

The Observer

THE NEW REVIEW

SUNDAY 05 AUGUST 2012



IS TODAY YOUR

BIRTHDAY?

CLASSICAL RELEASES

Beethoven Duos for viola and violin, Trio, Cello Sonata No 5 Maxim Rysanov (viola), Kristina Blaumane (cello), Jacob Katsnelson (piano) (ONYX)



Arranging and unearthing are key words here. Following two outstanding Brahms discs for Onyx in a similar mixed-repertoire format, virtuoso violist Maxim Rysanov and friends have turned to Beethoven: two unfamiliar early duo works from the 1790s, the Serenade Op 8 for viola and piano reworked by the legendary William Primrose and the Trio Op 11 arranged by Rysanov for viola (instead of clarinet), cello and piano. Cellist Kristine Blaumane and pianist Jacob Katsnelson give a warm account of the Cello Sonata No 5 written for – well, why not? – cello and piano. Hard though it might be to sum up this assortment in a simple category, it is chamber music playing of intimacy, range and flair. **Fiona Maddocks**

Mahler

Symphony No 1 Budapest Festival Orchestra/Fischer

(CHANNEL CLASSICS)



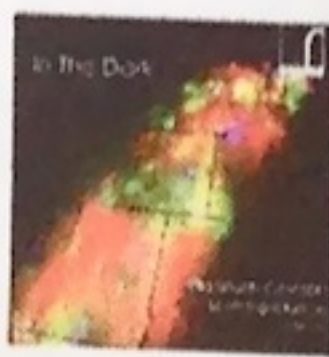
Caught by accident on the radio two years ago from the Proms, Iván Fischer's Mahler 1 was immediately gripping and very special, and this CD captures its qualities of absolute directness and clarity. The playing is lean and clean, not quite stylish but brilliantly transparent, as if the conductor is shining a strong torchlight on every corner of the score. Sometimes the performance lacks rhythmic lift, but the galvanising climaxes of the first and last movements are thrilling. The skilled Budapest players do everything to make up for the unhappy first performance of the symphony in 1889 – which, as it happens, was in Budapest. **Nicholas Kenyon**

Various

In the Dark

Platinum Consort/Inglis-Kidger

(RESONUS)



This is a hugely impressive debut from the Platinum Consort, a professional choir comprising former Cambridge choral scholars whose gloriously clean and focused sound is perfectly captured in this meticulously recorded download. Richard Bates, their young composer-in-residence, knows how to raise the hairs on the back of the neck with his smoky eight-part writing. Holy Week pieces by Victoria, Purcell, Lotti and Lassus join James Macmillan's monumental Miserere and Bates's deft handling of several of the Tenebrae texts in a selection that can be heard live at Kings Place, London on 1 September. It promises to be a memorable night. **Stephen Pritchard**

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