

# pressquotes

## **THIERRY FISCHER – CONDUCTOR**

### **Utah Symphony / Berlioz *The Damnation of Faust***

“Thierry Fischer and the Utah Symphony wrapped up an outstanding opening month with a stunning performance of Berlioz’s “The Damnation of Faust.”..Fischer has assembled one of the finest casts of singers ever to appear in Abravanel Hall, and the Utah Symphony elevated its playing to match them in Friday’s performance...”

*Salt Lake Tribune, September 2013*

“Unquestionably the best performance of a large choral/orchestral work by the orchestra in a very long time. Fischer is a remarkable exponent of the French composer’s music. He was in charge of the score from the opening measures. He knew exactly what he wanted and he elicited a superbly crafted reading from his forces that was powerful and emotionally charged. Under Fischer’s tenure the Utah Symphony has steadily improved in artistic integrity. And Friday it once again showed it is an orchestra to be reckoned with. Its playing was articulate and well executed and filled with nuance and finely molded phrasings. This was close to being a flawless performance from the ensemble.”

*Reichel Recommends, October 2013*

### **Grant Park Orchestra / Martin *Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments, Saint-Saens Symphony No.3* and Berlioz *King Lear Overture***

“The Swiss conductor is the real thing - a musician of clear intelligence, technical skill, and podium personality, drawing performances that blended impeccable balancing, textural clarity and fizzing exhilaration...”

This was the most impressive Grant Park podium debut of recent seasons and Thierry Fischer has earned himself an invitation back to Chicago.”

*Chicago Classical Review, July 2013*

“...a conducting talent Chicago audiences deserve to hear again...minimum of fuss and a maximum of insight...”

Fischer pulled out every stop he could in his energetic and full-blooded reading, and the orchestra musicians responded in kind...his orchestra dispatched it at fever pitch.”

*Chicago Tribune, July 2013*

“He conducts with both clarity and passion.... His connection with the players was clearly two-way...Fischer sold this oft-played piece better than I have ever heard the work live. Fischer believes in this work in the way that Daniel Barenboim believes in Wagner...”

Utah is lucky to have this conductor, and several Grant Park players who are members of that ensemble can you tell you so. The players honored him with his own ovation...Let’s hope he’s back.”

*Sun Times, July 2013*

### **London Sinfonietta / Kagel *Pieces of Compass Rose***

“This made for the most provocative, brilliant, intelligent evening of music I can recall experiencing, and I can’t speak highly enough of the London Sinfonietta’s marvellous performance, conducted with all the necessary humour and passion, and then some, by an ebullient Thierry Fischer.”

*One Stop Arts, June 2013*

### **Royal College of Music / Messiaen *Turangalila Symphony***

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"The Royal College of Music Symphony Orchestra under Thierry Fischer did a great job with this joyous ten-movement symphony celebrating time (that passes) and love. Overall, these young professional musicians – for that was the standard attained – gave this music with exhilarating life-force and painstaking preparation, Fischer ensuring a wealth of characterisation and dynamics to sustain 75 vital, sweet and fragrant minutes"

*Classical Source*, May 2013

## **Utah Symphony / Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique***

"Fischer once again dazzled the audience and orchestra. The intervening years didn't diminish the sparkle and brilliance of his interpretation. If anything, it was even better. Since conducting the piece for the first time, Fischer has had the opportunity to finesse and hone the orchestra and shape it into a much better ensemble than it was when he was here as a guest conductor... This was a vibrant reading that brought a freshness to this well known music and made it come alive."

*Reichel Recommends*, April 2013

"Many concertgoers still remember Fischer's last performance of this showpiece with the Utah Symphony on his successful audition concert in 2007. No one has taken it on in a Utah Symphony masterworks concert since then. Fischer again demonstrated his mastery of the Berlioz blockbuster in Friday's concert. His well paced reading brought out a wealth of colour and detail."

*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 2013

## **Northern Sinfonia / Beethoven, Bartok & Martin**

"Fischer maintained a hypnotic, driving pulse that suggested that Beethoven's revolutionary achievements encompassed the invention of minimalism.

There were further intimations of Reich, Glass and company in a transcendental account of Bartók's Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta. Fischer imbued the hazy textures with the quality of rising mist, while the arresting passages for woodblock and detuned timpani stood out like a demonstration of a pea bouncing on a drum."

*Guardian*, March 2013

## **Utah Symphony / Henze & Mendelssohn**

"The Utah Symphony hardly ever programs works written in the last 50 years or so, unless they are "accessible"... But thanks to Thierry Fischer things have slowly changed. He's taken the initiative and introduced works that don't necessarily have broad appeal.... The (Henze Double Bass) concerto is certainly a challenging work for the ensemble and soloist. And both acquitted themselves fabulously; they made the demands Henze places on them seem easy. The orchestra played with cleanly defined articulation and crisp execution, as well as with nuanced expressiveness. And Yavornitzky executed his part with polish and wonderful musicality. It was a seamless collaboration overseen by Fischer's perceptive direction.

