

Westminster Cathedral Choir

Discography

Palestrina: Missa Tu es Petrus & Missa Te Deum Laudamus

Westminster Cathedral Choir, Martin Baker (conductor)

The celebrated Choir of Westminster Cathedral goes back to its roots with this recording of some of the towering masterpieces of Renaissance polyphony — a genre which the choir has made its own through the ritual of daily liturgical performance. Recent reviews have declared the choir to be at the peak of its powers, and this disc is an important celebration of a great musical tradition.

From the vaults of Westminster Cathedral

Chant and polyphony from Advent to Christmas and the Epiphany and Presentation of our Lord

A century ago, Richard Runciman Terry re-introduced the wonders of the Renaissance into liturgical polyphony and placed Westminster Cathedral Choir at the pinnacle of the art.

“Splendid singing illuminates these works from the vaults of Westminster ... Throughout, the choral singing under Martin Baker’s direction glows resplendently, while still retaining its celebrated ‘continental’ edge.”

Gramophone

“Impressive organ improvisations from Martin Baker complete a richly satisfying recording.”

The Observer

Victoria: Missa Gaudeamus

A liturgical sequence for the Feast of the Assumption; organ music by Girolamo Frescobaldi

A recording from Westminster Cathedral features the gentlemen of their choir in a fascinating programme which brings to life the musical and liturgical traditions of this foundation.

“The Lay Clerks make a gloriously full-bodied sound with plenty of contrast and colour throughout the polyphony of both the mass setting and Victoria’s beautiful motet *Vidi speciosam*. This is very impressive singing indeed.”

musicalcriticism.com

Christmas Vespers at Westminster Cathedral

Office of Vespers as it might be heard on Christmas Eve in Westminster Cathedral

The only cathedral choir in the world to sing Mass and Vespers liturgically every day, The Choir of Westminster Cathedral is perfectly placed to offer to the armchair listener this CD encapsulation of their very lifeblood, recorded here in the opulent acoustic of their own cathedral.

“The real value of this disc is the palpable sense of atmosphere in the listening. The service unfolds in the acoustic space of the great Byzantine structure, almost making the listener present ... This disc is quite unique, a hugely successful evocation of Catholic cathedral worship at its best.”

Fanfare, USA

“Christmas comes with a combination of simplicity and stunning excitement in this recording.”

American Record Guide

Palestrina: Third Book of Lamentations

Narrative of Biblical events from the Last Supper through to the Crucifixion

Palestrina composed four sets of Lamentations, the third of which is recorded here. This most opulent of liturgies runs as a continuous narrative describing momentous Biblical events from the Last Supper through to Christ's crucifixion and death.

ONE OF GOLDBERG'S 50 DISCS OF THE DECADE

"Everything about this disc, from the captivating sound to the sleeve notes, is of the highest quality. A must for choral fans."

Classic FM Magazine

"A pleasing stability of tone ... The overall effect ... is reverential, moving and warmly recorded."

BBC Music Magazine

"Beautifully executed ... Highly recommended"

Fanfare, USA

Brahms/Rheinberger: Mass

Brahms *Missa canonica* and Rheinberger *Mass*

Brahms's *Missa canonica* is something of a rarity: composed around 1856, the work lay unperformed until 1983. Concluding this new disc from Westminster Cathedral is the extraordinary double-choir *Mass in E flat* by Joseph Rheinberger, Leichtenstein's most famous organ prodigy. This is music born of the polychoral Venetian tradition of Gabrieli and Monteverdi, nurtured on the harmonic milk of Bach and Mendelssohn, and finally offered up to the world as a miniature choral symphony that is uniquely Rheinberger's.

"It is hard to imagine finer singing of these sacred scores from Brahms and Rheinberger than that from the Westminster Cathedral Choir. The Cathedral choristers display a remarkable technical prowess and refinement ... The contribution from organist Matthew Martin is first rate, providing immediacy, without ever being obtrusive. These are superbly performed and recorded sacred works that lovers of choral music will surely relish."

Musicweb

Victoria: Ave Regina caelorum

and other Marian music

Westminster Cathedral continue their survey of the music of Tomás Luis de Victoria. The performances do full justice to the ambition of Victoria's intentions, as Martin Baker firmly cements his position as worthy successor to the glories achieved by this choir under James O'Donnell and, before him, David Hill & Stephen Cleobury.

ONE OF THE DAILY TELEGRAPH'S CLASSICAL CDs OF THE YEAR 2004

"The choir of Westminster Cathedral has long been noted for its distinctive Continental-style tone, which gives its performances of Latin sacred polyphony an attractively distinctive quality."

Daily Telegraph

Bingham/Vaughan Williams: Mass

Vaughan Williams *Mass in G Minor* and Judith Bingham *Mass*

Vaughan Williams's *Mass in G Minor* has been described as the first "English" Mass setting since the sixteenth century and the time of Tallis and Byrd. In this new performance of the work, which had its first liturgical performance at Westminster Cathedral in 1923, the Choir of Westminster Cathedral promises to set a new standard.

Judith Bingham now counts among the pantheon of composers who have responded to commissions from Westminster Cathedral. Her *Mass* recently won a British Composer Award for Liturgical Music and the new recording offers it a place in the repertory beyond the cloister.

"As is only to be expected from its past record, the Choir of Westminster Cathedral brings tonal richness and a superb musicality to its performances of these works. The solos sound as confident from the trebles as from the men, and one can almost smell the incense from the atmospheric recording."

