

# pressquotes

## JUN MÄRKL – CONDUCTOR

### **Oregon Symphony Orchestra / Dvořák, Rachmaninoff, Gershwin**

..capable and captivating ...as clearly expressive as he was thoroughly unpretentious, and the orchestra repaid his precise direction with immediate response, elegant sound and tight ensemble. Their collaboration, with Märkl's slightest change of gesture eliciting gorgeous colors and phrasings, made for a high-definition evening. The details in the Adagio of Antonín Dvořák's Eighth Symphony alone--lilting strings, limpid winds, regal brass, brief bits of lovely punctuation from horns and timpani--were worth the price of admission, and the rest of the piece was equally as enthralling.

*Oregonlive.com*, March 2013

### **Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra / Muhly, Saint-Saëns & Bloch**

"The guest podium artist this time was Jun Märkl, a conductor we always look forward to...he emblazoned the popular late Romantic symphony.... with energy, precision, balance and nuance."

*Nuvo.net*, January 2013

### **Utah Symphony / Debussy & Ravel**

"Märkl and the Utah Symphony displayed a remarkable cohesiveness. [Märkl] demanded exactness and precision from his musicians and they responded by playing with clarity and articulation, as well as with depth of expression and beautifully phrased lyricism... After opening with a charmingly vibrant reading of the *Petite suite*, Märkl and his band continued with an effusive account of *Ibéria* from *Images*, which he conducted without a score. It was a visceral experience, with the orchestra playing with finely crafted nuances and clear cut phrases... The orchestra was in top form and Märkl's direction didn't miss anything in terms of expression. It was an exquisitely crafted account."

*Reichel Recommends*, December 2012

### **Hamburg Philharmoniker / Dvorak, Debussy & Ravel**

"... unter der fabelhaften Leitung von Jun Märkl, der... die Philharmoniker Hamburg bereits hier (in Dvorak) zu Höchstleistungen (animierten)... Geschickt schaltete Märkl die klanglichen Überblendungen ineinander (bei Debussy Images)... (Ravels Bolero war) voller Verve."

"... under Jun Maerkl's fabulous direction... he inspired the Hamburg Philharmonic to a high level of achievement (in Dvorak)... Maerkl skillfully shaped the overlapping colours (in Debussy)... (Ravel's Bolero) was full of verve."

*Die Welt*, November 2012

### **St. Louis Symphony / Schoenberg, Haydn & Mozart**

"Märkl came off as a splendid choral conductor, crisp and clear in all his movements, giving cues that were happily devoid of any mystery. His interpretations, too, were right on the mark, and helped to tie the evening's three works together for meaning."

*St. Louis Post Dispatch*, November 2012

### **Nashville Symphony / Messaien, Korngold & Berlioz**

"After intermission, the hauntingly beautiful *Symphonie Fantastique* was performed by the Nashville Symphony with Jun Märkl again conducting. Performing without sheet music before him, Märkl draws the most incredible sounds out of the orchestra, with almost visible lines of electrical current flowing from his hands and baton, to the musicians and back into him, making this one of the most fluently harmonic symphonies I've yet heard performed by the Nashville Symphony... last night was something above and beyond the norm, a sound and feeling I can't do justice in writing, one you

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must experience for yourself; an event you don't want to miss, one for which your ears and heart will love you forever."

*Tennessee Examiner*, November 2012

## **Gürzenich-Orchester Köln / Debussy, Takemitsu & Hosokawa**

*"Märkl ermöglichte von Beginn an, schon bei den Trois Nocturnes (von Debussy), Trennschaerfe, entschlackte die Klangbilder und sorgte fuer konsequenten Spannungsaufbau, eine auch beim Publikum zuendende Auffassung..."*

"Right from the beginning, in the Debussy Nocturnes, Maerkl emphasised contrasts, throwing the pictures into relief and building excitement, making this a rousing performance..."

*Kölnische Rundschau*, October 2012

*"Den Dirigenten am Pult zu erleben, ist bereits optisch ein Genuss. Die exakte, geradezu theatralische Zeichengebung lässt profunde Vertrautheit mit den Werken erkennen. ...Bei Jun Märkl herrschen Wachsamkeit, Präzision, Intellekt. Das erinnert etwas an Pierre Boulez, einen anderen bedeutenden Debussy-Exegeten. Doch anders als dieser gibt sich Märkl am Pult ausgesprochen impulsiv, nachgerade tänzerisch, doch auch im Leisen außerordentlich beschwörend."*

"Even just watching the conductor on the podium was a visual feast. His precise, even theatrical gestures reveal a deep knowledge of the scores... Jun Maerkl's watchwords are alertness, precision, intellect – somewhat reminiscent of Pierre Boulez, another significant Debussy interpreter. The difference lies in Maerkl's podium style which is unashamedly impulsive, even dance-like, and yet extraordinarily seductive, even in the quiet passages."

*Klassikinfo*, October 2012

## **Royal Scottish National Orchestra / Debussy 24 Préludes (Naxos)**

"The Royal National Scottish Orchestra gives huge depth to these piano favourites, rearranged for larger forces by Slovakian composer Peter Breiner and conducted by Jun Märkl. A real treat for Debussy fans, and a new way to hear some old favourites."