On either side of Henze's concerto were two symphonies by Felix Mendelssohn, the First and Fifth (Reformation). Fischer elicited a commanding and articulate account of both works that kept the classical structure intact. The symphony's playing was precise and well executed. Fischer's interpretation captured the drama and restless energy as well as the charming lyricism of both. It was transparent and clean and underscored the youthful vigor and energy that courses through so much of Mendelssohn's music."

*Reichel Recommends*, February 2013

## **Utah Symphony / Elgar, Stravinsky & Mendelssohn**

"The orchestra's superbly polished performance never faltered. Right from the work's famous opening theme, I heard an incredibly articulate orchestral sound. Each section ably contributed to the nearly flawless communal sound, and the overall interpretation was once again confident, nuanced and meticulous.

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Music director Thierry Fischer led the orchestra with a clear, confident command of each score, as well as with economical gestures. Now that the conductor and orchestra are in their third season together, they are starting to operate together at peak effectiveness. The evidence is right there in the sound. To this reviewer, the orchestra has never sounded so confident, so articulate and so precise.

Friday's concert in Abravanel Hall was simply world class."

*Reichel Recommends*, February 2013

## **Scottish Chamber Orchestra / Macmillan, Mendelssohn & Stravinsky**

"Fischer's conducting is concise and considered, with a thrilling knack for holding energy levels at brimming point without letting a drop spill over... more refined than muscular, the sound was gutsy bottom-rich, with extra emphasis on the Serenata's off-kilter pizzicatos and the Tarantella's propulsive walking bass. The Mendelssohn was spruce and radiant with rapid-fire staccatos, weightless phrasing in the Andante and a palpable dance step to the Saltarello."

*Guardian*, January 2013

## **Essen Philharmoniker / Holt & Tchaikovsky**

"Thierry Fischer maintains a deliberately transparent approach – to the benefit of this performance of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony. Where others set the orchestral voltage to „high“, the Swiss conductor is careful to keep it at mezzoforte, and this gives him room to create tension within the dynamic range. Rarely have I heard such masterly control of volume and tone, as when the passionate affirmation of the famous Fate motif emerges from the murky depths (marked „piano“) of the opening... This allowed the musicians to demonstrate their tonal shading step by step. Thus Fischer's conducting allowed the lyricism (as always demanded by their Music Director Stefan Soltesz) to unfold in the most beautiful way, allowing us to enjoy this over-exposed Tchaikovsky symphony with renewed interest."

*Der Western*, January 2013

## **Utah Symphony / Debussy, Bruch & Mendelssohn**

"Fischer continues to give a fresh look to pretty much everything he conducts. Extra emphasis given to well-chosen notes, clean articulation and tempos that are sometimes slightly different than expected perked up the ear with refreshing new insights. The symphony's impeccable preparation allowed a feeling of interpretative spontaneity and momentum, especially during the work's stormy first movement."

*Salt Lake Tribune*, December 2012

"This was a wonderfully balanced and well thought out collaboration made all the more stunning by the orchestra's voluptuous playing. The same richness in sound and detail to expressions marked Fischer's reading of Felix Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 3, Scottish. The maestro elicited well crafted and articulate playing from his ensemble. It, in turn, played with gorgeously drawn out lyricism, deeply etched expressiveness and seamless phrases. Too often performances of Mendelssohn's works are superficial; the Utah Symphony under Fischer's baton brought depth and refinement to its performance."

*Reichel Recommends*, December 2012

## **Utah Symphony / Korngold, Mozart & Mahler**

"This was more than just accompaniment on the orchestra's part – the players and Hahn were equal partners. It was a fabulous collaboration that turned this performance of the Korngold into the best that has ever been heard of this work in Abravanel Hall... Fischer's account underscored the expressiveness of the music. Even the magnificent finale with its five separate themes was clearly defined and executed. The orchestra played radiantly with precision and clarity and showed it can do Mozart's music justice.... The Adagio from Mahler's unfinished Symphony No. 10 was also on

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the program. And this was no ordinary reading of this monumental and tragic movement. Fischer delved into the score and captured the essence of the music. His account was exquisitely crafted and nuanced and yet also vibrant and alive. The orchestra played wonderfully. The strings had a gorgeous, rounded tone, and each section played with passion and expression.”

*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 2012

## **BBC NOW / Stravinsky Violin Concerto / Orfeo CD C849 121 A**

“The Stravinsky Violin Concerto is little short of a revelation, lean and keen, with the kind of inner clarity that you never get with this degree of immediacy from an average seat in the concert hall. The consequence of this is a heightening of the work’s harmonic daring and wit. (...) It’s the interplay of voices that consistently springs surprises. All credit to Thierry Fischer...”

*Gramophone*, September 2012

## **Utah Symphony / Mendelssohn Symphony No. 2 Lobgesang**

“His interpretation flowed with finely articulated and nuanced phrasings and delicately crafted expressiveness. The orchestra played radiantly with fluid lines and graceful lyricism.”

*Reichel Recommends*, September 2012

## **Utah Symphony / Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 1 and Symphony No. 2**

“And to their credit, neither the soloist or Thierry Fischer, the evening’s conductor, allowed the music to wallow in sentiment. Everything was well balanced and articulated.

The same held true for the Second Symphony. Fischer’s interpretation wasn’t overly sentimental – in fact, he underplayed it, much to the music’s benefit.

