

may not find that a problem, of course, but I remain to be convinced. The two sonatas by Petrini are well worth hearing. BC

Schaffrath Six Sonatas Epoca Barocca
cpo 777 440-2 77' 18"

The music on this disc has been in the can for quite a time: one piece was recorded in 2003, two more in 2004 and the last three in 2007. The booklet made me laugh out loud with its translation of obbligato - "obliged Harpsichord" just isn't right, thank you very much. Schaffrath is one of those 18th-century composers whose music is "nice" - perfectly pleasing, but without much substance. To be fair, he was writing for the taste of his time, and although there is counterpoint in the music, it never overpowers the all-important melody. The six sonatas here are all cast in the slow-fast-faster framework. That he had deeper moments is exemplified by his sonata for violin and grateful harpsichord in B flat minor. Epoca Barocca are remarkably consistent over the five years - indeed, there is no reason to imagine that these have not all come from the same session. Excellent dinner party music. BC

19th CENTURY

Beethoven Complete Violin Sonatas Vol. 3
Hiro Kurosaki *vn*, Linda Nicholson *fp*
Accent ACC 24213 61' 12"

This series continues apace. Kurosaki and Nicholson here tackle the three op. 12 sonatas (which are more demanding than their low opus number might suggest) and a G major Rondo (WoO41). In such an unforgiving recorded sound world, it is all the more remarkable that both performers really "go for it" - these are edge of the seat performances and the absolute security in their own vision of the works in hand is a major part of the success of these gripping accounts. The virtuosity of both is no less impressive - these really are not light pieces of chamber music! I would never have expected myself to have fallen under the charm of any Beethoven cycle, but I am finding these recordings and absolute revelation. BC

Mendelssohn The Piano Trios (op. 49 & 66) The Benvenue Fortepiano Trio 59' 43"
Avie AV2187

Last year's Mendelssohn anniversary has moved his profile up a notch or two, and this CD of his two Piano Trios adds to that momentum. Played on period instruments by Eric Zivian *fortepiano*, Monica Hugget *violin* and Tanya Tomkins *cello*, the key focus of this recording is the sense of balance between the three

instruments - at no time does the violin dominate, for example. The trio also tread the fine line between taking Mendelssohn too seriously - or, indeed, too light-heartedly. The chorale melody in the last movement of the C minor Trio can sound irredeemably slushy, but the deftness of the accompanying instruments avoids this. Although Mendelssohn might be pushing the boundaries for some *EMR* readers, I can recommend this thoroughly musical interpretation.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Mendelssohn & Bach *Magnificats in D*
Yale Schola Cantorum, Yale Voxtet, Yale Collegium Players, Simon Carrington
Naxos 8.572161

The Yale Schola Cantorum is a 24-voice chamber choir that concentrates on music from before 1750 and after 1900. It was set up 7 years ago by Simon Carrington, one of the founders of the King's Singers, (and an enthusiastic subscriber to *EMR*). Taking a brief detour away from their intended repertoire, this CD contrasts Bach's *Magnificat* with Mendelssohn's early venture - composed, remarkably, when he was just 13. It was his first major work for full orchestra and singers. With a detailed knowledge of JS and CPE Bach's examples, and with the background of the Viennese classicists, Mendelssohn created a glorious synthesis of baroque and classical style which the Yale contingent relish in this strong performance. A movement from an early string symphony links this to the Bach work, given an expansive and measured reading. Mendelssohn's later direction is reflected in the concluding *Ave Maria*.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Schumann *romanzen und Balladen für Chor* SWR Vokalensemble Stuttgart, Rupert Huber 76' 04"
Hänssler Classic CD 93.256

Just as with the CDs of part-songs by Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn in the last issue, this is not a disc we would normally review, but the anniversary year means that many of the backwaters of Schumann's output will be explored and we really owe it to our readers to take advantage of this opportunity, and get a fuller impression of the man and his still largely neglected music. There are no fewer than 32 items on this re-released 1997/1998 recording and they show just how imaginative the composer was in writing for choir - there is an intensity to some of the works that is entirely lacking in Mendelssohn, and yet there is also a lightness of touch in others that is equally attractive. As one would expect from a professional German radio choir, the

singing is exemplary. I enjoyed listening to this, and will doubtless do so again. BC

PIANO MUSIC

Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Czerny

Specialists will forgive us (I hope) when they see that a non-specialist has written the following reviews. Long series can be a real challenge to single reviewers, and I have to say I sympathized with Richard Maunder when he returned the first three of these to me. We must send him some baroque concertos or reconstructed Mozart as variety! There have been rather a lot of 'complete keyboard works' of late! If anyone would like to volunteer to write for us (and not just on keyboard music), please get in touch!

Vol. 11 of Siegbert Rampe's Mozart *Complete Clavier Works* (MDG Gold MDG 341 1311-2, 81' 40") features a wide range of music (K 10, 15q, 15w, 15x, 115aa, 15cc, 15ee, 15gg, 15hh, 103 (61d), 180 (173c), 284a, 312 (590d), 398 (416e), 545) played on two harpsichords, a clavichord (which I must say I did not particularly enjoy) and a fortepiano. I don't think it is a disc I could listen to very often, I concede, but if a series is to be complete...

Trudelies Leonhardt's Vol. 2 of her *Beethoven Piano Works* (Globe GLO 5237) features the Sonata in D op. 10 no. 3, Sonatines in F & G K-H Anh 5, Preludium in F minor WoO55, Rondo in B flat Anh 6, Klavierstück in G minor WoO61a, Variations in F WoO76 and G WoO77) and Vol. 6 of her *Schubert Piano Works* (Globe GLO 5236), including D. 679, 681, 780, 946 & 961). Both discs are broadly shaped in the same way - substantial works open and close proceedings, with shorter, less challenging fare in between. I am not really qualified to discuss the suitability of the instruments used, but I enjoyed the performances. Both series are interesting in not limiting themselves to sonatas, though (in the Beethoven especially) this is where the most interesting music can be heard.

The last of this batch is a disc of Czerny Nocturnes played on a modern piano by Isabelle Oehmichen (76' 19", Hortus 074). I was impressed by the wide variety of character Czerny worked into the 17 works recorded (all but one for the first time ever), and equally by Oehmichen's wide range of colours. Given that the vast majority of Czerny's many hundreds of printed works were intended as material for students, it's not entirely surprising that these are premieres. I hope this venture will encourage period players to re-appraise his output - just as I have argued that many of the classic violin studies work as art, I am convinced that there is an undiscovered depth to Czerny. BC