

# DIGITAL MEDIA REVIEWS

EDITED BY ANNE SHELLEY

---

For information regarding the scope of this column, consult the headnote in the September 2013 issue. The dates of access for each review of an online source indicate the dates during which the reviewer was evaluating the resource. All Web sites were last accessed to verify availability on 1 August 2013.

**Classical Music in Video** [Alexandria, VA]: Alexander Street Press, 2012–. <http://clmv.alexanderstreet.com/> (Accessed May 2013). [Requires a Web browser, Adobe Flash Player, an audio-enabled device, and an Internet connection with a minimum bandwidth of 400 kbps. Pricing: annual subscription from \$1,024 to \$2,570 depending on library size or perpetual rights for \$25,000 plus a \$500 annual access fee; discounts are available for consortial purchases; unlimited simultaneous users.]

## Introduction

Users familiar with Alexander Street Press's family of music streaming products, such as *Classical Music Library*, *Jazz Music Library*, *Opera in Video*, and others, will welcome *Classical Music in Video*, a relatively new addition to this group. As of this writing, *Classical Music in Video* provides access to 732 recorded performances delivered by streaming video. *Classical Music in Video* currently contains recordings from seventeen different publishers, and includes recent recordings from publishers such as EuroArts and Masterclass Media Foundation, and historical recordings from Bel Canto Society and Entertainment One, Ltd.

## Navigation

Users may browse for recordings by many different access points—available on the left side of the home screen, or from the menu bar across the top of all screens—including people with responsibility for the recording (All People), composer, ensembles, genres, operatic roles (Roles), time periods, recording venues (Venues), and video titles (Videos). The actual browsing is done on separate screens, depending on which access point is selected for browsing. Users may also search for recordings by means of a basic search box available from

all screens of the site, which allows the user to search by any keyword, or to narrow the search to People, Subtitles, and Title fields. The “Advanced Search” screen allows the user to perform precise searches. This screen will search many data fields simultaneously, and provides users with the assistance of controlled vocabulary through pull-down menus or, for large sets of controlled vocabulary, “Select Terms” links. *Classical Music in Video* offers straightforward browsing by title. The title list displays video recordings arranged in numerical order (for titles that begin with numbers), followed by alphabetical order. A navigation bar across the top of the screen allows users to jump to the beginning of each letter or to the numerical section. Users can also easily browse for people. One can browse for all indexed people at once or by one role at a time. Users can limit roles for browsing purposes to only composers, librettists, performers, directors, conductors, choreographers, or designers. Users can also link directly to the list of composers from the home page or the navigation bar under Browse. Within each list of people, occupations are listed, with some listed generically as Performer, and some with more specific occupations, such as Tenor, Pianist, or Musical conductor.

Users may browse for ensembles alphabetically. Clicking on an ensemble name on the "Browse Ensembles" screen will take the user to an ensemble page that links to a list of the video recordings featuring that ensemble. Some ensemble pages also contain a historical article about the ensemble (called a Biography) from *All Music Guide*.<sup>1</sup> Users may also browse by genre. The list of genres is arranged hierarchically with two levels. The list of top levels is arranged alphabetically, and within each top level is at least one second-level genre. Individual video recordings can be found by clicking on the top-level or second-level genre headings. The top-level genres include such terms as Chamber, Contemporary, Dance, Instrumental, and Vocal + choral. Because this site is entitled *Classical Music in Video*, and because Alexander Street Press also offers an *Opera in Video* database, I was surprised to see that this list included such terms as Drama, Jazz, Latin Music, and Opera + Operetta. The Jazz genre heading (at the top level) only contains three videos and they represent two excerpts from the video *Seiji Ozawa Conducts a Gershwin Night* (EuroArts, 2003), and Leonard Bernstein's 1955 broadcast of *The World of Jazz* (Entertainment One Ltd., 2010). The Latin Music genre heading features one sub-genre, Bossa Nova, and only one recording, *The Girl from Ipanema*, performed by the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, conducted by Kurt Masur from the video recording *Kurt Masur: A Life in Music* (EuroArts, 2007). Faculty and students who wish to incorporate educational video recordings into courses may appreciate the site's Spoken Word and Sounds genre, which is divided into five sub-genres and contains a significant number of videos. These sub-genres are Documentaries (102 video recordings), Interviews (11 video recordings), Music Instruction (39 video recordings), Oral History & Biography (2 video recordings), and Sounds (1 video recording). Notably, as of this writing, *Classical Music in Video* contains thirty-seven video recordings of masterclasses released by the Masterclass Media Foundation. Alexander Street Press

