

own record label seems to be ideal for putting across their smooth, velvety sound. Is there a more refined orchestra?

It is so refined that some people will prefer a sound with more punch and emphasis—something more incisive and dramatic. In the First Symphony there are Slatkin in St Louis and Ashkenazy—both more powerful and stirring. But this is a beautiful performance of a work that is seldom heard and doesn't really wear well. You hear it and forget it. You don't need more than one recording.

*Isle of the Dead* has been recorded by many great conductors—even Toscanini! Besides the undeniably great Koussevitzky and Reiner, we have recommended Ashkenazy, Previn, and Svetlanov. Svetlanov is the most wrenching and moving. Previn makes it utterly beautiful. Jurowski is in that style—not stunning, but quite beautiful, and definitely subdued.

I like this recording, and the beautiful sound and orchestra certainly captivate me. The symphony is better than Previn—more coherent, more moving—especially the first movement, which is the best movement.

VR00N

**RANDEL:** *Quartet*; see GEIJER

**RATHAUS:** *Piano Pieces 1*  
Daniel Wnukowski  
Toccata 511—68 minutes

Karol Rathaus (1895-1954) was an Austrian Jewish composer born in eastern Galicia, now part of the Ukraine. He studied with Franz Schreker and had considerable success with some of his works in the 1920s, when he lived in Berlin, but then he was forced to emigrate when the Nazis came to power. Many of his compositions were destroyed in the Blitz in London, where the manuscripts had been stored. In America he obtained a teaching position at Queens College but kept a low profile and died relatively early.

This release is billed as Volume 1 of his piano music and contains five works: Sonata No. 2 (long believed lost and only recently rediscovered); 5 Pieces, Op. 9; 3 Mazurkas, Op. 24; 2 pieces from the ballet *The Last Pierrot*; and 3 excerpts from the film music for *The Murderer Dmitri Karamazov*. All are recorded here for the first time.

Except for the last item, this music does not make for easy listening, but it is quite engrossing. It is strongly dissonant and almost

atonal but does not follow any rigid system (such as Schoenberg's). It is severe and restless. Violent outbursts alternate with shorter, gloomy, quiet episodes. There is no joy or charm, not even in the mazurkas or the 'Sentimental Waltz' from the ballet; their dance character is barely hinted at. Melodies are fragmentary, harmonies transformed into unresolved dissonance or unison. Rhythms are strong and jagged, and an interior dynamism propels the music forward. It is difficult to judge the quality of these pieces, but I found them interesting. A certain uniformity of mood and style is perhaps a drawback. Only the film music excerpts, two of which have titles beginning with 'Song', are simpler and more melodic—and less interesting.

These technically demanding works are played to the hilt by the Polish-Canadian Daniel Wnukowski. The booklet contains an essay by Michael Haas (producer of Decca's *Entartete Musik* series and author of a fine book on Jewish composers banned by the Nazis), who points out that Rathaus's earliest compositions were in a more conventional and accessible style. Regarding the present works, Haas aptly speaks of "abrasive Expressionism" and finds the sonata "brooding", "apocalyptic", and demanding "unremitting brutality" from the pianist. It is to Wnukowski's credit that he conveys the brutality without seeming brutal himself.

REPP

**REINECKE:** *3 Cello Sonatas; 3 Pieces*  
Martin Rummel; Roland Kruger, p  
Naxos 573727—78 minutes

Carl Reinecke (1824-1910) was an active musician in Germany, friends with Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Liszt, and conducted the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig for 35 years. His cello music covers his life well. Sonata 1 in A minor was published in 1855, No. 2 in D in 1866, the 3 Pieces, Opus 146 in 1893, and the more meditative Sonata 3 in G in 1897, dedicated to the memory of Brahms.

This music is worth hearing, though not attention-absorbing. Rummel and Kruger are polished and experienced players and express Reinecke's romantic style with care and involvement. They work together well. There are two previous issues of the sonatas, the earliest by Claudius Herrmann and Saiko Sasaki (CPO 999 342; S/O 1996), the other by Manuel Fischer-Dieskau and Connie Shih (MDG 6031661; M/A 2012). All of these are played