

ALSO AVAILABLE:



"Terrific performance"

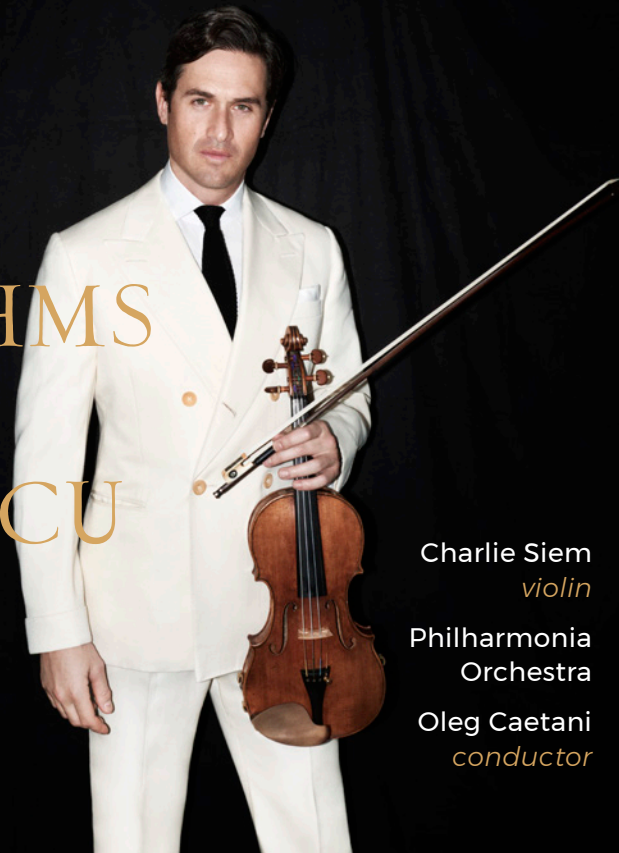
Classic FM Album of the Week

★★★★★ *"And while this is a very classical, traditional recording, it can please because of the virtuoso and technically flawless playing of the soloist, as well as a powerfully performing orchestra under a dynamic conductor"*

Pizzicato

signum
CLASSICS

BRAHMS AND ENESCU



Charlie Siem
violin

Philharmonia
Orchestra

Oleg Caetani
conductor



BRAHMS AND ENESCU

Charlie Siem *violin*
Philharmonia Orchestra
Oleg Caetani *conductor*

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77 **Johannes Brahms**

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | I. Allegro non troppo* | 19.49 |
| 2 | II. Adagio
Timothy Rundle, oboe | 7.27 |
| 3 | III. Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace | 8.06 |
| 4 | Ballade, Op. 4a George Enescu | 4.02 |

Aria and Scherzino **George Enescu**

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------|
| 5 | I. Aria. Lent | 2.01 |
| 6 | II. Scherzino. Assez vif | 2.52 |

Total timings	44.19
---------------	-------

*Cadenza by George Enescu – World Premiere Recording

www.signumrecords.com

JOHANNES BRAHMS 1833-97

VIOLIN CONCERTO IN D MAJOR OP 77

GEORGE ENESCU 1881-1955

BALLADE OP 4A

ARIA AND SCHERZINO

To late nineteenth century audiences **Brahms** was the 'chosen one' of Schumann's celebrated 'New Paths' eulogy (October 1853), a young man like Minerva sprung 'fully armed from the head of Kronos ... by whose cradle Graces and Heroes have stood watch' (*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*). His friend Georg(e) Henschel – the British-domiciled first conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra – met him in 1874. 'He was broad-chested, of somewhat short stature, with a tendency to stoutness. His face was then clean

shaven, revealing a rather thick, genial underlip; the healthy and ruddy colour of his skin indicated a love of nature and a habit of being in the open air in all kinds of weather; his thick straight hair of brownish colour came nearly down to his shoulders. His clothes and boots were not exactly of the latest pattern, nor did they fit particularly well, but his linen was spotless. What, however, struck me most was the kindliness of his eyes. They were of a light blue; wonderfully keen and bright, with now and then a roguish twinkle

