

## Thomas Horch



### Trombone in Europe

Frank Martin | Edison Denisov | Paul Hindemith | Kasimierz Serocki | Betin Günes | Jean-Michel Defaye

CD aud 95.435

[American Record Guide 6/2000 \(Barry Kilpatrick - 2000.11.01\)](#)



This fine recording offers works composed during World War II (Martin and Hindemith), in the early 1950s (Serocki and Defaye), and more recently (Denisov and Gunes). There is no humor in either of the WW II-era pieces. Swiss composer Frank Martin's *Ballade* (1940) is a subtle, jazz-infused work that has the trombonist crooning soulfully in the high register much of the time. It requires real strength and stamina, and given Thomas Storch's stature--former principal trombone of the Berlin Philharmonic and now principal of the Bavarian Radio Symphony--it comes as no surprise that he has plenty of both.

Hindemith's *Sonata* (1941) is the cornerstone of the trombone recital repertory. Calling for powerful playing by both soloist and pianist, the work can come across as brutal unless opportunities for nuance and warmth are explored. My favorite recordings, by John Kitzman (Sept/Oct 1998: 283) and Ben Haemhouts (March/April 1998), bear little resemblance to each other--except that both show warmth and lyricism. Storch's reading is powerful, driven by fast tempos. While he occasionally eases the intensity, he is too relentless for my taste.

The postwar works are light and playful. This may be the best recording of Kasimierz Serocki's *Sonatine* (1953), played with appropriate zest by Horch and spikiness by Walter-Lindqvist. Jean-Michel Defaye's *Two Dances* (1954) has been recorded more often than any other trombone piece. Why? Well, it is a pleasant foray into the pop realm--'Danse Sacree' is a soulful ballad, and 'Danse Profane' is lively--and an opportunity to show off the player's high register: Horch plays it well, as has every artist who has recorded it.

Edison Denisov explores extremes of register, microtones, and sympathetic vibration in his spooky *Choral Varie* (1979). Horch's reading is similar to one by Christian Lindberg (Nov/Dec 1991: 193) and more leisurely than one by Benny Sluchin (Jan/Feb 1990: 125). This is the first recording of *The Trombonite* (1993) by Turkish composer Betin Gunes. Horch delivers the most remarkable display of alto trombone virtuosity I have ever heard; but the modernist, meandering, and rather dreary piece does nothing for me.

**Das Orchester 10/1995 (Diether Steppuhn - 1995.10.01)**

An Posaunen-CDs herrscht kein Mangel – mit dem Schweden Christian Lindberg...

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**Fono Forum 1/1995 (G.S. - 1995.01.01)**

Das Thema Europa hat nach den diversen Musikfestivals nun auch die Programmgestalter von CDs inspiriert: Thomas Horch, erster Solo-Posaunist des Symphonieorchesters des Bayerischen Rundfunks, spannt den (europäischen) Bogen von den „Klassikern“ Hindemith und Martin bis in die Gegenwart, zu Denisov und Günes. Während Denisows „Choral varié“ (1979) mit Mikrointervallen operiert, lebt Günes' hier erstmals eingespieltes Werk von kraftvollen, melodiösen Impulsen, die sich freilich in filigrane Ausläufer verflüchtigen können. Thomas Horch weiß bis an die Grenzen seines Instruments farbig zu gestalten, Fritz Walter-Lindqvist ist weit mehr als nur Stichwortgeber.

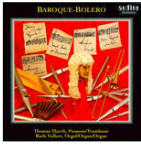
**Fono Forum 10/1995 (G.P. - 1995.10.01)**

Der Solist versteht sein Programm als eine europäische „Wegbeschreibung der solistischen Posaune“. Zugleich wartet die Anthologie mit pädagogischen Ambitionen auf: Werben um erhöhte Publikumsakzeptanz für Hindemith, Zugang zur Moderne durch Serocki, Ausschöpfen posaunistischer Techniken mit Günes, Vermittlung serieller und postserieller Erfahrungen dank Denisov, Neoklassisches von Frank Martin, Sentimentales und Jazziges von Defaye. Einziger Schwachpunkt ist der unmotiviert in den Hintergrund gerückte Klavierpart. Ansonsten ein gelungenes Instrumentalporträt zeitgenössischer Posaunenmusik.

