

# Classical Music Daily



**Eugen Alcalay**  
(1966-2019)

*A Spiritual Journey — Issue 173, September 2023*

## SPREADING LIGHT AND MAKING DARKNESS VANISH

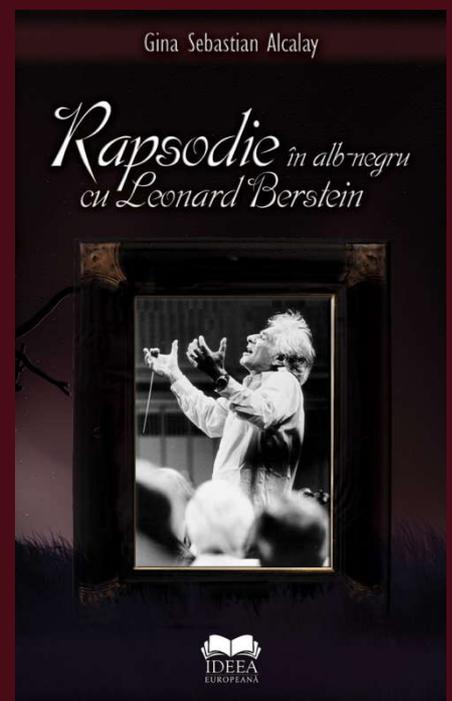
**Luiza Catrinel Marinescu:** On my way back from Sofia, Christmas Eve 2022, I was riding a cab that passed by a low-rise building once on Nicolae Iorga Street, now Dacia Boulevard in Bucharest, tucked up between Piața Romană and the Romanian Academy Library.

Not a particular thought, but when in front of that house, something crossed my mind - **Eugen Alcalay**, my former mate at High School of Music George Enescu lived here, I wonder what was he up to? ... Got home, Christmas came and went and, despite my intent of not going on the internet, I eventually found out - *In Memorium: Eugene Alcalay, DMA, 13 October 1966 - 26 June 2019 - College of the Arts - Azusa Pacific University (apu.edu)*

Eugen Alcalay was no more. The little genius, his nickname given by his classmates at George Enescu High School in the 1980s, had departed this Earth. He had a tournament in Romania, in Iași and, upon his arrival, his soul left him ... Behind, his music on some DVDs to be found on the internet, several recordings uploaded to *YouTube* and the book written by his mother, Gina Sebastian Alcalay.

*Rhapsody in black and white with Leonard Bernstein*, the memorialistic novel of Gina Sebastian Alcalay, a Romanian language author, is the portrayal of the price of success paid by a pianist who left Romania during Ceausescu regime ... [READ MORE](#)

[READ MORE ABOUT LUIZA CATRINEL MARINESCU](#)



Gina Sebastian Alcalay: *Rhapsody in black and white with Leonard Bernstein*, Bucharest, Ideea europeană Publishing House, Ideea europeană Library, Memorii collection, correspondence, diary, 2010

## IAN VENABLES - A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

**Roderic Dunnett:** Ian Venables is universally recognised as one of England's greatest composers. And this recognition has only been further enhanced by the emergence and recordings of his setting of the Requiem Mass.

He himself would be surprised and touched by the reception of the Requiem, his largescale new choral work, whose craftsmanship and beauty have been widely praised. It has featured on Classic FM. On BBC Radio 3's landmark programme *Record Review* it's received the highest praise, being hailed by Andrew McGregor as 'a modern classic'. *BBC Music Magazine* recognized its 'ability to stir the more tender emotions'. In the provinces it has been dubbed 'a flawless triumph.' *Choir and Organ* judged it 'both moving and consoling'. 'Simplicity becomes strength: small motivic cells gain stature through repetition and elaboration', wrote *The Gramophone*.

The last emphasises an essential point: the way Venables fashions small detail into a coherent whole, extracting from it significant, recognizable patterns which form the basis of a deeply satisfying, bold undertaking.



