



RÖNTGEN

String Trios Nos 1-4

Lendvai String Trio
Champs Hill Records CHRCD 068
60:47 mins

BBC Music Direct £11.99

A close friend of Brahms and Grieg, the German-born Dutch composer Julius Röntgen (1855-1932) was blessed with a level of compositional fluency normally encountered in the 18th century. Amazingly his output numbers more than 650 works, including 25 symphonies, 16 concertos, 3 operas and copious amounts of chamber music. Needless to say, only a fraction of his compositions were published or performed during his lifetime, but in recent years recording companies such as CPO have made praiseworthy efforts to secure a much wider dissemination of some of his orchestral music.

The same missionary zeal underpins the present release featuring the first four of the 16 String Trios Röntgen composed between 1915 and 1930. These prove to be captivating discoveries, full of fresh and memorable thematic invention, performed here by the Lendvai String Trio with great energy and musical commitment. Each work, composed in what might be termed a post-Brahmsian style, has its own distinctive merits. In the First and Second Trios, I'd highlight the haunting and melancholic slow movements, which provide an admirable contrast to the generally cheerful disposition of the rest of these works. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



VIERNE

String Quartet in D minor

PIERNÉ

Piano Quintet in E minor

Goldner String Quartet;
Piers Lane (piano)
Hyperion CDA 68036 63:23 mins

BBC Music Direct £12.99

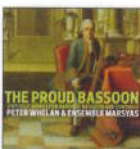
Success can be a dangerous thing. As Roger Nichols points out in his typically eloquent notes for

this welcome disc, much music by both Pierné and Vierne was overshadowed by their respective achievements as conductor and organist. However, anyone who has experienced the raw emotions of his Piano Quintet knows there is much more to him than the invaluable contribution of his Sunday job at Notre Dame. His youthful String Quartet is more easy-going, but, as this stylish account by the Goldner Quartet makes clear, it has a striking concision of expression, and the flitting of the *Intermezzo* is magical.

Piers Lane joins the fun for Pierné's Piano Quintet. Dating from the latter years of World War One, it encapsulates much of the spirit of the Belle Epoque, but also looks forward to the rhythmic drive of the 1920s. Echoes of Franck are apparent, especially in the final movement's remembrances of earlier themes and methods of cranking up the tension. Resonances of contemporaries such as Debussy, Ravel, Dukas and Stravinsky can also be heard, notably in the central 'Zortzico', and with the advocacy of this finely nuanced performance, Pierné's rhythmic and timbral invention shine through.

Christopher Dingle

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



THE PROUD BASSOON

Works by Boismortier, Couperin, Fasch, Telemann and Dubourg

Peter Whelan (bassoon),
Ensemble Marsyas
Linn CKD 435 (hybrid CD/SACD) 60 mins
BBC Music Direct £15.99

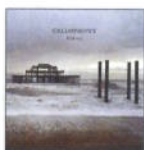
Sacheverell Sitwell once likened the sound of the bassoon to a sea god speaking. The deity speaks eloquently throughout this imaginatively assembled programme. Late Baroque composers were attracted by the expressive character of this mellow, darkly coloured instrument, and Peter Whelan explores its potential with affection and technical assurance. It was above all the elegiac tenor-register that attracted composers writing sonatas, concertos and assorted obbligatos; Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Rameau and Michel Corrette provide many wonderful examples. Sonatas by Telemann and Johann Friedrich Fasch take centre stage here. Telemann's F minor piece comes from his musical periodical, *Der getreue Music-Meister*. While allowing a treble recorder as

an alternative solo instrument, it is clear from the start that he had the bassoon foremost in mind. Its opening *Triste* is a masterly essay in affective writing, and Whelan captures its melancholy with tasteful restraint.

Two Sonatas by Boismortier are full of Gallic charm and felicitous melodic invention. Generalised opinion has done this composer few favours in recent times. But any woodwind player will tell you that his music is sympathetically written and rewarding to play. A variety of *frivolités* round off a splendid recital.

Nicholas Anderson

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★



VIBREZ

Arrangements of Wagner, Liszt, Wieniawski, Mendelssohn, JS Bach, Barber, Schubert and Sollima

Cellophony
Edition Classics EDN1047 60 mins
BBC Music Direct £14.99

As the cellos of the Berlin Philharmonic have proved, a 12-strong ensemble of high-calibre players can aspire to a string orchestra's palette. Cellophony is a mere octet (all ex-Guildhall players), but these imaginative arrangements succeed in creating the illusion of orchestral range and depth, particularly in the beautifully realised Prelude to Act 1 of *Tristan and Isolde*, and in the Samuel Barber *Adagio*, which sounds fresh and unhackneyed. Elsewhere, the scale is more intimate, with songs from Schubert's *Schwanengesang*, featuring poignant soloist with subtle accompaniment. Liszt's *La lugubre gondola* has a suitably veiled menace, but an arrangement of Bach's Prelude No. 11 in F sounds too congested.

If one were in any doubt about the virtuosity of these players, then their scintillating performance of Wieniawski's *Scherzo-tarantelle* lays that to rest: judging from the sound alone, one would be hard-pressed to believe there was no violin or viola playing in this display of lightning response. Their concert repertoire features Ligeti and Boulez, so it's a shame only one original work appears here, Sollima's pleasantly playful *Violoncelles, vibrez!* An impressive debut. *Helen Wallace*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

REISSUES

Reviewed by Paul Riley

GIULIANI

Complete original works for flute and guitar

Mikael Helasvuo (flute),
Jukka Savijoki (guitar)
BIS BIS-9045 (1989) 220:25 mins
BBC Music Direct £28.99 (3 discs)



Three discs with not an *adagio* in sight – and Giuliani's take on *Don Giovanni* is an object lesson in how to sanitise terror! A grit-free set executed with effortless charm.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

BORODIN

String Quartets Nos 1 & 2

St Petersburg String Quartet
Intergroove Classics IGCI12 (1993)
66:26 mins
BBC Music Direct £14.99



Borodin's First String Quartet has always lived in the shadow of the better known No. 2. Not here

when, in vivid 24-bit sound, the St Petersburg-ers invest both with ardent, intrinsically idiomatic life.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

JS BACH

Trio Sonatas, BWV 525-530

(arr. Fisk & Fuller)
Eliot Fisk (guitar),
Albert Fuller (harpisichord)
Nimbus NI2583 (1988) 75:40 mins
BBC Music Direct £11.99



BWV 525-530 have been increasingly liberated from the organ loft, but it's a touch counterintuitive to harness the quasi-similar sounds of guitar and harpsichord to differentiate lines. Still, it is lucidly performed.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

JS BACH

Flute Sonatas, BWV 1030-1035

Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute);
Robert Veyron-Lacroix (harpisichord),
Jean Huchot (cello)
Regis RRC144 (1962) 73:27 mins
BBC Music Direct £6.99



For all that the recorded sound betrays this disc's age, Rampal's buoyant, thoughtfully nuanced playing is manifestly in tune with the spirit of the music.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★