disc, one of the most dazzling records to have come my way for many years.'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 44



SCHUMANN

'The Romantic Violin Concerto, Vol 13'

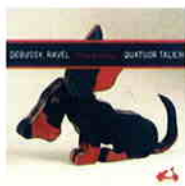
Anthony Marwood *vn*

BBC SSO / Douglas Boyd

Hyperion CDA67847

'It's a pleasure to report that Anthony Marwood's advocacy of Schumann's collected works for violin and orchestra continues to a high standard.'

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DEBUSSY. RAVEL

String Quartets

Talich Quartet

La Dolce Volta LDV08

'The Talich, which is just as adept in illuminating the character of a broad repertoire from Haydn to Bartók, seems here to inhabit the very soul of Debussy and Ravel.'

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JS BACH

'Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin, Vol 2'

Isabelle Faust *vn*

Harmonia Mundi

HMC90 2124

'Faust gently showcases everything of which these pieces are capable: the genius of their structure, melody and internal dialogue.'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 60



'BRASILEIRO'

Piano Works

Nelson Freire *pf*

Decca 478 3533DH

'Nelson Freire, imperceptibly assuming the mantle of the piano's elder statesman, is now in his late sixties. There are few works in his repertoire that he does not play better than any living pianist.'

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GRAMOPHONE *Reviews*



ELGAR

The Apostles
Soloists; Hallé Choir, Youth Choir and Orchestra / Mark Elder
 Hallé CDHLD7534
 'Elder's interpretation evinces an idiomatic pliancy, sure dramatic instinct and iron grip as well as scrupulous fidelity to both the letter and spirit of the score.'

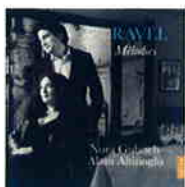
► **REVIEW ON PAGE 75**



MENDELSSOHN

Elijah
Soloists; various choirs; Gabrieli Consort and Players / Paul McCreesh
 Winged Lion/Signum SIGCD300
 'The sound is massive when required, but the articulation is never unwieldy and there is delicacy too.'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 75**



RAVEL

'Mélodies'
Nora Gubisch *mez*
Alain Altinoglu *pf*
 Naïve V5304
 'Gubisch, with a vocal timbre of mellifluous beauty and well-focused richness, responds with a strikingly malleable spectrum of sensibility to the varied scenarios that Ravel encapsulates.'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 76**



VICTORIA

Choral Works
Collegium Vocale, Ghent / Philippe Herreweghe
 PHI LPH005
 'Understatement is a feature of Herreweghe's conducting of Renaissance music with this choir... Here, the sense that less is more does the music no disservice'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 76**



DVD/Blu-ray

NOBUYUKI TSUJII

'Live at Carnegie Hall'
Nobuyuki Tsujii *pf*
 EuroArts 205 9088; 205 9084
 'I liked his firmly projected *Tempest* Sonata with its comparatively brisk *Adagio* and his masterly handling of Liszt's "Un sospiro".'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 67**



Reissue/Archive

BERLIOZ

Grande Messe des morts
Cologne Radio Choir and Symphony Orchestra / Dimitri Mitropoulos
 ICA Classics ICAC5075
 'The chromatic string phrase with which Berlioz twice fools you into expecting the next section sends shivers down the spine.'

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 72**



Reviewed this month: 510 minutes of Debussy; 307 minutes of Schubert; 2 minutes of Hurum

ORCHESTRAL 42

Latest Haydn symphonies from Thomas Fey; Kabalevsky's piano concertos reappraised; Benjamin Grosvenor's first orchestral disc

CHAMBER 54

Debussy and Ravel from the Talich Quartet; Beethoven's violin sonatas on period instruments; discovering Guillaume Lekeu

INSTRUMENTAL 60

Bach from Bacchetti, Faust and Schiff; Debussy from Cassard, Hewitt and Aimard; Nobuyuki Tsujii on DVD at Carnegie Hall

