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with
Robert
McCarney

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*Classical
Music
Daily*

A New Look and Format — Issue 165, January 2023

Robert McCarney: Happy New Year to all our readers here at *Classical Music Daily* and especially on behalf of myself to all the oblivionophiles amongst you. A new year is upon us and as such, in a desire to make this series more regular and structured and likewise wanting to find a more appropriate way to do justice to the sheer cornucopia of music which falls under its remit, my editor and I have decided to give the series a new look and format from now on.

The plan is that, starting today, *Echoes of Oblivion* will appear here every Sunday with five choice selections of little known or rarely touted music from the twentieth, and occasionally, twenty-first century. To describe any music as little known is clearly very relative and arbitrary. What one listener may consider as little known music another may view as almost mainstream. That being the case, all selections here will strictly be the subjective and personal choice of one listener: myself.

Little known may refer to a particular composer or it may refer to particular works of otherwise very well known composers. The net shall be cast as wide as possible: geographically, stylistically and chronologically. As great a mix as possible among composers, forms, periods and aesthetic will be attempted. The only rules for inclusion in what follows are firstly that the piece was composed in the year 1900 or after and that it has not received anything like the recognition that I believe it is due. No apologies are made for any perceived bias; as I said, all choices are subjective. As much as possible, I will try to draw attention to pieces that have never been, or at least not for a long time, commercially recorded, and in a similar vein I will draw attention to, when I am aware of it, new and future recordings of what can certainly be considered echoes of oblivion. [READ MORE](#)

Echoes of Oblivion is Robert McCarney's regular series of features about little-known twentieth century classical composers, which began in August 2022, and which has just relaunched in a new format, now appearing every Sunday.

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[MORE FROM ROBERT MCCARNEY](#)

CD SPOTLIGHT — AN IMPORTANT HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

Patrick Maxwell: The life of Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) was exceptionally long and saw some of the most far-reaching, dramatic and fundamental changes in the makeup of the society into which he had been born. This has made him very susceptible to the kind of half-baked musicology which scans the composition date of a piece of music and makes parallels between the ascertained mood of the piece and the general political state of the time in which it was written. It is the kind of thing too often done to Shostakovich, whose life was tainted in many ways but not marred by the Soviet regime's control; neither was everything written in the two World Wars, for instance, similarly imbued with reactions to the horrible contemporary conflicts.

I say this because Vaughan Williams' Fifth Symphony is one of his most pastoral,

bucolic and serene. It was composed in 1943 - one of the most destructive years in human history. Vaughan Williams' pastoral vision of England had been attacked by consistent bombing raids, and the scale of destruction in Europe was greater and more widespread than that he had viewed first-hand on the fields of Flanders in the First War. Whereas his *Pastoral Symphony* has been mistakenly viewed as an idyllic description of England - when in fact it was inspired by the grim sights of war-ridden France - the Fifth bars any attempt at fixing upon it the labels of political reaction or personal horror. The music is simply of a completely different character to any such attempts. Such a reflection would come, in fact, with Vaughan Williams' Sixth, a wonderfully powerful and emotive reaction after the end of the war.

This new release from SOMM places particular importance on the historical context of the Fifth, with two recordings of the piece conducted by the composer himself. With the London Philharmonic Orchestra giving the premiere in 1943, what survives here is a spirited and passionate recording of one of the composer's most personal expressions. Given the limited technology of a wartime listener, there are gaps throughout these recordings in the middle of certain movements, but their interest as historical documents is not in doubt. The third movement of the Fifth Symphony is often described as the 'heart' of the piece: it contains material which the composer re-used in his lifelong project to complete an opera on Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, completed in 1951. In the 1943 recording, the timeless quality of the opening chords and wandering cor anglais solo is mesmerising, with the composer taking the music's movement truly into his own hands.

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[MORE FROM PATRICK MAXWELL ...](#)



'... sparkling performances brimming with beguiling melodies and exquisite harmonies.'



'This is a set to be savoured.'

