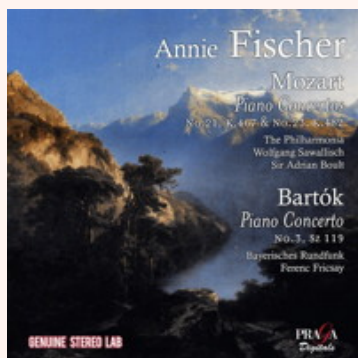


# MUSIC & VISION

classical music  
newsletter



*Genuine Profundity – Issue 101, 1 September 2016*



'Her phrasing makes even the most complex and profound passages instantly understandable ...'

**Béla Hartmann:** 'The Hungarian pianist Annie Fischer died in 1995 after a long and successful career that brought her much acclaim, even if it never lifted her into the first rank of classical pianists. She was omitted from the Philips "Great Pianists of the 20th Century" set of CDs which featured recordings by 72 pianists. However, there has always been a body of opinion that feels her achievements were much greater than this would indicate, and since her death many recordings have been released to considerable praise. The present CD contains such recordings made in 1958 and 1960, all previously issued by different labels. They show Fischer at her best in repertoire at which she was most successful, and illustrate why many regard her as one of the finest pianists of her time. Stylistically her

playing is at first unremarkable - in most respects her *tempi* and tone display no unusual features; in fact, the one aspect of her playing that might be considered a weakness is the lack of an instantly recognizable tone in the manner of Sviatoslav Richter, Vladimir Horowitz, Alfred Cortot or Wilhelm Kempff. But this is a weakness only at first glance: Fischer's somewhat neutral tone serves to underline a simplicity and profundity unencumbered by personality. Her phrasing makes even the most complex and profound passages instantly understandable - a skill particularly evident in her recordings of Beethoven's later Piano Sonatas.' (Praga Digitalis *PRD 250 326*)

**Gerald Fenech:** "In his youth and well into old age, he played the violin with a clear, penetrating tone." This telling description by J S Bach's son Carl Philipp Emanuel is proof enough of Bach's predilection for this instrument, and C P E even goes on to say that his father felt better able to direct an orchestra from the violin than from the keyboard. In view of all this, it is therefore no surprise that Bach's output includes a substantial number of pieces for the violin, four of which are included on this recording.



'Manze and Podger give free reign to Bach's poetic inspiration ...'

'Unfortunately, there is no doubt in one's mind that these concertos have not come down to us in the exact way the composer intended. Firstly, because Bach was in the habit of revising again and again, and secondly, because a considerable number of these scores have had their authenticity dented because of unreliable copying procedures adopted both during Bach's lifetime and after his demise in 1750. Notwithstanding all these pitfalls, these concertos remain some of Bach's most inventive pieces, and are prime examples of the composer's genius that spurred him to write such amazing "concertante" works that were almost ahead of their time.' (harmonia mundi HMA 1957155)



'... superbly played by the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra ...'

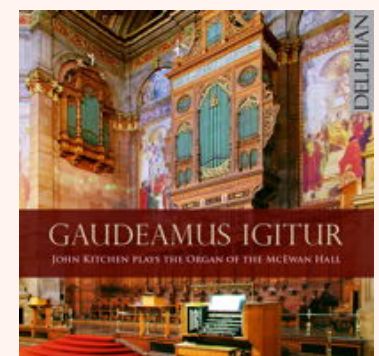
'This is the second volume of Granados' orchestral works to be issued on Naxos, and it is perhaps even more exciting than the first (**also reviewed in these pages**). Perhaps Granados' most famous work, the opera *Goyescas* is represented here by the Intermezzo, and this is superbly played by the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra under Pablo González.

'Two short dances are next, the *Danza de los ojos verdes* ('Dance of the Green Eyes') and *Danza Gitana* ("Gypsy Dance"). Both were composed between 1915 and 1916, so just a few months before the composer's tragic death on

board the SS Sussex. They are full of acrobatic orchestral inflexions and are very colourful indeed.' (Naxos 8.573264)

'There are plenty of rip roaring works that exhibit the organ's splendid sound and Kitchen's equally brilliant virtuosity. Johan Helmich Roman's *Sinfonia da Chiesa* is pleasant enough, while Kitchen gives pomp and circumstance to Alfred Hollins' Overture in C major as well as Guilmant's *Marche Religieuse*.

