

EMBARGOED INFORMATION, FREE FROM 17/01/19 – 6 AM

International Classical Music Awards 2019

SPECIAL AWARDS

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Nelson Freire, piano

Fifty years ago, Nelson Freire recorded Brahms' third piano sonata for the first time. Recently, he undertook a remarkable digital remake, brought to life with breathtaking accuracy. The two recordings document and frame the outstanding life's achievement of this pianist, who always impresses with his artistic seriousness and depth.

ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Javier Perianes, piano

Javier Perianes is a highly inspired and sensitive pianist who fascinates with an incredibly rich and always lyrical piano sound, combining clear-sightedness and emotion, and bringing always new perspectives to the music.

YOUNG ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Matko Smolcic, bassoon

At his young age, Croatian bassoonist Matko Smolcic, a winner of numerous national and international competitions, is an accomplished soloist, chamber and orchestral musician in a repertoire stretching from Baroque to contemporary music. With his sensuous, warm and at the same time intensely communicative sound he brings nobility to his instrument.

DISCOVERY AWARD

Eva Gevorgyan, piano

At her young age Eva Gevorkian is already a winner of numerous international competitions. Apart from her bright emotional eloquence and impeccable technique, this young musician possesses the important features of a mature master. Among them, in particular, are the ability to freely manage tempi, to reveal all the possible colours and nuances of a modern piano as well as an astonishing sense of style.

LABEL OF THE YEAR

Ars Produktion

For over 30 years, the German classical label Ars Produktion has been a successful platform for young artists as well as for widely recognized musicians. Many releases

feature niche programs revealing hidden treasures. Artists, critics and listeners have pointed out the excellent recorded sound created by Manfred Schumacher, with most of the productions being released as high quality hybrid SACDs.

COMPOSER AWARD

Francisco Coll

Since he became the only private student of Thomas Adès in 2009, the career of Spanish composer Francisco Coll has traced an upward progression that has placed him as one of the most solid and interesting voices on the international scene, with regular premieres by groups such as London Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Ensemble Intercontemporain, and London Sinfonietta.

ORCHESTRA AWARD

Stephen Waarts, violin

We have met the violinist Stephen Waarts thanks to our friend and wonderful pianist Martin Helmchen. At an altitude of 2200 metres, on the peak of Mount Pilatus, the two musicians performed Robert Schumann's 2nd violin sonata. Beautifully and resolutely played opening chords were followed by a performance of the highest sensitivity. Rarely have we heard such a stirring interpretation of this sonata. Stephen Waarts has deep-layered timbres, a perfect technique and musical intelligence. A splendid performance by the 22-year-old violinist. He therefore deserves our recognition. We are proud to present him with the ICMA Orchestra Award 2019 (Statement by the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra)

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Numa Bischof Ullmann

For many years, Numa Bischof Ullmann has shaped the Swiss orchestral scene with his artistically innovative ideas, his tireless verve and with his corporate long-sightedness. Firstly, he worked with Basel Sinfonietta. Since 2004 he has been the intendant of the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra (LSO). He is still setting landmarks in the perception of these orchestras. With his many-sided activities, he opened new doors for the LSO and gave it a new self-confidence as the residence orchestra of the KKL Lucerne.

AUDIO & VIDEO CATEGORIES

EARLY MUSIC

Music In Medieval Denmark: 13th - 15th Century

Ensemble Peregrina

Agnieszka Budzinska-Bennett

Benjamin Bagby

Tacet

243

The Basel-based singer, harpist and musicologist Agnieszka Budzinska-Bennett and her specialized Ensemble Peregrina have explored medieval music on the highest musical and scientific levels for more than twenty years. With Benjamin Bagby (Sequentia) as a special guest, Volume I of their journey through the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea presents the earliest music preserved in Denmark.

BAROQUE INSTRUMENTAL

Johann Sebastian Bach: Violin Concertos BWV 1041, 1042, 1052
Berliner Barock Solisten
Frank Peter Zimmermann
Hänssler Classic
17046

On their new, mesmerizing CD with violin concertos by Johann Sebastian Bach, Berliner Barock Solisten and Frank Peter Zimmermann prove that modern instruments and historically informed playing combine in high-level performances. Rhetorical freedom and lively dynamics as well as truly enthusiastic playing are the most characteristic values of the production.

BAROQUE VOCAL

17th Century Sacred Music in Wroclaw
Concerto Palatino, Gli Angeli Genève,
Wroclaw Baroque Orchestra
Stephan MacLeod
Claves
501805

This is an exciting musical voyage led by three remarkable ensembles into unknown but fascinating landscape of baroque music with pieces from the 17th century coming from archives in Wroclaw. Gli Angeli Genève, Concerto Palatino, and the Wroclaw Baroque Orchestra under Stephan MacLeod deliver lively and subtle performances.

