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A portrait of Georg Tintner, an elderly man with short, curly white hair, wearing a light blue collared shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

**Georg
Tintner's
recorded
legacy –
from Haydn
to Delius**

The Virtuoso Quartet

Peter Katin interview

More forgotten
singers on record

An encounter with
Hindemith



The Tintner Legacy – Not only Bruckner

In the second of two articles on the Viennese born conductor Antony Hodgson discusses Tintner's performances on record

In the Spring issue (page 54) I gave a biographical survey of Georg Tintner. I realise that few listeners in the UK have encountered anything of his beyond the admirable recordings of all Bruckner's symphonies, but we are now getting access to his many recordings of the standard musical repertoire which have been available only in other countries. Most of these are contained in the 13-part Tintner "Memorial Edition" issued by Naxos but there are other recordings and more may soon be available.

In assessing Tintner's recordings it seems logical to commence with those for which he is most famous – the Naxos set of all 11 Bruckner

symphonies. These are available as a boxed set on Ⓛ 8.501101 and also singly. The Royal Scottish National Orchestra is to be heard in Symphonies Nos. 00, 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9; the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland performs Nos. 0, 2 and 8, and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra provides No. 6. Despite these variations of orchestra and venue, the sound is very consistent and the playing is excellent throughout. A constant thread seems to be Tintner's firm intention to grade climaxes in such a way as to reserve the full fury of the orchestra for the most important fully-scored episodes. The chosen venues have sufficient resonance for this grand music and as to balance, the engineers present similar aural pictures; I like to think that perhaps the conductor's wishes were paramount throughout.

One of the most attractive elements of the performances concerns the conductor's insistence on employing no more than the very minimum of tempo modification. My reservations are very few although an exception applies to the earliest symphony of all: the so-called No. 00 or *Study* Symphony. I cannot understand why Tintner should have reduced the stature of this work by omitting the outer movement repeats. Without them the proportions do not seem to resolve and a great deal of music is lost. The interesting coupling is the second of the three versions of the finale to Symphony No. 4. This is useful for reference purposes but no wonder Bruckner rejected it. Tintner does his best for the poor old thing, but commencing with a trite opening idea featuring continuously drooping strings, the music moves fragmentarily from one theme to another. The only interesting moment is when the horn theme of the opening movement appears unexpectedly in the coda.

The remainder of the set displays clearly why these recordings were so well received. Symphony No. 1 is given a surging reading, urgent without being over-hasty. The Haas edition is used but some further discoveries made by William Carragan are included. The differences are minor (incidentally this is Bruckner's 1866 score – my CD is inscribed 1886).

Symphony No. 0 is no less convincing under Tintner's direction and sounds very much like mature Bruckner, who was in fact 45 when he created it. For reasons that are unclear, he did

not give it a number but there is no doubt that it was composed after Symphony No. 1. Where the so-called No. 00 is anything but mature, No. 0 is powerful and has a magnificent Scherzo, played here with controlled force.

Haas's corrections

Symphony No. 2 is often performed in inauthentic editions. The great musicologist Robert Haas corrected all this, putting back music that was cut in later versions, restoring the horn solo at the end of the slow movement and including the four repeats in the Scherzo that had also been removed. He wisely ignored Bruckner's notional intention when composing the work in 1872 to put the Scherzo second: I have found no evidence to suggest that it was ever printed like that and the Scherzo was certainly played as the third movement at the first performance in 1873. Regrettably the edition used in this recording does place the Scherzo second. This restructuring undermines an otherwise exceptional performance.

Symphony No. 3 also had problems which were effectively resolved in an early edition by Fritz Oeser. The Nowak edition used by Tintner is also very reliable and as with Oeser, later cuts are restored and both editors omit the banal coda to the Scherzo that Bruckner forbade his publishers to issue, using the words: "not to be printed" and "not in the score". This is a spacious performance – there have been others who have taken a swifter view which tightens up the lengthy exposition of ideas, particularly in the finale, but Tintner remains true to his approach to all these works – firm, unhurried but always forward moving.