Ian Venables. Photo © Graham Wallhead

But no surprise in that. Venables has long been acclaimed for his more than a dozen song cycles, which have appeared on more than ten magnificently memorable discs. His choice of poetry is shrewd, exquisite, and sometimes sensational, and time and again, his songs are inspired and magical. 'A song composer as fine as Finzi and Gurney' (also *The Gramophone*) was just one more of the accolades he has drawn. The earlier *On the Wings of Love* (superbly recorded by tenor Andrew Kennedy, **Naxos 8.572514**) and 'Love lives beyond the Tomb' (with Graham J Lloyd, Mary Bevan, pianist Allan Clayton and the Carducci Quartet, **Signum SIGCD 617**) are two superb examples. Likewise *The Song of the Severn* (again with the Carducci), the last two reflecting his notable ability to set songs with not just piano accompaniment, but with collective or solo instruments - clarinet, viola - as well. [READ MORE](#)

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## ALLAN RAE - THREE SYMPHONIES



Allan Rae - a psychedelic romp

Allan Rae is one of Canada's great composers, having produced an enormous catalogue of music, though his symphonies have not received the attention they deserve. It is clear from a detailed study of the scores that they are important, powerful, beautiful and significant compositions.

Allan Rae was born in Blairmore, Alberta - basically at the junction of two vastly different landscapes: the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains. To the East lies the Prairie's vast stretches of level land which were once covered in undulating mixed grass and are often blown by fierce and potent winds.

[A detailed biography of Allan Rae can be found [here](#)]

The mountains which rise upwards to the West in massive sheets of mostly sedimentary stone were heaved upwards in cataclysmic volcanic activity a hundred million years ago (called the Crowsnest Formation or the Crowsnest Volcanics) and then battered by extensive glaciers which carved the peaks jagged and rent the valleys harshly and in strange angles revealing cataclysmic changes over vast sequences of time.

Having lived in this landscape, Rae's music alternates between the sonic embodiment of these two geologic forms, but also between the psychic characteristics for which they are metaphors. His music almost always exemplifies these two elements.

Further, one must keep in mind that Allan Rae's music most often begins from a fundamentally meditative posture (or Yogic pose, if you like). Gentle events collect and build, but remain subtle and soft-spoken. It is as if the mind travels across vast fields of prairie with the sky above, the earth beneath and every footfall audible to the solitary wanderer. One hears the subtlest of sounds: the brush of birds' wings, the chirp of the insect, the breeze through the different foliage - each leaf structure makes a slightly different sound.

But then, as if from nowhere - for the mountains seem to sneak up upon the journeyer as he makes his way - there are eruptions of events (usually based on a relentless ostinato) that collect forces, potencies and powers to rise up into solitary massive peaks.

This may seem too poetic, be too purple a passage, but it is essential to gather together the best terms in language as poetry to try to prepare the reader for a sadly silent perusal of the compositions. [READ MORE](#)

[This feature has been published anonymously.]

And it's the same Allan Rae who has been entertaining us with classical music word puzzles ...

## CORROBOREE — A CLASSICAL MUSIC WORD PUZZLE

**Allan Rae:** The most famous work by twentieth century Australian composer John Antill (1904-1986), *Corroboree*, a ballet completed in 1944, has been widely performed, recorded and broadcast. It is a watershed work in Australian music and marked the beginning of a new phase for Australian composition.

*Corroboree*, which means a meeting of Australian Aborigines, is one of the many words hidden in the word puzzle, below, provided here for your Sunday entertainment, similar to that which I published here last month.

Just to remind you, with these puzzles, words can be hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and in retrograde.

The solution is complex as many letters are used multiple times, making these puzzles very dense, so only marking a line 'stroke' through the word is necessary. (Many commercial puzzles specify that each word should be circled when found; on these hand drawn puzzles, however, it is necessary just to stroke.)

