

Chamber Orchestra of New York

Onnino Respighi

Salvatore Di Vittorio
Music Director



ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA

"Voluptuous...a polished, rich sound...a stirring performance...."
- Vivien Schweitzer, The New York Times

Chamber Orchestra of New York was founded in 2006 in honor of Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936), and serves as the premier ensemble devoted to the Italian repertoire in the United States. It presents the great orchestral repertoire with a focus on ancient music and its influences on later composers, including undiscovered (or rarely performed) gems which complement and extend the classical tradition. Following Respighi's legacy, the Chamber Orchestra fosters a deep respect for antiquity by programming masterpieces of the baroque and classical eras alongside neo-baroque and neo-classical repertoire of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It is also one of the first, auditioned young professionals' orchestras in the history of New York.

The Chamber Orchestra's instrumentation (and roster of 45 musicians) was established in agreement with the stage dimensions of Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall, where its triumphant debut was held on 11 October 2007. Following the inaugural season finale concert, Vivien Schweitzer of The New York Times wrote: "The musicians played...producing a polished, rich sound...a stirring performance [of Mahler's Adagietto and]...a voluptuous rendition of Tchaikovsky's Souvenir...." As of this season, the ensemble serves as orchestra-in-residence of Music Under the Dome series at the Church of St. Jean Baptiste on the upper east side, and will have performed at the Italian Cultural Institute, Eventi Hotel/Big Screen Plaza, Caspary Auditorium/Rockefeller University, Merkin Concert Hall and The Morgan Museum.

The orchestra's Board includes many esteemed artists as well, such as Evan Wilson (Former Principal Viola, Los Angeles Philharmonic), film composer Ennio Morricone, conductors Alan Gilbert (Music Director, New York Philharmonic) and Andrew Litton (Music Director, Bergen Philharmonic-Norway) as well as soloists Lynn Harrell, Cho-Liang Lin and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg. Honorary Board members include Respighi family descendents Elsa and Gloria Pizzoli, Respighi archive curator/cataloguer Potito Pedarra and musicologist Luigi Verdi. It boasts an elite ensemble of gifted musicians, including first concertmaster Kelly Hall-Tompkins (New Jersey Symphony) and second concertmaster Daniel Khalikov (Metropolitan Opera Orchestra).

In collaboration with the Pizzoli family and Luigi Verdi, Salvatore Di Vittorio and the Chamber Orchestra of New York have established The Respighi Prize Music Competition for Young Composers and Soloists with the City of Bologna (Respighi's birthplace) in 2010.

In 2011, the Chamber Orchestra released its debut CDs on Naxos Records (8.572332 and 8.572333). Di Vittorio's completion of Respighi's Violin Concerto was showcased along with Respighi's Rossiniana Suite, Di Vittorio's transcription/revision of Respighi's Aria and Suite for strings, and his own homage Overtura Respighiana and first two Sinfonias. The Naxos recordings were immediately successful on the international level, listed for several weeks on Gramophone Top 20 Classical Chart in London, honored as WQXR Classical Radio NY "Album of the Week" and "Album of the Month" in Italy (for June and July 2011). The music has also aired on RAI, BBC radio, and dozens of stations in the U.S. and abroad. Over thirty positive reviews have been written in praise of the orchestra's recordings.

As part of its current Fourth Season 2011-2012, the Chamber Orchestra of New York looks forward to championing the performances of four newly printed critical editions of Ottorino Respighi's music, including a restoration of Respighi's orchestration of Claudio Monteverdi's "Lamento di Arianna" (Ariadne's Lament) for mezzo-soprano and orchestra, along with plans to record its next album on Naxos Records.

MUSIC DIRECTOR SALVATORE DI VITTORIO

Italian-born Salvatore Di Vittorio has achieved international recognition as a composer and conductor, hailed by Luigi Verdi of the prestigious Philharmonic Academy of Bologna, as a “lyrical musical spirit, respectful of the ancient Italian tradition...and an emerging leading interpreter of the music of Ottorino Respighi.” He gained considerable attention with his orchestration and completion of Ottorino Respighi’s rediscovered first *Violin Concerto (in A Major)*, a commission he received from Respighi’s family descendants and archive curator.