Geoff Pearce: I was delighted to receive this set to review. Hugo Alfvén has long been a favourite composer of mine and I have long wondered why he does not appear on concert programmes and recordings much more regularly than he does. What appeals to me is his geniality, wit, and that I find his music very humanistic. He is also a very accomplished orchestrator, and is at home with large scale works as well as smaller ones. He had a rich and varied long life (1 May 1872 - 8 May 1960), was a violinist, conductor, composer and also a more than competent painter. I would love to see his works performed and recorded more often, and also those of many other fine Scandinavian composers.

I guess one of the reasons why Alfvén and also many of his contemporaries from Scandinavia are so often overlooked is that their style is often more late Romantic and

considered old fashioned. To me, this does not detract from their worth at all.

This Naxos set contains the five symphonies, three rhapsodies, and the suites and short orchestral works. The final disc includes music of some of Alfvén's contemporaries from Sweden and this helps illustrate the influence that this fine composer had on those around him and also what in turn influenced him.

The first disc contains the *Festival Overture* Op 25, The Suite from *Bernakungen* ('The Mountain King'), the second Swedish Rhapsody 'Uppsala' and the four movement Symphony No 1 in F minor. This is all performed by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and is conducted by Niklas Willén who is the main conductor on this set. Many people regard *Bernakungen*, a ballet, as Alfvén's finest work, and although it was soon dropped from the repertoire, this suite is what is mostly performed today. It was composed between 1917-22, and was compiled by composer himself. The First Symphony was originally composed in 1897, but he revised it in 1904-5 and again in 1948.

The second disc contains a seven-movement suite from Alfvén's last major work, a ballet called *The Prodigal Son* (1957) and the Second Symphony, written just a couple of years after the First Symphony. The orchestra here is the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and also has Niklas Willén as the conductor. I find the ambience of this disc very satisfying and the performances really sparkle. The ballet is filled with character and the short movements are a real delight to the ear. The symphony is a fine work and it is easy to see how these first two symphonies would so profoundly affect Swedish music. The final fugal movement of the symphony is really uplifting. [READ MORE](#)

Geoff Pearce: This very interesting disc features the music of a composer that I had not heard of before - Mihailo Trandafilovski (born 1974) - and some very accomplished performers for whom this music was written. It was a challenging, but fascinating experience, and one that was rewarding, as it is always a delight to hear new composers - to me at least - and new works, and it always leaves me enriched - even if the work does not immediately reveal its charms. The title for this recording, *Polychromy*, means 'many colours' and is certainly apt.

The first work, *Chaconne*, is performed by Peter Sheppard Skærved, and is of about thirteen minutes in duration. This form, which has been widely used since the seventeenth century, starts with a seven bar theme. Over the course of the work, this theme goes through many changes, and the performer is

called on to employ a wide variety of techniques to achieve this ever shifting soundscape. There is a seriousness and intensity to this work, that never descends into mere gimmicks, and the piece ends quietly, as it began, with a modified return to the theme, in a retrograde, augmented and modified form.

The next work, *Sandglass*, performed by Roger Heaton, starts expansively and ends the same way. The silence between notes is as important as the notes themselves. The work becomes infinitely more concentrated and dense towards the middle before finally relaxing as it goes out - therefore the concept of the hourglass shape. The sonic capabilities of the clarinet are fully explored - glissando, double trills, multiphonics, harmonics, flutter-tonguing and changing the colour of notes by adding extra keys, as well as exploring the extreme compass of the instrument's range. Roger Heaton is exceptionally good at this, and one is astounded at this man's virtuosity. I do not know that much about extended techniques, as far as performing them, as it is not something that appeals to me personally, but I was amazed at what could be achieved.