I H C A I R A M I N U E T R A C K S S A L G R A I N G E R D U A H L I M V  
R M N E D S E R D Q U A R T E T C I R E T O S E S S I O N S K C A T T A I  
E O P E N E L O P E M K A L N I D R U S M U Z A K S T E N A T S A C U V O  
I D O R I A N E N O T B U S I D E M A N S I L E N C E Z E R P S E D B R L  
L A A L O P P O C H A N U S H E A D S E T U R N E R I N A I L O E A A A N  
A L T O S P H R A S E O D A G S A R C A K E W A L K V P E N A V A P S A I  
S I I C O M E D Y T E N R O C L E Z A A M A X I M A E N E A I S S E M E L  
T T P T R E K R A T S T E N O M S I L G N O S G N I S F O L K T A L E D O  
E Y P H N O N G I M H A N S O N E T E D U S H E R E D S L E U Q E R P E I  
T E E R T A I S S A K E M S S O P H I O C A N T I C L E T R A Z O M O M V  
N S T E R D E D I T I T O E R Z I E K N S T U C K Y N G E B C Y T B C E A  
I U T N E A K H X N R N N M E E P R S I A R I O S O R U L R T N A L C L N  
U A E O M N C E T E A A O I T B G B W Z N D Y A H A E E G U O O S I U C E  
Q L S D O A O A H V T L D H E A A O E E N O R P A Z T I U C R B S S B H S  
L P U Y L R R R O E I O Y C P C B L R T A L E N T N S N B H S E O S A O S  
A P A A O G A D A M S V T T A Y W E E T T S I L L E C G D R A T E R N R A  
U A P A R L A N D O N A I R C O L R D I R I B A L D R E H S U R E B R A B  
R P R E V I N A L I T T A E B F F O A E X P R E S S I O N U P T E M P O S  
A N G E L I Q U E N O L L I R A C S P S C H R E K E R L E A H C I M R A C

My 'Find a word' puzzle *Corroboree* is shown above. How many words can you find? If the puzzle is not visible, or if you can't see the letters in the puzzle clearly, then please [click here](#). All of the words below are hidden in the puzzle above. If you can't see the list of words clearly, please [click here](#). You may find it useful to print out the puzzle and the word list, so that you can mark the squares with a stroke and mark the words that you've already found. It's also worth noticing that, for words containing accented characters, such as *Cabezón* or *Hanuš*, the letters are shown without the accents.

Actors	Aeolian	Adams	Altos	Angelique	Antill	Appalachia
Applause	Apron	Arioso	Arnell	Attack	Attila	Bagpipes
Barber	Bliss	Boleros	Bruch	Bugle	Cabezón	Cakewalk
Canticle	Carmichael	Carillon	Castanets	Cellist	Chimes	Comedy
Coppola	Cornet	Corroboree	Denza	Desprez	Donizetti	Dorian
Dresden	Ebony	Edit	Esoteric	Event	Expression	Folktale
Glass	Grainger	Granada	Hanson	Hanuš	Haydn	Headset
Heard	Improperia	Iseler	Iturbi	Ives	Kassia	Lakme
Laura	Liadov	Locrian	Maazel	Mariachi	Mavra	Maxima
Medea	Melchor	Messiaen	Mignon	Milhaud	Minuet	Modality
Monet	Monody	Mozart	Muzak	Nabucco	Offbeat	Paderewski
Pause	Parlando	Partch	Pavane	Penelope	Persephone	Peters
Phrase	Picker	Polyphonia	Prequels	Previn	Rasgado	Retard
Ribald	Rock	Rogers	Thomas	Turner	Quartet	Quintets
Sabata	Salieri	Scale	Scelsi	Schreker	Segueing	Semiramide
Sessions	Shultz	Siddhartha	Sideman	Silence	Singsong	Sitar
Sixth	Somers	Starker	Stern	Stucky	Subtone	Surdin
Talent	Tasso	Threnody	Tippett	Tracks	Tremolo	Tubas
Turner	Uptempo	Usher	Ushered	Vanessa	Vaudeville	Viol
Violin	Vivier	Volante	Wyatt	Zelman	Zither	

Good luck! Please let me know how you get on, via the [Classical Music Daily contact page](#). You might also wish to suggest words - composers, compositions, musical terms etc - for a future puzzle.

[READ MORE ABOUT ALLAN RAE](#)

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## CLASSICAL MUSIC NEWS — THE INNOCENT FIELDS

The 2023 **Presteigne Festival** finished on 28 August, sadly one day earlier than usual due to difficulties obtaining funding. As usual, the festival, in the Welsh border marches area of the UK, is a meeting place for contemporary composers. Those visiting this year include **Michael Berkeley**, Edward Gregson, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Thomas Hyde, **David Matthews**, Ed Nesbit, Roxanna Panufnik (2023 composer-in-residence), Claire Victoria Roberts, Rhian Samuel and **Peter Thompson**.

