

Orchestra strings took this passage home for practice, that's for sure – I've heard it scrambled at a fraction of this tempo.

I've alluded to the tension between waking and dreaming, and Petrenko's ruthless clarity makes it hard to separate the two. The spooky *scherzo* and the finale's circus-like divertissement sharpen the composer's irony to a razor edge. Again Mahler had taught him how lethal that could be. So the opening funeral march sounds like a cross between Gounod's 'Funeral March of Marionette' and the 'Huntsman's Funeral' in the third movement of Mahler's First Symphony, with comedy and tragedy indivisible. Therein, I think, lies the essence of the piece. The unexpected final climax (over the two sets of timpani ostinato) really does sound like the triumph of self-destruction – and, as the open-ended final page drifts into solitude like a wilful non sequitur, one's mind drifts back to the skeletal ticking of the percussion at the close of the *scherzo*. This 'time' motif will accompany Shostakovich to the final pages of his last symphony and beyond. Rostropovich once told me that he imagined this to be the letting down of a silken ladder to eternity. Perhaps the best of Petrenko's much-praised cycle, then, and a strong contender for 'best in catalogue'. The skewed logic of the piece is made gripping, the disparate and the enigmatic reconciled. **G**



Vasily Petrenko conducts his RLPO

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK MCNUALLY

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November Gramophone Choices



BRUCKNER
Symphony No 1
Lucerne Festival Orchestra / Claudio Abbado
Accentus ACC30274
'This live Bruckner First Symphony recorded at the 2012 Lucerne Festival is a mandatory listen for any self-respecting Brucknerhead.'



BEETHOVEN
Late Piano Sonatas
Igor Levit *pf*
Sony Classical
88883 70387-2
'Even when you might find yourself disagreeing with this or that interpretative detail, the sheer conviction of Igor Levit's playing is mesmerising.'



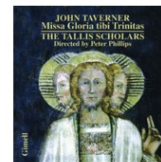
DELIUS. HOLST
Vocal Works
Roderick Williams *bar* **Hallé Youth Choir, Choir & Orchestra / Sir Mark Elder**
Hallé CDHLL7535
'This keenly poetic, shrewdly observant account finds Elder and his combined Hallé forces operating at the very top of their game.'



'GREAT WORKS FOR FLUTE & ORCHESTRA'
Sharon Bezaly *fl*
The Hague Residentie Orchestra / Neeme Järvi
BIS BIS1679
'The gorgeous Concertino of 1902 by Cécile Chaminade offers potential for both effervescence and endearing lyricism.'



'GUARDIAN ANGEL'
Solo Violin Works
Rachel Podger *vn*
Channel Classics CCSSA35513
'Podger's beautiful playing of the first movement's written-out decorations and her vital approach throughout the sonata mix virtuosity with an element of grandeur.'



TAVERNER
Missa Gloria tibi Trinitas.
Magnificats – a 4; a 5; a 6
Tallis Scholars / Peter Phillips
Gimell CDGIMO45
'I far prefer the more relaxed attitude of the new version, allowing every detail to come through with clarity and precision but never pressing too hard.'



BRITTEN
String Quartets
Takács Quartet
Hyperion CDA68004
'The pieces suit the assertive tone of the Takács, who are able to maintain a thread of musical argument not only through each individual quartet but through the collection as a whole.'



'RARITIES OF PIANO MUSIC 2012'
Piano Works
Various artists
Danacord DACOCD729
'Gianluca Luisi revels in the lush outpouring of Joseph Marx: rarely can a fugue have sounded less academic and more freely expressive as it builds towards its effulgent end.'



VERDI
Messa da Requiem
Soloists; Chorus and Orchestra of the Teatro alla Scala, Milan / Daniel Barenboim
Decca 478 5245DX2
'Barenboim is going somewhere else – towards a drama in which tempi are governed exclusively by atmosphere.'

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