Symphony No. 4 is given a spacious reading. There are no edition problems and there is a lovely sense of distance to the opening horn call. The slow movement shows how Tintner is able to sustain a very broad tempo while still moving the music forward with confident firmness.

It is known that Franz Schalk frequently rescored, rewrote and, worst of all, cut Bruckner's music – never more so than in Symphony No. 5 where he made huge excisions. His edition is now discredited and rarely performed. Tintner's first-hand experience of Franz Schalk qualifies him to complain that: "...he butchered Bruckner's texts dreadfully" and he said of Schalk in an interview with Peter Heyworth: "He committed a great



Franz Schalk

number of evil things to this work, perhaps without realising it. He was, however, a very great musician, who demanded the utmost from those lucky enough to work with him". In this Scottish performance of the authentic original edition there is a fine example of Tintner ignoring well-worn tradition. This is in the final coda – a magnificent, expansive, broad chorale which here is all the better for being kept strictly in tempo – how refreshing compared with the laboured slowing that is so often perpetrated.

In Symphony No. 6 many orchestral details are unclear. Familiarity with the conductor's usual style leads one to question whether his intended sonic intention was fully achieved – an example being the coda of the opening movement where the important timpani rhythms seriously lack definition. This leads to comparison with Tintner's other Bruckner Sixth, recorded three years earlier in September 1992 with the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonie (Deutsche Schallplatten ⊕ DSI005-2). Here the playing is less precise but orchestral detail is much superior. This is a fervent performance which is noticeably faster (55' against 59'47"). Certainly Tintner's intensity

portrays this music more positively here and I prefer the more exciting earlier version which is less polished in execution but superior in sound.

A shaky theory

In Symphony No. 7 Tintner uses the Haas edition. There is no "authentic" answer to the shaky theory that the words *gilt nicht* written faintly at the peak of the slow movement, one bar after the cymbal clash and three stave-widths above it, are meant to cancel the whole of the breathtaking onslaught by timpani, triangle and cymbals, but Tintner omits the percussion here. I tend to agree with Neville Cardus who, in describing this glorious moment, says: "The climax is achieved by a stroke on the cymbals which elevates this usually anonymous instrument to a radiant height". Tintner's refusal to impose unauthorised tempo changes is very satisfying in this work – especially in the finale where his firm sense of progress is exhilarating and leads to a passage of thrilling inevitability in the coda with, in Robert Simpson's words, its "golden fanfares".

Tintner's No. 8 is a very special case. This Naxos recording of the first version is very interesting: there are huge differences in the first two movements compared with the familiar revision – the first movement's triumphant forceful ending is a particular surprise, although the composer's decision to replace it with a quiet thoughtful passage in his revision is understandable. The Scherzo and trio are almost a different composition compared with the familiar revision. The scale of the interpretation is vast and is in Tintner's best unhurried Bruckner style. This is the original score, but in his notes Tintner goes to great lengths to extol the virtues of the Haas edition of Bruckner's later far-reaching revision because where others imposed cuts Haas restored the music. The edition that Bruckner left to the Imperial Museum in Vienna comprises the 1890 revisions of movements I and II but includes the uncut versions of III and IV, so this combination must be assumed to be the composer's preference and is therefore very close to the form of the Haas version. I know of only one Tintner performance of the Haas edition – this was with the McGill University Orchestra in 1992. It was recorded and the original tape was put into the library so here is another discovery task for a keen Tintner archivist.

The recording of Symphony No. 9 was universally acclaimed. The sound quality is spaciouly realistic and the grave intensity of the reading is gripping. This is a broad interpretation, but as so often with Tintner one is not concerned with tempo except that whatever speed he chooses seems entirely apt. His description of the Ninth in the booklet notes is very eloquent, and gently but firmly he makes a case against the fragments of Bruckner's incomplete last movement being incorporated into a reconstruction, because he believes that the material is unworthy of the remainder of the symphony. It is not surprising that he is of that opinion since this noble performance is fashioned in such a way as to make the close of the Adagio incontrovertibly final.

