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A large, detailed portrait of Joseph Haydn, showing him from the chest up. He is wearing a white powdered wig and a red coat with a white cravat. He is holding a violin and bow in his left hand.

Haydn in London

*The composer's
triumphant visits and
their impact on his music*



This year's
Christmas
releases

PLUS

Critics' Choice: our
reviewers name their
top albums of 2025

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Daniel Hyde
records Rutter
with King's,
Cambridge



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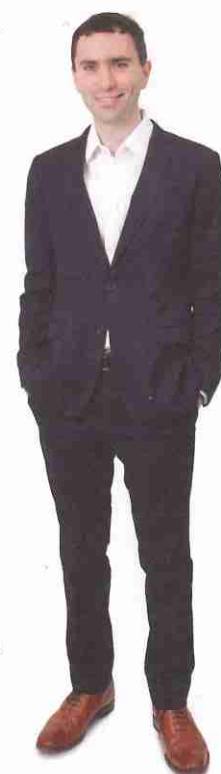
A reminder to us all of music's roots in society

Recorded music may be this magazine's focus, it being – as the quote above recalls – founded as 'an organ of candid opinion for the numerous possessors of gramophones'.

But recording exists of course as an integral part of not just the world of concert halls and opera houses, but of society beyond that too: religious services, education, community gatherings and much more. Rarely is that as apparent as at Christmas, when many people encounter more classical music than throughout the rest of the year put together.

This issue I talk to Daniel Hyde about a choir which perhaps more than any embodies that bond: King's College, Cambridge. For so many, the solo chorister singing the opening to *Once in Royal David's City* beneath the fan vaulting of that extraordinary chapel is an instantly evocative and much-loved part of Christmas. So too the music of the composer celebrated on the choir's new album: Sir John Rutter, whose 80th birthday has offered the choral world a wonderful opportunity to express our gratitude for his extraordinary and continuing contribution.

Sir John, meanwhile, got to express his own gratitude last month to a composer of an earlier generation, when he unveiled the statue of Benjamin Britten on Lowestoft's seafront. Regular readers may recall the campaign led by Zeb Soanes – who, like me, grew up in the town – to honour the composer in his birthplace with a statue that depicts him as a child, an inspiration to those growing up there today. Ian Rank-Broadley's sculpture is a moving reminder that classical music is woven into the tapestry of towns throughout the land.



Martin

Such a notion could hardly be better illustrated than a 2700 mile journey currently being undertaken by Jonathan Mayes, Chief Executive of Cathedral Music Trust, who is cycling between every choir the charity supports. Just as important as raising funds is raising awareness of the incredible choral life that goes on throughout the UK, and as his pilgrimage pauses mid-way for winter he reflects in an article on *Gramophone's* website about what he's learnt on his journey so far.

Meanwhile, an exhibition at London's Foundling Museum explores how Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus' transcended its oratorio to be sung by professionals and amateurs throughout the land (and indeed world). Though initially an Easter work, *Messiah* has also become a Christmas tradition for many.

Our country's musical life is remarkable, but we must never take it for granted. Numbers studying music in schools have declined, and just this month another leading UK university – Nottingham – announced it is reviewing whether to continue to offer music degrees. The earlier examples serve to remind us just how rooted music is in our society, but we need to do all we can to ensure this continues – to support it, to champion it, and to make sure there are opportunities for all to enjoy it.

And whether it be works by Handel, Rutter or Britten (whose *Ceremony of Carols* is a personal festive favourite), and whether heard in cathedrals, concert halls or broadcast from Cambridge colleges, I wish you all a music-filled – and a very happy – Christmas.

martin.cullingford@markallengroup.com

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

Andrew Achenbach • Tim Ashley • Michelle Assay • Richard Bratby • Edward Breen • Stephen Cera • Alexandra Coghlan • Rob Cowan (consultant reviewer) • Jeremy Dibble • Jed Distler • Adrian Edwards • David Fallows • David Fanning • Andrew Farach-Colton • Fabrice Fitch • Jonathan Freeman-Attwood • Charlotte Gardner • Jennifer Gersten • David Gutman • Christian Hoskins • Rob Hubbard • Lindsay Kemp • Aleksander Laskowski • Richard Lawrence • SangKwon Lee • Geraint Lewis • Thomas May • Andrew Mellor • Jeremy Nicholas • Richard Osborne • Mark Pullinger • Peter Quantrill • Peter J Rabinowitz • Guy Rickards • Malcolm Riley • Patrick Rucker • Edward Seckerson • Mark Seow • Hugo Shirley • Pwyll ap Siôn • David Patrick Stearns • Hilary Stroh • David Threasher • David Vickers • Richard Whitehouse • Arnold Whittall • Richard Wigmore • William Yeoman



'Haydn once said that his two trips to London in the 1790s were the happiest times of his life,' writes **RICHARD**

WIGMORE, author of our cover story. 'They were certainly the most hectic and colourful, and arguably the richest artistically. The London symphonies never lose their capacity to delight and surprise.'