*Classic FM*, August 2012

## **Grant Park Festival / Debussy, Saint-Saëns & Beethoven**

"[Märkl] drew performances of impressive refinement and musical insight... a subtle, luminous performance that conveyed the restless, undulating disquiet of the score with especially fine wind playing by the orchestra... Märkl's Beethoven had a lean, tautness and solid integrity of its own. Märkl drew a natural, organic performance that was all the more impressive for not trying too hard."

*Chicago Classical Review*, July 2012

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Debussy Complete Orchestral Works (Naxos)**

"This is a fine set. [...] The Lyons orchestra are thoroughly idiomatic under their German conductor Jun Märkl, and the sound is first-class... Expertly played and recorded."

*The Mail on Sunday*, February 2012

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Messiaen *Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum* etc.**

"This fine performance from Jun Markl and his Lyon forces..."

*BBC Music Magazine*, August 2012

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“Märkl and the Orchestre National de Lyon give the music plenty of expressive room, thereby underlining the beauty of its quiet birdsong and the universalism of its message.”

*Financial Times*, June 2012

## **Hong Kong Philharmonic / Debussy, Saint-Saëns & Ravel**

“Under the crisp and clear direction of Jun Märkl, the orchestra injected dynamism and drama into a work which I imagine can be quite mundane and colourless under less steadfast leadership.... Under Jun Märkl’s firm direction, the orchestra kept up a steady pace in buoyant mood... Märkl maintained a thoughtful balance between the slow and oppressive “Prélude à la nuit” first movement and the festive furore in the “Feria” finale, carrying off some toe-tapping dance episodes in between with panache and gusto galore.”

*Bachtrack*, June 2012

## **MDR Sinfonieorchester / Saint-Saëns, Debussy & Wagner**

“Wonderful impressionistic soundscapes, tender and shimmering”

*Leipziger Volkszeitung*, May 2012

“It must have been a heartfelt wish of Jun Maerkl’s, in his farewell concert, to emphasise his role in the musical arena of bringing together France and Germany, by allowing himself to plan a very personal programme... juxtaposing Saint-Saens and Debussy with German late-Romanticism (Wagner)... Debussy’s 6 Epigraphes were celebrated with great delicacy...”

*Suhl Freies Wort*, May 2012

## **Baltimore Symphony / Weber, Beethoven & Schumann**

“He has an easy rapport with the BSO, and it showed again Thursday night at Strathmore. With a flair for rhythmic spark and lyrical warmth, the conductor set Weber’s “Euryanthe” Overture spinning at the start of the evening. Inner details of the orchestration emerged neatly; dynamic contrasts also received keen attention. The ensemble responded with typical poise and color... Maerkl drew out those evocative qualities, maintaining a keen sense of propulsion without slighting sensitivity... Maerkl coaxed vibrant work from the BSO throughout the concerto.”

*Baltimore Sun*, May 2012

“Maerkl kicked off [the concert] with a jolt of adrenaline, treating the overture to Weber’s “Euryanthe” as a captivating self-contained drama. There was tension underlying the rapid string figurations — the Baltimore strings here superbly disciplined and woodsy of tone — and an urgency to the crisp attacks he coaxed from all sections of the orchestra.

Maerkl’s reading of Schumann’s “Rhenish” symphony proved just as individual, with lyrical passages taking on an autumnal glow and big moments filled with bustling energy. This is a conductor who isn’t afraid to mold phrases and play with tempos for expressive effect. His attention to the score’s atmosphere — letting troubling inner voices dart up through the music’s grand surface, or spinning a legato line through shifting brass chords to create an almost regal flavor — made Schumann’s oft-maligned orchestration sound ingeniously fresh.”

*Washington Post*, May 2012

## **Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra / Dvořák Cello Concerto**

“Until now, the recording to recommend was the celebrated DG version featuring the partnership of Rostropovich and Karajan, ideally coupled with Tchaikovsky’s Rococo Variations. But this

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wonderfully spontaneous new version by Zuill Bailey and Jun Märkl tends to sweep the board. It offers Telarc's very best sound and the recording, made in Hibert Circle Theatre, Indianapolis, could not be more natural or better balanced (the acoustic is obviously very sympathetic)... all in all this is an unforgettable performance..."

*Gramophone*, April 2012

"Märkl shows himself a masterful Dvořákian throughout this disc, eliciting performances that are vital and idiomatic, yet sensitive and full of Bohemian color. Full symphony cycles are not common in these economically trying times, but perhaps some enterprising label might enlist Märkl for a complete Dvořák set. Based on these performances, it would likely prove a worthy addition to the catalogue."

*The Classical Review*, April 2012

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Debussy Orchestral Works Vol. 7 (Naxos)**

"Each of these performances is filled with rapture and excitement. In the *Fantasy* Jean-Yves Thibaudet's constant arpeggios swell and ebb with fluid articulation as he picks out just right treble notes to underline Märkl's filigreed orchestral lines... Märkl creates a luminous impressionist sound bed.

... Märkl and his orchestra are simply superb."