The orchestra played wonderfully, with clean articulation and well crafted phrases.”

*Reichel Recommends*, September 2012

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales at the BBC Proms / Berlioz Requiem**

“Simply marshalling such an assembly is a major achievement in itself, and one that Fischer controlled impeccably. The unanimity of colouring from the choirs was as remarkable as their neatness of ensemble. Though its biggest moments are undeniably gargantuan, much of the Requiem is intimately voiced, and it was in their refined expression that Fischer and his forces impressed, as well as in their bold attack upon the passages of apocalyptic grandeur. Scaled with imaginative variety at all levels, this was a realisation that took in every shade of the work’s emotional and sonic scale.”

*Guardian*, August 2012

“The Berlioz was fierily dramatic from first note to last, with the music literally enacting the libretto’s great events. ‘The Day of Judgment’ was pure brass-and-percussion magnificence as twelve timpani were brought into play, and the choral effects were earth-shaking. The emotions in Berlioz’s world are painfully raw and real, with humanity facing its destiny with a mixture of fear, guilt, and longing; when the chorus sings ‘Call me from the deep abyss’, that is exactly what the bass trombones do.”

*Independent*, August 2012

“The restrained moments of the Requiem such as the ‘Quaerens me’, using a reduced chorus, achieved an impressively hushed quality...Fischer and his armies embraced the *Grande Messe* with a good ear not only for its extravagance but also for its subtleties.”

*Daily Telegraph*, August 2012

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / Stravinsky, Martin & Honnegger (Orfeo B0080EG7JQ)**

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"a superb disc"

*The Herald*, June 2012

## **Utah Symphony / Strauss & Beethoven**

"Fischer delved deeply into the music and coaxed a nuanced performance from his forces. His interpretation was perceptive and thoughtful and captured the immensity of the score.... this was the kind of performance by the Utah Symphony that would have been unimaginable a few years ago. In his brief time as music director here Fischer has whipped his players into shape and raised the bar considerably higher than it has ever been. This has proven to be a fortuitous collaboration that promises even greater things.

"The high standard of playing Fischer expects from his orchestra was also evident in Beethoven's Symphony No. 1. Seldom has an early work by Beethoven been executed better than it was Friday. The orchestra played with crisp articulation and finely honed phrasings, and Fischer once again elicited delightfully nuanced playing from his ensemble. It was a memorable end to Fischer's season-long Beethoven cycle."

*Reichel Recommends*, May 2012

## **Kioi Sinfonietta / Mozart & Beethoven**

"The orchestra (Kioi Sinfonietta), conducted by Thierry Fischer, played with polish and commitment throughout. Mr. Fischer, the music director of the Utah Symphony Orchestra, who was making his debut with the Kioi Sinfonietta in these concerts, opened the program with a vivid rendition of Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro" Overture.... After intermission, Mr. Fischer led a vibrant and subtly shaped interpretation of Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony."

*New York Times*, May 2012

## **Utah Symphony / Mahler**

"This was a probing performance of Mahler's richly detailed score. Fischer's strategy of honing the players' articulation through a seasonlong cycle of Beethoven symphonies paid big dividends here. There are a lot of extremes in the Fourth Symphony, particularly in the third movement, and whether the orchestra was pivoting or easing through the transitions, all of them were handled expertly."

*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 2012

## **Utah Symphony / Beethoven**

"Fischer and the orchestra gave them another forceful, impassioned performance. The taut tempo in the first movement of the "Eroica" proved especially invigorating."

*Salt Lake Tribune*, April 2012

## **Utah Symphony / Mozart & Beethoven**

"(...) the best performance of a work from the classical period I've ever heard from the symphony.... immediately alive and vigorous, with incredibly pristine intonation, tight and unified articulations and a beautiful warm balance. Maestro Fischer's clear and dynamic interpretation of the score was realized nearly flawlessly by the orchestra, and set a high performance standard for the remainder of the evening..."

The members of the symphony admirably regrouped and gave the work an impressively vigorous performance throughout all four movements. The music never seemed to languish throughout the 50-minute arc of the piece."

*Reichel Recommends*, April 2012

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## **Utah Symphony / Bruckner**

"Fischer's account of the Fourth - really allowed the music to unfold and let him build some tremendous climaxes. He was able to shed light on the work and draw out its essence and capture its heart, soul and spirit. It was a gorgeously expressive and poetic perusal. And despite the somewhat relaxed tempos, Fischer never let the music drag. There was purpose and direction to his reading, and his interpretation was perceptive, thoughtful and intelligent. Fischer knew what he wanted and he got it.

The Utah Symphony played magnificently, giving one of their most luminous performances yet under Fischer's baton. Because of his attention to nuances in the score, Fischer demanded a lot from his ensemble, and they delivered. At Friday's concert, they truly lived up to Fischer's expectations (in his short time here, Fischer has raised the bar pretty high), and they showed that they are an orchestra to be reckoned with."

*Reichel Recommends*, February 2012

## **London Sinfonietta / Rihm**

"The Sinfonietta gave us their brilliant best, and Thierry Fischer, maestro for the night, attacked the score with the elegant vim that he usually reserves for conducting French trifles."

