

Tamara Brooks

Reviews
Selected Concerts

BLOCH: Sacred Service; STRAVINSKY: Symphony of Psalms; SCHOENBERG: Friede auf Erden

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Orchestra
Academy of Music. Philadelphia, PA

"[Mendelssohn Club's] performance of three major 20th century choral works, with orchestra, under the vibrant leadership of Tamara Brooks, was a stunning, beautiful experience second to no other musical event of any kind in the city."

Sunday Bulletin - Philadelphia, PA

"[The Mendelssohn Club gave] a brilliant and stirring performance of three major choral works last night. . . with Tamara Brooks, a slender woman who drives with energy and knew well the music . . . The blend of the chorus was superb, no more so than in [the] Schoenberg . . . sung radiantly with the many difficult but rich modulations smooth and warm sounding. The piece glowed . . Miss Brooks held her maximum forces together with firm authority throughout a magnificent and continuously enjoyable evening."

The Evening Bulletin - Philadelphia, PA

"Miss Brooks has a fluid style that gives grace to the most difficult line . . . The rhythmic toughness of Schoenberg's Friede auf Erden and Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms was solved without apparent effort . . . The ending choruses of the work [Bloch Sacred Service] were . . stirring in their strength and vitality and the dialogue between soloist and chorus was alertly developed. Brooks's security with the large orchestra was plain."

Philadelphia Inquirer - Philadelphia, PA

"I was certainly impressed by her first Academy of Music appearance with the Club, earlier this season, when she led a virtuoso performance of demanding music by Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Bloch. Her ability to handle large blends of instrumental and choral groups . . . had an electric quality about it."

Sunday Bulletin - Philadelphia, PA

PERSICETTI: Symphony No. 4;
MENDELSSOHN: Die erste Walpurgisnacht.
Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, The New School of Music Orchestra
Carnegie Hall, NY

"... throughout the evening, Miss Brooks extracted persuasive performances, charged with energy and a commanding central vision."

The New York Times - New York, NY

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 7; MENDELSSOHN: Violin Concerto;
KODÁLY: Háry János Suite.
The Greater Trenton Symphony
Trenton, NJ

Brooks Raises Symphony to New Heights

Guest conductor Tamara Brooks gave Greater Trenton Symphony subscribers something to cheer about Sunday night with a podium performance which combined consummate musicianship with a flair for the exciting... Her conducting technique has as its foundation gestures which are remarkably clear and precise, a lively podium manner which is never exaggerated into histrionics, and a thorough knowledge of the music... She led the final movement [of the Beethoven], marked Allegro con brio, at as fast a clip as I have ever heard this music. It was a risky business for the instrumental interplay is tricky... but the musicians rose to the occasion nobly, following Brooks' crackling pace with precision and clarity. It was breathtaking all the way and at the finish there was an ovation from the audience, many of whom rose to their feet."

The Times - Trenton, NJ

"Under the leadership of Ms. Brooks, [the Trenton Symphony] revealed vastly improved intensity, vitality, ensemble and tuning... From the start, the conductor's strong, energetic beat elicited a depth and intensity missing so far this season. [In the Beethoven] the orchestra effectively conveyed the joyous, energetic aspects of the work with clearly-delineated mood shifts and some lovely string playing."

Princeton Packet - Princeton, NJ

VERDI: Messa di Requiem

NEC Chorus and Chamber Singers, NEC Symphony Orchestra
Jordan Hall, Boston, MA

" [the Verdi was]... an unusually searching, indeed sublime, spiritual experience. Everything was drawn out of the music and the situation it depicts and embodies; nothing was superimposed. And this made every moment of it profoundly original. Most of the time it was impossible to think how well this or that famous episode was being done because every concern of the musicians was with what the music means; how to do it came directly out of that engagement ... Brooks took her time, never forced anything, gave players and singers the space to expose their feelings and do unforgettable things, and they did ... Though there were plenty of soaring climaxes, this wasn't a blow-out Requiem. It spoke to humanity's most intimate fears, hopes and confidences, and it compelled the active participation of the audience's feelings too. More than once, wept."
Boston Globe - Boston, MA

BRITTEN: War Requiem.

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, The New School of Music Orchestra.
Carnegie Hall, NY and Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA

"Under the guidance of Tamara Brooks, central focus was placed on the architecture of the work. However fine elements were executed, each was carefully polished, then put into place to form a glorious whole. The performance left this listener both stunned and moved."

Amsterdam News - New York, NY

"Brooks' sense of timing and of dynamic contrasts was impeccable, and the unbroken performance encompassed an equally unbroken tension and final resolution."

The Westsider - New York, NY

"Brooks conducted a most perceptive and probing account of this work which seems to become more deeply moving with every passing year."

New York Daily News - New York, NY

"Tamara Brooks led a beautiful and tender reading that gave the 93-minute work a feeling of honest, unforced eloquence."

Courier Times - Camden, NJ

PERSICHETTI: Mass; BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 9

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, The
Albany Symphony.
Symphony Hall, Albany, NY

"The finely honed Mendelssohn Club is indeed a superbly trained choir, totally disciplined in its ability to sustain tone and sing on pitch. The group is a very flexible one and the interesting cadences [of the Mass] were all gorgeously shaped."

Schenectady Gazette - Schenectady, NY

"The Albany Symphony was fortunate indeed to have as guest artists the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia under the direction of Tamara Brooks. The Mendelssohn Club opened the program with a performance of Vincent Persichetti's Mass. It was marked with remarkable discipline and clarity of tone under the direction of Ms. Brooks."

