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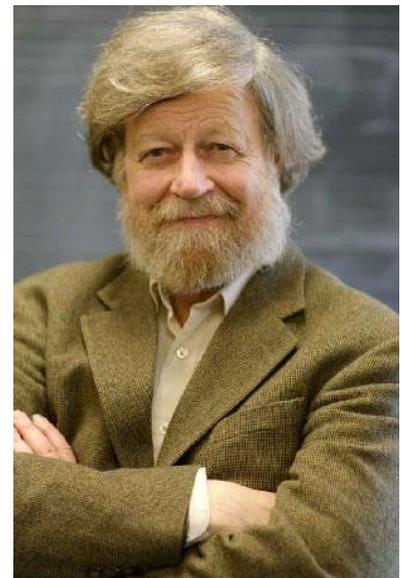
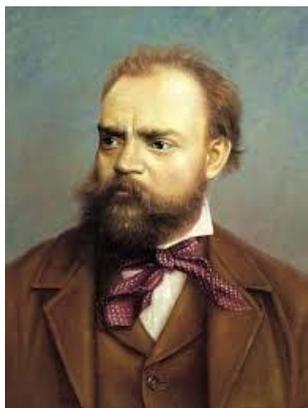
*Programme*

*Notes*

*26<sup>th</sup>*

*March,*

*2021*



## Today's Musicians and Selections

### WA Mozart      *Overture - Abduction from the Seraglio*

Mozart was badly in need of success. He had turned his hand to the task of writing the opera at a crucial time in his life. In the years 1781 and 1782 he was severing two important relationships — one with his repressive employer, the Archbishop of Salzburg, whom he loathed, the other with his dominating father Leopold, whom he loved unequivocally — and instituting another with his marriage to Constanze Weber (Constanze, coincidentally, is the name of Seraglio's heroine).



*Emperor Joseph II*

Mozart's imperturbable creativity barely faltered in the midst of these emotional involvements. The Emperor (Joseph II), had commissioned him to write the opera, the outcome of which was to quickly enhance Mozart's reputation across the Continent.

“Turkish” music had become a fashion of the time. So when Mozart wrote an opera with a Turkish setting it was naturally going to be well received. “Turkish” music was characterised by the use of new techniques and previously unknown traits - unusual instruments such as cymbals, big (Turkish) drums, piccolo flutes and triangles which gave the opera a certain indefinable something

An additional help to its favourable reception was that the deliverance of Christians, particularly Christian women, from Turkish captivity, especially in Turkish harems, was one of 18th-century Europe's favourite play and opera subjects. The *Abduction from the Seraglio* is, then, a rescue opera - one in which the heroics of the rescuers are thwarted by the magnanimity of the chief villain.

Mozart, at the same time, produced a work that, though not without faults, has some delicious and splendid music, and further, proved to be an important springboard for the operas yet to come.

We will hear it performed by none other than the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Fabio Luisi. The Vienna Philharmonic reputedly has retained a distinct sound that sets it apart from other orchestras in the 21st century. Its uniqueness is attributed to an unusual combination of instruments and style. Not everyone agrees on precisely what that distinctiveness is — it is sometimes described as plush, warm and rich or sumptuous — but many listeners say that they know it when they hear it.

Fabio Luisi has been the Chief Conductor of both the Dresden Staatskapelle and of the Semperoper, Dresden; the Vienna Symphony Orchestra; and is currently the Music Director of the Zurich Opera. At the same time, Luisi maintains an active schedule of guest engagements with international orchestras and opera companies including the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra as in today's recording.



## Giovanni Gabrieli



Gabrieli became principal organist at St Mark's Basilica, Venice in 1585. San Mark's had a long tradition of musical excellence and Gabrieli's work there made him one of the most noted composers in Europe. The vogue that began in 1597 with his influential volume *Sacrae Symphoniae* (to which the short piece we hear today belongs) was such that composers from all over Europe, especially from Germany, came to Venice to study.

