

### (10) Shocking Pictures

North Korea Doesn't Want You To See These Pictures May

Shook You



Google Search

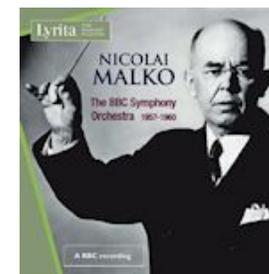
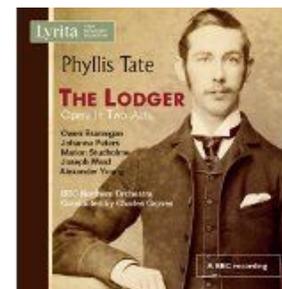
Custom Search

# PRESTO CLASSICAL

selling Internationally



Schubert sonatas



4CD set £16 postage included

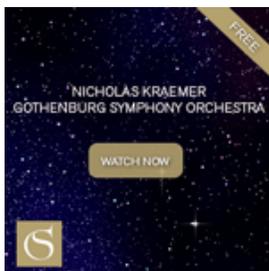
### Newest Releases

[Searching Musicweb](#)
[Review Archive](#)
[Resources](#)
[Articles](#)
[Seen & Heard](#)
[Jazz reviews](#)
[Message Board](#)
[Announcements](#)
[About Musicweb](#)
[Site Map](#)

Founder: [Len Mullenger](#)

Classical Editor: [Rob Barnett](#)

Some items to consider



Free classical music concerts by Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra.

### REVIEW

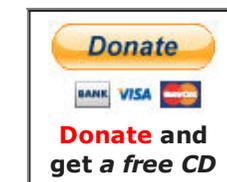
**Gordon Shi-Wen CHIN (b.1957)**  
 Symphony No. 3 *Taiwan* (1996) [26.28]  
 Cello Concerto No. 1 (2006) [35.44]  
 Wen-Sinn Yang (cello)  
 Taiwan Philharmonic/Shao-Chia Lü  
 rec. National Concert Hall, Taipei, 2014  
 World premiere recordings  
**NAXOS 8.570615** [62.12]

There are several things that I really like about this release. First, the superb playing of the Taiwan Philharmonic founded only in 1986. Taiwan has connections with both China and Japan. Indeed Gordon Chin has many connections with the latter. Secondly, the booklet notes which, rarely for Naxos, gives us various musical quotations and simple, clear analysis to follow. Thirdly, the recorded sound: vivid, direct

### Plain text for smartphones & printers



Advertising on Musicweb



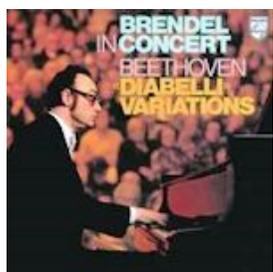
New Releases

and beautifully spaced.

Support us financially by purchasing this from



Today's leading  
clarinet-piano duo  
Ongaku Records



Vinyl edition



Having said all that what about the music itself. I'm ashamed to say that until this CD appeared in my post I had not heard of Gordon Shi-Wen Chin. I feel especially bad about this because the list of his works is considerable especially in the field of concertos. Naxos have also recorded his Double Concerto for Violin and cello (8.570221).

What struck me initially after hearing the **Third Symphony** was that this was a significant 'International' symphony and should be played in any country. A three-movement structure, basically fast-slow-fast so placing it in a more traditional format. Its biting dissonance, its virtuoso treatment of the orchestra and overall power applies to many symphonies but this one really hit home.

There I wish I could stop but I can't and what in a way troubled me were the titles of each movement and the composer's background notes. 1. 'Plunder' "depicts the various invasions of foreign powers and the inevitable result of the feeling of helplessness of the people" (of Taiwan). This is quite a violent movement, an unstoppable powerful force. 2. 'Dark Night': Here the composer quotes a beautiful folk-poem 'Flowers in the rainy night'. Its melody is used most delicately in almost Takemitsu-like harmonies but is swept aside later by "raging, roaring chords". 3. 'Upsurge' "Foreign aggression could not intimidate the people of Taiwan". This falls into four sections AABA with the B being the only slower one with the middle movement's melody re-quoted. After that come themes from elsewhere and it is here that the musical quotations are so helpful. The rather wild and hairy ending which the composer describes as heroic and "signifying the struggle of the people of Taiwan". Perhaps I'm 'out on a limb' but if the work, as an abstract form, had just been called 'Symphony No. 3' I could have formed a more balanced impression. As it is I'm not sure that the politics and history will aid in its appreciation and general acceptance.

