

New horizons for Concertgebouw

Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra has a solid reputation for premiering works, including those of Mahler and Richard Strauss early last century. Now it is extending that tradition to recording by launching the Horizon series on its RCO Live label.

Horizon Volume 1 features Markus Stenz conducting works by Moritz Eggert, Colin Matthews, Theo Verbeij and Detlev Glanert, all but the last world premieres.

David Bazen, the RCO's marketing manager, says the recordings will be drawn from the orchestra's A-series of concerts, devoted to 20th- and 21st-century music, each programme performed twice and drawing a respectable 75-85% attendance, compared with an overall level of 92%.

'We are very proud of the series and for us it's very important that these premieres are documented which is why we decided last year to record them ourselves, now that we have a record label of our own. We find that these pieces are performed once or twice and then not again. So we decided to record all the programmes that have world premieres or national premieres and then decide if we want to release the material.'



Caitlin Moritz

Recording premieres:
Markus Stenz

There will be one Horizon release a year, alongside an average four releases a year of mainstream repertoire on RCO Live. After four years, the label is breaking even on all releases, with its debut disc from 2004, Mariss Jansons conducting Dvořák Symphony No 9,

the top seller, having shifted more than 20,000 discs.

It has also released four volumes in its Anthology series, of performances spanning from 1935 to 1980. Volume 5 (1980-1990) is due for release this winter.

New releases reviewed by Phillip Sommerich



Shostakovich: Piano Trios Nos 1 & 2, Quintet for piano and strings. London Mozart Trio & Chamber Ensemble. Big ears BE 002

★★★★★

Little hint here in the too polished playing of anguish underlying Shostakovich's Piano Trio No 2, but delicate dynamics and taut ensemble are eerily telling in the earlier work and the quintet. Available from www.merlinclassics.com



Haydn, Schubert: Sonatas. Chopin: Scherzo No 2. Anja German. Diversions ddv24136.

★★★★★

Part of 22-year-old German's prize for winning last year's Manchester competition for young pianists is this disc and while she is a tad too cautious in the Haydn, the clarity of lines and colour in the Schubert and energy of the Chopin vindicate the judges.



Brahms: Sonata No 2, Eight Piano Pieces Op. 76, Three Intermezzi Op. 117. Libor Novacek. Landor LAN285.

★★★★★

Novacek's strong sense of architecture in marshalling an absorbing unity from the sprawling, turbulent sonata is matched by the yearning delicacy of the Op 76 and the Intermezzi.



Debussy: Preludes Books 1 & 2. Ivan Illic. Paraty 108.105.

★★★★★

A swirling west wind, spectral underwater cathedral or quirky military gent – Illic, a 28-year-old American based in Paris, captures each of Debussy's mini-portraits vividly. The order of the preludes on disc is unconventional but fidelity to what the score says is impeccable.

RECORDING OF THE FORTNIGHT



De Fuego y de Agua. Mayte Martín, Katia and Marielle Labèque. KML 1119

★★★★★

Fire and water indeed in this excursion through Spanish music on the Labèque sisters' own label. The brilliant arrangements by Joan Albert Amargós for piano duo of often guitar-based traditional airs, the Labèques' storming rendition of these and works by Falla, Rodrigo and Granados, and the gravelly, kenning voice of Mayte Martín are an intoxicating cocktail.