While this polychoral style had been around for decades, Gabrieli pioneered the use of carefully specified groups of instruments and singers, with precise directions for instrumentation, and in more than two groups. The acoustics were and are such in the church that instruments, correctly positioned, could be heard with perfect clarity at distant points.

On Aug. 19, 2020, the Marine Brass Ensemble performed a concert highlighting the majestic sounds of the brass-family. The ensemble is made up of members (in this case 10 in number) from the US Marine band.

The United States Marine Band is the premier band of the United States Marine Corps. Established by act of Congress on July 11, 1798, it is the oldest of the United States military bands and the oldest professional musical organization in the United States. The Marine Band has been uniquely known as "The President's Own" since 1801 due to the historic connection to the President of the United States. The relationship between the Marine Band and the White House began on New Year's Day 1801, when President John Adams invited the band to perform at the Executive Mansion.



*The United States Marine Band at the White House in October 2007*

## Antonin Dvořák



Joseph Joachim

Dvořák was influenced by both people and places in his composing and in his famous Violin Concerto in A Minor, both musical heavyweights and his own Czech heritage help shape his composition. The Concerto took several years to reach fruition, not because of Dvořák's tardiness, but rather because he awaited the suggestions and approval of the famous violinist, Joseph Joachim, for whom he had written the work. Although Joachim's input was incorporated into the Concerto at several junctures, he never actually performed it. Perhaps this was because, like any composer worthy of his stripes, Dvořák finally put his foot down and said, "No more!"

## Ann-Sophie Mutter

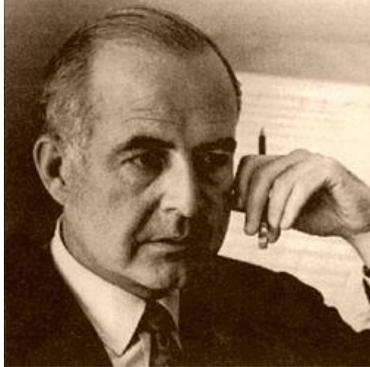
German violinist Ann-Sophie Mutter needs little introduction having been on the concert stage since the age of 13 when she debuted with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. In today's recording she is once again with the Berlin Philharmonic (only 40 years later).



For our performance of the Dvořák concerto Ann-Sophie Mutter teams up with conductor **Manfred Honeck** who for the past 14 years has been the Music Director of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and has been guest conductor of many American and European orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic (naturally).



## **Samuel Barber**



Samuel Osmond Barber II (1910-1981) was an American composer, pianist, conductor, baritone, and music educator. It is said of him that he “had the misfortune to be the right man in the right place but at the wrong time. His music is indisputably American in feel (albeit with a mild transatlantic flavour), yet it lacks the sheer pizzazz of those more inclined to embrace the popular mainstream”. “While Copland was busy evoking the sounds of the Old West in *Rodeo* and *Billy The Kid*, and Bernstein was devouring everything from boogie-woogie to rock 'n' roll, Barber stuck to his guns with concertos, symphonies and operas in the grand style”.

“50 years earlier, his gift for luxurious melody, poignant harmonies and achingly nostalgic sound worlds would have made him a national hero, but by the 1960s it was John Cage and Elvis who were grabbing the musical headlines”. (Classic fm.com).

While Barber composed a significant body of purely instrumental music, two-thirds of his compositional output was dedicated to writing art songs for voice and piano, choral music, and songs for voice and orchestra. In his later years he successfully adapted his famous “Adagio for Strings” (1936) to a choral work, *Agnus Dei* (1967), set to the Latin liturgical Mass text on the “Lamb of God” – a work that has become widely performed and recorded by choirs internationally. Today’s work, however, is a separate composition. Here Barber has taken JS Bach’s harmonisation of Joachim Decker’s 1604 setting of the *Agnus Dei* and “mutated it from its original form into several contrasting forms and scored it for a brass orchestra.