'I was also very much taken with the three Trumpet Tunes from *King Arthur* and *The Indian Queen* by Henry Purcell, while Handel's Overture and March from the *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* fairly thundered out of the speakers.' (John Kitchen's *Gaudeamus Igitur*, Delphian DCD34163)



'... a curiously varied programme ...'



'... this music took me completely by surprise ...'

Gerald also reviews *Bien que l'amour ... airs sérieux et à boire* from William Christie and Les Arts Florissants (harmonia mundi *HAF 8905276*), Gaetano Veneziano's *Passio* (Glossa *GCD 922609*), Lutoslawsky and Brahms from the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (harmonia mundi *HMU 807668*), Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* (Naxos *8.573537*) and a Celtic Album of piano music by Ronald Stevenson (Christopher Guild on Toccata Classics *TOCC 0272*).

**Geoff Pearce:** 'What a cracker of a disc - lovely, approachable

music which is never dull or hackneyed, and which I would heartily recommend to anyone, presented by the San José Chamber Orchestra led by Barbara Day Turner.



'... lovely, approachable music ...'

'The disc opens with Michael Ching's interesting Piano Concerto from 1996 - lush music in one movement (but divided into four sections). It is somewhat evocative of the concertos of great masters of the past, but without quoting or copying any of them. The influence of Gershwin is strongly felt in the last section. It is music to be enjoyed for its entertainment value and I think all will find something to like in this very personable work. The fine pianist on this recording is Craig Bohmler.' (Navona *NV6031*)

The late **Howard Smith** listened to Prokofiev, played by Jerry Wong (MSR Classics *MS 1357*), Franz Mittler (Con Brio Recordings *CBR21042*) and to Sergio Puccini's *Romerias* (Aleph Records *Aleph 044*).

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## ENSEMBLE — ECHO OF GLOBALIZATION

**Giuseppe Pennisi:** 'Città di Castello is a relatively small medieval town in Umbria with 40,000 residents. It is surrounded by walls and features many important churches and palaces as well as two significant museums. It is a quiet place, and for this reason it has been and is the residence of artists. For the last forty years, it has organized a rather peculiar festival at the end of August and the beginning of September. It is named the Festival of Nations (Festival delle nazioni) because each year it celebrates a nation and a specific national musical period. This year (23 August-3 September 2016) it deals with France in the phase around World War I. The concerts are not only held in Città di Castello (in churches and palaces) but also in nearby towns such as Umbertide and Sansepolcro, with the purpose of sharing costs of an operation that isn't easy: "theme festivals" are always hard to organize, especially at the end of the Summer when many artists are committed to major activities.

'*France* is part of series exploring music in the years around World War I, ie in 2014 the Nation selected was Armenia, in 2015 Austria and in 2017 Germany. It is mostly a chamber music festival, but the first and the last concerts are symphonic. On 23 August, the festival was opened by a performance of the Dijon Bourgogne Orchestra conducted by its principal conductor, the Hungarian Gergely Madaras, a young maestro (born in 1984) with gesture and touch quite similar to those of Daniel Harding. In the first part, the

program included two late nineteenth century compositions - Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and Bizet's stage music for the drama *Arlesienne* by Daudet; this a happy and brisk piece followed by a pathetic and dramatic piece. After the intermission, a series of very happy overtures and suites from Offenbach's operettas. The audience was quite enthusiastic. The orchestra replied with an encore of Offenbach's *Can Can* and a traditional Burgundy way of applauding (*ban bourguignon*) when the audience joined in.'  
**Read more ...**



Introducing the Dijon Bourgogne Orchestra at the Festival della nazioni in Città di Castello.  
Photo © 2016 Monica Ramaccioni

Giuseppe also visits the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro for *La Donna del Lago*, *Il Turco in Italia* and *Ciro in Babilonia*, sends two more reports from this year's Salzburg Festival, featuring spiritual and religious music, plus a new production of *Così fan tutte*, and gets a rare chance to hear Richard Strauss' *Der Liebe der Danae*.

