

form, with Buchbinder letting the music pause and ruminate, rather than forcing it into the straitjacket of a tight structure. But his treatment of the remaining three movements doesn't possess the same sureness: the *Andante* is heavy, the *Scherzo* and Trio rather charmless, and the concluding *Allegro* has a relentlessly pressured urgency. For a definitive account of that, go to Mitsuko Uchida's fine Philips recording.

Michael Church

SEE SIANG WONG:

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★
RUDOLF BUCHBINDER:
PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★



SCHUMANN

Album für die Jugend

Florian Uhlig (piano)
Hänssler Classics SCM CD 98.013
78:29 mins
BBC Music Direct £10.99

Florian Uhlig, reaching the sixth volume in his epic traversal of Schumann's piano works, takes us into memory-lane territory. So deeply embedded are the best-known pieces of the composer's *Album for the Young* in the consciousness of anyone who learned the piano as a child that it can be easy to forget what terrific music it is. Indeed, Schumann set out to provide top-quality repertoire that could engage and entertain his children, and others, in their musical studies.

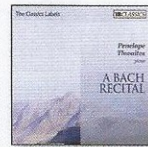
Uhlig treats the music of Book 1 (*Für Kleinere* – For Little Ones) with the seriousness it deserves, delivering plenty of drama in 'Knecht Ruprecht' and demonstrating just how songful and Schumannian pieces such as 'Mai, lieber Mai' should sound. The second book, at intermediate level, is perhaps less generally familiar, but it contains some absolute gems. Among them is a pastiche *Song without Words* called 'Erinnerung (4 November 1847 – Mendelssohns Todestag)' in which Schumann captures his late friend's musical style to perfection while paying a tender, quietly distressed tribute to him.

Uhlig's playing is by turns raptly beautiful and full of energy – the 'Kleine Fuge', for instance, has a delicious bounce. He shows us just how Schumann's affection for his children was reflected in empathetic

creations that cede no musical inspiration to the relative simplicity of the technique required to play them. This recording is not only instructive, it's a treasure trove of gorgeous music.

Jessica Duchon

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★



A BACH RECITAL

JS Bach: Six Little Preludes; Italian Concerto; arrangements and transcriptions of Bach by Liszt, Rummel, Hess and Busoni

Penelope Thwaites (piano)
LIR Classics LIR027 59:37 mins
BBC Music Direct £9.99

Best known for her championship of Percy Grainger, Penelope Thwaites here offers an attractive selection of arrangements and original versions of Bach's keyboard works. Two transcriptions by Liszt frame the recital: the Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, BWV 542 and the Prelude and Fugue in A minor, BWV 543 – works originally conceived for the organ, whose colours, complexity and monumental scale are well suited to Liszt's Romantic construal. Thwaites responds with expressive, luxuriant playing and an intuitive sense of the music's architecture. Only in the A minor Prelude is there a slightly lumbering quality.

The expansive majesty of these transcriptions is offset by the intimate sound-world of Bach's *Six Little Preludes* and the sparkling Baroque brilliance of his *Italian Concerto*. Thwaites's approach to Bach's originals is refreshingly unfashionable, eschewing period style in favour of a Romantically-inspired, pianistic approach. She exploits the instrument's natural resonance and colouristic potential, here and throughout the recital: the tone is veiled and velvet in the cherished version of *Jesus, Joy of Man's Desiring* by Myra Hess, sonorous and all-embracing in Walter Rummel's reinterpretation of *Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn*. There are moments, too, of sheer serenity – in *Mortify Us by Thy Grace* (Rummel's arrangement of *Ertödt uns durch dein Güte*) and in the *Italian Concerto's Andante* which floats luminously in the fine acoustic of Potton Hall in Suffolk.

Kate Bolton
PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★



A TRIBUTE TO OSCAR PETERSON

Oscar Peterson (improvisations):

Lulu's Back in Town; Round Midnight; Body and soul; A Child is Born; Little Girl Blue; Take the 'A' Train; Basin Street Blues; How Long Has This Been Going On; The Nearness of You; Over The Rainbow; Things Ain't What They Used to Be; Perdido

Andrew Litton (piano)
BIS BIS-2034 (hybrid CD/SACD) 54 mins
BBC Music Direct £12.99

Among classical pianists, jazz has become not just a source of fascination, but repertoire. Twenty years ago, Steven Mayer recorded an album of Art Tatum transcriptions, and Jean-Yves Thibaudet paid similar homage to Bill Evans, while the ever-individual Joanna MacGregor has channelled performances by Erroll Garner and Thelonious Monk.

The latest project recasting brilliant improvisations as concert works is Andrew Litton's *A Tribute to Oscar Peterson*. The Canadian jazz master makes a particularly suitable candidate for classical transcription because his technique was legendary. A mighty virtuoso, he was proud that his teacher had a direct pedagogical link with Liszt. Indeed, it was the virtuosity Peterson displayed on his recordings that first thrilled the teenage Andrew Litton, and which he ardently recreates on this disc. It's filled with bravura flights on evergreen standards – *Round Midnight*, *Little Girl Blue*, *Perdido* – teeming with the torrents and cascades of swirling sound that were Peterson's trademark, the amazing double-handed runs and tremolos that leave the listener gasping.

Ballads predominate, providing ample scope for embellishment. However, despite variation in dynamics, an overall sameness of colour and texture imparts a certain uniformity. But then this disc is less about jazz's sound of surprise than sheer delight in dazzlement. And these pieces may find their way into recitals – coming soon to an encore near you. I guess, in cold blood, I'd give it three stars for performance, five for sound. *Geoffrey Smith*

PERFORMANCE ★★
RECORDING ★★

Hear the BBC Music team give its verdict on this CD on our 'First Listen' podcast, available from iTunes & www.classical-music.com

REISSUES

Reviewed by Tim Parry

CHOPIN • LISZT

Works by Liszt, Brahms, Schumann and Chopin
Julius Katchen (piano)
Audite 21.419 (1962, 1964) 109:06 mins
BBC Music Direct £14.99

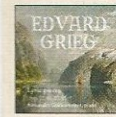


Katchen is well known for his imperious Brahms, but the true revelations in these 1960s German radio recordings are the Chopin and Liszt. A wonderful fusion of technique and imagination.

PERFORMANCE ★★
SOUND ★★

GRIEG

Lyric Pieces
Alexander Goldenweiser (piano)
Melodiya MELCD1002118 (1903, 1950-54)
70:03 mins
BBC Music Direct £11.99



Goldenweiser's *Lyric Pieces*, recorded in his late 70s, have a lovely expressive purity, although there are some technical frailties. Two of Grieg's own piano-roll recordings from 1903 are a welcome bonus.

PERFORMANCE ★★
SOUND ★★

SCHUMANN • LISZT

Piano Sonatas
Lazar Berman (piano)
Melodiya MELCD1002145 (1970s)
79:01 mins
BBC Music Direct £11.99

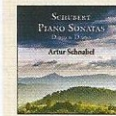


When on song, Lazar Berman's pianism could be overwhelming. These recordings are viscerally exciting, if occasionally over-aggressive, and not for the faint-hearted. Boxy sound.

PERFORMANCE ★★
SOUND ★★

SCHUBERT

Piano Sonatas, D959 & D960
Artur Schnabel (piano)
Regis RRC1415 (1937, 1939) 70:21 mins
BBC Music Direct £6.99



Schnabel's Schubert has characteristic insight and lucidity, especially in the slow movements. The first movements are marred by uneasy accelerations of tempo (D960), and a curious strenuousness (D959), but the rest is very compelling.

PERFORMANCE ★★
SOUND ★★