The attractions at Presteigne included the first performance of festival founder **Adrian Williams' *The Innocent Fields***, setting words selected by Williams from celebrated Welsh poet Gillian Clarke's set of poems *The Hours*, providing a unique, moving and powerful picture of life in the Welsh countryside during the COVID19 pandemic.



From left to right: **George Vass**, **Gillian Clarke** and **Adrian Williams** in St Andrew's Church, Presteigne, after the performance of *The Innocent Fields* at the Presteigne Festival. Photo © 2023 Keith Bramich

*The Innocent Fields* was commissioned jointly by the Presteigne Festival and St Albans Choral Society, who will give a further performance in April 2024. The solo part in Williams' new work was performed by baritone **Julien van Mellaerts** (whose CD *Songs of Travel and Home* received high praise here from Geoff Pearce). [READ MORE](#)

Read more news, also via the link above, about Jonathan McPhee's *The Essential Ring*, Nick Hely-Hutchinson's *Perfect Pitch* podcast, the *Stabat Mater Music Calendar 2023* and cult genre vocal techniques.

In 2023, years of research by Ellen Stokes from the UK's Huddersfield University will see a long-lost work by composer **Antonio Salieri** being performed for what is believed to be the first time in over two hundred years. [READ MORE](#)

The programme of the forty-fifth edition of the Rossini Opera Festival (ROF) has been announced.

The Festival, which will take place in the year that Pesaro will be the Italian Capital of Culture, will offer five operas for a total of thirty performances from 7-23 August 2024. A new production of *Bianca e Falliero*, directed by Roberto Abbado and staged by Jean-Louis Grinda, will open the festival. The opera has been absent from the ROF since 2005.

It will be followed by another new production, *Ermione*, conducted by Michele Mariotti and directed by Johannes Erath. The title has not been performed at the festival since 2008. [READ MORE](#)

A new work by contemporary Canadian composer John Estacio will celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Calgary Philharmonic Chorus. Born in 1966 into a farming community in Ontario, Estacio studied composition with Glenn Buhr, Peter Hatch and Stephen Chatman. In 1992 his first major orchestral work received second prize in the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's Canadian Composers Competition.

He's no stranger to Calgary, as he was composer in residence with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and Calgary Opera between 2000 and 2003.

The Calgary Philharmonic Chorus will give the first performance of Estacio's new work at 7.30pm on Saturday 16 September 2023 in Calgary's Jack Singer Concert Hall, accompanied by the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Rune Bergmann. [READ MORE](#)



The Jack Singer Concert Hall forms part of Arts Commons (left, with Calgary Tower, a highlight of the city's skyline, visible far left). After construction of the concert hall - the main facade is shown in the centre panel - someone donated extra funding for an organ, and to accommodate this, the back of the hall had to be built out over the pavement/sidewalk, as shown in the right hand panel. Photos © 2023 Keith Bramich

We also have information about the Bella Music Foundation International Music Competition for the Blind and Visually Impaired, in November 2023 - application deadline 31 October 2023, and about the 2023/24 season of Worcester Festival Choral Society and a new production of *Tosca* by Northern Ireland Opera.

[READ MORE](#)

Here are some recent appointments in the classical music world: British conductor Jonathan Nott (born 1962) has extended his contract with the Geneva-based Orchestre de la Suisse Romande until 2026. The Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra (NOSPR) has announced Marin Alsop as its new Artistic Director and Chief Conductor. Alsop's directorship will begin with the 2023/24 season. Czech conductor Petr Popelka will become the new Chief Conductor of the Wiener Symphoniker. In the 2023/24 season, he will make a number of appearances as Chief Conductor Designate, before taking up his position for an initial period of five years, beginning with the orchestra's anniversary season in 2024/25. Following his successful tenure as Assistant Conductor, the English Symphony Orchestra is very pleased to announce Michael Karcher-Young as the orchestra's Associate Conductor. The classical music agency Intermusica is pleased to announce the signing of Australian conductor Nicholas Carter for worldwide general management. The Royal College of Music (London, UK) is delighted to announce that James Williams has been appointed as its next Director and will take up the post on 1 September 2024. [READ MORE](#)

