

THE TOP CHOICE



Hope, BBC SO / Watkins

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Daniel Hope has the double advantage of access to the corrected edition of the score and the collaboration of a conductor and orchestra who share his commitment to freshness and spontaneity in music that can easily seem calculated and manipulative.

Rebecca Hirsch and the Netherlands Radio SO (1999) go almost too neatly to the opposite extreme, bracingly unsentimental but also prosaic when the music needs heightened expressiveness. Altogether more imposing is the version made by **Daniel Hope** and the BBC SO under Paul Watkins at Maida Vale in 2003. This is outstanding, and not just because it was billed as the first “official” recording of the Jarman edition of the score.

Like Zehetmair and Holliger a decade and more before, Hope and Watkins throw caution to the winds and take all kinds of risks in putting together a new and compelling reading. Hope deploys a smoky, even steely tone in places which might not be to all tastes. But it seems supremely right for this music, facilitating an ideally well characterised yet never exaggerated articulation. In the finale, in particular, it is weight rather than fervour which is most telling, digging down to the substance of the score without losing sight of even a scintilla of its emotional immediacy.