*American Record Guide*, March 2012

## **Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra / Sibelius & Tchaikovsky**

"[Jun Märkl] captured both the musical depth of Tchaikovsky's flowing melodic lines and the sheer power of the piece's biggest moments. Märkl brought forward-leaning tempos and bold dynamic contrasts to the piece. The players of the MSO responded with a vigorous, precise performance that blended a strong, well-balanced brass section playing with rich string sounds... The piece opened with clean, bold, brass passages and wrapped up with a thrilling full-orchestra sound... a performance that was fascinating from top to bottom."

*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, March 2012

"Märkl and his players drew many vivid characters and scenes from the music and thus freshened Tchaikovsky's familiar score... it has the real emotional effect of thwarting an impulse, an effect Märkl heightened through emphasis and very subtle stretching of time in the middle of the bar."

*Third Coast Digest*, March 2012

## **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra / Schumann, Strauss & Prokofiev**

"Have you ever heard the finale of Schumann's Third Symphony, The Rhenish, played so fast and with such blazing intensity? That was how conductor Jun Märkl and the BBC SSO finished their enthralling first encounter on Thursday night. It's astonishing that this was the German-born conductor's debut with the SSO... He's a conductor who has steadily acquired confidence, and the SSO has plucked him from the cherry tree at his most ripe. His big-boned Rhenish was superb, with the pacing of the glorious Landler wonderfully gauged. The finale was outrageous, but it stayed on the rails and the SSO responded in kind, playing up to the hilt.

At the top end of the programme, Märkl's reading and the band's delivery of Strauss's Till Eulenspiegel was red-blooded, edge-of-the-seat stuff, but the SSO rapidly got the bit between their teeth and produced an electrifying performance that might have been a bit short on polish, but compensated for that in its visceral, brilliant characterisation.

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... A seductively played account of the Prelude to Strauss's *Guntram* provided a moment of stillness. I take it Märkl left with a return invitation?

*Herald Scotland*, February 2012

## **Utah Symphony Orchestra / Strauss, Takemitsu & Brahms**

"Under the direction of guest conductor Jun Märkl, the Utah Symphony gave a golden-hued, shimmering performance of Takemitsu's Impressionist-inspired score. The autumnal mood lingered after intermission in the orchestra's performance of Brahms' *Symphony No. 1*. Märkl has a physically demonstrative, yet graceful, podium presence, but he never overplayed his hand... The appearance of the symphony's most well-known theme in the finale was like the sun breaking through clouds."

*Salt Lake Tribune*, March 2012

## **MDR Sinfonieorchester / Mendelssohn & Bartok**

"...And in Jun Maerkl, Midori had the ideal partner. Maerkl's accompaniment was thoughtful and avoided extremes, and the MDR's sound was warm and pleasant.

He saved the grand gesture for the end of Bartok's *Concerto for Orchestra*, heightening the sense of surprise and making this a wonderful climax to the cleverly worked out drama. This Bartok is delicately-spun despite the large canvas, and so suits Maerkl's approach perfectly. Taking their lead from his wise and reflective direction, the orchestra took a measured approach and expressed Bartok's restrained jubilation and beautifully as his subdued melancholy."

*Leipziger Volkszeitung*, February 2012

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Debussy Orchestral Works Vol. 7**

"Folge wird die Gesamteinspielung der Orchesterwerke Debussys auf dem nun schon gewohnt hohen, teilweise sogar Maßstäbe setzenden Niveau fortgeführt und abgerundet. Das ist die zurzeit beste zyklische Einspielung aller bestechend fantasievollen Orchesterwerke Debussys."

*Fono Forum*, February 2012

## **Cincinnati Symphony / Wagner, Liszt & Brahms**

"Not only did Märkl lead a fine accompaniment for Lang Lang, but a well-crafted and stirring performance of Brahms' *Symphony No. 4* as well... he led with vigour and precision, opening the concert with Wagner's *Overture to "The Flying Dutchman"*.

The CSO responded even more keenly to him in the Brahms *Symphony*, yielding a performance that balanced classic and romantic expression. (Märkl led both works from memory.) [...]

Märkl pulled out all the stops in the *Allegro giocoso* (joyous), before launching into the great variations finale, where each statement of the eight-bar theme was distinctly and beautifully shaped... Märkl emphasized the tragic nature of the symphony with a heart-rending return of the theme as originally stated. In response to another standing ovation, the CSO players showed their regard for Märkl by affording him a solo bow (i.e. refusing to stand when signalled)."

*Northern Kentucky News*, January 2012

## **St. Louis Symphony / Strauss & Ravel**

"Guest conductor Jun Märkl brought lithe grace, clear leadership, enormous energy and zippy tempos... From a lovely soft opening, Märkl's reading of "*Death and Transfiguration*" grew to almost

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the size of Strauss' ego, for some remarkable contrasts and effects. The musicians of the SLSO were entirely on the same page as the conductor, giving an excellent performance throughout.

[...] The fast-and-big treatment worked well here [Ravel], with the orchestra following Märkl perfectly all the way from the polite beginning to the demented end, for a spectacular conclusion to the evening.”

*STL Today*, Nov 2011

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Debussy Orchestral Works Vol. 6**

“Jun Märkl and the Orchestre National de Lyon offer a sparking performance, playing the music with real verve, as if they had discovered a heretofore unknown Debussy masterpiece. [...] Debussy fans will find this release a real delight.”

