

THE CLASSICAL CD MUSIC SHOP

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RECENT RELEASES

BACH Christmas Oratorio

Dunedin Consort John Butt

LINN 2 CDs £19.95

‘...the singers here are Dunedin regulars...with Mary Bevan as a standout newcomer. The choral sound is pert, sinewy, unforced; the instrumental playing is punchy, broad and charismatic. Butt’s navigation of the sprawling six cantatas is tremendously enjoyable.’ Guardian, Oct 20th
‘...this latest gift from the Dunedin Consort is one to go under the tree’ Gramophone Magazine, November 2016

‘It has the same sense of freshness as previous releases...a pleasing transparency of texture, and nimbly sprung rhythms under John Butt’s scholarly direction’ BBC Music Magazine Christmas 2016.

The sheer exuberance of the opening chorus with the dramatic bite of the timpani and baroque trumpets sets the tone for this superlative performance. Butt’s energy and exhilarating musicianship sweeps all before it. The twelve singers are outstanding, with newcomer Mary Bevan in exemplary form. The smaller choir allows for greater clarity of line and is better balanced with the period instrumental ensemble, which as you would expect from the Dunedins is of a very high quality. In the faster numbers there’s a rhythmic buoyancy which adds to the momentum of the music and adds to the sense of joy and wonder of the Christmas story. This is recommended without reservation and with also being beautifully packaged and illustrated it is perhaps an ideal Christmas present.



Joyce DiDonato

In WAR and PEACE

with Il Pomo d'Oro directed by Maxim Emelyanychev

Erato £11.75

“Perhaps my most personal project to date,” is how American mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato describes In War and Peace: Harmony through Music. Her ambitions for this collection of arias from Baroque operas are substantial. Surrounded as we are by instability, she hopes it will help us find an answer to a vitally important question: “In the midst of chaos, how do you find peace?”

Her aim is to “steer conversation and discourse ... to help all of us find peace in our lives in a dynamic way ... As I have tried to convey in this selection of music, the power to bravely tip the scales towards peace lies firmly within every single one of us.”

DiDonato, an opera singer who certainly does not live in an ivory tower, was motivated to assemble the programme after the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015. In War and Peace: Harmony through Music was recorded with Il Pomo d'Oro under its principal conductor Maxim Emelyanychev. The programme comprises 15 arias divided into two sections: ‘War’ and ‘Peace’.

Both contain music by Purcell and Handel – including, to close ‘War’, Dido’s dignified, but searing lament from Dido and Aeneas and

Almirena’s haunting and heartbreaking ‘Lascia ch’io pianga’ from Rinaldo. An excerpt from Monteverdi’s Il ritorno d’Ulisse is included in ‘Peace’, which concludes with Cleopatra’s spirited and defiantly optimistic ‘Da tempeste il legno infranto’ from Giulio Cesare.

A further aria from Giulio Cesare is the bonus track for the album; it is Sesto’s touching apostrophe to hope, ‘Cara speme’, which Joyce DiDonato sings unforgettably on a floating whisper of breath.

Notes provided by Erato Classics.

‘DiDonato brings technical security and a variety of tonal colours to each aria. Il Pomo d’Oro offer bristling accompaniment....’

*The Guardian, 30th October 2016 *****

‘In War & Peace’ finds DiDonato back on Baroque ground for the first time in a while, and it’s a joyful musical homecoming. ...Drama, as ever with DiDonato, is everything. Ornamentation serves narrative first, ego second.’

Gramophone Magazine, November 2016

‘In ‘Lascia ch’io pianga’ she washes just enough color out of her voice to achieve a purity that enhances the composer’s signature formula of gut-wrenching despair set to music of extraordinary beauty...’

Washington Post, 16th November 2016

Joyce DiDonato performed with on the Andrew Marr Sunday morning programme recently.

WARNER ERATO BARGAIN BOXES IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

AMERICAN CLASSICS

from ADAMS, BARBER, BERNSTEIN, COPLAND, GERSHWIN, GLASS AND JOPLIN

Hélène Grimaud excels in sparkling, idiomatic performances of Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue and the Piano Concerto in F, Rattle similarly so in John Adams classics such as the Chairman Dances, Short Ride in A fast Machine etc. Bernstein’s Symphonic Dances from West Side story are thrillingly and atmospherically performed by the CBSO directed by Paavo Järvi and coupled with. Prelude Fugue and Riffs for Clarinet and orchestra with Sabine Meyer and other Bernstein works. The other works in this bargain box include Barber’s Knoxville and Adagio for strings, Copland’s Appalachian Spring and Fanfare for the Common Man, Korngold’s Violin Concerto and short works by Glass and Reich. This is a fascinating and substantial collection of complete works played by some of the finest interpreters of American Music.

