

# ORCHESTRAL

*Daniel Barenboim* and *Pierre Boulez* tackle Liszt; clarinetist *Sharon Kam*'s beautiful tone shimmers in Mozart; plus Vaughan Williams's *Flos Campi* blooms in *Lawrence Power*'s hands

## BBC MUSIC ORCHESTRAL CHOICE

### Fresh sounds take flight

*Christopher Dingle* is enchanted by birdsong from Jonathan Harvey



#### HARVEY

**Bird Concerto with Pianosong; Ricerare una melodia; Other Presences**

Hidéki Nagano (piano), Gareth Hulse (oboe), Paul Archibald (trumpet), Tim Gill (cello); London Sinfonietta, Sound Intermedia/David Atherton  
NMCD177 54:05 mins

**BBC Music Direct £12.99**

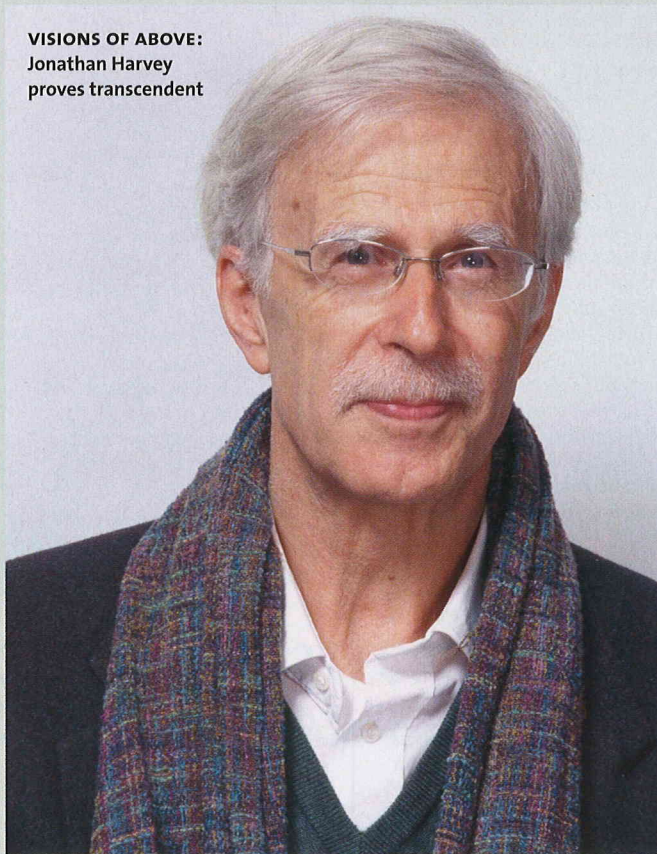
Here is yet another mesmerising disc of music by Jonathan Harvey. *Bird Concerto with Pianosong* is a work of remarkable, beguiling beauty, in which the sounds of real birds intertwine with transformations of their song by the soloist and ensemble.

#### A wonderfully fresh, post-Messiaen masterpiece

Recent works using birdsong inevitably invite comparison with Messiaen, with whom Harvey shares fundamental characteristics. They both possess a luminescence of vision and a hard-won simplicity that is never simplistic. In short, this half-hour work is a wonderfully fresh, post-Messiaen masterpiece, and, in Hidéki Nagano and the London Sinfonietta, it finds exceptionally strong advocates in this live performance from the 2009 Warsaw Autumn Festival.

*Other Presences* from 2006 is an involving example of dialogue between solo trumpet and

**VISIONS OF ABOVE: Jonathan Harvey proves transcendent**



electronics. The sounds gradually build up around the soloist Paul Archibald, becoming a shimmering, sustained chord, like an eerie harmonium. They provide an enlightening counterpoint with the two versions of *Ricerare una melodia*. Dating from 1984, it is among Harvey's earliest works manipulating instrumental sound within a live performance. Originally for trumpet, it's heard here first in the oboe version,

played superbly by Gareth Hulse, while Tim Gill's equally assured performance of the cello adaptation caps a marvellous recording. Strongly recommended.

**PERFORMANCE ★★★★★**  
**RECORDING ★★★★★**



#### ON THE PODCAST

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#### BEETHOVEN

**Complete works for piano and orchestra: complete Piano Concertos; Triple Concerto; Rondo**  
Tasmin Little (violin), Tim Hugh (cello); Orchestra & Chorus of Opera North/Howard Shelley (piano)  
Chandos CHAN10695(4)  
316:27 mins (4 discs)

**BBC Music Direct £34.99**

Until this set turned up, I had no idea Beethoven had written five hours and 20 minutes of music for piano and orchestra, including the comparatively rare Fantasy Op. 80, and the Triple Concerto. Howard Shelley also gives us a Rondo in B flat, which is the putative last movement of the Second Piano Concerto, and just as attractive as its replacement. Beethoven's own arrangement of the Violin Concerto for piano features a timpani-accompanied cadenza to the first movement, and an alarming transition from the second to the third movements. Also included here is a whole concerto probably written when Beethoven was 13, for which there is no longer an orchestral score. Though Shelley compensates with his own, the work doesn't seem to have any merit, and I can't imagine anyone else recording it.

The main interest is provided by the five established Concertos. Shelley, who is a major contributor to Hyperion's Romantic Piano Concertos series, clearly feels that the Beethoven Concertos should be in the series too. These are big-boned, sweeping renditions. The excellent Opera North Orchestra give massive accounts of the *tutti*, and when in dialogue or combat with them, as at the climax of the first movement of the *Emperor*, Shelley clearly enjoys seeing who can make the most noise. But he is equally capable of hushed playing of a kind that we also associate with the latter part of the 19th century.