

subject. His playing in the slow movement, too, is admirably limpid.

Vogt is a bit less convincing in the slow movement of Concerto No. 2. This is not an *Andante*, as in the First Concerto, but a genuine *Adagio*, and paradoxically Vogt's flowing tempo makes the music sound more sentimental than it does in the noticeably slower performance by Murray Perahia on his classic Sony recording. Still, this newcomer is very impressive and benefits greatly from the fine playing of the Orchestre de Chambre de Paris. The more concentrated *Capriccio brillante* in B minor makes an attractive companion-piece to the two concertos. *Misha Donat*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Nielsen • Sibelius

Violin Concertos

Johan Dalene (violin); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Stockholm/John Storgårds

BIS BIS-2620 (CD/SACD) 73:23 mins



These two great Nordic violin concertos are coupled almost as frequently as Mendelssohn and

Bruch these days. They certainly make a good foil for each other: the Sibelius darkly atmospheric, with discernible roots in private pain, the Nielsen playful, quirkily brilliant, but not without its own moments of deeper reflection.

The contrast works particularly well in this new studio pairing. Johan Dalene has a strong command of long evolving lines – crucial in both composers – but he balances that with a fine feeling for 'speaking' phrasing and articulation. The music seems to be addressing us personally, often on a very intimate level indeed. I haven't heard many performances that come so close in this respect to the classic Ginette Neveu recording (a firm personal favourite) in the slow movement of the Sibelius. The expression can certainly be full-toned and red-blooded, but what I like most of all are his *pianissimos*: how can tone that's so delicate, fragile almost, also be so full of feeling? Of course, Dalene is up against stiff competition in the Sibelius, but what I think gives his Nielsen the slight edge is the way he and John Storgårds bring out the element of conversation between soloist

and orchestra. The enchanting dialogue that's such a key ingredient in Nielsen's later Wind Quintet is anticipated delightfully here. Yes, the Nielsen is a great concerto, but how many of the other 'great' violin concertos can be such fun, while at other times be so touching? Lovely recordings too. Strongly recommended. *Stephen Johnson*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Weinberg

Cello Concertino; Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra; Chamber Symphony No. 4

Jean-Michel Charlier (clarinet), Pieter Wispelwey (cello); Les Métamorphoses/Raphaël Feye

Evil Penguin EPRC 0045 67:01 mins



The manuscript for Weinberg's Cello Concertino was discovered relatively recently, the

composer not even listing it among his completed works. One reason for this might be that this work, which was written in a matter of days in 1948 during one of the darkest periods in the composer's life, is in essence a slimmed-down version of the later Cello Concerto featuring four movements that share almost identical thematic material. Yet the more intimate accompaniment of a string orchestra in the Concertino not only suits Weinberg's strong vein of melancholy, most obviously manifested in the unforgettably moving lament that opens and closes the work, but also works most effectively in the energetic Polish folk dance and klezmer-inflected material of the central movements.

Pieter Wispelwey inflects the solo cello part with tremendous artistry, sculpting Weinberg's melodic lines with a wonderful sense of colour and imagination yet without succumbing to indulgent emotion even in the most heart-rending passages. The Belgian ensemble Les Métamorphoses under Raphaël Feye are admirably responsive partners both in this work and in the *Fantasy*, another attractive work in which Wispelwey mesmerises the listener with his charismatic shaping of the hauntingly mysterious waltz in the slow sections and the rumbustious dance rhythms of the central *Allegro*.

Feye and Les Métamorphoses then take up the reins to deliver a compelling account of the

emotionally inscrutable Fourth Chamber Symphony, impressively sustaining the tension throughout the quiet shadowy chorale textures and solo instrumental soliloquies that are so predominant in this late work. A word of praise too for the recording which captures these fine performances in stunningly vivid sound. *Erik Levi*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

A Night in London

Works by GB Cirri, Geminiani, Handel, JA Hasse, Oswald, Porpora, D Scarlatti

Sandrine Piau, Raquel Camarinha (soprano), Gabriel Pidoux (oboe), Ophélie Gaillard (cello); Pulcinella Orchestra

Aparté AP274 85:22 mins



Ophélie Gaillard's musical tour of Georgian London takes in a medley of vocal and instrumental

works that might have wafted through the city's streets, theatres and salons in the early decades of the 18th century. This was the period when Londoners adopted 'the dear Saxon' George Frideric Handel and welcomed a flurry of Italian musicians who energised 'the land without music' with their instrumental virtuosity and the drama and lyricism of opera. The programme skilfully plaits together the various connections between two of the 'local boys', Charles Avison and James Oswald, and their émigré friends, colleagues and rivals.

Among the disc's many highlights are the virtuoso cello concertos by Cirri and Porpora which showcase Gaillard's athletic technique as well as her extraordinary ability to make the cello sing. Also invigorating is Geminiani's Concerto Grosso 'La Folia' (a homage to his teacher Corelli) whose vacillating moods and exotic Hispanic rhythms are thrillingly played up by the French-based period ensemble Pulcinella. Composer-cellist James Oswald was inspired by traditional Scottish tunes in four pieces that add a dram of local colour; their wistful melodies are expressively shaped by Gaillard or irresistibly jazzed up by the ensemble. Finally, we're treated to a quartet of vocal works, including Geminiani's arrangements of British folk songs and Handel's meltingly beautiful lament 'Credete

al mio dolore' from *Alcina* – ravishingly sung by Sandrine Piau. *Kate Bolton-Porciatti*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★

Rhapsody

Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue etc; **Rachmaninov:** Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini; **Wild:** 7 Virtuoso Etudes after Gershwin

Martin James Bartlett (piano); London Philharmonic Orchestra/ Joshua Weilerstein

Warner Classics 9029643433 67:48 mins



In 2014 the then 17-year-old pianist Martin James Bartlett won *BBC Young Musician of*

the Year with a thrilling account of Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. A year later he made his Proms debut to equal acclaim with Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Now he has brought the rhapsodies together, making a commanding, lyrical case for their affinity on his second album for Warner Classics.

It's a joyful display, full of warmth, character and the singing tone that Bartlett has come to be known for. His staunch partners the London Philharmonic Orchestra perform with an invigorating freshness under conductor Joshua Weilerstein. The emphasis is on spontaneity rather than virtuosity for its own sake, with an elastic rapport between orchestra and soloist – or soloists, with clarinettist Benjamin Mellefont a bluesy treat in the Gershwin.

Indeed a spirit of the blues permeates the album, drawing threads between the rhapsodies through a jazzy turn of phrase here, a colourful interjection there – and through a canny selection of solo piano pieces and transcriptions which highlight a continuum between Rachmaninov's songs and Gershwin's *American Songbook*, via the pianist-composer Earl Wild.

Two Etudes from his *7 Virtuoso Etudes after Gershwin* complement wonderfully his transcriptions of Rachmaninov's *Vocalise* and 'Where Beauty Dwells', Op. 21 No. 7. Bartlett is especially tender in the latter and Gershwin's *The Man I Love* – while a romping *Polka de W.R.* finds its bouncy equivalent in *I Got Rhythm*. Great stuff. *Steph Power*

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
RECORDING ★★★★★