These recordings were recommended in the Gramophone, Penguin Guide, Radio 3 CD Review etc when first issued on EMI and Virgin.

Warner Classics 6 CDs £13.75.

DVORAK Symphonies 1 – 9

Czech Suite, Scherzo capriccioso/Carnival Overture, In Nature’s Realm, Othello and American Suite.

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic/Czech Philharmonic directed by Libor Pešek

Erato 7 CDs £15.75

As with the above bargain box above, these performances were highly recommended in the Gramophone, Penguin CD Guide, BBC Radio 3 CD Review when they first appeared on Virgin Classics in the late 1980s/early 1990s, and they are still as fine as any currently available and the sound is first rate.

TCHAIKOVSKY

SWAN LAKE Op 20, SLEEPING BEAUTY Op 66 and The NUTCRACKER Op 71 (complete)..

London Symphony Orchestra directed by André Previn

Warner Classics 7 CDs £15.75

Another highly recommended set, with perhaps Swan Lake as fine as any in the catalogue, Previn presents the music of all three ballets as a coherent whole, so rather than being background music for a ballet this highly original and inventive music takes centre stage. This is Previn and the LSO at their very best.

HILLIARD ENSEMBLE

This 6-CD collection focuses on music from the Renaissance and Early Baroque, from England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Mexico.

There are CDs of Italian and English Renaissance Madrigals, a CD of music from the courts of Ferdinand and Isabella, and a CD of music from the New World. Two CDs are devoted to the music of William Byrd. This has the three Mass settings for three, four and 5 voices plus other works including De Lamentations and Ave Verum Corpus.

Erato Classics 6 CDs £13.75.

MENDELSSOHN Symphonies 1 – 5

Barbara Bonney (soprano), Edith Wiens (sop 11), Peter Schreier (ten)
Gewandhausorchester Leipzig & Rundfunkchor Leipzig/Kurt Masur
String Symphonies 1- 13 (complete)
Concerto Köln

These are fine and spirited performances with just the right size orchestra to do justice to Mendelssohn's sound world. The String Symphonies make this set even more of a bargain. Written when Mendelssohn was 12 to 14 years old they are amazingly precocious highly enjoyable pieces, played with considerable style and panache.

Warner Classics 6 CDS £13.95

MARTHA ARGERICH The Warner Classics Recordings

Warner Classics 20 CDs £47.50



This 20 CD budget box from Warner Classics features Martha Argerich's recordings from the EMI and Teldec back catalogues. There are fine performances of the two Chopin Piano concertos, exhilarating Prokofiev First and Third piano concertos coupled with a stunning performance of Bartok's third. Mozart 19th and 25th piano Concertos and the Concerto for two pianos with Alexander Rabinovich,

who also duets with her in the Rachmaninov Suite for two pianos. Other standout recordings include piano music from Schumann, Chopin and Ravel. Other musicians in the chamber recitals include Mischa Maisky, Gidon Kremer, Alexandre Rabinovitch, Daniel Barenboim and others.

These recordings show Martha Argerich at her very best and is perhaps a very special present to someone very special.

SOME MORE PRESENT SUGGESTIONS

PUCCINI Manon Lescaut

Anna Netrebko (Manon Lescaut)/Yusif Eyvazov (Des Grieux)/
Armando Piña (Lescaut), Carlos Chausson (Geronte), Benjamin
Bernheim (Edmondo)/ Münchner Rundfunkorchester,
Konzertvereinigung Wiener Staatsopernchor/Marco Armiliato
DG 2 CDs £27.95 (December only - £23.95)

VERDI La forza del destino

Anja Harteros (Leonora)/ Jonas Kaufmann (Alvaro)
Bayerisches Staatsorchester & Chor der Bayerischen Staatsoper/
Asher Fisch (conductor) & Martin Kušej (director)
SONY 2 DVD £14.95

'A large part of the characterisation comes from the sheer quality of Harteros's singing, poised and perfectly shaped, with an impeccable sense of style..... This is a wonderful performance...Tézier is hardly less stylish, and sings with thrillingly rich and generous tone.' Gramophone June 2016

WAGNER Tristan und Isolde

Stephen Gould (Tristan)/ Evelyn Herlitzius (Isolde)/
Georg Zeppenfeld (König Marke/ Iain Paterson (Kurwenal)
Bayreuth Festival Orchestra, Christian Thielemann (conductor) &
Katharina Wagner (stage director)