We also mark the recent passing of some of those people who have made the classical music world a better place, including Renata Scotto, Gillian Bibby, Carl Davis, Mariana Sirbu, Nancy Van de Vate, Valentin Gheorghiu, CHEN Mao-shuen, André Watts and Yuzo Toyama. [READ MORE](#)

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## ENSEMBLE — FANTASTIC TALES

**Ron Bierman:** All four compositions were performed with passionately impressive musicianship. Cellist Efe Baltacigil and pianist Roman Rabinovich opened with **Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*** (fantasy pieces). In three movements, it progresses from romantically melancholy to playfully energetic, and then concludes in exuberant triumph. Baltacigil's warm tone and light vibrato were especially appealing, and the smile on his face as the pair tore through the closing pages matched my own. The duo mastered every emotion in synchronous agreement.

Thomas Adès' *Märchentänze* (dances from fairytale), a work composed last year, followed with the composer at the piano and violinist Anthony Marwood. Marwood impressed with his execution of the composition's demanding virtuosic effects. As a composer Adès is unpredictable, his eclectic style ranging from lyrically straightforward to wildly demanding of both performer and listener. In program notes he said the first movement is 'a fantasy based on the folk song "Two Magicians" immortalized by Steeleye Span', a British folk rock group popular half a century ago. (Did I mention 'eclectic'?) The fantasy's first movement reminds me of an Irish jig that might have come from The Chieftains. It probably reminds Marwood of the years of practice it took to achieve the skill needed for the double stops, high-register effects and rapid pizzicatos called for. The second movement switches to almost lilting, and the last is meant to recall the song of a skylark, but as a wild dance rather than the gentle idyllic flight of Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*. As in the preceding Schumann, the duo blended beautifully as equal partners. [READ MORE](#)

Ron Bierman's report above is from the La Jolla Music Society's Summerfest. He also reports on the Summerfest's opening concert, and to a recent concert of Roberto Sierra, Bernstein and Rachmaninov from Pacho Flores, Rafael Payare and the San Diego Symphony Orchestra.

[READ RON BIERMAN'S LATEST FEATURES](#)

**Adam J Sacks:** The Boston Symphony Orchestra's Tanglewood 'Berkshire Day' on Sunday 23 July 2023 began with an infrequently heard 'Ballade in A minor'. This was the orchestra's first rendering of this piece by **Samuel Coleridge-Taylor**, a composer of mixed African and English ancestry, better known in his day than our own.

Though he worked to advance Black artistry in the classical field, compositionally he was better known for tone-poem-like music that illustrated Native American life such as *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*. Perhaps as a kind of cultural transposition of sounds native, conductor Thomas Wilkins carefully conducted this proto-cinematic folk adventure of the black atlantic that meets the rustic frontier.

Another first BSO performance, that of Jeff Midkiff's 'Concerto for Mandolin and Orchestra', continues the theme of rustic Americana, both real and imagined. Informed by a background in bluegrass as well as classical, the mandolin makes for an improbably tinkerbell-like guide, an instrument of both small scale and one whose rough hewn character cannot be smoothed out entirely even in the hands of a great virtuoso like Midkiff. An aural journey that surveys the Blue Ridge landscape, Midkiff's windchimes then transform into a bluesy improvisation, even culminating into a 'hoe dow' where the first violin plunges into a relay of dancing frenetic runs.

Rounding out the well-computed program of vernacular music that fuses dance and frontier with the symphonic is Duke Ellington's *Suite from the River*, a music of eminent style and langor. A late work made to celebrate the American Ballet Theater, a Big Band Cotton Club like swing of the middle section admirably full percussion with remarkable snare work and a mellifluous bass set then takes its erotic undertones into the transcendental. The striking last movement pairs drums and harp into a proto-minimalist drone.

