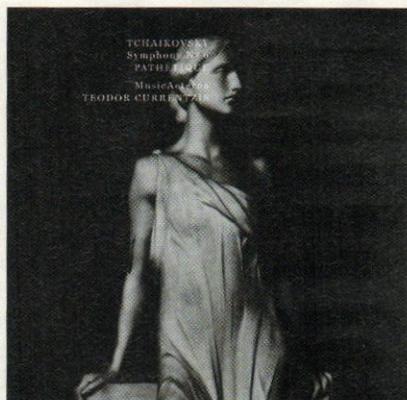


# GRAMOPHONE *Editor's choice*

**Martin Cullingford's pick of the finest recordings from this month's reviews**



RECORDING OF THE MONTH



**TCHAIKOVSKY**  
Symphony No. 6, 'Pathétique'  
MusicAeterna / Teodor Currentzis  
Sony Classical  
► **PETER QUANTRILL'S REVIEW IS ON PAGE 30**

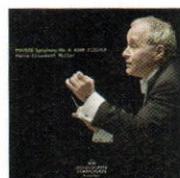
In this extraordinary, vivid Pathétique, Teodor Currentzis not only offers an incredibly powerful performance of the work, but also a remarkable showcase of the very art of recording.



**BEETHOVEN**  
Symphonies Nos 1 & 3  
Vienna Symphony Orchestra / Philippe Jordan  
Wiener Symphoniker

An impressive statement of intent from Philippe Jordan as he begins a Beethoven cycle with his Vienna Symphony, on its own label.

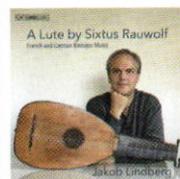
► **REVIEW ON PAGE 33**



**MAHLER**  
Symphony No. 4  
Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra / Adam Fischer  
AVI-Music

Following his praised recording of the Seventh, Adam Fischer offers us an exploratory Fourth, Mahler's ideas deeply thought through. This could become a superb cycle.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 38**



**'A LUTE BY SIXTUS RAUWOLF'**  
Jakob Lindberg *lute*  
BIS

A beautiful Baroque programme, specially compiled to showcase Jakob Lindberg's rather unique instrument – possibly the oldest lute in playing condition (and about which you can learn more on page 12).

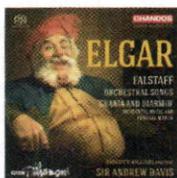
► **REVIEW ON PAGE 67**



**DVD/BLU-RAY**  
**JS BACH** St Matthew Passion  
Sols; Gächinger Cantorey / Hans-Christoph Rademann  
Accentus

An imaginative, inspiring and choreographed approach to Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, movingly performed by players, soloists and 100 children from schools around Stuttgart.

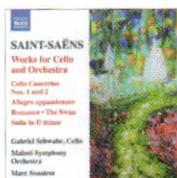
► **REVIEW ON PAGE 70**



**ELGAR** Falstaff. Songs  
Roderick Williams *bar* BBC  
Philharmonic Orchestra / Sir Andrew Davis  
Chandos

A *Falstaff* full of personality and perceptiveness, Roderick Williams eloquent in orchestral songs ... just the highlights from a wonderful Elgar anthology from Sir Andrew Davis.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 37**



**SAINT-SAËNS** Works for Cello and Orchestra  
Gabriel Schwabe *vc*  
Malmö Symphony Orchestra / Marc Soustrot  
Naxos

Gabriel Schwabe brings a delightful tone to these concertos: as critic Jeremy Nicholas makes clear, a bargain at Naxos prices, but a brilliant buy regardless.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 41**



**'DOLCE DUELLO'**  
Cecilia Bartoli *mez*  
Sol Gabetta *vc* Cappella Gabetta / Andrés Gabetta  
Decca

Cecilia Bartoli once again delivers a fascinating project, this time in the company of the equally engaging and exploratory musicianship of cellist Sol Gabetta.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 78**



**HAYDN. KRAUS**  
'Symphonies, Vol 5'  
Basel Chamber Orchestra / Giovanni Antonini  
Alpha

Giovanni Antonini's *Gramophone* Award for his previous Haydn volume set the bar high – and it's met here, on a worthy addition to his compelling exploration of the composer.

