



Sounding Joy

Sacred Music by

Gwyneth Walker
Ronald Arnatt
Richard DeLong
Leo Nestor
Daron Hagen
Fred Gramann
Daniel Pinkham
Frank Ferko
Jane Marshall
John Carter
Douglas Major

American Repertory Singers

Leo Nestor
Director

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SACRED MUSIC FROM THE LAS DECADES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

American Repertory Singers, Leo Nestor, Director

Among the professional services offered to the choral music industry by the American Repertory Singers is the recording of scores to accompany the distribution of publishers' new issues. Over the past two years, the American Repertory Singers has been involved in 6 such projects, and this disc contains the best contemporary sacred music from those recordings. All of them were taped direct to digital master at St. Patrick's Church in downtown Washington, D.C., a room resplendent with tasteful, beautiful art and sumptuous acoustic produced by the very high vaulting. The room also features a wonderful pipe organ more than suitable for both liturgical and concert purposes, a versatile instrument recently built by the Lively-Fulcher Organ Builders behind the beautifully stenciled Victorian facade of the original organ case. Normally, commercial CD projects by the American Repertory Singers use 20 to 24 or more singers, but these "utilitarian" tracks for publishers' new issues usually use 12 singers. One track here (No. 21) used sixteen singers. And, normally, one hour of recorded music time is usually recorded in two very efficient 3-hour sessions with as few retakes as possible. Such is the skill of these singers and their director that the tracks included on this CD were deemed by the producer to be both viable and varied for commercial release, a watermark of *fin de siècle* American sacred composition.

Along with the excellent acoustical setting of this lovely and busy urban church come other artifacts determined by its location. City transit buses used to run (loudly) by the front of the church; a pizza supply truck occasionally idled across the street while supplying the shop within "Woodie's" (the recently-closed Woodward & Lothrop department store); tour busses from the nearby convention center sometimes congregate in the neighborhood; and certain weather patterns route departing Washington National Airport traffic directly overhead. 11 o'clock was quitting time on some days because of the heavy Disco "thump" emanating from a club around the corner. But, no matter; only the most sharp-eared will hear bits of these at various times.

All of the music on this disc was written in the last two decades of the 20th century, and all of it has been published since 1994. It is a representative sampling of some of the best of America's choral composers who have written music for the Christian churches of all liturgical persuasions. The American Repertory Singers and their director, Leo Nestor,

obviously revel in performing this very new music and are delighted to share it on this recording.

[1] **Sounding Joy**, "an updated version of the Justin Morgan tune" — Gwyneth Walker.

Come, sound his praise abroad, and hymns of glory sing: Jehovah is the Sov'reign God, the Universal King. He formed the deeps unknown; he gave the seas their bound; the wat'ry worlds are all his own, and all the solid ground. Sounding joy!

— adapted from Psalm 95

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) lives most of each year on a farm in Vermont where she writes music for orchestra, voices, keyboard, and all kinds of chamber ensembles. Her voice is frequently humorous, always entertaining, and most of her music (even the sacred things) produces a smile. Here, she has taken 18th century composer Justin Morgan's (yes, the Morgan horse breeder) so called "fugueing tune" and added her own dancing voice to his sprightly tune. There's probably no mistaking what belongs to "then" and what to "now," but the two live very *simpatico*.

[2] **Steal Away to Jesus** — African-American Spiritual, arr. by Ronald Arnatt

Steal away, steal away to Jesus! Steal away home, I ain't got long to stay here! Steal away, steal away to Jesus. My Lord he calls me, he calls me by the thunder. The trumpet sounds within my soul, I ain't got long to stay here. Steal away... Green trees are bending, poor sinners stand atrembling; the trumpet sounds within my soul, I ain't got long to stay here. Steal away... Tombstones are bursting, poor sinners stand atrembling, the trumpet sounds, within my soul, I ain't got long to stay here. Steal away... My Lord he calls me by the lightning, the trumpet sounds within my soul, I ain't got long to stay here.

Born (1930) in London, England, trained as chorister at Westminster Abbey and King's College, Cambridge, Ronald Arnatt has spent his entire adult career in the United States. Presently director of music at St. John's Episcopal Church in Beverly, Massachusetts, his distinguished career has included directing music at Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis, being president of the American Guild of Organists, directing the church music program at Westminster Choir College, and editing for E. C. Schirmer Music Company. On top of all that, he has always had time to compose. His many compositions, both secular and sacred, include works for orchestra, chorus, voice, keyboard, and chamber ensembles.