'Christmas arrived early for me and, surprisingly, I wasn't feeling Scrooge-like,' says **EDWARD BREEN**, who writes this

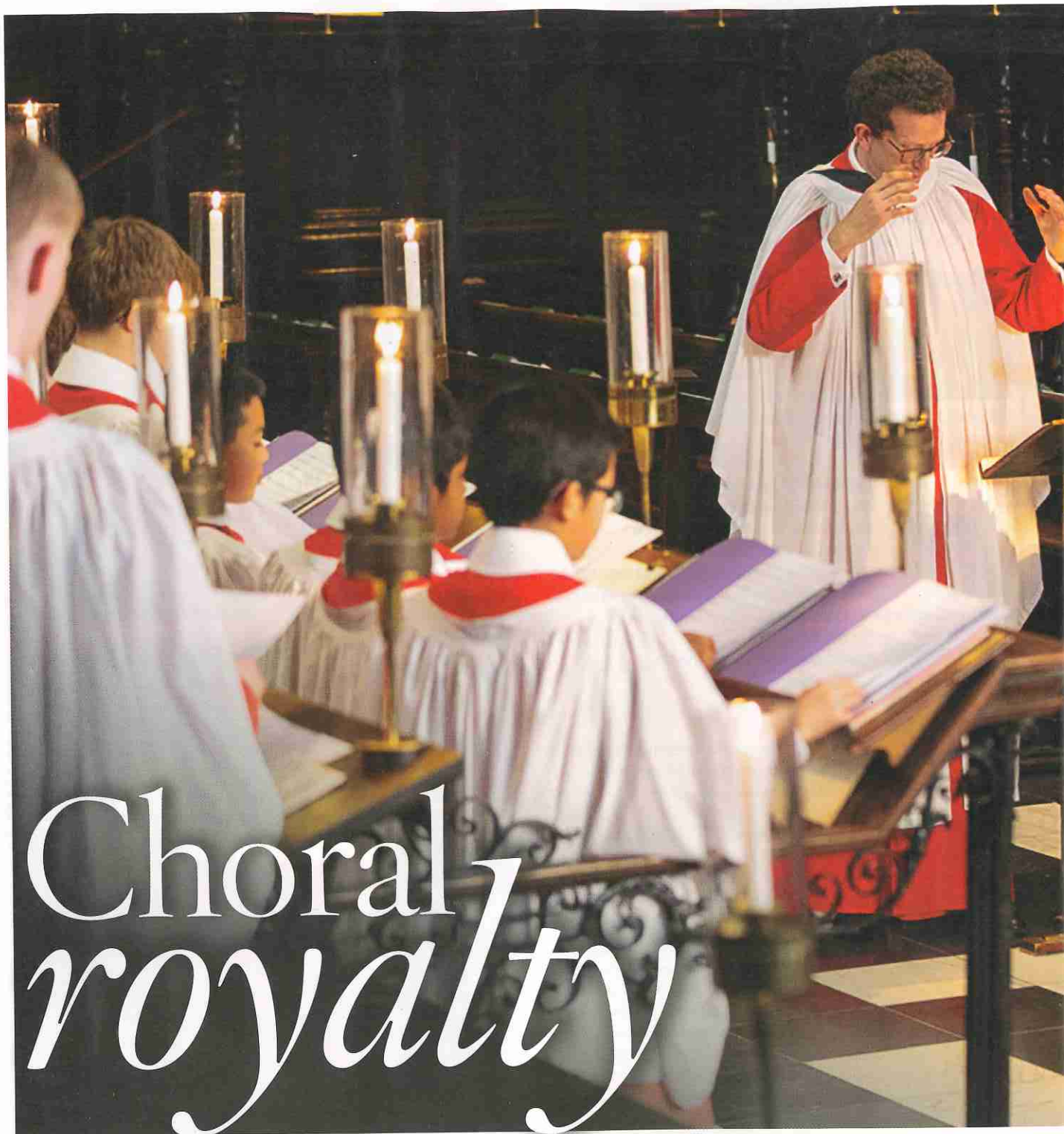
year's Christmas Round-up. 'I was captivated by the diversity: Christmas albums often revolve around established favourites, but many new tracks caught my ear. For once, I wish it could be Christmas every day.'