Away from Bruckner

Bruckner is familiar Tintner territory but to encounter his many hitherto unheard recordings was revealing. Here is a conductor who, although steeped in the great central European traditions of the previous century, was never influenced by the many long-standing conducting traditions so often accepted without question and frequently imposed on mainstream concert repertoire. Re-orchestrations and, more particularly, unwarranted shifts of tempo – always at the same places with wearisome predictability – were entirely foreign to him. Most performances are with Symphony Nova Scotia, an excellent orchestra which here seems to have a very central-European sound, notable for its weight. A number of these recordings include the addresses that Tintner gave immediately before some performances. These are interesting and include plenty of touches of humour, but they are placed on separate tracks so the listener has the opportunity to bypass them. Much less necessary is the applause after the works in live concerts although fortunately it is always well-mannered and not too disturbing. Volumes 8, 9 and 13 differ by being performed by the National Youth Orchestra of Canada – an outstanding ensemble whose quality challenges that of professional counterparts. Currently these three items are available only on download although for review purposes I was given access to CD versions.

Memorial Edition Volume 1 (Ⓢ 8.557233) incorporates Mozart's Symphonies Nos. 31, 35 and 40. Both Nos. 31 and 35 have the same full-blooded texture that collectors have known for years from hearing Böhm's readings. One big difference however is in the finale of No. 31 where Tintner is unusually, but convincingly, very fast. In the noble performance of the *Haffner* Symphony it was a delight to note that Tintner uses the proper long grace notes in the trio section of the Minuet. Symphony No. 40 is given a suitably serious reading. It is good to hear the original version – those added clarinets of the later revision are never convincing and I was delighted to read in Tintner's notes that he always plays the original version since "the clarinets, however lovely they are, make this work a little more amiable, a little less uncompromising and desperate than I think it should be". It is splendid to hear the minuet in strict tempo from start to finish (few conductors beyond Furtwängler and Boult play it like that). Tintner's opening movement is only just fast enough to create the state of desperation that he believes to be innate but altogether this is a considerable performance.

Lack of repeats

Volume 2 of the Edition (Ⓢ 8.557234) provokes discussion of Tintner's firm respect for a composer's instructions concerning repeats. This volume contains Schubert's *Great C* Major Symphony – or quite a lot of it. We know from airchecks of other occasions that in performances of this work Tintner invariably made all repeats, yet here we get only the one short repeat at the start of the Scherzo. I have discovered that this was never the conductor's intention. Radio station policy and union overtime rules forced this mutilation on him. Infuriated by this, I edited the recording to a CDR, copying in the amputated bits from the available music in order to approximate Tintner's true intention. It was well worth it because now I was able fully to appreciate the proper configuration of a noble, spacious reading, refreshingly free of all the weary mannerisms so often imposed on the music – no pompous slowing for the coda of the first movement; no fussy tempo shifts in the *Andante con moto*; no going soggy in the trio. All Tintner's tempi are convincing and the very

important trombone parts are clearly audible – this is a particular delight in the trio of the Scherzo. It is interesting too that Tintner should join several other conductors (Otto Klemperer, Rafael Kubelik, and Klaus Tennstedt come to mind) in playing the final chord of the work as a decrescendo from its first impact, as the score suggests. The trimmed Great C major means that there was room for the coupling – a broad, peaceful rendering of the *Unfinished* Symphony, deliberate in pace and rather well balanced. This is not a performance to wring the emotions, but it gives an opportunity to bathe in its cool beauty. It is sad that not much more than 80 per cent of Tintner's magnificent interpretation of the Great C major was presented but I have heard a 1991 recorded broadcast of him conducting the Auckland Philharmonia in a superb complete performance – one of the finest I have encountered. I hope that this recording might one day be made available so that Tintner's real interpretation can be appreciated.