First noticed by chamber orchestras in Italy which premiered his early compositions, often in programs with Respighi’s music, Di Vittorio has been acclaimed a “serious, lyrical and romantic composer...following in the footsteps of Ottorino Respighi.” He then aroused national interest as Music Director and Founder of the Chamber Orchestra of New York “Ottorino Respighi” which debuted on October 11, 2007 at Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall – one of the first fully-auditioned ‘young professionals’ orchestras in New York, dedicated (in part) to the Italian repertoire. Following the inaugural season finale, Vivien Schweitzer of The New York Times wrote: “The musicians played...producing a polished, rich sound...a stirring performance [of Mahler’s Adagietto and]...a voluptuous rendition of Tchaikovsky’s Souvenir...” In 2010, under the auspices of the Chamber Orchestra, he founded “The Respighi Prize” Music Competition with the City of Bologna.

Praised by renowned conductor Piero Bellugi for his compositions and elegance on the podium, Di Vittorio has been featured as composer and conductor by numerous orchestras: Accademia Musicale Siciliana, Teatro Massimo Opera (Palermo), Orchestra Filarmonica Franco Ferrara, Chamber Ensemble of Rome, Orchestra da Camera Fiorentina, Florence Symphonietta, Festival Sinfonietta Umbra (Perugia), Carnevale di Venezia Musica, Royal College of Music Symphony (London), Brussels Chamber Ensemble, San Jose Chamber Orchestra, Vancouver Island Symphony, State Symphony of Sofia (Bulgaria), El Hanager String Orchestra (Cairo), Danbury Symphony, Adelphi University Symphony and Metropolitan Youth Orchestra. His music is inspired by philosophical-programmatic themes and captivates each listener with poignant lyricism and magnificent orchestrations.

Di Vittorio’s completion of Respighi’s *Violin Concerto* was showcased along with his transcription/revision of Respighi’s *Aria* and *Suite for strings*, his own homage *Overtura Respighiana* and first two *Sinfonias* on Naxos Records (8.572332 and 8.572333). The recordings were immediately successful on the international level, listed for several weeks on Gramophone Top 20 Classical Chart in London, honored as WQXR Classical Radio NY “Album of the Week” and “Album of the Month” in Italy (for June and July 2011). The music has also aired on RAI and BBC radio stations, and dozens of other stations in the U.S. and abroad.

Reviews praise Di Vittorio: “Top billing goes to Di Vittorio’s completion of the *Violin Concerto* that the 24-year-old Respighi left unfinished in 1903”-Gramophone Magazine (London); “Unabashedly tonal, traditional, and Italian, his style employs a great deal of chromaticism but also has a swelling lyricism”-American Record Guide; “A brilliant and sparkling semi-pastiche overture and two symphonies, which are pictorial-philosophical, using many of the significant tropes of late Romantic and neo-Romantic music from Mahler to Barber, to create very tonal, approachable works distinguished by his very Respighian sense of orchestral color”-Records International; “[Di Vittorio] is a composer of beautiful music extraordinaire.”-Fanfare Magazine (New Jersey); “[The *Violin Concerto*] sounds like genuine Respighi, with anticipations of characteristic moments in *Pines of Rome*”-Classics Today (New Hampshire); “his revisions, transcriptions and completions are sensitive to Respighi’s Neo-Baroque style”-Music Web International (London); “*Respighiana*...[is] a happy and very lively score”-David’s Review Corner (Cambridge); “di Vittorio proves more and more to be an important Italian composer...one can also find hints of Scarlatti and Rossini...in his music...[he] has composed an album of assured popularity”-Qobuz (Paris); a modernism that is resolutely neo-romantic, as well as verismo, even cinematographic...without concerns of criticism from the avant-garde...*Respighiana*, entwined with Rossini crescendos and fanfares alla *Pines*, is a contemporary music entirely timeless”-Abeillemusique (Paris); “a musician of remarkable attainment...in his two short symphonies, he emerges as a composer of prodigious imagination and talent” – Houston Public Radio/NPR (Texas). Other reviews include The Guardian, Daily Telegraph, Northern Echo and Classic FM Magazine (London), Sacramento Bee, Strings Magazine, San Francisco Classical Voice and Arts San Francisco Observer (California), Buffalo News, America Oggi and New Music Connoisseur (New York), L’Informazione (Bologna), Ducale Music (Varese), La Repubblica (Rome), Il Mediterraneo and Giornale di Sicilia (Palermo), and La Nazione (Florence).