**Das Schallstück 2/1996 (Heiko Petersen - 1996.07.01)**

Der Titel „Posaune in Europa“ sagt nicht sehr viel über den Inhalt dieser...

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## Baroque-Bolero - Baroque Music for Trombone and Organ

Antonio Vivaldi | Johann Christoph Pepusch | Hannes Meyer | Joseph Bodin de Boismortier | Jean Baptiste Loeillet

CD aud 95.437

[American Record Guide](#) 2/2001 (Barry Kilpatrick - 2001.03.01)



Thomas Horch, principal trombone in the Berlin Philharmonic during Herbert von Karajan's final years as conductor, is now principal of the Bavarian Radio Orchestra. This is his second recording in only a few months. Many aspects of his first one impressed me, though his Hindemith Trombone Sonata was way too forceful for my taste (Nov/Dec 2000: 281). Here, on alto trombone, he plays transcriptions by 18th-Century composers Vivaldi, Pepusch, Boismortier, and Loeillet, as well as two 18th Century-style works by Hannes Meyer (b 1939). One is a sonata based on themes by Pergolesi. The other, Love Play Suite, is the most interesting piece on the program. The last of its five movements is an amusing 'Chorale-Bolero' that sets a familiar tune over the bolero rhythm.

Horch delivers pleasant, moderately expressive, technically polished recitations, but I am not moved or inspired by his playing. Nor am I impressed by his decision to include Vivaldi's Spring concerto from Four Seasons. The notes say Horch played it "with a twinkle in his eye", but it doesn't sound like he included it as a little joke. We all know how this piece sparkles when played on violin; this does not sparkle.

Horch's wife Ruth Vollert accompanies ably on the organ at Maria Konigan Church of Baldham near Munich.

**Musikmarkt 30.10.1995 ( - 1995.10.30)**

**musikmarkt**

Auszüge aus Vivaldis „Vier Jahreszeiten“ und weitere Werke aus der Zeit des...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**International Trombone Association Journal Volume 28 (Larry Weed - 2000.12.01)**



Formerly principal trombonist in the Berlin Philharmonic, and since 1990 first...

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**www.arkivmusic.com 28.11.2000 (- 2000.11.28)**



As the proverb goes, necessity is the mother of invention. And one brief look at...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Hörzu Heft 33/1995 (- 1995.09.01)**



Die Bearbeitung macht's möglich: Posaunist Thomas Horch und Organistin Ruth...

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**Ars Organi 44. Jhg - Heft 3 (Holger Brülls - 1996.09.01)**



Diese Paarung ist dann attraktiv, wenn sie ausgesprochene Repertoire-Neuheiten...

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**Das Orchester 6/1996 (Diether Steppuhn - 1996.06.01)**



In Heft 10/95 (S. 67) dieser Zeitschrift war die neue CD „Posaune in Europa“...

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## Betin Günes & Heitor Villa-Lobos: Izmir

Betin Günes | Heitor Villa-Lobos

CD aud 95.440

[American Record Guide](#) 2/2002 (Barry Kilpatrick - 2002.03.01)



The Izmir Symphony, whose home is found on the Aegean coast, was established in 1975. This recording, made in Munich in 1995, is its first and the first ever by a Turkish orchestra outside of Turkey. It gave me my first chance to hear music by a Turkish composer and a Turkish orchestra.