[3] O Lord, Increase Our Faith — Richard DeLong (1951–1994)

O Lord, increase our faith, strengthen us and confirm in us thy true faith; endue us with wisdom, charity, chastity and patience, in all our adversities. Sweet Jesus, say Amen.

— Book of Common Prayer, 1549, altered

Richard DeLong's untimely death robbed the world of a young and bright light in the field of church music. Living in Dallas and working in Plano, Texas at the time of his death, DeLong wrote many works for his own choir as well as for choirs directed by many of his friends throughout the U.S. and England. *O Lord, Increase* and *There is a Country* are fine examples of his prolific output, all of it firmly rooted in British and American models from this century.

[4] There Is a Country — Richard DeLong

My soul, there is a country Far beyond the stars, Where stands a winged sentry All skillful in the wars: There, above noise and danger, Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles, And One born in a manger commands the beauteous files. He is thy gracious friend, And, oh, my soul, awake! Did in pure love descend To die here for thy sake, If thou canst get but thither, There grows the flow'r of Peace, the Rose that cannot wither, Thy fortress and thy case; Leave then thy foolish ranges; for none can thee secure But One who never changes, Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

— Henry Vaughan (1621–1695)

[5] And Peace at the Last — Leo Nestor

May Christ support us all the day long till the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in his mercy, may he grant us a safe lodging and a holy rest, and peace at the last.

— John Henry Cardinal Newman (1808–1890)

A trained linguist and avid reader, Leo Nestor's affinity for fine literature and poetry shows in the many unusual texts which he superbly sets to music. Born (1948) in the east, raised and trained in California, he is Music Director at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D. C. where he conducts a notable professional choir. He also teaches conducting at the Catholic University of America, is a

founding member of the Conference of Catholic Cathedral Musicians, and, of course, director of the American Repertory singers. This motet and the following two Marian anthems are representative of Nestor's many sacred and liturgical works.

[6] To Rise Beyond the Stars — Leo Nestor

Not braids of gold, nor beauty in thy eyes, Nor queenly dress, nor winsome maiden grace, Nor youthfulness, nor music's melody, Nor loveliness of angel in thy face, Could draw the King of Heaven from sov'reign place To this our land of guilt and sordidness To be made flesh in thee, Mary, Mother of Grace, Mirror of Joy and all our happiness. But thy humility, so great in thee, It broke the ancient barrier of wrath Twixt God and us, to open heaven's bars. Then of thy virtue, lend to us that we may follow, Holy Mother, in thy path Unwavering, To rise beyond the stars.

— Giovanni Boccaccio (d. 1375)

[7] Who Is She Ascends So High? — Leo Nestor

Who is she ascends so high, Next the heav'nly King, Round about whom angels fly and her praises sing? Who is she adorned with light, Makes the sun her robe, At whose feet the queen of night Lays her changing globe? This is she in whose pure womb Heaven's Prince remained; Therefore in no earthly tomb Can she be contained. Heav'n she was, which held that fire, Whence the world took light, And to heav'n doth now aspire, Flames with flames to unite. She that did so clearly shine When our day begun, See how bright her beams decline: Now she sits with the Sun.

— Sir John Beaumont (1583–1627)

Little Prayers — Daron Aric Hagen

Daron Hagen (b. 1961) was raised in Wisconsin, trained in Philadelphia and New York, and he now lives and works in New York. He also teaches at Bard College. His works include three symphonies and other symphonic works, five major vocal song cycles, works for brass instruments, a major opera about an episode in the life of Frank Lloyd Wright, and many chamber works and music for ballet. The *Little Prayers* are unusual in his output because they are real miniatures, and because Hagen has written only rarely using sacred texts. These little pieces are dedicated to another Philadelphia composer, Vincent Persichetti, whose music clearly inspired these.

8 1. Almighty Father, Incline Thine Ear

Almighty Father, incline thine ear. Bless us, and those who've assembled here. And fill this place with Holy Grace. Amen.

9 2. Our Father, Who Art in Heaven

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who've trespassed against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the power and glory, forever and ever. Amen.

10 3. Why Do you Seek Rest?

Why do you seek rest? You were only created to labour. Amen.

— St. Thomas Aquinas

11 4. We May Be Heroic

We may be heroic after our fashion, disciplined warriors of our craft, yet we are all like women, for we exult in passion, and love is still our desire, our craving and shame.

— from *Death in Venice*, Thomas Mann

12 5. Lord, god in Heaven

Lord, God in Heaven, Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered all life long that I, too, might be saved, and whose suffering still has no end. This too, wilt Thou endure: saving and redeeming me, this patient suffering of me with whom Thou has to do, I who so often go astray. Lord, God in Heaven. This, too, wilt thou endure: saving me, redeeming me. Amen.