Portuguese tuba player and Yamaha International Artist, **Sérgio Carolino** is one of the most acclaimed tuba players in the international scene. Since 2002, he has been principal tuba with the *Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música* and professor of tuba, artistic director and founder of the Portuguese Youth Brass

Ensemble “**MASSIVE BRASS ATTACK**”! at the Porto Superior School of Music and Arts. We will hear Sergio conduct the Portuguese Youth Brass Ensemble as they play Barber’s *Mutations from Bach* in a performance recorded in the Clérigos Church, Porto, during April 2013.

## **Morten Lauridsen**

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, one of the most exciting trends to emerge in classical music was the rediscovery of the relevance of choral music. A wealth of contemporary composers have broken new ground in creating ethereal harmonies that are regularly described as ‘heavenly’. Perhaps nowhere is this more obvious than in the glorious music of the American composer Morten Lauridsen.



Born in 1943, Lauridsen is a Los Angeles-born composer. He is currently a distinguished Professor of Music at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music. He has received medals, awards and honorary doctorates from a plethora of different institutions and organisations over the course of his career. Whilst growing up, Lauridsen didn't consider a career in music, and he initially studied English and History at university. After making his career change slightly later in life, Lauridsen graduated from his music degree and began teaching composition.

To date, Lauridsen is one of the most frequently performed living composers in the world. His large catalogue of works span a number of different genres including concertos, orchestral works, and chamber works. Arguably, Lauridsen's most influential works are his choral pieces. Undoubtedly his more performed work is his setting of *O Magnum Mysterium* (*O Divine Mystery*).

Our recording is by the *Maîtrise Notre-Dame de Paris*, the choir school of the landmark Gothic cathedral in Paris. The *Maîtrise*, encompassing five different choral ensembles, offers training and performance opportunities to talented children and adults. Following the tragic fire that swept through the cathedral in April 2019, the singers' performing home was forced to close temporarily, but they continue the spirit through tours across France and around the world.



## Max Richter



Max Richter began his long march through the world of music in Germany, where he was born in 1966. Moving to Great Britain as a young child, he studied piano and composition at Edinburgh University, the Royal Academy of Music in London, and with the great modernistic 20th-century composer, Luciano Berio. Richter initially followed in Berio's footsteps, composing music in the hardcore atonal and serialist traditions that were the penultimate development in late 20th-century classical music. (serialism is a compositional technique using all

12 notes of the western scale – all within a fixed set of rules; atonality in its broadest sense is music that lacks a tonal centre, or key).

After graduating, Richter co-founded *Piano Circus*, a highly successful classical performance ensemble featuring six pianists. It was his performance experience with this group that guided him back towards tonality, as well as towards incorporating electronics.

His work “*On the Nature of Daylight*” first of all, is a well-known song from his 2004 landmark album “*The Blue Notebooks*” – an album which was a protest record against the Iraq War using music as an externalized meditation on violence.



The performance we hear is from Deutsche Grammophon's 120th Anniversary collection. The Orchestra is the Hong Kong Philharmonic conducted by Robert Ziegler. Max Richter himself is at the keyboard, adding a subterranean bass line for added gravitas, while, high above, another violin soars sweetly, mournfully. The violin soloist is Norwegian Mari Silje Samuelsen.

## Franz Joseph Haydn

A church interior draped in black cloth. One lantern lighting up the dark. A bishop giving a sermon on each of Christ's last words on the cross. This was the unusual Easter tradition for which the Holy Cave Oratory in Spain asked Haydn to compose music – commissioning seven pieces to reflect each last 'word' of Jesus.

“The Seven Last Words from the Cross” have been the inspiration for composers through the ages. Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672), Charles Gounod (1818-1893), César Franck (1822-1890), and many more up to the present day, have composed works based on the Seven Last Words of Christ, which form a sort of shorthand interpretation of the crucifixion and are taken from the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and John and arranged into presumed chronological order.