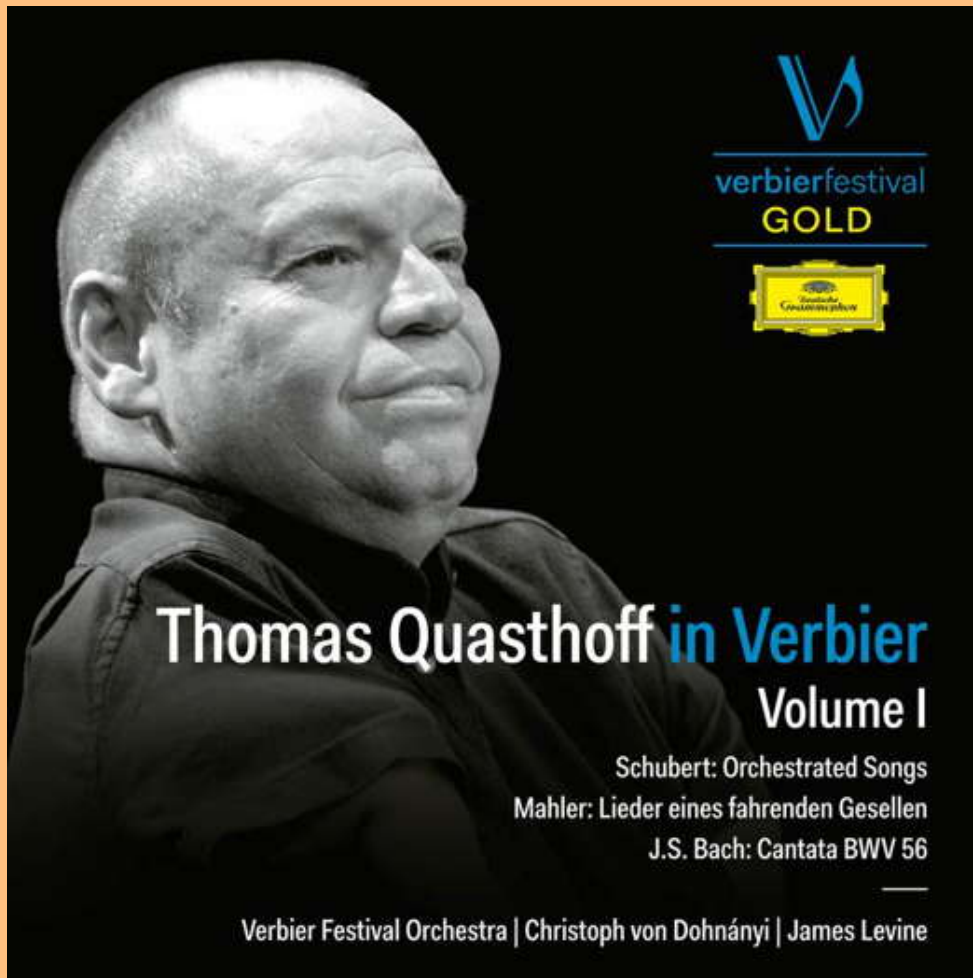
Šarenilo (pronounced 'Sharenilo' - Macedonian for 'colourfulness') is a violin duo involving Peter Sheppard Skærved and the composer, and the programme notes go fully into what he is portraying in the two movements. I find this work is particularly effective, and it may be the work on the disc that has the widest appeal. The two movements, just over four minutes each, are reflective and have a beauty about them. I think one would have to be in an almost meditative state to bring this off. [READ MORE](#)

Geoff also listens to music by Shostakovich and Bacewicz from the Dudok Quartet on Rubicon.

[MORE FROM GEOFF PEARCE ...](#)



'... the performers are outstanding ...'



John Dante Prevedini:
Thomas Quasthoff in Verbier (Volume 1) is the recent release from Deutsche Grammophon featuring a compilation of performances by the German bass-baritone Thomas Quasthoff with the Verbier Festival Orchestra, recorded over the course of Quasthoff's relationship with the eponymous annual summer festival in Verbier, Switzerland since his first appearance there in 2003. The fourteen-track, hour-long release is available in digital format only, and the accompanying virtual liner notes can be accessed directly from the label's website.

According to the Verbier Festival's official webpage, 'the Festival's mission is to build a community of exchange between great masters and young artists from all over the world and to be a leader in its field by providing meaningful music education programmes'. To

'Taken within the context of Verbier, this album documents just as effectively his gift for pedagogical modeling as it does his vocal virtuosity.'

this end, the highly respected international festival has been offering a 'blend of events, both large-scale and intimate' (including concerts, rehearsals and master classes), each summer since its inception in 1994. Considering Quasthoff, whose work I have long admired for its unusual breadth and sensitivity across various musical disciplines (he is well known as an interpreter of Schubert lieder, a vocal coach and a jazz singer alike), this release seems to me a welcome retrospective of an extraordinary educator thriving in his element.

