

Brief notes

Our monthly selection of shorter reviews features Papageno, Pärt and Prague

Harri Ahmas Organ Works

Jan Lehtola (organ) et al
Toccata Classics TOCC 0525



A welcome introduction to the Finnish composer whose organ music echoes Petr Eben's angular tonalism. The organ's clean, immediate sound adds brilliant clarity. The Sonata deserves wide currency. (OC) ★★★★★

JS Bach • Jalbert • Pärt • Vasks Violin Concertos etc

Margaret Batjer (violin) et al *BIS-2309*



Its moods ranging from otherworldly to feisty, Pierre Jalbert's Violin Concerto has its memorable moments. The real pleasure, though, lies in the Bach, Pärt and Vasks that follow. (JP) ★★★★★

Beethoven

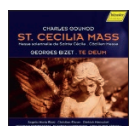
The Creatures of Prometheus
Warren Lee (piano) *Naxos 8.573974*



This piano version of *The Creatures of Prometheus* understandably lacks the colour of the ballet proper, yet is enjoyable enough in the capable hands of Warren Lee. (CJ) ★★

Bizet • Gounod Choral Works

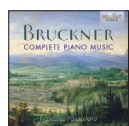
Munich Motet Choir et al
Hänssler Classic HC19046



These two French composers' liturgical works aren't in the same league as their operas – some lovely moments, especially in the *Te Deum*, but in truth neither works leave the runway. (OC) ★★

Bruckner Piano Works

Francesco Pasqualotto (piano)
Brilliant Classics 95619



Bruckner's piano works were clearly intended for domestic performance – no hint of his great symphonies in these rather superficial miniatures. Fine playing, but a slightly muddy recorded sound. (OC) ★★

Alexander Chapman Campbell Piano Works

Alexander Chapman Campbell (piano)
Signum Classics SIGCD0816



A short but sweet selection of piano solos performed by the young Scottish composer. Engaging, emotional and lyrical; I just wish there was more to hear. (MB) ★★★

Charlton Choral Works etc

Brussels Chamber Choir et al
ErCetera KTC1662



Alan Charlton presided over these recordings before his untimely death, aged 47, last year. His innovative musical artistry comes through in heartfelt and energetic performances. (MB) ★★★★★

Chopin • Takemitsu • Serocki • Szymanowski Piano Works

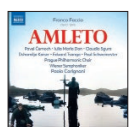
Miyako Arishma (piano)
Steinway & Sons 30118



Serocki's Suite of Preludes is the Bartókian star here in an imaginative programme that juxtaposes music of three Polish composers and a Takemitsu miniature. Terrific, alert playing. (OC) ★★★★★

Faccio Amleto

Vienna Symphony Orchestra et al
Naxos 8.660454-55



To buy or not to buy? The occasional moment of iffy recorded balance aside, there's not much rotten in the state of this spirited live performance of Faccio's rarely heard Shakespearean opera from 1865. (JP) ★★★

Philip Glass Symphony No. 5

Trinity Wall Street
Orange Mountain OMM0143



This work is rarely performed because of the massive forces required, so this release including a concert performance and interview on DVD is a rare treat. (FP) ★★★★★

Liszt • Arvo Pärt Choral Works

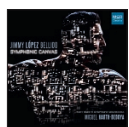
Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir
Ondine ODE 1337-2



Kalle Randalu draws solemnity from the piano solos in Liszt's late work *Via Crucis*, paired here with four pieces by Pärt; the a capella *Solfeggio* (1963) and *Summa* (1977) are highlights. (CJ) ★★★

Jimmy López Bellido Symphony No. 1 etc

Forth Worth Symphony Orchestra
MSR Classics MS 1737



So much to enjoy in these two broad orchestral works; both are wild flights of symphonic fancy, filled with colour and drama. The Fort Worth Symphony gleams. (MB) ★★★★★

Mozart Die Zauberflöte

Chamber Orchestra of Europe et al
DG 483 6400



Tenor Rolando Villazón sings Papageno in this live recording of Mozart's classic opera from Baden-Baden. Flautist Clara Andrada de la Calle impresses. (CJ) ★★★★★

Ravel Chamber Works

Maria Milstein (violin) et al
Mirare MIR416



Sisters Nathalia and Maria Milstein explore the influence of time and place on Ravel's chamber music. A chronological programme highlights his development superbly, with fine sound and impressive virtuosity. (FP) ★★★

Reizenstein

Piano Concerto No. 2 etc
Oliver Triendl (piano) et al *CPO 555 2452*



A German plying his trade in mid-20th-century England, Reizenstein's style has a touch of, say, Walton about it, with glimpses of Sibelius in the *Serenade*. Sadly, it's not hugely distinctive. (JP) ★★★

Will Todd Mass in Blue

Nonsuch Singers et al *Convivium CRO47*



Todd's jazz mass is snappily performed, but it all veers precariously into lounge. The choir, happier no doubt in Tallis and Parry, sounds out of its comfort zone. (OC) ★★★