in them [best described as good-natured sarcasm], and yet at times of almost childlike tenderness ... In the evening of the day of our first meeting I found myself sitting with [him] in a *Kneipe* – one of those cosy restaurants, redolent of the mixed perfumes of beer, wine, tobacco, coffee, and food, so dear to Germans in general, and to German artists in particular' (*Personal Recollections of Johannes Brahms*, 1907). A genius of opposites and contrasts, a 'solitary altruist', generous on the one hand, cantankerously uncivil on the other, 'ready to snap at friends and adversaries alike' (Max Graf, *Composer and Critic*, 1946), he was born into the deprived tenement quarter (*Gängeviertel*) of Hamburg on the Elbe – during his youth a Hanseatic port of escape to America and Australasia for refugees fleeing the Austro-Russian suppression of the 1848-49

Hungarian uprising. In the 1860s he settled in Vienna – Franz Joseph I's capital where 'rode the Nibelungs, [where] the immortal Pleiades of music shone out over the world ... [where] all the streams of European culture converged' (Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday*, 1934-42).

Joseph Joachim (1831-1907), beloved of the Mendelssohn/Schumann circle. 'First violin player, not only of his age, but of his *siècle*' (*Illustrated London News*). His performance of the Beethoven Concerto in Hamburg, 11 May 1848, aged sixteen, was an occasion that for Brahms 'remained vividly in his remembrance as one of the few great musical events' of his life (Florence May, *The Life of Johannes Brahms*, 1905). A Hungarian Jew, Joachim, shortly to become Liszt's concertmaster in Weimar, moved to the Hannoverian Court at the end of 1852. The following May he appeared at Schumann's invitation

at the Lower Rhine Music Festival in Düsseldorf, playing once again the Beethoven. Shortly afterwards, in his Prinzenstrasse rooms in Hannover, he and Brahms, just twenty, of 'high voice and long fair hair' (Albert Dietrich), met for the first time, marking the beginning of a lifelong friendship (only Joachim's divorce in the early 1880s rupturing the harmony, Brahms siding with his wife, the contralto Amalie Schneeweiss). 'Never in the course of my artist's life have I been more completely overwhelmed with delighted surprise, than when [this] rather shy-mannered, blonde [German] played me his sonata movements [Op 1], of quite undreamt-of originality and power, looking noble and inspired the while ... his playing, so tender, so imaginative, so free and so fiery, held me spell-bound' (Brahms Festival address, Meiningen 7 October 1899). In

1853, through Joachim's support and letters of recommendation, Brahms met with Liszt and Schumann. Life shaping times. Liszt he disliked. Schumann he esteemed.

'The Germans,' claimed Joachim in 1906, 'have four violin concertos. The greatest, most uncompromising, is Beethoven's. The one by Brahms vies with it in seriousness. The richest, the most seductive, was written by Max Bruch. The most inward, the heart's jewel, is Mendelssohn's.' Dating from between his Second Symphony and G major Violin Sonata, sharing the mood of both, Brahms wrote his Concerto in the summer of 1878 in the lyrical Carinthian surroundings of Pörtschach am Wörthersee. 'It is lovely here, lake, forest, blue mountains above, shimmering white in the pure snow, there are loads of crabs. The inn is

called Werzer, the best and most comfortable ...' Typically he'd be up at dawn, have a swim *au naturel*, take breakfast and a stroll around 5 am, and start composing at 7. Never reticent about seeking the advice of trusted friends and instrumentalists when it came to writing soloistically for other than the piano, he advised Joachim, 21 August, that he would be sending 'a number of violin passages' for his opinion, the next day dispatching the solo part of the first movement and the beginning of the finale. Joachim responded positively, joining Brahms at the beginning of September to work on the score in person. Later that month, in Hamburg, they played the opening *Allegro* to Clara Schumann who admired how 'the orchestra blends completely and utterly with the [solo] player'. Between October and December, back in Vienna, Brahms continued to revise and improve,

among other things rejecting his original four-movement plan (applied later to the Second Piano Concerto), having 'stumbled over the [intended] Adagio and Scherzo, naturally they were the best' (23 October). A substitute slow movement, described self-deprecatingly as no more than 'a paltry *adagio*,' was confirmed in a subsequent letter to Joachim (10 December). The holograph full score (1878-79), Library of Congress ML96.B68, formerly in the possession of Fritz Kreisler), shows the extent of Brahms's corrections and Joachim's input, five differently coloured pencil/ink stages permeating the primary brown ink underlay.