'Revisiting Ravel's final piano work through nearly a century's worth of recordings reminded me of what we've gained

and lost in terms of performance practice,' says **JED DISTLER**, who writes this month's Collection. 'It was not easy to determine my final choices, yet the process was both stimulating and educational.'

Gramophone, which has been serving the classical music world since 1923, is first and foremost a monthly review magazine, delivered today in both print and digital formats. It boasts an eminent and knowledgeable panel of experts, which reviews the full range of classical music recordings. Its reviews are completely independent. In addition to reviews, its interviews and features help readers to explore in greater depth the recordings that the magazine covers, as well as offer insight into the work of composers and performers. It is *the* magazine for the classical record collector, as well as for the enthusiast starting a voyage of discovery.



Choral *royalty*

As King's College, Cambridge, celebrates both Christmas and the works of Sir John Rutter, Music Director Daniel Hyde tells Martin Cullingford about the famous choir's modern musical life

Here I am, watching the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, singing Christmas music by Sir John Rutter, the familiar melodies – which sound so instinctively natural yet are the result of a craft impeccably honed over a phenomenally successful career – rising into the near-darkness of the famed fan vaulting above us. Outside the door, a red light twinkles in the cold mist that's settling for the evening on the college's impeccable lawn that sits amid the century-spanning structures of Henry VI's magnificent Gothic chapel, the classical Gibbs Building and the later-still Gothic Revival screen that completes the quadrangle. This is Cambridge at its most idyllic, atmospheric – and wintry;

which is exactly what you might expect for a recording of Christmas music by a choir arguably more associated with the festive season than any other ensemble. It's not, however, usually thus: most sessions by choirs for Christmas albums that I've attended seem to have happened in the summer – students in T-shirts and shorts having to conjure up images of holly, ivy, icy vistas and roaring log fires; the juxtaposition always raising a laugh. It may be January, but it's rather nice that the weather feels seasonally appropriate for once.

The album being recorded, 'All the Stars Looked Down: A John Rutter Celebration', is the choir's exploration of the composer's music in his 80th-birthday year and draws together

some of his most popular Christmas carols and arrangements – all wonderfully played by the Britten Sinfonia – with works by other composers who have a special connection either to him or to King's. Between takes I exchange greetings with Director of Music Daniel Hyde and chat with the acclaimed production and engineering partnership of Adrian Peacock and David Hinitt, but otherwise I let everyone get on with the business at hand. I sit back, enjoy the glorious music, absorb the atmosphere and watch them all at work.

The album safely in the can, I visit King's again a few months later for an in-depth interview with Hyde at a quieter moment.

PHOTOGRAPHY: LEON HARGREAVES

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This time it would be the perfect paradoxical weather for a traditionally unseasonal Christmas recording: the mercury is nudging past the 30s, the scorching sun sparkling on the Cam as it snakes through the Backs. But we're here to cast out minds back to winter, so I start by asking Hyde for his reflections on the composer whose Christmas music the album celebrates.

'John, as you know, is very much a Cambridge man. At the college next door [Clare], he was mentored very closely by one of my predecessors, David Willcocks. He has always had an extremely close connection to King's, and has always been a great supporter of it. He understands the building and the choir and the whole concept of everything we do here. And since he has a big birthday, I thought, well, it would be nice to put something together.'

It sounds simple, but Hyde was clear from the start that he needed to offer something a little different. 'We could have just done a carols-with-organ sort of album, but one of the things about John's music which I find so interesting, and that I have such respect for, is his construction and technique as an orchestrator. He really understands how to create a singing line, but also how to, if you like, fluff it up, how to upholster the whole thing. And when you talk with John you realise he has a very clear idea of the ideal recorded King's sound (he's done recording engineering himself), and one of the things we've discussed many times is the sound of an orchestra in the chapel – the quality of beautiful binding horns and woodwind floating around the building. So I just thought: "Why not?" We would never sing these carols like that in a service, as we'd never have a full orchestra there, so it just seemed like an opportunity to celebrate John – and to do something different.'

The non-Rutter element of the album pays tribute to Hyde's predecessors as King's music directors, a trio of choral knights: Sir David Willcocks, Sir Philip Ledger and, of course, Sir Stephen Cleobury, who held the post for 37 years, retiring in 2019, the same year in which he died on, poignantly, St Cecilia's Day. The Cleobury contribution is an orchestration of a carol by Sir Henry Walford Davies, a setting of *O little town of Bethlehem* that Hyde had found nestling in a folder, written by hand and not quite finished. Hyde doesn't know when it was composed or why, but he completed it himself, and the outcome is a moving gesture to a much-loved figure. There are also works by two former music directors at St John's College, just a little along Trinity Street: Christopher Robinson and David Hill.