The album opens with five orchestrated examples of Schubert lieder: *Tränenregen* from *Die schöne Müllerin* (orchestrated by Webern), *Der Wegweiser* from *Winterreise* (orchestrated by Webern), *Memnon* (orchestrated by Brahms), *Ständchen* from *Schwanengesang* (orchestrated by Offenbach) and *Erkönig* (orchestrated by Reger). These are followed by the four movements of Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, and the album closes with the five movements of the J S Bach cantata *Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen*.

What strikes me about this album is not simply the breadth of Quasthoff's mastery of vocal technique and expressive artistry across the idioms of these various repertorial worlds; this fact is already well established about Quasthoff and, at this point, goes without saying. Rather, what I find fresh and novel about this release is its curation of Quasthoff's efforts to present this diverse repertoire for educational purposes. Taken within the context of Verbier, this album documents just as effectively his gift for pedagogical modeling as it does his vocal virtuosity.

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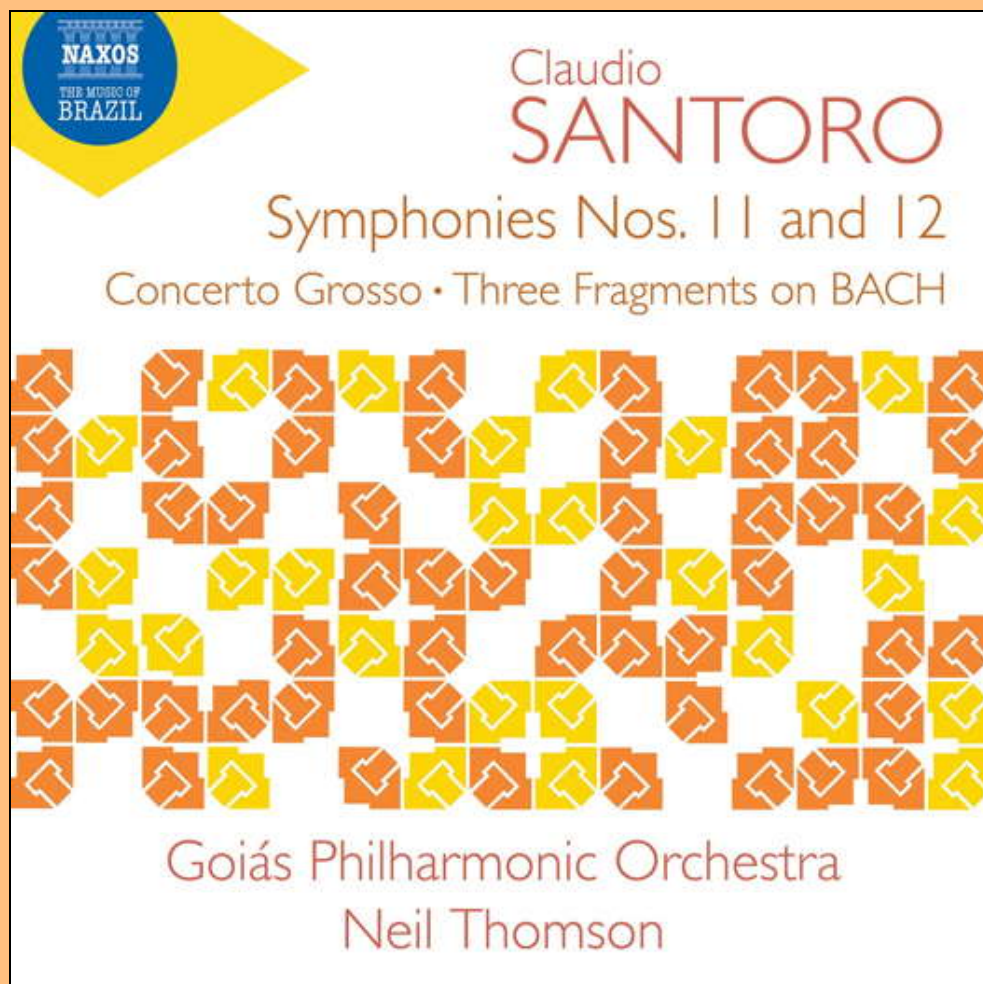
Gerald Fenech: Cláudio Santoro (1919-1989) is considered one of Brazil's great symphonic composers of the twentieth century. A controversial figure, his fourteen symphonies remain the benchmark of the genre in his country's musical development during the last century. Santoro was a member of the Brazilian Communist Party, which brought him major problems during his artistic life and forced him into exile for extended periods. Persecuted by Brazil's military dictatorship, he lived in Germany as a political refugee in the 1970s, during which time he served as professor of conducting at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Heidelberg-Mannheim.