*Classicstoday.com*, 10/10, October 2011

“The performers continue to display a flair for Debussy, lending his music elegance, grace, saturated colors, and enthusiasm, while Märkl's tempos and pacing are unerring.”

*International Record Review*, October 2011

“In their latest Debussy volume, Jun Märkl and his fine French players turn to orchestrations of piano works by the composer's contemporaries or later admirers. They capture perfectly the flash and dazzle of the *Suite bergamasque*, particularly in the high-voltage opening and closing movements, and charm us with the graceful *Petite Suite* and *Printemps*.”

*The Observer*, June 2011

“If trying to rethink Debussy's sublimely idiomatic piano writing in orchestral terms isn't challenging enough, to make it sound like an orchestral original borders on the impossible. Yet miraculously, this is just what Jun Märkl achieves in this enchanting collection, as witness magical performances of the *Suite bergamasque* and *Petite Suite* that appear to float free of musical gravity. He makes *en blanc et noir* sound even more alluring than in its two-piano original, while an early symphonic movement that originally never got beyond piano duet scoring emerges like liquid gold.

No one has ever captured the sense of a small boat creating gentle ripples on a lake in the early morning mist (*En bateau* from *Petite Suite*) as magically as Märkl and his gifted Lyon players.

Jun Märkl's outstanding Debussy series makes every piece sound like one of the most cherishable masterworks in the repertoire. All five previous volumes in this Naxos Debussy series are must-haves.”

*Classic FM*, five stars, July 2011

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Debussy Orchestral Works Vol. 5**

“Right from the opening moments, Märkl and the engineers create *atmosphere*... as Märkl creates characters with terrifically flexible tempo changes that are so essential to this music...”

Once again the warm, resonant, utterly transparent, best-seat-in-the-house engineering lets you bathe in Märkl's fluid, ideal pacing and the soloists' exquisite musicianship.”

*International Record Review*, October 2011

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"It is performed with the sensitivity, warmth of character, fluency and discerning treatment of instrumental timbre that have been the hallmarks of the Lyon orchestra's playing and Jun Märkl's conducting on all four of their previous discs."

*Gramophone*, June 2011

"Another winner from Lyon...revelatory...these treasurable pieces have never sounded finer on disc."

*Classic FM*, April 2011

## **MDR Sinfonieorchester / Mahler Symphony No. 3 at Leipzig Gewandhaus**

"...Mahler 3 is difficult to grasp – as the Staatskapelle Dresden under Esa Pekka Salonen discovered to their cost in the Leipzig Mahler Festival. So now to the MDR, who, having held their own amidst international competition last May with an assured account of Mahler 10, more than rose to the challenge of Mahler 3 on this occasion.

It is not Märkl's style to focus merely on beautiful sound production; he is not satisfied with spinning glorious lines, or allowing the rich chords and instrumental layering to suffice. He takes a more analytical approach, goes right to the heart of the matter, constantly seeking out new details to shed light on the whole, and eschewing self-indulgence for clarity. This approach meant that, for Mahler 3, he was exactly the right man in the right place.

With irresistible logic he took the scraps of material from the opening and wove them into the powerful fabric of the first movement, and in doing so revealed Mahler's drama of contrasts, always taking care not to repeat himself. And so he illuminated anew every detail, every development, every sound and every motif. The result: a vibrant sensuality and an over-arching tension which ever dipped..."

*Leipziger Volkszeitung*, September 2011

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Stravinsky, Mozart & Saint-Saëns**

"The Ascension Day holiday did not prevent a full house for Jun Maerkl's closing concert of his 6 year tenure. The programme juxtaposed Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite*, Mozart's Piano Concerto No.20, and above all the imposing and majestic Organ Symphony by Saint-Saens – which unleashed the public's enthusiasm, who with one accord rose to their feet to give the maestro a long ovation...The public were there primarily to thank Jun Maerkl for having brought a breath of fresh air to the orchestra throughout his tenure...he has left his mark upon the orchestra and we salute him!"

Antonio Mafra, *Le Progrès*, June 2011

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Thierry Escaich / Les Nuits hallucinées (Universal Edition)**

"Jun Märkl's lyrical and refined conducting at the head of his Lyon musicians is faultless."

*Le Monde*, May 2011

## **Philadelphia Orchestra / Haydn, Mozart & Beethoven**

"The Haydn... was an unalloyed joy. Both muscular and lithe, the Symphony No. 44 in E minor, "Trauersinfonie," benefitted enormously from Märkl's light touch (his right hand confidently stopped beating time in spots to allow chamber music to take hold), from the polish of the strings, and the ease with which hornist Jeffrey Lang negotiated a part of enormous glide and altitude. This orchestra has never been known as a Haydn ensemble, even in Wolfgang Sawallisch's Haydn season. But maybe now's the time."

Peter Dobrin, *Philadelphia Enquirer*, April 2011

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## **Leipzig MDR Radio Symphony Orchestra / Mendelssohn Symphony No. 2 - Lobegesang Op.52 (Naxos)**

"This new Leipzig performance, finely played and sung, and spaciouly recorded, could win over many doubters to Mendelssohn's splendid symphony-cum-cantata"

*Gramophone*, March 2011

"Märkl blows away any Victorian cobwebs with a reading that keeps Mendelssohn's precision scoring firmly on its toes. This approach reaches its zenith in the glorious chorus *Die Nacht ist vergangen* ('The night is departed'), which pushes forward with an elatory zeal guaranteed to activate the goose flesh. He negotiates the tricky Allegretto second movement – halfway between a scherzo and song without words – with remarkable assuredness, and captures the 'religioso' spirit of the slow movement without the slightest hing of bogus piety."

