

CLASSICAL

Leland Chen

Violin Favourites (Leland Chen)

★★★★★

Various composers: Violin favourites. Leland Chen with John Lenehan and Max Richie, piano (Leland Chen LCP506, full price)

There are plenty of violin soloists around, and some are more noted for their looks or their histrionics than the beauties of their playing. But Manchester-based Leland Chen is in the old tradition of Yehudi Menuhin – who first spotted him, introduced him to his schools in London and Gstaad, and launched him on his career. The selection of melodic favourites and encore items here demonstrates a technique which can seemingly deliver perfection every time. If you enjoy the sheer beauty of cantabile playing in Schubert's Ave Maria (arr. Wilhelmj) – double-stopped octaves perfectly in tune – the charm of Fauré's Berceuse (lovely muted tone), the nostalgia of Kreisler's Caprice Viennois, the sweetness of Wieniawski's Scherzo-Tarantelle, the acrobatics of Sarasate's Zapateado (outdoing even La Campanella), or any of the other dozen showpieces on this album, then you will not be disappointed. John Lenehan and Max Richie contribute masterly accounts of the piano accompaniments.

Robert Beale