Coming back to Rutter himself, I probe Hyde a little further about something he's already mentioned twice: Rutter's understanding of the sound of King's. How much, I ask, is what we hear down to the composition, and how much to the way that Hyde conducts it? 'I think there's probably an element of both. You've died and gone to heaven when you hear beautiful music in that space – and so I think the way in which we play in that building is important. But I think it's also John's ability. If you look at his orchestrations, if you look at the string parts, he knows where the bow is at any given moment. It's all so beautifully constructed to make these luscious sounds. When he uses colour in the wind, it's never overdone. It's always the right instrument at the right moment. There is a skill and technique to what he does, he's a master of balance and he knows how to, if you like, support and augment the choir rather than overwhelm. It feels good, and I've personally

been fascinated by just getting my brain into this kind of crazy "Rolls-Royce" that he drives when he's writing – and just learning how he's done it.'

But, I suggest, for all that skill, Rutter's phenomenal popularity also rests on the brilliance of his instinct for a perfect tune. 'John understands melody,' agrees Hyde. 'I think he would probably say that he learnt so much in his early years by being a copyist in publishing houses, in the days before Sibelius software. He's quite into musical theatre as well, and says he was once asked to write a musical but he didn't because he didn't really have a good story. But he knows the music of Stephen Sondheim and similar composers. So I think he's developed that extraordinary sense of melody. He can write a tune that just goes the extra mile. But he has such a strong grasp of harmony and counterpoint that everything he weaves around a good tune, the harmonic pacing of it, works.' Put it all together, and 'people respond to quality. John's music is really well constructed. There is not a single note that shouldn't be where it is.'

It's familiar festive fare brilliantly done, then, but wrapped in a refreshing new package. In inheriting such a storied choir, Hyde is acutely aware that it brings with it an acclaimed, comprehensive and vast catalogue. It's an honour to be its contemporary custodian – but a challenge too. 'My predecessors have basically recorded everything,' he says. 'In the early days, certainly of CDs, choirs like ours were pumping out four or five discs a year – of standard repertoire. So we have to be creative in the way in which we record. It might be that there's a themed recording, or a way of doing some of our regular service music

dressed up with other things. At the back of my mind, I'm thinking that I've got to have something to say in whatever recording I put out. There's no point in just making a recording for the sake of making a record.'

It's six years since

Hyde took over, in which time he's had a whole generation of choristers pass through his care. 'Of the ones leaving this summer, I think I auditioned nearly all of them – maybe a couple of them were auditioned by Stephen, but they've certainly all been trained by me.' How does Hyde choose the very young choristers who come to King's to continue that cycle? 'I usually audition a child three times – very rarely would I take one after one hearing. And it's always a case of looking for potential. In the time I spend with a child at an audition, I'm most interested in where they are when they walk in, where we get to, and how we get there. How quick are they to pick things up? What's their instinct? Vocally, do they just go from bottom to top quite happily, or are there issues in the voice? Can I get them into their head voice? Can I open the trapdoor to find if there's a voice in there? I'm also interested in whether or not there's an ear that I can train.'

Finding undergraduates for the back row, meanwhile, is 'hard work', he tells me. 'We don't need to rehearse here the difficulties of music in schools. I require a certain level – and that level of musical training is not necessarily going on in all schools, and maybe some schools that used to have music no longer do. There's a smaller pool of candidates, a diminishing field. So I have to look more widely, and we now have both undergraduates and postgraduates in the back row, and that is a demographic that's changed. Some of them have graduated and stayed on. They sing here and we treat them as lay clerks, and they work part-time; some of them work in other colleges,

fundraising, for example. I have to be pragmatic, so that I have a standard in the back row that enables me to do the things that we're meant to be doing. It's a tough one.'

Another challenge he's noticed is a change in attitude towards commitment. 'I need people to commit to six days a week, and that's not such a fashionable thing to do. That's not a kind of a judgement or negative statement, it's just that attitudes are different. Maybe they want to go somewhere three or four times a week instead. Maybe there's a hedging of bets. Maybe something else might turn up.' And if they do commit, that commitment must be

absolute. 'It may happen once or twice in a year that somebody is late, but they only do it once. Some might say I'm extremely strict about it, but it's more about a respect for everybody else's time. It's a level of commitment which then gives a level of payback, which of course is extremely fulfilling.' It's also a vital lesson for life. 'I remember a visiting conductor coming and working with some students, for a big event. Some of the students were late, and this conductor told them that if they did that in the professional world their phone wouldn't ring again. And I remember thinking: that's the best advice you can give.'

