

EMBARGOED INFORMATION, FREE FROM 21/01/20 – 6 AM

International Classical Music Awards 2020

SPECIAL AWARDS

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Elisabeth Leonskaja, piano

Elisabeth Leonskaja is one of those rare musicians who seem to transcend their time: she is a performer for the ages, and one of the last of the great Russian school, an immense artist whose intellectually superior humility in the face of music has made her universal reputation. Her recent recordings of the Schubert Sonatas - so vivid and so crisp - show that she is not repeating earlier interpretations but continuously refreshes her approach to the great repertoire.

ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Marina Rebeka, soprano

The Latvian singer Marina Rebeka embodies, perhaps more than any other, the idea of the 'absolute soprano': her repertoire spanning from Baroque to Verismo, from Belcanto to Russian music. She always stands out for the astounding perfection of her singing, her immaculate diction in many languages and a moving commitment to the theatrical demands of the different characters.

YOUNG ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Erica Piccotti, cello

Erica Piccotti is already, at 20, a cello player of enormous promise: her warm, velvety tone, coupled with an astonishing technical proficiency, allows her natural musical sensitivity to flow with beauty and spontaneity. Listening to Erica's playing, it is easy to indulge in comparison with the great cello players of the past, for her maturity as an artist truly belies her age.

DISCOVERY AWARD

Philipp Schupelius, cello

The young German cellist Philipp Schupelius is an exceptionally gifted and charismatic musician. Characterized by rare passion and a total intellectual and emotional involvement, Philipp's performances go straight to the heart. With his musical imagination coupled with technical virtuosity, he is at home in a broad repertoire. Such strong musicality and skill means that he has a bright future ahead of him.

LABEL OF THE YEAR

Pentatone Classics

The Dutch label Pentatone does not limit itself to a specific period or genre, but releases great recordings of music from Baroque to the 21st century. Paying special attention to the quality of the recording process, the label offers both Vinyl and Hybrid SACD with deep and spacious sound of the highest quality. Its releases are appreciated not only for the extraordinary level of the interpretations but also for their modern and elegant design.

COMPOSER AWARD

Ivan Boumans

The Spanish-Luxembourgish composer and conductor Ivan Boumans is a very prolific composer with skills across all genres. But he is also more than that: in his so far 150-plus works from solo to chamber music, film and symphonic music as well as music-theatre, he has proved himself a composer of huge imagination and great musical expressivity revealing a deep artistic personality.

ORCHESTRA AWARD

Pepe Romero

Who is Pepe Romero? I can say he is my dear friend and colleague with whom we recently made a successful tour in Germany. But perhaps it must be asked: Who is not Pepe Romero?

Pepe is not an ordinary musician. He is extraordinary, with aristocratic musical genes that would make even a monarch jealous and an artistic sensibility and curiosity that inspires everyone with whom he performs.

Pepe is not an egomaniac. He is an almanac of musical knowledge and an authentic person who generously shares his soul on stage for all to enjoy.

Pepe is not a trend. He is a legend in his time and for all time, championing Spanish music and bringing the full repertoire for the guitar to the world for over a half century.

Without Pepe, our musical literacy would be incomplete. Without Pepe, our lives would be emptier.

So it is for these reasons and so many more that the Real Orquesta Sinfonica and I present this special ICMA 2020 Orchestra Award to Pepe Romero, who is not just any soloist of great fame, but a true member of our musical family forever. (Statement by John Axelrod)

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

John Axelrod

John Axelrod is a highly imaginative and dynamic musician, whose rich musicological background and historical insights combine with intellectual drive and charismatic enthusiasm for people and for life, to get probing, rigorous and richly characterised interpretations. One of John Axelrod's strengths is the energy he brings to live performances, based on his conviction that each opportunity to make music is a chance to bring about a better world.

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Jérôme Lejeune

In 1980, Jérôme Lejeune founded the Belgian label Ricercar. 40 years on, Ricercar is a reference point for ancient and Baroque music. Music lovers owe him for many discoveries — from rare scores to several generations of excellent artists.