VOCAL 72

Paul McCreesh's supersize *Elijah*; Herreweghe conducts Victoria; David Vickers delves inside Archiv's 'All Baroque' box of reissues

OPERA 80

Jacobs conducts one of Mozart's first operas; Gluck from *La Fura dels Baus* filmed in Peralada; Michaël Levinas's new Kafka-inspired piece

BOOKS 86

Hugh MacDonald's exploration of the musical universe in the year 1853; tracing the life and work of violinist Viktoria Mullova

REPLAY 88

EMI's big box of Boult; new recordings from 'Mr Parsifal' Hans Knappertsbusch; celebrating cellist Erling Blöndal Bengtsson

THE SPECIALIST'S GUIDE 90

David Thresher delves into one of the smallest of musical forms, the concert overture, and names 10 recordings we should all hear

THE GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION 92

Philip Clark introduces and appraises the available recordings of Charles Ives's *Concord* Sonata and names the one to own

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image and voicing it with subtlety and winning allure. In an exquisite miniature such as 'Sur l'herbe', the fluctuations of pace and emphasis are conveyed with innate perception, seductiveness and gentleness of humour, always with Altinoglu applying just the right pianistic brush strokes to make the picture complete.

Geoffrey Norris

Ruehr

Averno. Cricket, Spider, Bee. Gospel Cha Cha

Marguerite Krull sop Stephen Salters bar

Trinity Choir; Novus NY / Julian Wachner

Avie © AV2263 (67 • DDD • T)



A cappella choral works from Boston-based composer

Three American poets supply the texts for this enterprising release of music by Michigan-born, Juilliard-trained Elena Ruehr (b1963). She is probably best known for her chamber music and forays into dance and silent film.

Her setting of Emily Dickinson's *Cricket, Spider, Bee* (the earliest work on the disc, dating from 1996) makes a charming eight-minute triptych. Langston Hughes's *Gospel Cha Cha* (2000) provides a word-painter's paradise. Here, Ruehr successfully blends such diverse musical references as 18th-century French courtly dances and Ghanaian drumming, while eschewing an overtly jazzy style.

The programme's centrepiece is the recent 11-movement cantata *Averno* from 2010. Stylistically there is little to frighten the horses, with a fondness for diatonic, repeated phrases, occasional funky, irregular bar-lengths and a solid sense of ebb and flow in the musical narrative. The text is taken from a selection of poems by the Pulitzer prize-winner Louise Glück (b1943) and retells the dark story of Demeter, goddess of the earth, and her daughter Persephone. Due to the complexity of some of the vocal writing it is essential that the libretto is on hand. The scoring is a marvel of delicacy and brought to mind the fleeting lightness of John Williams's score for *Catch me if you can*. At other moments there are hints of early Kenneth Leighton, especially in the writing for oboe and strings.

Of the two soloists, baritone Stephen Salters gives the more searingly satisfying performance. Marguerite Krull's vibrato, recorded at close quarters, can become wearing. Otherwise the singing, playing and production are all first-class. **Malcolm Riley**

Victoria

Officium defunctorum (Madrid, 1605).

O Domine Iesu Christe a 6. Domine, non sum dignus a 4. Salve regina a 6. Vadam et circuibō civitatem a 6

Collegium Vocale, Ghent / Philippe Herreweghe

PHI © LPH005 (60' • DDD)



gramophone.co.uk



Herreweghe's choir in Victoria's six-voice Requiem

Philippe Herreweghe's conception of Victoria's six-voice Requiem (the more famous of the two settings he composed) imparts a sense of concision to a work that is often treated more expansively. The alternating plainsong intonations in the *Kyrie* are omitted and the tempi, while sounding neither particularly brisk nor hurried, are not over-indulgent. The Collegium Vocale is more choir than vocal ensemble and its reading is close (in this sense at least) to those of a number of English *a cappella* groups. The work's dramatic potential is not overtly exploited but rather suggested, such is the concentrated, cut-glass quality of the singing at its best. Understatement is a feature of Herreweghe's conducting of Renaissance music with this choir, for better or (perhaps) not so well, but here the sense that less is more does the music no disservice – rather the reverse. The impression of a work revisiting itself in the concluding *Libera me*, as the words of the opening *Requiem* and *Kyrie* movements are briefly repeated to very similar but not identical music, is extraordinarily moving.

