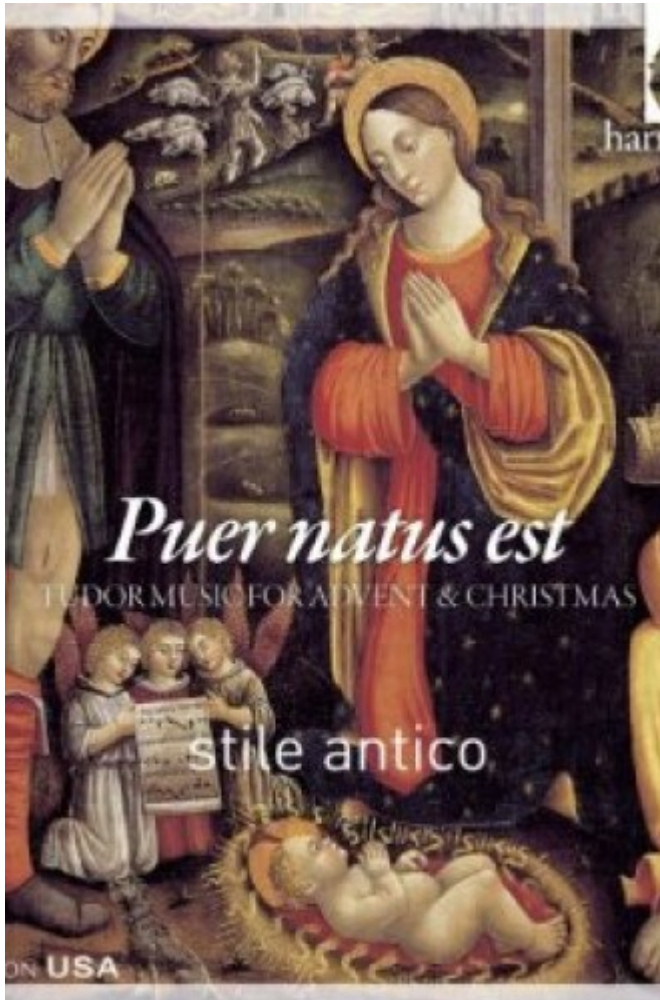


CC recommends: Classical music

selected by [Jon Pott](#) and [Raymond C. Van Leeuwen](#)

This review appears in the [December 14, 2010](#) issue.