There is one more repeat oddity to mention. This comes in Volume 3 (Ⓢ 8.557235). I have no information as to whether it was forced on Tintner but I take leave to doubt if he really chose to omit the exposition *da capo* from the finale of Beethoven's Fourth Symphony (5'30") while observing the extensive example in the first movement (12'43"). Nevertheless I appreciate the clarity of the recording and the crisp approach. The first movement is particularly strong. There is an interesting point related to the two trio sections: Beethoven asks for them to be slightly slower than the surrounding Scherzo but there is virtually no difference in tempo – I rather like it this way. Schumann's Second Symphony is given a serious reading: the long introduction is broad, brooding and intense, and the clear recording helps give the rest of the movement a light feeling. As so often Tintner is dashing in the Scherzo movement and the finale is powerful.

On Ⓢ 8.557236 (Vol. 4) Haydn's Symphony No. 103 has interesting features. Tintner may not have been using the latest of editions because the opening drum roll and its later repeated reference are played *crescendo-diminuendo* and few modern editions require this. In the trio of the Minuet the notes say that it "... allows the London clarinetists a dangerous prominence" but I hear no clarinets.



The finale is played, as is nearly always the case, without bars 364-380 which were removed between Haydn's performances in London and the publication when he returned to Vienna. None of these things detracts from the firm reading and Tintner is no less strongly direct in the *London* Symphony with which it is coupled. There is a slight feeling of reserve in some areas but the orchestra is given its head in the weighty introduction, the fierce end of the development of the first movement and the all-powerful finale. These are by no means 'period' readings but they are notable for their strength and honesty.

Full-blooded Brahms

Tintner's Brahms is full-blooded by nature and on Ⓛ 8.557237 (Vol. 5) the performance of Symphony No. 3 has the shapely contours of a Klemperer performance coupled with the rich texture of Bruno Walter. It is a broad reading, the sound is suitably strong but perhaps over-full in the bass. It is however ideal for underlining moments such as the sudden, violent eruption at the first *tutti* in the finale. An equable approach to tempo strengthens the music's structure. As with most recordings the wind choir at the close overwhelms the descending string theme. The calm Serenade No. 2, quaintly scored with no violins, provides music for a warm Sunday afternoon and here the forward nature of the woodwind is entirely suitable within an admirably clear recording.

Volume 6 (Ⓛ 9.557238) has the novel coupling of Beethoven's Third and Sibelius's Seventh symphonies. The *Eroica* performance revives a little-known controversial discussion where Beethoven's pupil Czerny avers that bars 150-151 of the opening *Allegro con brio* should be repeated. The very first edition was printed like this yet none has included this feature since then. Tintner does include this repetition - I am not convinced but it is always interesting to hear theory put into practice. The recording is quite good but not all the climaxes are ideally forceful and I regret the lack of clarity in the important quiet timpani solo at the end of the Scherzo. The Sibelius simply unfolds calmly. Other performances seek tension and mystery, while Tintner achieves lucidity. Woodwind detail is admirable and the engineers' definition of the trombone section is an advantage in this work.

Volume 7 (Ⓛ 8.557239) returns to Mozart. The *Idomeneo* Overture is very sprightly but I am unsure whether the admirably literal exposition of Symphony No. 34 is sufficient to elevate it above its station as one of the more modest compositions of Mozart's later years. Symphony No. 41, *Jupiter*, is on a grand scale. Given every repeat, it represents 40 minutes of music and its innate grandeur is stressed throughout. The unhurried Minuet is a gem and Tintner is not afraid to allow the dramatic brass interventions to make their mark; there are no slick shadings of tempo. The whirling strings in the finale pay tribute to the skill of this orchestra.

Volume 8 (Ⓛ 9.70018) is one of those to make a delayed entry into the Memorial Edition. The National Youth Orchestra of Canada performs here and does so with skill and sensitivity. Tintner obtains a lush string sound and the dynamic range is admirably wide. Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* is given an expressive interpretation: the orchestral sound has considerable weight, and the solos are played with ease. The result is to make the work sound even more like Richard Strauss than ever. The Adagio from Mahler's Symphony No. 10 is expounded cogently. This is serious music but Tintner is not prepared to screw up tension, and calmness is of the essence.