The BSO Tanglewood concert of Friday 28 July 2023, pairing the newly commissioned (2022) *Her Story* by Julia Wolfe and Mahler's 1st, presents no immediately obvious intertext. Meant to mark the centennial of women's electoral emancipation in 1919, the text largely illustrates the every potential terror of patriarchy and the struggle to emerge out from under it. [READ MORE](#)

[READ THE LATEST FEATURES FROM ADAM J SACKS](#)

**Mike Wheeler:** Thanks largely to the energy and enthusiasm of a local promoter, the Chester Green area of Derby is developing quite a flourishing musical culture of its own. The latest event - St Paul's Church, Derby, UK, 22 July 2023 - was a recital by the Tedesca Quartet: Nic Fallowfield, Clare Bhabra, Richard Muncey (all past or present members of Sinfonia Viva), and Jenny Curtis.

Haydn's Quartet in D, Op 64 No 5, got things off to a polished start. With dapper support from the other players, the first violin theme that gives the work its nickname, the 'Lark', had a good sense of lift. The second movement showed a real grasp of Haydn's knack for combining outward simplicity with emotional depth. Though the minuet could have done with a touch more earthiness - for all his sophistication, Haydn remained a country boy at heart - it moved gracefully, while the finale was sent bubbling on its way.

[READ MORE](#)

Mike also provides extensive coverage of the Buxton Festival and reports on Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers* from Opera North and on Sean Shibe's appearance with the Hallé Orchestra.

[READ MIKE WHEELER'S LATEST FEATURES](#)

**Roderic Dunnett:** Bampton is where opera runs hilarious riot. Each production is clever, funny, insinuating, always ingenious. It has its own style, and it's one that its audience, newcomers or regulars, loves.

This summer's plum performance is (again) Salieri: the UK premiere of his comic opera *La Fiera di Venezia*, translated as 'At the Venice Fair'. **Antonio Salieri** has served Bampton well; or to put it the other way, Bampton has served Salieri superbly. But that's not a surprise: every time Bampton mounts one of its daft, barmy, potty operas, it achieves a hit. Aficianados in England have probably all heard of Bampton, who are celebrating their thirtieth anniversary this year; but for those from abroad who venture during July to catch opera in Britain, it's well worth putting Bampton in your diary as well. You won't be disappointed, and are likely to be intrigued and bemused by its originality and ingenuity.

A double feast for visitors: in conjunction with a revealing exhibition in the early seventeenth century old Grammar School, Bampton has issued in full colour a beautifully produced and typically jolly book featuring many of its productions, replete with vivid and juicy photos. [READ MORE](#)

Roderic also reports on a new opera, *Anna*, from English composer David Matthews.

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**Malcolm Miller:** A fascinating glimpse into the vivid musical and cultural lives of three *émigré* Austrian-born composers was offered in the superb concert, entitled 'Echo of the Unheard', of seldom played string quartets by Walter Bricht (1904-1970), Julius Bürger (1897-1995) and Hans Gál (1890-1987), including a modern premiere, on 22 June 2023 at the Ehrbarsaal in Vienna.

The concert, given by the Ineo Quartet at the chamber music hall of the Palais Ehrbar on Vienna's Mühlgasse, once the site of piano manufacturers, attracted a select audience to this eighth concert in an on-going series that began in 2018, presented by the Exilarte Centre of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. The evening was introduced by Professor Gerold Gruber, founder Director of the Exilarte Centre, who explained its mission to preserve, research, perform and disseminate music by composers persecuted and suppressed by the Nazis, many of whom either perished or emigrated during the Holocaust. To date the Centre has received archives from numerous composers' estates and this concert series is but one of their projects, alongside CDs, exhibitions, book series and music editions.

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## CD SPOTLIGHT — A BERNSTEIN NO ONE HAS HEARD

**Geoff Pearce:** I have never been a particular fan of **Gustav Mahler's** second symphony. I do not know why, and I have listened to many fabulous recordings of it, and perhaps the one I like the most to date is the live recording of a performance in 1974 that Leonard Bernstein gave with the London Symphony Orchestra, with Janet Baker and Sheila Armstrong.

