

September *Gramophone* Choices

continually delighted by a series of remarkable instrumental combinations; a particular highlight is the ghostly pairing of flute and clarinet in the soprano aria 'He sung Darius great and good'.

There's fun to be had, too. After an interval schnapps – and a six-minute speech by Harnoncourt in German – the trumpets and horns (and that bass drum) really go to war in the military chorus 'Break his bands of sleep asunder', which is rapturously received and encored, setting the scene for Gerald Finley, who hisses and sparkles with evident glee in the showstopper bass aria 'Revenge, Timotheus cries'.

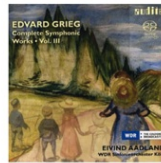
Finley is matched by the impeccable Handelian credentials of soprano Roberta Invernizzi and the ardent tenor of Werner Güra. The choir of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde revel in the choruses that are such a Handel hallmark. The audience (about the same size in 2012 as it was in 1812) only makes its presence felt when necessary. Concentus Musicus and friends convey the joy of this multicoloured score. The queasy changes of tempo in the soprano aria 'The prince, unable to conceal his pain' seem somewhat contrived: they're not marked in Handel's or Mozart's scores but they may be Mosel's mannerism rather than Harnoncourt's, as too may be the *inégalité*s in the central section of 'Revenge, Timotheus cries'. Not that any of this can really dampen such a memorable performance. Handel loved hearing his music played with gargantuan forces and his music gave rise to a tradition of such large-scale gatherings – in Britain, at least. The 'authentic' movement resulted in so many anaemic, small-scale recordings that it's a relief and a pleasure to welcome this big *Timotheus*, performed in such a way as Handel all too rarely is these days. **G**



Harnoncourt and his forces at the Musikverein

PHOTOGRAPHY: DIETER NAGL

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**GRIEG**  
 'Symphonic Works, Vol 3'  
**WDR Symphony Orchestra,**  
**Cologne / Eivind Aadland**  
 Audite AUDITE92 669  
 'The first two discs in this Grieg "Complete Symphonic Works" series were outstanding. This third is wholly exceptional.'



**HINDEMITH**  
 Violin Concerto & Sonatas  
**Frank Peter Zimmermann** *vn*  
**Enrico Pace** *pf* / **Frankfurt RSO /**  
**Paavo Järvi**  
 BIS BIS2024  
 'Zimmermann's technique is more than adequate to the Concerto's virtuosic challenges and his musicianship to its expressive potential.'



**MAHLER**  
 Symphony No 8  
**Soloists; Chorus;**  
**Royal Concertgebouw**  
**Orchestra / Mariss Jansons**  
**Orchestra / Mariss Jansons**  
 RCO Live RCO13002  
 'Mariss Jansons embraces its fantasy...with so much else going for him, this is up there among the select front-runners.'



**DEBUSSY. RAVEL.**  
**SAINT-SAËNS**  
**Pascal and Ami Rogé** *pf*  
 Onyx ONYX4117  
 'La mer is so resourceful that you hardly regret the absence of orchestral colour and range and in Ravel's transcription of "Fêtes" their playing seems to wing its way off the page.'



**SCHOENBERG** Verklärte Nacht  
**TCHAIKOVSKY**  
 Souvenir de Florence  
**Emerson Quartet** with **Paul Neubauer** *vn* / **Colin Carr** *vc*  
 Sony 88725 47060-2  
 'A performance of such rapt songfulness, dazzling poise and tumbling fantasy that Tchaikovsky's inspiration sounds as fresh as the day it was conceived.'



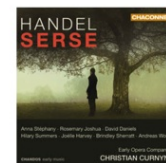
**JS BACH**  
 Solo Cello Suites  
**Colin Carr** *vc*  
 Wigmore Hall WHLIVE0060  
 'Carr is so fleet of foot, even in the slowest movements, that it is not long before it becomes clear that this performance is a masterclass in restraint and musical altruism.'



**SCHOENBERG**  
 Piano Works  
**Florent Boffard** *pf*  
 Mirare MIR191  
 'Boffard caresses details and creates an ambiguity of foreground and background that turns these miniatures into vast canvases of enlightened experience.'



**PEKIEL**  
 Masses. Motets  
**The Sixteen /**  
**Eamonn Dougan**  
 Coro COR16110  
 'This craftsman's masterful music is presented here with an assured charisma by the mighty Sixteen. Eamonn Dougan draws typically golden performances.'



**HANDEL**  
 Serse  
**Soloists; Early Opera Company**  
**/ Christian Curnyn**  
 Chandos CHAN0797  
 'For anyone wanting to acquire this jewel among Handel's later operas, this beautifully recorded new version is the one to go for.'

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