*Classic FM Magazine*, March 2011

## **Leipzig MDR Radio Symphony Orchestra / Mendelssohn *Elijah* Op.70 (Naxos)**

"This is a splendid CD of an unfairly neglected and often misunderstood work, and at the attractive price it will be very hard to beat."

*International Record Review*, January 2011

"This is in every way a 'big' *Elijah*. Climaxes are full-blooded from both orchestra and chorus, and in the narrative sections conductor Jun Märkl brings out the drama with telling use of contrasts in both texture and tempo."

*BBC Music Magazine*, four stars, November 2010

"...this excellent performance of Mendelssohn's great Biblical oratorio thrills both in the surges of choral glory and in the moments of tender reflection."

*Daily Telegraph*, five stars, October 2010

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Debussy *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* (Naxos)**

"Märkl draws beautiful playing from the Lyon orchestra."

*BBC Music Magazine*, five stars, January 2011

"The performance conveys the music's subtle seductiveness with a sure and refined sense of colour"

*Gramophone*, November 2010

"Debussy's music is notoriously difficult to bring off convincingly, which makes Märkl's achievement all the more remarkable. Played like this, with every phrase pulsating with life-enhancing radiance and choreographic intensity, these magical scores caress the senses as rarely before.

...Even bearing in mind classic recordings from the likes of Karajan and Haitink, Jun Märkl is a master Debussyan, who captures the magical half-lights of these scores with a rare instinct for colour and texture."

*Classic FM Magazine*, five stars, November 2010

"...the music's sensuous colouring shows Debussy inspired, the orchestral playing echoing his finesse."

*The Telegraph*, September 2010

## **Dallas Symphony Orchestra / Ravel Piano Concerto in G - La Valse**

**intermusica**

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"The concert's dazzler was Ravel's La Valse, with Märkl tuning right into the work's mix of imperial elegance and surrealism... The piece built to an exciting conclusion, the music thrusting and exploding with great panache."

*Dallas Morning News*, November, 2010

## **MDR Symphony Orchestra / Mahler Symphony No. 2**

"Jun Märkl... had the violins shimmer gently as if with his hand movements he was applying liquid gold, blending ceaselessly with the prophetic call of the oboe, clarinet, horns and particularly the brass. But soon Märkl loosened the reins: his Andante Moderato was a restrained, tentative dance allowing room for reflection and room to breathe after the complexity of the Allegro Maestoso.

In the third movement (as in the first) Märkl created great arcs, this time using them to impose order upon the chaos of earthly life, alternating cheerful serenity with sudden outbursts, stretching the line yet further in the fourth and fifth movements.

No less impressive is Märkl's collaboration with the orchestra: heavenly soli from the cor anglais, oboe, flute, trumpet and horns, together with enchanting brass and strings melting with elegance and full of energy, all work together to create crackling suspense."

*Leipziger Volkszeitung*, September 2010

## **Orchestre National de Lyon/ Debussy Orchestral Works Vol. 3 (Naxos)**

"Over the years I've grown attached to conductor Jun Märkl's Debussy series with the Orchestre National de Lyon as it has progressed volume by volume.

...because it is so lucid, with great clarity of detail, it seems almost transparent; and because it is so transparent, the music can appear to lack its sultry sense of heat. In fact what you realise is that, instead of listening to an impressionistic wash of ravishing orchestral sound, you are hearing detail gleaming from within the textures."

*Glasgow Herald*, May 2010

## **Seattle Symphony Orchestra / Wagner, Schumann & Beethoven**

"During a magnificent stretch at the conclusion of the Intermezzo, the line between soloist and symphony blurred, the music exploded into the realm of dazzling energy, and everyone in the hall was breathing as one. It is for these kinds of moments that people go to live concerts: when one no longer just listens to the music but becomes a part of it."

*Seattle Times*, May 2010

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Debussy Images, Ibéria, Rondes de Printemps (Naxos)**

"In Jun Märkl's expert hands one can immediately sense Debussy using orchestration as a means of articulating each work's form....he magically evokes iridescent textures from which points of sound emerge like piquant sources of light on a canvas. A captivating performance enhanced by four bonus orchestrations"

*Classic FM* April 2010

## **Guerzenich Orchestra Koeln / Messiaen & Wagner**

"The Guerzenich Orchestra played (Messiaen *Poemes pour Mi*) at the top of their game, with lean sound, transparent, colourful, pictorial - and without any sugary religious kitsch."

*Koelner Stadtanzeiger*, February 2010

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"Under Jun Maerkl's direction the Guerzenich Orchestra's accompaniment (in *Wesendonck Lieder*) was highly responsive and full of empathy. A perfect example of sensitive musicianship was 'Stehe still' with its driving rhythms ending in tender fragility."

