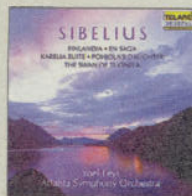


## Out this week

Michael Kennedy

CDs



**Sibelius**  
POHJOLA'S  
DAUGHTER,  
EN SAGA, etc  
Atlanta SO/Levi  
Telarc, £9.99  
★★★★☆

Yoel Levi conducts stirring performances of five works, the most important being the tone-poem *Pohjola's Daughter*, which can claim almost to be another symphony. The orchestration

is Sibelius at his most masterly in terms of colour and contrasts. Levi stresses the work's links with the Fourth Symphony for which it seems like a preliminary study. The earlier *En Saga*, in its revised version, is also given an atmospheric performance by this excellent orchestra. Levi does not patronise *Finlandia* but lets it emerge as the heroic piece it is, written originally for a concert in support of a free press. The popular *Karelia Suite* and *The Swan of Tuonela*, ever magical and mysterious, complete this admirable disc.



**Bruckner**  
SYMPHONY NO 7  
Netherlands Radio PO/  
Van Zweden  
Exton, £13.99  
★★★★★

A very fine account of this great symphony, magnificently recorded, and outstandingly well conducted by Jaap van Zweden. The expansiveness never becomes turgid, nor

are the tempi exaggeratedly slow. Van Zweden keeps the pulse of the symphony strong and firm and builds the climaxes effortlessly. The slow movement is especially moving, with supple strings and noble brass. Van Zweden eschews the controversial cymbal clash at the movement's emotional peak. His treatment of the scherzo and his firm grip on the finale's episodic structure are admirable. This performance can be classed among the best of the work now available.



**Brahms**  
SYMPHONY NO 1  
Munich PO/Thielemann  
DG, £13.99  
★★★★★

Christian Thielemann unleashes a fiercely romantic interpretation of a symphony he feels has recently been displaced for some musicians by the 'more relevant' Mahler and

Stravinsky. Not for him, obviously, for this performance – preceded by an electrifying *Egmont Overture* of Beethoven – bears every sign of a close re-examination of the score. The storm and fury of the first movement, the lyricism of the second, the grace of the third (not really a scherzo) and the grandeur of the finale, with its unforgettable melody, are given new life here in a performance that also testifies to the high quality of this orchestra under his stewardship.

To order any of these CDs call Telegraph Music Direct on 0870 164 6465

## CLASSICAL CHOICE

**BBC Proms** Royal Albert Hall, London SW7 (020 7589 8212). Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts the BBCSO in euro-premiere of his Piano Concerto (soloist Yefim Bronfman) and excerpts from Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* (tmw). Two Proms from BBC

Scottish SO and Ilan Volkov; works include Britten's Piano Concerto (with Steven Osborne) and *La Mer* (Tues); and Mahler 9 (Wed). Mark Elder conducts the NYO (Sat) in Shostakovich's *Leningrad* and Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No 1, with Alexander Kobrin.

**Mostly Mozart** Barbican, London EC2 (0845 120 7500). Last three concerts include the Fauré Requiem and Mozart Vespers (Thur), Jennifer Pike as soloist in Mozart's Violin Concerto No 3 (Fri), and the Mozart Requiem and Vivaldi Gloria (Sat).