The same orchestra shows its fine qualities in Vol. 9 (Ⓛ 9.70019) with its unusual coupling of Richard Strauss and Pfitzner: any orchestra that

can master the opening section of *Don Juan* as successfully as this must have something special about it. The recording is somewhat set back but the detail is excellent. *Till Eulenspiegel* is full of instrumental dexterity. How deftly the timpanist points the phrases, how subtly the brass lets all other instruments through after a major climax. Two preludes to Pfitzner's *Palestrina* are thoughtfully and beautifully played, and there is intense string playing in the soulful first prelude and plenty of full-orchestra aggression in the second.

Unexpected Delius

Delius brings an unexpected departure from the Central European nature of the set. Volume 10 (Ⓢ 8.557242) provides excerpts from *Irmelin*, *Koanga*, *A Village Romeo and Juliet* and *Fennimore and Gerda*. Individual works are *On hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*, *Summer Night on the River* and *Sleigh Ride*. *Sleigh Ride* is strange: a swift jolly melody surrounds a long contemplative section – perhaps the reindeer took some time off grazing. I was amused by Tintner's comments about it when he says: "... it is interesting to see how a great man started not so great". The main work is the Violin Concerto. I am indebted to the soloist (French-born Canadian violinist Philippe Djokic) for describing the circumstances of this recording. Apparently the Canadian Broadcasting Company recorded the disc on a very tight budget and Djokic comments: "We were given the chance to play through the concerto twice and choose one. As far as I know there was no splicing and with only two chances to play through, the pressure was on for us all. I'll always remember the soothing effect of the daylight coming through the stained glass windows of the large Cathedral of All Saints in Halifax. Together with an inspired maestro and an orchestra that was in top form I almost forgot that there were microphones nearby. The two play-throughs seemed effortless. Although quite thorny in a technical sense the Delius Concerto does not show the soloist in a virtuosic light. It's all about mood and sensuality". The clear and spacious recording reveals a very sensitive interpretation of this peaceful composition. The solo line is woven subtly within the orchestral textures. The orchestra seems fully aware of the conductor's sympathy for the special nature

of Delius's orchestration – often delicate and subdued but always internally clear.

Volume 11 (Ⓢ 8.557243) is a gem. How suitable too that a Viennese-born conductor should be in charge; Tintner is entirely at home here. The substantial ballet *Les petits riens* is given as stylish a performance as I can recall as indeed are the complete sets of the Dances, K605, K609 and *Das Donnerwetter*, K534. Swift and lively is the appropriate approach for the *Contredances* and *German Dances*. The group of minuetts, K601 is suitably broader in tempo and the sequence is varied by the three Marches, K408 and a final selection of five dances ending with the mysterious combination of Minuet and Country Dance, K463, which omits violins from the scoring. This delightful disc is one of the few in the Memorial Edition not to use live concert material. All Saints, Halifax has a lovely acoustic.

Volume 12 (Ⓢ 8.55244) is entitled "Colonial Diversions". It starts with a selection of cheerful Grainger works – including the well-known and soulful *Colonial Song* and ends with the off-broadcast *Gum-suckers March*. Not surprisingly, Tintner is in full sympathy with all represented here. New Zealand born Douglas Lilburn, perhaps best known for his symphonies, provides a suite entitled *Diversions for Strings*: highly individual, and suggesting elements of Scandinavian composers. German-born George Dreyfus went to Australia in 1939 at the age of 11. His compact *Serenade for Small Orchestra* betrays no national characteristics but it includes some Grainger-like humour. Australian-born but mostly England-domiciled Arthur Benjamin is represented by his *North American Square Dance*, consisting of eight traditional dances. Appropriately the final contributor is the Canadian Jean Coulthard who, like Lilburn, studied with Vaughan Williams. His *Excursion Ballet Suite* is a challenging work harmonically and his orchestration has a few hints of Martinů. The sound of this studio recording is weighty but decently detailed and the orchestra is well on form.

Memorable Mahler

The thirteenth and final volume (Ⓢ 9.70022) is indeed memorable. Mahler's Symphony No.1 is performed by the National Youth Orchestra of Canada and the playing is spectacularly exciting.