*Koelnische Rundschau*, February 2010

"The heady atmosphere (of the *Wesendonck Lieder*) was largely down to the conductor Jun Maerkl, who differentiated the individual voices and emphasised the finely shaded tonality.... Jun Maerkl guided the disciplined musicians of the Guerzenich Orchestra through this narcotic music with unerring instinct. The conductor demonstrated his affinity with Wagner's music if anything even more strongly in the Overture to Tristan."

*Bonner Generalanzeiger*, February 2010

## **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra / Schumann *Rhenish Symphony No. 3* & Mendelssohn *Hebrides Overture* and *Italian Symphony No. 4***

"It seemed that Märkl had done his homework painstakingly, proving to be as facially expressive as he was nimble and pointed with the baton. The players responded accordingly, the timpani resounding as the sole percussion, and the horn section welcomingly together and particularly sonorous."

*Liverpool Echo*, January 2010

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Mozart *Overture II Seraglio* and Horn Concerto & Strauss *Alpine Symphony***

"The extraordinary II Seraglio overture, alert, joyous, very Rossini-esque, showed too how Maerkl and the ONL are just as much at ease bringing to life Mozart's fleetfooted and intimate Turkish conceit, as they are in the larger symphonic repertoire."

Transported and overcome by these great waves of lyricism (of Strauss' Alpine Symphony), one can judge the full extent of the work accomplished by Jun Maerkl over the past few seasons: he has brought to the ONL that particular German sound which is essential for any great orchestra - a sensuality which issues from the depths of the music, and which is rooted in the work's architecture. Thanks to Jun Maerkl, the ONL is one of the very best orchestras in Europe."

*Liberation*, December 2009

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Ravel *Daphnis et Chloe* (Naxos)**

"Sous la houlette de l'Alemand Jun Märkl...ce ballet est un jaillissement continu des couleurs gorgées..."

"Under the leadership of German Jun Märkl...this ballet is a continual outpouring of gorgeous colours..."

*Valeurs Actuelles*, July 2009

"Jun Märkl a repris le flambeau. La souplesse de sa direction....est ici parfaitement en situation. La réussite est évidente et les couleurs enveloppantes, luxuriantes dans la Bacchanale finale, sont plus que réjouissantes"

"Jun Märkl was in control. The seamlessness of his conducting...was here perfectly suited. The success was clear and the colours, enveloping and luxurious in the Bacchanale finale, were more than gratifying."

*Le Tout*, August 2009

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## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Debussy (Naxos)**

"A richly satisfying collection, immaculately recorded, with its full measure of rarities."

*Gramophone*, March 2009

"The opening Pelléas suite sets the tone, with Märkl offering a moody account of some of the moodiest music in the French repertoire. Mystery is at the heart of his approach to the Nocturnes, too. And the three piano studies (Nos 9, 10 and 12) turn out to be unusually effective in orchestral guise."

*Irish Times*, January 2009

## **Munich Philharmonic / Messiaen *Turangalila* Symphony**

"Jun Märkl, the Munich Philharmonic, the pianist Steven Osborne and Philippe Arrieus on the Ondes Martenot... all revelled in every last drop of striking sensuality in the many passages with 'Love' in the title.

They also made a veritable ecstasy of colour out of the valedictory frenzy of joyful love 'Joie du sang des étoiles' (composed last), which they were able to intensify yet further in the 'developpement de l'amour' and the actual Finale. The orchestral musicians looked as if they were having as much fun with the loud as with the quiet passages, with the emphatic uplifting moments as with the ever-circling pianos, just as though they had a Tchaikovsky symphony in front of them."

*Sddeutsche Zeitung*, December 2008

"Many of his colleagues limit themselves to showy effects.... Jun Märkl trod a different path... He emphasised tradition rather than modernity. His *Turangalila* was reminiscent of the music of Gershwin or Bernstein (the latter having conducted the premiere in 1949 in Boston). Märkl let the blocks of sound fragment with furious tempi and allowed Steven Osborne to thunder away at the piano. The electronic Ondes Martenot vibrated like a Wagnerian heroine. Märkl's Messiaen is not just sexed-up Bruckner, but an intensification of the 2nd Act of Tristan into a dionysian frenzy."

*Munich Abendzeitung*, December 2008

## **Royal Scottish National Orchestra / Liszt & Tchaikovsky**

"...these performances revelled in the sensitive colourings of the music – Liszt's volatile persona brought to life in a highly sensitised interpretation, while the "Pathétique's" anguished opening and close were delivered with agonising care and patience."

*The Scotsman*, December 2008

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Amsterdam Concertgebouw / Debussy, Strauss & Saint-Saëns**

"The ONL under Jun Maerkl gave a marvellous accompaniment from start to finish to Anne Schwanewilms for Im Abendrot .. The desperately sad sonority of the beautiful Adagio [in the Saint-Saens Organ Concerto] was superb. In the closing Maestoso, the organ and orchestra let rip."

*Trouw*, July 2008

"Here, too, Jun Maerkl balanced superbly, and integrated the organ like a veritable wind band rising above the musicians."

*NRC Handelsblad*, July 2008

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Debussy (Naxos)**

# pressquotes

"Jun Märkl creates a deeply sensual, headily intoxicating soundscape... His supple handling of phrasing, rhythm, texture and dynamics coalesces into ecstatic sequences..."

