

10 CDs FOR A DESERT ISLAND

Aapo Häkkinen

Goldberg (December 2008)

I like this exercise – it forces one to be sincere. It's one thing to be nice about good performances of important works (CD of the month or so...) but a selection for a desert island – clearly, nothing less than pure love will do!

If there's going to be a CD player, I can surely bring my clavichord and music library as well... so the following are as much for the performances as for the music.

CHOPIN, LISZT – Busoni (Symposium 1993). De Pachmann (Arbiter 2001, 2004). Paderewski (Philips 1999). Rachmaninoff (BMG RCA 1992)

Child of the Baltic shores, this will always be home to me – and an indispensable link to historical piano playing. Busoni was a fascinating visionary. He had a Baltic connection too – he taught at the St Petersburg and Helsinki conservatories, and was married to Finnish Gerda Sjöstrand. Already before Dolmetsch's book was published, Busoni was taking harpsichord lessons from him!

BACH – Mass in B minor (Harnoncourt, Teldec 1986/1995). Christmas Oratorio (Harnoncourt, BMG DHM 2007). St Matthew Passion (Mengelberg, Naxos Historical 1939/2004). Es ist vollbracht (Stokowski, Pearl 1934/1994)

The essentials. As long as there's art like this, the world isn't such a bad place maybe 🎵🎧 The Christmas Oratorio brings up some of the most beautiful memories of concerts I've heard (the one recorded here) and given (my first Bach as a 10-year-old chorister). The DG 1982/2005 DVD with the Tölzer Knabenchor is also wonderful.

BULL (Hantai, Astrée 1995/2001)

Magical music, magical playing.

BUXTEHUDE (Coin, Astrée 2001)

The most touching Buxtehude to my Nordic sensibilities – even though there's little I can agree about...

MOZART – Le Nozze di Figaro (Harnoncourt/Guth, DG 2006)

By doing everything wrong, Claus Guth does everything so right... here we really see and hear the 'leidende, klagende Seelen' Wagner called them. (Not that Wagner was always right about everything!)

MONTEVERDI – Vespro della Beata Vergine (Savall, Alia Vox 1989/2007). Sestina (Alessandrini, Arcana 1992/2005). Lamento della Ninfa (Alessandrini, Naïve 1997/2008). Canto Mediterraneo (Sempé, Astrée 1996/2001)

Synthesis and revolution, turning point and high point – and epitome of the lament-obsessed early *seicento*.

HANDEL – Alcina (Christie, Erato 1999)

I didn't see the show, but heard it from a portable radio... the charisma and involvement of the performers is breathtaking.

BACH SONS & al – La Casa del Diavolo (Antonini, Naïve 2005)

Thoughtful and exciting programme, fantastically played.

HAYDN – The Paris Symphonies (Harnoncourt, BMG DHM 2005). The Creation (Harnoncourt, BMG DHM 2003)

Challenging music, challenging performances – a model of clarity and expressive imagination in service of musical content. Will make me miss human beings...

SCHUMANN – Genoveva (Harnoncourt, Teldec 1997). Das Paradies und die Peri (Harnoncourt, BMG RCA 2008). Szenen aus Goethes Faust (Harnoncourt, RCO 2008)

Profoundly dramatic, deeply moving.

SCHUBERT – ‘Rosamunde’ Quartet (Quatuor Mosaiques, Astrée 1996). The Symphonies (Harnoncourt, Teldec 1993)

Doleful tales of left-behind Europe.

Aapo Häkkinen studied with Bob van Asperen and Pierre Hantaï. Upon graduation in 1998, he won second prize and the VRT prize at the Bruges Harpsichord Competition. He was also awarded the NDR special prize for his interpretations of Italian music. He is particularly known for his authoritative knowledge and personal vision of the Northern Germanic and Baltic repertoire. He records for Naxos. In 2003, he became Artistic Director of the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra. In addition to international touring, their ground-breaking productions of Handel's and Haydn's operas (recently *L'Isola Disabitata – The Desert Island*) have earned wide national recognition. The orchestra's uncompromising performances and recordings have contributed to their reputation as major exponents of Baltic and Scandinavian Baroque music. Aapo is enjoying a December at home, conducting Christmas programmes of Charpentier and Bach.

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