VOCAL RECITAL

Miroir(s)
Gounod - Massenet - Puccini - Steibelt - Rossini - Mozart - R. Strauss
Elsa Dreisig, soprano
Orchestre National de Montpellier
Michael Schönwandt
Erato
190295634131

The French-Danish soprano Elsa Dreisig, already awarded in 2017 as ICMA Young Artist of the Year, astonishes with her debut album Miroir(s), where she shows a mellifluous, charming soprano voice, an amazing depth of feeling and total ease and versatility in a very broad repertoire, from Mozart to Strauss. This is a concept album that achieves perfect balance between rarities and famous arias.

CHORAL MUSIC

Sergei Prokofiev: Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution
Ernst Senff Choir - Erfurt Air Force Music Corps
Staatskapelle Weimar
Kirill Karabits
Audite
97754

Kirill Karabits frees Prokofiev's October Revolution Cantata from any possible revolutionary pathos, enhancing the satirical and destructive character of the music, which Prokofiev didn't dare to publish. The large ensemble united for this performance delivers a taut and focused sound, superbly caught by the microphones.

OPERA

Gioacchino Rossini: Semiramide
Albina Shagimuratova, Daniela Barcellona, Mirco Palazzi, Barry Banks, Gianluca Buratto,
Susana Gaspar, David Butt Philip, James Platt
Opera Rara Chorus - Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
Mark Elder
Opera Rara
9293800572

The new recording of Gioacchino Rossini's Semiramide under the baton of Sir Mark Elder brings, despite relatively slow tempi throughout this performance, a great deal of freshness, resulting both from many dynamic contrasts and intense dramaturgy, as well as from a historically informed way of conducting. With a magnificent set of sensitive soloists and a chorus bursting with sweetness but also with energy, here is a very contemporary and convincing vision of this score.

SOLO INSTRUMENT

Wolfgang A. Mozart: Fantasy K. 475 + Piano Sonatas Nos. 14, 16 & 18
Maxim Emelyanychev
Aparté
AP 161

More than other composer's piano works, Mozart's solo sonatas need a sense for simplicity and strong transparency. Maxim Emelyanychev's unusual playing combines that lucidity with stylish ornamentation, nuanced touching, shaded dynamics, exquisite rubati, outstanding technical abilities and an overall authentic sound on a modern copy of a fortepiano from 1792.

CHAMBER MUSIC

Es war einmal – Once upon a time
Robert Schumann: Märchenerzählungen op. 132
Fantasiestücke op. 73 + Märchenbilder op. 113
Jörg Widmann: 5 Stücke im Märchentone
Jörg Widmann, Tabea Zimmermann, Denes Varjon
Myrios
MYR020

Once upon a time there was a CD which wove an inspiring and irresistible bond between Robert Schumann's romantic Fairy Tales and the work of one of today's most versatile composers, Jörg Widmann. The album Es war einmal proves that, with musicians like Tabea Zimmermann, Denes Varjon and Jörg Widmann, every fairy tale in music may become true.

CONCERTOS

The Golden Age - Cello 1925
Hindemith: Kammermusik No. 3 - Ibert: Concerto for Cello & Wind Instruments
Toch: Cello Concerto - Martinu: Concertino for Cello, Winds, Percussion & Piano
Christoph Heesch
Eroica Berlin, Jakob Lehmann
Genuin
GEN18613

For his debut CD, Christoph Heesch has put together an ambitious and attractive program. As an accomplished chamber musician, the young cellist communicates with his colleagues to enter into a true dialogue with them. So, together with the ensemble Eroica, he proves an inspired and expressively eloquent performer with a blooming, lyrical sound of great intensity.

Ex-aequo

Bartok: Violin Concertos Nos. 1 & 2
Christian Tetzlaff,
Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra
Hannu Lintu
Ondine
ODE1317-2

This release proves the excellence of violinist Christian Tetzlaff, conductor Hannu Lintu and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra in the repertoire of the 20th century. Together, they offer a masterful interpretation of Bartok's violin concertos. Tetzlaff and his Finnish partners use their outstanding abilities and musical senses to expressively recreate the moods without neglecting structural refinement.

SYMPHONIC MUSIC

Sibelius: Symphony No. 2 - Grieg: Allegretto grazioso + Melody Op. 34/2
Gürzenich-Orchester Köln
Dmitrij Kitajenko
Oehms Classics
OC457

In Sibelius' Second Symphony Dmitrij Kitajenko comes closer to the spirit of the score than a lot of other conductors, and his performance is one the most atmospheric and gripping available on disc. With extremely rich and differentiated textures, it breathes with stunning immediacy and impact. The playing of the Gürzenich Orchestra is superlative throughout.