No less remarkable is Märkl's handling of the three 'symphonic sketches' that constitute *La mer*, throughout which he hypnotically translates the play of light on the water into musical sound so exotically enticing that it feels as though one could reach out and touch it.

One of the finest discs Naxos has ever released."

*Classic FM Magazine*, orchestral disc of the month, July 2008

"L'atmosphère de sensualité intime et discrète établie par Jun Maerkl et ses musiciens est toujours parfaitement contrôlée, portée par un goût de l'épure que le chef partage avec Kent Nagano; chaque section a une place claire, l'arrière-plan demeure toujours lisible."

"The atmosphere of intimate and discrete sensuality established by Jun Maerkl and his musicians is always perfectly controlled, carried by a taste for which the conductor shares with Kent Nagano; each section clearly has its place and the overall structure is always visible."

*Diapason*, June 2008

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Salle Pleyel / Wagner & Mozart**

"Märkl trouve d'emble le ton juste pour restituer l'ample lyrisme de l'oeuvre. Ce concert confirme l'opinion exprimée dans nos colonnes à l'occasion de ses récents enregistrements: Jun Märkl est bien un chef à suivre."

"Märkl straightaway found just the right tone to restore the ample lyricism of the work. This concert confirmed the opinion expressed in this column when reviewing his recent CD releases: Jun Märkl is definitely a conductor to watch."

*Diapason*, June 2008

## **Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra / Schumann, Borodin & Tchaikovsky**

"...Märkl, in his Milwaukee debut, alternately took his cues from his soloist (Hilary Hahn/Tchaikovsky Concerto) and egged her on in a lively give and take. This stylish maestro, elegant and accurate of gesture, is quite sure of what he wants.

Märkl and the orchestra made it all as charmingly clear and sweet as the sunlight that broke through the clouds on Friday afternoon."

*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, June 2008

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Cologne / Debussy, Ravel & Manuel de Falla**

"Sein Dirigat verbindet Eleganz und Energie in höchst ansprechender Weise."

*Kölner Stadt Anzeiger*, February 2008

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Vienna Musikverein / Messiaen, Ravel & Mahler**

"The musicians gave further proof of their feeling for the different facets of sound in the second ballet suite from Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe*. The wind section's decorative motifs rose above the gloomy backdrop of the basses, the strings played with subtle nuances and a dancing lilt. Märkl skillfully let the sound bloom whilst avoiding too much luxuriance."

*Der Standard*, March 2007

"An absolutely explosive performance... with a powerful orchestra and a conductor completely persuasive in his treatment of the Mahler score".

# pressquotes

*www.resia.com*, March 2007

## **Baltimore Symphony / Wagner, Messiaen, Debussy & Berlioz**

"German conductor Jun Märkl, in his third engagement with the BSO since 2002, had the ensemble playing at the top of its game Friday night at Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, thinking about the color and character of each note, breathing as one.

All evening, the connection between podium and orchestra was as effortless as it was galvanizing and rewarding."

*Baltimore Sun*, February 2007

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Mahler Symphony No. 3**

"...an absolutely explosive performance...with a powerful orchestra and a conductor completely persuasive in his treatment of the Mahler score."

*www.resmusica.com*, February 2007

## **Royal Scottish National Orchestra / Stravinsky *Petrushka***

"...a top-drawer RSNO performance throughout Stravinsky's *Petrushka*... characterised by colourful, zesty and biting-rhythmic orchestral playing... I cannot think when the auditorium last sounded this alive to the sound of the RSNO, notably in the wallop at the end of the Shrove-tide Fair and the pounding reprise of the Coachmen's Dance."

*The Herald*, October 2006

"...Märkl and the RSNO struck exalted heights, drawing from Stravinsky's score an electrifying precision and colourful sense of animation and imagination. On that evidence alone, Märkl ought to be asked back."

*The Scotsman*, October 2006

## **Semper Oper, Dresden / Weber *Euryanthe***

"Unter Jun Märkl's Händen entfaltete die Sächsische Staatskapelle einen wundervoll durchsichtigen, farbenreichen Klang, der Webers Partitur bestens zu Gesicht stand und den Sängerstimmen alle Gelegenheit zur Entfaltung bot. Trotz Liebe zum Detail ließ er den Spannungsbogen nie abreißen, balancierte den Orchesterklang zwischen lyrischer Zartheit und dramatischer Wucht gekonnt aus. Vielleicht - oder besser: hoffentlich - also der Beginn einer »Euryanthe«-Renaissance?"

U. Ehrensberger, *Das Opernglas*, May 2006

"With Jun Märkl's lean, intelligent conducting and a cast of stars, this is a landmark interpretation. What Nemirova and Märkl have done is to place the work firmly in its context, an environment of postwar trauma infused with repressive Biedermeier tensions. Märkl spares the work anachronistic romanticism, approaching it from a background of Beethoven and Schubert. In this brisk, electrifying reading, it is astonishing how much foreshadowed Wagner can be heard."

*Financial Times*, March 2006

"Praise in abundance for the orchestra who were extremely well-prepared and sensitively led by Jun Märkl, for the glorious chorus and for a cast whose command of this complex, difficult work left nothing to be desired... In the way his orchestra were alert to every nuance of colour, both in the many solo passages and in the tutti passages - interjections scattered throughout the lyrical drama to reinforce it - Jun Märkl showed how this *Euryanthe* could have been viable, if only the production had done, what good conductors do: let the work speak for itself."