Mastering the 'truly unusual difficulties' of the solo part if not without effort – 'the case-hardened and battle-tested warrior [needed to] visibly exert himself to negotiate the technical difficulties and

precarious balance of the solo part' (*Signale für die musikalische Welt* [SwM]) – Joachim premiered the Concerto on New Year's Day 1879, the composer directing the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra with Carl Reinecke otherwise responsible for the programme, finishing with Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. He then took the work to Habsburg Vienna (Musikverein, 14 January, under Joseph Hellmesberger), later Victorian London (Crystal Palace, 22 February, with August Manns), Ethel Smyth contributing a programme note. In 1889 Franz Kneisel, Nikisch and the Boston Symphony gave the first North American performance (Boston Music Hall, 6 December 'rehearsal and concert' matinee, 7 December 1889 evening), with a presentation in New York days later (Steinway Hall, 17th). Incorporating still further revisions and changes – 'so extensive' as to necessitate re-

engraving the finale's solo part (Michael Struck, *Neue Brahms Ausgabe*) – Simrock's Berlin edition, together with Brahms's violin and piano reduction, was published in October 1879. 'The product of a romantic age and a chivalrous one' (Yehudi Menuhin, 1979). Early reaction to the Concerto was divided. Leipzig thought it 'one of this composer's most approachable, translucent, and spontaneous creations' (*SmW*). In Vienna Eduard Hanslick, friend and champion, hailed it as 'the most significant violin concerto to appear since Beethoven's and Mendelssohn's. In London the *Musical Times* correspondent (March, April 1879 issue) was undecided. 'Brahms's new manuscript Violin Concerto ... is like all its author's compositions highly original, and deeply thoughtful; it requires indeed several hearings before its beauties can be fully

appreciated. So far as can be judged from a single performance, the first and second movements are the best; the finale strikes us as less interesting'. 'A second hearing ... confirms our impression that the work gradually deteriorates as it advances, the first movement, although discursive and vague in character, being by far the best' (Philharmonic Society, St James's Hall, 6 March). For British and Empire audiences, the young Donald Francis Tovey's landmark analytical notes for Marie Soldat, Fritz Steinbach and the Meiningen Orchestra (St James's Hall, November 1902) set the record straight, even if some found their angling and severity of tone off-putting.

Reconciling 'the lyrical and the constructive: Brahms the songwriter, Brahms the symphonist' (Hubert Foss, 1952), the Teutonic classical portals of

the work are unmistakeable. In particular the first movement's tensioned tonal theatre and motivic development, and its focussing of action through traditionally familiar parameters from double-exposition sonata design to the balancing of *tutti* and *sol*i entries. A curious flashback at the onset, albeit different material dynamically reversed, is the side-step from D tonality to C major harmony in bar 9, echoing the similar drop of a tone between the opening C and B-flat statements, likewise eight bars apart, of the 1853 Op 1 Piano Sonata (also inscribed to Joachim). The great F major variation-poem of the central *Adagio* Tovey thought of as 'a single unbroken melody [of] inexhaustible variety and resource'. Not least among its orchestral refinements is the opening 31-bar solo oboe/wind serenade *ritornello* (paired flutes,

oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns), comprehensively switching timbral fields. The culminating rondo, like the conclusions of Brahms's three other concertos (as well as the accelerated coda construction of the two for piano, especially the same-tonic first), owes something to the paprika-and-*bikavér* finales of Joachim's *Hungarian Concerto* (1857) and Bruch's First (1866–68). No doubt stimulated as much by Joachim himself, and by Brahms's early violin partner Ede Reményi, as by the fact that Hungarians, gypsies and the lustrous dark-eyed peoples of the Balkans were as integral to the Viennese landscape as to the lanes and wenching dens of childhood Hamburg. Brahms 'would frequently come to our room and play to us,' recalled Schumann's youngest daughter, Eugenie, 'Schubert waltzes or his own *Valses Op 39* [1865], and wonderful, melancholy Hungarian

melodies for which I have looked in vain among his published works; perhaps he never wrote them down' (*Erinnerungen*, 1925).