*Times*, January 2012

"A magnificent whirlwind of sound, performed with tremendous warmth by the Sinfonietta and conductor Thierry Fischer."

*Daily Telegraph*, January 2012

"...All superbly conducted by Thierry Fischer."

*Guardian*, January 2012

"...Managed impeccably by conductor Thierry Fischer, who showed his powers of concentration and nerves of steel in keeping the players perfectly together and maintaining the silences for just long enough to make everyone feel slightly on edge... The London Sinfonietta excelled in their playing, which was exciting, engaging and expert throughout."

*Bach Track*, January 2012

"His last work in the programme managed to combine dense contrapuntal textures with pristine clarity as conductor Thierry Fischer coaxed sparks out of the thrilling ensemble."

*MusicOMH*, January 2012

## **Utah Symphony / Beethoven, Wagner & Rouse**

"The concert, which also included music by Richard Wagner and American composer Christopher Rouse, showed new levels of stylistic definition and ensemble unity, especially during Beethoven's programmatically descriptive symphony... The work was highlighted by transparent phrases and authentic, Classical-period articulation produced by the string section's crisp, shortened bow strokes, clarity from the woodwinds and brass and defined sticking by the George Brown on the orchestra's new timpani.

Wagner's music opened and closed the concert's second half. A transcendent reading of his Prelude to Act I of "Lohengrin" contrasted with the rousing and uncommonly buoyant "Ride of the Valkyries" from "Die Walküre." The symphony's brass section energized the music with focused muscle and avoided too much bombast."

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*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 2011

## **Utah Symphony / Walton Violin Concerto & Beethoven Symphony No. 7**

"The finely crafted balance between the soloist and the orchestra took the art of collaboration to another level.

The series of Beethoven symphonies continues this weekend with the Seventh. A study in rhythm, Fischer captured the exuberance and brightness of the Seventh with his briskly paced account. And the orchestra played with crisp and cleanly defined articulation. It was vibrant, thrilling and kept the audience on the edge of their seats."

*Reichel Recommends*, November 2011

"In keeping with his oft-stated philosophy that the orchestra should give listeners the impression that "anything is possible in that moment," Fischer brought a remarkable feeling of spontaneity to one of Beethoven's most frequently played symphonies... The sound in the galloping first movement... always exciting and fresh."

*Salt Lake Tribune*, November 2011

## **Scottish Chamber Orchestra / Mozart & Beethoven**

"...superlative...I felt honours should be shared among the team behind the splendid concert...while conductor Thierry Fischer and the SCO had served up a crisp little taster in Mozart's tiny First Symphony, the purely orchestral highlight of the night was the interpretation of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, where, in terms of pacing and momentum, Fischer got everything right..."

... A truly extraordinary performance of the Pastoral Symphony... The second movement was sublime, with its unhurried pace and its immaculate interior-detailing of every curve and line: the nuanced shading of phrases and dynamic contours had me completely entranced; I have not heard a more exquisitely-gauged account of this movement. Above all, the total transparency of textures, through the peasant dance, into the storm, and on into the golden serenity of the finale displayed a supremely-balanced ensemble doing what it does rather better than most: listening to each other. That's the secret: they care"

*Glasgow Herald*, October 2011

"... [Fischer] conjured up a big sound from the small orchestra but found transparency in the inner textures with remarkable clarity from the winds... The whole evening was crowned with a glorious account of the Shepherds' Hymn, expansive and soulful with playing of utter conviction and assured control from the podium."

*Seen and Heard International*, October 2011

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / Debussy *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien***

"In the last phase of his tenure as principal conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the contribution made by Thierry Fischer in bringing French music to the concert platform and to radio must be applauded as a major contribution. These forays into unheard repertoire have often been revelatory."

*Guardian*, October 2011

## **Utah Symphony / Beethoven Symphony No. 8**

"Fischer presided with a keen musicianship that always seemed to foreground exactly the right elements at exactly the right time. The orchestra members followed him attentively and with an unerring sense of ensemble. Even when Fischer proceeded at breakneck speed, as he did in the final movement, the playing was crisp, transparent and completely natural. Contributions from Bruce

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Gifford on horn and George Brown on the orchestra's new "Beethoven timpani" were especially noteworthy."

*Salt Lake Tribune*, September 2011

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring* & Poulenc *Les biches* (Signum Classics)**

"[Fischer's] *Rite* is one of the best I've heard... One experiences the excitement that one hopes for in a live performance..."

Even though this performance has a strong visceral impact – when it needs to, the music hits one in the solar plexus – there is refinement in the orchestral colours and textures, and a sensitivity to tempo and dynamics which other conductors would do well to note.

...Fischer has thought out this score on his own, and while it is not an eccentric or egotistic performance, it has personality."

*International Record Review*, September 2011

"Thierry Fischer's French sensibility is evident from the very start of this brightly lit and articulate *Rite*: a provocative and teasing *rubato* in the opening bassoon solo immediately hints at the sexual and the chic. The verdant "dawn chorus" is crisp and transparent, sophistication clearly taking precedent over primitivism. The whole orchestra vibrates like a tuning fork, the rhythmic snap and incisiveness giving the reading terrific impulse and uplift. Fleet, airy, balletic – these are the watchwords.

