

REVIEWS

**ORCHESTRAL**

Just when you thought there were no more unheard Brendel gems, Decca finds some
76

**CHAMBER**

A truly inspired signing: violinist Vilde Frang delivers more excellence for EMI
86

**INSTRUMENTAL**

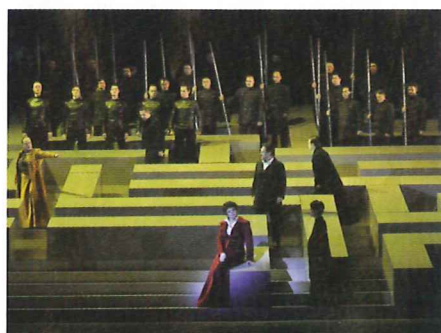
One man, one church, one organ: Desenclos conjures up a dynamic recital
94

**VOCAL**

Striggio's Mass for 40 voices sounds about as awesome as it looks
102

**OPERA**

Elizabeth Kenny's Theatre of the Ayre troupe make their debut on disc
110

**DVD & BLU-RAY**

A step up for *bel canto* opera productions: *Maria Stuarda* from La Fenice
114

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

'The finest recording of the Gershwin concerto' Jeremy Nicholas has heard
79

REISSUE OF THE MONTH

35 years on, Wilhelm Kempff's Liszt continues to amaze and inspire
99

REPLAY

Ferenc Fricsay's Bartók concertos have raised Rob Cowan's blood pressure
116

KEY TO SYMBOLS

- R** Reissue
- H** Historic
- 2** Compact disc (number of discs in set)
- T** Text(s) included
- t** translation(s) included
- S** Synopsis included

- N** Notes included
- s** subtitles included
- SACD** SACD
- DVD** DVD audio
- DVD** DVD video
- Blu-ray** Blu-ray
- Download** Download
- VHS** VHS cassette

- nla** no longer available
- aas** all available separately
- oas** only available separately
- £** £11 and over
- £** £8 to £10.99
- £** £6 to £7.99
- £** £5.99 and below



