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HEARING IT DIFFERENTLY

orchestral disc of the month



The Trondheim Soloists shine in unique recorded sound and intriguing repertoire

WORDS PHILIP CLARK

The Trondheim Soloists are a troupe of über-honed Norwegian string players most renowned for backing violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter on her 1999 recording of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*. The 2L label is an Oslo-based organisation that is interested in pairing incredible performers with the latest advances in recording technology - put the two together, marinate with some intriguing repertoire, and the result is very tasty indeed.

Such interest in technology from 2L founder Morten Lindberg is manifested in this, the first-ever audio-only release on Blu-Ray - the video format associated with high definition moving pictures. The Blu-Ray disc will work



★★★★★
Britten
Simple Symphony
Bacewicz *Concerto for String Orchestra*
Björklund *Carmina*
Bartók
Divertimento for Strings
The Trondheim Soloists
 2L 2L50

on Blu-Ray players, while those without such equipment will find the hybrid SACD, also included, amply demonstrates the rewards of excellent recording. From the first

note of Britten's *Simple Symphony* the sound has a depth that makes conventional CDs sound wimpy. But even more impressively, an authentic sense of perspective fakes the genuine spatial distribution of a live string orchestra playing in a resonant concert hall.

And what of the music? It's all good stuff. Britten's *Simple Symphony* is a charming re-working of melodies he composed during childhood. Bartók's *Divertimento* transforms folksongs with dashing orchestration and ingenious re-harmonisations. Polish composer Grazyna Bacewicz's *Concerto* is poignantly lyrical, while *Carmina* by Terje Björklund aptly demonstrates the vitality of contemporary Norwegian music. ■



★★★★★

Rachmaninov
Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 3
Barry Douglas (piano), Russian State Symphony Orchestra/Evgeny Svetlanov
 We've had to wait 15 years for this release, during which time tastes have changed considerably and there are now countless Rachmaninov recordings from which to choose. It must have been quite tough for the dynamic and adventurous Barry Douglas to encounter the distinguished conductor Evgeny Svetlanov, who embodied the very finest Russian musical traditions. However, the young pianist was clearly inspired by the maestro's greatness, particularly in the First Concerto where the orchestra's powerful surety is complemented by his delicious light, rhythmic touch. The Third Concerto is less cohesive, as Douglas champions exuberance over the orchestra's more established phrasing, but their partnership is re-established for a highly charged finale.
RCA Red Seal 88697 27972 2
 Jane Jones



★★★★★

Haydn
Cello Concertos Nos 1 & 2
Kraft
Cello Sonata in G
Jens Peter Maintz (cello), Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen/Thomas Klug
 Haydn was not an instrumental virtuoso, which goes a long way towards explaining his relatively limited success in the concerto domain. That said, his two works for cello featured here indisputably deserve a place at the concerto's high table. Jens Peter Maintz's deft, highly articulate, infinitely flexible technique creates the appealing effect of the cello being a tenor-baritone violin. He brings plenty of dash and sparkle to Haydn's outer movements and keeps the central adagios flowing attractively. In the world-premiere recording of cellist and composer Anton Kraft's (1749-1820) delightful Cello Sonata in G, Maintz is joined by fellow cellist Dávid Adorján to enchanting effect.
Berlin Classics 0016322BC
 Julian Haylock



★★★★★

Alwyn Orchestral Music
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra/David Lloyd-Jones
 Alwyn's vast output ranged from five symphonies to concertante pieces, song cycles, operas and music for nearly 60 films and 150 documentaries. His orchestral music brims over with first-rate invention, consummately scored, with passing references to the soundworlds of Rimsky-Korsakov and Ravel. The *Overture to a Masque* is one of the most overtly sensual works of its type ever written, the *Pastoral Fantasia* pays occasional homage to Delius, while the *Scottish Dances Suite* has a lighter touch than is usual with such music. Atmospheric performances under David Lloyd-Jones, beautifully recorded.
Naxos 8.570704
 Julian Haylock



★★★★★

Rise of the North Italian Violin Concerto, Vol.3
Music by Vivaldi, Tartini, Locatelli, Sammartini
La Serenissima/Adrian Chandler (violin)
 What can one say to the critic who wrote recently that all Vivaldi's music sounds like *The Four Seasons*? One answer is to recommend a recent recording - and nobody in England has done more for Vivaldi's concertos than Adrian Chandler and La Serenissima. This disc contains two concertos framing works by Vivaldi's contemporaries. RV569 is splendid: in the first movement the horns chase each other like puppies; the slow movement is a wistful *siciliano* for violin and strings. Chandler's playing and direction are excellent: a pity this is the last in the series.
Avie AV2154
 Richard Lawrence

ALWYN ON ICE

Northampton-born composer William Alwyn's *Concerto for Harp and String Orchestra, Lyra Angelica*, was made famous at the 1998 Winter Olympics when figure skater Michelle Kwan performed to it.