

CRQ Editions: Summer 2017

Summer is festival time and for many opera lovers that means the Glyndebourne Festival Opera, held in Sussex, England. Once again we celebrate this remarkable institution with the production mounted in 1959 as the centre-piece of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Glyndebourne's founding: Richard Strauss's 'Der Rosenkavalier'. This was also the final production at Glyndebourne by one of its founders, the German stage director and actor, Carl Ebert. Ebert's influence in this production is immediately apparent with scintillating word-play throughout. Leading the exemplary cast is a wonderful quartet of principles: Régine Crespin as the Marschallin, Elisabeth Soderström as Octavian, Anneliese Rothenberger as Sophie, and the highly characterful Viennese bass, Oscar Czerwenka as Baron Ochs. Conducting is Leopold Ludwig, at this time general music director of the Hamburg State Opera. The original BBC broadcast sound is very good indeed, far better than previous manifestations of this memorable performance.

Emil Gilels's recordings have more than stood the test of time, in fact they grow in stature the older they become. His combination of Olympian control, musical insight and technical virtuosity place him in a class of his own. This quarter we present two classic interpretations by this great musician. Gilels's first studio account of Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto was made in 1947 with Kirill Kondrashin conducting. Gilels delivers a perfect account of the solo part, while Kondrashin conducts with great intensity. Even more powerful is Gilels's phenomenal 1959 account of Tchaikovsky's Second Piano Concerto, recorded live in Budapest in 1959. Often thought to be recorded in Leningrad this Hungarian performance is truly astonishing in its bravura and virtuosity. Once heard, never to be forgotten!

The conductor Rudolf Kempe is very much the musician's musician. As Sir Thomas Beecham's successor in the position of chief conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, it was inevitable that at some time he should turn to conduct the music of Delius, a Beecham favourite. The Delius performances contained on this CD, never before published, have achieved legendary status and they do indeed prove to be revelatory. The first is a live account of the Delius Violin Concerto captured live at the Bradford Delius Festival of 1962: Raymond Cohen is the excellent soloist. A year later Kempe conducted Delius's Sea Drift with the BBC Symphony Orchestra in the broadcasting studio: another haunting performance, with John Shirley-Quirk as a highly sympathetic soloist. The remainder of this two CD set is made up of ultra-rare repertoire conducted by Kempe in Munich, with the two major Munich orchestras: the Munich Philharmonic, of which he was the chief conductor, and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. The wide-ranging repertoire includes music by Hugo Wolf, Nikolai Medtner, Aaron Copland and Serge Prokofiev.

Another twentieth century giant of the podium, although himself frail in stature, was the Kiev-born Jascha Horenstein, whose performances continue to fascinate long after his death in 1973. Although one of the earliest conductors to record the music of Bruckner, until now there has been a major gap in Horenstein's Bruckner discography on CD, and that is the Sixth Symphony. We rectify this with a recording of Horenstein conducting the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra in an account of Bruckner's Sixth Symphony from 1968. This is coupled with another recording new to Horenstein's published discography, Liszt's symphonic poem, Mazeppa, from 1969 and with the same orchestra. While it is clear that at this time the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra was not in the international front rank, any purely technical imperfections are more than made up by the intensity of Horenstein's unique vision in these two significant works.

The British maestro Sir Malcolm Sargent died fifty years ago in 1967 and we mark this anniversary with a two CD set of previously unreleased recordings of Sargent conducting choral music by Elgar. Sargent was above all a great choral conductor – when conducting the major choral works he

seemed to gain considerably in musical stature. We are very grateful indeed to veteran collector Malcolm Walker for making available to us these two major Sargent 'firsts' – recordings of Elgar's 'The Apostles', from a Royal Festival Hall concert of 1957, and the same composer's 'The Music Makers', recorded in the Royal Albert Hall in 1965. Both these recordings preserve excellent performances and are significant additions to the Sargent discography, in addition to being in very good sound indeed.

In complete contrast to the British choral tradition, based on the musical aesthetic of the nineteenth century, is our release of music by twentieth century French composers, entitled 'L'esprit français'. This release contains recordings which all involve musical creators in some way – Cloez and Büsser conduct their own orchestrations of Debussy, Büsser conducts his 'Petite Suite', Ibert conducts his 'Escalaes', Jean Francaix is the piano soloist in his light-hearted 'Concertino', and Poulenc accompanies the baritone Pierre Bernac in ten of his settings of poems by Guillaume Apollinaire. Aspects of the French twentieth century musical aesthetic are here heard directly in performances by its creators.

The great Scottish bass singer David Ward died in 1983 and his very considerable art has all but been forgotten since then, a result of his small commercial discography. We are delighted to be able to rectify this situation with a two CD set which draws on the Tim Lockley and Mark Hood collection to present a rounded vocal portrait of this magnificent singer in core repertoire. In addition to the expected Wagnerian excerpts, including a complete Wotan's Farewell from Covent Garden in 1965 with Amy Shuard as a galvanic Brünnhilde and grippingly conducted by Sir Georg Solti, the set contains excerpts from several major Verdi operas, as well as Ward's fascinating interpretation of Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov and his humorous portrayal of Richard Strauss's Sir John Morosus in Die Schweigsame Frau. The conductors represented are a roll-call of the major operatic maestri of the 1960s and 1970s.

In the early 1950s the small American record company Period Records issued a set of the six Piano Trios by Mozart performed by violinist Victor Aitay, cellist János Starker and pianist Agi Jambor. When Saga Records in the United Kingdom took on distribution of Period Records in the 1960s it reissued two Trios from this set, K. 542 and K. 548, but the rest remained unpublished. This situation has now been regularised with the reissue on a single CD of the remaining four Piano Trios. These works make a very satisfying single CD's listening, and cover a considerable span of Mozart's creative life, from K. 254 to K. 564. Needless to say with musicians of this calibre, the performances are exemplary.

Previous releases on CRQ Editions of recordings led by the Danish conductor Mogens Wöldike have been popular and we are now delighted to be able to present Wöldike's little-known recordings of Bach's Six Brandenburg Concerti, originally made by the Danish branch of HMV between 1949 and 1954. These are excellent examples not only of Wöldike's exemplary musical taste but of Bach performances immediately after the Second World War. In addition the original recordings have been carefully restored by Graham Silcock to present them in the best possible light. An important step on the road to present-day Bach performances.

The British conductor Sir Jeffrey Tate died suddenly in Italy in June this year, and to mark his passing we have assembled an 'in memoriam' CD which draws on his broadcasts for Italian radio and television. This seeks to give a representative overview of his unique strengths as a conductor, and includes music by Benjamin Britten whom he held in the highest regard, an immensely impressive account of Brahms's Third Symphony which gets right to the core of this enigmatic work, and to open a sprightly reading of Rossini's Overture to 'The Italian Girl in Algiers'.

Last but not least, our latest DVD-ROM contains recordings of all the major Janáček operas conducted by the conductor who was his close associate, Břetislav Bakala. These recordings present

an alternative, Brno-based, view of these works, more direct and raw than the well-known Prague school of Janáček interpretation. Any admirer of these works and of this extraordinary conductor will not want to be without this remarkable sound document, which comes complete with a 40 page monograph on Bakala and Janáček by the noted scholar Nigel Simeone.