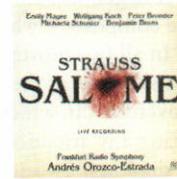
► **REVIEW ON PAGE 38**



**KANCHELI. SCHNITTKE**  
'Light Over Darkness'  
Erato Alakiozidou *pf*  
Lutoslawski Quartet  
Odradek

An excellent disc from the innovative Odradek label, musicianship and sound-quality of very high standard making for a grippingly intense chamber experience.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 51**



**R STRAUSS** Salome Sols; Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra / Andrés Orozco-Estrada  
Pentatone

'A deeply musical account of the score', writes critic Hugo Shirley of this dramatic telling of Strauss's opera; Emily Magee is a 'compellingly real' Salome, and all in excellent sound.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 93**



**REISSUE/ARCHIVE**  
**'THE MARYLA JONAS STORY'**  
Maryla Jonas *pf*

Sony Classical  
As Bryce Morrison puts it: 'a blazingly original talent, heard here in brilliantly remastered sound'.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 66**



Listen to many of the Editor's Choice recordings online at [qobuz.com](http://qobuz.com)

## ARTISTS & THEIR INSTRUMENTS

### *Jakob Lindberg* on his precious 16th-century Sixtus Rauwolf lute



changed to keep up with the times. It has its original soundboard – we can confirm through dendrochronology that the tree from which it was made dates from 1418 to 1560 (they can be that precise!) – and that's extremely rare. I'm not aware of another instrument that has both back and soundboard in playing condition that is that old.

A lute soundboard is extremely thin, so in order for it to withstand the tension it has bars underneath to strengthen it. These were also altered at various points in this particular lute's history and although some of the bars are in fact original, some have been modernised. But we were very keen to try not to add modern wood when we were restoring the instrument. I was very fortunate in getting hold of some wood from Palazzo Pitti – they were changing some of their bookshelves, and so

“It was made in Augsburg in the 1590s by a prolific maker called Sixtus Rauwolf, and it was probably initially a seven- or eight-course lute. We don't know for whom – it's not a luxury model, but it's a sort of professional model. You often find in lutes of the old times that you have some very ornate instruments made for rich patrons, and then you have these simpler models which were probably working musicians' instruments.

The history of the lute is a very complicated one. It arrived from the Arab world in Medieval times, and then in Europe it changed technique from plectrum to finger-playing, and kept having strings added to it. So by the early 18th century lutes had as many as 11 double strings on them, and in order to play the repertoire they needed a wider neck. And that's what happened to this lute in 1715 – it was simply modified from a Renaissance lute to a Baroque lute. It happened to many lutes which were of good quality – they were

I was actually able to buy some wood from the 16th century. So all the new bits of wood are actually old bits!

I find the sound of the Rauwolf particularly subtle. It has what I've always been after in a lute, which is clarity on the one hand (where you can hear the different voices clearly) and also a beautiful sustain, and that's quite hard to get on a lute – so that is why I love it. But of course when travelling it's quite scary really because it's so sensitive to humidity. I do love recording on it, though. When it was newly restored I did travel with it quite a bit, but I always carried a hygrometer with me and sometimes it was simply too dry in the concert halls and they had to organise all sorts of humidification. It was complicated, and so now I tend to travel with other instruments – I've got marvelous lutes from English makers that I'm very pleased with. But this Rauwolf lute has just got an extra dimension.”  
*Lindberg's 'A Lute by Sixtus Rauwolf' (BIS) is reviewed on page 67*

### Rob Cowan plays the Classics

*Gramophone* critic and 'Replay' author Rob Cowan has joined the Classic FM presenter team where, from January 6, he'll be hosting a primetime show, 'Cowan's Classics', every Saturday from 7-9pm. For Rob, it marks a welcome return to the station (which received a Special Anniversary Award at the 2017 *Gramophone* Awards), having last presented there in 2001, before moving to BBC Radio 3.