Santoro returned to Brazil in 1978, when he was invited to set up the orchestra of Brasília's Teatro Nacional, where subsequently he became its first principal director. In tandem with this

he resumed his activities as professor of composition and conducting at Brasília University. Both the orchestra and his teaching would be of central importance to him during the last ten years of his life.

This release in the ongoing Naxos cycle of Santoro's symphonic works features two pieces composed during his last decade. The Eleventh Symphony is one of the densest and most dramatic in Santoro's symphonic canon. Written in 1984, it was premiered in 1987, and with its compact three-movement structure, the work lasts less than twenty minutes. The first movement contrasts an air of desolation with more vibrant passages. The second movement is a short lively scherzo in which the flamboyant writing showcases the woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. The involvement here of the entire orchestra comes in striking contrast to the linearity of the first movement. [READ MORE](#)

Gerald also listens to *Vive Verdi!* on the Dynamic label, to music by Florence Price on Naxos and to Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* on Erato. [MORE FROM GERALD FENECH ...](#)



'... performances full of intense power and restless excitement.'

Our CD reviews are worth exploring in more detail than shown here. They are all illustrated with short sound samples, usually chosen by the author of each review, and each review has a detailed information page about the album under scrutiny. We also publish a long list of new releases, normally once each month, with a new selection due later this month.

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From left to right: Agunda Kulaeva, Sergey Radchenko, Stanislav Kochanovsky, Piero Monti, Alberto Marucci and Milena Vukotic in Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia's presentation of Tchaikovsky's *Snegurčka*.
Photo © 2022 Riccardo Musacchio

Giuseppe Pennisi: A real Christmas gift: on 22 December 2022, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia presented, for one evening only (out of subscription), *Snegurčka* (The Snow Maiden) by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky in its first performance in Rome and, I believe, in Italy. I have memories of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's work on the same subject as well as based on the same play (by Aleksandr Nikolayevich Ostrovsky). I saw and heard it in Rome, as a child, in 1953. The Rimsky-Korsakov work, according to my memories, was seen and heard, about thirty years ago, at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and later in the theatrical circuit of Emilia-Romagna, while Tchaikovsky's 'incidental music' was played, without voices or chorus, as a musical carpet for a ballet staged in Piacenza last January. They are compositions of rare execution. I do not know if there are CDs or DVDs of Tchaikovsky's work on the market. A few years ago, I was able to find a CD of Rimsky-Korsakov's work from a German publishing house but sung in French. This clarification is necessary to know what work we are talking about.

Tchaikovsky's 'incidental music' was composed for the premiere of Ostrovsky's theatrical work. Ostrovsky was a very prolific author, with over forty texts represented in Russia and beyond, by 1873. The work by Ostrovsky / Tchaikovsky was not a great success with critics and audiences in 1873, but gradually became popular. About ten years later, Tchaikovsky himself would have wanted to make it a full opera but was preceded by Rimsky-Korsakov whose work was staged in 1882 and became, in Russia and beyond, a 'classic' for the Christmas and New Year period.