Among the Violin Concerto's antecedents and influences, Beethoven is the model most widely invoked [Charlie Siem, Signum Classics SIGCD704]. In a letter to Clara Schumann from Pörtschach, June 1878, Brahms, however, mentions another – Giovanni Viotti's 'London' A minor, No 22 (printed in 1803, dedicated to Cherubini). 'My very special love ... It is a magnificent piece, showing a remarkable freedom of invention; indeed it sounds as though the soloist is improvising. Every detail is conceived in masterly style ... If people only knew it, what they get from us in drops they could drink in abundance there.' In the manner of Mozart, Viotti, Beethoven and others (but not Mendelssohn), the Brahms Concerto was the last grand



© Hannah Burton

Classico-Romantic example of the genre to leave the choice/writing of the first movement cadenza to the soloist. Initially, among many, Joachim (1878-79, printed 1902 following many revisions); Joachim/Soldat (c 1884-85, MS Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna, a leaner version preferred/amended by Brahms, published 2004); Maud Powell (1891). Latterly Tovey (c 1900), Auer (1903, 1916), Busoni (1913), Kreisler (1928), Ysayë (1938). This recording favours Enescu's quotational 56-bar cadenza (1903 – advocated early on by Menuhin, Enescu's student in Paris, notably his April 1943 BBC Maida Vale broadcast with Boult) in Ana-Alexandra von Bülow/Frank Heckel's 2021 transcript of the composer's May 1946 Moscow/Oistrakh manuscript. The finale's accompanied cadenza (composer generated) links with Viotti's practice.

A pacifist married to a Moldavian

princess, **Enescu**, the guiding spirit of 20th century Romanian music, scarred by the Second World War, opposed to the new Communism of his country, died in exile in Paris – paralysed from a stroke and poverty-stricken, essentially forgotten. In the early 1890s, as a student in Vienna, he'd played under Brahms, including the First Symphony. The E major Ballade Op 4a for violin and small orchestra, dedicated to the French violinist Eva Rolland (daughter of his landlady), was completed in Paris, 9 November 1895, its author newly enrolled as a pupil of Massenet and Fauré at the Conservatoire. Richly veined music, the outer *andante* paragraphs, fusing polyphony and 'walking' baroque bass (*pizzicato* cellos, doublebasses) with nobly soaring Brahmsian sentiment, frame a declamatory central section.

Originally part of an abandoned Piano Quintet (violin, viola, cello, doublebass, possibly incorporating

ideas from as early as 1896) before being recycled for a lutherie competition in 1908, the Aria and Scherzino appeared independently in *Le Monde musical* in 1909 – the D major Aria in a January supplement, the B minor Scherzino in August. The former, sonically and melodically, touches Enescu's most sensually lyrical vein; the latter is a fleet, virtuosic 2/4 affair, grace and gossamer to the fore. Sourced from notebooks in the George Enescu Museum, Bucharest, the late Sherban Lupu's adaptation for violin, string orchestra and piano was published in September 2005 (Romanian Cultural Institute).

© **Ateş Orga 2025**



CHARLIE SIEM

Charlie Siem is one of today's foremost violinists, with such a wide-ranging diversity of cross-cultural appeal as to have played a large part in defining what it means to be a true artist of the 21st century.

Born in London, to a Norwegian father and British mother, Siem began to play the violin at the age of three after hearing a broadcast of Yehudi Menuhin playing Beethoven's Violin Concerto. He received a broad and thorough education from Eton College, before completing the intellectually demanding undergraduate degree programme in Music at the University of Cambridge. From 1998 to 2004, he studied the violin with Itzhak Rashkovsky in London at the Royal College of Music, and since 2004 has been mentored by Shlomo Mintz.