### Idagio partners with Vienna Phil

Classical-specific streaming service Idagio has launched a new partnership with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra to release exclusively some new live recordings. The series launches with the

farewell concert of the orchestra's solo flute player, Dieter Flury – who was in the post from 1981 to 2017. It was recorded at a concert in Vienna's Musikverein on July 11 last year, conducted by Christian Thielemann. Repertoire includes Jörg Widmann's *Flûte en suite* and Bach's Partita for solo flute. The series will be made available to subscribers of Idagio.

### Sony signs Anita Rachvelishvili

Sony Classical has signed the Georgian mezzo Anita Rachvelishvili. She first achieved fame in 2009 when Daniel Barenboim chose her to open the La Scala season in a new production of *Carmen* with Jonas Kaufmann as Don José – excerpts from the role will feature on the debut disc, due out in March.

For myself I'm eager to discover whether live encounters will live up to the considerable promise of this debut recording. **David Fanning**

*Shostakovich – selected comparison:*

*Melnikov, Mabler CO, Carrentzais*

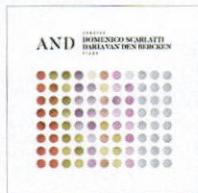
(5/12) (HARM) HMC90 2104

## D Scarlatti

Keyboard Sonatas – Kk3; Kk27; Kk32; Kk54; Kk87; Kk109; Kk119; Kk159; Kk212; Kk230; Kk247; Kk183; Kk481; Kk511; Kk519; Kk531; Kk544

**Daria van den Bercken** *pf*

Sony Classical (F) 88985 48665-2 (62' • DDD)



There's a sense of care about the whole production here, from the specially created

cover art to the choice of sonatas. Daria van den Bercken is alive to the gentler side of Scarlatti's creations as well as their brilliance, bringing warmth to the opening sonata, Kk183 in F minor. In Kk109 there's intimacy, too, the trills clear but not overly prominent, while Kk519 has a quiet sparkle to it. Kk212 is another highlight, with van den Bercken relishing the harmonic tensions and adding fastidious ornamentation.

One of the enduring fascinations of Scarlatti is the way a single sonata can respond to a wide variety of approaches. Van den Bercken takes Kk119 at a relatively sedate pace – others, not least Sudbin in his recent Scarlatti disc (BIS, 4/16), are more outlandish. Kk27, on the other hand, is relatively swift here, but it has its own allure, the ritardandos and accelerandos sounding entirely natural. However, I did find Kk32 just too slow, leaving its beautiful melody sounding a little stilted. Sudbin is also steady but maintains more of a sense of line; he takes considerably more liberties than van den Bercken but he makes them work, thanks to his sense of conviction. She is also a little too smooth-edged in Kk230, which really comes to life in Scott Ross's classic recording on harpsichord (Erato, 6/88).

Occasionally I wanted a bit more oomph: the hunt-infused Kk159 is too genteel – more of a sedate outing on a seaside donkey than a canter through the fields. Quèffélec (Apex, 3/95) is a real speed merchant here but it's thrilling, and Hewitt (Hyperion, 2/16), not quite so feckless, gets more of a sense of the chase in her reading. But the much-recorded Kk87 is another winner, its undulating lines warmly shaped and full of enticing detail, such as the slightly detached left-

hand counterpoint at 4'03". She ends as she began, in a mood of gentle good humour with Kk544. **Harriet Smith**

## 'Chaconne'

**JS Bach/Busoni** Chaconne **Busoni** Toccata:

Preludio-Fantasia-Ciaccona, K287 **Casella**

Variations on a Chaconne, Op 3 **Gubaidulina**

Chaconne **Handel** Chaconne, HWV435 **Handel/**

**Liszt** Sarabande and Chaconne from 'Almira',

S181 **Nielsen** Chaconne, Op 32

**Sofya Gulyak** *pf*

Champs Hill (F) CHRCD117 (73' • DDD)



Sofya Gulyak builds her new Champs Hill release around a series of chaconnes, dating

from the early 18th century through the 1960s. The highlight of the disc may be Busoni's fierce *Toccata: Preludio-Fantasia-Ciaccona* from 1921, which Gulyak attacks with something like abandon. Carl Nielsen's Chaconne is a close second, its intriguing harmonies and figuration imbued with a sort of nervous freshness. The virtuoso performance given Sofia Gubaidulina's early Chaconne (1962) achieves a terrifying intensity though, like most of the pieces on the disc, it suffers from what seems to be overly close microphone placement.