Composer-conductor Betin Gunes was born in Istanbul in 1957 and studied piano and composition at the Istanbul State Conservatory. From there he went to Germany to study composition, conducting, trombone, and electronic music. His Izmir Alto Trombone Concerto was given its first performance in 1993 by the Izmir Symphony with the soloist heard here. I have written about Thomas Horch before (Nov/Dec 2000: 281; Mar/Apr 2001: 213). Principal trombonist of the Bavarian Radio Symphony, he certainly has good tone and all of the requisite skills, but his playing can be forceful and uninspiring. He has adapted very well, though, to the alto trombone, a little instrument with little solo literature. Pitched in E-flat, it is not an easy double for tenor trombonists accustomed to instruments in B-flat. Players like Christian Lindberg, Joseph Alessi, and Alain Trudel make it sound light yet full, like a large fluegelhorn. Horch compares quite favorably with those artists.

Lyricism, nifty group pyramids and trills, and restraint--unusual for a trombone piece--mark Gunes's concerto. In a wary and mysterious I, the soloist plays lyrically over spare orchestral textures. The furtive mood continues in II, as quiet lines from strings and woodwinds lead to lovely playing by Horch. Energy finally becomes a factor in III, but never to the extent I expect. Still, the piece is nicely proportioned, always interesting, and attractive. Gunes favors rich sonorities and has a good imagination. Horch's performance is excellent, and the orchestra complements him well.

If Gunes the composer knows how to make the Izmir Symphony sound good, Gunes the conductor doesn't fare as well in Villa-Lobos's Bachianas Brasileiras 7, where the orchestra sounds washed out. Vague instrumental tone qualities are the products of modestly competent players. Distant miking in a concert setting does not help. The worst problem is anemic bass and tuba sound.

**Kölner Stadtanzeiger Nr. 36/1998 (EB - 1998.02.12)**



**Gewandt im Ausdruck – Der türkische Komponist und Dirigent Betin Günes**

Gewandt im Ausdruck – Der türkische Komponist und Dirigent Betin Günes

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**Frankfurter Rundschau 02.03.1996 ( - 1996.03.02)**

Frankfurter  
Rundschau

Musikalische „Fremd“-Sprache verspricht eine CD mit dem Titel Izmir. So...

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**Musikmarkt April 1996 ( - 1996.04.01)**

**musikmarkt**

Thomas Horch, Soloposaunist im Sinfonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks und...

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## Recital Francais

Eugène Bozza | Paul Bonneau | Jean-Michel Defaye | Roger Boutry | Jacques Castérède  
| Henri Dutilleux

CD aud 97.479

[www.ipv-news.de](http://www.ipv-news.de) 01.08.2003 (Benno Reinhard - 2003.08.01)



Die hier vorliegende CD des Soloposaunisten beim Symphonieorchester des...

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**Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik Oktober/November 2003 (Hans-Dieter  
Grünefeld - 2003.10.01)**



Erst im Jazz wurde die Posaune aus der rhythmischen Polsterungsfunktion befreit...

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**Musikmarkt 09.06.2003 ( - 2003.06.09)**



Thomas Horch, Soloposaunist des Bayerischen Rundfunks sowie langjähriges...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Sonic Jan./Feb. 2005 ( - 2005.01.01)**



Treffend charakterisiert der Solist selbst die hier eingespielten Werke: In...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**International Trombone Association Journal January 2005, Vol. 33 No. 1 (Darin Achilles - 2005.01.01)**



Many people may be familiar with Thomas Horch's exemplary work as solo...

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**Das Orchester Mai 2005 (Juliane Bally - 2005.05.01)**



Die hier vorgestellten Werke für Posaune und Klavier entstammen den Federn...

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*







## Parable - Original Works for Brass Quintet

John Cheetham | Eugène Bozza | Leonard Bernstein | Vincent Persichetti | Witold Lutoslawski | André Previn | Kerry Turner

SACD aud 92.525

[Der neue Merker](#) Dezember 2005 (Dorothea Zweipfennig - 2005.12.01)



Im Jahr 2003 initiierte der Posaunist Thomas Horch das Brass Quintett München,...

