Osmo Vänskä (conductor)
Minnesota Orchestra (2004-8)
*BIS SACD 1825/6 £28.99*

There are two particular strengths in Osmo Vänskä’s beautifully engineered SACD recordings made between 2004 and 2008. First, the Finnish conductor manages to capture the essence of Beethoven’s thinking through his painstaking attention to inner details. Second, he has established a sense of partnership with a first-rate orchestra and secures urgent and incisive playing. In general, Vänskä has more interesting things to say about the earlier symphonies, where the performances are strongly characterised and fleet of foot. But the set is a superb achievement, illustrating the point that great Beethoven performances are not the exclusive province of the central European orchestral tradition.

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