**Roderic Dunnett:** 'Of all the choral events to be found around rural England, one most certainly holds the treasured crown. It's the Three Choirs Festival, staged by turn in the three cathedrals of Worcester, Hereford and Gloucester. Its standards are as high as can be imagined, centred around the splendidly rehearsed Festival Chorus, drawn from the choral societies of the three cathedrals, and the Philharmonia Orchestra, which after several years' association now holds a regular formal residency at the festival, and guarantees a quality of instrumental support that matches the magnificent choral singing.

'There's no doubt that the mainstream choral concerts in the evenings are the highlight of the whole week, and so it proved at Gloucester, whose turn it was in 2016, following the 300th anniversary at Hereford last year, to stage these events in the glorious Norman cathedral nave.



A view down Gloucester Cathedral, looking west. Photo © 2016 Ash Mills

'But the Festival also stages a host of other events. A major orchestral concert featured not only vivid playing of justifiably popular works - Dvořák's Ninth (*New World*) Symphony, conducted with style by the Scandinavian conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali, chief conductor of the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra (whose parents both played in the Lahti Symphony Orchestra); and with it, Sibelius' *Finlandia* - but also a riveting reading of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto by the wondrously accomplished Jack Liebeck. There were further orchestral treats also: this year's Artistic Director, Adrian Partington, prefaced an enjoyably buoyant performance later in the week of *Carmina Burana* with two memorable works, one celebrated, one new.' **Read more ...**



Clark Rundell

**Mike Wheeler:** 'Ensemble 10/10 is the contemporary music arm of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Its Buxton Festival appearance ... opened with a reminder of just what brilliant new talent the young Britten must have appeared to his contemporaries. His *Sinfonietta*, Op 1, is brimming with invention, skilfully put together. No wonder some more guarded souls were wary of him.

'Conducted by Clark Rundell, the players pitched into the work with vivid, attention-grabbing conviction, pointing up moments like the flute and clarinet duo that sounds just like a pre-echo of *Peter Grimes*, and the ambiguity of the violin duet at the start of the second movement - both like and unlike the English pastoral manner simultaneously. The finale's tarantella figure was unobtrusively set up as the nerve-centre of the movement's racing activity, with the quiet central interlude unobtrusively making its mark.' **Read more ...**

Mike also listens to Baroque music and English string classics from the Northern Chamber Orchestra, to Haydn, Bartók and Dvorák from the Chilingirian Quartet, to an exploration of the celebration and imitation of national styles, and to Vivaldi's *La Sena Festeggiante*, all at the Buxton Festival, and to organ recitals by Peter Gould, Richard Hills and Daniel Gottfried.

**Keith Bramich:** 'Contemporary composers abound at this festival, and without really trying, I spoke to two more of them last night. David Matthews, whose Piano Concerto will be performed in the Festival Finale by Clare Hammond with George Vass and the Festival Orchestra, told me that he is currently writing his ninth symphony and (to avoid the precedent of Beethoven and Mahler) hopes to move on rather quickly to his tenth! No 9, written for a Brahms-sized orchestra, has connections with Shostakovich's Ninth, and performances are earmarked with conductor Kenneth Woods, both in the UK (with the English Symphony Orchestra) and the USA.