But the name we most associate with them – apart from Jesus, presumably – is Haydn. Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809) not only wrote the most famous musical setting of the Seven Last Words, he wrote (or is responsible for) the four most famous versions – an Orchestral version (1786); a version for string Quartet (1787); a piano version (1787); and a choral version (1796).

The Chiara String Quartet is (was) an internationally performing professional string quartet based in Lincoln, Nebraska. Known for playing its repertoire from memory (believing that sheet music is a distraction to performance, instead of an aid), the ensemble was formed in 2000. Following a rich and diverse 18-year performance career, the Quartet has since (2018) made the decision to end full-time work together, to allow the musicians to expand their own performing and teaching careers. And so, to the music.....



## WA Mozart

## Overture – Abduction from the Seraglio

Italian overtures, often detached from their operas and played as independent concert pieces, became important to the early history of the symphony. Such was the case for Mozart's overture to his opera, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Similar to the later *Magic Flute* overture, this one opens quietly and is then interrupted by loud passages similar to the Turkish military band music.

With his "The Abduction from the Seraglio", Mozart created the first of his great masterpieces. It premiered on July 16, 1782, in Vienna and was a great success.

Mozart's music for this farcical romance set in a Turkish harem (a Seraglio is the living quarters of wives and concubines during the time of the Ottoman Empire).



The Abduction takes place in sixteenth-century Turkey and concerns the efforts of a young Spanish nobleman Belmonte to find and rescue his servant Pedrillo, his girl friend Constanza and her maid Blonde who have been abducted by pirates and sold to a Turkish Pasha named Selim (a 'Pasha' is a person of high rank) who makes a servant of Pedrillo and adds the women to his harem.

The harem is overseen by the Pasha's servant named Osmin. Having gained entry to the Pasha's palace, Belmonte meets up with Pedrillo and set about devising a two-man to somehow abduct the two women.

But it's not that easy. The Pasha has taken a fancy to Constanza, while Osmin tries his best to win the love of Blonde.

The two women of course will have none of it and both wait for their liberation. Pedrillo incapacitates Osmin with wine, Belmonte is reunited with Constanze and they plan their escape. They seem to succeed at first, but are thwarted by Pasha Selim and Osmin. Pasha Selim decides to have all four put to death, but finally shows mercy.



All ends well after Osmin takes pity on Belmonte and pardons both him and Constanze (and their devoted servants) from further punishment for their attempts at escape.

With its quasi-exotic orchestration (piccolo, triangle, big drum, and cymbals are added to the standard combination), the Overture is in the old Italian style, notwithstanding that Mozart wrote Seraglio for the anti-Italian, German form of musical theatre, the Singspiel. There is a busy main section that, after a decided close, is followed by a slow episode. A return to the initial material rounds off this eminently pleasant, jolly but unremarkable bit of Mozart fluff.

### **Giovanni Gabrieli - Canzon per sonar duodecimi toni à 10**

Giovanni Gabrieli's *Canzon per sonar duodecimi toni à 10* is an instrumental work in 10 parts (2 choirs antiphonal) composed in 1597 as part of a collection of 45 motets titled *Sacrae Symphoniae*. This is a collection of pieces including motets for choirs of various sizes and canzonas and sonatas for varying instrumental groups.

The instrumental works of the *Sacrae Symphoniae* have been cherished by brass performers for many years. The original scoring of the *Canzon in Echo Duodecimi Toni a 10* was for two choirs, each of four cornets and one trombone.



Interior of St Mark's Venice showing the two choir lofts

Like composers before and after him, Gabrieli would use the unusual layout of St Mark's church, with its two choir lofts facing each other, to create striking spatial effects. Most of his pieces are written so that a choir or instrumental group will first be heard on one side, followed by a response from the musicians on the other side; often there was a third group situated on a stage near the main altar in the centre of the church.

