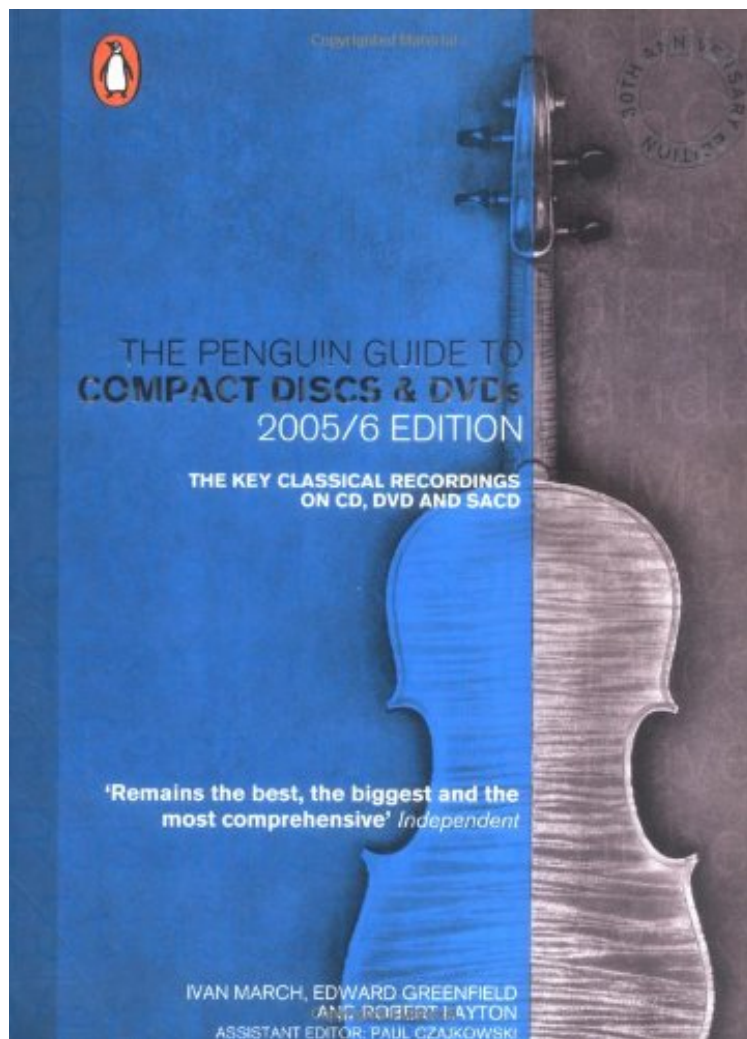


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The Penguin Guide to Compact Discs and DVDs 2005/06 Edition: The Key Classical Recordings on CD, DVD and SACD, 30th Anniversary Edition (Penguin Guide to Recorded Classical Music)