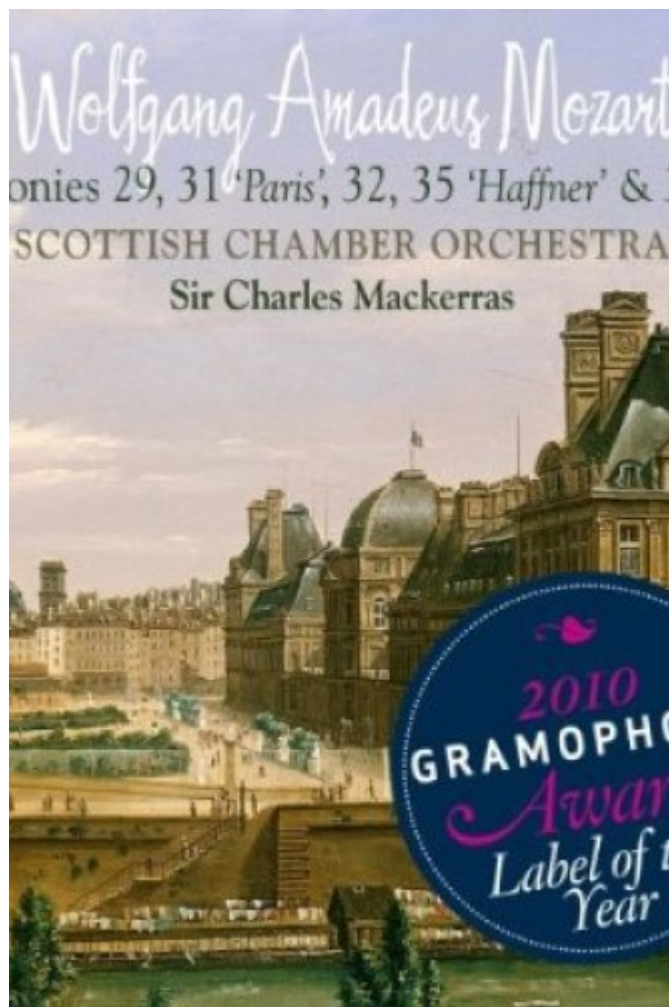
In Review



Puer natus est

Stile Antico

Harmonia Mundi



Mozart: Symphonies Nos. 29, 31, 32, 35, 36 and 38-41

Scottish Chamber Orchestra
Linn



Beethoven: Complete Piano Concertos

Paul Lewis

Harmonia Mundi



Winterreise

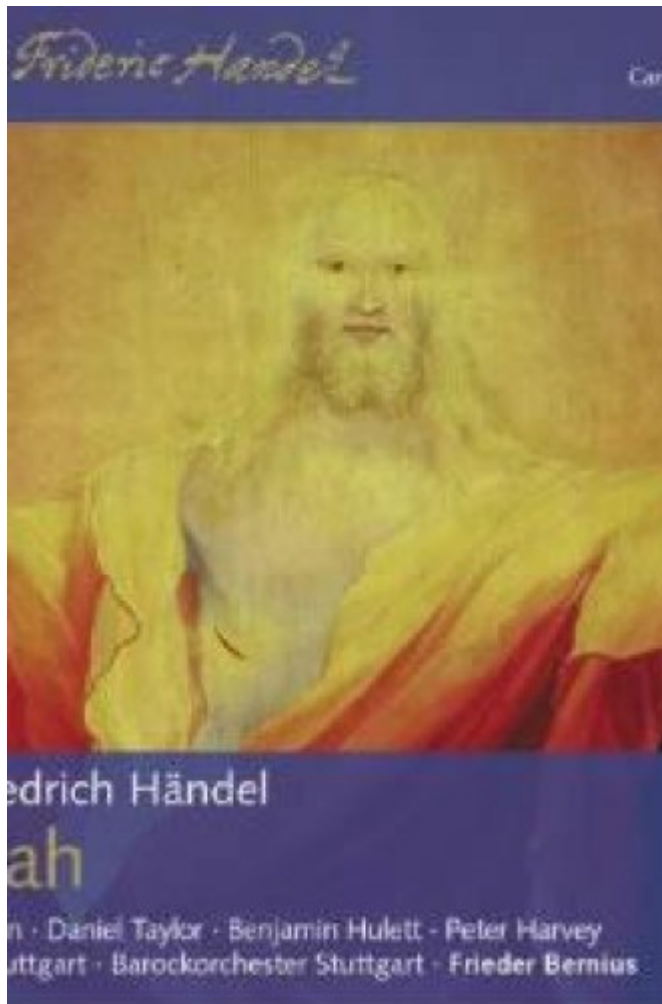
Mark Padmore and Paul Lewis
Harmonia Mundi