Born in Palermo, Italy, Salvatore Di Vittorio studied composition with Ludmila Ulehla and (conducting with) Giampaolo Bracali at the Manhattan School of Music, and aesthetics (and ancient) philosophy at Columbia University in New York. He is a protégé of Francesco Carotenuto (Conservatory of Music “S. Cecilia”, Rome), Piero Bellugi (Conservatory of Music “L. Cherubini”, Florence), and John Farrer (Royal College of Music, London). A member of the Manhattan School of Music Alumni Board Council, Di Vittorio has taught at Adelphi University and Loyola School in New York City. His compositions are published by Edizioni Panastudio in Italy. Recordings of his music are available on the Naxos and Panastudio labels. He resides in New York and Palermo.

REVIEWS

"Top billing goes to Salvatore Di Vittorio's completion of the *Violin Concerto* that the 24-year-old Respighi left unfinished in 1903, having composed the first two movements and just a few bars of the finale. Laura Marzadori proves a big-hearted, assertive soloist. The concerto is framed by Di Vittorio's transcriptions of the mellifluous *Aria* from 1901 and the 1902 *Suite for strings*, the latter a pleasingly inventive creation whose second movement "Siciliana" and concluding "Rigaudon" in particular suggest a more than passing acquaintance with Grieg's *Holberg Suite*. Di Vittorio secures a tidy response from his young New York band."

Gramophone Magazine, London

"These works by Salvatore Di Vittorio are unabashedly tonal, traditional, and Italian. His style employs a great deal of chromaticism but also has a swelling lyricism. *Overtura Respighiana* has a startling direct reference to the beginning of Pines of Rome, and Di Vittorio's love of Respighi permeates this bright piece. *Sinfonia No. 1* also has a Respighian quality, with additional allusions to Vivaldi and Alessandro Scarlatti. Di Vittorio delivers a Verdian gesture in his *Ave Maria*. The clean, incisive clarinet playing of Benjamin Baron in the engaging *Clarinet Sonata* is a bracing contrast. He's only one guy, but he shows how it's done... [The Respighi CD] is a splendid program, beautifully played and very well recorded. Di Vittorio did quite a bit of extrapolation to complete the finale [of the *Violin Concerto*]. The result is a delightful work, light, airy, and bucolic, with moments that remind us of Vaughan Williams. It's a modest 21-minute work with cheerful, sunny outer Allegros flanking a beautiful, lyrical slow movement. Miss Marzadori plays with a warm, nuanced, unforced tone and gets secure, sympathetic support from Di Vittorio and the orchestra. Di Vittorio did some revising [on the *Suite for strings*], just as he transcribed the luscious *Aria* [which] reminds me of an Italianate analog to Sibelius's *Andante Festivo*. This music... would add luster to a concert program of any size string ensemble."

American Record Guide, Cincinnati

"Laura Marzadori was featured soloist for the world premiere recording of Ottorino Respighi's *Concerto for Violin*, completed by the orchestra's conductor Salvatore Di Vittorio – who was personally chosen by Potito Pedarra and the Respighi archive."

Il Resto Del Carlino, Bologna

"What is most striking about the pieces on this [Respighi] CD is how unlike those famous works they are, in sound and style. A good percentage of this music has been rescued by Salvatore Di Vittorio, who is credited with completing some of the orchestrations. He has reinvigorated [these] works such as the *Violin Concerto*, completing the last movement. It is quite beautiful and well worth our attention. The orchestral playing is solid."

Limelight Magazine, Australia

"Di Vittorio has been entrusted with the revisions of early Respighi works. This Respighi CD should probably be re-named Respighi/Di Vittorio, since ¾ of the CD, in fact, maintains a strong presence of Di Vittorio's compositional hand. However, Di Vittorio's completion of the first *Violin Concerto* does not affect Respighi's original musical vision. This is a wonderful accomplishment by the Chamber Orchestra of New York, and talented soloist Laura Marzadori."