But the commitment shown by the choir, by each individual singer, can be, Hyde believes, an inspiration throughout the college. 'I think a lot of people would say that just knowing what's going on here is important, even if they're not here themselves. There's something sort of monastic about it: the training, the fact that we do it six days a week and we aspire to a level of excellence which means that yesterday, a normal day, is no different from the day the BBC come along to record. You can't turn it on for Christmas Eve, do a great broadcast, and then 364 days of the year stop what you're doing. And maybe other parts of the college community take something from that.'


After all, a choir isn't just for Christmas. So how is Hyde shaping their wider repertoire? 'My natural inclination is towards earlier music. I absolutely love proper Renaissance choral polyphony. I also love all the kind of 20th-century Anglican material – I mean, I grew up on it, I'm pretty eclectic. But I find more and more that I go earlier as a way of finding new and inspiring material, but also the material that has the educational tools that I need. To me, it's all chamber music. It's all about being with other people – there is nothing soloist about it. It's about training their inner sense, almost, their aural awareness.' And specifically? 'There's quite a lot of English stuff – Tallis and Byrd, obviously. More recently this year we've done a lot of Gibbons, because of his connection to us. Then I do a lot of Latin-texted polyphony – Italian, Spanish, Palestrina, Victoria, Guerrero; but north-German Baroque too – Schütz, Buxtehude: "Avant-Bach", I call it.'



In Hyde's six years as Director of Music of the Choir of King's College, a whole generation of choristers has passed through his care

Apart from standing in front of the King's choir, Hyde is, like his predecessors, a gifted organist. 'For me, playing the organ should involve the same approach as making a choir sing. It's very easy with an organ to pull out sounds and play them – but it's a question of how you combine the stops, and how you actually allow them to breathe.' Other conducting work, meanwhile, includes that with the BBC Singers – an ensemble he describes as 'terrifyingly good'. His approach to working with such a group in the often uncompromising contemporary music in which it excels proves that Hyde's own work ethic is no less serious than anything he expects from his King's charges: 'I can be preparing scores at 5.30 in the morning,' he says. 'I always get up and do it before I come to work. I've worked out that the way to deal with it is to be methodical and consistent in the preparation.'

So committed is Hyde that, as we wrap up, he even does a bit of my job for me by asking himself an excellent question. 'If you asked me what I think is my single best achievement here, I think I could say that if you were to turn up on any given day in chapel, you would hear something of a suitable standard and quality. It's getting that and maintaining it, making it look like the swans of the river down there,' – he points out the window to the Backs – 'gracefully gliding along, even though there's a hell of a lot of paddling below deck.'

And to conclude, a final, moving, reflection. 'On Easter morning we sang Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli*, and the kids absolutely loved it. We'd done a lot of work around it. It was the perfect match of music and liturgical feast. Spring was here, and glorious light was coming through the windows refracting in all sorts of different ways during the course of the hour-and-a-half service. This music fits this choir perfectly, and the building too – the arc shape of the music and the fan vaulting ... And it wasn't on YouTube. It wasn't webcast. It won't be reviewed in *Gramophone*. But I know it happened. And there will have been people there who will remember that too, because it's one of those buildings where people come once in their life, and they will always remember it. For me, that was a good day at the office.'  The new album *All the Stars Looked Down* is reviewed on page 30

approach to traditional carols and for their joyful rendition of *Jingle bells*. For even more Christmas fanfare and ceremony, The Band of the Royal Marines Collingwood sound fabulous with Portsmouth Cathedral's choristers on **The First Nowell**, especially in *Once in royal David's city*. A spectacular opening to a very atmospheric album.

For something completely different try **A Christmas Carol**, an abridged version of Dickens's classic with choral music by Benedict Sheehan, somewhere between an audiobook and a Broadway musical. Combining compelling, immersive narration by Christine Baranski with punchy, high-energy singing from the Skylark Vocal Ensemble, Sheehan's choral movie score invokes a chilling vision of Dickensian London.

Die Nacht ist vorgedrungen from Richard Resch's Ensemble La Silla is my favourite concept-programme this year, offering a multilingual blend of traditional, sacred and seasonal night-time themes. Take the opening two tracks: a spine-chilling Advent hymn by Jochen Klepper written in 1937, *The night is advanced*, which then contrasts with *Maria durch ein Dornwald ging* ('Mary walked through a thorn forest') arranged by Silvan Loher, representing death, a folk-song setting reminiscent of Warlock's 'Sleep'. Resch is strongest in understated, mournful songs but reveals a joyful side in Franz Tunder's *Wachet auf*, complete with camp festive chimes and exuberant string-playing.

