



**BERNSTEIN**  
 Serenade. Facsimile.  
 Divertimento  
**Philippe Quint** *vm*  
**Bournemouth**  
**Symphony**  
**Orchestra / Marin Alsop**  
**Naxos**



Another lively and rhythmically vital performance from Alsop and her Bournemouth band. The upbeat, lively *Divertimento* makes a nice contrast with the more cerebral *Serenade* and *Facsimile* – though you can identify Bernstein's unique voice right from the first bars. The sound Naxos is getting in Poole's Lighthouse is most impressive.

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**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

**Bernstein**  
 Serenade<sup>3</sup>. Divertimento. Facsimile  
<sup>2</sup>Philippe Quint *vm* Bournemouth  
 Symphony Orchestra / Marin Alsop  
 Naxos American Classics ® 8 559245 (65' • DDD)  
 Marin Alsop offers another welcome  
 collection of her mentor's music



The programme plays to Alsop's strengths. She has always sprung Bernstein's rhythms with a real feeling for the idiom while tending to eschew the element of rhetorical overkill familiar from his own performances. Here the element of caution translates into elegance. The *Divertimento* comes closest to seeming underplayed. Alsop misses the poignancy of the 'Waltz' but what a relief to discover that the 'Turkey Trot' is actually listenable after all. The work convinces more readily when allowed to speak for itself, a late example of what used to be called 'light music'.

Bernstein recorded his early *Facsimile* ballet three times so it obviously meant much to him. Perhaps because of its low-key

manner, it remains under-appreciated. Alsop, again cooler than the composer, plots a beautifully sustained course with some lovely woodwind playing en route. There's none of the melodrama that the booklet-note considers de rigueur.

Placed first is an account of the *Serenade* we would have rated an amazing bargain a few years ago. Following the score's belated acceptance as mainstream repertoire there are, however, superior options for those with sufficient funds, versions combining technical excellence with greater dynamic variety. Russian-born and trained, Quint's accomplished, eloquent playing generally survives the microphone's close scrutiny for all that his intakes of breath are caught, too. More worryingly, he is taxed by the double stopping near the start of the second 'Aristophanes' movement and his finale lacks the dash of its rivals. Throughout, the expression is just a little generalised. Warmly recommended nonetheless. **David Gutman**