

symphonic structure from the opening movement. The performance really catches fire in the Mephistophelean finale, where the recent experience of playing *Die Meistersinger* at Glyndebourne, the uniquely febrile Proms atmosphere and the uninhibited contribution of tenor Marko Jentzsch all conspire to make the piece something more than the sum of its parts – all too rare in my experience.

There are five ‘symphonies’ in the set, all of them nonconforming children to their generic parentage. The third symphonies of Szymanowski and Enescu (in, remarkably, its London premiere, a century after its composition) again find Jurovski in his element, keeping rhythms on a fairly tight rein so that the voluptuous harmonies and choral apotheoses don’t spill over into self-indulgence. Some will find that the Festival Hall acoustic in such works inhibits the last degree of involvement, but the microphones capture both a wide dynamic range and more flecks of colour amid the great washes of sound than one is likely to appreciate in the hall itself.

Signing off the set is its most recent recording, from February 2017, the two-movement Second Symphony completed by Edison Denisov just months before his death in 1996. This 15-minute essay in densely applied layers of tone-colour owes as much to Webern as to Scriabin, making it a well-judged foil to the gently pulsing dissonances of Ligeti’s *Atmosphères*.

These are preceded on the final disc by another two slabs of Jurovski’s most personal and controversial offering to London audiences in his dogged advocacy of post-Soviet composers such as Denisov and (surely trying the patience of even the most loyal LPO subscriber) Alexander Raskatov. The muted Mahlerian detail of Valentin Silvestrov’s Fifth Symphony is certainly more lovingly cared for than on the Russian recording which made him famous in the West, but to what end? You might hear the ghost of Mahler’s Tenth or, at a stretch, the end-times aesthetic of Ustvolskaya in the crude contrasts and quizzical banalities of *Another Step* by Giya Kancheli, but you would be a more generous listener than me.

How to sum up? The set works on one level as a documentary of an adventurous orchestra, led at a happy if fiscally challenging point in its history by the restless intellect of a director who has the confidence both of the players in front of him and the management structure behind him. On the other hand, it would be a shame if only the LPO’s regular audience picked it up for the sake of happy memories. I haven’t even mentioned Glinka, Zemlinsky or Janáček: there are

discoveries to be made here by any listener sharing Jurovski’s ever-youthful curiosity of mind. **Peter Quantrill**

‘La flûte norvégienne’

Bræin Concertino, Op 10^a **Hovland** Suite, Op 31^a
Kvandal Flûte Concerto, Op 22^a

Mortensen Solo Flute Sonata, Op 6

Tom Ottar Andreassen //

^a**Norwegian Radio Orchestra** / **Ingar Bergby**

LAWO Classics (LWC1127 (71' • DDD)



This is as much a celebration of the Norwegian Radio Orchestra’s principal

flute chair as it is a snapshot of the divergent influences that were shaping Norwegian music in the decade 1953–63. Tom Ottar Andreassen formerly occupied that chair (he now plays in the Oslo Philharmonic and Norwegian Chamber orchestras) where his predecessors Alf Andersen and Per Øien were responsible for introducing these works and, often, prompting their creation in the first place.

The year 1953 saw the first international festival of new music in Oslo under the guidance of Ny Mysikk’s Pauline Hall, and international currents were very much felt in the 10 years following. Edvard Fliflet Bræin went to study in Paris and neoclassicism shapes his Concertino for flute and orchestra (1958), a direct and spiky piece that springs thematically from small cells (it’s notable that the faun-like language associated with the flute from previous compositional schools born in France prevails in the soloist’s part). Johan Kvandal’s Concerto for flute and strings (1963) is more individual, combining wistfulness with barbed elegance and including a tone row in its slow movement.

Neoclassicism and atonality meet in Egil Hovland’s Suite for flute and strings (1959) but despite that the piece isn’t as cold as you might think, mostly as the composer throws in some grit and develops a more dynamic and confrontational relationship between soloist and orchestra. Dark clouds linger over the second movement (of five), which rests on a sinister ostinato, and the Passacaglia plays with the structural implications of the title. We end with Finn Mortensen’s highly focused Sonata for solo flute of 1953. It was considered unplayable at the time but seems technically quite tame now. It certainly doesn’t trouble Andreassen, who plays with character, technical finesse and an attractively unfussy tone, while his old orchestra do him proud.

Andrew Mellor

‘Nordic noir’

Arnalds *Near Light*. **Words of Amber** **Bak** *The Mists* (Parts 1-3) **Helmerson** *Study in Rituals* (Parts 1 & 2). **Timelapse** **Pärt** *Darf ich* **Söderqvist** *Love & Rage* **Söderqvist/Samuelsen** *Prelude to Study in Rituals* **Tveitt** *Vél komne med æra*
Mari Samuelsen *vi* **Håkon Samuelsen** *vc*
Trondheim Soloists

Decca (481 4879DH (44' • DDD)



Mari Samuelsen is joined by her cellist brother Håkon and the Trondheim

Soloists for an album which hangs off the coat tails of the Nordic noir screen drama phenomenon but which, despite the title and an investigative booklet note, sounds a good deal more inoffensive and laid back than any Nordic thriller I’ve seen (and I’m afraid I’ve seen them all).

Alongside concert works by Geirr Tveitt and Arvo Pärt, at the heart of the album are new three-movement suites developed by Samuelsen with Frans Bak and Uno Helmersen, who scored the Danish series *The Killing* and *The Bridge* respectively. Bak’s work disappoints because his music for the TV series achieves far more in terms of both texture and tension. *The Mist* has one foot in the swampy woodland of series 1 of *The Killing*’s crime scene but feels compromised by the need to accommodate a soloist and could do more with its material (that tune gets irritating very quickly). The lone violin lines in Helmersen’s *Study in Rituals* work far better: free and a touch contrary, like a cue that tells you not to trust the picture.

The additional *Prelude* composed as an add-on with Johan Söderqvist (of *Let the Right One In* fame) gets stretch and strain from its minimal material while that composer’s own *Love & Rage* skilfully deploys the little sonic niggles that are a stock-in-trade of this particular school and could show Ólafur Arnalds a thing or two about how to write arpeggio patterns without resorting to commercial cliché. My ambivalence towards the latter composer is only increased by his naff *Near Light* and his elegant *Words of Amber*.

Samuelsen can play, finding imposing confidence and delicate lightness from the ‘Duke of Edinburgh’ Strad, and the Trondheim Soloists’ string sound is as seductive as we know it can be. There is nuance in the interpretations of Pärt’s *Darf ich* and of Tveitt’s *Vél komne med æra* (despite Simon Hale’s syrupy arrangement) but quite a lot of misty knob-twisting in the studio, too. But that’s the name of the game in this aesthetic. **Andrew Mellor**