The precision of the Welsh orchestra is impressive, the clarity and vitality of the sound throwing up detail that one thought had long since stopped being surprising. But here it is – freshly minted, vivid, and always with the footwork and bodily gyrations of the score as prime motivator.

...The harmonic dissonance is always seductive in Fischer's hands – making the coupling of Poulenc's *Les biches* all the more appropriate and provocative... Fischer and his orchestra are again properly bracing and audacious, and the fact that both these performances were recorded live is further testament to the thorough preparation and high quality of the work."

*Gramophone*, July 2011

"...Fischer's refinement speaks volumes in the *Rite*'s quieter passages, where the string clusters and gurgling woodwind have a lucid beauty that contrasts finely with the weight of the rest.... The real treat, though, is *Les Biches*...There is a dark undertow in the performance, with echoes of Offenbach and 18th-century elegance beneath its jazz-inflected, art deco veneer. The tricky choral writing is expertly negotiated, and the playing poised in the extreme.

*Guardian*, May 2011

"The world doesn't exactly need another recording of Stravinsky's *Rite*, but this live performance from an unexpected source is very, very decent. Thierry Fischer's augmented orchestra avoids sounding slick, and you can really sense just how strange and shocking this warhorse must have sounded in 1913. There's so much to enjoy in the sheer sound of this performance – the gorgeous, Impressionistic textures conjured up in the slow opening to the ballet's second half, or the swift traipse through "The Augurs of Spring", with the offbeat chords sonorous and weighty. And the "Dance of the Earth" is terrific, from the bass drum rumble which starts proceedings to the whooping, barking horns. You can almost feel the delight on the players' faces at finishing without mishap.

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But you should buy this for the generous, unusual coupling with Francis Poulenc's rowdy, witty 1924 ballet *Les biches*... the central "Jeu" is one of the most entertaining things you'll hear all year... As with the Rite, the performance is immaculate."

*Arts Desk*, June 2011

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / BBC Prom 18: Beethoven, D'Albavie & Carter**

"...a wonderfully atmospheric realisation of Stravinsky's 1910 *Firebird* ballet, complete with three harps, two contrabassoons, brass on the balconies, and magical inventions not in the various suites.

The second concert was stimulating all through... [The performances'] combination of lightened timbre, virtuosic dash and sheer intelligence was admirable. [Beethoven's Symphony] No. 1 went off with the fireworks brilliance it demands, but the reading of No. 7 was profound. Though the modern trend among conductors to override breaks between a work's movements is regrettable, Fischer's "attacca" between this one's first two was, I found, quite shockingly moving. The instant cancellation of the first movement's closing A-major chord by the second's A-minor one lurched us into tragedy. There is no "slow movement" — it's not really slow at all — like the allegretto of this symphony. In its disarming, indeed, charming, way, it enacts the inexorability of fate."

*Sunday Times*, August 2011

"...[Fischer] grabbed the Beethoven by the scruff of their necks, propelling the music along with period-instrument-practice alacrity.

There's no real slow music in either Beethoven's First or Seventh Symphonies and Fischer clearly pointed to 19th-century developments rather than harking back to 18th-century sensibilities in his brisk, breath-of-fresh-air performance of the First, making sweeping gestures to engender brittle attack from his responsive BBC National Orchestra of Wales players, including old-style timpani and 'natural' trumpets (though not, in either symphony, 'natural' horns). To end the concert, Fischer conducted an equally strident performance of the Seventh Symphony, suitably breathless and assuredly breathtaking, and greeted with a barrage of cheers from a packed audience."

*Classical Source*, July 2011

"Interestingly different flute concertos prove variety is the spice of life... Both here and in the two Beethoven symphonies (nos 1 & 7), the orchestra under Thierry Fischer played with alert, honed energy."

*Daily Telegraph*, July 2011

"The BBC National Orchestra of Wales under the baton of Thierry Fischer, gave a robust and enjoyable concert of Berlioz, Fauré and the complete version of Stravinsky's *Firebird*. If tepid at first, their performance of this 1910 ballet grew to an incandescent climax."

*Observer*, July 2011

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / BBC Prom 16: Berlioz, Fauré, Dusapin & Stravinsky**

"These were well-rehearsed performances, positive, lively, with ideas of their own and not a note wasted."

*Financial Times*, July 2011

"*Hinterland* was played with the fierce concentration typical of the Arditti Quartet - and attentively directed by Thierry Fischer.

...What impressed in this account was the refinement of the solo wind-playing in a score that, whatever its indebtedness to past models, remains a decisive statement of intent. For his part Fischer was especially adept in the often-lengthy passages of scenic description that can pass for

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little, not least a vivid account of the 'Ivan/Kashchei' confrontation where the deployment of offstage trumpets and Wagner tubas audibly paid off."

*Classical Source*, July 2011

"Fischer opened with *Le Corsaire*, one of Berlioz's splashier overtures, delivered with appropriate panache. After that, Fauré's *Pavane* was blessed relief, its reticence failing to mask depths of feeling undulled by familiarity: the flute solos, in particular, had a wonderfully woody charm. There's nothing reticent about Stravinsky's *The Firebird*. This was a carefully modulated reading but always with the required sense of danger, thanks not least to the deployment of sundry wind instruments around the auditorium."