Gabrieli's *Canzoni* are the pinnacle of early Baroque choral style. This remarkable work seems close to real military music, partly because of its unique, treble-dominated scoring divided into two choirs, and also because of its simple, regular harmonic structure and processional feel. Was this perhaps a symbolic evocation of a military band of antiquity?

Echo-writing is one manifestation of composers' liking, around the turn of the seventeenth century, for special effects of musical perspective. Here the effect depends on the dynamic possibilities of the cornetts rather than their physical placing, for each choir takes turns to echo the other.



### Antonin Dvořák - Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A minor Opus 53

Although Dvořák's *Violin Concerto* long ago took its place in the basic classical repertoire, it has never quite caught on with the public the way those from Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Paganini, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and the rest have caught on. The Dvořák hasn't quite the soaring lines, memorable melodies, and grand Romantic gestures we find in other popular concertos. Still, it offers its fair share of pleasures.

Dvořák begins the concerto with an *Allegro ma non troppo* (fast, but not too much), the "ma non troppo" marking used in all three movements. The violin enters almost immediately, the soloist caresses the opening passages while still imparting a desired grandeur to the music.



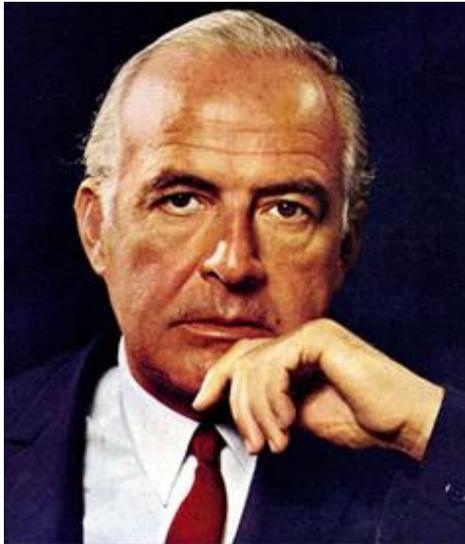
Joachim may have felt that the orchestra dominated the score, but Dvořák made some revisions before premiering it, and certainly in today's recording Maestro Honeck and his Berlin players share the spotlight equally with the violinist, never overwhelming her.

The slow central movement, the *Adagio ma non troppo*, is the emotional heart of the work. Again, Dvořák's marking indicates he didn't want the soloist or orchestra to take things too slowly, possibly not to make the music too sentimental. Nevertheless, in the performance we hear, while Ms. Mutter does tend to stretch it out a bit more than usual, she does so without losing sight of the music's emotional grip. Even at a marginally slower pace than some other violinists have approached it, she is well able to communicate the movement's pensive yearning.

In the Finale Dvořák returns to the radiant, dance-like tunes of the opening movement, and Ms. Mutter shines accordingly. She has a good feel for Dvorak's Bohemian roots, and her violin skips along merrily. It's a delight.



### Samuel Barber - Mutations from Bach



Sometimes referred to as "Meditations on a Theme from Bach", Barber's short work for brass and timpani was composed in 1967. It is based on "Christe, du Lamm Gottes" (Christ, you Lamb of God), a Lutheran hymn often referred to as the "German Agnus Dei". Martin Luther took the Latin words from the Roman Mass - "Lamb of God, you take away the sins of world, have mercy on us...grant us your peace" - , the last "fixed" section of the traditional text of the Mass - and the melody from a 1525 Wittenberg publication. Often referred to as the "German Agnus Dei", Barber states the hymn melody at the outset and then "transforms" or "mutates" it from its original form into several contrasting episodes, concluding back to the original hymn melody.

Joachim Decker was one of the early Lutheran composers to arrange liturgical melodies as chorales for congregational singing, supporting the tune with simple harmony and regular metre. Barber begins with Decker's 1604 version, given here to the lower instruments of the ensemble.

