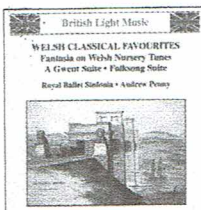


Welsh Classical Favourites N

Burtch Aladdin **Davies** Solemn Melody
Hoddinott Folksong Suite **Mathias** Serenade
Parrott Fanfare Overture **Roberts** Pastorale
Walters Primavera Overture. A Gwent Suite
Williams Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes
 Royal Ballet Sinfonia / **Andrew Penny**
 Marco Polo © 8 225048 (71 minutes: DDD)

A charming collection of Welsh orchestral works that deserves exposure, especially in such genial performances



The great Welsh vocal and choral heritage famously stretches way, way, back into the mists of medieval musical history. Only in the 20th century has there been an orchestral tradition, so Welsh folk melodies have not received the concert-hall exposure, in orchestral garb, of comparable English tunes. Then in 1940 Grace Williams completed her *Fantasia*, using eight very winning homespun ideas, arranging them into a kind of pot-pourri (a little like Roger Quilter's *A Children's Overture* uses nursery rhymes), deliciously scored, whimsical, touching and light-hearted by turns. Walford Davies had preceded her in the 1930s and he left us the gorgeous hymn-like *Solemn Melody*.

Trevor Roberts's delicate *Pastorale* readily evokes Pembrokeshire but has something of Butterworth and Vaughan Williams in its fragile atmosphere, with a lovely oboe solo and a passionate string climax. Alun Hoddinott's very winning *Folksong Suite* is also lightly scored, and utterly charming. Mervyn Burtch's *Aladdin* overture (not incidental music) has a lurching, syncopated main theme of considerable character and Gareth Walters' vigorous spring-inspired overture is a similarly monothematic through-composed piece with just a whiff of Malcolm Arnold. The colourful orchestration of the latter's sets of dances is mirrored both in the jolly finale of Mathias's *Serenade*, where the main theme is repeated in constantly changing orchestral dress, and in the exuberant opening and closing movements of the Walters *Gwent Suite*.

All this music is brightly, lightly and affectionately played by Penny and his Royal Ballet Sinfonia and given a warmly colourful recording and nicely judged ambience. A pity it was not issued at Naxos price – such an enticing programme deserves the widest exposure. The disc, nevertheless, is generously full. **Ivan March**

British Light Music Classics 3 N

Ancliffe Smiles, then Kisses **Binge** Miss Melanie **Caryl** The Pink Lady **Coates** Music Everywhere **Dexter** Siciliano **Duncan** Girl from Corsica **Ellis** Alpine Pastures **Evans** Lady of Spain **Farnon** Portrait of a Flirt **Godin** Valse septembre **Joyce** Songe d'automne **Ketèlbe** In a Persian Market^a **Melachrinò** Woodland Revel **Monckton** Soldiers in the Park **Richardson** Melody on the Move **Strachey** In Party Mood. Theatreland **Tomlinson** Little Serenade **Torch** On a Spring Note **Wood** Montmartre ^aNew London Light Opera Chorus, New London Orchestra / Ronald Corp
 Hyperion © CDA67148 (80 minutes: DDD)

A well-filled disc of well-played songs, including plenty that are familiar but hard to come by



This third Hyperion helping of British Light Music Classics proves no less rewarding than its predecessors. The almost obligatory pieces by Coates, Farnon and Ketèlbe are duly here, and so too are such favourites of the post-Second World War era as Haydn Wood's *Montmartre*, Trevor Duncan's *Girl from Corsica*, Ernest Tomlinson's *Little Serenade* and Sidney Torch's *On a Spring Note*. All have popped up from time to time in similar collections over the past few years; what makes these Hyperion collections especially rewarding is the way they introduce items not otherwise readily available. Examples here include the two pieces by Jack Strachey – the bouncy *In Party Mood*, which served as the signature tune of *Housewives' Choice*, and the rousing march *Theatreland*. There is also a gratifying whiff of mountain air and cowbells in Vivian Ellis's *Alpine Pastures*, which was for many years the signature tune of *My Word*.

No less welcome, though, are pieces from an earlier age that both LP and CD have tended to neglect. *Valse septembre* by Felix Godin was prominently featured in the film *Titanic*, but the elegant and shapely *Smiles*, then *Kisses* by that fine craftsman Charles Ancliffe has probably been neglected since the post-Second World War revival of 'Olde Tyme Dancing'. Ronald Corp and the New London Orchestra play with their familiar accomplishment and affection and, if anything, an even surer grasp of pace than before. The CD is gratifyingly full and excellently recorded. More, please! **Andrew Lamb**

Recital N

Bruch Violin Concerto No 1 in G minor,
 Op 26 **Bloch** Baal Shem **Bunch** Fantasy
Sarasate Zigeunerweisen, Op 20
 Ittai Shapira *vn* English Chamber Orchestra
 / Charles Hazlewood
 EMI Debut © CDZ5 73501-2 (66 minutes: DDD)

A pleasing entrée to a recording career that's also sympathetically recorded



The 24-year-old Israeli violinist, Ittai Shapira, here makes an impressive recording début. His technique is immaculate, and his control of timbre and colour already shows maturity. Perhaps the Bruch – which needs a riper, more full-blooded identity with romantic hyperbole – was not an ideal choice. But if you are looking for a felt, though essentially refined approach, Shapira is your man, as the tenderly moving opening of the *Adagio* readily shows.

He is in his element in the Bloch triptych, displaying a natural affinity for its Hebrew sonority and temperament. The opening is spell-binding, and the closing 'Simchas Torah' (Rejoicing) especially compelling. The Bunch *Fantasy*, written and dedicated to the soloist, is a strange piece, which opens rather weirdly (the struggle for existence of fantasy in the face of 20th-century

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