Rorem

Flute Concerto[a]. Violin Concerto[b]. Pilgrims
[a]**Jeffrey Khaner** *fl* [b]**Philippe Quint** *vn* **Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra / José Serebrier**
Naxos American Classics ⓢ 8 559278 (63' • DDD)

Every composer needs a champion; now Rorem has his

Ned Rorem's position in the CD catalogue has improved recently thanks to José Serebrier. On a previous Naxos release (10/03) he celebrated Rorem's 80th birthday with all three symphonies, dating from the 1950s – inexplicably they had hardly been performed in the intervening period. Their expansive scope contradicts the image of Rorem as a song specialist, although his 300 songs are widely admired. His often scintillating chamber music (New World, 10/92) is another aspect of his large output that should not be ignored. And then there are the operas...

Pilgrims, for strings, comes from the same decade as the symphonies. It's not a patriotic celebration of the founding fathers but arises from the Bible via a novel by Julien Green and creates an austere commentary on a Saëns regularly favoured. Daniel Grimwood proves an excellent partner for Walton, in his way as imaginative as Pascal Devoyon with Isserlis, and the new version gains in the extra brightness and forwardness of the sound. An excellent disc, a credit to the enterprise of the Quartz label. **Edward Greenfield**