Musica Progetto, Naples (Italy)

"Thanks to the enthusiasm of Salvatore Di Vittorio and the Chamber Orchestra of New York we now have an early Respighi *Violin Concerto*, completed by the conductor, with a selection of other orchestral works."

New Zealand Herald

"This great concerto is quite colorful, and played here with much passion by the Chamber Orchestra of New York. Di Vittorio has done a great job!"

Pizzicato Magazine, Luxembourg

"In a disc of his own music, Di Vittorio conducts a brilliant and sparkling semi-pastiche overture and two symphonies, which are pictorial-philosophical, using many of the significant tropes of late Romantic and neo-Romantic music from Mahler to Barber, to create very tonal, approachable works distinguished by his very Respighian sense of orchestral color.... The Respighi *Violin Concerto* is gently lyrical and, as always, conscious of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque eras although not to the extent of [his other violin concerti]."

Records International, Tucson

"Respighi's sumptuous skills are well represented here...in this disc...an initiative by Salvatore Di Vittorio, an Italian conductor active in the U.S. This recording is important because Di Vittorio has recorded the world premiere of lesser known Respighi works, such as the first *Concerto for Violin in A Major*, revised and completed by him from the original manuscripts. A very risky operation, accomplished with intelligence....Bologna violinist, Laura Marzadori, gives an interpretation full of momentum, driving, not devoid of attention to the lyrical style that constitutes one of the remarkable aspects of [this] composer."

Chiara Sink, L'Informazione di Bologna

"*Overtura Respighiana*...is a devilishly delightful concoction that plays on Respighi's *Rossiniana* and *Pines of Rome*, fusing them with references to Di Vittorio's own music, to create a kind of freshly minted *Boutique fantasque*. The brilliant swatches of instrumental color Di Vittorio weaves into and through the striking musical tapestry [of his *Second Symphony*] is reminiscent of Respighi's way with the orchestral palette. His *Ave Maria* first...struck my ears as fairly dissonant...but as the piece unfolded, emerging from the harmonic counterpoint were passages that, with just a few minor adjustments to the voice leading, sounded as if they might have come from a *cappella* moments in Verdi's *Requiem*...The effects of Di Vittorio's piece are quite arresting, simultaneously stark and austere yet illuminated from within by a shimmering light that leads to a most meltingly beautiful cadential Amen. [Respighi's] spirit hovers over [*Sinfonia No. 1*] in the luminous divided string writing and exquisite chiaroscuro effects. The music is sad, to be sure, even brooding, but more than once it put me in mind of Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, a piece that is somehow

uplifting in its tragedy. Di Vittorio proves himself...to be a composer of beautiful music extraordinaire. The Respighi [*Violin Concerto*] inhabits a world of lyrical sunshine that plays on the senses like a fresh breeze bearing scents of an Italian vineyard in spring. Thanks to the efforts of Di Vittorio, and the capable hands and sensitive voice of violinist Laura Marzadori, this romantically expressive score is brought to us complete for the first time. The [*Suite for strings*] is given...in a delightful performance by Di Vittorio's orchestra."

Jerry Dubins, Fanfare Magazine, New Jersey

"Devotees of opulent romanticism will particularly enjoy this enterprising programme...Chamber Orchestra of New York [is] already a fine ensemble. Most of the music is backward-looking pastiche that will appeal particularly to readers who prefer their Baroque and Classical on modern instruments. The exception is the unfinished *Violin Concerto*, a fascinating discovery brought to life by Di Vittorio who has done a magnificent job of realizing and expanding upon the existing material."

Julian Haylock, Classic FM Magazine, London

"Di Vittorio...is a musician of remarkable attainment. In his two short symphonies, he emerges as a composer of prodigious imagination and talent, generally tonal—though unafraid of dissonance and having occasional, though rare, flirtations with atonality. Some of Charles Ives' blood, as well as Respighi's, seem to course through his veins. The sense of color and shape, and the alternation of two-voice textures with various fuller orchestral sonorities in *Lost Innocence*, are impressive. The [*Preludio* from his] first symphony, *Isolation*...is superbly idiomatic and richly expressive. Di Vittorio's prowess as a conductor is a complement to his compositional acumen...Whatever influences...the music is compellingly original...His *Ave Maria* for women's voices seems to take Josquin's much more patently linear setting as a point of departure, with some faint echoes of Verdi. But this music isn't derivative: it is cast in a highly original musical language. Like Renaissance motets, it is put together in sections — in line with the text. Di Vittorio seems, in a way, to write for chorus much as Frederick Delius did—that is, as if for strings. It is the same expressive quality that imbues his instrumental music, but it comes across in a refreshingly different way."