Daily Telegraph

"A glorious celebration of music written with the acoustics of Westminster Cathedral in mind."

Classic FM Magazine

"A stirring *Vision of Aeroplanes* testifies to the choir's extraordinary virtuosity which, under Baker, is clearly going from strength to strength ... Hyperion has been making recordings in Westminster Cathedral almost since the day the company first came into being, and, as ever, the sound on this latest disc is gorgeous, full of depth, and with an ideal balance between, choir, organ and atmosphere."

International Record Review

Maxwell Davies: Mass & Missa parvula

and other sacred works

This new recording from Westminster Cathedral presents two of the most important new Mass settings of recent times. Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, recently confirmed by Buckingham Palace as the new Master of The Queen's Music. Both Masses were composed for, and first performed by The Choir of Westminster Cathedral.

"Baker entices some of the most wonderful singing from his choir here while Robert Quinney and Houssart positively revel in their virtuoso interplay. It almost goes without saying that Hyperion's recording captures the full effect of Maxwell Davies' astonishing writing."

Gramophone

Palestrina: Missa Hodie Christus natus est

Music for Advent and Christmas

Martin Baker's first disc of Palestrina with Westminster Cathedral Choir was highly praised across the world. Here follows another delicious disc of Palestrina, this time dedicated to Christmas, the main work being the stunning *Missa Hodie Christus natus est* — one of Palestrina's most popular works.

"All the familiar qualities that serve to make Westminster unique among Britain's cathedral choirs are in evidence here ... the crucial added ingredient is singing of a passion and conviction that reminds us that this music is the choir's lifeblood. This is unquestionably one of the glories of the year."

Goldberg

"This is a thrilling recording of Palestrina's music for the Christmas season."

The Guardian

Palestrina: Dum complerentur & Veni Sancte Spiritus
and other music for Whitsuntide

“Purposeful performances by a choir for whom this music is a staple diet, and whose slightly edgy, ‘continental’ treble sound is ideally suited to it.”

The Daily Telegraph

“Here [Martin Baker] reinforces his reputation and that of the choir in energetic accounts of music by Palestrina celebrating Pentecost.”

The Guardian

“The renowned choir are on top form as they respond to Palestrina’s majesty ... Highly recommended.”

Gramophone

“This is a thoughtful, carefully analysed performance — Baker and the Westminster choir communicate a clear sense of the structural logic ... the singers are excellent ... virtually flawless ... shut your eyes and you can almost smell the incense. Very warmly recommended.”

BBC Music Magazine

MacMillan: Mass
and other sacred music

The *Mass* was commissioned by Westminster Cathedral and was first performed on the Feast of Corpus Christi in 2000. Many of the pieces on this recording have been commissioned by well-known choirs such as St Paul’s Cathedral and King’s College, Cambridge. The singing throughout is of the great standard we have come to expect from this choir. The use of soaring treble lines (such as in *Christus vincit*) is particularly special. All of the works are premiere recordings and the disc is sure to be popular with followers of James MacMillan’s music and The Choir of Westminster Cathedral alike.

Gramophone Editor’s Choice / BBC Music Magazine Best CDs of the Year

“From the moment this CD begins, the senses tingle with the magical, spiritual nature of the music.”

The Sunday Herald

“This music, the *Mass* in particular, is virtually guaranteed a passage into the central repertoire of choirs around the world; it could hardly have had a better springboard than this recording.”

International Record Review

“Powerful liturgical music from one of today’s most admired composers, performed with passionate intensity.” “Performances throughout are exceptionally fine and the recorded sound radiantly atmospheric.”

Gramophone

“It is hard to think of any recent music that conveys religious ecstasy as intensely as James MacMillan’s *Mass* ... music of high voltage from first to last ... the singing of Westminster Cathedral Choir is electrifying.”

The Guardian

“A sublime disc.”

BBC Music Magazine

“Outstanding performances. *Gaudeamus in loci pace* is a breath-catching bonus.”

HMV Choice

OTHER RECORDINGS

Adeste Fides

Anerio: Requiem

Britten: A Ceremony of Carols

Durufié: Requiem

Exultate Deo

Guerrero:

Missa De la battalla escoutez & other works

Missa Sancta et immaculata

Janáček/Kodály: Masses

Josquin: Missa Pange lingua

Langlais: Messe solennelle

Lassus: Misa Bell 'Amfitrit' altera

Martin/Pizzetti: Mass & Messadi Requiem

Masterpieces of Mexican Polyphony

Masterpieces of Portuguese Polyphony

Morales: Missa Queramus cum pastoribus

Mortuus est Phillippus Rex

Palestrina:

Aeterna Christi munera

De Beata Virgine & Ave Maria

Ecce ego Johannes

Missa Papæ Marcelli

O rex gloriae & Viri Galilæi

Panis angelicus

Penalosa: Masses

Poulenc: Mass & Motets

Praetorius: Christmas Music

Stravinsky: Mass & Symphony of Psalms

The Music of Westminster Cathedral

Treasures of the Spanish Renaissance

Victoria:

Dum compleretur

O magnum mysterium & Ascendens

Christus

O quam gloriosum & Ave maris stella

Requiem

Tenebræ Responsories

Trahe me post te

Vidi speciosam

Vierne, Widor & Dupré