This new recording with the Philharmonia Orchestra under a conductor I was not familiar with - Santtu-Matias Rouvali, with soprano Mari Eriksmoen, contralto Jennifer Johnston and the Philharmonia Chorus - is also a live performance.

Recording techniques are very different these days, and the acoustics of the venue are also very important, but one thing that is apparent to me in listening to them both, is that there appears to be a little more detail in the orchestral sound of the older recording, but they are both very compelling performances.

This is a very long symphony at about ninety minutes in duration, and at first I found the new recording a bit hard edged and had to listen to it a few times before I wrote this review (as I often do), and I then discovered I liked this new recording very much.

There is some absolutely sumptuous playing in the first movement, the orchestral forces are finely focussed and the contrast of colour, texture and emotional mood are really brought out. I am particularly impressed with the winds and brass - particularly oboes, cor anglais and horns. When the mood is contemplative and relaxed, the effect is magical, and the more emotionally charged and driven sections are almost terrifying in their intensity. [READ MORE](#)

Geoff also listens to Berlioz, Saint-Saëns and Ravel from Canadian soprano Marie-Nicole Lemieux and to Weinberg and Dutilleux from Edgar Moreau, both on Erato. He also listens to Canadian composer Evan Ware's symphonies on Neuma Records.

[READ GEOFF PEARCE'S LATEST CD REVIEWS](#)

**John Dante Prevedini:** *Bernstein, Music for String Quartet (1936)* is the upcoming release from **Navona Records** featuring the eponymous composition by **Leonard Bernstein** in its premiere recording, performed by Lucia Lin, Natalie Rose Kress, Danny Kim and Ronald Feldman. Composed while Bernstein was an eighteen-year-old student at Harvard University, the piece was subsequently lost and only recently rediscovered. This release pairs the newly unearthed quartet with *Elegies for Violin and Viola (1932)* by Bernstein's lifelong friend and collaborator, the fellow **American** composer **Aaron Copland**. The sixteen-minute EP is available in both CD and digital format and features an online booklet with extensive liner notes by former Boston Symphony Orchestra librarian John Perkel, who oversaw the process of finally bringing Bernstein's lost composition to life.

*Music for String Quartet* is a two-movement work spanning about ten minutes in total. Movement one, 'Allegro Vivace', begins with a pulsating ostinato outlining stacked fourth intervals, a motif which will reoccur throughout the seven-minute movement. Around this motif gradually emerges a complex and energetic interweaving of melodic and rhythmic content featuring expanded diatonicism and syncopation. Many of Bernstein's future trademark compositional techniques are already present here, including percussive gestures, melodies voiced in thirds and diverse harmonic influences from the rich variety of musical cultures that informed his upbringing. The harmonically unpredictable soundscape concludes humorously with a tonal resolution on a single pizzicato note. [READ MORE](#)

John also listens to the complete *Impressiones* of Mexican composer José F Vásquez played by Vladimir Curiel on Toccata Classics, to *Korean Tapestry* - an important release of art songs by female Korean composers on Naxos Records and to the late American composer Alvin Lucier's *Sizzles* and *Swing Bridge* on Mode Records.

[READ JOHN DANTE PREVEDINI'S LATEST FEATURES](#)

**Gerald Fenech:** From the middle of the nineteenth century there was a blossoming of nationalism within the creative arts - very notably in music - in Finland that reflected the ardent wish for freedom from Russian domination. From an international perspective, the dominant figure of Sibelius can often overshadow the wide-ranging works of his peers - something that this lovely album goes some way to redress.

There is music here from the pens of nine composers, so I think it is fitting to take them one by one, with a tiny bit of information on each and listing at the same time the respective composition.

**Robert Kajanus** (1856-1933) was the leading figure before Sibelius hit the scene. He was a conductor, composer and teacher. In 1882 he founded the Helsinki Orchestral Society, Finland's first professional Orchestra. As a conductor he was also a notable champion and interpreter of Jean Sibelius's music. His *Overtura Sinfonica* is a late work dating from 1926 which epitomizes his style. [READ MORE](#)

Also on Chandos, Gerald listens to horn concertos from Martin Owen. On the harmonia mundi label, Gerald listens to cello concertos by Haydn and Monn, and on Danacord, several recordings of the Danish conductor Thomas Jensen. On Hänssler, he reports on J S Bach's complete Secular Cantatas, on CPO to Haydn's *L'Incontro Improvviso*, to Rachmaninov on Deutsche Grammophon, to Bjerkestrand and Glass on LAWO Classics, to Vaughan Williams' *First Songs of Travel* on Albion Records, to orchestral anthems on Delphian Records and to Stanford's Requiem from Martyn Brabbins on Hyperion Records.