The recording is of exceptional quality – in the opening passage crystal clear woodwind entries are supplemented by magically distant trumpets. There is sparkling treble quality, high percussion is caught with exciting brilliance and even the complex final bars reveal every detail. Tintner is straightforward but always exciting and he causes the orchestra to release tremendous power in the climaxes; the entry of the finale is shattering. A superb interpretation.

Recordings mentioned so far are available via Naxos in one way or another but I have been given access to issues on other labels. There is an alternative recording of the original version of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony with the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. It is on a two-disc Jubal Records set (Ⓛ 5003/4). This was the first performance of the original version in North America. It is a touch faster than the Irish recording mentioned above and has a more 'covered' sound. The brass lack the exciting edge that can enhance the grander moments although I like the way the timpani come through. There are a number of imprecise moments but Tintner completists will not be disappointed. Disc 2 starts with the finale of the Bruckner, then track 2 consists entirely of three minutes of meaningless applause. On track 3 there is a likeable performance of Thomas Morley's madrigal *Now is the Month of Maying*. The remaining tracks provide a performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. The recording here is not very special, for it seriously lacks brilliance and tends to compress, but to hear Tintner in such a great work is very interesting. As always he is direct and straightforward, letting the music speak for itself.

A 1990 Philips disc (Ⓛ 426 487-2) again gives us Beethoven, but not as we know it! Here is the *Egmont* Overture, Fifth Symphony and *Wellington's Victory*. The whole programme is given by five players who perform as "Canadian Brass" supplemented by the combined brass of the Boston Symphony and New York Philharmonic orchestras, with timpani. In *Wellington's Victory* the brass and percussion arrangement doesn't really do any harm and is probably more stirring than it would have been on the panharmonicon for which it was composed. There is also another version of this arrangement with the same ensemble but where the Philips was recorded in

New York, this disc, entitled "Brass Busters" (RCA Ⓛ 09026-68076-2 or V Hal Leonard Publishing Ⓛ HL50488) was recorded at a public concert given in the same month (July 1989) in Kitchener, Ontario. There is not much difference although the gunfire is more convincing on the Ontario version whereas the Philips gives slightly fuller brass sound. On both, cannon boom alternately from left and right – and so they should. The rest of the Canadian disc provides Beethoven's Fifth again, but only the first movement, and two works each by Monteverdi and Gabrieli, which are very effective, also *A salute to John Philip Sousa*, a clever arrangement. The playing is admirable in all these works, but I really strongly disapprove of Vaughan Williams's *Tallis Fantasia* which entirely loses its magic when rearranged for brass.

A Canadian Broadcasting Commission recording (Ⓛ SNS1001) provides another opportunity to hear Tintner in Beethoven with Symphony Nova Scotia. This is an expansive performance of the Second Symphony and for once the conductor's tempi do not entirely convince. The exceptionally broad reading of the opening movement is effective enough but the 13-minute "Larghetto" seems interminable. Beethoven's metronome marking implies that the movement should take exactly nine minutes but at over 40 per cent slower, the SNS performance never really progresses. The remaining two movements are solid and there are some exciting full orchestra moments in the finale but the clear yet heavy recording does not help the music to catch fire. Things are entirely different in the Vaughan Williams *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus*. With lighter strings and a beautifully balanced harp Tintner really does seem to have a sympathy for this composer (I wish he had recorded a 'real' version of the *Tallis Fantasia*). Canadian born Gerald Bales wrote his *Essay for Strings* only eight years later than the *Variants* but is far more inclined to employ dissonances.

One other Symphony Nova Scotia recording is recorded on CBC and it looks fascinating. Entitled *Late Romantics* it includes Pfitzner's Symphony in C and works by Morawetz, Reznicek, Schreker, Humperdinck, and Gál. Of these I have only been able to hear a studio transcription copy of the delightful Hans Gál *Serenade for Strings*: how can a Viennese-born composer, though



Hans Gál

British domiciled, write such English-sounding music? On this basis the original CD would be well worth pursuing (CBC Ⓢ CD5167).

There are a few more Australian recordings including Weill's *Threepenny Opera Suite*, two symphonies and a piano concerto by Alfred Hill, and works by Gethen and Douglas, but none of these is available.

