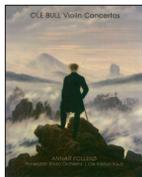


BULL Violin Concerto in A major,
Concerto fantastico, The Herdgirl's
Sunday, La melancolie (arr. Halvorsen/
Plagge), La verbena de San Juan,
A Mountain Vision
**Annar Follesø (violin) Norwegian Radio
Orchestra/Ole Kristian Ruud**

2L-067-SABD (WWW.2L.NO)

(HYBRID SACD PLUS PURE AUDIO BLU-RAY DISC)



Ole Bull aimed to out-Paganini Paganini, and in his lifetime he pretty much succeeded, as the plaudits of Schumann and Joachim in the notes for this new

recording suggest. Certainly the combination of extravagant, look-what-I-can-do virtuosity and supple lyricism make similar demands on a soloist. If you can't play it brilliantly, leave it alone. Annar Follesø, lean and bright of tone, is a worthy protagonist in these colourful dramas. In the outer movements of the A minor Concerto, where Bull's trademark multiple-stoppings are the default, there is little he can do sometimes beyond staying in there, which he does admirably.

After the delightful little *Herdgirl's Sunday* at the opening, the music gains

in character from one piece to the next, and so does Follesø. He shows an elfin agility in the jolly shenanigans of the *Concerto fantastico* finale, and brings character to the Spanish smörgasbord of the *Verbena de San Juan*. Follesø has a captivating way with the bel canto melodies of the concertos, but it is in the Norwegian works that he, and indeed Bull, show real individual character. The final piece, *A Mountain Vision*, a patriotic sequence of sometimes melancholy song and dance, is beautifully done. The recorded sound is detailed and generous.

TIM HOMFRAY

CORIGLIANO Violin Concerto 'The Red Violin', Phantasmagoria – Suite from 'The Ghosts of Versailles'

**Michael Ludwig (violin) Buffalo
Philharmonic Orchestra/JoAnn Falletta**

NAXOS 8.559671



This disc plunges you with carefree abandon into the highly coloured and expressive world of Corigliano. After the expertly performed suite from the

composer's opera *The Ghosts of Versailles* comes the meat of the recording, the Violin Concerto, based on Corigliano's 1998 score for the film *The Red Violin*. The work is structurally strange, retaining the feeling of having been stitched together, with three short movements attempting to balance a long first one. It has moments of exquisitely scored neo-Romantic bliss, particularly in the opening Chaconne, with touches of Sibelius in the sweeping violin themes and explosive cadenzas.

Michael Ludwig gives a suitably virtuosic performance, showing technical excellence in the wild, scampering scherzo and the breakneck finale, but he is also eminently convincing in his approach to the work's piecemeal architecture, maintaining the drive and relaxing into the big themes as if they grow organically from the texture. JoAnn Falletta is adept, too, at keeping a tight rein on the work's brilliant colourations and vast orchestral forces, recorded in crystal-clear detail. But for all its thoroughly enjoyable quasi-Romantic aspirations, it's still an oddly unsatisfying piece, beautifully wrought but slightly misshapen.

CATHERINE NELSON