*Evening Standard*, July 2011

"The second half of the concert saw the NOW give a superb version of Stravinsky's breakthrough piece *The Firebird*... Up to now Thierry Fischer had been the epitome of measured calm, patiently shaping the sound of the orchestra, but now showed himself in more urgent, animated and exhortative mood. The NOW were also shown to be in excellent form as they imparted one final orchestral flourish before executing the thrilling climax with confidence and precision."

*Music OMH*, July 2011

## **Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra & Choir / Frank Martin *Der Sturm* (Hyperion)**

"Nun ist endlich eine Aufnahme herausgekommen - und sie ist ein sehr starkes Plädoyer für das Werk..... Dirigent Thierry Fischer lässt spüren, welch dramatisches Potential in dem Werk steckt....Unverzichtbar!"

*Now a recording has finally been released – and it is a very strong advocate for the piece... Conductor Thierry Fischer realises the work's dramatic potential... Unmissable!*

*Wiener Zeitung*, July 2013

"Thierry Fischer secures a committed response from the Netherlands Radio forces, burnished strings and incisive woodwind hear to advantage in the fabled Concertgebouw acoustic... A near-definitive account of an opera whose take on *The Tempest* has yet to be equalled for sensitivity and insight."

*Gramophone*, Editor's Choice, July 2011

"Thierry Fischer' refined and yet muscular conducting, reminiscent of Ernst Ansermet, is the trump card."

*Le Monde*, July 2011

"The devoted conducting of Thierry Fischer... At last, this magical opera has the complete recording it has so long deserved and the result is a triumphant success. Fischer's conducting is quite magnificent: full of attention to detail and ideally paced too. It's hard to imagine the ravishing and often surprising orchestral colours of this opera being realized so sensitively."

*International Record Review*, June 2011

"It's a beautifully organised score with some striking moments... This recording – the first ever of the complete work – certainly serves it well."

*Guardian*, May 2011

"Das Orchester unterlegt das vokale Geschehen mit motivischer Verarbeitung, die sowohl den großen symphonischen Zusammenhang stiftet als auch punktuell kommentiert. Dirigent Thierry

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Fischer lässt spüren, welch dramatisches Potential in dem Werk steckt. Unter den insgesamt ausgezeichneten Solisten sticht Robert Holl als ehrfurchtgebietender und sehr menschlicher Prospero hervor. Unverzichtbar!"

*Wiener Zeitung*, May 2011

## **Utah Symphony / Stravinsky**

"Fischer caught the exuberance of this gregarious march in his vibrant and meticulously articulated account. The standard of playing set by Fischer in the Ives continued in Stravinsky's complex ballet. His interpretation of The Rite of Spring was loud, bold and forceful and captured the score's uninhibited passion and the splashes of brutality. It was a wonderfully crafted account in which Fischer asked for, and got, nuanced, articulate and precision playing from his ensemble. Right from the start, when principal bassoonist Lori Wike opens the work, the orchestra played with cleanly phrased execution and splendid clarity. This was without question the best Rite of Spring the Utah Symphony has played in many years."

*Reichel Recommends*, May 2011

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / Berlioz *Roméo et Juliette***

"Conductor Thierry Fischer wisely insisted on realising it in a single dramatic sweep, with no interval. This way, the music's passionate pulse could be sustained until Romeo's faltering expiry, Juliet's suicide and beyond, to the Montague/Capulet breast beating."

*Guardian*, April 2011

## **Ensemble Orchestral de Paris / Haydn Symphony No. 104**

*"L'excellent Thierry Fischer et (les cordes de) l'Ensemble Orchestral...allegent et avancement avec une transparence elegante et festive qui se transmet a tout le programme, original, astucieux, coherent: il conduit de la premiere a la derniere symphonie de Haydn en passant par deux pastiches du XXe siècle...on en sort galvanise..."*

"The excellent Thierry Fischer and (the strings of) the Ensemble Orchestral... lightened the textures, propelled the music forward with an elegant, festive transparency throughout this original, astute and coherent programme, which proceeded from the first to the last of Haydn's symphonies by way of two 20<sup>th</sup> century pastiches... we came out galvanised..."

*Le Figaro*, April 2011

"...Fischer, vigorous but not brutal, solemn but not heavy, dramatic but not rigid...gave the phrasing and the silences room to breathe; his Haydn was full of invention, anything but dogmatic, fresh proof of the "reconquest" of modern instrument groups in this repertoire."

*Concertonet.com*, April 2011

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / Stravinsky *Petrushka* and *Liadov* (Signum Classics)**

"The orchestra reveals a host of colors and emotion in this music. The otherworldly Enchanted Lake is simply gorgeous. Despite adding nearly 2 minutes to the timing of this work in any of my other recordings, Fischer achieves a sense of peace that is delicate and wonderful without ever sounding like the music is dragging, *Kikimora* – much like *Baba-Yaga* in its supernatural story – is also exceptional."

*American Record Guide*, February 2011

"Fischer's re-imagining of the orchestra... is a winning strategy. I like how Stravinsky's abrupt jumpcuts in the opening scene – provoking an edgy musical montage – are kept taut and alive with anticipation; Stravinsky with authentic sting..."