The addition of the brighter trumpets signals the beginning of Bach's harmonisation of the melody from over a century later. Barber moves on to Bach's version of the chorale in Cantata 23, "Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn" ("you true God and David's son"), along with



Bach's organ prelude BWV 619 from the *Orgelbüchlein* (Little Organ Book) based on the chorale.

In the most intriguing section, Barber puts a recitative bass line from Cantata 23 against a melody from the prelude. The score ends with a return to Decker's melody.



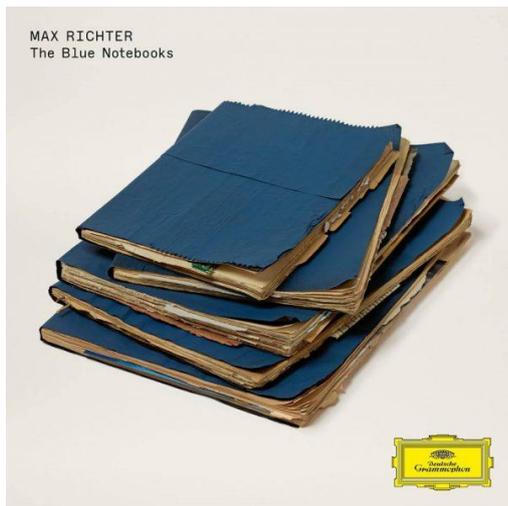
Although composed in 1994, *O Magnum Mysterium* took a good few years before garnering much widespread praise. And while it is performed all year round, the piece is, at its heart, all about Christmas. This bewitching work radiates a profound feeling of peace, offering a peaceful meditation upon the pastoral image of the animals surrounding their Lord in manger as it tells the story of the birth of Jesus, and Lauridsen's music is as sensitive and spiritual as you could possibly wish for. Dense layers of sustained choral lines placed one on top of the other blend to create indulgent yet deceptively simple harmonies.

Inspired by the text of a sung response from Catholic liturgy during the traditional monastic very early morning liturgy of the Matins on Christmas day, Lauridsen has disclosed that this motet is an 'affirmation of God's grace to the meek—a quiet song of profound inner joy' expressing mystical awe at the mystery of the Incarnation as well as the very human tenderness of the Virgin Mary for her newborn child.

The English translation from the Latin text is:

"O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the newborn Lord, lying in a manger! Blessed is the virgin whose womb was worthy to bear the Lord, Jesus Christ. Alleluia!"

### Max Richter - *On the Nature of Daylight*



On February 15th, 2003, in what was called a "global daisy chain" of peaceful demonstrations against the US invasion of Iraq, the single largest anti-war protest in history, up to 30 million people demonstrated worldwide.

Max Richter was among those who took to the streets that day. About a week later he made his album "The Blue Notebooks". It was recorded in only three hours, with a string quintet and the actress Tilda Swinton reading from texts by Franz Kafka and the Nobel Prize-winning poet Czesław Miłosz "for a token fee". When the LP came out a year later, in March 2004, the killing of four contractors in Fallujah sparked a renewed period of bloody

violence.

Richter wrote the song and the album as a protest against the 2003 Iraq War, describing the work as "a mediation on violence...the violence of war...the utter futility of so much armed conflict."

Scored for string quintet, "On the Nature of Daylight" is slow in movement, simple in harmony and fruitful in atmosphere. Opening with unison chords, the lower strings take the lead in creating the luscious texture. The slow chordal movement adds to the solemnity of the music, with no real melody to grab on to, the music slowly moves along.

Richter builds texture and atmosphere by his shift in chord progressions. He also gets the violin to take a melodic lead over two minutes in, which resembles the same sort of effect as the theme from Schindler's List. The alternating note motif sits neatly on top of the droning lower strings. Tension is built through the slow piecing together of motifs and dynamics. As the violin begins to soar into its upper range, so do the lower strings.

"On the Nature of Daylight" comes to a gentle close after a controlled swell in texture and dynamics, leaving the listener wanting more.