Chris Hathaway, Houston Public Radio-NPR, Texas

"The beauty of the *Violin Concerto*'s composition makes clear its connection with Vivaldi, a work which has been orchestrated and completed via its third movement by the conductor on this recording, Salvatore Di Vittorio, who attentively maintains the nature and integrity of the work. In the *Aria* for strings the connection is then made for Corelli and Frescobaldi, while the *Suite* for strings returns to ancient music, as is evident with the development of the [titles of] its six movements."

Ducale Music, Varese

"This album is both by and for Respighi fanatics. It features the Chamber Orchestra of New York - Ottorino Respighi, founded to promote his music in 2006 by Salvatore di Vittorio, a Sicilian-born composer and conductor who has also completed a number of Respighi's unfinished scores. The disc's raison d'être...is Di Vittorio's performing version of the *Violin Concerto* in A, left incomplete in 1903. The influence of Rimsky-Korsakov, Respighi's teacher from 1900 to 1902, is apparent in the Slavonic inflections of the thematic material, but in essence, it's a big, late Romantic concerto, reminiscent of Brahms. Laura Marzadori does some nice things with it – the ornate slow movement is particularly refined – though neither she nor Di Vittorio's orchestra are helped by the close, very dry recording. The *Aria* for strings and *Suite* for strings, both scrupulously played, are attractive early exercises in Respighi's pseudo baroque style..."

Tim Ashley, The Guardian, London

"The most noteworthy piece on this disc of Respighi rarities and premiere recordings is the early *Violin Concerto*, revised and completed by conductor Salvatore Di Vittorio. The first two movements are complete, the finale sketched out as to its initial thematic material. Di Vittorio has completed it quite effectively by turning it into a rondo based on the tunes of the earlier movements, a process very similar to that found in, say, Gershwin's *Piano Concerto* or Bartók's *Second* for that instrument. Suffice it to say that the piece sounds like genuine Respighi, with anticipations of such characteristic moments as the catacombs in *The Pines of Rome*. Laura Marzadori plays the piece very well, with a nice balance of lyrical fulsomeness and virtuoso flashiness. For fans of the composer this disc is a must, and I also can see the opening *Aria* for strings getting a good bit of radio play. It's a charmer."

Classics Today, David Hurwitz, New Hampshire

"[The Orchestra's] enthusiasm and that of their conductor is indisputable. His revisions, transcriptions and completions are sensitive to Respighi's Neo-Baroque style...Laura Marzadori gives a most compelling reading [of the *Violin Concerto*], tenderly romantic in the slow movement and passionate in the exuberant finale. She is given sterling support by the talented and enthusiastic young orchestra and by the dedication of Di Vittorio... [*Rossiniana*] is a warm-hearted, breezy performance that competes well with other recordings...The recorded sound is first class...A notable release for Respighi enthusiasts."

Ian Lace, MusicWeb-International, London

"Salvatore Di Vittorio...has a growing portfolio of major scores. As you will discover, his famous predecessor, Ottorino Respighi, has been a major inspiration, and written in homage the *Overtura Respighiana* which employs material from the *Pines of Rome* and *La Boutique Fantasque* in a happy and very lively score. Created within the bounds of tonality, the [first *Sinfonia*'s] four movements are subdivided by changing moods, though it is the mix of foreboding and desolation that makes the work a moving experience. It ...came three years before the *Second* with the title, 'Lost Innocence', a score engendered by the Yugoslav civil wars in the 1990's. Strong and powerful, it tells a story of death and destruction, but where innocence offers hope for the future. A short *capella Ave Maria* for female voices, started life in 1995, the same year that saw work began on the *Sonata* for solo clarinet. In three short movements it is lyrical and often meditative. With Di Vittorio conducting the orchestra he founded, we can take the disc as being a benchmark. It impresses by its dynamic range and subtle colours, while the soloist in the *sonata*, Benjamin Baron, is also the orchestra's principal clarinet. The recording, made in early 2010, is open in texture and of pleasing quality."

