

Critical Acclaim

Minnesota Orchestra Beethoven Symphony Cycle

Symphonies No. 2 and 7

“It’s hard to think of a more distinguished Beethoven cycle by an American orchestra since the legendary Toscanini traversal of 1939. . . . [Vänskä] and his wonderfully committed musicians have staked out a claim not merely for excellence, but for greatness.”

William Trotter, American Record Guide, January/February 2009

“The clean punch of Vänskä’s approach is nothing new, but his musicians surpass themselves in the boundless joy climaxing in the Seventh, surely the hottest modern interpretation on disc.”

Geoff Brown, The Times (London), October 31, 2008

“Osmo Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra draw their Beethoven cycle to a close. It has been an impressive achievement, with consistently fine orchestral playing and a view of the music from Vänskä that conveys both its visceral excitement and its expressive depth. . . . Altogether, a superb conclusion to a worthwhile cycle.”

Misha Donat, BBC Music Magazine, December 2008

“One of the greatest of these marvels was, of course, No. 7, which here receives an incandescent interpretation and is played with virtuosity. Splendid recording.”

Michael Kennedy, The Sunday Telegraph (London), October 28, 2008

“Here concludes one of the finest available Beethoven symphony cycles.”

Richard Osborne, Gramophone, January 2009

Symphonies No. 1 and 6

“The Minnesota sounds as lithe and responsive as a good chamber orchestra in these recordings Just Symphonies 2 and 7 now remain to be released and an estimable Beethoven *intégrale*—the best from an American orchestra in some time—will be complete.”

Andrew Quint, Fanfare Magazine, May/June 2008

“Vänskä’s Minnesota band is consistently alert to detail.”

Rob Cowan, Gramophone Magazine, April 2008

“Osmo Vänskä’s Beethoven cycle has been a supremely accomplished series, and this penultimate installment is scarcely less impressive than its predecessors. Vänskä offers a glowing performance of the *Pastoral* . . .” *Misha Donat, BBC Music Magazine, March 2008*

Symphony No. 9

“Another conductor commits Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 to disc? Yes—but this version is one you really need to buy. This new installment finds all concerned in the recordings pushing dizzy heights up further still.” *Philip Clark, Classic FM Magazine, February 2007*

“From the very first bars of this new recording... we know we are in for an exceptional experience....this is a Beethoven Ninth for our times.”
Misha Donat, BBC Music Magazine, January 2007

“Vänskä, a notorious taskmaster, appears to have sent his players to rhythmic boot camp, getting them to knock out dotted figures with quasi-military snap. At the same time, he has total command of the emotional architecture of the work. This is some of the most vivid Beethoven playing on the market.” *Alex Ross, The New Yorker, November 20, 2006*

“The orchestral playing is wonderfully detailed too.”
Andrew Clements, The Guardian, November 2006

“...this is the most powerful and exciting Ninth I have ever heard.”
John Sunier, Audiophile Audition, October 2006

“The Minnesota Chorale sings wonderfully, with spirit and superbly well-focused tone.”
Michael Anthony, Star Tribune (Minneapolis), October 2006

“People have been saying for several years that Osmo Vänskä is a very great conductor. But with this Ninth... we are somewhere completely different: in the very closed circle of musicians who have been able to mark forever the discography of a major point in the history of music. To be a musician in the Minnesota Orchestra is today one of the most enviable jobs on the planet in the orchestral musician world.”
Christophe Huss, ClassicsToday.com (France), October 2006

Symphonies No. 3 and 8

“And, boy, does the Minnesota Orchestra impress as a world-class symphonic institution.... This Beethoven cycle is shaping up to be as good as any from an American orchestra since Bernstein.”
Andrew Quint, Fanfare Magazine, January/February 2007

“The second in Vanska’s cycle of the symphonies is a revelation because it makes you listen to these masterpieces with fresh ears. The best since Carlos Kleiber’s Beethoven a generation ago with the Vienna Philharmonic....My record of the year.”
Andrew Clark, Financial Times, December 2006

“It’s becoming clear, two discs into the Osmo Vänskä/Minnesota Orchestra cycle, that anyone going up against the Finn and his Minnesotans will suffer a distinct disadvantage....Vänskä’s [*Eroica*] on BIS is stunning.”
James Reel, Fanfare, November/December 2006

“As with the first installment in Vänskä’s continuing Beethoven cycle, these are fiery, scrupulously detailed performances *à la* Toscanini. The *Eroica* is especially fine.”
Richard Wigmore, The Daily Telegraph, July 2006

“This disc...makes clear that the Minnesota Orchestra now has a world-class glow. The interpretations of the Third and the Eighth are outstanding.”

Geoff Brown, The Times (London), June 2006

Symphonies No. 4 and 5

“Yet another Beethoven cycle in the making? Yes, and it may be the definitive one of our time. Here is the first disc documenting the exciting work Mr. Vänskä is doing in Minnesota.”

The New York Times’ selection of the year’s most notable CDs, December 2005

“Here is the modern Beethoven recording par excellence...”

Andrew Clark, Financial Times (London), February 15, 2005

“The glorious explosion into the finale, the sense of triumph of light over dark, is as thrilling as anyone makes it.”

Stephen Pettitt, The Times (London), February 6, 2005

“... the whole orchestra shines in majestic joy without appearing at all self-important. This is something that Mr. Vanska excels at over and over here: creating a sense of impending event, then delivering even more than he promised.”

Anne Midgette, The New York Times, March 6, 2005

“On first evidence, this bold new contender in the Beethoven sweepstakes suggests that Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra can be ranked as highly as old favorites by Toscanini, Szell and Furtwängler.”

Michael Anthony, Star Tribune (Minneapolis), January 16, 2005

“Vänskä’s Beethoven cycle begins triumphantly. It is quite an accomplishment to have music this familiar sound in a way that excites even a hardened record enthusiast.”

Jukka Isopuro, Helsingin Sanomat (Helsinki), January 2005

“Fiery, elegant, bristling with character—this is impressive Beethoven The Minnesota Orchestra are extraordinarily proficient: fleet-footed and articulate...”

Richard Osborne, Gramophone Magazine, March 2005

“These performances are as compelling as any, beautifully realized in every respect. There’s plenty that even the most jaded Beethoven collectors have never heard before, or heard so well.”

David Hurwitz, ClassicsToday.com, January 2005

“When I reviewed the Minnesota Orchestra’s splendid retrospective set last year, I was impressed by how good the orchestra sounded in the more recent recordings. I’m pleased to report that it is still in fine estate and would put several of the “Big Five” to shame in head-to-head comparison.”

Lawrence Hansen, American Record Guide, May/June 2005

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