

bonum' (a passionate setting of Robert Browning by the 19-year-old RCM student – with a quotation from *Tristan und Isolde* in the piano part) to the *Two English Folksongs* for tenor and violin first published in 1935. 'Linden Lea' is heard in a mellifluous version for SATB and piano from 1929 by Sumner Salter (1856-1944), and I'm very much taken with the piercingly poignant 1912 setting of the folksong 'How cold the wind doth blow' (alternatively known as 'The Unquiet Grave'). Listen out, too, for those especially imaginative duet treatments of Whitman's 'The Last Invocation' and 'The Love-Song of the Birds', as well as 'Fear no more the heat o' the sun' from *Cymbeline* and 'It was a lover and his lass' from *As You Like It*. Vocal and instrumental contributions alike leave nothing to be desired – and a special word of praise for William Vann's deft pianism.

Exemplary production values bolster the appeal of these two Albion releases, both of which can be cordially recommended to all RVW acolytes. **Andrew Achenbach**

'Aksel!'

JS Bach Bist du bei mir, BWV508. Cantata No 51 – Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen. Cantata No 68 – Mein gläubiges Herze. Cantata No 205 – Angenehmer Zephyrus. Magnificat, BWV243 – Quia respexit. St John Passion, BWV245 – Ich folge dir gleichfalls **Handel** Alcina – Barbara! Io ben lo so; Chi m'insegna il caro padre. *Eternal Source of Light Divine*, HWV74. Joshua, HWV64 – Happy, oh thrice happy we; Oh! had I Jubal's lyre. Messiah, HWV56 – How beautiful are the feet; Thou art gone up on high. Rinaldo – Lascia ch'io pianga. Samson, HWV57 – Let the bright Seraphim **Mozart** Exsultate, jubilate, K165 – Alleluia. Le nozze di Figaro – Non so più; Voi, che sapete

Aksel Rykkvin *treb* **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** / **Nigel Short**
Signum © SIGCD435 (58' • DDD • T/t)



A successful boy treble is every record label's nightmare. No sooner does your artist reach

his peak than he is forced to retire for at least a decade. Which is no reason not to celebrate and preserve this fleeting musical moment. Thirteen-year-old Norwegian chorister Aksel Rykkvin is certainly a treble worth preserving – a mature, musical performer whose unbroken voice offers a fascinating alternative take on much of the familiar repertoire recorded here.

Ignore the exclamation mark of the title. It does Rykkvin an enormous disservice, reducing what is an

accomplished and adult disc to a novelty nightmare. The music here is carefully chosen – not just textually but musically appropriate for so young a performer. There are no Queen of the Night arias nor twee arrangements of Puccini, just a solid mixture of Bach, Handel and Mozart. Some will balk at a treble singing Cherubino's arias, but if the result isn't exactly authentic it's a fascinating and legitimate experiment, especially when performed as well as here, with Rykkvin living the breathless, desperate emotional confusion of 'Non so più'.

Recordings of 'Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen' and 'Ich folge dir gleichfalls' make the most of this agile, accurate voice, while *Eternal Source* celebrates the easy grace of his upper register. But most interesting, perhaps, are Oberto's two arias from Handel's *Alcina*. Composed for the treble William Savage, these are nevertheless uncompromisingly virtuoso pieces, especially the dramatic 'Barbara! Io ben lo so' – a rare example of serious operatic repertoire for this voice. Rykkvin's passagework is nimble, his phrasing instinctive, and if he doesn't have quite the emotional maturity 12-year-old Tolzer Knabenchor treble Elias Madler recently displayed in Katie Mitchell's staged production for the Aix festival, this might be explained by the lack of dramatic context.

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and conductor Nigel Short are Rykkvin's very classy colleagues, supporting the young soloist with some exquisite obbligato solos and consistently lively, generous tempi. All add up to a recording that's much more than just the cute curiosity its cover suggests.

Alexandra Coghlan

'Chanson perpétuelle'

Berlioz La captive^a **Caplet** Viens – une flûte invisible soupire^a **Chausson** Chanson perpétuelle^c **Debussy** Proses lyriques **Gaubert** Soir païen^a **Ravel** Chansons madécasses^{ab}. *Histoires naturelles* **Saint-Saëns** Une flûte invisible^a. Violons dans le soir^c
Katherine Broderick *sop* **James Baillieu** *pf* with ^a**Adam Walker** *fl* ^b**Tim Lowe** *vc* ^c**Heath Quartet**
Champs Hill © CHRCD095 (81' • DDD • T/t)



There's been a surge of interest in French chamber songs of late, and Katherine

Broderick's new Champs Hill recital shares some of its material, inevitably perhaps, with both Marie-Nicole Lemieux's