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**Pizzicato 12/2005 (Rémy Franck - 2005.12.01)**



**Und zum Abschluss Kerry Turner**

Das Münchner Brass Quintet spielt auf dieser CD nicht nur ausschließlich Originalkompositionen für Blechbläserquintett, es wählte auch sehr anspruchsvolle Stücke aus, wie sie nur ein Ensemble mit ausgesprochenen Virtuosen risikofrei und souverän aufführen kann. Die Münchner erkunden die Werke von Cheetham, Bernstein, Persichetti, Previn und Turner als wahre Kammermusiker detailfreudig und auf Wohlklang bedacht, mit sorgfältigster Phrasierung und raffinierten Nuancen. Keine der klippenreichen Partituren scheint ihnen auch nur die geringste Mühe zu machen, auch nicht jenes wunderbare Ricochet von Kerry Turner, dem Solohornisten des Philharmonischen Orchesters Luxemburg, dessen brillante Komposition das Programm wirkungsvoll beschließt.

**Bayerischer Rundfunk 13. September 2005 (Fridemann Leopold - 2005.09.13)**



Erstklassige Blechbläser-Ensembles gibt es seit der Pionierarbeit von Philip...

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**Ensemble - Magazin für Kammermusik 11/12 2005 (Oliver Kersken - 2005.11.01)**



**Fabelhaft**

Fabelhaft

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**American Record Guide May/June 2006 (Kilpatrick - 2006.05.01)**



A very good brass quintet playing a solid program of modern works. I always appreciate it when a group can make complex music sound logical, make difficult parts interact neatly, make tense moments seem calm. Such is the case here, but one key is Munich Brass's conservative tempos. Only rarely is there a sense of daring or propulsion. Tempos tend to settle back and become rather monotonous. Still, you have to admire the beautiful individual and group sound.

I am quite taken by the tuba playing of Alexander von Puttkamer – especially in the Bozza Sonatine, where I heard his lines as never before. The other members are trumpeters Hannes Läubin and Thomas Kiechle, horn player Luiz Garcia, and trombonist Thomas Horch.

**Audiophile Audition August 2006 (John Sunier - 2006.08.15)**



**Exciting playing of original works composed for brass quintet**

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**Gramophone 2/2006 (Jonathan Freeman-Attwood - 2006.02.01)**



**A luminous disc of brass quintet classics proves a revelation**

The quintet medium has never quite established itself as the solid-state default for composers wishing to write for brass but it's as close as it gets. The majority of works here were inspired by the great American brass tradition and more often than not they are still performed indigenously. So to hear the Munich Brass Quintet (principal players of the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra) revel in the canny, incisive and easy vernacular of Cheetham, Previn and Bernstein is quite a revelation.

In this beautifully luminous surround-sound recording one can also appreciate the meticulous attention to dynamics, voicing and timbral depth which these refined German players bring to the probing discourse of Persichetti's Parable and Kerry Turner's Richochet from 1994. The latter is a delightful Texan frolic, about as far as you can get from a Bavarian musical landscape, but the musicians find compelling solutions and Turner writes brilliantly for brass, irrespective of dialect. An admirable addition for brass aficionados.

[Das Orchester](#) 3/2006 (Michael Schmidt - 2006.03.01)



Kann man dem Publikum zeitgenössische Originalkompositionen für...

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**Les Années Laser Numéro 130, Avril 2007 ( - 2007.04.01)**



**Audite**

Audite

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[Der neue Merker](#) 01/2008 (Dorothea Zweipfennig - 2008.01.01)



Bläser-Musik nicht nur zu Weihnachten mit dem Münchner Posaunen Quartett, das...

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## Intermezzo

Paul Peuerl | Johann Pachelbel | Claude Debussy | Missimiliano Neri | Samuel Scheidt | Johann Sebastian Bach | Eberhard Kraus | Friedemann Winklhofer | Dietrich Buxtehude | Robert Schumann | Franz Schubert | Giuseppe Verdi | Julius Fucik | Bernhard Etzel | Carl Maria von Weber

CD aud 97.469

**Musikmarkt 6. November 2000 (- 2000.11.06)**

**musikmarkt**

Für seine klingende Visitenkarte wählte das Ensemble Kompositionen von Paul...