AUDIO & VIDEO CATEGORIES

EARLY MUSIC

Willaert e la Scuola Fiamminga a San Marco

Cappella Marciana, La Pifarescha

Marco Gemmani

Concerto Classics

2117

Successfully conceived as a musical companion to an exhibition of paintings at the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, this CD perfectly reflects the magnificence of the works of Adrian Willaert, a Flemish composer who was in charge of the music at San Marco in the 16th century. The Cappella Marciana does full justice to the extreme complexity of this repertoire, with a Mediterranean touch of melodic beauty.

BAROQUE INSTRUMENTAL

Night Music

Vivaldi - Gerardo - Eyck - Lully - Hotteterre - Biber

Dorothee Oberlinger

I Sonatori de la Gioiosa Marca

Deutsche Harmonia Mundi

190759 12522

Offering a thrilling and stylish tour through nocturnal music across the ages, the German recorder player Dorothee Oberlinger and Sonatori de la Gioiosa Marca present various facets of the night.

The well selected repertoire from Middle Ages to the 20th century requires a wide spectrum of styles and techniques. The result of this nocturnal exploration is fascinating: the sophisticated, colourful playing and the rhetoric performances reveal Dorothee Oberlinger's creative intelligence, which is stimulatingly paired with much poetry and charm.

BAROQUE VOCAL

Georg Friedrich Händel: Serse

Franco Fagioli, Vivica Genaux, Inga Kalna, Francesca Aspromonte

Andrea Mastroni, Delphine Galou, Biagio Pizzuti

Il Pomo d'Oro

Maxim Emelyanychev

Deutsche Grammophon

4835784

This recording of Handel's opera Serse will go down in history as the first recording of this work with a countertenor performing the title role. But it is about more than the Serse himself. The phenomenal mastery of Franco Fagioli, who is in the prime of his talent, is framed by an excellent cast and supported by the bright and impeccable performance of Pomo d'Oro. Maxim Emelyanychev's conducting is fresh and stylish, powerfully engaging his creative partners thanks to his charisma and great talent.

VOCAL MUSIC

Franz Schubert: Winterreise

Ian Bostridge, Thomas Adès

Pentatone Classics

PTC 518676

Ian Bostridge's third recording of Schubert's Winterreise shows many developments in the singer's view of this cycle. Bostridge's voice is richer now, and in the lower range also darker, which allows more colours and a correspondingly greater expressive potential to make every important word meaningful. Supported by Thomas Adès, who fully shares his emotional view, Bostridge succeeds in creating a rare unity of the music by combining the individual songs into a single trajectory of thought. He is fully immersed in the devastating melancholy and merciless irony of Schubert's music.

CHORAL MUSIC

Piotr Tchaikovsky: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom - Nine Sacred Choruses

Latvian Radio Choir

Sigvards Klava

Ondine

ODE 1336-2

This CD highlights Tchaikovsky's role as an innovator of Orthodox music. The Latvian Chamber Choir sings Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and other sacred works with an angelic purity and brightness that emphasizes the universality of the music. The harmonies seem to glow and the melodies create a long, intense arc that combines beauty, spirituality and passion.

Ex-aequo

Arthur Honegger: Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher

Judith Chemla, Jean-Claude Drouot, Christian Gonon, Adrien Gamba-Gontard, Claire de Sévigné,
Christine Goerke, Judit Kutasi, Jean-Noël Briend, Steven Humes
Rotterdam Symphony Chorus, Netherlands Children's Choir
Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra
Stéphane Denève
RCO Live
19001

The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam has a great reputation for music from the French tradition. Under the baton of Stéphane Denève, orchestra, choir and a wonderful cast deliver an exciting interpretation of Arthur Honegger's dramatic oratorio Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher. The Concertgebouw Orchestra's reading is rich in detail and impresses with a wonderful palette of colours. The live recording from 2018 also has a very good sound quality.