Chopin: Complete Waltzes

Ingrid Fliter

EMI



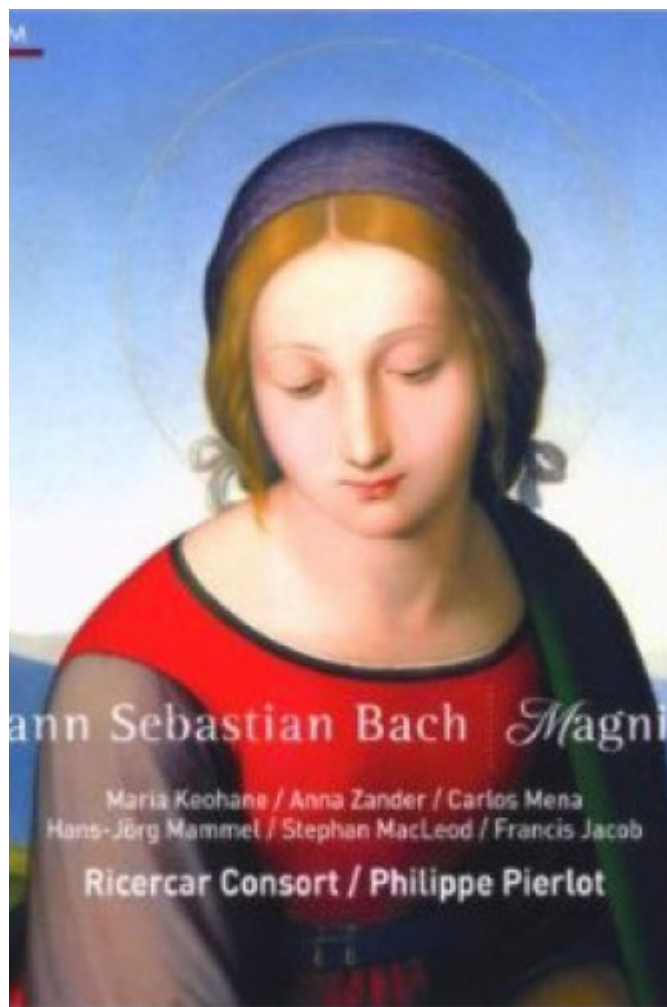
Messiah

Stuttgart Chamber Choir and Stuttgart Baroque Orchestra
Carus Verlag



Haydn: Piano Trios Nos. 39, 43-45

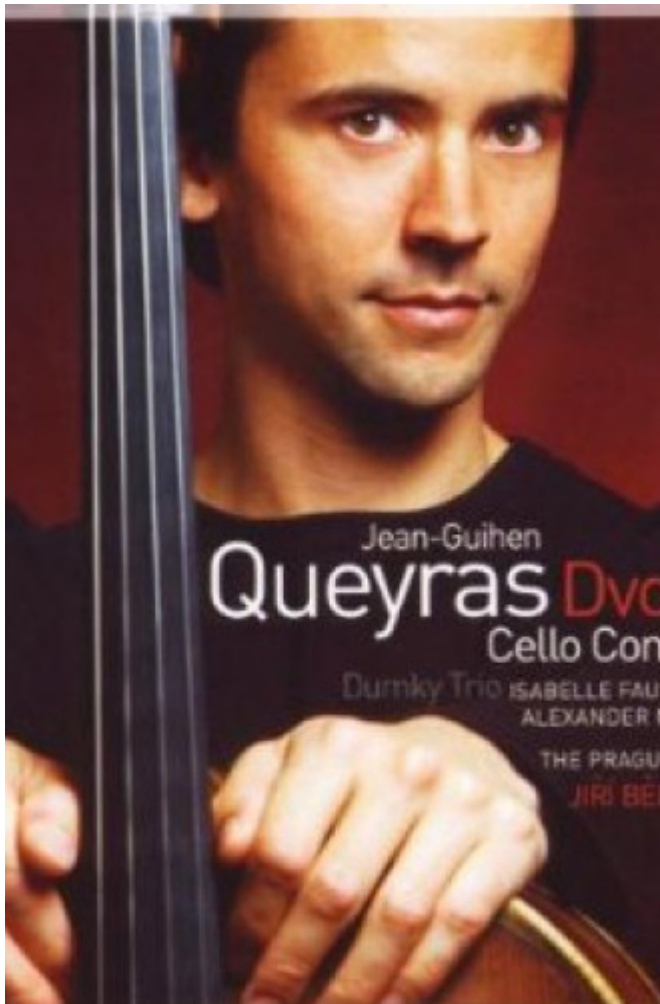
Trio Wanderer
Harmonia Mundi



J. S. Bach: Magnificat

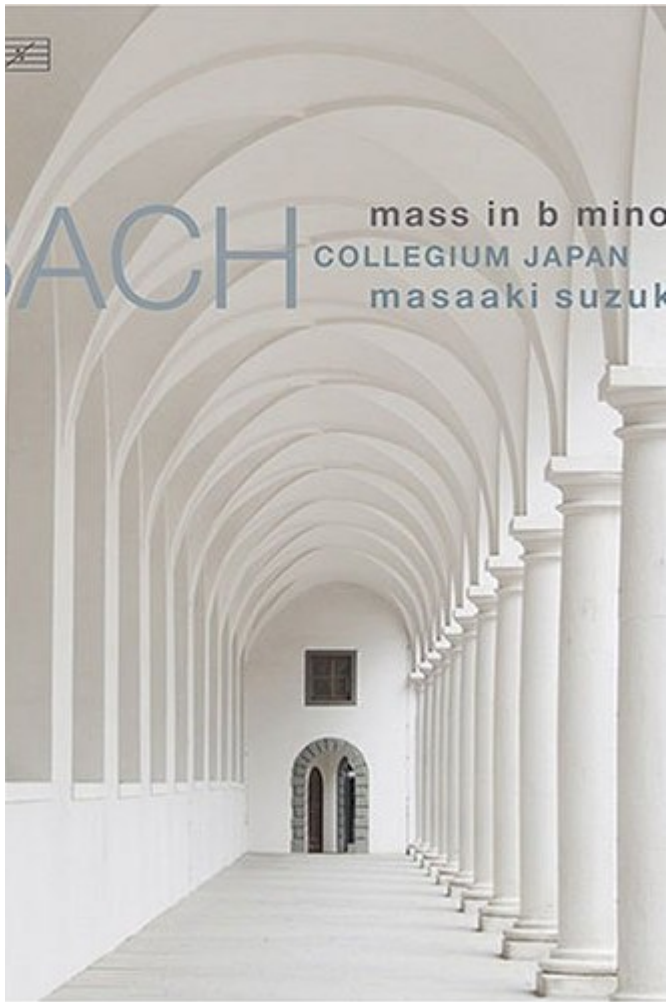
Ricercar Consort

Mirare



Dvorak: Cello Concerto, Dumky Trio

Jean-Guihen Queyras
Harmonia Mundi



Bach: Mass in B Minor

Bach Collegium Japan Orchestra
Bis

Stile Antico, *Puer natus est*. A glorious program of Advent and Christmas music by a fast-rising group of young British singers. The backbone of the program, as the erudite notes by choir member Matthew O'Donovan explain, is the magnificent (though incomplete) mass by Thomas Tallis, *Puer natus est*, which is built on the plainchant by that name. Sections of the mass are interspersed imaginatively with other music from the Tudor period by John Taverner, William Byrd, Robert White and John Sheppard, and with the plainchant itself. The voices are clear and superbly balanced in a wonderful acoustic caught in the Super Audio format, though playable as a standard CD as well.

Scottish Chamber Orchestra, *Mozart: Symphonies Nos. 29, 31, 32, 35, 36 and 38-41*. Mackerras died this year, and these separate two-disk sets of late Mozart symphonies, succeeding an earlier fine set with the Prague Chamber Orchestra (Telarc), are a tribute to his eminence. Using modern instruments, with their power and brilliance, but also mindful of the lessons to be learned from period instruments and practice, he offers recordings with the crack Scottish Chamber Orchestra that are clean, bracing and full of insight.

Paul Lewis, *Beethoven: Complete Piano Concertos*. Lewis's celebrated traversal of the 32 Beethoven piano sonatas is now joined by his set (with Jiří Bělohlávek) of the five piano concertos. Though he has technique aplenty, Lewis (a protégé of Alfred Brendel) is not a self-indulgent, showy pianist but a deeply thoughtful musician. As he said in an interview, he wanted to let the music speak for itself. And speak it does, with pianist and conductor in vital and felicitous rapport. Listen, for example, to the rapt and expectant interplay between piano and timpani before the close of the final concerto, the "Emperor." These recordings do not replace the many notable sets in the past, dating back to the legendary accounts by Artur Schnabel and Sir Malcolm Sargent in the 1930s (still available), but they belong in the highest rank.

Mark Padmore and Paul Lewis, *Winterreise*. The Romantics had a love affair with the twin themes of love and death. Nowhere in music is this terrain more grippingly explored than in Schubert's desolating *Winterreise* ("Winter Journey"), tracing the steps of a forlorn wanderer over a winter landscape of unrequited love. Padmore sings with great pathos and drama, but in Schubert's songs the piano is never mere accompaniment, and the wonderful insights of Lewis are not to be missed.

