

Fourth Symphony, Chailly's new account has a concentration of gesture and urgency of movement which his earlier Concertgebouw reading rather lacked. The opening still sounds understated but the performance builds steadily until the coda glows white hot.

Wilhelm Furtwängler liked to argue that it is in moments of transition that the deeper truths lie. This may be so but it requires Brahms-conducting more like that which we encounter in Kurt Sanderling's epic 1971-72 Dresden cycle to realise the point. Broad tempi and sudden indwellings are not Chailly's way. Yet his account of the Third Symphony – as finely ordered and dramatically direct a performance as any on record – misses few if any of the work's darker undercurrents. The nocturnal mysteries of the two inner movements are beautifully realised.

Most Brahms symphony cycles occupy three discs. This one occupies two, with a third disc given over to an intriguingly prepared anthology of Brahms orchestral pieces of varying degrees of familiarity. It begins with the *Tragic Overture*. It's here that you can acquire in summary form a sense of the quality of timing and attack in these Leipzig performances, of the players' scrupulous observation of dynamics and Chailly's practised way with those almost imperceptible changes of rhythmic motion which lead us through the work's haunted dream states. After that, we drop into an unexpected pool of quiet for the first of two orchestral transcriptions of late Brahms piano pieces. The *Haydn Variations* follow and, after them, a pleasing rarity: the nine-movement suite for small orchestra which Brahms derived from his *Liebeslieder Waltzes* at the request of conductor Ernst Rudorff. Here, more than in the three *Hungarian Dances* with which the disc ends, we have a shrewd sense of the players giving their rivals in Vienna and Budapest a decent run for their money.

Towards the close of the anthology we have the *Andante* of the First Symphony as it was originally heard in Karlsruhe, Munich and Cambridge in 1876-77. Brahms was a great destroyer of drafts, so this is a rare example of a significant staging-post which survives in the public domain. The Cambridge performance was not conducted by Brahms. He had been reluctant to cross the North Sea to receive in person the honorary degree which Cambridge had proposed and which it now churlishly withdrew.

Not the least of the unexpected delights of this new set is the juxtaposition of this *Andante*, which Cambridge folk heard in 1877, with the rip-roaring performance by Chailly and his Leipzig players of the *Academic Festival Overture* which Brahms wrote for Breslau University some four years later. A chance juxtaposition or a well-aimed raspberry? The latter, I'd like to think. **G**

October Gramophone Choices



DVOŘÁK
Cello Concertos
Steven Isserlis *vc* Mahler CO / Daniel Harding
Hyperion CDA67917
'The work's melodic fecundity and youthful vigour emerge unscathed, especially when Isserlis performs it with such burning conviction.'



SCHUBERT
String Quartet No. 14.
String Quintet
Pavel Haas Quartet;
Danjulo Ishizaka *vc*
Supraphon SU4110-2
'Their tempi are unfailingly right to the extent that comparisons, for once, seem almost irrelevant.'



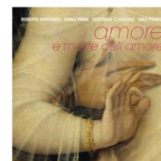
MARENZIO
First Book of Madrigals
La Compagnia del Madrigale
Glossa GCD922802
'As I listened, my jaw dropped at the quality of Marenzio's music and the astonishing sonorities of La Compagnia del Madrigale's beguiling performances'



PROKOFIEV
'Complete Works for Violin'
James Ehnes *vn* Andrew Armstrong *pf* BBC Philharmonic Orchestra / Gianandrea Noseda
Chandos CHANI0787
'Ehnes's combination of virtuosity, sweet tone, flowing tempi and interpretative restraint suits all this music down to the ground.'



CHOPIN
Etudes, Opp 10 & 25
Jan Lisiecki *pf*
DG 479 1039GH
'Lisiecki gives us tone-poems first and studies second, his technique as unobtrusive as it is effortlessly fluent, lissom and precise... the luminous quality of his musicianship strikes you at every turn.'



'AMORE E MORTE DELL'AMORE'
'Duets'
Roberta Invernizzi *sop*
Sonia Prina *contr*
Ensemble Claudiana / Luca Pianca
Naïve OP30549
'In Invernizzi and Prina, Naïve have netted the two most exciting Italian Baroque specialists of their generation.'



SCHUMANN
Violin Concertos
Baiba Skride *vn*
Danish National Symphony Orchestra / John Storgårds
Orfeo C854 131A
'Schumann's poignant late essays make for an absorbing threesome and Baiba Skride is their ideal exponent.'



GRIEG. LISZT. RACHMANINOV
'Romantic Sonatas'
Boris Giltburg *pf*
Orchid ORC100035
'Once again Giltburg shows himself the possessor of a massive and engulfing technique, supporting interpretations that glow with warmth and poetic commitment.'



VERDI
Arias
Anna Netrebko *sop* Teatro Regio Orchestra, Turin / Gianandrea Noseda
DG 479 1052GH
'A new, mostly darker, lower repertoire – truth to tell, a very Callas repertoire – is encompassed with style, dramatic involvement and *agilità*.'