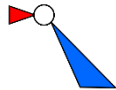


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<1137/c>	, the Messe des Pauvres, composed, incredibly, in 1895. The work has voices in the first two movements, but is essentially for solo organ, dazzlingly played by Gaston Litaize, who clearly enjoys himself of the magnificent beast which lives in the church of St. Francois-Xavier in Paris. This work has had me taking this set off the shelf again and again. The last movement has some harmonic progressions which are thoroughly reminiscent of early Messiaen and the whole marvellous piece is one which I am genuinely excited to have encountered. () Aldo Ciccolini made six LPs of Satie piano music and about half of these recordings have been re-issued on a 'Rouge et Noir' set. Ciccolini is capable of very stylish virtuosity and shows this to great effect in the more extrovert pieces to which he also brings genuine humour (as opposed to the archness which spoils so many performances of Satie's music). Where I find him occasionally disappointing is in the dreamier world of the Gymnopédies and the more intriguing Sonneries de la Rose Croix (one of the composer's Rosicrucian works). His playing is never less than very good, but he does occasionally tend to be a trifle straight-laced in the more contemplative works. This is only a minor reservation. Incidentally Ciccolini also plays several works for piano 4 hands, partnering himself by re-recording! I have to confess that I would, in principle, prefer to hear two real 'live' pianists playing Satie's splendid duets, but Ciccolini makes a very decent job of all four hands. () Igor Markevitch's recording of Le Sacre du printemps has long been cherished as one of the really stunning accounts on disc. Markevitch generates a staggering amount of energy and draws brilliant playing from the Philharmonia. A gramophone classic which has come up sounding very fine on an interesting set of Markevitch Stravinsky and Prokofiev performances from the '50s. Other highlights include a superb Pulcinella Suite and a delicious Love of Three Oranges Suite, both with the French Radio Orchestra. In addition the set includes the Fairy's Kiss Divertimento, a substantial Petrushka Suite with just about the only really convincing performance I have ever heard of Stravinsky's concert ending, and Prokofiev's Scythian Suite and Le Pas d'Acier. Not to be missed by admirers of this conductor at his best. Sadly in his last years Markevitch was not the same man. I wish I could forget two London concerts he gave shortly before he died, but I prefer to remember him through performances as brilliant, powerful and exciting as we have on this set. () The piano works of Igor Stravinsky are not well represented on CD, so
 <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>the re-issue of Michel Béroff's recordings</p> <p>is to be welcomed with open arms. This includes the early F sharp minor Sonata the Etudes Op. 7, Le cinq doigts, the 1924 Sonata, the Serenade in A, Piano Rag-Music, Tango and Three Movements from Petrushka. In addition there are the three works for piano and orchestra and two amazing rarities: the bathetic Souvenir d'une marche boche composed in 1915, and the remarkable little Valse pour les enfants, published in the daily newspaper 'Le Figaro' in May 1922. I have enjoyed playing this miniature ever since finding the reproduction of it on page 248 of Eric Walter White's Stravinsky catalogue (2nd edition, London, 1979), but it is delightful to hear it played by a pianist of Béroff's stature. The piano and orchestra</p>

	<p>works, especially the Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments receive outstanding performances from Béroff and the Orchestra de Paris under an alert Seiji Ozawa. Béroff's tone throughout the set is appropriately crisp and brilliant and set earns a most enthusiastic recommendation. () André Previn's 1970s recordings of the complete Tchaikovsky ballets were some of the happiest collaborations with the LSO, and 'Rouge et Noir' puts together nearly 150 minutes of well-chosen extracts from Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty and Nutcracker. Incredibly, the fine 1972 Nutcracker has yet to appear complete on CD (Previn's RPO remake is a bitter disappointment by comparison) so the generous selection here (including the 'Snowflakes Waltz' and the Finale as well as the pieces from the Suite and some other movements) is all we have from a fine set. It is every bit as good as I remember and so are the other two ballets. Previn conducts the big numbers with a real swagger and the shorter dances are well characterised and beautifully played. The recording is never less than good. An attractive proposition for anyone seeking substantial highlights at a very reasonable price. () Finally, an anthology of French orchestral music played by the Orchestre de Paris recorded in 1968-9. Barbirolli's famously self-indulgent late Debussy recordings, La Mer and the Nocturnes, really don't show the great man at his best, though there is no denying the conviction and enormous affection which sir John brings to these pieces. The rest of the programme is conducted by Serge Baudo. It includes Ravel's Ma mère l'oye, a very fine performance of the Second Suite from Roussel's Bacchus et Ariane, Messiaen's Les Offrandes oubliées and Fauré's Dolly orchestrated by Rabaud), Masques et Bergamasques and Pelléas et Mélisande. All are well done, though for once EMI's generosity causes momentary irritation having to change discs half way through</p>
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