Fischer's *Petrushka* is up there with the best on record... The BBC NOW's spriti of sped-up frenzy is top-notch."

# pressquotes

*Classic FM*, October 2010

**WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln / Mahler Lieder with Christian Gerhaher**

"And the WDR Symphony Orchestra (playing Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* with soloist Christian Gerhaher) gave an impressive demonstration of how the late Romantic orchestral apparatus can be made to sound transparent and homogenous with well-balanced dynamics, as if they were playing chamber music....

...the WDR SO presented the musical scenes (of Musssorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*) with virtuosic expressivity, evoking vivid and exciting images. The Finale of the Great Gate of Kiev was staged dramatically as a never-ending, ever-renewing monumental apotheosis. "

*Online Music Magazine*, January 2011

**Utah Symphony Orchestra / John Adams *Harmonielehre***

"Under Fischer's direction, the Utah Symphony seemed to generate enough electricity to power a city block. *Musique d'energie*, indeed...

...In Friday's performance, "*Harmonielehre*" was like a living entity, pulsing and sparkling and crackling with light and joy. Fischer displayed a profound sense of the piece's architecture."

*Salt Lake Tribune*, January 2011

**Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine / Stravinsky, Szymanowski & Mussorgsky**

...and there was nothing routine about this performance! ...a former orchestral musician himself, this conductor gained the confidence of the ONBA who, as a result, revived all the colours of the Ravel orchestration."

*Sud Ouest*, December 2010

**Utah Symphony Orchestra / Berlioz *Roméo et Juliette***

"As he proved at Friday's performance Fischer is certainly is one of the most perceptive interpreters of this music today.

Fischer gave a commanding interpretation of the work. His account captured the myriad small nuances of the score. He doesn't fall into the trap, so common with many conductors today who attempt Berlioz, of going for the obvious. Instead he probes and goes deeper to find the subtleties of expression that make Berlioz's music memorable. Fischer's interpretation was intelligent, thoughtful and radiantly musical. This was Berlioz in the hands of someone who understands and appreciates the music.

The orchestra played wonderfully. Fischer got a warm and romantic sound from his ensemble, and the most lyrical movements were gorgeously eloquent. Most stunning were the purely orchestral movements "*Roméo seul*" and "*Scene d'amour*." Here Fischer captured the ardor of Romeo's love for Juliet through some of the most exquisitely expressive playing yet heard from the Utah Symphony."

*Deseret News*, November 2010

**BBC National Orchestra of Wales/ Bach Mass in B Minor**

"Certainly this performance directed by Thierry Fischer was intensely dramatic, full of fierce contrasts of tempo and texture, richly expressive and emotionally intense, though without any sense of self indulgence"

*Seen and Heard International* April 2010

**Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra / Saint-Saens, Stravinsky & Ravel**

# pressquotes

"...a brisk, well-defined performance...incisive playing and considerable poise (Saint-Saens *Organ Symphony*)..."

With technical mastery in the foreground and emotion kept at arm's length, the work has a distinctive bristling charm that this reading highlighted. (Stravinsky *Symphony in 3 movements*)

It was bracing to hear the lovely theme of the second movement declaimed rather than sentimentalized. The dash and clarity of the outer movements represented a real meeting of the minds between conductor and pianist (Ravel *Piano Concerto in G major*)."

*indystar.com*, October 2009

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / BBC Proms 2009: Mendelssohn, Holliger & Prokofiev**

"Fischer and the BBCNOW, emulating the lighter sounds of period trumpets and drums, were fleet of foot in it, as they were later in Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto*...."

To end, a short group of dances from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* formed a symphony in miniature, in which the BBCNOW lifted its skirts to give Fischer its energetic best."

*Financial Times*, August 2009

"The BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Thierry Fischer gave the symphony [Mendelssohn No.1] a good, positive reading, neat, sleek and sufficiently charged with energy."

*Daily Telegraph*, August 2009

"The first half of the evening was devoted to Mendelssohn, with a glittering performance of his first symphony, and with Isabelle Faust as the excellent soloist in an exquisitely refined account of his *Violin Concerto*."

*Independent*, August 2009

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / BBC Proms 2009: Berlioz, Beethoven & Jarrell**

"Thierry Fischer directed a suitably grandiose performance that relished both the harmonic and textural quirks [Berlioz *Symphonie Funebre*]..."

Soloists and orchestra alike demonstrated impressive levels of concentration in realising an elusive conception [Jarrell *Sillages*]..."

*Evening Standard*, August 2009

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / D'Indy (Hyperion)**

"Under the direction of Thierry Fischer, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales here plays with poise and utter commitment to this work...Fischer knows all about how to create a refined sound and one senses that this assignment has special meaning for him."

*International Record Review*, March 2009

"A performance...full of vitality and warmth with bright brass and energetic strings..."

*BBC Music Magazine*, March 2009

## **Utah Symphony / Schubert, Mendelssohn & Stravinsky**

"Fischer made a huge impact the last time he was here — and that was repeated Friday night. One of the most dynamic and expressive conductors to have appeared here in a long time, Fischer's musicality is a welcome addition this season."