— Søren Kierkegaard

13 Still, Still with Thee — Fred Gramann

Still, still with thee, when purple morning breaketh, When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee; Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight, Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with thee. Alone with thee, amid the mystic shadows, The solemn hush of nature newly born; Alone with thee in breathless adoration, In the calm dew and freshness of the morn. Still, still with thee! As to each newborn morning, A fresh and solemn splendor still is giv'n, So does this blessed consciousness, awak-

ing, Breathe each day nearness unto thee and heaven. So shall it be at last in that bright morning, When the soul waketh and life's shadows flee; O in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning, Shall rise the glorious thought, I am with thee.

— Harriet Beecher Stowe (1812-1896)

Born in 1950, Fred Gramann is currently (since 1976) director of music at the American Church in Paris. A native of Washington State, he was trained at Syracuse University and the University of Michigan before moving to France for further study in 1972.

14 A Sermon on Wisdom — Daniel Pinkham

Happy are they who have found wisdom, and those who have acquired understanding; for wisdom is more profitable than silver, and the gain she brings is better than gold. She is more precious than red coral, and all your jewels are no match for her. First acquire wisdom; gain understanding though it cost you all you have. Do not forsake her, and she will keep you safe; love her, and she will guard you; cherish her and she will lift you high; if only you embrace her, she will bring you to honor. She will set a garland of grace on your head and bestow on you a crown of glory. How much better than gold it is to gain wisdom, and to gain discernment is better than pure silver.

— selected by Daniel Pinkham from *Proverbs*

Daniel Pinkham (b. 1923) has spent his distinguished career entirely in his native city and state where he has been director of music at historic King's Chapel and faculty member at New England Conservatory of Music. Educated at Harvard and in Paris (with Nadia Boulanger), he has long been active in the early music revival as well as being a teacher and composer. He is often paired (and compared) with Ned Rorem as an important composer of song. Pinkham's prolific output spans virtually every aspect of post World War II musical life.

15 I Was Glad — Frank Ferko

I was glad when they said unto me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord." Now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity with itself; to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, the assembly of Israel, to praise the Name of the Lord. I was glad when they said unto me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

— from Psalm 122

Educated at Valparaiso University (Indiana), and Northwestern University, currently resident in Chicago, Frank Ferko (b. 1950 in Ohio) is one of the more evocative composers of this age. His church music exhibits his interest in chant; his two large cycles, one for organ, one for chorus, based on the visions of Hildegard of Bingen (both recorded on ARSIS CDs 101 and 102) put musical flesh on mystical things; his harmonic and melodic language frequently evokes the music of French composer Olivier Messiaen, whose music he greatly admires. Ferko's is a unique voice wrapped in commonly recognizable things, a consistent voice (rare in this age) with great imagination.

[16] *I Will Give Thanks to You, O Lord* — Frank Ferko

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing to your Name, O Most High. I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart. I will tell of all your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing to your Name, O most High. The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in time of trouble. For the needy shall not always be forgotten and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever. Sing praise to the Lord who dwells in Zion; proclaim to the peoples the things he has done. I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all your works. Alleluia.

— from Psalm 9

[17] *O Gracious Light ("Phos hilaron")* — Frank Ferko

O gracious light, pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven, O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed! Now as we come to the setting of the sun, and our eyes behold the vesper light, we sing your praises, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices, O Son of God, O Giver of life, and to be glorified through all the worlds.

— Office Hymn for Vespers, from the Greek, c. 200 AD

[18] *Of Hospitality* — Jane Marshall

I saw a stranger yestreen; I put food in the eating place, drink in the drinking place, music in the listening place; and in the sacred name of the Triune he blessed myself, he blessed my house, he blessed my cattle and my dear ones. And the lark said in her song, often, often goes Love in the stranger's guise.

— from an old Gaelic rune

Long active in the Hymn Society of America, the American Guild of Organists, the American Choral Directors Association, and the Chorister's Guild, Jane Marshall (b. 1924) has always been a strong advocate for congregational song. She teaches choral conducting and theory at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. Recently, she has been composing much choral music, both sacred and secular, and her sensitive setting of this Irish folk text and her most affective setting for the Song of Simeon (Track 20) are good examples of her extensive skill and lyrical expressiveness.

[19] *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* — hymn tune "Hamburg" by Lowell Mason, arr. by John Carter

When I survey the wondrous cross On which the prince of glory died, My richest gain I count but loss, And pour contempt on all my pride. Forbid it Lord, that I should boast, Save in the death of Christ my God; All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood. See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down: Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, Or thorns compose so rich a crown? Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.

