

Brief notes

This month's selection features letters, stories, travellers and a curious harp

Berg Violin Concerto et al
Gil Shaham (violin), Susanna Phillips (soprano), San Francisco Symphony/
Michael Tilson Thomas
SFS Media 2193600902



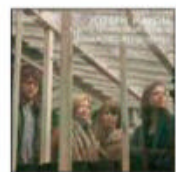
Berg's shimmering, often Mahlerian soundscapes are lovingly rendered by Tilson Thomas. Shaham brings tonal beauty and power to the sublime Concerto, while Phillips's voice is radiant in the *Seven Early Songs*. (OC) ★★★★★

Eugene Birman Nostra Culpa
Helsinki Chamber Choir
Alba ABCD 500



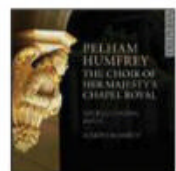
Birman's style ranges from haunting and atmospheric to plain brutal, with all manner of whoops and hollers thrown in. It's superbly sung here but, for many, may prove fairly hard to love. (JP) ★★★★★.

Haydn String Quartets, Op. 76
Chiaroscuro Quartet BIS BIS-2358



Following their disc of the first half of Op. 76, the Chiaroscuros return, armed with a perfect sound balance and rich, vibrant textures from each player. (FP) ★★★★★

Humfrey Sacred Choral Music
Choir of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal
Delphian DCD34237



A major player in bringing European influences into post-Restoration England, Pelham Humfrey deserves a wider audience. These agile and spirited performances do him excellent service. (JP) ★★★★★

Pat Metheny Road to the Sun
Jason Vieaux (guitar), LA Guitar Quartet
BMG 5053863932



Jazz guitarist Pat Metheny's first foray into chamber music features dazzling playing from Jason Vieaux and the LA Guitar Quartet who showcase Metheny's skills in creating finely wrought textures and brilliant tunes. (OC) ★★★★★

Sid Richardson Borne by a Wind
Da Capo Chamber Players et al
New Focus Recordings FCR 285



A thought-provoking selection of recent works by this Boston-based composer. *Red Wind* is the dramatic centrepiece, fusing poetry with an unusual and evocative musical soundscape. (MB) ★★★★★

Rebecca Saunders Shadow; Dust; Solitude etc
Klangforum Wien Kairos KAI0015098



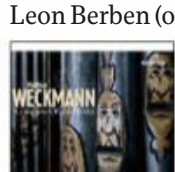
This is the latest in Klangforum Wien's lockdown 'Solo' series, with works for one performer. Each track – performed by a different instrument – plays with silence and extreme dynamics in a deliciously eerie way. (FP) ★★★★★

Jasmin Seidl Repose etc
Jasmin Seidl (piano) Cugate KNT001CD



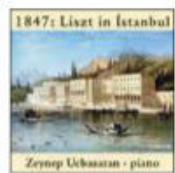
This album makes you feel a little like you've stopped to take a breath, the world's madness falling away. Seidl's unpretentious solo piano lines feel lived in and somehow nourishing. (MB) ★★★★★

Weckmann Complete Organ Works
Leon Berben (organ) Aeolus AE11261



The perfect marriage of instrument and music – Weckmann belongs to the pre-Bach north German school and his colourful music is brought thrillingly to life here on two 17th-century German organs. (OC) ★★★★★

1847: Liszt in Istanbul Works by Liszt, Chopin et al
Zeynep Ucbasaran (piano)
Divine Art DDA 25213



Ucbasaran pays tribute to Liszt's visit to her home country with a programme of pieces he performed during his visit. The playing is tidy and well phrased, if a little 'sensible'. (FP) ★★★★★

Adela Works by Rodrigo, Gismonti et al
Aleksander Dębicz (piano), Łukasz Kuropaczewski (guitar)
Warner Classics 9029513743



Guitar and piano is a rare combination and some of the arrangements here do sound a little forced. Others, however, are both inventive and attractive. (JP) ★★★★★

Caprices and Laments Works by Copland, Nielsen et al
Maximiliano Martín (clarinet) et al
Delphian DCD34250



There are beautiful moments of light and shade in these sparkling performances by the Tenerife musicians. Martín's expressive virtuosity is the set's glowing heart. (MB) ★★★★★

Fake Bach Arrangements by Brahms, Gounod et al
Luigi Palombi (piano) Dynamic CDS7891



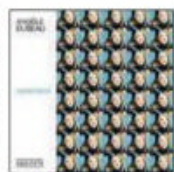
Piano arrangements of the great man's work by composers in the late-19th century, some of them deliciously over-the-top. Palombi's approach is suitably grandiloquent. (JP) ★★★★★

Glass-Bach Dresden Works by JS Bach & Philip Glass
Mark Steinbach (organ)
Orange Mountain Music OMM0150



Composers separated by centuries unite to mesmerising effect through the 1755 organ of Dresden's St Trinitatis Cathedral, gorgeously recorded. (MB) ★★★★★

Immersion Works by Nyman, Einaudi et al
Angèle Dubeau (violin), La Pietà Analekta AN28749



Dubeau and her all-female orchestra La Pietà wrap us in a warm blanket with this album of lesser-known film soundtracks, plus post-classical and minimalist works – all in sumptuous arrangements. Beautifully recorded. (OC) ★★★★★

Letters from Quarantine Works by Escher, Tomasi et al
Rui Travasso (clarinet)
Odradek ODRCD411



Seeing as this was recorded at home, it's a beautifully distinct 'live' sound – every breath accounted for. Travasso showcases the versatility of the clarinet in a contrasting selection. (MB) ★★★★★

Nordic Choral Music Works by Nørgård, Gjeilo et al
Dortmund Choral Academy Youth Concert Choir et al Hänssler HC20064



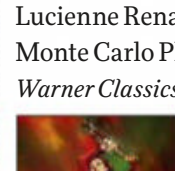
Beautifully performed, often folk-inspired works by Mäntyjärvi, Nørgård, Sandström, Rautavaara et al, testament to choral music's place at the heart of Nordic culture. (OC) ★★★★★

Piano Protagonists Works by Chopin, Rimsky-Korsakov et al
Orion Weiss (piano) Bridge BRIDGE 9547



Orion Weiss performs three very different Romantic works for piano and orchestra by Korngold, Chopin and Rimsky-Korsakov. Thoroughly entertaining. (FP) ★★★★★

Piazzolla Stories Works by Piazzolla, Ginastera et al



Lucienne Renaudin Vary (trumpet), Monte Carlo Philharmonic/Goetzl Warner Classics 9029515563
Renaudin Vary's trumpet is the rich and chocolately centre of an eclectic and satisfying disc, celebrating Piazzolla and the music that inspired him. (MB) ★★★★★

Reflections Works by Debussy etc
Vikingur Ólafsson (piano) DG 483 9222



The pianist's latest release is a mix of pieces recorded in home sessions and 'reworks' of his recordings by other artists. The result is an eclectic playlist-style album, full of surprises (FP) ★★★★★