Some items to consider

Enjoy the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra wherever you are. App available for iOS and

REVIEW
RECORDING OF THE MONTH

Plain text for smartphones & printers

Anton BRUCKNER (1824-1896)
Symphony No. 4 in E flat major *Romantic* (version 1878/80 edited Nowak) [66.07]
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra/Manfred Honeck
rec. live, 6-8 December 2013, Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts, Pittsburgh.
REFERENCE RECORDINGS FR-713 SACD [66.07]

Having reviewed the mightily impressive first two releases in the 'Pittsburgh Live!' series I wondered how this third and latest disc would measure up. Enjoying every second of this captivating performance I can report that the series continues to provide an elevated standard of performance and sound.

Hoffnung
Gerard Hoffnung CDs

Advertising on Musicweb

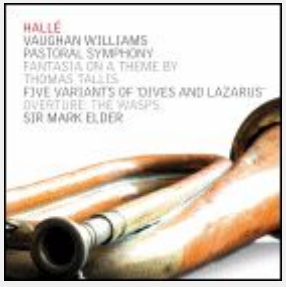
Donate
Donate and get *a free CD*

New Releases

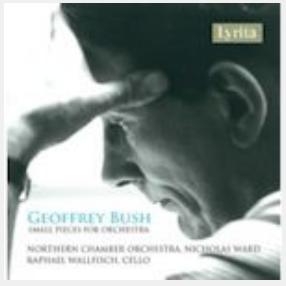
open in browser PRO version Are you a developer? Try out the HTML to PDF API pdfcrowd.com

Android

Tudor 1620 4CDs



Vaughan Williams Symphony 3 etc.



Lyrita New Recording

Lyrita 4CDs £16

More than any other Bruckner symphony his *Symphony No. 4* known as the *Romantic* and written in 1874 has been given wholesale revisions at various times. Here Manfred Honeck uses the version of 1878/1880, edited by Leopold Nowak. It's the one given at the première in 1881 under Hans Richter a version described by composer and musicologist Robert Simpson as "clean and lean".

Support us financially by purchasing this from

amazon.co.uk amazon.com

ArkivMusic

In the booklet notes Honeck talks about the programmatic content of the *Fourth Symphony* as Bruckner described it to his friend Viktor Christ. He explains how he believes the *Fourth Symphony* "is almost a tone-poem in the robe of a symphony". Rather than strictly follow the score Honeck believes that "Bruckner's musical phrases and thoughts require their own flexible tempi and expressions, particularly when referring to nature and folklore." This all amounts to Honeck making a number of slight alterations mainly concerned with emphasis and balance. There's also the occasional addition all done in a manner that other conductors surely do but probably don't write about.

In the opening movement the sheer force of the symphonic power generated by the Pittsburgh players is compelling and nearly pins the listener to back of his seat. It's not all about raw energy, though. We also encounter outstanding subtlety in the contrasting episodes of nature music. Impressive too is how the orchestra builds and sustains its crescendos. The slow movement harbours a satisfying calmness bordering on serenity to which Honeck seamlessly develops a tension-laden undertow. The great climax is accomplished magnificently without it feeling forced. Tuned to perfection the Pittsburgh brass section in the *Scherzo* rings out to stunning effect; I doubt the heavily engaged trumpets and horns have ever sounded better. Remarkable playing too in the *Finale* with Honeck adding a sense of mystery and foreboding. Sure-footed through Bruckner's changes of mood the work culminates in a quite magnificent climax of a grandeur that sends a shiver down the spine. Impeccably paced and carefully shaped Honeck creates a magnificently inspiring Bruckner interpretation. Decisive and highly spirited the textures feel ideally layered with the Pittsburgh players also displaying a natural feeling for orchestral colour.

In the *Fourth Symphony* my benchmark recording is the 1998 live Berlin account from Günter Wand with the Berliner Philharmoniker. Using the original 1878/1880 version Wand's interpretation is both visionary and magnetic. All the components are handled with the utmost care and control based on decades of experience. It's good to have another excellent recording available and this live performance from Honeck with his Pittsburgh players can confidently stand close to Wand.

Recorded by Soundmirror at live concerts at Heinz Hall, Pittsburgh this hybrid SACD played on my standard player has moderately warm, clear sound that reveals ample detail and achieves a satisfactory balance. There is little extraneous audience noise to worry about and the applause at the conclusion has been taken out. Manfred Honeck has written a wonderfully informative essay which is well worth reading. With the Pittsburgh Orchestra giving such a penetrating reading under the inspirational Honeck, Bruckner's music is remarkably well served.

Michael Cookson

NAXOS

Nimbus Records

CHANDOS
serious about classical music

hyperion

divine art
the spirit of music

Guild

foghorn CLASSICS

accord
CD ACCORD MUSIC EDITION

ARCODIVA
music from prague

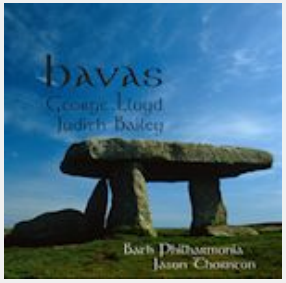
Lyrita

Classical

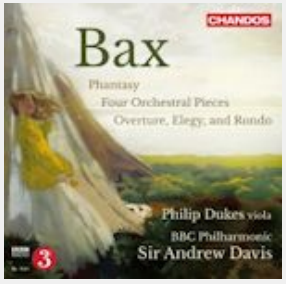
open in browser PRO version Are you a developer? Try out the HTML to PDF API pdfcrowd.com

incl.postage

Lyrita 4CDs £16
incl.postage



Judith Bailey, George Lloyd



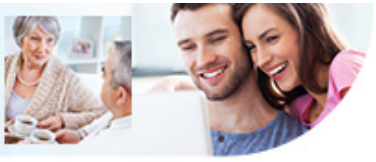
BAX Orchestral pieces

CASKEN Violin Concerto

ClassicsOnline
YOUR CLASSICAL MUSIC DOWNLOAD SOURCE

NAXOS MUSIC LIBRARY
NAXOS BOOKS
NAXOS AudioBooks
MARCO POLO
DACAPO
NAXOSDIRECT.com
The World's Leading Classical Label Direct To You

2014 Clearance Sale • Up to 55% off
APARTMENTS FOR SENIORS
See Sale
Pricedepot



Recordings Quarterly

AdChoices
► Bruckner
► Recording
► Conductor

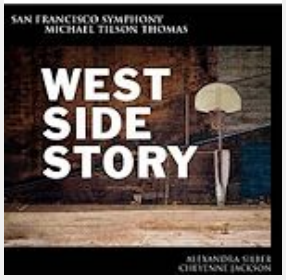
Musicweb sells the following labels

Acte Préalable
Alto
Arcodiva
Atoll
CDAccord
Cameo Classics
Centaur
Hallé
Hortus
Lyrita
Nimbus
Northern Flowers
Redcliffe
Sheva
Talent
Toccata Classics

Follow us on Twitter

Subscribe to our free weekly review listing sample

open in browser PRO version Are you a developer? Try out the HTML to PDF API pdfcrowd.com



Schumann Symphonies
Rattle

Complete Brahms
Bargain price

open in browser PRO version Are you a developer? Try out the HTML to PDF API pdfcrowd.com

open in browser PRO version Are you a developer? Try out the HTML to PDF API pdfcrowd.com