

May Gramophone Choices

rather than the harpsichord. Whichever, they are a delightful discovery and so ear-tweaking and unusual (especially the one in the slow movement) that they alone are almost worth the price of the disc.

Hamelin and his Québécois band (the strings of Les Violons du Roy are joined by the subtle but telling presence of *les hautbois et cors du roy* in the D major) are recorded with a touch more presence than Andsnes and his Norwegian players, imparting a welcome earthiness to the sound – listen especially to the more muscular approach Hamelin takes in the opening movement of the G major Concerto. Other minor differences between the two discs include the use of *tutti* strings at the opening of the *Largo cantabile* of the F major (No 3), as opposed to Andsnes's solo violin; at a rather slower tempo (7'49" against the Norwegian's 4'59"), Hamelin here weaves an enchanting spell, approaching an almost Mozartian pathos. And where Andsnes, in the finale of the D major Concerto, holds back the tempo into the *all'ungherese* episode in the finale (the section referred to in official musicological circles as 'the one that sounds like "Three Blind Mice" with trills'), Hamelin pushes forwards without dropping the tempo, heightening the delirium of this whirling gypsy dance. Add to that some unmarked *col legno* earlier in the same movement for an authentic touch of Hungarian paprika and the result cannot fail to raise a smile.

If one were to bring it down to the level of national stereotypes, one might say that Andsnes et al impart Haydn's wit and wisdom with a Nordic coolness, Hamelin and friends with a Gallic shrug. Both bring different, valuable and irresistibly delicious attributes to Haydn's music. So I'm left like a child having to choose between sweets or chocolate – and in this case, it's hardly piggy to want both. **G**



Marc-André Hamelin

PHOTOGRAPHY: SIM CANETTY-CLARKE

gramophone.co.uk



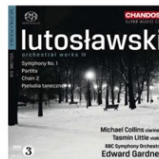
BLOCH, BRIDGE, HOUGH
Cello Works
Steven Isserlis *vc*
Deutsches SO / Hugh Wolff;
Tapiola Sinfonietta / Gábor Takács-Nagy
BIS BIS1992
'Isserlis's spellbinding advocacy of Bridge's masterpiece has acquired a plangent intensity.'



VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
Symphonies - No 5; No 8
Hallé Orchestra / Sir Mark Elder
Hallé CDHLL7533
'The oratorical percussion-topped finale sends out mixed messages (an equivocal celebration?) and again the balance of some very varied textures is spot-on.'



JS BACH
St John Passion
Soloists; Polyphony; Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment / Stephen Layton
Hyperion CDA67901/2
'Layton's reality is about cultivating the focus of each sentiment with supreme corporate executancy.'



LUTOSŁAWSKI
'Orchestral Works, Vol 4'
Michael Collins *cl*
Tasmin Little *vn*
BBC SO / Edward Gardner
Chandos CHSA5108
'Gardner's recording of the First Symphony with the BBC Symphony Orchestra is easily the best-played version with the most vivid sound.'



'TINE'
Trumpet Works
Tine Thing Helseth *tpt*
Kathryn Stott *pf*
EMI 416471-2
'Sommerfeldt's Divertimento shows Helseth's remarkable range: she is as happy with a soulful central *Larghetto* as with the dancing final *Allegro con brio*.'



'ALLELUIA'
Sacred Vocal Works
Julia Lezhneva *sop*
Il Giardino Armonico / Giovanni Antonini
Decca 478 5242DH
'Julia Lezhneva fields a voice of bell-like purity, even throughout its compass, immaculately fluent in coloratura.'



MENDELSSOHN
Symphony No 2
Soloists; Consensus Vocals;
Netherlands SO / Jan Willem de Vriend
Challenge Classics CC72543
'For a fresh, immediate statement that compels one's attention from start to finish, I cannot imagine anyone being disappointed by this new release.'



SCHUBERT
Piano Sonatas - No 16, D845; No 21, D960
Maria João Pires *pf*
DG 477 8107GH
'The Portuguese pianist produces such a consistently beautiful, mellow sound that one is liable to be seduced by that single element of her playing.'



WAGNER
Opera Arias
Jonas Kaufmann *ten*
Deutsche Oper Berlin Chorus and Orchestra / Donald Runnicles
Decca 478 5189DH
'Mighty tents are already pitched on this summit of early Wagnerian arioso but Kaufmann and Runnicles are up there with them.'

GRAMOPHONE RECORDINGS OF THE YEAR 2013 17