

BBC

LUDOVICO EINAUDI
We meet the best-selling composer-pianist



THE MAGIC OF ICELAND
How the volcanic nation is enjoying a cultural boom

music

The world's best-selling classical music magazine



JASCHA HEIFETZ

John Luther Adams
The composer who headed into the wilds

Acis and Galatea
The best recordings of Handel's oratorio

Brief notes

Our selection this month includes perspectives, reflections and a welcome party

Matthew Aucoin
The Orpheus Moment etc
American Modern Opera Company
NAXOS 8.579105

 Across two discs and seven works, we're introduced to the music of American composer Matthew Aucoin (1990). It's quite the intro. Whether working with the voice, instrumentalists or full orchestra, Aucoin paints a dazzling musical picture. Now I want to hear more. (MB) ★★★★★

Rob Chilcott
Circusling
Houston Chamber Choir
Signum Classics SIGCD017

 Circusling is a choral work packed full of fun, with vibrant, dynamic sections alongside more reflective, ethereal moments. Placed alongside a series of shorter pieces by the contemporary composer here, there's plenty to enjoy. (JP) ★★★★★

Debussy Pythodes Book 2: Children's Corner Elise Joyeuse
Veronica Bealle/Mosell (soprano)
Decca 481 0439

 Veronica Bealle Mosell brings quite an aggressive approach to these works, with some surprisingly rapid tempos. Not always a bad thing, though there are moments where it would be nice to be allowed to relax and breathe in Debussy's perfected air a little more. (JP) ★★★★★

Coranne Harrocks Hopagan
Welcome Party
Triad Classics (best members of the London Symphony Orchestra)
NAXOS 8.579105

 Inspired by the composer's time in residence at LSO SoundLab, this collection of works is wide-ranging, dynamic and utterly unique. The album encompasses acoustic and electronic textures, western and western influences and plenty of percussive fun. (JP) ★★★★★

Matthew King Wagner
Richard Wagner in Venice:
Siegfried Idyll
The Madras Players/Tomas Lasker
Makro Players MP 00020

 This debut album from the Scottish ensemble offers up a Wagner classic and a new work based on some of his unfinished late sketches. Presented against the Siegfried Idyll, Matthew King's effort feels authentic and the performance by this group of intrepid Highlanders is robust. (MB) ★★★★★

Steve Reich Electric Counterpoint
Electric Guitar Phase etc
Piers Blake (guitar)
Indigo 20233

 To celebrate Reich's 85th birthday, the rarely recorded Electric Guitar Phase is rereleased between the ever-popular Chipping Music and Electric Counterpoint. Despite a few lapses in perfect phrasing, the overall effect is smooth and transportive. (JP) ★★★★★

Huang Ruo A Dust in Time
Sul Duo Quartet
Bright Star Music BSM 017C 019

 The CD release of this comes with a coloring book of mandalas to complete while listening. So the message, then, is mindfulness and the music certainly warms. Unfolding and moving across a non-stop 60 minutes, it's really rather captivating. (MB) ★★★★★

Saint-Saëns Chamber Works
Les Solistes de l'Orchestre de Paris
Antony 002049

 This double disc of Saint-Saëns chamber music is a thorough guide to the composer's writing for real instruments. 'The Swan' from The Carnival of the Animals played on contrabass is stunning – a really engaging transcription. (JP) ★★★★★

Schubert Winterreise
James Rutherford (soprano),
Eugene Asti (piano)
RCA 801 2640

 It's difficult to make any Winterreise recording stand out against the current competition, but James Rutherford's rich baritone grabs attention. Schubert's song cycle has been transposed a minor third down to accommodate the warmth of his voice in a well-balanced interpretation. (JP) ★★★★★

Xiangyi Yi The Road to the Republic; Cantonese Suite
Chinese National Symphony Orchestra
Naxos 8.579105

 Distinctive and dramatic, The Road to the Republic is a big-boned choral work in which western orchestral lines and chorus rub shoulders with Chinese instruments and a children's choir. The folk-inspired Cantonese Suite is an altogether more going band. (JP) ★★★★★

Aigen Works by Takemitsu,
François, Brower et al
Cordas of Santa Dae
Dedicated 0785707

 There's plenty of dexterity playing in this selection of works dedicated to this flute and guitar duo's home country of São Paulo. From Takemitsu to Castelnuovo-Tedesco, the compositions will captivate and delight. A lot of moments a little less so. (JP) ★★★★★

Braga Santos Portuguese Music for Strings
Camerata Atlantica
Naxos 8.579105

 Braga Santos's Concerto for Strings has the feel of Vaughan Williams, while glimpses of the subject of Sérgio Azevedo's Music for Strings (In memoriam Béla Bartók) can also be heard in Azevedo's other works. Earthy, energetic playing. (JP) ★★★★★

Family Works by Mozart, Vivaldi,
Thomas Newman et al
Olga Schlegel (piano)
New Classical 04 00479612

 Unless you're building a playlist, it's not often you find music by Hans Zimmer and Thomas Newman snuggled up with Vivaldi, Mozart and Haydn. Schlegel's programme works, though, as she takes us by the hand through her heartwarming, joyous and occasionally emotional selection. (MB) ★★★★★

Findings Voice Mexican Song
Cycles After 2020
Juan Carlos Mendosa (soprano),
Jessica Munoz (piano)
Naxos 8.579105

 Thoughtful Juan Carlos Mendosa occasionally sounds as if he's pushing his voice to its limits – there are rough edges here and there – this is an engaging introduction to the world of Mexican song, successful though much of it is inclined to be. (JP) ★★★★★

Letter To Kamilla
Music in Jewish Memory
Moshe Vizen
Chandos CHAN 2060

 Jewish choral music, ranging from centuries past to contemporary compositions, is deftly arranged for five voices and song with power and passion. The story behind the penultimate song, Letter from Kamilla, is simply heartbreaking. (JP) ★★★★★

Perspectives Works by Caplet,
Ludovico, Britten and Hallgrímur
Ariana Tacart (soprano)
Naxos 8.579105

 A superbly played showcase disc from Ariana Tacart to light-fingered Britten and reflective Hallgrímur, shows how much more there is to the harp than the fluty, stately soundworld it is often credited. (JP) ★★★★★

Bows Up!

Portuguese Music for Strings
Camerata Atlantica
Naxos 8.579105



Braga Santos's Concerto for Strings has the feel of Vaughan Williams, while glimpses of the

subject of Sérgio Azevedo's *Music for Strings (In memoriam Béla Bartók)* can also be heard in Azevedo's other works. Earthy, energetic playing. (JP) ★★★★★