advertises forty-one recordings on their promotional Web page for *Classical Music in Video*.<sup>2</sup> An Alexander Street Press representative informed me that the remaining videos will be available in upcoming releases of *Classical Music in Video*. These masterclasses chiefly feature strings and piano, but there are a handful of masterclasses available in other areas, such as singing, chamber music, conducting, percussion, and brass. I watched the *Trumpet Masterclass* with Håkan Hardenberger (Masterclass Media Foundation, 2008), which features three trumpet students playing three different works for trumpet and piano followed by a lesson with Hardenberger on each work. Throughout the masterclass, Hardenberger moved beyond mere technical problems of each of the students (and there were many to tackle here) to address the overall interpretation of each of the works. Though this particular masterclass would be most useful to teachers and students who are working with Bohuslav Martinů's *Sonatine for Trumpet and Piano*, Hans Werner Henze's *Sonatina for Trumpet Solo*, or Georges Enesco's *Légende*, there were many overall suggestions that could be applied to other similar works, or to trumpet playing in general. The other masterclasses available on *Classical Music in Video* also feature artists of very prominent stature.

Users can browse for recordings by a limited number of roles from eight operas. Those who wish to explore video recordings of operatic roles in more depth would do well to use Alexander Street Press's *Opera in Video* database. As of this viewing, browsing by time period reveals eight periods: Renaissance (2 video recordings), Baroque (97 video recordings), Classical (120 video recordings), Romantic (131 video recordings), Late-romantic (58 video recordings), National school (19 video recordings), 20<sup>th</sup> century (193 video recordings), and 21<sup>st</sup> century (11 video recordings). The numbers of recordings listed under each time period may be less than the number available, due to inconsistent metadata quality, which is discussed below.

1. "AllMusic," accessed 20 May 2013, <http://www.allmusic.com>.

2. "Classical Music in Video," accessed 20 May 2013, <http://alexanderstreet.com/products/classical-music-video>.

Browsing by venue allows the user to select the video based on where it was recorded. Venues are listed in alphabetical order.

### Video Interface and Features

Users can log into *Classical Music in Video* within the context of their institutional subscriptions to create clips and playlists, which can be made visible only to themselves, only to their institutions, or to everyone. These features could be incorporated into courses, as faculty and students can isolate particular musical examples within larger works, such as the harpsichord cadenza in the first movement of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5*. Faculty and students can also create playlists to share with each other. Users can annotate both clips and playlists.

On each video recording page, users have the default option to view the video recordings in a small window embedded within the screen. This screen also allows users to view recording and work metadata by clicking on "see more details." Above the video window, users will find links to view subtitles for the recording, if applicable. These subtitles display in a separate window from the video recording. Users can also view thumbnails from the beginnings of sections of the recording. Finally, users can select the "Embed/Link" option to obtain a hyperlink directly to the recording page in *Classical Music in Video* or code that will embed the video recording window into another Web page.

Below the video window, users will find options to make clips, start and pause playback of the recording, jump to the next or previous section of the recording, adjust the volume, display subtitles on the screen, enlarge or reduce the video window, or display the recording in full-screen view. The picture quality is crisper when it is viewed on a smaller screen, and the sound quality is as good as any streaming service I have heard. As one would expect, the quality of sound and video varies by the date of the recording; newer recordings tend to be crisper than older recordings.

Users should be aware that *Classical Music in Video* is still in development, and as a result, metadata for the various recordings are of inconsistent quality. For example, *Classical Music in Video* contains recordings of the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra performing all six *Brandenburg Concertos* of

J. S. Bach, but the first concerto does not appear in the time period browse because the Baroque time period tag is absent in the metadata for that particular recording (EuroArts, 2000). However, this tag is present in the Orchestra Mozart recording of the same work (EuroArts, 2007), and its recording is present in a time period browse. Also, the Håkan Hardenberger masterclass discussed above does not have a genre heading in *Classical Music in Video*. One can find the recording by searching for the publisher (Masterclass Media Foundation), but one will not find it by searching for the genre, Music Instruction. Additionally, when browsing for performers, one will find composers who died before the advent of recording technology listed as performers. An Alexander Street Press representative informed me that these inconsistencies in metadata will be corrected in future releases of *Classical Music in Video*.

### Conclusion

In summary, *Classical Music in Video* is an immensely useful resource for music instruction. Through its functionality, faculty can pull up video recordings to play in classes; they can include links to recordings or embed them directly in Web pages. They can also create and share clips and playlists. Students can view video recordings in libraries or remotely. I was able to play video recordings from *Classical Music in Video* on my iPhone through my library's proxy server, and an Alexander Street Press representative confirmed that *Classical Music in Video* will play on the Apple iPhone on the 3G or higher network, as well as on the Android OS. Alexander Street Press offers free MARC records for their collections, which will allow another path for library users to discover recordings. Inconsistencies in metadata should be improved with subsequent releases. Finally, users may happily anticipate a new interface for Alexander Street Press's music recording products, called *Music Online*. This new interface should load and play recordings faster, and should have more features to enhance the user experience. *Classical Music in Video* will be included in this new interface by the end of the year.

MICHAEL J. DUFFY IV  
Northern Illinois University

Copyright of Notes is the property of Music Library Association Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.