

ORCHESTRAL

Emmanuel Krivine and *La Chambre Philharmonique* reveal Berlioz's characterful woodwind in *Symphonie fantastique*; Mariss Jansons brings exceptional nuance to Mahler's Ninth; and Andrew Manze has an unusual take on Vaughan Williams's *A Pastoral Symphony*

MUSIC ORCHESTRAL CHOICE

A devastating combination

Tolstoy's novella highlights the drama of Janáček, says *David Nice*



JANÁČEK

String Quartets Nos 1 & 2; plus Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* dramatised (English & Norwegian)

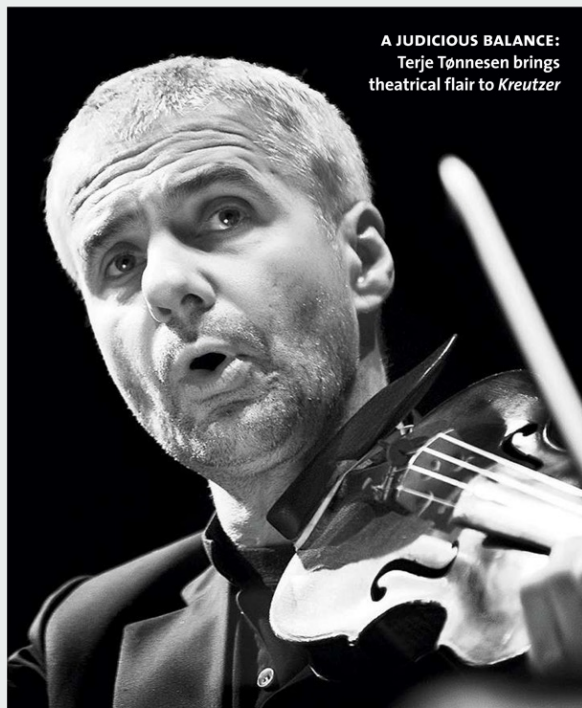
Teodor Janson (actor); Norwegian Chamber Orchestra/Terje Tønnesen
LAWO LWC1124 151:42 mins (3 discs)

Nervous systems go haywire when confronted with committed performances of Janáček's two quartets. Imagine the impact, then, when both are carefully and selectively arranged for string orchestra, as they have been here by the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra's inspirational artistic director Terje Tønnesen, and when the first can also be heard broken up

The shared vision of these remarkable players scours the soul

with harrowing readings from the Tolstoy novella which inspired it, *The Kreutzer Sonata*.

That so much scours the soul here is due partly to the shared vision of these remarkable players and partly, on the second disc here – to distinguished Norwegian actor Teodor Janson's amazingly idiomatic English for the Tolstoy (if your Norwegian is up to it, try disc three). Hybrids like this can spell danger, but Tønnesen makes sure the music rules in the careful placing of the four movements, adding the opening of the eponymous Beethoven violin sonata, later a bit



A JUDICIOUS BALANCE:
Terje Tønnesen brings theatrical flair to *Kreutzer*

of the slow movement, and a few atmospheric soundscapes within the narration (he has composed scores for the theatre, too). The novella is hardly the 'little psychological thriller' or 'slight reaction to Beethoven's violin sonata' the liner note suggests; it's a devastating study of an unhappy marriage – based on Tolstoy's jealousy of his wife's innocent friendship with the composer Taneyev – up there with Strindberg and Ingmar Bergman. The arrangements themselves embrace judicious solos with

ensembles that are hair-raising in the stabbing *sul ponticellos* (close-to-the-bridge sequences) and barely audible in astonishing *pianissimos*. If you already have the quartet versions and love the music, add this beautifully-presented release to your collection.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

ON THE WEBSITE

Hear extracts from this recording and the rest of this month's choices on the [BBC Music Magazine website](http://www.bbc.com/music/magazine)
www.classical-music.com



BERLIOZ

DVD *Symphonie fantastique*; plus extras: *The Concert* (comments from Emmanuel Krivine); *The Bassoon* (presented by Antoine Pecqueur); *The Timpani* (presented by Aline Potin); *The Violin* (presented by Christophe Robert); *Round table with Emmanuel Krivine, Antoine Pecqueur, Aline Potin and Christophe Robert*

La Chambre Philharmonique/
Emmanuel Krivine
Alpha Classics ALPHA714 125:05 mins
Performing Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* on period instruments was regarded as a radical, if not downright potty idea when Roger Norrington made his pioneering 1989 recording. As soon became clear, though, this colourful, arch-Romantic fantasy is fertile territory for historically informed performance. Berlioz's orchestral imagination is as precisely nuanced as the scenario is wildly febrile, his wide palette and expanded instrumental resources ensuring the differences of timbre and practice are readily apparent.

This DVD of period instrument ensemble *La Chambre Philharmonique* under Emmanuel Krivine is especially welcome not just for the performance itself, but also the accompanying films. In these, bassoonist Antoine Pecqueur, timpanist Aline Potin and violinist Christophe Robert enthusiastically demonstrate their instruments, and there is also a discussion between them and Krivine. In addition, the performance can also be viewed with a commentary by Krivine, periodically drawing attention to difficulties not apparent to the listener (unless they go awry) and, at times, being refreshingly honest.

The performance itself is notable for the translucence of the