The concert opened with a gorgeously crafted reading of Schubert's *Symphony No. 8* ("Unfinished"). Marked by long fluid lines, this was a wonderfully defined and eloquent performance, with the orchestra playing seamlessly. Fischer showed a fine sense for details, paying careful

# pressquotes

attention to matters of nuances in dynamics, tempos and expression. He also skillfully captured the moodiness of the work, from the drama of the dark and somber opening movement to the second movement's lightness and lyrical grace. Fischer coaxed richly textured reading from the orchestra, whose playing was well-articulated, cleanly defined and wonderfully executed.

And the musicians played luminously. It's a challenging score with many solo passages, and the players didn't disappoint either. They played with a conviction and a passion that mirrored Fischer's."

*Deseret News*, January 2009

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / Opening of the Hoddinott Hall**

"... [Fischer] directed the Ravel eloquently, provided neat backing to the marvellously assertive young Latvian, Baiba Skride, in Sibelius's Violin Concerto, and supervised a cogent premiere for St Vitus in the Kettle, a work commissioned from Simon Holt for winds, percussion and double basses."

*Times*, January 2009

"Conductor Thierry Fischer... realised the instrumental textures and timbres to scintillating effect."

*Guardian*, January 2009

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / Honegger (Hyperion)**

"Here is an excellent introduction to a still underestimated composer.

...Thierry Fischer conjures up a wonderful dream atmosphere...

At the other end of the work Fischer's handling of the final 'wind-down'... is deeply moving."

*BBC Music Magazine*, Disc of the Month, December 2008

## **Scottish Chamber Orchestra / Stravinsky, Ravel & Faure**

"...it [*Pulcinella*] was transformed on this occasion into the most vivacious of concert scores, conducted by Thierry Fischer with exuberant aplomb."

Ravel... benefited additionally from Fischer's (batonless) expertise in handling the orchestral detail."

*Glasgow Herald*, November 2008

## **Dutch Radio Philharmonic Orchestra / Frank Martin *Der Sturm* / Zaterdag Matinee series at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw**

"The orchestra, under the direction of Thierry Fischer, was exemplary."

*NRC Handelsblad*, October 2008

"... great orchestra...impassioned conducting of Thierry Fischer, and ...great singers. "

*Telegraaf*, October 2008

## **Nagoya Philharmonic**

"Thierry Fischer's appointment as chief conductor of the Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra has generated much interest in how the orchestra will evolve....Fischer has especially improved the ensembles to allow more delicate expression of soft sounds... Delicate expressions of pianissimo as well as other excellent performances proved that the Nagoya Philharmonic has been steadily improving its harmony in ensembles."

*Nikkei*, September 2008

## **Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra / Holliger, Rachmaninov & Berlioz**

# pressquotes

"He presented a sharp and witty performance which gave a new impression of the Nagoya Philharmonic.

Fischer is unique for his clear-cut interpretation of works without any vagueness, and for his smart and urbanized sense that conveys abundant expression without making it too complex.

Keep an eye on the Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra's future progress with Fischer, who is clearly pointing out a new direction for its music."

*Chunichi Shimbun*, July 2008

"The surprising freshness of this piece was supported by the fine performance of the orchestra members who showed both curiosity about the work and empathy with their conductor.

Fischer's movements were large yet purposeful. His body expressed precise visualization of the beat and of the images conveyed by sound."

*Asahi Shimbun*, July 2008

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / BBC Proms 2008: Messiaen *La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ***

"Thierry Fischer and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales lashed out in glory on Sunday, slotting into place each aural jigsaw piece with split-second timing and daring.

Fischer's choirs and orchestra announced Heaven's gateway with the most gorgeous wave of exultant sound, lifting the Albert Hall dome. Once in a lifetime."

*Times*, July 2008

"Their combined efforts paid off in a performance that captured the music's sensuousness as well as its power."

*Daily Telegraph*, July 2008

"Fischer's performance, with the combined forces of the BBC National Chorus of Wales, the BBC Symphony Chorus and the Philharmonia Voices, was fine-grained and precise, too, and he caught much of the necessary radiance and grandeur..."

*Guardian*, July 2008

"The perfect work for the spacious Royal Albert Hall, it might be thought, and so it proved, at least at first. This rare performance by the combined Philharmonia Voices, BBC Symphony Chorus, and BBC National Chorus and Orchestra of Wales under Thierry Fischer never sounded less than strikingly vivid."

*Independent*, July 2008

"This performance, by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Thierry Fischer, was a good one."

*Financial Times*, July 2008

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / BBC Proms 2008: Debussy, Simon Holt (World Premiere) & Mussorgsky**

"In performance, there can be a tendency to over-refine Ravel's scoring of Mussorgsky's original piano piece, but Fischer here coaxed something much more robust and well upholstered that served as a reminder that the music's roots are very much in Russian soil."

*Daily Telegraph*, July 2008

## **BBC National Orchestra of Wales / Dutilleux Weekend**

# pressquotes

“Conductor Thierry Fischer balanced the colours beautifully in Dutilleux's Second Symphony, *Le Double*, where the solo ensemble of 12 orchestral principals made the interplay of forces a subtly dynamic element.”

*Guardian*, February 2008