OPERA

Antonio Salieri: Tarare

Judith van Wanroij, Jérôme Boutillier, Tassis Christoyannis, Philippe-Nicolas Martin
Cyrille Dubois, Jean-Sébastien Bou, Marine Lafdal-Franc,
Danaé Monnié, Enguerrand de Hys, Karine Deshayes
Les Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles
Les Talens Lyriques
Christophe Rousset
Aparté
AP208

Christoph Rousset's recording of Salieri's Tarare is characterized by strong dramatic musical flow and full of a splendid virtuosity that is absolutely essential in an 18th century opera. The orchestra as well as the singers convey plenty of esprit and finesse, with results that make the recording very impressive and highly recommendable. In such a performance, this revival of one of the most important operas of its time is a real revelation.

SOLO INSTRUMENT

Beethoven/Liszt - Schubert - Haydn - Say - Bartok - Sasaki
Can Çakmur, piano
BIS
2430

This very first CD by the young Turkish pianist Can Çakmur is a distinctive achievement. Comprising a wide range of works from Haydn to modern Turkish and Japanese composers, it is a wonderful tribute to the vision and depth of this already mature artist. Based on an analytical approach that doesn't affect the spontaneity of his interpretations, Can Çakmur's soundscapes and his ability to share energies with the listener makes this a superb release.

Ex-aequo

Schubert: Sonata D 960 - Drei Klavierstücke D 946 - Moments Musicaux D 780
Dina Ugorskaja
Cavi
8553107

"In this music, time occasionally seems to stand still", Dina Ugorskaja wrote about Schubert. In her double album, she bares the very soul of the Moments Musicaux, not shying away from the moments of deep sorrow and loneliness in Schubert's sonata in B flat Major. Dina Ugorskaja died far too young. This Schubert album is a great pianist's legacy.

CHAMBER MUSIC

Lili Boulanger: Nocturne - César Franck: Violin Sonata - Louis Vierne: Violin Sonata Op. 23
Eugène Ysaÿe: Poème élégiaque Op. 12
Alina Ibragimova, Cédric Tiberghien
Hyperion
CDA68024

The violinist Alina Ibragimova and pianist Cédric Tiberghien are a consistently impressive musical duo. In this recording devoted to French and Belgian composers, they revisit the famous Sonata of César Franck and also let us discover rarer scores by Louis Vierne and Eugène Ysaÿe. The entire programme shows the deep musicality of Ibragimova and Tiberghien. Their lovely performances are tasteful and stylish.

CONCERTOS

Ferruccio Busoni: Piano Concerto
Kirill Gerstein
Men of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus
Boston Symphony Orchestra
Sakari Oramo
Myrios
MYR024

Ferruccio Busoni's monumental Piano Concerto is a very challenging work. Kirill Gerstein upholds the highest standards in its rarefied performance history. Neither the barnstorming power nor the Mediterranean playfulness that are equally important components of Busoni's music are missing in this incredibly attractive interpretation. With perfect harmony between pianist Kirill Gerstein and conductor Sakari Oramo, this recording of Busoni's Piano Concerto is a precious addition to the catalogue.

SYMPHONIC MUSIC

Ludwig van Beethoven
Complete Symphonies
Sara Swietlicki, Morten Grove Frandsen, Ilker Arcayürek, Lars Møller
Danish National Concert Choir
Danish Chamber Orchestra
Adam Fischer
Naxos
8.505251

Adam Fischer and the Danish Chamber Orchestra present a very convincing, coherent and meaningful set of Beethoven's symphonies whose main characteristic is the rhetorical diversity showing all Beethoven's various facets. This eloquence is achieved with a consistently slender, low-vibrato music-making and a wide range of tempi, rhythm and dynamics. Exciting contrasts, powerful accents, expressive rubato let Beethoven 'speak' in a most persuasive way.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Dusapin: Penthesilea
Georg Nigl, Natascha Petrinsky, Marisol Montalvo, Werner van Mechelen, Eve-Maud Hubeau,
Wiard Withol, Yaroslava Kozin, Marta Baretta
Orchestre Symphonique et Chœurs de la Monnaie
Franck Ollu
Cyprès
CYP4654

In Penthesilea, Pascal Dusapin presents one of the greatest operas of our time. Exploring human desire, the score is a masterpiece of exceptional musical and dramatic strength. Recorded under the concentrated conducting of Franck Ollu at the Royal Theatre of La Monnaie in Brussels, a world-class place for contemporary opera, it is musically impeccable, with a wonderfully clear and spacious sound.