Weber Flute Works

Kazunori Seo (flute) et al *Naxos 8.573766*



Brilliant flute works are performed here alongside chamber works arranged for the instrument. Light, controlled playing, but with slightly shrill high notes. It could benefit from a more varied approach. (FP) ★★★

21st Century Double Bass

Works by Robin Walker et al
Leon Bosch (double bass) et al



Meridian CDE84655
From the frenetic bursts in Parkin's *December* series to the earthy resonance of Roxanna Panufnik's *Shosholozza*, soloist Leon Bosch dazzles in this varied programme of largely premiere recordings. (CJ) ★★★★★

A Bernstein Story

Works by Bernstein, Reich et al
Sebastian Studnitzky (piano) et al
Berlin Classics 0301109BC



Jazz pianist and classical clarinetist join forces in new interpretations of music by Bernstein, Stravinsky and Reich. An unexpected delight. (FP) ★★★★★

Emergence: Emily Dickinson

Works by Copland et al
Nadine Benjamin (soprano) et al
Stone Records 5060192780864

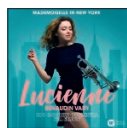


Nadine Benjamin's renditions of 20th- and 21st-century musical settings of poems by Emily Dickinson are a great tribute. The singing is beautifully controlled, with care for the text. (FP) ★★★★★

Mademoiselle in New York

Works by Gershwin et al

Lucienne Renaudin Vary (trumpet) et al
Warner Classics 9029540710



This is a riot. Renaudin Vary's trumpeting shines more than her singing, but it's a fabulously zesty programme. Bill Elliott's arrangements are a real highlight. (MB) ★★★★★

Praga Rosa Bohemiae

Works by Grudencz et al

Cappella Mariana
Supraphon SU 4273-2



Works by Josquin and Obrecht are among the gems in this excellent collection. Crisp, one-to-a-part performances benefit from majestic recorded sound. (JP) ★★★★★

Salvator Mundi

Works by Byrd, Stanford et al

Roger Sayer (organ) et al
Edition EDN1132



English choral works performed by saxophone and organ? Yep. Gorgeous arrangements played with sophistication ensure that this most unlikely of combinations works rather well. (JP) ★★★★★

Silenced Voices

Works by Kuti, Frid et al

Black Oak Ensemble
Cedille CDR 90000 189



All but one of these composers died at the hands of the Nazis. As such, there's more than a shadow of pathos over this otherwise delightful clutch of chamber works. (MB) ★★★★★

Twentieth Century Oboe Sonatas

Works by Poulenc et al

Alex Klein (oboe) et al
Cedille CDR 90000 186



Alex Klein gives a richly detailed account of oboe sonata stalwarts by Bowen, Poulenc and Saint-Saëns; the lesser-known Dutilleux and Bozza works add depth. (CJ) ★★★★★

Reviewers: Michael Beek (MB),
Oliver Condy (OC), Claire Jackson (CJ),
Freyja Parr (FP), Jeremy Pound (JP)

The month in box-sets



Fifth element:
Martin Roscoe plays
with the Maggini

Baroque birthdays and British quartets

This month's round-up also sees a mighty collection by Michael Haydn

The Michael Haydn Collection

(Brilliant Classics 95885) seeks to fly the flag for Haydn the younger, who is often over-shadowed by Joseph. Despite the sheer volume of works encompassed in this 28-disc collection, it remains a mere snip of the composer's enormous output. Included, though, are 26 symphonies, 11 masses, a pair of requiems, an opera and the complete violin concertos and string quintets; so more than enough to be going on with. It has a huge performer list, too, including the Salzburg Haydn Quintet and Bournemouth Sinfonietta.

The cast list is much smaller for **British String Quartets** (Naxos 8.502021), which collects all 20 of the Maggini Quartet's discs in that series – recorded from 1994-2009. Boxed in a spectacular British landscape, the discs feature original artwork and explore chamber works by some 14 composers, from Alwyn to Walton. While quartets are the main focus, further works see guest appearances by the likes of pianists Peter Donohoe and Martin Roscoe, oboist Nicholas Daniel, flautist Michael Cox and clarinetist David Campbell.



The Maggini explore works by some 14 British composers

Vincent Dumestre's **Le poème harmonique** (Alpha Classics ALPHA 568) marks its 20th anniversary with a gilt-edged box of delights. Two decades of recordings fill 20 discs, taking in French, Italian and English music from the 16th and 17th centuries. Fan the discs out and you're presented with the colours of autumn leaves, stick them in your player and you'll discover works by the likes of Cavalieri, Charpentier, Clérambault, Monteverdi, Purcell and more.

A decade before Dumestre's ensemble began making music, Alfredo Bernardini's group Zefiro was founded. Its 30th anniversary is celebrated in **The Baroque Collection** (Arcana A202), which features recordings previously released between 1993 and 2017. The ensemble, established by Bernardini with fellow oboist Paolo Grazi and bassoonist Alberto Grazi, performs both classic staples of the repertoire and a number of rediscoveries. Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks* and Bach's overtures sit alongside works such as Telemann's *Overture for Double Choir* and a selection of concertos by Fasch.