The opera by Rimsky-Korsakov is full of musical colors and its melancholic tint is very light. As such, it is similar to most of his works and especially fairytale works such as *Sadko*: I remember a good production of this fairytale at La Fenice, of which there is a CD. Therefore, it is very different from the highly dramatic and black horror opera *The Czar's fiancée*; seen and heard in the last fifteen years both in Catania, in a Helicon Opera Theater production in Moscow, and at La Scala in a production that caused lively discussions. Largely, Tchaikovsky's 'incidental music' - nineteen numbers, mostly for choir and orchestra - is inspired by Russian folk tradition. [READ MORE](#)



Isabella Boylston as Kitri and Daniel Camargo as Basilio in Opera di Roma's production of *Don Quixote* by Ludwig Minkus.
Photo © 2022 Fabrizio Sansoni

Giuseppe Pennisi: In Rome, ballet is alive and well during the Christmas period. At least three theaters are engaged with ballet, and it is also a tradition of Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. Last year - it will be remembered - the usual *Nutcracker* by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was on stage (reviewed in this magazine on 28 December 2021). This season a title that has often appeared in recent seasons, *Don Quixote* by Ludwig Minkus, was chosen, but with a largely new staging thanks to Francesco Zito and Antonella Conte's beautiful sets and elegant costumes. They take us into a fairytale world with Vinicio Cheli's bright colors and beautiful lights. The show is repeated almost every night until 31 December 2022 (when it begins at 6pm, to allow the public to participate in New Year's Eve dinners and balls after an evening at the Opera House).

Don Quixote has a particular story. It belongs to the late romantic genre. (The first version is from 1870, but the current version dates back to 1871.) It was conceived by Marius Petipa, who then made good and bad weather in the field of dance in the Imperial Theaters of Tsarist Russia. Petipa choreographed it with Alexander Gorgsky. Minkus was commissioned to write the music. He was born in what is now the Czech Republic but then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He went to Vienna as a child and became one of the court musicians in St Petersburg from 1869 to 1891, when he returned to Vienna where, now elderly, he had little professional fortune and died in poverty because the Soviet revolutionary government took away his pension. His numerous ballets have always been in repertoire in the USSR and now in the Russian Federation, but they did not arrive in the West until 1961 when, at the Parisian airport of Le Bourget, Rudolf Nureyev asked for political asylum. However, the grand Act III *pas de deux* was well-known because George Balanchine, who was born in St Petersburg but fled to the West when young, had included it in the repertoire of New York City Ballet. [READ MORE](#)

Giuseppe also listens to Chopin recitals by Italian pianists Gloria Campaner and Leonora Armellini, and experiences Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov* at La Scala.

[MORE FROM GIUSEPPE PENNISI ...](#)



The Sitwell Singers performing on 19 December 2022

Mike Wheeler: The Sitwell Singers' established track-record of mixing unfamiliar ingredients alongside the more familiar ones in their Christmas concerts is clearly in safe hands with their new conductor Dexter Drown. Tenor Martin Power was doing double duty, nipping up to the organ loft for the audience participation carols - St John's Church, Derby, UK, 19 December 2022.

There was plenty of expressive contrast, from exuberant energy to hushed concentration. Sweelinck's *Hodie Christus Natus Est* was a robust curtain-raiser, followed by the flowing lines of Victoria's motet *O Magnum Mysterium*, whose concluding 'Alleluia' went with a real swing. There was an engaging lilt to Robert Pearsall's arrangement of *In Dulci Jubilo*.

At the quiet end of the spectrum, the choir captured the serenity of John Joubert's *There Is No Rose* and Morten Lauridsen's *O Magnum Mysterium*, though the big climax of this was not short-changed. Herbert Howells' *A Spotless Rose*, with David Tudor the expressive soloist, and *Here Is The Little Door*, were both highly atmospheric. For Peter Cornelius' *The Three Kings*, in the familiar Ivor Atkins choral transcription, Dexter Drown moved to the church's east end and the choir turned to face him. Apart from a slight loss of co-ordination in the last verse, it was an imaginative way of ensuring the chorale - the piano part in the original song - was a discreet backdrop to Chris Motley's sonorous account of the solo part.

Other numbers included Sullivan's jolly *I Sing The Birth*, whose music could easily slot into one of the Savoy operas, Welsh composer Garth Tredseder's engaging setting of fifteenth-century words in *Blessed Be That Maid Marie*, and the teenage Britten's remarkably mature *A Hymn To The Virgin*, with the solo quartet effectively placed off-stage.