My favourite album cover is **Hearth** by the Miró Quartet, which matches many of the uncomplicated, naive sounds conjured in their wintry carol arrangements. I really love the variety of textures throughout, especially the sense of swirling snow-flurries in the Appalachian folk song *I wonder as I wander*, arranged by Reena Esmail.

Have you ever wanted to spend a year away from chestnuts and open fires? **Cuban Christmas** offers a mix of the traditional, moving and upbeat, underpinned by complex rhythmic pulses and outstanding musicianship. From the melting horn solo of *Silent night* to the toe-tapping complexity of *We wish you a merry Christmas*, this will make a memorable addition to a playlist looking to steer away from an exclusively religious selection. The *Cuban Nutcracker Suite* is not to be missed: 'Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy' is a touch of percussive genius.

I love brass bands, and on **Let it Swing** the slick ensemble Salaputia Brass excel in creating a nostalgic, warm sound. Their arrangements are all new, with hints of classic Hollywood detailing and plenty of inventive moments. Start with *White Christmas* to see how they meld a jazzy sense of swing without distracting from this classic tune – and just wait for that dazzling trumpet! Stephan Stadtfeld's variations on Handel's 'Lascia ch'io pianga' are heart-wrenching on the penultimate track.

Finally to my top choice – **Joy to the World** from Chanticleer. Readers who know the respect I hold for old polyphony might be surprised to know that I shed an awkward tear in the queue at Gail's bakery at the title-track – a tight close-harmony arrangement by Adam Brett Ward with more added chords than I've had sourdough loaves. The bright, easy sheen of the falsettists leading into the blazing final cadence was too much. Imagine a carol crossed with the woollens section of a menswear catalogue and you'll see what I mean. The earworm of 2025 goes to Sarah Quartel's sea shanty-esque *This Endris Night*, with rich low notes, tight ensemble and compelling rhythmic drive. Throughout I was struck how the individual voices, each so full of personality, yield such a homogeneous vocal meld when required. They are perhaps less memorable in the Renaissance works, but Joanna Marsh's *Winter's Garland* is not to be missed. **G**

THE CHRISTMAS LIST

Your guide to the festive season's recordings



Natale veneziano
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**All the Stars
Looked Down**
**Ch of King's College,
Cambridge**
King's College KGS0075



O Holy Night
**Ch of St John's
College, Cambridge**
Signum SIGCD913



**The Wise Men
and the Star**
The Sixteen
Coro COR16215



**Nowel: Advent
& Beyond**
Ens Pro Victoria
Delphian DCD34315



**On Christmas
Night**
London Choral Sinf
Orchid ORC100402



A Babe is Born
St Martin's Voices
Resonus RES10371



Clive Osgood
Christmas Collection
Polyphony
Convivium CV1106



**Kristina
Arakelyan**
A Christmas Offering
**Choir of King's
College London**
Signum SIGCD953



**Feminine Voices
at Christmas**
Ens Altera
Alpha ALPHA1182



**A Meridian
Christmas**
Meridian
Signum SIGCD967



In the Stillness
Jervaulx Singers
Convivium CV1113



Lord of the Dance
Norwich Cath Ch
Deux-Elles DXL1220



The First Nowell
Portsmouth Cath Ch
Signum SIGCD943



**Benedict
Sheehan**
A Christmas Carol
Skylark Vocal Ens
Arlos ARRO001



**Die Nacht ist
vorgedrungen**
Richard Resch
Carpe Diem CD16339



Hearth
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Cuban Christmas
The Sarahbanda
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Let it Swing
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Joy to the World
Chanticleer
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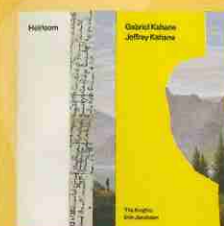
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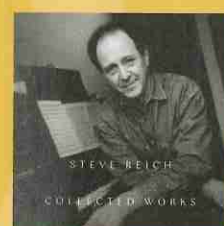
AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE
honey from a winter stone
'Five richly textured, layered (and then often delayed) pieces that speak directly to the struggles facing Black men in America. Powerful, eloquent social commentary when we need it most.'
– BBC Music Magazine, Jazz Choice
★★★★★



