

# Vocal



David Patrick Stearns on the latest Szymanowski from Chandos:

*'The choral/orchestral forces benefit from Gardner's unindulgent but still atmospheric balancing of elements'* ► REVIEW ON PAGE 91



Alexandra Coghlan on her exploration of Brumel's

*'Cantatas bustle with enlivening Lutheran gestures'* ► REVIEW ON PAGE 91

## Berg · Zemlinsky

Lieder

**Berg** Sieben frühe Lieder (arr de Leeuw) **Busoni**

Berceuse élégiaque, Op 42 (arr Schoenberg)

**Webern** Passacaglia, Op 1 (arr de Leeuw)

**Zemlinsky** Six Songs to Poems by Maurice

Maeterlinck, Op 13

**Katrien Baerts** sop

Het Collectief / Reinbert de Leeuw

Zig-Zag Territoires (C) ZZT345 (51' · DDD)



The short-lived Society for Private Musical Performances, founded by

Schoenberg and his pupils, is the inspiration for this unusual disc. Restricted by their limited funds, the Society's concerts regularly offered full-scale works in modest arrangements. As a result, reductions exist of a fair number of pieces by Second Viennese School composers for small, flexible ensembles, and it is in that spirit that Reinbert de Leeuw has conceived this programme. Old or new, the arrangements mostly employ nine or ten instruments and crucially include the distinctive sounds of harmonium and piano.

This is a world of shimmering beauty, reflected in glowing colours. Busoni's dreamy *Berceuse élégiaque*, in an arrangement by Schoenberg, sets the tone. Then two sets of songs – Berg's *Seven Early Songs* and Zemlinsky's little-heard *Six Songs after Maeterlinck* – are sung with light, lyrical warmth by soprano Katrien Baerts. De Leeuw's arrangements of the Berg engage the most suggestive of colours, subtly underpinned by the harmonium (there is little of the post-Wagnerian lushness found in Berg's own version for full orchestra). Various hands were involved in the arrangements of the Zemlinsky songs, which range from a dark, fairy-tale ambience to *Pelléas*-like, barely suppressed passion. The disc ends with Webern's Op 1 Passacaglia, arranged again by de Leeuw and played on a surprisingly large scale by the fine musicians of Het

Collectief. Only just over 50 minutes' playing time, but this is a disc where size is pointedly not the issue. **Richard Fairman**

## Brahms

Warum ist das Licht gegeben, Op 74 No 1

Fünf Gesänge, Op 104. Schicksalslied, Op 54\*

Drei Motetten, Op 110. Drei Quartette.

Fest- und Gedenksprüche, Op 109.

Intermezzo, Op 119 No 1\*

**Cappella Amsterdam / Daniel Reuss** with

**Philip Mayers**, \***Angela Gassenhuber** pf

Harmonia Mundi (C) HMC90 2160 (70' · DDD · T/D)



From the three sets of unaccompanied motets

Brahms composed at various times, only

one from the second set (Op 74) and the complete final set (Op 110) are included on this disc, revealing an intriguing juxtaposing of stylistic influences. Bach is very much in evidence in the four-section *Warum ist das Licht*, while Brahms's study of the Renaissance polyphonists strongly flavours the shorter Op 110 motets, and all are infused with the lush harmonic vocabulary of late-19th-century Germany. Cappella Amsterdam perform these works with immaculate poise and a wonderfully rich breadth of tone, magically captured by this warmly atmospheric recording. Daniel Reuss induces a sumptuous sound from his singers, no question about it, but whether he more than dips an interpretative toe into the complexities of Brahms's sacred motets is open to question.

Certainly the secular works on this disc come across with far more conviction. The choral sound is never anything but immensely beautiful; but, wonderful as the unaccompanied singing is, the intense beauty of the *Song of Destiny* is, if anything, enhanced by the gorgeously moulded accompaniment from the piano partnership of Philip Mayers and Angela Gassenhuber.

The latter pianist crops up again in a delicate and discreet account of one of the solo piano Intermezzos which makes a

surprising bridging chorale which is the first of the have seemed to actually is, were of aural lacquer programme. A from piece to enough to ask mixed bag of us. **Marc Rocher**

## Brumel

Missa de Beata

Beata es, Mari

canunt omnia

**The Brabant Er**

Hyperion (C) CD



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