

Brief notes

Our collection of 25 further reviews, including unmissable Britten and Vasks

JS Bach *Ein feste Burg, BWV 80; Mass in G minor*
Soloists; Stuttgart Chamber Choir; Stuttgart Baroque Orchestra/Bernius Carus 83.282



Invigorating, richly-textured performances of one of Bach's most joyous cantatas in an ideal acoustic. The balance sometimes raises eyebrows. (OC) ★★★★★

Bloch *Violin Sonatas Nos 1 & 2; Piano Sonata*

Stark (violin), Pescia (piano)
Claves 50-1705



Nurit Stark's sound is raw and agitated in the violin sonatas, but strangely rustic and effective, while Pescia's Piano Sonata is pure in tone with superb voicing. (FP) ★★★★★

Britten • Hindemith
Violin Concertos

Arabella Steinbacher (violin); Berlin Radio Symphony/Vladimir Jurowski
Pentatone PTC 5186 625



Steinbacher's lithe playing, alive to both concertos' volatilities, is matched by orchestral playing of depth and heart. (OC) ★★★★★

Chopin *Etudes Opp. 10 & 25*

Krzysztof Jabłoński (piano)
The Fryderyk Chopin Institute NIFCCD



Jabłoński's tasteful, restrained performances bring out myriad colours and lines from Chopin's masterpieces. The playing is impressively even. (OC) ★★★★★

Danzi *Concertos*

Nareh Arghamanyan (piano), Aurélien Pascal (cello); Munich CO/Griffiths
Sony Classical 88985361082



Mozart and Haydn enthusiasts will enjoy exploring these two elegant concertos by their little-known German contemporary Franz Danzi. Spirited performances of each help no end. (JP) ★★★★★

GETTY

O Davis *Spiral; Bacchus; Morpheus; Chillingham etc*
Kerenza Peacock (violin), Huw Watkins (piano); RPO/Paul Bateman et al
Signum Classics SIGCD522



Slick, lyrical and bubbly, Davis's concert music is a happy extension of his work for TV and film. *Bacchus* is a joyful pizzicato piece of mischief. (RF) ★★★★★

Franck *String Quartet; Piano Quintet*

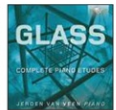
Quatuor Danel; Jumpanen (piano)
CPO 555 088-2



Meaty playing that brings out the angst in these knotty, chromatic works. The Quartet's *Larghetto* has an expansive feel while the Quintet's finale has a devilish abandon. (OC) ★★★★★

Glass *Complete piano etudes*

Jeroen van Veen (piano)
Brilliant Classics 95563



Glass's love of repeated rhythmic and harmonic patterns is suited to the etude form. Van Veen can be heavy-handed, but this is a hypnotic listen. (FP) ★★★★★

Handel *Dixit Dominus*
JS Bach *Magnificat in D*

Vox Luminis/Lionel Meunier
Alpha Classics Alpha 370



The singers of Vox Luminis are clear, warm and unfussy in these beautifully shaped performances of works by two Baroque masters. (RF) ★★★★★

Janáček • Debussy • Respighi
Violin Sonatas

Ueda (violin), Rinaldo (piano)
Heritage HTGCD 190



Three sonatas written within three years of each other, but varying in character. Ueda and Rinaldo bewitch in the Janáček and Debussy, but the Respighi could do with more fire. (JP) ★★★

Martinů *Bouquet of Flowers*
Novák *Philharmonic Dances*
Soloists; Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir & Choir; Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra/Tomáš Netopil
Supraphon SU 4220-2



An idiomatic performance of *Bouquet of Flowers*, an engaging cantata based on folk song, and displaying hints of Janáček and Stravinsky. (RF) ★★★★★

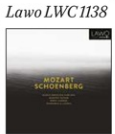
Martinů *Early orchestral works*

Sinfonia Varsovia/Ian Hobson
Tocatta Classics TOCC 0414



The 1922 symphonic tryptic *Vanishing Midnight* and two smaller works all receive their CD debuts. Lyrical and measured performances. (FP) ★★★★★

Mozart *Sinfonia Concertante in E flat*
Schoenberg *Verklärte Nacht*
Ensemble Allegria
Lawo LWC 1138



Not an obvious coupling, but a very effective one, with light-spirited Mozart placed in contrast with the darker shades of Schoenberg. Winning performances in both works, too. (JP) ★★★★★

Penderecki *Symphony No. 2*
Dvořák *Symphony No. 7*

Sinfonia Varsovia
Warner 9029573272



The Penderecki is the standout performance, with well-controlled playing by Sinfonia Varsovia. The Dvořák occasionally requires more clarity. (FP) ★★★★★

Poulenc • Ravel • Ferroud
Violin Sonatas

Ingolfsson (violin), Stoupel (piano)
Accentus music ACC 30436



Robust and lyrical performances of the Poulenc and Ravel violin and piano masterpieces, while Pierre-Octave Ferroud's Sonata is a real find. (OC) ★★★★★

Prokofiev
Romeo and Juliet; Cinderella
Brussels Phil/Stéphane Denève
Deutsche Grammophon 481 6548



Pieces from the *Romeo & Juliet* and *Cinderella* suites are reimagined in a condensed narrative. Denève elicits a wonderful sound from the Brussels Phil. (FP) ★★★★★

Saint-Saëns *Symphonic Poems*
Orchestre National de Lille/Jun Märkl
Naxos 8.573745



The *Danse macabre* will already be familiar to many, the likes of *La Jeunesse d'Hercule* and *Le Rouet d'Omphale* probably less so. Saint-Saëns is on colourful form in this likeable disc. (JP) ★★★★★

Vasks *Laudate Dominum etc*

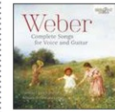
Latvian Radio Choir; Sinfonietta Riga/Sigvards Kljāva
Onidne ODE 1302-2



At times impassioned, at times hauntingly still, Vasks's atmospheric choral world is brilliantly showcased in performances that are as exquisitely balanced as they are perfectly paced. A stunning disc. (JP) ★★★★★

Weber *Songs*

Cigna (soprano), Sebastiani (guitar)
Brilliant Classics 95323



There's plenty of charm and character in Patrizia Cigna's performances of these rarely heard, really rather lovely, songs. Sadly, there are intonation problems too. A shame. (JP) ★★

Amor Fatale *Rossini Arias*

Marina Rebeka (soprano); Munich Radio Symphony/Marco Armiliato
BR Klassik 900321



Marina Rebeka finds the emotional depths of Rossini in this programme of arias from operas including *Otello*, *Guillaume Tell* and *La donna del lago*. (RF) ★★★★★