[READ GERALD FENECH'S LATEST CD REVIEWS](#)

**Patrick Maxwell:** A fair amount of serious writing about **Tchaikovsky** starts by staking its claim to writing about such a composer in such a way at all. It's fair to say that the reputation of Russia's supreme melodist took something of a hit from those who took against his extraordinary popularity in twentieth century America. 'No more Tchaikovsky symphonies' asserted Simon Rattle when he first took to the stage of the Proms, and you can see why: the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth had and continue to take an all-too-predictable slot in the last forty-five minutes of a concert programme.

Such reactions were probably most of all against the kinds of recordings as this sumptuous one of the Fifth Symphony from the Utah Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maurice Abravanel.

The vibrato-heavy string playing, the sense of forward motion very typical of its place and time, and the sheer emotional intensity of Tchaikovsky's high-points. This recording is taken from the original 1974 release, which was a part of the complete orchestral works undertaken in the last part of Abravanel's remarkable tenure in Utah: it was under his thirty-two years that the orchestra changed from a part-time community band to one of America's foremost provincial professional groups. [READ MORE](#)

**Anett Fodor:** When I received this recording, a sense of anticipation overcame me for the musical journey ahead. Engrossed in its music, I sought to unravel the identity of the composer. Could it be Mozart? Something made me question that initial assumption. Consumed by curiosity, I eagerly examined the CD cover. My suspicions were confirmed; it was not Mozart, it was ... Mysliveček.

It is not surprising that I nearly confused them! Comparative musicology has convincingly demonstrated that Mysliveček (1737-1781) served as a precursor to Mozart's expressive style. For example, the structure, melodic elements, and motifs found in Mysliveček's opera *Tamerlano*, particularly in the Aria of 'Bajazette', can be identified in Mozart's later work *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, which postdates *Tamerlano* by sixteen years. Additionally, other sections of Mysliveček's opera bear striking resemblances to Mozart's works, such as *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that Mozart possessed a deep understanding of Mysliveček's music, making the Czech composer one of the pioneers of the style that reached its zenith in Viennese classical music. Mysliveček, however, could not achieve the same level of depth as his Viennese successors; instead, he heralded the style of a new musical era. [READ MORE](#)

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**Paul Sarcich:** This really is a lost corner of music history. In 1925, seven young Belgian composers formed a collective, wanting to break away from the prevailing late romanticism of the time and incorporate modernistic tendencies into their music. Sound familiar? The comparison with *Les Six* in Paris is obvious, and the Belgians even had a Nadia Boulanger equivalent - Paul Gilson, their teacher at the Brussels Conservatory. Where they differed from the Parisian group was in having no professional orchestras in Brussels, save at the opera. They did have the support though of Arthur Prevost, who directed the Royal Band of the Guides, then and now a top wind orchestra. Eventually some seventy-five works were transcribed or written for wind band, but few were ever published, so most lay forgotten. It took the work of the producer this album, Luc Vertommen, to find and prepare some of them for recording.

The band here is the Royal Band of the Belgian Air Force, directed by Matty Cilissen, and a very fine band it is. Their sound is rich and refined, partly due to having a decent sized clarinet section, not something all bands have these days. With excellent intonation and ensemble, this is a truly symphonic band. A well-balanced recording from Vertommen and engineer/editor Jelle Tassyns allows us to hear all sections clearly. [READ MORE](#)

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Also on Naxos, Keith Bramich listens to music by Paul Wranitzky.

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.

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On 23 September John Dante Prevedini will host a discussion on the implications of artificial intelligence on the classical music world. Keep the date free and please pass on the link to anyone you think might be interested. [READ MORE](#)

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