## **Franz Joseph Haydn - The Seven Last Words of Christ**

Haydn himself described the history of this unique work in the preface to a vocal or choral version, published in 1801:

"About fifteen years ago [1785] I was asked by a Canon in Cádiz to write instrumental music on the Seven Words of Jesus on the Cross.



It was then customary every year, during Lent, to perform an oratorio in the main church at Cádiz, to the increased effect of which the following arrangements contributed a great deal. The walls, windows, and pillars of the church were covered with black cloth, and only one large lamp, hanging in the centre, illuminated the sacred darkness.

At noon all the doors were closed, and the music began.

After a spoken prelude, suited to the occasion, the bishop ascended the pulpit and pronounced one of the Seven Words, and delivered a reflection upon it. When it was finished, he descended from the pulpit and knelt down before the altar. This interval was filled by music. The bishop ascended and descended the pulpit a second, a third time, and so on; and each time the orchestra filled in at the end of the discourse.

My composition had to be appropriate to these circumstances. The task of writing seven Adagios, each of which was to last about ten minutes, to follow one another without wearying the hearers, was not the easiest; and I soon found that I could not confine myself to the prescribed time limits. The music was originally without text, and it was printed in that form. It was only at a later period that I was induced to add the text. . . . The partiality with which this work has been received by discerning connoisseurs leads me to hope that it will not fail to make an impression on the public at large".

We will hear the closing parts of Haydn's setting for quartet: the final word: "Father, into your Hands", and "The Earthquake", from a recording of the complete work given in a candlelight performance in February, 2018 at the West Side Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood, New Jersey.

## Acknowledgment of Sources

WA Mozart – *The Abduction from the Seraglio*

[www.Mozart.com](http://www.Mozart.com);

Orrin Howard – *Concert Notes*, Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra

G Gabrieli – *Canzon per sonar duodecimi toni à 10*

Digitalcommons @ University of Nebraska – Thesis by Donna Kay Van Riper

A. Dvořák *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in A minor Opus 53*

1. Review of recording by Richard Tognetti and the Nordic Chamber Orchestra.  
([www.musictrust.com.au](http://www.musictrust.com.au))

2. Review of recording by Ann-Sophie Mutter and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra ([www.classicalcandor.blogspot.com](http://www.classicalcandor.blogspot.com)).

S. Barber *Mutations from Bach*

[www.pt.yamaha.com](http://www.pt.yamaha.com)

Programme Notes – Gordon Kerry, Tasmanian Symphony Orch. 2016

Samuel Barber – A Life – Classic FM Digital Radio ([www.classicfm.com](http://www.classicfm.com))

M Lauridsen *O Magnum Mysterium*

[www.classicfm.com/composers/](http://www.classicfm.com/composers/)

[www.hyperionrecords.uk](http://www.hyperionrecords.uk)

Alex Burns – [www.classicalalexburns.com/](http://www.classicalalexburns.com/)

YouTube notes re – *Matrise Notre-Dame de Paris*

M. Richter *On the Nature of Daylight*

“Blue Notebooks” (15<sup>th</sup> Edition) Review ([www.ra.co/reviews](http://www.ra.co/reviews))

‘On the Nature of Daylight’: A Sombre Close – Alex Burns 2019

FJ Haydn *Seven Last Words of Christ*

Programme Notes Chiara String Quartet Concert February 2018

([www.parlancechamberconcerts.org/](http://www.parlancechamberconcerts.org/))

## YouTube Links to Recordings

Mozart [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrFbiw77\\_9Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrFbiw77_9Q)

Gabrieli <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34hc9eXVREU>

Barber <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLUOFAgMnAo>

Lauridsen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liRecu694yA>

Richter <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJmZ-F9We4>

Haydn <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2ljYXsWWGs>

(1hr long recording – Seventh Word begins at 59mins 51` secs))