

February *Gramophone* Choices

Klava's interpretation doesn't give the sensation of dragging. This is because Klava resists the temptation to linger at the many pauses. He carefully draws out every dramatic nuance from this choral feast. His two dozen singers produce a well-nourished *tutti* and sound like a much larger group. Despite a wide dynamic range (which never sounds congested or harsh), the balance remains transparent. There is a wonderfully kaleidoscopic (though carefully graded) palette of vocal colours throughout, with plenty of sonorous bloom for those celebrated deep bass notes. Praise also goes to the tenors, whose highest notes sound so effortlessly sweet and fluid, and to the upper voices, who bring out the tolling bells in the *Nunc dimittis* most beautifully.

The Latvians' unanimity of attack is well-nigh perfect, with just one slight blemish at 4'20" in tr 9 ('Blessed art thou, O Lord' – the work's centrepiece). However, they redeem themselves in the exultant 'Alleluias' which were later incorporated (in a histrionically syncopated form) so movingly into Rachmaninov's compositional swansong, the third orchestral *Symphonic Dance*.

This is a sublimely beautiful yet rapturous recording. **G**

*Selected comparison:*

*Estonian Philb Cbbr Cb, Hillier*  
(9/05\*) (HARM) HMU80 7504



Rachmaninov, probably pictured here in the 1910s

PHOTOGRAPHY: ARCHIVE PICS/ALAMY

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**BARBER**  
Cello Concerto. Cello  
Sonata. Adagio  
**Christian Poltéra** *vc* **Kathryn Stott** *pf* **Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra** / **Andrew Litton**  
BIS BIS1827  
'Poltéra is outstanding and invariably well supported by the Bergen players under Litton.'



**ELGAR. BRUCH. CARTER**  
Works for Cello and Orchestra  
**Alisa Weilerstein** *vc*  
**Staatskapelle Berlin** /  
**Daniel Barenboim**  
Decca 478 2735DH  
'The young cellist Alisa Weilerstein has been called the new du Pré and I can see why... Her developing band of fans will devour this CD.'



**'AMERICAN MAVERICKS'**  
Orchestral Works  
**Jeremy Denk** *p* / **Paul Jacobs**  
*org* **San Francisco SO** /  
**Michael Tilson Thomas**  
SFS Media/Avie SFS0056  
'Tilson Thomas considers each work to be "classic", each note worthy of diligent finesse.'



**DVOŘÁK**  
String Quartets, Vol 1  
**Vogler Quartet** with **Oliver Treindl** *harm*  
CPO CPO777 624-2  
'An auspicious start to what promises to be a rewarding series, with Op 34, a litmus test for any quartet in Dvořák, enjoying one of its best-ever recorded performances.'



**MOZART**  
Violin Sonatas  
**Lars Vogt** *pf*  
**Christian Tetzlaff** *vn*  
Ondine ODE1204-2  
'This disc brings together two musicians absolutely at the top of their game and with long experience of working together, as the easy dialogue between them amply demonstrates.'



**BRAHMS**  
Piano Sonata No 3.  
Handel Variations  
**Jonathan Plowright** *pf*  
BIS BIS2047  
'In the *Scherzo* – a true dance of the gods – his performance is eloquent and direct, quite without impediment or undue idiosyncrasy yet musical to the core.'



**JS BACH**  
Leipzig Cantatas  
**Soloists;**  
**Collegium Vocale Gent** /  
**Philippe Herreweghe**  
PHI LPH006  
'This latest recording represents the first cantata disc on the PHI label and is arguably the finest in Herreweghe's recent Bach output.'



**R STRAUSS**  
Complete Songs, Vol 6  
**Elizabeth Watts** *sop*  
**Roger Vignoles** *pf*  
Hyperion CDA67844  
'My pleasure is without any reservations. Elizabeth Watts sings gloriously, rising fluently to the high tessitura of Strauss's melodic lines.'



**'CANCIONES ESPAÑOLAS'**  
Songs by Falla,  
Rodrigo and Granados  
**Bernarda Fink** *mez*  
**Anthony Spiri** *pf*  
Harmonia Mundi HMC90 2133  
'This recorded set effectively provides a history of the classics of Spanish song in less than 70 minutes.'

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