

Brief notes

Our collection of 25 further reviews finds surprising combos and new classics

JS Bach Cantatas for Luther

Montreal Baroque/Eric Milnes, et al
ATMA Classique ACD22407



A quartet of soloists make up the entirety of the chorus in these surprisingly full-bodied performances of joyful, often winsome cantatas written to celebrate the Lutheran Reformation. (OC) ★★★★★

Jeff Beal House of Cards Symphony, etc

Norrköping Symphony Orchestra/Jeff Beal, et al BIS BIS-2299



Beal's symphonic take on his popular TV tunes is a thriller, but the delightful shorter works featuring flautist Sharon Bezaly ultimately steal the show. (MB) ★★★★★

Beethoven Piano Trios

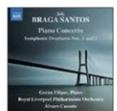
Van Baerle Trio
Challenge Classics CC72778



Despite the lively playing of the Van Baerle Trio, this trio transcription – reputedly by the composer himself and his student Ferdinand Ries – clips the wings of his Second Symphony. (RF) ★★★

Braga Santos Piano Concerto, etc

Goran Filipce (piano), et al
Naxos 8.573903



The Symphonic Overtures remind one of Vaughan Williams with splashes of Stravinsky; the Piano Concerto, from 30 years later, is spiky and spicy. All good stuff. (JP) ★★★★★

Braunfels Quintet for String Orchestra; Sinfonia Concertante
Munich Radio Orchestra/Ulf Schirmer, et al BR Klassik 777 579-2



Forget the impenetrable booklet note. Just dive into the dense but gorgeous late-Romantic sound world of Walter Braunfels, in these heartfelt performances. (RF) ★★★★★

BETY

Luca Lombardi Flute Works

Roberto Fabbriani (flute)
Kairos 0015033KAI



Contemporary works for a selection of flutes, heavily packed with extended technique and unusual sound manipulation. Listening to it became a little tiresome after a while. (FP) ★★★

Paderewski Piano Works

Kevin Kenner (piano)
National Institute Fryderyk Chopin
NIFCCD 057



Paderewski was a better pianist than composer, but these Chopin-esque pieces are worth hearing, if only to get a fuller picture of the legend. Kenner is a fine advocate. Echoey sound. (OC) ★★★

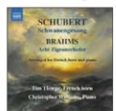
Prokofiev • Nielsen Concertos

Liya Petrova (violin), et al
Orchid Classics ORC100086



Co-winner of the 2016 Carl Nielsen competition, Liya Petrova turns in a stylish performance of the concerto that brought her success. (JP) ★★★★★

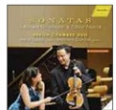
Schubert: Schwanengesang; Brahms: Acht Zigeunerlieder
Tim Thorpe (french horn), Christopher Williams (piano) Naxos 8.573815



There's no real need for these song arrangements in which the horn replaces the human voice, but they're not bad. Eloquent playing, but sadly some wayward tuning. (RF) ★★★

Schumann • Franck Sonatas

Berlin Chamber Duo
Hansler Classic HC18027



Máté Szűcs is impressive in these transcriptions, his fortes rich, his pianissimos whispering and seductive. There's a vocal quality, too, which is why the lieder arrangements also work well. (OC) ★★★★★

Shostakovich • Schubert String Quartets

Aris Quartet *Genuin GEN 18617*



Death haunts these two quartet masterpieces, both written by composers facing their own mortality. They are brilliantly played by this young German quartet. (RF) ★★★★★

American Concertos Works by Bernstein, Korngold, Rózsa

Baiba Skride (violin), et al
Orfeo C.932 182 A



Bad cover design aside, Skride sizzles in this gathering of 20th-century US works. Beyond the Bernstein, Rózsa's red-hot concerto adds fuel to the fire. (MB) ★★★★★

American Symphonies Works by Piston, S Jones, S Albert

London Symphony Orchestra/Lance Friedel *BIS BIS 2118*



The big-country spirit of Copland looms large in these three US symphonies, but also hints of Shostakovich and even Respighi. Worth a try. (JP) ★★★★★

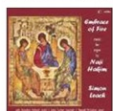
Écoutez Piano works by Debussy, Cage and Takemitsu

Sheila Arnold (piano) *Avi 8553257*



Sheila Arnold's effective programme juxtaposes three subtle and varied sound worlds, Takemitsu somehow uniting perfumed Debussy and prepared-piano Cage. (RF) ★★★

Embrace of Fire
Organ works by Naji Hakim
Simon Leach (organ)
Metier msv 28583



Hakim's music combines Poulenc mischief with Messiaen mysticism – his organ works traversing the full range of what the instrument can offer. Leach gets some remarkable sounds from his William Hill. (OC) ★★★★★

Fragments Works by Ibert, Debussy, Lutosławski, et al

The Juniper Project *Divine Art dda 25179*



A very palatable set of duets for flute and harp. The tone and control of the flute is particularly commendable, and the repertoire is well considered. (FP) ★★★★★

Ingmar Bergman – Music from the Films Works by Chopin, D Scarlatti, Schumann, et al

Roland Pöntinen (piano) *BIS BIS-2377*



Pöntinen is the star of this celebration of the late director's love of music and musicians, shared on film often. A suitably atmospheric selection. (MB) ★★★

Lost Saxophone Concertos
Works by Gunaropulos, Pals, et al
Olli-Pekka Tuomitalo (saxophone), et al
Naxos 8.579038



Phyllis Tate's sprightly B flat major Concerto is the pick of the five works here. Tuomitalo is a characterful soloist, but his ensemble occasionally sounds a little threadbare. (JP) ★★★

Norungen Works by Maria Theresia Paradis, JS Bach, et al
Vegard Landaas (saxophone); Anders Eidsten Dahl (organ) *Lawo LWC1159*



Saxophone and organ: a combination we're not used to seeing perform Norwegian folk tunes and Baroque. Surprisingly beautiful and rich in tone. (FP) ★★★★★

Octets Works by Stravinsky, Peter Eotvos, Alessio Elia, et al
I Solisti Della Scala/Andrea Vitello
Warner Classics 5419700581



Stravinsky's Octet for Wind Instruments is the centrepiece of this disc, but the contemporary works surrounding it are not to be underestimated. Controlled performances with superb voicing throughout. (FP) ★★★★★