Ingrid Fliter, *Chopin: Complete Waltzes*. This year is Chopin's 200th anniversary. Fliter, winner of the 2006 Gilmore Award, gives a performance of the complete waltzes that rivals the benchmark recordings of Rubinstein and Lipatti. Schumann called them "waltzes for souls much more than waltzes for bodies." Chopin wrote his waltzes individually, not as an integral set, and Fliter concentrates on each as a distinct gem. Brilliance, fluency, reflectiveness and exquisite rhythmic flexibility are all here, and beautifully recorded.

Stuttgart Chamber Choir and Stuttgart Baroque Orchestra, *Messiah*. Bernius's recording gives one joy and makes the familiar fresh. In the great choruses the fleet 16th notes are sung with a clarity and ease that delight the ear and satisfy the heart. The soloists are superb, and their use of ornament rarely misses the mark (try

the repeat in Harvey's "The Trumpet Shall Sound"). Sampson's glorious soprano and technical skill in arias like "Rejoice greatly" fosters rejoicing. Taylor's profound "He was despised" makes one thankful for the music and the reality it depicts.

Trio Wanderer, *Haydn: Piano Trios Nos. 39, 43–45*. Sadly, Haydn is less known than his younger contemporary Mozart, yet Mozart himself was awed by Haydn's chamber music. Here is music for piano, violin and cello that is inviting and fun for beginners and full of surprises for connoisseurs. As in his piano sonatas, Haydn achieves wonderful effects with modest means. The Trio Wanderer, formed in the late 1980s by three young Paris Conservatory students, rapidly established itself as one of the world's leading piano trios. Their playing is not only technically flawless but also has the unity of spirit born of years of collaboration and devotion to great chamber music.

Ricercar Consort, *J. S. Bach: Magnificat BWV 243, Fuga sopra il Magnificat BWV 733, Missa BWV 235, Preludium und Fuga in G BWV 541*. Bach's *Magnificat* takes us into Advent, with the Gospel of Luke's Mary anticipating the birth of her son and his kingdom, which sets the topsy-turvy world "right side up" again. The opening chorus combines the royal majesty of timpani and trumpets with the exuberance of Mary as she anticipates the One who will make all things new. In keeping with newer Bach research, the choruses are sung one on a part, which gives the music a clarity often lost in performances by larger forces. The small "Lutheran Mass" of Bach's, included on this album, deserves to be far better known. The G minor *Missa* recorded here is a splendid introduction and invitation. The choral works are interspersed with two fine organ performances by Jacob—it's just like church, only better! A bonus is a DVD video which shows the ensemble as they record the *Magnificat*.

Jean-Guihen Queyras, *Antonín Dvořák: Concerto for Cello in B minor*. Alexander Melnikov, Jean-Guihen Queyras and Isabelle Faust, *Trio for Piano and Strings No. 4 in E minor*. Queyras is of the new generation of great European musicians, combining training in historical performance on period instruments and on modern cello. In the baroque repertoire, his 2007 recording of Bach's *Cello Suites* has no peers for technical perfection, flawless intonation and depth of insight into music that does not reveal its secrets easily. In the Dvořák concerto his playing is equally sublime. His mastery shines in the articulation of each note, in his sense of the musical phrase and in his modulated emotional range and tonal control. An added bonus on this disc is the splendid "Dumky" trio, in which Dvořák's great charm, sparkle,

tenderness and sheer fun are served up brilliantly by Queyras and his partners Faust and Melnikov.

Bach Collegium Japan, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Mass in B minor*. Suzuki's Bach is revered not only for its superlative musicianship but for its deep insight into the spirit and theology of Bach's music. In the Mass in B minor, Suzuki and his phenomenal Bach Collegium tackle what may be the pinnacle of Western music. This masterful recording spans the range of human experience from prayer for mercy (the opening "Kyrie" and the final "Dona nobis pacem") to praise and adoration. For strengthening one's faith there is nothing better than Bach's "Credo," which makes us experience the Nicene Creed as well as think it. A desert-island disc.