

# Brief notes

This month's selection features echoes, postcards, paths and cyborg pianists

## Beethoven Cello Sonatas

Gary Hoffman (cello), David Selig (piano) *La Dolce Volta LDV111.2 (2-discs)*



Here, Beethoven's five cello sonatas, spanning his early, middle and late periods, are joyfully sinuous – and even the thorny later works benefit from a clear musical purpose that only supreme technical competence and years of committed partnership can bring. Outstanding. (CS) ★★★★★

## Richard Cameron-Wolfe

Telesthesia

Antwerp Cello Quartet  
*Antarctica AR055*



This intriguing work is inspired by the memory of a close friend. The subtitle – '13 episodes/deliberations on multi-planar syzygy' – refers to post-death 'sightings' of that friend, and like those near-encounters, the piece features an array of 'almost' melodies, frustratingly interrupted. (CS) ★★

## Chausson • Ravel Piano Trios

Trio Metral

*La Dolce Volta LDV122*



From the wistful Romanticism of Chausson's *Pas trop lent* first movement to the fanfares as Ravel marches off to war in his closing *Animé*, these performances of two much-loved French trios show poise and passion aplenty. Recommended. (JP) ★★★★★

## Farrenc Piano Trios Nos 2 & 4; Sonata No. 1 etc

Linos Ensemble  
*CPO 555538-2*



The Linos excel again in Farrenc. Her chamber music best showcases the composer's gift for melody, often offset by poignant harmonies. Piano and strings are beautifully balanced in the Second Trio; the flute gets a vigorous workout in the Fourth. (SW) ★★★★★

## Henze The Raft of the Medusa

Arnold Schoenberg Chor et al  
*Capriccio C5482*



Written in 1968, Henze's darkly abrasive work for soloists, chorus and orchestra – with spoken German dialogue – vividly conveys the many horrors faced by the survivors of a notorious 1816 shipwreck that was famously depicted by painter Théodore Géricault. (JP) ★★★

## Korngold Chamber Works

Bruno Monteiro (violin) et al  
*Etcetera KTC1774*



Written at 13, Korngold's vivacious, harmonically adventurous Op. 1 Trio needs no special 'juvenilia' pleading. The Violin Sonata, from the grand old age of 16, captivates from its ambitious, symphonic opening onwards. A resonant acoustic sacrifices a scintilla of clarity. (SW) ★★★★★

## Leiviskä Symphony No. 1 etc

Oliver Triendl (piano); Staatskapelle Weimar/Ari Rasilainen  
*Hänssler Classic HC23050 (2-discs)*



Helvi Leiviskä's Piano Concerto of 1935 makes no huge stylistic leaps from, say, Brahms's Second, but builds interesting dialogues for soloist and orchestra. The First Symphony (1947) trades the Romantics for Impressionism: the woodwinds ethereal, the harmonies tangy. (SW) ★★★

## Medtner Violin Sonata No. 3 etc

Natalia Lomeiko (violin), Alexander Karpeyev (piano) et al  
*SOMM Recordings SOMMCD00674*



Lomeiko makes short work of Medtner's otherwise epic Third Sonata. Karpeyev is *en pointe*, too, taking what is a dizzyingly agile part in his stride. Theodore Platt is in fine, hefty, voice for the *Eight Songs*, though I would have preferred more of Lomeiko's bewitching violin. (MB) ★★★★★

## Paul Mottram Seven Ages of Man

Tim Garland, Jason Rebello et al  
*Ubuntu UBU0140*



What do you get when you cross two of the UK's finest jazz soloists with a swathe of orchestral musicians? Mottram's vivid cycle spins an enjoyable musical yarn, taking us from human gestation to old age with bags of cinematic character, charm and musicality. (MB) ★★★★★

## Carlos Simon brea(d)th

Minnesota Orchestra/Jonathan Taylor Rush et al *Decca 485 4863 (EP)*



Composer Simon and performer Bamuthi Joseph collaborate on this eloquent, impatient call for healing across an America rocked by racial tensions and the pandemic. Bamuthi Joseph's vocal delivery is spring-heeled, acerbic; Simon's music has an ageless solemnity. (SW) ★★★★★

## 1923 Works by Janáček, Berg et al

Schumann Quartett  
*Berlin Classics 0302968BBC*



Collecting works associated with a single year is an interesting concept, but throws up some less-than-inspiring oddities. Though Hindemith's *Minimax* is a quirky military pastiche, the Janáček and Berg, both passionate and tortured, are well served by the Schumanns' spirited performances. (CS) ★★

## Cyborg Pianist Works by Laura Bowler, Shiva Feshareki et al

Zubin Kanga (piano etc) *NMC D279*

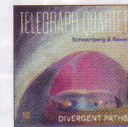


Prepare to be dazzled, or dazed. Zubin Kanga's take on the future of the piano may be an acquired taste; fascinating developments in technology proffer some entertaining results, and while there's inventive and immersive stuff to be found here, much of it represents a future some will not be ready for. (MB) ★★

## Divergent Paths

Works by Ravel and Schoenberg  
Telegraph Quartet

*Azica Records ACD-7136027*



The first in an intended series exploring string quartet repertoire of the 20th century pairs vastly different works – and while the Ravel's ghostly delicacy suits the Telegraph's spare, unadorned style, the dense and stormy Schoenberg feels a little anaemic. (CS) ★★★★★

## Echoes of Bohemia Works by Haas, Reicha, Janáček, Martinů

Orsino Ensemble

*Chandos CHSA5348 (CD/SACD)*



A beguiling album of music for wind quintet and sextet. Flutes flutter, bassoons and clarinets march and bustle. The slow movement of Pavel Haas's Quintet has some gorgeously soulful oboe writing, while *Mradi* ('Youth') finds Janáček in strikingly mellow mood. (SW) ★★★★★

## Estrellita Works by Liszt, Ravel, Tchaikovsky, Debussy et al

Hee-Young Lim (cello), Chuhui Liang (piano) *Orchid Classics ORC100227*



It's hard not to be won over by this selection drawing together encore pieces arranged for cello and piano. It's a beguiling programme, many familiar, others less-known, and all performed with no small amount of warmth and expression. (MB) ★★★★★

## Fandango

Works by Márquez and Ginastera

Anne Akiko Meyers (violin); LA Phil/Gustavo Dudamel et al  
*Platoon Music (digital only)*



Cut from the same cloth as his rhythmically infectious *Danzon* No. 2, Márquez's *Fandango* shows soloist Anne Akiko Meyers in truly sizzling form. An equally lively Ginastera *Estancia* follows. (JP) ★★★★★