(especially on 'shine') that keeps the choristers in flight. Elder is especially skilful setting his own words in three nocturnes, including a ravishing *Belladone to the Moon* with piano accompaniment. In contrast to much of the rest of the offerings is the dramatic character of *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, which contains sliding and layered lines, and a collective scream followed by a hushed conclusion.

The Westminster Choir, conducted by Joe Miller, sing everything with wonderful cohesion and clarity, bringing special tenderness to Elder’s charming version of *Twinkle, twinkle little star*. Donald Rosenberg

**Paine**

_Symphony No.1, Op 23. Overture to Shakespeare’s ‘As You Like It’, Op 28._

_Shakespeare’s Tempest, Op 31._

_Ulster Orchestra / JoAnn Falletta._

_Naxos American Classics © 8559747 (CT • DDD)._  

Apparentley the amount of German Romantic orchestral music by Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Schumann in Boston circa 1875 wasn’t enough to satisfy the public desire. No problem. John Knowles Paine, already established as a composer and Harvard educator, was ready with a full-blown German Romantic symphony of his own. Laid out in four big movements totalling 80 minutes, the Symphony careers magnificently from one widely familiar symphonic convention to another, in each case retooled ingeniously, and legitimately, for the music’s own adventurous purposes. No wonder it was a triumph for the Boston Symphony. These fine performances by the Ulster Orchestra and JoAnn Falletta reveal, however, more than craftsmanship and a broadly trained ear. The instrumental writing is superb, often brilliantly so. The energy of the high-flying themes and the excitement created by Paine’s colourful palette and the audiophile dynamic range even lead one or twice to unexpected moments of authentic introspection.

Falletta and the Ulster Orchestra also get into the flow of the lovely if eventually tiresome *Overture to Shakespeare’s ‘As You Like It’* and the more effective, programme-driven symphonic poem *Shakespeare’s Tempest*. They were both written within a few years of the Symphony and each creates absorbing, admittedly retro material that falters when a convincing climax or resolution is needed and doesn’t quite materialise. When it occasionally does, as at the end of ‘Prospero’s Tale’ – replete with a Wagnerian flow – the effect is enchanting.

Recorded in Belfast’s Ulster Hall, the sound has an attractively large sound stage with impressive, natural power.

_Laurence Vittes_ 

**Schedl**

‘A Voice Gone Silent Too Soon’

_Strings Trio. A due. A tre. A cinque._

_Walden Chamber Players._

_Walden Chamber Players © 888295 001731 (64 • DDD)._  

These superb performances by the Boston-based Walden Chamber Players showcase emotionally complex, deeply beautiful chamber music by the Austrian Gerhard Schedl (1957-2000). Staring out from the CD cover as if conflicted between art and privacy (he was a victim of suicide), Schedl is one of those rare composers whose musical thoughts fuse spontaneously with their emotions, like breathing, whose own distinctive voice emerges shyly.

Schedl processes his modernist musical ideas through seemingly chance, absorbing encounters ranging from desperate Second Viennese energies and late Beethoven fugalism to transparent Mozartian consolations. Astounding moments of light and shade make the listener forget the music’s obvious pain. Schedl also knows how to write a devastating _adagio_, and has a keen ear’s infatuation with tactile sounds and their immediacy. At the opening of the String Trio’s third movement, he shows an intimate familiarity and ease with the comfort zones where instruments make their most exquisite noises. And as good as his writing is for strings alone in the String Trio and _A due_ for violin and cello, it is stunning when clarinetist Ben Seltzer and pianist Jonathan Bass join in for _A tre_ and _A cinque_. The

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sound, recorded in the WGBH studios in Boston, is audiophile in its detail. The booklet-notes provide a good introduction to Schell's life and music, headed by a quote that may serve as his mantra: ‘Music is an addiction.’ Laurence Vittes

Teitelbaum


Intersections’; Seq transit parametris’; ...dal niente... In the Accumulate Mode

Yppen;...; Richard Teitelbaum

Each of Richard Teitelbaum’s six piano pieces, written between 1963 and 1998, has a timeless glowing quality that creates its own self-referential musical space, perhaps best listened to in the dark. Using just a piano, Frederic Rzewski captures an engraver’s delicacy the Stockhausenian flow and flair of Intersections, a strict 12-tone piece. Playing on a piano alongside two Yamaha Disklaviers, using software created for the piece, Ursula Oppens unleashes gurgling passages of sound in Seq transit parametris. In the 22-minute ...dal niente... for piano and computer, Aki Takahashi and the composer use acoustic and sampled piano sounds to summon up sonic ghost images on boundaries of reality between consciousness and waking. The effect is profoundly accelerated when, a third of the way through, the music starts developing structure so it out of some cosmological ripple in the harmonic winds, and begins to spin a longer, more eventful narrative tape before wandering off with Chaplinesque dignity.

Teitelbaum performs the remaining three pieces for three computer-assisted pianos, in which an improvisatory, reflective quality creeps into his work. The infectious repetitious strains of the 14-minute In the Accumulate Mode, for example, display an uncanny sense of anticipation; at just the moment each stasis seems to become unbearable, the music breaks gradually into a smile and a grin. Extensive booklet-notes by Benjamin Boretz (florid) and Teitelbaum (precise) contribute immensely to the fun but are probably best read after hearing the music first. Laurence Vittes

‘The Coming of Light’

Barber Dover Beach Harbison Twilight Music Lieberson The Coming of Light Taaffe Zwilich

Quintet for Alto Saxophone and String Quartet

Chicago Chamber Musicians

The Chicago Chamber Musicians have led a stimulating life in their city and beyond since incorporating in 1986. Among the ensemble’s missions is the performance of new or recent music, including commissioned works. CCM’s newest release contains the commission that gives the disc its title, ‘The Coming of Light.’, which shares the bill with pieces by Samuel Barber, John Harbison and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich.

Zwilich’s score, from 2009, exemplifies the American composer’s late style, a contrast to his earlier, more severe modernism. Like Neruda Songs, which he wrote for his late wife, the mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, the six songs of The Coming of Light bask in lyrical effusion while also exploring inventive harmonic and colouristic regions. Set to texts by John Ashbery, Shakespeare and Mark Strand, it is a glowing collection of personal musings.

Zwilich’s Quintet for alto saxophone and string quartet, which received its world premiere by ensemble members in 2008, evokes insouciant and expressive appeal. With its distinctive, penetrating timbre, the alto saxophone engages in a series of close encounters with the strings, including an array of jazz riffs in which the sax excels. The older works, Harbison’s Twilight Music for horn, violin and piano (1984) and Barber’s Dover Beach (1935), inhabit different poetic worlds but both are haunting essays showing the composers at the top of their expressive form. All of the performances are superb, with notable contributions from alto saxophonist Taimur Sullivan and baritone John Michael Moore, who brings warmth and clarity to the pieces that open and close this engaging disc.

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