Gulyak also makes a strong case for the rarely heard Sarabande and Chaconne from Handel's *Almira*, Liszt's gift to his British disciple Walter Bache. Drawing on plenty of variety in both dynamics and articulation, Gulyak foregrounds the inherent tension of Liszt's juxtaposition of the two dances. Her straightforward interpretation stands in vivid contrast with Alessio Bax's more subtle and sensitive reading (Warner, 11/04).

The first two items on the programme are in many ways the least successful. Famously, the gateway to Busoni's remarkable piano transcriptions of Bach was the organ works, and it is usually with that sound ideal in mind, if not with that of the original Solo Violin Partita, that pianists approach the D minor Chaconne. Favouring neither, Gulyak employs a rather aggressive, detached touch for the opening, later contrasting it with legato *pianissimos*. Her preoccupation with pianistic sonorities unfortunately leaves the music itself a bit marginalised. Listening to the Handel Chaconne, Grigory Sokolov's Couperin comes to mind, though Gulyak's Handel is less virtuosic. The overall impression is of a mannered digital tour de force at Handel's expense. **Patrick Rucker**

## 'A Lute by Sixtus Rauwolf' **G**

'French and German Baroque Music'

**Anonymous** Suite in F sharp minor (attrib Pergolesi) **Dufault** Suite **Kellner**

Campanella. Courante. Sarabanda. Aria. Giga.

Gavotte **Mouton** Prelude 'La promenade'.

Allemande 'Le dialogue des graces ...'. Canaries

'Le Mouton'. Courante 'La Changeante'.

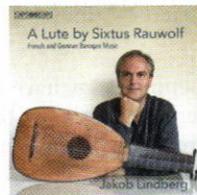
Gaillarde 'La Bizarre'. Sarabande 'La Malassis'.

Menuet 'La Ganbade' **Reusner** Padoana **Weiss**

Suite in A

**Jakob Lindberg** *lute*

BIS (F) (S) BIS2265 (82' • DDD/DSD)



After delighting us with the music of Jacobean and Italian Renaissance masters

of the lute in his previous two recordings, London-based Swedish lutenist Jakob Lindberg turns his attention to works by French and German Baroque composers with equally felicitous results.

Lindberg's Sixtus Rauwolf lute was built in Augsburg around 1590 as a seven- or eight-course instrument. In 1715 it was altered and became the 11-course instrument it is today. As Tim Crawford writes in his superb booklet note, Lindberg has chosen works 'that could plausibly have formed part of the repertory of an owner of the instrument at around the time of its final conversion'. Crawford also explores the similarities between instrument restoration and early music performance, and the relationships between the German composers Esaias Reusner, David Kellner, 'Mr Pachelbel' and Weiss, and the French composers of an earlier generation from which they drew inspiration, such as François Dufault and Charles Mouton. The Baroque dance suite, with its variations on the classic Allemande-Courante-Sarabande-Gigue pattern, dominates. There are, however, clear differences between the French and German styles; furthermore, within those, the distinctive voice of each composer is evident.

These are voices Lindberg hears clearly and translates with great sympathy and imagination. He is stately and expressive in Reusner's *Padoana* while seizing upon the extravagant trills and strums evoked by the Dufault and the elegant deportment of the Mouton. Lindberg similarly relishes the toccata-like textures, bittersweet harmonies and melodic attractiveness of Kellner, 'Mr Pachelbel' and Weiss, though it is in the latter's Sarabande and Ciaccona that Lindberg's mastery of this repertoire is at its most convincing – and moving.

**William Yeoman**