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## Classical CDs Weekly: Prokofiev, Daniel Röhn, Ayreheart

A great ballet score gets a definitive reading, a nostalgic violin recital, and an American quartet tackle the hits of the English Renaissance

by [Graham Rickson](#) Saturday, 03 December 2016



**Prokofiev: Romeo and Juliet (Complete)** Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra / Vasily Petrenko (Lawo Classics)

The three suites which [Prokofiev](#) extracted from his ballet *Romeo and Juliet* are skilfully put together, but they're a poor substitute for the full score. There's so much more to hear, and this is a work which you can happily sit through in a single long sitting; despite being constructed from over 50 short movements, it has a real symphonic sweep and drive. Vasily Petrenko's new studio version is a stunner, tidier than Gergiev's entertaining LSO Live recording and as taut as Lorin Maazel's famous 1970s Cleveland account. Working without dancers allows for swifter, more exciting tempi and greater abandon. And within minutes you'll find yourself sat bolt upright, riveted by the energy and drive of the Oslo Philharmonic's playing. Marvel at the gradual increase in tempo early in the ballet, the street becoming livelier and rowdier before a devastating account of "The Fight". There are details in this performance I've never heard before, Petrenko reminding us that Prokofiev hadn't forgotten his early years as an *enfant terrible*. Nothing is undersold: numbers like "Arrival of the Guests" and the little folk dance which opens Act 2 are delicious. Prokofiev's big romantic numbers are spectacular, the Oslo string playing lacking nothing in terms of weight and security, The three dances which close Act 1 really hit the heights.

I could witter on about the two dances with mandolins (absolutely enchanting), or the Stravinskian violence which Petrenko brings to the violent close of Act 2. It's all so incisive and arresting; sample the electrifying ponticello strings scything away when Romeo decides to avenge Mercutio. All of which prepares us for a devastating, cannily paced final act. Shorter numbers like "Juliet's Room" and the "Dance of the Girls with Lilies" gleam under Petrenko's baton. Lower brass excel in the funeral scene. Magnificent, in other words, brilliantly recorded and easily among the best versions of this miraculous score yet recorded. Can we have a *Cinderella* from the same forces, please?

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