Siem has appeared with many of the world's finest orchestras and chamber ensembles, including: the Bergen Philharmonic, the Camerata Salzburg, the Czech National Symphony, the Israel Philharmonic, the London Symphony, the Moscow Philharmonic, the Oslo

Philharmonic, the Rotterdam Philharmonic, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, MDR Leipzig and Camerata Salzburg. He has worked with top conductors including: Charles Dutoit, Dannis Russel Davies, Edward Gardner, Zubin Mehta, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Sir Roger Norrington, Libor Pešek and Yuri Simonov. International festival appearances to date include: Spoleto, St. Moritz, Gstaad, Bergen, Tine@Munch, Festival Internacional de Santa Lucía and the Windsor Festival. Siem's regular sonata partner is renowned pianist Itamar Golan.

Charlie Siem has a varied discography and has made a number recordings, including with the London Symphony Orchestra (Warner Classics, 2011) and Münchner Rundfunkorchester (Sony Classical, 2014). His recordings with Signum Classics include *"Between the Clouds"* (SIGCD652, 2020) with

works by Kreisler, Sarasate, Paganini, Elgar and Wieniawski, showcasing Siem's versatility and virtuosity in an intimate Parisian-style 'salon' programme. 2022 saw the release of *Beethoven: Violin Concerto and Romances* with Oleg Caetani and Philharmonia Orchestra, and the album *Vaughan Williams, Grieg: Violin Sonatas* with pianist Itamar Golan which garnered 5 star reviews from BBC Music Magazine and Music Opinion was released in 2023.

A great believer in giving to worthwhile causes, Siem is an ambassador of The Prince's Trust. He is also a Visiting Professor at Leeds College of Music in the UK, and Nanjing University of the Arts in China. He gives masterclasses around the world at top institutions such as the Royal College of Music in London and the Accademia di Musica in Florence.

Passionate about bringing

classical music to new audiences around the world, in addition to his classical performance career Siem has revived the age-old violinistic tradition of composing virtuosic variations of popular themes, which he has done alongside artists including: Bryan Adams, Jamie Cullum and The Who. In 2014, he wrote his first composition – *Canopy*, for solo violin and string orchestra – which was commissioned by the USA television station *CBS Watch!* and recorded with the English Chamber Orchestra. Siem has also had numerous collaborations with fashion brands including: Armani, Chanel, Dior, Dunhill, Hugo Boss and Loro Piana.

Charlie Siem plays the 1735 Guarneri del Gesù violin, known as the *D'Egville*.



OLEG CAETANI

Oleg Caetani, one of the greatest conductors of his generation, moves freely between symphonic and opera repertoire. Caetani has conducted all over the world including: the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, the Royal Opera

House in London, the Opera House in San Francisco, the Musikverein in Vienna, Lincoln Center in New York, the Suntory Hall in Japan, the Sydney Opera House, the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Munich Philharmonic, the Mozarteum Orchester in Salzburg, the Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra of Russia, La Scala in Milan, the Yomiuri Orchestra in Tokyo, the Sydney Symphony and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. He has worked with the greatest soloists in our day including: Marta Argerich, Sviatoslav Richter, Danil Trifonov, Vadim Repin, Misha Maisky, Gautier Capuçon, Viktoria Mullova and Emmanuele Pahud.

Caetani considers Nadia Boulanger to be the driving inspiration of his career. She discovered his talent, initiated him into music, and gave him the

philosophical approach to life linked to Montaigne, that he still has today.

Caetani's vast experience, of almost forty years now, in the opera repertoire of Verdi, Puccini, Mussorgsky and Wagner has influenced his approach to the great operatic and symphonic works of the twentieth century.

Oleg was chief designate at the ENO in 2005, chief designate 2002-2005 for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Music Conductor and Artistic Director for the same orchestra from 2005 to 2009. Before that, Caetani was the Principal Conductor for the Staatskapelle Weimar, First Kapellmeister of the Frankfurt Opera and GMD in Wiesbaden and in Chemnitz.

Shostakovich's music plays a central role in his repertoire. Caetani translated the libretto of *The*

Nose from Russian into German for his production in Frankfurt in 1991; he conducted the Italian premiere of the operetta *Moscow Cheriomushki* in 2007, and has conducted the first performances in many different countries of Shostakovich's operas, concertos, ballets and suites, as well as having recorded the first Italian complete cycle of Shostakovich symphonies with the LaVerdi Orchestra in Milan. Their albums have won several prizes, 10/10 from Classical Today in the USA, Télérama in France and Record Geijutsu in Japan. His recordings of Tansman's Symphonies, released by Chandos, won three Diapason d'Or in 2006 and 2008; his Gounod's Symphonies for CPO (including the 3rd Symphony, discovered by Caetani) also won a Diapason D'or in January 2015. Caetani's album releases with Signum Classics include *Beethoven:*

Violin Concerto and Romances with violinist Charlie Siem and Philharmonia Orchestra, which has reached over 10,000,000 streams.