Ex-aequo

Bernstein: Complete Symphonies + Prelude, Fugue & Riffs
Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Beatrice Rana
Nadine Serra, Josephine Barstow
Orchestra e Coro dell' Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia
Antonio Pappano
Warner Classics
01902956 61588

On the occasion of the Leonard Bernstein centenary, Antonio Pappano, various soloists and his Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia show that Bernstein's symphonies are now classics of the 20th century. The performances are excellent, lively, dynamic and sensitive as well.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Arvo Pärt: Symphonies Nos. 1- 4
NFM Wroclaw Philharmonic
Tõnu Kaljuste
ECM New Series
2600

For many years the Estonian conductor Tõnu Kaljuste has been one of the most prolific and substantial interpreters of Arvo Pärt's musical cosmos. His sublime and differentiated reading of the four Symphonies not only presents a journey through different compositional styles, such as neo-classical, serialist, gregorian-chant or church-slavonic-influenced and traditional, but also a deep understanding of the composer's spiritual quest.

ASSORTED PROGRAMS

In Time

Felix Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto op. 64 + String Octet op. 20

Chouchane Siranossian

Anima Eterna Brugge, Jakob Lehmann

Balasz Bozzai, Nicolas Mazzoleni, Bernadette Verhagen, Katya Polin,

Davit Melkonyan, Astrig Siranossian

Alpha

410

In these refreshing recordings, Chouchane Siranossian and her partners prove excellent Mendelssohn performers. Both in their original versions, the Violin Concerto and the String Octet are heard in lively and fiery performances, thus intensifying the bliss of the composer's inspiration. In the Concerto, full of sparkle and imagination, Chouchane Siranossian shows her outstanding technical and interpretative skills.

BEST COLLECTION

Jean Sibelius: Incidental Music

Turku Philharmonic Orchestra

Leif Segerstam

Naxos

8.506032

The box of incidental music of Jean Sibelius reveals hidden treasures, full of theatrical atmosphere and emotions as well as interesting reminiscences of the composer's more familiar masterworks. The Turku Philharmonic orchestra and Leif Segerstam dig deep into this rich theatrical sound world, captivating meaningful details and colourful sound.

HISTORICAL RECORDINGS

Birgit Nilsson. The Great Live Recordings

Sony Classical

88985392322

The director Otto Schenk once said that "Birgit Nilsson's miracle has to be experienced in the theater." For those who never saw her on a stage, this box is the closest we come to experiencing such a miracle, and the best possible tribute to one of the great sopranos of the 20th century.

VIDEO PERFORMANCE

Bartok: Bluebeard's Castle - Poulenc: La Voix Humaine

Barbara Hannigan, John Relyea, Ekaterina Gubanova

Paris Opera Orchestra

Esa-Pekka Salonen

Krzysztof Warlikowski

Arthaus Musik

109364

At first glance, the two one-act-operas La Voix Humaine and Bluebeard's Castle have no mutual musical relation. And yet, in this outstanding live recording with an extraordinary successful cast - Barbara Hannigan, John Relyea, Ekaterina Gubanova, and the Paris Opera Orchestra -, under the refined direction of Esa-Pekka Salonen, Krzysztof Warlikowski's inspired staging reunites both works in one absolutely fascinating production.

Ex-aequo

Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro
Ildebrando D'Arcangelo, Dorothea Röschmann
Anna Prohaska, Lauri Vasar, Marianne Crebassa
Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin
Gustavo Dudamel
Jürgen Flimm & Bettina Hartmann
Accentus Music
ACC20366

With Jürgen Flimm's inventive and lively staging in Almaviva's summer residence, as well as an excellent cast, this is an outstanding performance of Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro, consistently conveying a very fresh and delightful humour. Despite rather measured speeds, Gustavo Dudamel's inspired conducting carries all the sparkle of the music.

VIDEO DOCUMENTARIES

Belcanto - The Tenors of the 19th Era
Documentary by Jan Schmidt-Garre
Caruso, Slezak, Tauber, McCormack, Schipa, Gigli, Schmidt, Koslovsky, Björling et al.
Naxos
2110389-91

This documentary allows us to travel back to the beginning of the 20th century, getting in touch with the singers who built the modern 'myth' of the tenor voice, from Gigli to Tauber, from Caruso to Melchior, in an effective mix of vocal charm and public charisma. With rare restored material, this documentary is a must for every opera lover.