David Denton, David's Review Corner, Cambridge

"The scoop: With this CD the repertoire finds Respighi channeling Italian baroque composers, namely Vivaldi, Corelli and Rossini, through the colorful prism of Respighi's musical mind. A highlight of this recording is the playing by the Chamber Orchestra of New York, whose goal is fronting the work of Respighi and other Italian composers. The orchestra and soloist Marzadori prove more than up to the task. Highlight: Violin Concerto. Left unfinished by the composer in 1903, this concerto gets a revision and completion here. The work shifts from a frothy buoyancy to dark, luscious moments. The concerto is warmly performed by Marzadori, especially the poignant and unforgettable nine-minute second movement."

Edward Ortiz, The Sacramento Bee, Sacramento, California

"Salvatore di Vittorio proves more and more to be an important Italian composer. Following in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor Ottorino Respighi, with his Overture Respighiana, one can also find hints of Scarlatti and Rossini or even Mahler in his narrative and elegiac music. [He] has composed an album of assured popularity."

Qubuz Magazine, Paris

You might almost guess the title of the light and sparkingly playful *Overtura Respighiana* from the first few bars - the Roman trilogy is much in evidence. Later on the older composer's dreaminess and Rossinian tarantella tendencies are referenced. All uproarious fun... The *Ave Maria* for female choir... may be thought of as a modern echo of the Monteverdian madrigal. Exalted stuff. The First Symphony is for string orchestra. Its four movements range from a dazzlingly concentrated Barber-like *Preludio* to an at times shudderingly emotional and then reserved *Passacaglia*. The little *Fuga* skims along towards the almost equally short and gleamingly moonlit *Finale*. This is music that it is not difficult to like.

Rob Barnett, MusicWeb-International, London

"So famous is Respighi for the Pines and Fountains of Rome — irresistible orchestral showpieces — and, to a lesser extent, the Ancient Airs and Dances and Church Windows and Roman Festivals that his unfinished Violin Concerto (among 200 Respighi compositions) didn't stand much of a chance. With the work now revised and completed by this disc's conductor, Salvatore Di Vittorio, along with Respighi's Aria and Suite for strings and Rossiniana..., you can't help but respond with fascination to a composer too often dismissed as a master orchestrator without substance. He's one of the great charmers, it seems to me."

Jeff Simon, The Buffalo News, Buffalo

"Respighi's Baroque leanings in his Aria and Suite for strings contrast with the out-and-out Romanticism of his Violin Concerto. Predating the Fountains of Rome by some years, the concerto inhabits a similar world of sound artfully allied to the dynamism familiar from violin concertos by Mendelssohn, Bruch and Brahms, together with the clarity of orchestration that Respighi inherited from Rimsky-Korsakov. Left unfinished in 1903, the concerto has been completed by Salvatore Di Vittorio, and its performance here is spirited."

Geoffrey Norris, The Daily Telegraph, London

"Following the principal, which says, that you are always best served by yourself, music director Salvatore di Vittorio (1967), is conducting here the works of Salvatore di Vittorio. That said, the musical influences declared by di Vittorio are of Respighi and other Italian composers of that generation, with a modernism that is resolutely neo-romantic, as well as verismo – even cinematographic. The listener will choose his own religion for this unclassable music, whose style seems to constantly oscillate from one language to another, without any concerns of criticism from the avant-garde. The most interesting work is without any doubt the Overture Respighiana, an homage to Respighi with a good number of his passages included, though certainly remodeled and transformed, and entwined with Rossini crescendos and fanfares alla Pines of Rome. The overture was written in 2008, and is a contemporary music entirely timeless; which does justice for our times, permitting us to write the music that we wish to write, without fearing the wrath of the self-declared serialists."

Abeillemusique, Paris

"Laura Marzadori, joined by the Chamber Orchestra of New York, presents a magnificent account [of the Violin Concerto]. The work, written in 1903, was revised and completed by composer/conductor Salvatore Di Vittorio, who directed its premiere last year. The Concerto also foreshadows the orchestral technicolour of the great Italian composer's Roman Trilogy."