MARY HALVORSON
About Ghosts
'A kaleidoscopic blend of angular rhythms, intricate melodies and thrilling improvisations. However edgy and angular Halvorson's music gets, powerful melodies and inviting harmonies always drift below even the stormiest surface, giving the much-lauded composer and guitarist an appeal way beyond the avant garde.'
– Guardian, Jazz Album of the Month
★★★★★



GABRIEL KAHANE
Heirloom
'A musical roller coaster of a journey bursting with drama, detail and invention. A dazzling *concerto du jour* that glows with an exhilarating sense of its own clear purpose and inevitability.'
– Gramophone



STEVE REICH
Collected Works
'Few living composers can claim to have altered the course of history by fundamentally changing the way we listen to music. Reich is one of those figures. Collected Works contains innumerable landmark moments. There still remains so much to admire, appreciate and understand about the music of this significant figure in contemporary music.'
– Gramophone



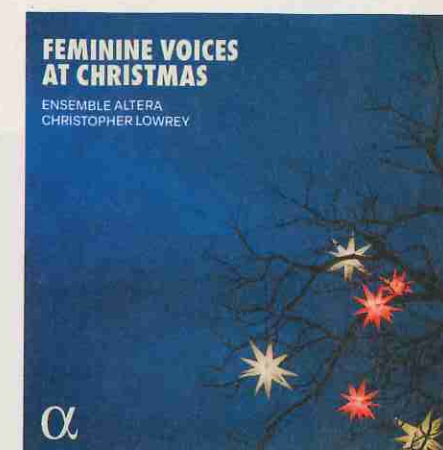
CÉCILE McLORIN SALVANT
Oh Snap
'Sonically, thematically, emotionally, *Oh Snap* is a remarkable album even by Cécile McLorin Salvant's exalted standards.'
– Jazzwise ★★★★★



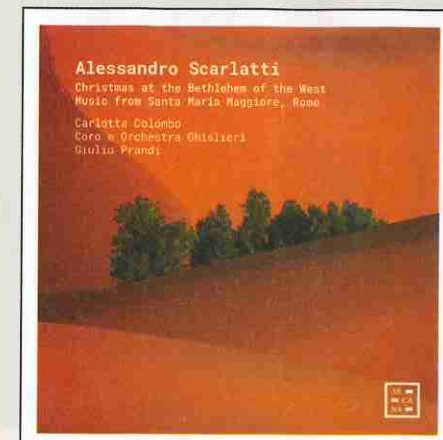
CHRIS THILE
Bach: Sonatas & Partitas Vol. 2
'An album of real beauty, emerging as if through the mist – the mandolin proceeds to bring to this familiar music a vivid and highly personal sense of both mystery and joy.'
– Gramophone, Editor's Choice

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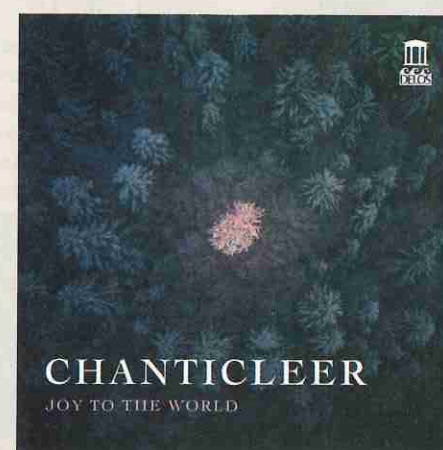
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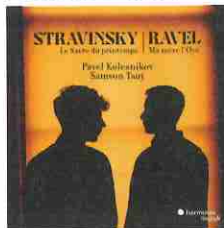


David Fanning

Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*Ravel *Ma Mère l'Oye*

Pavel Kolesnikov, Samson Tsoy pf

Harmonia Mundi HMM90 2752 (7/25)



Can a piano duet partnership ever be truly exciting? Kolesnikov and Tsoy certainly make a fine case for the proposition. Their *Rite of Spring* is

both virtuosic and imaginatively recreative – controversially so in places, but never less than thoughtful in intent and thought-provoking in effect. The album also offers their ravishing Ravel *Mother Goose* and two elegant, complementary booklet essays.

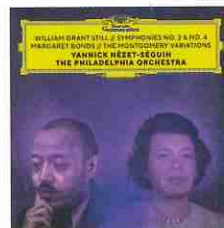
Andrew Farach-Colton

Bonds *Montgomery Variations*Still *Symphonies – No 2, 'Song of a New Race'; No 4, 'Autochthonous'*

Philadelphia Orchestra /

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

DG 486 8163 (A/25)



Stokowski was absolutely correct in calling William Grant Still 'one of our greatest American composers'. Hopefully, this brilliantly played

album will attract a new audience to music that's been shamefully neglected for far too long. Both symphonies here are beautifully crafted, memorably melodic, emotionally forthright and easy to love.