There is one more CD that can help listeners to get closer to the thought processes of this remarkable musician. This is a fairly recent recording (Naxos Ⓢ 8.570258) where Tintner's own music is presented. The earliest works are the fully tonal Piano Sonata in F minor in which the Romantic era is still reflected – the shades of Liszt and Brahms lurk in the background. *On the death of a friend* is from the same period, the late 1920s. One very accessible piece is the Variations on Chopin's brief A major Prelude, from the mid-1930s. The notes by the composer's widow reveal his nature understandingly and in explaining his music, she writes compassionately of his feelings for an early lost love and also for his first wife who in part inspired the Violin Sonata of 1944. Tintner's music of this period is less openly emotional and occasionally – as in both the Violin Sonata and the *Trauermusik* – he even toys with serialism, although he later declared the system to be a "dead end". The 2007 recording is excellent. Helen Huang is a skilled and sympathetic pianist



Cho-Liang Lin

and she is joined by Cho-Liang Lin for an expressive performance of the Violin Sonata.

This newly-discovered treasury of Georg Tintner's recordings provides interpretations of unaffected freshness and I believe that today's listeners prefer such an approach to the great classics of the concert hall and will surely be impressed by the majority of these thoughtful readings. This is a very suitable time for a revival of interest in this greatly underrated conductor, especially as next May represents the centenary of his birth. **CRQ**



of activity, with no one, however distinguished, outstaying their welcome. Canarina has a shrewd eye for the politics of music management, which represent an ever-present back-drop, but he avoids taking sides, thus creating a vivid canvas on which the work of great musicians such as Bernstein, Boulez, Mehta, Masur and Maazel is graphically described. So effective and gripping is his account of their work that this reader was swiftly driven to the nearest LP and CD shelves containing NYPO recordings. He is particularly good on the various programming policies of these chief conductors of the orchestra, making it clear that those with the most original ideas, such as Bernstein and Boulez, may not have always incurred the approbation of the orchestra's subscribers, but often left the most significant legacy. This in turn prompts fresh consideration and assessment of these major figures and of their legacies. Canarina is also extremely good at bringing into focus the work and opinions of the individual members of the orchestra, and of other often unsung heroes, such as the numerous assistant conductors, of whom he himself was one. It is fascinating to read of so many promising musicians whose careers went in such different directions – one name that surprisingly pops out is that of the fabulously musical but unsung Czech maestro, Zdeněk Košler, who died in 1995. When the author does offer an opinion, such as his vivid insight into the work of the great Josef Krips, one can be certain that he is making a judgement on rock-solid foundations of good sense, understanding and taste.

This most valuable history of one of the USA's most important performing arts organisations is beautifully produced. Anyone with the slightest interest in both international music-making of the last half century and of the life of such a vibrant community as New York City will find this book a joy to read throughout. It cannot be recommended too highly.

David Patmore

Out of Time – The Vexed Life of Georg Tintner

By Tanya Buchdahl Tintner

Published by UWA Publishing, Crawley,
Western Australia 6009. 448 pages. Paperback.
ISBN9781742582566. AUD\$39.95. (Also

available soon in the UK from The Roundhouse Group – www.roundhousegroup.co.uk).

This is an extraordinarily compelling and moving book, especially since the subject is that of a life which was only partially fulfilled. Tanya Tintner is the conductor's widow and was his third wife. She writes about her husband with affection and admiration, but she is at the same time remarkably fair and balanced in discussing the good and less good elements of his personality and character. As a professional journalist her writing style is clear, elegant and highly expressive.

Like many musicians who take up conducting, Georg Tintner felt that this activity was less important than that of composition, and for most of his life he tried to find time – usually unsuccessfully – to fulfil a need to create music. As a conductor he inspired remarkably diverse opinions. The pianist Denis Matthews considered him to be the greatest he had come across after Toscanini, and all through his professional life Tintner attracted highly complimentary press notices and very favourable opinions amongst fellow musicians. Others felt him to be lacking as a technician, capable of producing dull performances and a bad communicator.

