

# CC recommends: Classical music

selected by [Bradley Lehman](#) in the [December 11, 2007](#) issue

**Schumann and Schubert: Piano Quintets.** *The Atlantis Ensemble. Musica Omnia, \$13.99.*

The performance sounds like infectious fun breaking out among friends playing the most delightful pieces of 19th-century chamber music. The ensemble plays an original 1835 Graf piano and suitably matched string instruments. As a bonus, Max van Egmond sings the song “Die Forelle” (The Trout), which became a set of variations within Schubert’s quintet.

**Haydn: Piano Trios (complete). Van Swieten Trio.** *Brilliant Classics, 10-CD set, \$46.98.*

Fortepianist Bart van Oort, two violinists, two cellists and a flautist present Joseph Haydn’s sparkling trios. This music is not as well known as his quartets, symphonies or sonatas, but it deserves to be heard. The set is arranged in a nearly chronological sequence, and it is fun to hear the change in compositional style as the cello part becomes increasingly independent from the pianist’s left hand.

**Arvo Pärt: Triodion. Nine compositions from 1996 to 2002.** *Polyphony, conducted by Stephen Layton. Hyperion, \$21.98.*

Pärt’s distinctive style seems more relaxed than usual. Most of these compositions on Christian themes and texts are for unaccompanied chorus. One of the texts is an unlikely choice—the recited genealogy in Luke chapter 3. Polyphony is a 26-member chamber choir. Countertenor David James is the soloist in the haunting setting of “My Heart’s in the Highlands,” by Robert Burns.

**Leonard Pennario: The Early Years, 1950-1958.** *Piano music by Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Franck, Mussorgsky, Prokofiev, Bartok, Rozsa, Ravel, Debussy and Pennario. MSR Classics, 4-CD set, \$19.99.*

Pennario was among the most elegant of 20th-century American pianists, and he has put together this five-hour set documenting his early career at Capitol Records.

Everything here has the perfect blend of fire and easy flow. It's not stereo, but the high-fidelity tone is lucid and beautiful.

**Telemann: Das Befreite Israel (oratorio); Der Mai (cantata); Overture (suite) in F minor.** *Soloists, Rheinische Kantorei, Das Kleine Konzert, conducted by Hermann Max. CPO, \$16.99.*

Near the end of his life, Telemann wrote this 26-minute oratorio as a response to Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, in which the Israelites celebrate having made it through the Red Sea. *Der Mai* is a shepherds' idyll of about 17 minutes. Between these two mini-dramas, Max and his period-instrument orchestra play a French-influenced dance suite, chosen from the extant 122 of the approximately 1,000 examples that Telemann composed.

**Biber: Missa Christi resurgentis, with sonatas and fanfares by Biber and Schmelzer.** *The English Concert, conducted by Andrew Manze. Harmonia Mundi USA, \$21.98.*

This is only the second recording (both were in 2004) of Heinrich Biber's recently discovered mass *Christi resurgentis* from 1674. There are nine singers and an orchestra of cornetti, trumpets, trombones and strings. The performance is bright and thrilling. The mass movements are interleaved with a selection of sonatas and fanfares for the trumpets, re-creating a typical liturgical service.

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