Gavin Engelbrecht, The Northern Echo, London

"[The] Chamber Orchestra of New York 'Ottorino Respighi' has among its goals the promotion of Respighi's works. This is a noble and worthwhile endeavor as many listeners are undoubtedly unfamiliar with the bulk of Respighi's vast output apart from the extremely popular Roman Trilogy. The orchestra is made up entirely of young professional musicians, a model found less frequently in the US than abroad. Listening to this Naxos album, Di Vittorio's orchestra sounds every bit as mature and seasoned as more veteran orchestras. Their program features Di Vittorio's own revised version of the Suite for Strings, a work that can easily be counted among the great string serenades of Tchaikovsky, Elgar, and Dvorák. In the Suite, the able-bodied chamber orchestra produces a wonderfully rich, velvety tone that ideally complements Respighi's melodious writing and expert scoring. The same appealing sound quality is achieved when the winds and brass join in for the Rossiniana Suite. Top billing on the program goes to the A Major Violin Concerto, P. 49. This concerto went unfinished by Respighi, and is heard here in a completed and revised version by Di Vittorio... The recording fills a gap in recordings of Respighi's oeuvre, and is more than worthwhile for the Suite for strings alone."

Mike D. Brownell, Rovi, Barnes & Noble, New York

"Happily Naxos fills many gaps in the orchestral catalogue of Respighi's large oeuvre and with much zest and bravura... Conductor-arranger di Vittorio has done a great job making three of the four works on this disc ready for publication, something that wasn't happening without his efforts... Was it worth it, you could ask? The Aria is a slow contemplative 5 minute string thing with some impact; you could think it's Bachian. The Violin Concerto has its scratchy moments but I found the slow middle movement very beautiful. The Suite, for me, is the winner and in this piece you can hear Respighi's love for the Baroque forms. The booklet points

forward to his more famous works in this genre: the Ancient Airs and I think that's a good point. This Suite too has a very lyrical heart: a fine slow lamento-like movement. The recording and the playing are full of enthusiasm and clear enough. The performance of the Rossiniana is very good but this piece has been recorded many times before, so orchestral collectors will have that one in their collection already...Respighi collector don't you let this CD pass you by!! There're many other works from Respighi's juvenile period to be recorded and rescued from oblivion, so Naxos go on with this conductor and orchestra. They deserve it. And, the booklet speaks of Respighi's orchestration of Claudio Monteverdi's aria Lamento di Arianna, that's a great thing to record!!"

Charles Voogd, Underwaterland, London

"Well over a century later, the violin appears in very different form in the 1903 Concerto in A by Ottorino Respighi. The composer never finished this work – the version heard in its world première on a new Naxos CD was revised and completed by conductor Salvatore Di Vittorio, who is himself a composer. This concerto is largely composed with a look backwards, toward the concertos of Mendelssohn and other Romantic-era composers, although its emotional content seems more like the donning of an expected garment than a genuine expression of inner feelings. There is a fair degree of virtuosic display here – all of which Laura Marzadori handles quite well – but not so much plumbing of emotional depths. The work is most interesting for its coloristic handling of the orchestra: written two decades before the Roman Trilogy, it foreshadows some of the effects that Respighi would later use. Also on this CD is another Respighi world première recording: the Aria for Strings, transcribed by Di Vittorio. It is a short and graceful work of no great importance. The Suite for strings, heard here in a Di Vittorio revision, is more substantial and more interesting, filled with grace and elegance that reflect the music and sensibilities of older times – which always fascinated Respighi, as shown most notably in his three suites of Ancient Airs and Dances. Indeed, this work somewhat resembles the third Ancient Airs and Dances suite, the only one written for strings rather than full orchestra. The fourth work on this CD is a suite of another sort: Rossiniana, which is less known and somewhat less ebullient than La Boutique Fantasque but carries much of the same verve in this nicely played performance. The CD as a whole offers a pleasant mixture of unknown Respighi works with one who's comparative familiarity helps put the others in perspective."