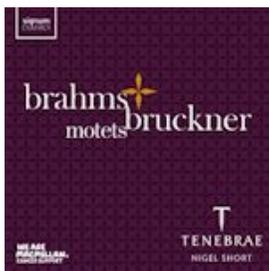
If the symphony is rather defiant the **Cello Concerto** is more placatory although it has its moments of violence, especially in the first movement. It is, anyway a longer more lyrical work and acts as a superb platform for the powerfully projected tone of its dedicatee Wen-Sinn Yang aided by the brilliantly evocative interpretation of Shao-Chia Lü's orchestra.

We are offered quotes, which the composer reckons, will help "better (to) explain the meaning of each movement". I'm not sure if this is really helpful but they are in: 1. from *King Lear* including "Give me life"; 2. from Pascal (this movement being subtitled 'Dreams trapped inside the Mirror') and 3. - perhaps the most curious of all - from Samuel Johnson "Reason deserts us at the brink of the grave, and can give no further intelligence". This is a serious-minded work and often a dark one. The final movement is subtitled 'After Great Pain'. The booklet notes, which were so extensive for the Symphony are scanty for the concerto, so what lies behind all of these quotations for the composer is never divulged.

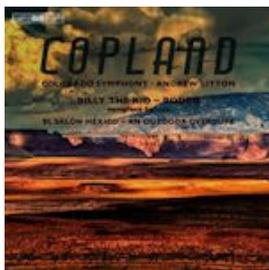
Chin describes the concerto as classical, in so far, I suppose, as it is in three movements. There is much brilliant writing for the brass and passages of wilful strength are set alongside periods of almost romantic nostalgia.

If the first movement begins with a Stravinskian chord, the second movement has, for me, reminiscences of Ligeti and Bartók side by side. There's some atmospheric woodwind writing and some unusual instrumental effects. It does though constitute a slow movement as the fast third movement bursts in after a lengthy silence like a frantic nightmare. Again, as for example after about two





Uplifting music



cracking performance  
from start to finish



Heartfelt

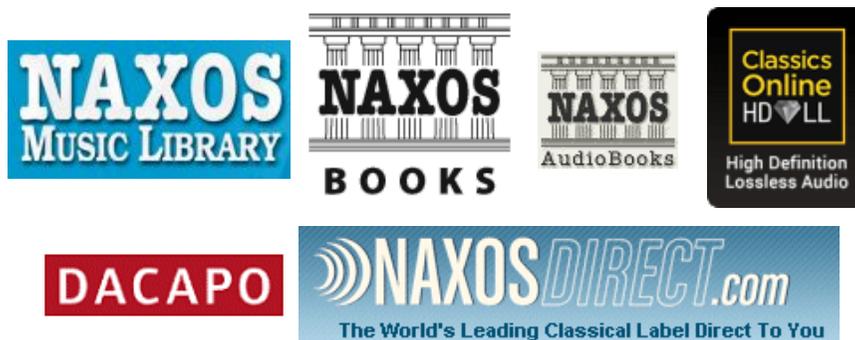


Sheer magic

minutes, there is a more gently lyrical melody contrasting dramatically. It is orchestrated sensitively. The restless, faster music returns with the cello scurrying around looking for somewhere to hide. This reaches a climax before evaporating into a weirdly circumspect cadenza. This is short-lived and then a pleading passage introduces gentle flute episodes with added string glissandi. The powerful coda is almost Bernstein-jazzy in its brass interjections.

The recording, which is of an excellent quality enhances the whole effect of the often disturbing musical journeys found in both works.

**Gary Higginson**



Musicweb sells the following labels

- Acte Préalable
- Altus
- Arcodiva
- Atoll
- CDAccord
- Cameo Classics
- Hallé
- Hortus
- Lyrita
- Nimbus
- Prima voce
- Red Priest
- Redcliffe
- Retrospective
- Saydisc
- Sheva
- Toccata Classics
- Wyastone



Follow us on Twitter

Subscribe to our free weekly review listing sample

Sample: See what you will get

**Editorial Board**  
**MusicWeb**  
**Classical Editor**  
Rob Barnett  
**Seen & Heard**