Katharina Wagner now gets a novel focus on Tristan und Isolde by stripping the work, its characters and its settings almost entirely of 'Romantic illusions and pretensions.....This is an important and compelling addition to the number of worthwhile interventionist Bayreuth productions.' Gramophone September 2016

DG 2 DVDs £19.95

LEONCAVALLO I Pagliacci

MASCAGNI Cavalleria Rusticana

Jonas Kaufmann/Staatskapelle Dresden/Sachsischer Staatsopernchor
directed by Christian Thielemann

SONY 2 DVDs £12.95

'We have plenty of the thrilling, untrammelled and ringing sound that the tenor is capable of at his best...Happily, Kaufmann's outstanding central performances are well matched, both musically and scenically.....

Thielemann is always aware of the drama and the beauties of the playing are many.' Gramophone DVD & Blu-Ray of the month May 2016

Shortlisted for Gramophone Award

BIZET CARMEN

JULIA MIGENES (Carmen),
PLÁCIDO DOMINGO (Don José) Ruggero Raimondi (Escamillo)
Faith Esham (Micaëla)/Choeurs et Maîtrise de Radio France
& Orchestre National de France, **LORIN MAAZEL**

ERATO 2 CDs £9.50



This recording was the thrillingly atmospheric soundtrack to a film of Carmen – directed by Francesco Rosi and released in 1984 featuring Plácido Domingo, in one of his greatest roles as Don José, with Julia Migenes Johnson, a spirited, volatile Carmen of striking theatrical immediacy. Lorin Maazel demonstrates his mastery of French style in a performance that does full justice to Bizet's amalgam of

wit, elegance, romance and high drama. BBC Radio 3's Building a Library recently rated this recording as the top recommendation, well ahead of its nearest rivals.

'...Julia Migenes approaches the title part in an immediate, vivid way, exuding the gipsy's allure and suggesting Carmen's fierce temper and smouldering eroticism; she develops the character intelligently into the fatalistic person of the card scene and finale.. Plácido Domingo has made Don José very much his own, and here he sings with unstinting involvement and finesse...'

DECCA SIGN LOCAL 17 YEAR OLD CELLIST

Local cellist **Sheku Kanneh-Mason** is the **BBC Young Musician of the Year 2016**, in a spectacular and spell binding performance of Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No 1 and as result has just been signed up by **Decca Classics** to record the Shostakovich for release next year. He is a mere 17 years old and is a student at Trinity Comprehensive, Nottingham. We congratulate him on this splendid achievement and will certainly stock what will undoubtedly be a bestselling CD.

BRAHMS

Double Concerto for Violin & Cello in A minor, Op. 102

Piano Trio No. 1 in B major, Op. 8

SCHUMANN Violin Concerto in D Minor middle movement Langsam in an arrangement for strings by Benjamin Britten

Joshua Bell (violin)/Steven Isserlis (cello)
Academy of St Martin in the Fields/directed by Joshua Bell
with Jeremy Denk (piano) in the Trio

SONY £12.95

Joshua Bell and Steven Isserlis performed the Brahms Double last year here at the Royal Concert Hall and William Ruff in the Nottingham Evening Post – summed it up

'.....Quite how Joshua Bell managed to be soloist, duettist and conductor all at the same time is a mystery - but he managed it and coaxed a moving, exhilarating performance from his colleagues.....' An opinion shared by all who were there.

BERLIOZ Roméo et Juliette, Op. 17

Katija Dragojevic (mezzo-soprano)/Andrew Staples (tenor),
Alastair Miles (bass)/Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra & Swedish
Radio Choir/Robin Ticciati

LINN £19.95

It is perhaps surprising that one of Berlioz's most original and imaginative works, displaying as ever his astonishing orchestral wizardry and inspired by his fervent love of Shakespeare, is still somewhat neglected, perhaps because it is a hybrid -part symphony, part music drama. The music had a seismic effect on the young Wagner who was present at the work's premiere in 1839. The lyric beauty and passion of the *Scene d'amour* clearly foreshadows Tristan and Isolde.

Ticciati has previously recorded other Berlioz works such as the *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Les nuits d'été* & *La mort de Cléopâtre* and **L'ENFANCE du CHRIST**; the latter was named Gramophone's 'Top Choice' recording of this remarkable and often haunting music. An ideal Christmas present perhaps?

Written, compiled, and edited by Richard Gibson. December 2016
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