Fine as this account of the Requiem undoubtedly is, the series of accompanying motets contains some of the disc's finest singing, and inspirations that match anything else that Victoria wrote. Herreweghe doesn't confine himself to penitential subject matter but presents a few of what one takes to be his own favourites: the expansive *Vadam et circuibō* and the version of *Salve regina* heard here are very well known but the two short pieces for higher and lower voices respectively are marvels of concentrated expression. **Fabrice Fitch**

Vivaldi

'New Discoveries, Vol 2'

Concertos - 'Il Gran Mogol', RV431a; RV815; RV816; RV817. Son nel mar d'aspri tormenti. S'odo quel rio che mormora. Palpita il core e geme tutt'affanno. Langue il fior sull'arsa sponda. Vaghe luci, luci belle
Ann Hallenberg sop Alexis Kossenko fl Anton Steck vn
Modo Antiquo / Federico Maria Sardelli

Naïve © OP30534 (58' • DDD)



Modo Antiquo and friends offer 'all-new' Vivaldi

Musicology and the recording industry are sometimes uneasy bedfellows, particularly in relation to early repertoires. Dodgy reconstructions of music for great historical occasions are just one of the items on the shelves of the Old Spuriousity Shoppe and much-trumpeted discoveries of new masterpieces are another. In this context, this recording of newly identified compositions by

Vivaldi is beyond reproach, six-voice works have been accepted as genuine by an official body which pronounced them authentic.

The opening piece, the concerto for transverse flute known as *Il Gran Mogol* discovered in Edinburgh in 2005, is here in a stunning performance by Anna Kossenko, whose mellow tones and discrete ornamentation, well-informed by the melodic contours of the sixteenth-century flute, give way to a breathtakingly virtuosic final movement. Two violins, identified by the distinguished expert Michael Talbot among the collection of the Foundling Museum in London, given crisp, elegant performances by Ann Hallenberg and Ann Steck, again with stylish improvisation and ornamentation that does not detract from the instrumental work, the *A Major Concerto*, is preserved only as a fragment, so might seem the weakest contribution to the disc. Attribution to 'Il Prete Rosso' and strong thematic relationships with authenticated pieces make it very likely that the work is his.

Of the five separately presented pieces which punctuate the recording, the virtually unknown opera *L'Arione trionfante in amore*, which marks a return to the Venetian theatre after almost five years. Here they are sung by Ann Hallenberg, who, with their individual distinctive musical imaginations, sensitive to the work from beginning to end. **Iain Fenwick**

'Ay Portugal'

Anonymous Non me pregunteis
Ya nam quero ser pastora. Vos se maltratarme. Não tragais borzeg
Dipues vienes delhaldea Cristo A
Pásame per Dios, barquero G Fer
Eso rigor e reprente. Tleycantimo
Xicochi conetzintle. Botay fora F
Reyes siguen la'strella. Qué buen
Niño dios d'amor herido M Mach
que sale. Dos estrellas le siguen M
Siobhan Stagg sop La Compañia / I
ABC Classics © ABC476 4955 (50'



Australians explore from Renaissance

La Compañia is one of Australia's best-known early music ensembles. Music has already been in evidence in the repertoire (a previous disc on 'El fuego'). This is a collection of Iberian composers having some connection, energetically performed including brass, woodwind, both strings and percussion, but that the listener to imagine a 'Renaissance orchestra' using an array of instruments.

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