Infodad.com, Florida

"Early, Modest Respighi...[Di Vittorio] has brought to the fore some early compositions by his band's namesake, including an incomplete Violin Concerto, the third movement of which he has finished from the composer's sketches, plus some extrapolation. [This] work features a lively, tuneful first movement followed by a subdued, romantic meditation. Di Vittorio wisely and idiomatically finishes the package with a 4½-minute finale from sketch fragments and motives from the first two movements. Respighi probably may not have been pleased, but audiences certainly will have a better feeling of completion listening to this round-off. Laura Marzadori does a fine job with her unchallenging solo violin score."

San Francisco Classical Voice, Jeff Dunn, California

"Inspired by the tragedy of the Yugoslav civil wars of the early 1990's...the main themes [of Di Vittorio's *Second Symphony "Lost Innocence"*] are taken from lullabies of various countries. Looking at the subject and arc of this piece's narrative, I am moved by how haunting and how *apropos* that choice is...the themes...are accessible...The melody [in the second movement] is familiar enough that we indulge the composer in this dance, but the dissonance in the lines remind us of the pain that surrounds...The delicate orchestration and floating lines [of the third movement] guides our minds and spirits upwards out of the ruin. The hope for redemption [in the fourth movement] wins over the mourning, the delirium, the senselessness of it all"

James Harrington, Daily Symphony, Nashville

"A Discovery! ...the world premiere recording of a Violin Concerto by Respighi. If you don't recognise the name, you may already know some of his music, for instance the lovely orchestral suite The Birds. The violin concerto just released harks back to the writing of Vivaldi and Mendelssohn, and foreshadows the orchestral technicolour of his later works. It's the first time it has ever been recorded, and its arrival is to be warmly welcomed."

Baalam's Music, Bury St. Edmonds (UK)

"Hot on the heels of the recent rediscovery Respighi's Violin Concerto, Salvatore Di Vittorio has recorded a disc of his own music, including Overtura Respighiana. Hailed by critics as "following in the footsteps of Respighi", Salvatore Di Vittorio's "serious, lyrical and romantic" work appears here in its ideal light: conducted by the composer and performed by the orchestra he founded in 2006, noted for its 'stirring... voluptuous' sound - The New York Times. Italian influences abound. Echoes of Rossini, Scarlatti and the Renaissance heighten this music's narrative appeal, while the moving Sinfonia No. 2 turns more to the Germanic worlds of Brahms and Mahler for its elegiac message."

Presto Classical, Warwickshire (UK)

"Composer Salvatore Di Vittorio...shares similar philosophy, vision and orchestration with Ottorino Respighi. These qualities no doubt helped him in his latest endeavor, finishing Respighi's unfinished first Violin Concerto in A Major (1903). Until now, the Concerto All'Antica in A minor (1908) was thought to be the composer's first violin concerto."

Chloe Roth, Strings Magazine, California

"The festive evening was celebrated with a moving concert by the Chamber Orchestra of New York, under the direction of Italian-conductor Salvatore Di Vittorio, joined by their extraordinary concertmaster Kelly Hall-Tompkins and harpsichordist Alexandra Snyder Dunbar. In a crowded salon, the music deeply touched the heart of its audience. While holding their breath, the guests were transported by the music, thanks to the closeness of the orchestra musicians who unified everyone present in harmony and devotion. The music itself, a magnificent collage of sound which engulfed the entire evening, inspired the public to contemplate upon the Nativity scenes and paintings displayed at the Italian Cultural Institute, as a sort of preparation for the sacred act of viewing."

Olivia Fincato, America Oggi News

"Mr. Di Vittorio led his ensemble in the final concert of its inaugural season in a program called "Souvenir from Florence", which highlighted the string section. The musicians played with vigor and commitment throughout the evening, producing a polished, rich sound. The Adagietto from Mahler's Symphony No. 5...received a stirring performance. The orchestra concluded the evening with a voluptuous rendition of Tchaikovsky's popular "Souvenir de Florence."

Vivien Schweitzer, The New York Times

"[Di Vittorio's] conducting possesses a deep understanding of music, and the personalities involved with making music in a large orchestral setting. His style embraces the values of the old European traditions using a clear and concise beat, never letting the histrionics of so many of today's conductors distract and detract from the music."

Evan N. Wilson, Former Principal Violist, Los Angeles Philharmonic

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