WMVT radio review - Albany, NY

"The Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia sounds extraordinary under Tamara Brooks' direction . . . The chorus opened the evening with Vincent Persichetti's hauntingly lovely Mass The dynamic range of the singers, from softly quiet to forceful, was spectacular [The last movement of the Beethoven Ninth] was spurred on by the magnificent chorus."

Times Record - Albany, NY

MENDELSSOHN: Elijah

NEC Chorus and Chamber Singers; NEC Symphony Orchestra
Jordan Hall, Boston MA

Tamara Brooks delivers 'Elijah' with passion

". . . Brooks brings something even more valuable to her work, an immediate emotional connection to the music and its message, a message that she invariably delivers to performers and audience with passionate intensity and conviction. . . this was a superior performance, handsomely played by the NEC Orchestra and stirringly sung by the NEC Chorus and Chamber Singers."

Boston Globe - Boston, MA

MILHAUD: La Création du Monde.

Sequenza Chamber Ensemble
The New School, Philadelphia, PA

"Guided in Tamara Brooks' knowledgeable way, the work comes off with the kind of hidden power Kurt Weill's songs and certain Hindemith pieces were having at the same time (1923). To realize this power, Sequenza fielded 19 of Philadelphia's best free-lance musicians; for once they sounded adequately rehearsed."

Jewish Exponent - Philadelphia, PA

BRAHMS: Alto Rhapsody. Jossie Pérez, alto
Men of NEC Choruses; NEC Philharmonia
Jordan Hall, Boston, MA

Deeply touching performance by Pérez, Brooks

"Chief among the many delights of Thursday's final all-Brahms concert was a radiant performance of the Alto Rhapsody, Op. 53, by 19-year-old contralto Jossie Pérez, the NEC Philharmonia orchestra and men's chorus, all conducted by Tamara Brooks. Pérez arched high and plunged deep below the staff with a searing passion wed to technical aplomb; while the orchestra, tremulous, fraught, and ultimately serene, surged and subsided expressively under Brooks' baton. The men's chorus filled every gesture with vibrancy. As the great ground swell of the final prayer flooded the hall, Pérez' glowing voice rode the crest of it like a swan. This was a beautifully realized, deeply touching performance."

Boston Globe - Boston, MA

STRAVINSKY: Les Noces.
Members of NEC Chamber Singers and Chorus,
NEC Percussion Ensemble, pianists and soloists
Jordan Hall, Boston, MA

"Its four pianos, percussion and singers were led by an assured Tamara Brooks in a rollicking shindig of a performance. From the opening lament by gleaming soprano Sabrina Learman, the group piled delight upon delight, reaching nearly unbearable levels of excitement by the end of Scene 2."

Boston Globe - Boston, MA

BRAHMS: Variations on a Theme by Haydn; Requiem
The Haverford-Bryn Mawr Chorale,
The New School of Music Orchestra

". . . one of the most beautiful concerts in recent memory . . . The musical forces under the baton of Tamara Brooks rendered playing and singing of the highest order. The

music has the quality of the inevitable about it . . . that was captured by Ms. Brooks. Her interpretation was filled with sentiment, yet it never dawdled sentimentally . . . the fugue was delivered in an exemplary fashion . . . enabling the Bachian splendor of the texture to be captured . . . The chorus sang splendidly. The concert opened with a glowing reading of Brahms' Variations on a Theme by Haydn. The playing was magnificent and in any other concert would have been considered the highpoint. But the Requiem was sung and played so sublimely as to almost make one forget it altogether."

News of Delaware County - Ardmore, PA

VARESE: Octandre.
Ariel Chamber Ensemble
Sanders Theatre, Cambridge, MA

". . . really fine playing of the evening was the performance of the Varèse Octandre, conducted by Tamara Brooks. From the very opening phrase it was clear that there was a firm guiding hand directing the piece and that the players were working with a collective will . . ."

Boston Globe - Boston, MA

SUMMER '73: bi-national music festival in Cyprus

". . . the direction of Tamara Brooks, without being personally distracting, imposed her ideas on orchestra and chorus and rendered perfection to the performances.

Eleftheria - Nicosia, Cyprus

ATHENS FESTIVAL
Herod Atticus Theatre, Athens, Greece

"Under the direction of a really inspired conductor, this ensemble actually 'makes art,' the kind of art that has the grip of truth and spirituality, of an intense attachment to treating details with sincerity, and of ethic quality. The pieces we heard proved to us that Tamara Brooks, the conductor of the group, has one of those rare musical natures who not only know how to create a whole of extraordinary precision and unity, but who also possess the sensitivity for lofty expression needed to achieve unique interpretations."

Eleftheros Kosmos - Athens, Greece

GAETA FESTIVAL

Gaeta, Italy

"Above everything else was the work of the conductor, Tamara Brooks, a very talented and skilled artist with an excellent style who demonstrated a profound knowledge of her difficult instrument. She has a precise and energetic beat to which the ensemble responded in a most amazing way."

Journal - Gaeta, Italy

Recording (nominated for a Grammy)

PERSICHETTI - Winter Cantata, Mass, Love.

Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia conducted by Tamara Brooks.

New World NW316.

"The interpretations are nothing short of definitive and dedicated ."

Fanfare

"Brooks draws loving - I am tempted to say definitive – performances from her choir. The recording is all one could ask for [a] long term treasure."

High Fidelity