Of the two pieces by Peter Warlock, *Bethlehem Down* was taken at a riskily slow tempo, but it was well sustained, and the tricky tuning mostly came off, a telling contrast to the choir's ebullient take on his *Benedicamus Domino*.

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Mike Wheeler: The first thing to hit you was the extraordinarily vivid sound. Conductor John Wilson's re-launch of the Sinfonia of London has been a major success story of the last few years, with good reason. They were alive to every twist and turn of their opener, Walton's quick-witted 'comedy overture' *Scapino* - Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham, UK, 4 December 2022. The players can whizz round the notes, no question, though there were moments when the phrasing could have used just a little more time to breathe.



John Wilson. Photo © 2013 Sim Canetty-Clarke

Valses Nobles et Sentimentales, as John Wilson suggested in his spoken introduction, is 'maybe Ravel's most exquisite achievement'. There was certainly plenty of that quality in evidence in this performance, but that did not rule out vigour, and some not inappropriate roughness, in the opening waltz, and there were moments in No 7 that seemed on the point of turning into the manic urgency of *La Valse*.

Set against that, there was Adam Walker's haunted flute solo in No 2, and a delicate teasing-out of Ravel's own style of smiling melancholy in the following number. And as Ravel summoned the ghosts of previous waltzes at the end, the long fade-out was handled with unimpeachable sensitivity.

Pianist Martin James Bartlett then joined the orchestra for Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Christopher Richards was clearly having fun with the opening clarinet solo, likewise Katy Ayling, chortling away on bass clarinet a little later. For his part, Bartlett brought some refreshing subtlety to what can too often be an in-your-face first piano entry, and often suggested Gershwin playing to a small group of friends, though he could also produce the grand gesture when needed. And with the orchestra's alert, incisive playing, there was never any danger of Ferde Grofé's familiar orchestration seeming over-upholstered. [READ MORE](#)

Mike also presents reviews of Filarmonica Braşov (otherwise known, when touring, as the Romanian National Philharmonic Orchestra) conducted by Sergey Smbatyan, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Dominic Hindoyan, Monteverdi's *Orfeo* from Opera North, Derby Concert Orchestra's Christmas concert, pianists Hannes Minnaar and Sarah Beth Briggs, the Aquinas Piano Trio, Derby Bach Choir's performance of the Verdi Requiem, and of Dexter Drown's first concert with the Sitwell Singers.

[MORE FROM MIKE WHEELER ...](#)



Pablo Sáinz-Villegas (photo © 2015 Lisa Mazzuco) and **Isabel Leonard** (photo © Jared Slater / J & J Photography)

Ron Bierman: Mezzo Isabel Leonard and classical-guitarist Pablo Sáinz-Villegas are stars in their fields.

Leonard has sung on two Grammy-winning opera recordings and won a Beverly Sills Artist Award at the Metropolitan Opera - and even guested on *Sesame Street*. Sáinz-Villegas has garnered thirty international awards, including the Segovia, which he won at age fifteen, and critics have compared him to that legendary guitarist.

Understandably, their recital at La Jolla Music Society's Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center in La Jolla, California, USA, sold out more than a month before the performance - chairs were added on stage for late ticket buyers - and the artists lived up to their reputations.

Leonard's voice has the beauty and easy fluid power of a top mezzo, while the guitarist's exceptional technique and control bring the best from quiet single notes or hard, Flamenco-like strumming.

But is the combination of mezzo and acoustic guitar ready to supplant diva and piano? Not likely in the grand-opera arias that began the concert.

The first was the familiar Seguidilla from Act I of *Carmen*. Leonard will make her debut as Carmen at the Washington National Opera in May, and she'll have no trouble convincing the audience that Corporal Don José would succumb and desert his post to join her in a smuggler's mountain-hideout. Had he the voice, Sáinz-Villegas would make a dashing tenor costar. But in this recital his very basic guitar accompaniment, no matter how well played, added little to Leonard's seductive performance.