"Out of Time", the book's title, succinctly describes Tintner's situation. If he had been born 40 years earlier or 30 years later it is likely that he would have pursued a good career in his native Vienna. But in that city's somewhat anti-Semitic 1930s environment and as the first Jew to enter the Vienna Boys' Choir he always felt a sense of being different. The 1938 *Anschluss* compelled his emigration from Austria at the age of 21. After unsuccessful applications to gain entry to various countries he obtained a temporary visa to stay in England and through the efforts of a contact in New Zealand he was finally able to settle there in January 1940.

At that time opportunities for a young musician in that country were few, and for Tintner this was the start of life-long struggles to make his way and earn a living as a performing musician. It would have been hard enough for any mid-European immigrant to be accepted by the

then conservative New Zealanders, but Tintner also made himself a man apart through his ascetic way of life. He became a vegan and eschewed tea, coffee and alcohol; he would not kill any living creature, even moths and cockroaches, and was so against medication that on one occasion he had several teeth extracted without anaesthetic and then returned home using his preferred mode of transport, a bicycle. His high personal standards led to a lack of diplomacy and tact when dealing with authority and fellow musicians – though a chink in his armour was a weakness for female beauty, which he said provided him with a muse to inspire composition.

Antony Hodgson's article on Tintner's career in the *CRQ* Spring issue (page 50) gives details of his various appointments: suffice to say here that a move to Australia in 1954 did not lead to acceptance there any more than in New Zealand, and at the lowest ebb of his Australian experience he was taking opera groups on tour to remote centres, accompanying his singers on sometimes inadequate pianos. A brief spell in Cape Town was followed by a stay in London in 1967-70. Even here he failed to make an impact as a member of the Sadler's Wells company.

He returned to Australia and then in 1987 he began what was the most artistically satisfying phase of his career as director of Symphony Nova Scotia in Canada. In 1994 a chance meeting with Naxos's Klaus Heymann led to an agreement that he should record all of Bruckner's symphonies for that label. This was a breakthrough, but it was too late, for Tintner was by then 77 years old, in increasingly poor health, and he died not long after the final sessions five years later. If that opportunity had arrived ten years earlier it could have resulted in the chance for Tintner to achieve worldwide recognition and to work regularly at last with front-rank orchestras and opera house ensembles. But this was not to be.

The only drawback to this book is that it has no discography. Elsewhere in this issue (page 10), Antony Hodgson discusses Tintner's recording legacy at large and shows that his present reputation as a Bruckner specialist is unfounded. His performing repertoire was very wide-ranging, from Handel to Bizet, Verdi and Schoenberg. He

considered the two greatest twentieth-century operas to be *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Wozzeck*, and he had an especial fondness for the music of Delius. Let us hope that Tintner's recorded legacy as a whole achieves greater circulation and appreciation. That would be some kind of posthumous justice.

Alan Sanders

Multimedia

John O'Sullivan – A Biography

by François Nouvion

Symposium CD Rom 1388. £15.00.

John O'Sullivan

Songs and arias recorded in Paris (1916), Milan (1922-28), London (1926) and Berlin (1928) for Columbia, HMV and Parlophone.

John O'Sullivan (ten) with various artists.

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John O'Sullivan enjoyed a substantial international operatic career: it was centred on France, and French opera was at its heart. His is not perhaps the most ingratiating of voices, but as a heroic tenor, especially in the French repertoire, he was surely unequalled. The biography identifies a career total of some 1,400 performances of which 400 were in just two operas, *Guillaume Tell* and *Les huguenots*. Neither is frequently performed today and for good reason: how many tenors have the vocal attributes – range and power – to essay Arnold or Raoul? These roles were sung all over France by O'Sullivan, making them his own in the same way as Mary Garden was the *Mélisande* of choice.

François Nouvion's work, now published on CD Rom, is far more than a straight biography, for it embodies research which must have taken many years. The actual biography draws on a vast range of source material with much taken from contemporary reviews. The chronology is a model of its kind – programmes and local press notices in all the places where O'Sullivan sang have been scoured for information. The ongoing career is analysed in a variety of ways: opera sung on a year by year basis and performances in each location. The discography is surely definitive. There are