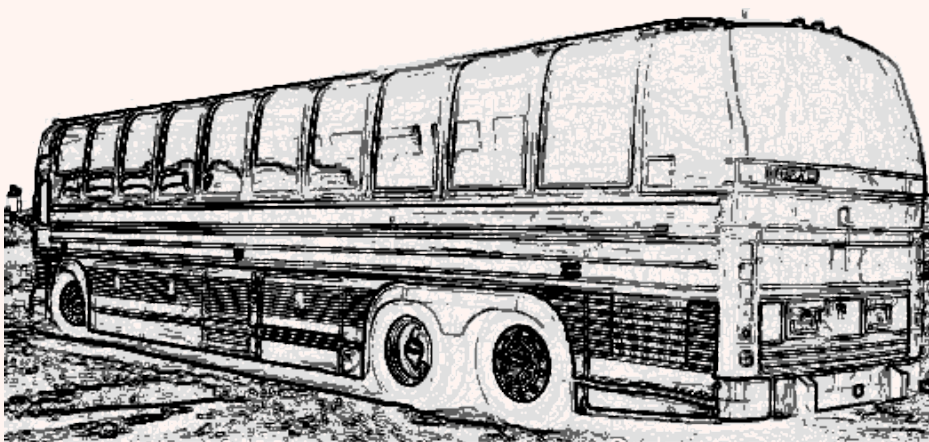
'Shortly after speaking with David, I found myself sitting next to John Hawkins, another regular Presteigne visitor, whose solo cello work *Stranger, Lover, Dancer* will be played on Sunday afternoon by Alice Neary. John studied with Malcolm Williamson and Elisabeth Lutyens, and was commissioned to write a Sea Symphony on a recommendation from Charles Mackerras. Another nautical work, *Voices from the Sea*, is available on CD, sung by Martyn Hill. *This World*, for choir and two trumpets, has been broadcast by the BBC Singers, and *Urizen* for viola and piano has been broadcast many times worldwide.' **Read more ...**



Robert Saxton, composer in residence at the 2016 Presteigne Festival.  
Photo © Katie Vandyck

**Read our latest concert reviews    Listings of forthcoming concerts and festivals**

## FICTION — MIDNIGHT ICE CREAM — THE BUS DRIVER'S STORY



**Maria Nockin:** 'Finally, one Saturday afternoon my phone rang. I held my hand over it for three seconds so as not to sound desperate, and then I pounced. "Could I please speak to Frederick Lindquist?" "Speaking," I answered. "This is Fran at Central City Bus Company. I got

a call from Sunny State Coach in Florida asking if I know of an experienced driver who can start tomorrow night. Would you be interested?"

"Would I ever! Who do I call? What do I do?"

"Call Sunny State. Bill will interview you by phone. If he likes you, you can start tomorrow. He needs a driver to pick up a foreign group at the airport and take them to a nearby

hotel. You stay there, too. Monday morning you start regular hours driving the group for six weeks."

"Thanks, Fran. I'm calling Tallahassee right now."

*Wow, Tallahassee is closer to Albany GA, my hometown, than Atlanta! I can celebrate with Mama and my lil' brother when I get a day off.*

'I'm from Albany, Georgia, and in 2002, after I got my commercial driver's license, I spent two years driving for local freight companies. Lifting freight in and out was a boring job so, two years later I got my passenger endorsement, and headed for Atlanta where I wasted several weeks. I got interviews with quite a few promising companies, but the sessions always ended with, "We'll call you when we have an opening." **Read more ...**

## COMMON GROUND — SERIOUS ANALYSIS OF COMPUTER GAME MUSIC

**Keith Bramich:** '*Koji Kondo's Super Mario Bros Soundtrack* isn't the kind of book usually reviewed in this magazine. Furthermore, *M&V* readers are likely to think that they would be more interested in its author, Andrew Schartmann, than in the subject of his book. If you read us regularly, you're probably familiar with his writing, as an occasional CD reviewer and writer of the regular series *Andrew Schartmann's Musical Tidbits* which ran here throughout 2013. He is also assistant editor of *DSCH Journal*, and has written at least one other book, but he's mainly a pianist, composer and music theorist - someone able not only to perform and create music, but also to successfully question and challenge the work of other composers and performers, and to write about this process in an accessible and understandable way.



'What Schartmann does here is to turn his analytical tools in the direction of a completely different genre of music - towards what some might argue isn't even music in any conventional sense, although it has interesting parallels with opera, ballet, film and cartoon music. Classical music writers have occasionally done this before. The best example I can think of is an *M&V* contributor from the past - the late Professor Wilfrid Mellers, who (trying to win back the affections of his young daughters following a marriage break-up) turned his critical pen in the direction of *The Beatles*, at a time when classical criticism was still very straight-laced, with fascinating results.

