

On record

The week's esser

Classical

MICHAEL HAYDN

★★★

Requiem, St Ursula Mass

Soloists, The King's Consort and Choir, cond Robert King

Hyperion CDA 67410



Like Mozart, Michael Haydn composed for Salzburg's prince-archbishops, Sigmund Schrattenbach and Hieronymus Colloredo, and his Requiem in C minor of 1771 has striking similarities to Mozart's

unfinished work of 20 years later. Written for the funeral of Schrattenbach, the Requiem coincided with the death of Haydn's infant daughter, so the grief-laden sounds he conjures up sound more personal than ceremonial. The St Ursula Mass dates from 1793; it is an altogether happier work, not in the league of his brother Josef's six great masses, but composed with an easy fluency. King's performances are as attractive as the music, with fine solos from Carolyn Sampson and Hilary Summers. *HC*

RICHARD TAUBER

★★★

Opera Arias, Vol 2 (1926-46)

Naxos Historical 8.111001



The great Austrian lyric tenor was as remarkable for the range of his repertoire as for his sweet-voiced, stylish singing. Though this collection of 21 tracks, mostly dating from the late 1920s and 1930s, does not include

the operetta roles that brought him his widest fame, it shows him excelling in everything from Mozart's Tamino to Wagner's Walther and Offenbach's Hoffmann (particularly memorable). The exquisite head notes are a Tauber speciality, but equally fine is his incisiveness and dramatic force in Max's Scena from *Der Freischütz* and in Don Ottavio's *Il mio tesoro*, where the breath control is phenomenal. The orchestral accompaniments (not identified) are mostly good. *DC*

Classical CD of the week

MAHLER

★★★★

Symphony No 8

Soloists, Chorus, CBSO, cond Simon Rattle

EMI 5 57945 2

As he completes his Mahler cycle on disc, Rattle has saved the biggest, the Symphony of a Thousand, until last. He has also returned to Birmingham to finish the cycle where — if one doesn't count his early, Bournemouth version of the unfinished 10th, later superseded in Berlin — it began in 1987 with the Resurrection (No 2). Whatever the (much-aired) problems of his relationship with the Berliners, his "Birminghamsters" were clearly delighted to have him back for two concert performances recorded live last June. The result is the most exhilarating

RAMEAU

★★★★

Les Cyclopes

Trevor Pinnock (harpichord)

Avie AV 2056



Pinnock has adored Rameau's music since his teens, and it shows. His performances of the great A minor Suite from the *Nouvelles Suites* (c 1728) and the E minor Suite from the 1724 *Pièces de Clavecin* are magisterial, the A minor's Sarabande as noble as anything by Bach, its concluding Gavotte avec les doubles — a theme and variations — as exuberantly exploratory. He revels equally in colourful pieces such as *Les Cyclopes* and poetic works like *L'Entretien des Muses*, evokes clucking and pecking with his dry staccato chords in *La Poule* and wanders with an apt sense of intrigue through the harmonic vagaries of *L'Enharmonique*. His 1764 Goerman instrument (modified by Taskin in 1783/84) sings beautifully. *SP*

DOMENICO SCARLATTI

★★★★

Piano Sonatas

Yevgeny Sudbin

BIS-CD-1508



Sudbin is a player of remarkable fire and fineness. Intellectually alert (he writes his own sleeve notes) as well as digitally, this young Russian virtuoso brings a wonderful freshness of tone to 18 of Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas.

Nothing in musical history is perhaps more surprising than this eruption of wit in the high baroque (Scarlatti was an exact contemporary of Bach and Handel). The sonatas are not merely witty, of course, but sublimely so, whether reflective (F minor, K466), fugal (G minor, K30, the "Cat Fugue") or rumbustious (A major, K24) in character. Sudbin lends such ardour to the part-writing that each one seems a living thing. *PD*

Hugh Canning, David Cairns, Stephen Pettitt and Paul Driver

and cogent account of this problematic cantata-symphony since Solti's famous Vienna recording of the early 1970s. Rattle clearly believes fervently in this work and gets notably beautiful playing from the CBSO, especially in the Poco adagio introduction of Part II (a setting of the final pages of Goethe's *Faust*). The choirs, from Birmingham, London and Toronto, are thrilling, and the female soloists, led by the sopranos Christine Brewer, as *Magna Peccatrix* (Great Sinner), and Soile Isokoski, as *Una Poenitentium* (Penitent/Gretchen), are the best since Solti's. The men are less remarkable, but don't prevent this being a top modern recommendation. *HC*



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Parlophone 560



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