# pressquotes

*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 2006

"Of course Weber's own orchestra have just the right woodwind timbre, but Jun Märkl managed by dint of absolute transparency and constant vigilance to make us almost forget that Weber gives us many beautiful moments in this work but never a logical musical whole. Märkl conjured up phrases out of thin air and he flitted into imaginary depths by whipping up extreme dynamics. He was helped by a glorious chorus and a fabulous German-speaking house ensemble, which is rarely the case nowadays."

*Die Welt*, February 2006

"Jun Märkl maintains the momentum throughout the three-hour work, keeping even the large choral tableaux buoyant, keeping a modern Weber in his sights and achieving wonderful results with his slimmed-down approach."

*Der Tagesspiegel*, February 2006

"Jun Märkl echoed the production with a slimmed-down, transparent interpretation devoid of any cheap romantic thrills. Under his direction the Staatskapelle were feather-light and full of nuance, and the Chorus made a persuasive contribution to the success of the whole evening. The excellent cast together with the orchestra and chorus all proved the incontestable qualities of this performance of Euryanthe and gave a fitting platform to this neglected music."

*Freie Presse*, February 2006

"...the orchestra, who under Jun Märkl gave us a very transparent, finely-differentiated Weber, devoid of sentimentality or excess. The cast was marvellously supported by the glorious chorus..."

*Sächsische Zeitung*, February 2006

"We heard a wonderfully transparent, slimmed-down sound."

*Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, February 2006

## **Orchestre National de Lyon Gala Concert / Wagner, Prokofiev & Dvorak**

"We shan't dwell further upon the qualities of this orchestra who surpassed themselves thanks to the importance of the occasion and the talent of their conductor...Pointless to dwell upon. This concert revealed the strong sense of fellowship between the maestro and his troops. Perhaps the best present the ONL could offer its public".

*Le Progrès*, November 2005

## **Orchestre National de Lyon Gala Concert / Liszt, Tomasi & Dvorak**

"Precise and elegant, his conducting brings out the best qualities of the whole orchestra, a Rolls Royce which can happily stand comparison with the best European ensembles. "

*Le Progrès*, November 2005.

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Liszt & Messiaen**

"The conducting was precise, full of contrasts, enthusiastic and motivating. A treat for the ears."

*Lyon Figaro*, October 2005

"Audacious and demanding, this programme cohered well. The musicians played it with energy and talent in a lyrical and rigorous interpretation generated by the inspired direction of their new boss."

**intermusica**

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# pressquotes

*Le Progrès, October 2005*

## **Orchestre National de Lyon / Beethoven & Liszt**

"Superbly conducted (by heart) by Jun Märkl who can do no wrong. The surgical precision of his conducting made for a lean, flexible performance of refined suppleness, which was more reminiscent of the Sturm and Drang influence from Haydn rather than a heavier Romanticism. The musicians played it with faultless musicality, masterly technique, and were quite clearly enjoying themselves hugely."

*Le Progrès, October 2005*

"Jun Märkl conducted an "Eroica" the likes of which we have not heard for many years here, full of fire and irresistible momentum: aural fireworks of which the tiniest rocket, carefully placed, acquired devastating meaning."

*Le Tout Lyon, October 2005*

## **Chicago Symphony Orchestra / Mozart & Richard Strauss**

"Dramatic tension and energetic convulsions, CSO trademarks when it tackles Strauss, permeated the brilliant performances of *Death and Transfiguration* and *Don Juan* in the second half. But Märkl also managed to bring forth the tone poems' softer, graceful side, their Mozartean moments. The orchestra responded to him like the precision machine that it could be, a willing collaborator in his cogently theatrical and never merely showy interpretations. Märkl has proved himself a maestro to watch."

*Chicago Tribune*

## **West German Radio Symphony Orchestra / Prokofiev**

"Jun Märkl is one of the most interesting conductors of his generation, knows how to let music bloom with an inspirational, impulsive physicality. An elegant, precise conductor and a sympathetic and cheering presence. He understands how to choose and effect well, understands dynamic developments, and how to give well-measured effects. He is a pleasure to watch..."

*Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*

## **NDR Symphony Orchestra / Debussy, Canteloube & Mendelssohn**

"...the orchestra worked itself up into a collective roar, with intoxicating effect, but Jun Märkl never allowed these moments to become violent. Sometimes his conducting seemed almost dance-like, his left hand, full of gesture, ensured fine tuning. The melodic passages, which brought to mind the Scottish expanses at twilight, never failed to impress."

*Die Welt*

## **Minnesota Orchestra / Schwertsik & Schubert**

"Märkl, a Munich native, opened the evening with an impressively weighty, spacious account of the Overture to Weber's *Der Freischütz*, and closed with a detailed, well-paced Schubert Symphony in C Major *The Great*."

*Minneapolis Star Tribune*

## **St. Louis Symphony Orchestra / Brahms**

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# pressquotes

“Jun Märkl is by now a familiar figure here, and a welcome one. He is graceful, even balletic in his movements, but in a natural way; there’s never the suggestion that it’s all for show or part of an act. His conducting is clear and meaningful.”

*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*