'Schartmann's subject is somehow even more daring - a three minute audio creation written in 1985 for a Nintendo computer game by Japanese composer Koji Kondo (born Nagoya, 1961). Schartmann's argument is, simply, that this music is just as valid and worthy of study as the classical music he normally works with. **Read more ...**

## ASK ALICE — J S BACH AND THE MASS CELLO REPERTOIRE

**Alice McVeigh:** Hi fellow cellos!!!!

My old friend, now a principal cellist in Spain, David Johnstone, has been at it again!!!

He has made a very intelligent, hugely playable arrangement of *Brandenburg 3* for ten (count 'em) *celli*, and recorded all the parts here:

It's a little implacable tempo-wise - which is what happens when you have to record ten parts separately and combine them electronically - but very well played and what an addition to the mass cello repertoire!!!

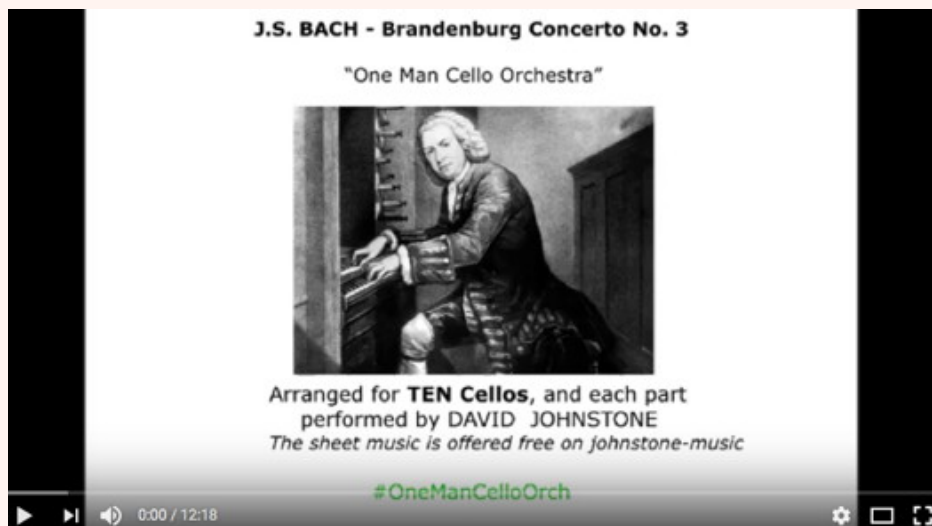
Check out his other arrangements too:  
**JOHNSTONE MUSIC**

Happy summer celloing!!!!

Alice [Read more](#)

**More episodes of 'Ask Alice' ...**

**Ask Alice your classical music-related questions ...**



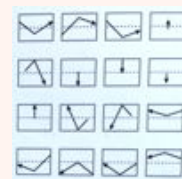
**BACH - Brandenburg Concerto 3 - One Man Cello Orchestra**

## MUSIC AND/AS PROCESS — CLASSICAL MUSIC NEWS



**Daniela Dessì**  
(1957-2016)

Cambridge Scholars Publishing's *Music and/as Process*, ISBN 978-1-4438-9491-3, edited by Lauren Redhead and Vanessa Hawes, will be available for purchase soon. This academic volume, with contributions from Nicholas McKay, Suzie Wilkins, Keith Potter, Geraint A Wiggins, Vanessa Hawes, Ellen Hooper, David Gorton, Zubin Kanga, Lauren Redhead, Charles Céleste Hutchins, Michael Picknett, Alistair Zaldua, Steve Gisby and Charlotte Purkis, explores mathematical processes in musical composition, interpretation, rehearsal and performance, following on from Steve Reich's 1975 essay *Music as a Gradual Process*.



**Music and/as Process.**  
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We mark the passing of Daniela Dessì, Neil Black, Andjelko Klobuchar, Patrice Munsel and Andre Hajdu.

**Read our latest news**

This newsletter, edited by Keith Bramich, is a monthly taster for Basil Ramsey's high quality and colourful online classical music magazine, published every day since January 1999.

The editorial and advertising copy deadlines for our October newsletter are both Tuesday 27 September 2016. Details [here](#).

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