Ivan March, Edward Greenfield, Robert Layton
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Ivan March, Edward Greenfield, Robert Layton : The Penguin Guide to Compact Discs and DVDs 2005/06 Edition: The Key Classical Recordings on CD, DVD and SACD, 30th Anniversary Edition (Penguin Guide to Recorded Classical Music) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Penguin Guide to Compact Discs and DVDs 2005/06 Edition: The Key Classical Recordings on CD, DVD and SACD, 30th Anniversary Edition (Penguin Guide to Recorded Classical Music):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Broadest Coverage of Classical Releases - Well Worth Getting While Still Available at a Reasonable Price By Phil (not) in Magnolia Penguin has long been considered to be the most comprehensive resource for reviews and recommendations of recorded classical music, and in past years they have released annual (or thereabouts) compilations such as this one in 2005/6, sometimes alternating years with supplemental guides that addressed new releases since the previous full volume. This 2005/6 edition for example is 1520 pages jam packed with thousands of listings of classical recordings, rated one to four stars, with key recommendations highlighted, and with an indication of price range. Both DVD's and CD's are included although the focus is primarily on CD releases. The reason for my review of this 2005/6 guide today in 2017 is the following - Penguin is no longer issuing these massive compilations, choosing instead to publish most recently The Penguin Guide to the 1000 Finest Classical Recordings, which has been received with much complaint since it obviously omits the vast majority of the information contained in the earlier Penguin Guides. As a result, the final complete guide (The Penguin Guide to Recorded Classical Music 2010 being the most recent, I believe) has shot up in price as people wishing to obtain the most current Penguin recommendations have had no choice but to purchase a previous year edition since nothing more current was being published. I therefore recently decided to go back and purchase this 2005/6 Guide when I saw that it was still available here on and saw that the price (for a used copy) is a real bargain. This will probably not last for very long, and so anyone wishing to pick up a relatively recent copy of the complete Penguin Guide would be well served by considering this edition. (Both the Penguin Guide 2008 and Penguin Guide 2009 are also still available, at much lower prices than the final 2010 edition and also worth picking up for the same reason. From my point of view both the 2008 or 2009 guides are roughly equivalent and I chose to purchase the 2008 guide simply because it was less than half the price of the 2009 version at the time I made my purchase. The content is not going to change very much from year to year and if you read the reviews of the 2009 guide you will see that many of the complaints are to that exact point). A similar thing has recently happened with Gramophone as well, and they have decided to discontinue their annual printed guide (The Gramophone Classical Music Guide 2012 will be the final guide published, with Gramophone's reviews and recommendations only available from their online site in the future, and for a subscription fee). I have primarily relied on the Gramophone guides over the years and I still feel that they are more user friendly than the Penguin guides, but the coverage is much less than Penguin. I have the Penguin "1000 Finest" guide as well as this 2005/6 guide and the 2008 edition, and also a number of the Gramophone Guides including the final 2013 edition, and they all have their individual merits with each giving a somewhat different selection of discs as well as different opinions on which represents the best performances available. I frequently refer to all of them and in my opinion there is no single guide that can meet all needs, although of all those available I think that the Penguin Guide may come closest simply because it does have the greatest coverage of most classical music. This 2005/6 Penguin Guide is neither indexed nor cross-referenced, it includes some brief introductory notes, and of greatest interest is their listing of 'A Hundred Outstanding Recordings' that are new to this volume or reissued, followed by 'Fifteen Outstanding DVDs', also selected from those new to this volume. The majority of this volume is then of course the massive listing of Composers and their works and musical recordings from A (Carl Friedrich Abel) to Z (Ellen Zwilich), and I venture to guess that it contains more listings of recordings, for more composers, than any other guide currently available in print. Others have posted reviews either praising its merits or complaining about omissions or changes made since previous years (or both), but at the end of the day this guide offers a greater compilation of information on worthwhile classical music recordings (as of 2005/6) than any other resource available. It is useful both to the experienced collector who already has a large number of recordings, as well as to the beginner who is looking for guidance as he or she begins to build a collection. Omissions from the guide are impossible to avoid since no printed volume can contain all of the recordings currently available and the editors of the guide have obviously had to make judgement calls on what to include and what to exclude in order to keep the guide to a "reasonable" size. As a final comment, I do not consider a guide that is just a couple of years old to be seriously out of date. With classical music recordings, often the performances that are considered to be most worth obtaining, or even the finest available, are ones that have been around for years already. Anything listed in this 2005/6 guide is still going to be a very fine recording and worth considering, even if newer guides have decided to supersede particular recordings with something new that has come out. I still refer to my old Gramophone guides, going back to the first one that I purchased in 1992, for that very reason, and with all of this information plus the reviews on and in online forums, you can spend as much time as you wish in reading reviews and recommendations and educating yourself regarding the music as well as the various recordings and performance choices available before finally clicking on the "purchase" button and ordering that special recording to add to your collection. It all adds to the pleasure of exploring classical music and I find that you learn something every single time you pull one of these guides down from the bookshelf and refer to it for one reason or another. Bottom line is that this is a superb reference, still available and for a very acceptable price. It is well worth picking up if you want to have a good comprehensive reference to guide you in purchasing classical music recordings - just don't wait too long!