The combination did work better in the following 'Voi che sapete' from *Nozze di Figaro*, though the guitar can't match the playfully delicious piano trills in a more typical recital arrangement. [READ MORE](#)

[MORE FROM RON BIERMAN ...](#)



**Andrew Mayor and Sarah Fox singing Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* in Worcester Cathedral.
Photo © 2022 Michael Whitefoot**

Lucas Ball: Ralph Vaughan Williams' 150th anniversary is upon us. This Worcester Festival Choral Society concert (with the admirable Samuel Hudson directing) not only had this in mind but also the subject of the sea. What is more, both items on the programme - Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony* and Delius' *Sea Drift* - used pantheistic poet Walt Whitman's text with the sea as another way of linking the two.

Words in Whitman's text are surely vital to hear in light of this, and I unfortunately struggled to hear each and every one from baritone Andrew Mayor. (Admittedly I was sitting quite a long way back so that might have made life harder.) I found I was really having to depend on reading the words in the programme during the performance. This issue applied particularly in *Sea Drift* - less so in *A Sea Symphony*.

The Worcester Festival Choral Society does make a great sound, however. One could hear the words rather more when it came to *A Sea Symphony*, and the choral society's efforts created goose bumps (and other thrilling feelings) at moments where the combination of Whitman's words in the solo voices and chorus, and Vaughan Williams' orchestration, are both unleashed.

Any dubious ensemble moments with the Meridian Sinfonia during *A Sea Symphony* were redeemed at appropriate moments. Both soprano Sarah Fox and baritone Andrew Mayor here helped make up for the difficulty hearing the words in the Delius.

Perhaps it is a good thing RVW's anniversary is being celebrated and not that of Delius.

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THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

Worcester Festival Choral Society

SATURDAY 18 MARCH 2023 7.30PM

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THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

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MERIDIAN SINFONIA

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Edward Elgar's much-loved choral work, *The Dream of Gerontius*, is returning to Worcester Cathedral in the UK on Saturday 18 March 2023 at 7.30pm - sung by a one-hundred-and-forty-strong local choir that was close to the Worcestershire composer's heart. The performance is being staged by Worcester Festival Choral Society, which, in the 1890s, was often conducted by Elgar and premiered two of his choral compositions.

Widely regarded as one of Elgar's finest, most thrilling masterpieces, *The Dream of Gerontius* is set to a poem by John Henry Newman about a dying man's soul journeying to the judgment throne, led by his guardian angel.

Worcester Festival Choral Society's voices depict friends, priests, demons and angels along the way. Joining the chorus are acclaimed soloists whose credentials include the Royal Opera House and English Touring Opera: mezzo-soprano Marta Fontanals-Simmons (Angel), tenor Mark Wilde (Gerontius) and bass-baritone Njabulo Madlala (Priest / Angel of the Agony). Accompanying is the Meridian Sinfonia symphony orchestra. The conductor is Worcester Cathedral's director of music, Samuel Hudson. Ben Cooper, chairman of Worcester Festival Choral Society, said: 'This is a wonderfully exciting, yet moving work that's a true experience from start to finish. It's the first time we'll have performed it in

Worcester for twelve years, so not to be missed!'



From left to right: Mark Wilde, Njabulo Madlala and Marta Fontanals-Simmons

MONTHLY AND DAILY UPDATES BY EMAIL

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OBITUARIES

We mark the recent deaths of:

- Italian pianist, musicologist and teacher Pietro Spada
- Russian composer Eduard Artemyev
- French pianist Alain Bernheim
- American viola player, author and teacher David Johnson Dalton
- American clarinetist Stanley Drucker
- Belgian composer, percussionist and teacher Wim Henderickx
- American timpanist Elaine Viola Jones
- Estonian composer Urmas Sisask
- Azerbaijani composer, teacher and writer Oqtay Radjabov
- American cellist and teacher Maxine Neuman
- English music critic and composer Bayan Peter Northcott
- American composer John Aler
- American composer, inventor and teacher Herbert Deutsch
- Brazilian composer, conductor, music critic and record producer Edino Krieger
- Canadian composer, pianist, teacher, writer and administrator John Beckwith
- Swiss composer and conductor Jost Meier
- Ukrainian conductor and teacher Volodymyr Kozhukha
- American oboist and teacher Laila Storch.

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Founded by the late Basil Ramsey and current editor Keith Bramich.

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