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**Crescendo Sommer 2001 (EW - 2001.07.01)**

**crescendo**

Wozu vier Posaunen in der Lage sind, zeigt das münchener posaunen 4uartett auf...

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**Klassik heute 04/2001 (Gerhard Pätzig - 2001.04.01)**

**KLASSIK  
HEUTE**  
[www.klassik-heute.de](http://www.klassik-heute.de)

So ganz korrekt ist es nicht, sich auf die "seit etwa sechs Jahrhunderten nahezu...

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**Das Orchester 5/2001 (Heinz Fadle - 2001.05.01)**

das  
Orchester

Die vorhandene Literatur für ein Ensemble von vier Posaunen ist auch heute noch...

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**Musik zum Lesen 07-08/2002 ( - 2002.07.01)**

"Intermezzo" hält neue Impressionen eines Instruments bereit, das seit etwa sechs Jahrhunderten nahezu unverändert gebaut wird. Der Choral als Gattung, der schon immer das Aufgabenfeld dieses Instruments durchzogen hat, wird auch hier immer wieder spürbar. Das Quartett besteht aus Thomas Horch, Dany Bonvin, Ulrich Pförtsch und Volker Hensiek, allesamt im "Hauptberuf" bei führenden Orchestern beschäftigt.

**American Record Guide 4/2001 (Barry Kilpatrick - 2001.07.01)**

This all-star German group includes Thomas Horch, who has made two solo recordings (Nov/Dec 2000: 281; Mar/Apr 2001: 213) and is principal trombonist of the Bavarian Radio Symphony. The other ensemble members are Dany Bonvin, principal of the Munich Philharmonic; Uli Pfortsch, principal of the Bavarian Opera Orchestra; and Volker Hensiek, bass trombonist of the Bamberg Symphony.

Most of these works were arranged by Horch. Deftly executed ornaments enliven a set of sprightly dances by Paul Peuerl (c 1570-c 1625), and a Fantasia and Fugue by Pachelbel is very somber. A sonata by Massimiliano Neri (c 1600-66) is fascinating and multifaceted, and a set of Schumann miniatures ends with the delightful 'Knecht Ruprecht'. The chorale Nun komm der Heiden Heiland' is the basis for works by Scheidt and Bach, a very dissonant chorale prelude by Eberhard Kraus (b 1931) that includes extensive mute work, and an introspective Introduction and Chorale by Friedemann Winkelhofer (b 1951).

Munich sounds much like the Triton and Vienna trombone quartets--vibrant, beautifully blended, and intensely concentrated. Unlike most quartets, though, it often varies its instrumentation to obtain timbral variety. Horch plays alto trombone on about half of the selections. Truly unusual is bass trombonist Hensiek's use of the rarely heard contrabass trombone, an instrument that operates in tuba register with trombone tone. With it Hensiek produces the most remarkable very-low-register trombone sound I have heard--from huge fortissimos to easy, gentle pianissimos. The instrument is prominent in Julius Fucik's 'Entry of the Gladiators' and in a set of Debussy arrangements, especially 'General Lavine' and 'Jimbo's Lullaby' (the suite also includes 'Canopes' and the whimsical 'Homage a S Pickwick, Esq PPMPC', based on 'God Save the Queen'). Plenty of contrabass trombone is heard in Hensiek's setting of Weber's Freischutz Overture. This exciting reading almost--not quite--overcomes my dislike of orchestral work s arranged for chamber ensembles.

**Der neue Merker 01/2008 (Dorothea Zweipfennig - 2008.01.01)**

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## Ouvverture - Works for Trombone Quartet

Michael Praetorius | Johann Sebastian Bach | Joseph Bodin de Boismortier | Gioacchino Rossini | Samuel Barber | Claude Debussy | Johannes Brahms | Gaetano Donizetti

CD aud 97.533

[www.musicweb-international.com](http://www.musicweb-international.com) February 2008 (Dan Morgan - 2008.02.01)



Brass quartets can be most rewarding, as I discovered with the recent Tetraphonics disc of 20th-century music for four saxophones. Far from being an assault on the ears it turned out to be chockful of challenging music very well played [review]. But at least there is some original music for sax quartet, which is not the case with trombones. Hence the Munich quartet's Thomas Horch decided to make his own arrangements of pieces written for other instruments and ensembles.