41 of 43 people found the following review helpful. Still the best at what it does but might be slipping By Larry VanDeSande Is the Penguin Guide becoming an anachronism that relies too heavily on its timeworn recommendations and lets them get in the way of better new

recordings? This is the first question I asked when I purchased the newest guide (apparently written in 2005 and dated 2005-06) and couldn't find any of the newer CDs I had purchased that surely deserve some commendation herein (the new Shostakovich symphony set led by Kitaenko on the Capriccio label being the most obvious.) I was also taken back when I reviewed the Bach cantata pages and see the current issue continues to list all the complete sets made by groups in the Bach year of 2000. That was six years ago. Doesn't that make these somewhat dated and less deserving of a place in this compendium, given that every single CD of the sets recorded by Rilling, Gardiner and others continues to be included? Even the entire set recorded on the super discount Brilliant label is included! These were my first impressions. When I looked deeper, I found the Penguin Guide in 2005 still performs the same role it did when it first arrived 30 years earlier: it recommends classic recordings, the best new recordings since its past issue, the best recordings of English music (the authors are British), and probably the best recordings of just about any classical music in which you have interest. Even though they don't list every favorite recording of mine, I found the authors' taste and comments were just as judicious today as ever. Here's an example: Howard Hanson's Symphony No. 2, or "Romantic" symphony, was first recorded by the composer in the 1950s on Mercury Living Presence. It has since been recorded a bunch of times, with the consensus critical best probably being the performance by the St. Louis Symphony on EMI. The Penguin Guide authors suggest the newly reissued SACD of Hanson's recording does nothing to hide its thin string sound and they demote it a half-star because of that. However, because it is a classic recording led by the composer and unlike any other recording of the music, they call it an "indispensable" disk even in light of recordings they rate higher. An example of this compendium's failure is its steadfast refusal to list a single CD by the late German composer Richard Wetz, the author of three very Bruckner-Mahler like symphonies, a violin concerto and other music, all currently available. While any mediocre British composer can get his or her entire diskography included in the Penguin Guide, there continues to be not a single word published about Richard Wetz or his music, CDs of which have received plentiful critical around the world the past five years. Even given this obvious and large fault, the Penguin Guide continues to be the top guide in recommending current classical music recordings. As a two or three year guide, it is well ahead of that thing Gramophone magazine produces every year, the Rough Guide and the now hopelessly out of date Third Ear Classical Music, whose editor died shortly after its only printing. This version does not seem to be as innovative as the last one, which introduced a section on "key" recordings and DVDs. To its credit it lists a group of 100 outstanding recordings (some not otherwise reviewed inside) and 15 wonderful DVDs. In addition, it includes chatter about the emerging Super Audio CD, or SACD, recordings that continue to flood the market. It even talks a bit about surround sound. There aren't many SACDs in this issue but I'm sure that will change as the industry changes. In the final analysis, this issue let me down a tad compared to past issues, but I think that's because I may be ahead of the curve for this publication in terms of purchasing and collecting classical music CDs. If so, that change is because of me, not the Penguin Guide. Overall, this is still the best bet for any discerning collector that wants to know what the best bets are when purchasing classical music on CD and DVD (and someday on SACD). 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent

By ken rogers I was replacing a copy that had fallen apart from reading it so much. I use Penguin guides to keep up with the latest classical music and they have yet to let me down.

This new, completely revised edition of The Penguin Guide surveys the key classical recordings issued and reissued on CD over the past two decades, many of which have dominated the catalogue because of their sheer excellence, irrespective of their recording dates. Now DVDs have also been added, with their extra video dimension, as well as the sound-enhanced SACDs. If you want to be sure of acquiring the finest available version of any major classical work (including DVDs of opera and ballet) you will find it listed and assessed in these pages often with alternatives of comparable excellence and price. For those just embarking on a classical CD collection, there is invaluable advice on which works to sample.

"More valuable than ever to any serious collector of classical music." About the Author Ivan March is a well-known lecturer, journalist and writer in the world of recorded music. He lives in London, SW6. Edward Greenfield was on the staff of the Guardian for forty years and is a regular BBC broadcaster. He lives in London, E1. Robert Layton is a journalist and broadcaster. He lives in London, NW6.