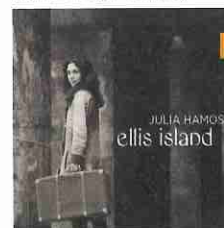


Charlotte Gardner

'Ellis Island'

Julia Hamos pf

Naïve V8674 (7/25)



Rarely do albums get so under my skin as this silvery, vivacious, songful, organically unfurling debut recording from Julia Hamos, exploring her American and Hungarian roots. From Schubert and Bartók to Monk and Mingus, her piano chimes, hammers, dances, glints, darkens into velvet – and I remain smitten.



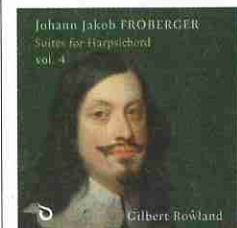
Pavel Kolesnikov and Samson Tsoy give virtuosic accounts of Stravinsky and Ravel, David Fanning's choice

Fabrice Fitch

Froberger *Suites for Harpsichord, Vol 4*

Gilbert Rowland hpd

Athene 2 ATH23215 (9/25)



My accolade this year takes in not just this volume but its three predecessors: together they offer about eight hours' worth of superb music and playing.

Froberger's elegant, reserved yet generous multinationalism blazed a trail for more famous German Baroque composers after him, and Rowland does him full justice.

David Gutman

Rachmaninov *Piano Concerto No 3*

in D minor, Op 30

Yunchan Lim pf

Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra /

Marin Alsop

Decca 487 1023 (7/25)



Completing a gruelling accompanimental stint at 2022's Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, Marin Alsop's band find themselves

co-curating a performance for the ages. Jeremy Nicholas's review of this belated official audio-only release was by no means over the top. However suboptimal its recessed orchestral textures, prizewinner Yunchan Lim is on breathtaking form, unmistakably the real deal.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

Merula *'Concerti spirituali'*

InAlto / Lambert Colson cornett with

Bernard Foccroulle org

Ricercar RIC474 (A/25)



Tarquinio Merula – another Italian early-Baroque journeyman? InAlto don't agree. This luminous procession of solo motets, canzoni and piquantly

tuned (and played) organ works is quite exquisite. Lambert Colson's astonishing cornett-playing leads a wonderfully integrated ensemble in a new world of poetry, colour, rhetoric and vitality. Delectable rare fruits.



Christian Hoskins

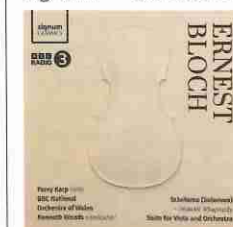
Bloch *Schelomo. Suite for Viola (Cello)*

and Orchestra (arr Baller/Rejtő)

Parry Karp vc BBC National Orchestra

of Wales / Kenneth Woods

Signum SIGCD932 (8/25)



Bloch's marvellously inventive Suite for viola and orchestra sounds if anything even finer in this arrangement for cello, and the performance by Parry Karp and

Kenneth Woods is inspired. Their stirring account of *Schelomo* is also one of the finest of recent years. A most rewarding album.



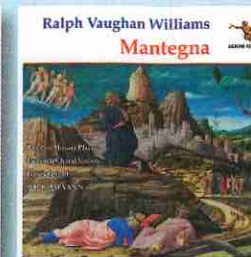
The Ralph Vaughan Williams Society



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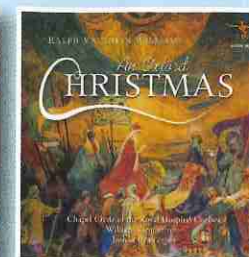
Kathryn Rudge, Alessandro Fisher and Penelope Thwaites



MANTEGNA

Hymnody & beyond
An exploration of the hymn tunes of Vaughan Williams.

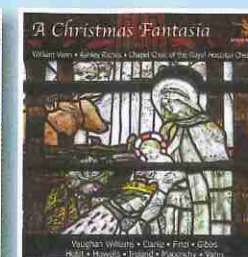
William Vann, London Mozart Players, James Orford, Dulwich Choral Society



AN OXFORD CHRISTMAS

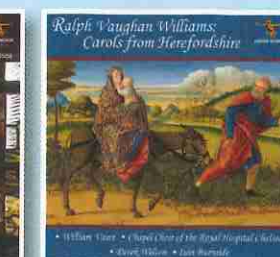
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