

l'église éternelle blazing with especial fervour. Less convincing are the broad acoustics of Atlanta's All Saints Episcopal Church, although Chenault's 42-year-long association as resident organist clearly pays dividends here.

MICHAEL QUINN

PURCELL: AYRES AND SONGS FROM ORPHEUS BRITANNICUS, HARMONIA SACRA & COMPLETE ORGAN MUSIC

Davitt Moroney, Thomas Dallam organ, Saint-Milliau, Guimiliau, Brittany, France; Jill Feldman (s), Nigel North (archlute), Sarah Cunningham (bass viol)

Arcana A430 (2CDs) [70:00; 70:00]

★★★★



As the long title indicates, here are three significant collections presented across two CDs. The first is a compilation of pieces from the posthumous publication of Purcell songs, all beautifully accompanied with viol and archlute.

The second disc intersperses songs from the *Harmonia Sacra* with the complete organ works. Of particular interest here is the Thomas Dallam organ from the late 17th century. Built by the grandson of the famous English builder of the same name, this instrument brings us as close to the sound of 17th-century England as we can hope for. Jill Feldman deftly delivers Purcell's dramatic and often quirky writing with wonderful expression.

RUPERT GOUGH

A RUSSIAN JOURNEY

Gail Archer, Schlicker organ, St Joseph Church, Macon, GA, USA

Meyer Media MM17035 [58:11]

★★



This is an interesting collection of organ music from six Russian composers, including two Preludes from César Cui and a Prelude & Fugue by Alexander Glazunov. While the music is harmonically colourful, the Schlicker organ does little to reveal the orchestral nature of this music. For most of this recording we are presented with various plenums where the poor tuning of the instrument really begins to grate. Sergei Slonimsky's *Toccata*, with its Prokofiev-like impetus, makes a welcome contrast, but the concluding transcription of Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain* fails to sparkle. There are some interesting sleeve notes, though no information on the instrument chosen.

RUPERT GOUGH

BATTLEGROUND

Omstridt Duo (Anders Eidsten Dahl, org; Marius Hesby, tromb),

Bragernes Church, Drammen

Lawo LWC 1128 6962432 [65:10]

★★★★



An amusing title for an instrumental duo, perhaps; however, after the confrontational opener by Stig Nordhagen (inspired apparently by a bad day at work!), synthesis is restored with a melodious *Fantasia* by Arne Rodfelt Olsen. There

is great variety in this collection of trombone and organ repertoire, including jazz and blues from the pen of Jon Laukvik. The substantial *Missa* by Olsen is a complete setting of the Latin ordinary, with voice replaced by trombone. The Gregorian-inspired melodies are expressively declaimed by Marius Hesby, with dexterous support from Anders Eidsten Dahl on the organ.

RUPERT GOUGH

CHORAL CDS

IN CHAINS OF GOLD – THE ENGLISH PRE-RESTORATION VERSE ANTHEM VOL.1 (ORLANDO GIBBONS: COMPLETE CONSORT ANTHEMS)

Magdalena Consort, Fretwork, His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts
Signum Classics SIGCD 511 [66:38]

★★★★



Glorious Gibbons, both rare and well-loved, reaches an apogee of expression in this anthology featuring genuine consort/chamber/chapel forces. Revealed as early Protestant sacred music of the highest order, all elements combine in a micro-universe of sonorous delight – not only in a celebration of Gibbons's exquisite musical craftsmanship, but also with the texts given their true interpretational, devotional prominence. Subtle, seductively supple and sinuous singing and playing breathe vivid life into works we have grown used to hearing in more massive interpretations. Volume two from this dream-team will be eagerly awaited.

REBECCA TAVNER

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: DONA NOBIS PACEM; BERNSTEIN: CHICHESTER PSALMS

Ailish Tynan (s), Roderick Williams (bar), George Hill (treb), Choir of King's College, Cambridge, Richard Gowers and Henry Websdale (org), Britten Sinfonia / Stephen Cleobury (dir)

King's College KGS 0021 [51:20]

★★★★



This latest release from King's features two major choral works from the last century linked by the common theme of peace. While Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* is given in the composer's authorised version for organ, harp and percussion, Vaughan Williams's *Dona nobis pacem* is here recorded in a new instrumentation for small orchestra by Jonathan Rathbone, which will soon to be available from OUP. Rathbone's version is to be welcomed: it re-imagines RVW's original orchestration, making this powerful piece within the reach of all kinds of smaller vocal ensembles. Stephen Cleobury's King's forces, ably matched by the ever-reliable Britten Sinfonia, give of their very best, though occasionally one hankers for the bigger, mixed-voice choral sound that the composer originally had in mind. Both soloists are superb, with Roderick Williams's bright tone and exemplary diction especially to be admired. The Bernstein receives a lively, precise reading in which the newly restored chapel organ is heard to particularly fine effect. A special shout out should be