ASSORTED PROGRAMS

Antonio Vivaldi: Arias & instrumental works
Léa Desandre, Bruno Philippe, Peter Whelan
Jean Rondeau, Cecilia Bernardini, Louis Creac'h
Jérôme Van Waerbeke, Douglas Balliett
Jupiter, Thomas Dunford

Alpha
550

The debut recording of Jupiter (a group formed in 2018 by the young lute player Thomas Dunford) is destined to become an inevitable reference point for lovers of Antonio Vivaldi's music, not only in the vocal pieces (with a fine selection of arias superbly performed by the mezzo-soprano Lea Desandre), but also in the orchestral works. This is the very latest generation of Baroque musicians, ready to break down any kind of barriers.

BEST COLLECTION

Mieczysław Weinberg: Chamber Music
Alexei Mikhlin, Evgeniya Seydel, Alexander Brusilovsky, Fyodor Druzhinin, Alla Vasilieva,
Mieczysław Weinberg, Timofei Dokschtzer
Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra
Borodin Quartet, Algis Zhuraitis, Rudolf Barshai

Melodiya
MELCD 1002519

The collection of works by Mieczysław Weinberg published by Melodiya stands out even against the backdrop of many brilliant releases with which the music world recently celebrated the centenary of birth of this genius composer. This collection of rare recordings captures not only the unique voice of Weinberg's music, but also his own art of performing together with outstanding Russian musicians who were his contemporaries.

HISTORICAL RECORDINGS

Wilhelm Furtwängler - The Radio Recordings 1939-1945
Edwin Fischer, Peter Anders, Walter Gieseking, Tilla Briem, Elisabeth Höngen, Rudolf Watzke
Erna Berger, Walther Ludwig, Fritz Heitmann, Georg Kulenkampff, Conrad Hansen
Pierre Fournier, Adrian Aeschbacher
Berliner Philharmoniker
Wilhelm Furtwängler
Berliner Philharmoniker Recordings

BPHR 8949955

Reuniting the recorded Furtwängler concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic between 1939 and 1945, this box is an essential document of this legendary conductor. The new remastering of original radio tapes allows the listener to discover many important, previously inaudible details which help to understand how amazing an artist Wilhelm Furtwängler was. Some of the performances are so potent that they seem to depict the tragedy of that time. The 184-page long booklet is fascinatingly documented.

VIDEO PERFORMANCE

Richard Strauss: Salome
Asmik Grigorian, John Daszak, Anna Maria Chiuri, Gábor Bretz, Julian Prégardien
Wiener Philharmoniker, Franz Welser-Möst
Romeo Castellucci, stage director

Unitel Edition
801608

This 2018 Salzburg Festival production of Richard Strauss's provocative opera Salome has many high qualities. Romeo Castellucci's incredibly imaginative staging is characterized by its intense symbolism. With her strong and agile voice, Asmik Grigorian is a triumphantly successful interpreter of the title role, musically and dramatically. John Daszak is an excellent Herod, and the rest of the cast is of the finest Salzburg standard. Under the commanding and sympathetic baton

of Franz Welser-Möst the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra provides a rapturously successful musical support.

VIDEO DOCUMENTARIES

Gidon Kremer – Finding your own voice

Directed Paul Smaczny

Kremerata Baltica, Giedre Dirvanauskaite, Tatjana Grindenko, Olesya Petrova, Evgeny Svetlanov Orchestra, Vladimir Jurowski, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony, Jacek Kaspszyk

Mieczyslaw Weinberg: Preludes to a Lost Time

Accentus

ACC20414

Paul Smaczny's film about the Latvian violinist Gidon Kremer, certainly one of the most unconventional and exciting musicians of our time, accompanies the violinist on tour and looks back on important moments of his life. Smaczny explores the musician's many artistic, intellectual and emotional facets with great empathy and deep understanding for an artist with an exceptional sense of mission and moral responsibility. In addition to the incredibly enriching documentary film, the DVD also includes a recording of a concert at Moscow's Gogol Centre, with Gidon Kremer playing Weinberg's 24 Preludes, originally for cello, arranged by Kremer for violin.