

**Carpenter, Sessions, Ives** | Howard Hanson (cond) | HDTT HDDVD216



These 96k/24-bit DVD-R HDTT transfers from Mercury Records' pre-recorded tapes from 1956–7 capture Hanson in top form, devoting himself to the legacy of American symphonic works with the same rigour and intensity that marked all of his inscriptions. John Alden Carpenter's 'Adventures in a Perambulator' is a suite of six pieces based on a day in the life of an infant. They're colourful and imaginative, but harmonically conservative. Roger Sessions' 'The

Black Maskers' is melodic but has a dissonant and confrontational style, with raucous sounds. Pungent and often coarsely dramatic, this music still carries a punch. Ives' Symphony No.3 draws materials from other compositions: Ives constantly added dissonances because he felt the music was 'too soft' on listeners. High class religious Americana is the rubric that best defines this energetic and colourful disc.

**HarmOrgan (Harmonica & Organ)** | Sigmund Groven, Iver Kleive | Pure Audio Blu-ray | 2L



2L continues to release off-the-beaten-track music that should appeal as much to audiophiles whose primary interest is the ultimate in hi-res surround on Blu-ray (192k on all channels!), as to music lovers open to unusual works. There have been a number of recordings of panpipes and pipe organ but to my knowledge this is the first combining harmonica and pipe organ. The two performers have been collaborating for more than 30 years and the virtuoso abilities of the chromatic

harmonica are quite amazing. Groven has no difficulty handling Bach's Flute Sonata in E-flat Major, nor the Siciliana from Handel's Recorder Sonata in F Major. The Uranienborg Church in Norway was the recording venue, and the careful miking used by 2L preserves a fine feeling for the site's acoustics. The discs are encoded with +5.0 SACD, DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 (192k/24-bit) and PCM Stereo 192k/24-bit.

**Ravel** | Daphnis et Chloé, Boléro, Pavane | Gergiev | SACD LSO0693 [Harmonia Mundi]

There are a lot of Daphnis & Chloés on disc out there, and those who appreciate the sensuous, shaded echt-Ravelian interpretations of Munch and Ansermet, might want to stay with either the 1955 Living Stereo SACD or the 1961 HDTT 96/24 reissue with Munch. I also really like the recent BSO SACD with James Levine. However Gergiev certainly adds to his laurels with a

fantastic conducting job here—bringing out the colour and dynamics while highlighting every detail and making every bar a real event. He is more precise and sharply-focused than most of the other versions; Gergiev's chorus is more clear and present than most of the competition, and there is a better balance of the male voices with the female voices.

**Stuttgart/Hofkapelle Stuttgart** | Frieder Bernius | Carus SACD [Albany]

Cherubini was a contemporary of Mozart and his Requiem—which was very popular during his lifetime and used at Beethoven's funeral—has many similarities to Mozart's Requiem. Cherubini was a top-rated opera composer, but his dark-coloured Requiem doesn't get operatic to the extent of those composed by Verdi and Berlioz, though it does have dramatic moments. There are some modern touches, such as the unexpectedly

loud tam-tam crash to introduce the Dies Irae. One of its choral movements might almost be a cousin of Carmina Burana. The Offertorium section is one of the highlights of the work, and the following section brings together the Sanctus and Benedictus texts—a custom of the period in France. It is an important requiem which has been neglected, and Bernius has assembled an excellent performance of it.

**Dvorak** | Symphony No. 7; Symphony No. 8 | BSO/ Marin Alsop | Naxos NBD0010

This Blu-ray is the second in a series of audio-only Blu-rays (with DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 and PCM Stereo) Naxos is releasing in its latest foray into hi-res surround formats. The performances by Marin Alsop and her Baltimore Symphony of all four symphonies are superb. The Seventh is the composer's most dramatic and dark symphony, but still full of lovely melodies.

Brahms' influence on Dvorak can be heard at many points, but it is usually mixed with the Czech folk flavour of so much of Dvorak's music. No. 8 is from 1889 and is strong in a spirit of Bohemia. The string section tone on both symphonies is especially rich and natural. The original recordings were 24-bit but only 88.2k, however the fidelity is excellent.

**Roy Haynes Quartet** | Out of the Afternoon | Analog Productions SACD CIP12SA

This classic 1962 Van Gelder session was another winner among the many recordings stellar drummer Haynes has been involved in. The seven tracks here are about divided between clever treatments of standards and originals—three by Haynes himself. The other star here is the phenomenal blind multi-instrumentalist Roland Kirk. On some of the tracks he plays tenor sax, manzello, strich, C flute, nose flute, and sometimes the first three reeds simultaneously.

The chords he creates when playing multiple instruments are something to hear—entirely original. The players are solidly placed on the stereo soundstage, with great depth and air around them. The music is creative without becoming the least bit inaccessible—a terrific album right up there with the best of them.

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