An arranger and academic Horch is no mean player either, having been principal trombonist with the Berlin Philharmonic from 1987 to 1989. At the time this recording was made – in 1996 – Dany Bonvin and Uli Pfürtsch were principals with the Munich Philharmonic and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra respectively, while Volker Hensiek played bass trombone in the Bamberg Symphony.

As much as I wanted to enjoy the earlier items I found there simply wasn't enough variety of timbre and dynamic to hold my attention for long. The Praetorius dances – two ballets, a galliard and a courant – are all despatched in ringing style but there is an relentless quality to the music-making that may deter all but the most dedicated brass fans. Yes, the Bach Prelude and Fugue is neatly done, the opening of the prelude especially sonorous, but there is little character here. The fugue fares rather better, with some deft articulation, but ultimately it all seems a little bloodless.

The Boismortier – originally scored for three flutes and continuo – is cast in the form Adagio-Allegro-Largo-Allegro, the faster movements full of brio and bite, the Largo characterised by a pleasing instrumental blend and real gravitas. Perhaps a warmer, more expansive acoustic might have helped to tame the trombones' natural edge, especially in the more exposed upper registers.

Some extra 'air' would certainly been welcome in the 'horn call' at 4:06 in the Rossini but that said the players achieve some wonderful, rich sonorities in the run-up to the famous gallop. The latter is dashed off in great style; surely one of the more invigorating and infectious arrangements on this disc.

Curiously Barber's Adagio, derived from the second movement of his String Quartet No. 1, Op. 11, has become synonymous with sadness and tragedy. Indeed, listeners of BBC Radio 4's Today programme voted it the 'saddest' piece of classical music ever written. The natural timbre of the trombone – especially in the lower registers – may lend itself to mourning but to their credit the Munich quartet invest the long, flowing melodies with a genuine sense of nobility. The climax is splendid but it's the gentle ending that is most moving. This really is exceptional playing, sensitively done.

The Petite Suite is not the work Debussy wrote for four hands in 1869 but a suite of the arranger's own choosing. First up is the delightful Minstrels from Book I of the Préludes. Delectably sprung, the piece has all the harmonic colouring of the piano original plus a real sense of fun. Taken from the same book The Girl with the Flaxen Hair is rather more serene – after all it is marked *Très calme et doucement espressif* – eliciting some secure and surprisingly tender playing. There's nothing restrained about the jazz-inflected

rhythms of Golliwog's Cakewalk, from Children's Corner (1908). Again the quartet bring a welcome degree of spontaneity to the music, especially in the staccato chords that pepper the piece.

They also rise to the rather different rhythmic challenges of Brahms's 3rd and 4th Hungarian Dances, which come across with plenty of vigour. As a foil to this Magyar moodiness comes the Italianate warmth of the overture to Donizetti's comic masterpiece Don Pasquale. Full of wit and point this is a real test of the trombonists' expressive skills. Needless to say they are more than equal to the task.

This disc gets better with repeated listening, but I still feel the early pieces are the least successful. From the Barber onwards matters improve, though; it's impossible not to smile at the humour of the Cakewalk or bask in the genial warmth of Pasquale. The liner-notes – in English and German – are surprisingly informal, which gives you a pretty good idea of the players' approach to the music. Well worth a spin, even if this isn't your usual fare.

[Der neue Merker](#) 01/2008 (Dorothea Zweipfennig - 2008.01.01)



Bläser-Musik nicht nur zu Weihnachten mit dem Münchner Posaunen Quartett, das...

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[www.critic-service.de](#) Dezember 2009 (Christian Ekowski - 2009.12.01)

Trompeten-Ensembles hört man oft, weil sie zumeist brillant schmettern und den...

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