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1945, the Philharmonia Orchestra is one of the world's great orchestras. Finnish conductor Santtu-Matias Rouvali took up the baton as Principal Conductor in 2021, and Marin Alsop joined him as Principal Guest Conductor in 2023. They follow in illustrious footsteps: Herbert von Karajan, Otto Klemperer, Ricardo Muti, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Christoph von Dohnányi, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Esa-Pekka Salonen.

The Orchestra is made up of 80 outstanding musicians. It has premiered works by Richard Strauss, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Errollyn Wallen, Laufey and many others, and performs with many of the world's most admired soloists.

Resident at the Southbank Centre in the heart of London, the Philharmonia also holds residencies in Basingstoke, Bedford, Canterbury and Leicester, at Garsington Opera and at the Three Choirs Festival. In each of these residencies, the Orchestra is deeply embedded in the community, empowering people to engage with and participate in orchestral music. The Orchestra has a global audience, it tours extensively throughout Europe and has performed in China, Colombia, Japan, Mauritius and the USA.

The Philharmonia is known for embracing innovative technology. The Orchestra's recordings include benchmark LPs, more than 150 film and videogame soundtracks



and streamed performances. Its recording of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 is travelling through interstellar space on board the Voyager spacecraft, and its immersive installations and virtual reality (VR) experiences have introduced many thousands of people to orchestral music. The Philharmonia is committed to nurturing and developing the

next generation of instrumentalists and composers, with a focus on increasing diversity within the classical music industry.

The Philharmonia is a registered charity. It is proud to be supported by Arts Council England and grateful to the many generous individuals, businesses, trusts and foundations who make up its family of supporters.

1st Violins

Rebecca Chan
Adrián Varela
Yuriko Matsuda
Haim Choi
Julian Trafford
Jane Kim
Emily Groom

2nd Violins

Eugene Lee
Julian Milone
Emanuela Buta
Gideon Robinson
Susan Bowran
Mee-Hyun Esther Park
Helena Logah

Violas

Scott Dickinson
Sylvain Séailles
Daichi Yoshimura
Cameron Campbell
Raquel Lopez Bolivar

Cellos

Richard Birchall
Miwa Rosso
Nina Kiva
Rebecca Herman

Double Basses

Christopher West
Mark O'Leary
Joseph Cowie
Samuel Rice

Flutes

Frederico Paixão
Robert Looman

Oboes

Timothy Rundle
Lauren Weavers

Clarinets

Mark van de Wiel
Jordan Black

Bassoons

Paul Boyes
Luke Whitehead

Horns

Norberto López
Kathryn Saunders
Daniel Curzon
Finlay Bain
Elise Campbell

Trumpets

Thomas Nielsen
Mark Calder

Timpani

Marney O'Sullivan

Recorded 27th–28th August 2024 at Fairfield Halls, Park Lane. Croydon, CR0 1JD

Tracks [5] and [6] Aria and Scherzino pianist: **Susanna Stefani Caetani**

Producer **Andrew Keener**

Recording Engineer **Mike Hatch**

Recording Assistant **Will Good**

Editing **Tom Lewington**

Cover Image © **Circus MS**

ONLY STAGE
ARTS MANAGEMENT & PRODUCTION

© 2025 The copyright in this sound recording is owned by Signum Records.

© 2025 The copyright in this CD booklet, notes and design is owned by Signum Records.

Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording of Signum Compact Discs constitutes an infringement of copyright and will render the infringer liable to an action by law. Licences for public performances or broadcasting may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission from Signum Records Ltd.

Signum Records, Suite 14, 21 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middlesex UB6 7LQ, UK.
+44 (0) 20 8997 4000 | E-mail: info@signumrecords.com | signumrecords.com