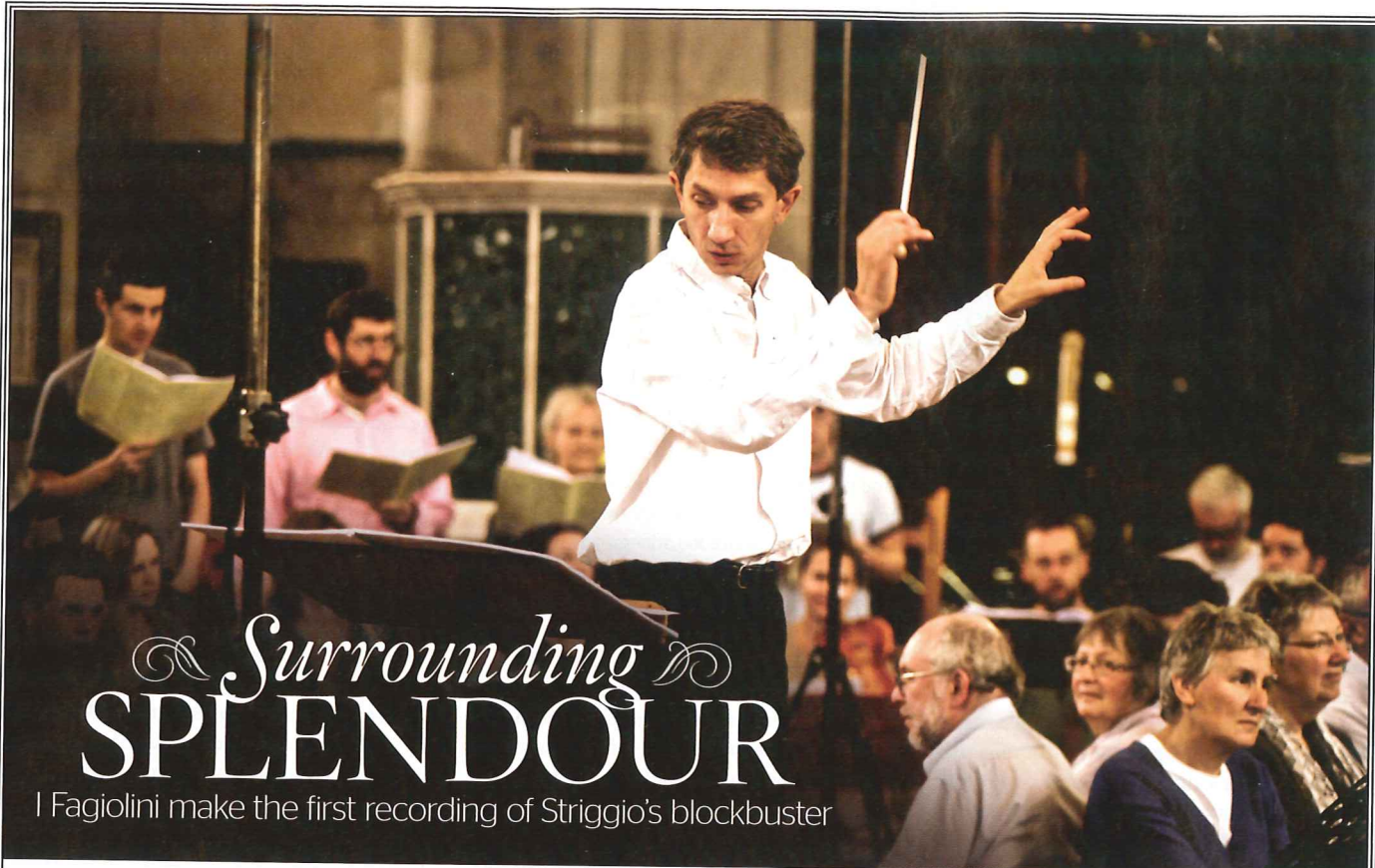
Editor's Choice
See page 12



Gramophone recommends



Pay a visit to the Gramophone Player at www.gramophone.co.uk to hear excerpts from this month's Editor's Choice discs as well as other featured recordings



I Fagiolini make the first recording of Striggio's blockbuster

Rogier

Domine Dominus noster. Laudate Dominum.
Missa Domine in virtue tua
**Magnificat; His Majestys Sagbutts and
Cornetts / Philip Cave**
Linn ② CKD348 (73' • DDD/DSD)

Striggio

Striggio Ecco Ecce beatam lucem. Missa Ecco
si beato giorno. Fuggi, spene mia. O giovenil
ardire. Altr'io che queste spighe. D'ogni gratia
et d'amor. O de la bella Etruria. Caro dolce
ben mio. Misero ohimè **Galilei** Contrapunto
Secondo di BM **Plainchant** Spem in alium
Tallis Spem in alium

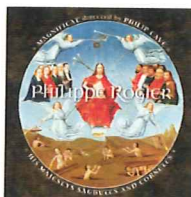
I Fagiolini / Robert Hollingworth

Decca ② (CD + DVD) 478 2734DH2 (78' • DDD)

DVD contains a performance of Tallis's Spem in alium

**Writing for several choirs is a grand
affair, as these new recordings reveal**

These two new recordings explore the rich polychoral repertoire of the late 16th century, which may with justification be regarded as a harbinger of Baroque sensibility. Several years ago Magnificat recorded the *Missa Ego sum qui sum* by Philippe Rogier, one of Philip II of Spain's chapelmasters. Both the work and the performance were so convincing that a second visit is not entirely surprising, for all Rogier's comparative obscurity, and the choice of pieces, being exclusively polychoral, contrasts with the earlier recording. This type of writing



tends to a certain conventionality, which places the responsibility on the performers to bring to the fore the music's spatial and dynamic qualities, as well as clothe it in suitably opulent colours. The purpose of such music, after all, is to instil a sense of the marvellous. Whether Magnificat entirely achieve this is debatable: the *Missa Domine Dominus noster* was previously recorded for Ricercar under the direction of Jean Tubéry, whose faster tempi, more incisive approach and variegated sonic image are ultimately more compelling. That the new recording lacks the polish and panache of Magnificat's previous Rogier disc is partly explained by the fact that the ensemble's membership on the two discs is almost entirely different. That said, the chance to hear more of Rogier's music is undoubtedly welcome.

By contrast, I Fagiolini had no choice but to "super-size" themselves to do justice to Alessandro Striggio's monumental *Missa Ecco si beato giorno*, recently rediscovered by Davitt Moroney and given its first performance in modern times at the Proms in 2007. The composer toured Europe in 1567, either with

this piece or the 40-part motet *Ecce beatam lucem*, famously provoking a response from Tallis. Striggio's motet has often been recorded alongside *Spem in alium* but here we go one better with all three (and a selection of motets that make the case for Striggio's accomplishments more completely). In a move typical of Renaissance Masses, Striggio piles on 20 more voices in the final *Agnus Dei*. A friend of mine, listening to this recording, mouthed the word "minimalism"; and the sense of waveforms shaped around recurring harmonic patterns does indeed remind one of latter-day musical developments. It's easy to compare Striggio unfavourably to the great Englishman but the new work especially reveals that to do so misses the point. The variegated plumage Striggio intended for his creation induces precisely the marvel I mentioned earlier and I Fagiolini seem to revel in the showy splendour of it all. The comparison's often valid for polychoral music generally but the monumental canvas on which Striggio works makes it especially so. When at last we're given *Spem*, we're made to appreciate the parallel as never before, not least because Hollingworth has chosen his combination of voices and instruments with care. This time, Striggio's contribution is not heard as the "also-ran" in a competition; rather, it is the creative irritant whose siren song stirred the "humble and quiet" Tallis into superb arrogance. Worth hearing? Definitely. **Fabrice Fitch**