— Isaac Watts (1707)

Born (1930) in Nashville, where he graduated from Peabody College, John Carter also graduated from Trinity College in San Antonio. His active career in the service of church music has involved editing, teaching, choral conducting and as clinician. He and his wife, Mary Kay Beall, serve as directors of music and youth ministry at Northwest United Methodist Church in Columbus, Ohio.

[20] *Song of Simeon ("Nunc dimittis")* — Jane Marshall

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel.

— St. Luke 2: 29–32

It is appropriate to close this recording with two "canticles," traditional songs of the church. The Song of Simeon is taken from New Testament scripture; the *Te Deum* from the early church. It is doubtful that Marshall thought of Simeon's song from liturgical perspective since it lacks the traditional closing *doxology*; it is treated more like an anthem.

[21] Te Deum — Douglas Major

We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting. To thee all Angels cry aloud; the Heavens and all the Powers therein; To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of thy glory. The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee. The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee. The noble army of Martyrs praise thee. The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee; The Father, of an infinite Majesty; Thine adorable, true, and only Son; Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst humble thyself to be born of a Virgin. When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father. We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge. We therefore pray thee, help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood. Make them to be numbered with thy Saints, in glory everlasting.

— English translation from The Book of Common Prayer, 1549

Douglas Major (b. 1953) has been on the staff of Washington National Cathedral, Washington, DC, since 1974, first as Assistant Organist and Choirmaster, and then as Organist and Choirmaster of the cathedral since 1988. As such, he conducts a renowned choir of men and boys and plays the organ for over 250 services per year. Major has recorded five solo organ albums at the cathedral, and also one with the Empire Brass Quintet.

Leo Nestor, Artistic Director and Conductor, came to Washington, D. C. from Los Angeles in 1984 to assume the position of Music Director at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. A life-long devotee of and participant in the choral art, he pursued study in composition, choral music, conducting and classics at California State University, Hayward, and the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, where he received his graduate degrees with highest honors. Under Dr. Nestor's direction, the choir of the Basilica has achieved national prominence and is acclaimed by the Washington Post as "one of Washington's secret treasures." A singer's conductor first, Nestor has envisioned for ARS a stylistic and vocal malleability of unparalleled diversity as response to the literature at hand.

The **American Repertory Singers**, Leo Nestor, Artistic Director, is a professional vocal ensemble resident in Washington, D. C. **ARS** singers are selected not only for their vocal ability and sensitive musical understanding, but also for their range of flexibility in matters of ensemble. Although **ARS** perform music of all periods, it particularly espouses American music, especially that of our day. Although never more than 12 singers perform in each track (except track 21 with 16 singers), all singers who have performed are listed below.

Soprano	Joellen Brassfield, Susan Crowder, Tanya Hoffmann, Mary McCarthy
Alto	Janis Brennan, Patricia Caya, Gail Collins, Virginia Gabriel, Lisa Koehler
Tenor	Nevin Bender, Michael Ford, Douglas Gaddis, Boyd Galloway, Will Lowry, Robert Vorst, Norman Shankle
Bass	Charles T. Bowers, Mark H. Cobb, David Frederick Eberhardt, Ted Faris
Soloist, track 2	David Frederick Eberhardt
Instrumentalists	J. Carlton Rowe (trumpet), Sara Stern (flute), Jay R. Rader (organ).
Rehearsal Assistant	Jay R. Rader
Manager	David Frederick Eberhardt

Recorded direct to digital master in October, 1994; January and July, 1995; and January, 1996 at St. Patrick's Church in the City, Washington, DC

Recording Engineer: Ed Kelly
Mobile Master, Hyattsville, MD

Producer: Robert Schuneman

Editing & Premaster: Robert Schuneman, Arsis Audio
Boston, MA

ALSO ON ARSIS:

CD 101 — Frank Ferko: The Hildegard Organ Cycle. Music by Frank Ferko, based on the visions of Hildegard von Bingen; recorded in Washington, D. C. by the composer.

CD 102 — Frank Ferko: Motets. *The Hildegard Motets* and *Six Marian Motets* by Frank Ferko; performed by the American Repertory Singers, Leo Nestor, Artistic Director.

CD 103 — Ye Shall Have a Song. American Repertory Singers, Leo Nestor, Artistic Director, perform a cappella works by Randall Thompson, including *The Peaceable Kingdom*, *Bittersweet*, *The Best of Rooms*, *Alleluia*, *Four Odes of Horace*, and *The Last Invocation*.

CD 104 — For Two to Play. Timothy and Nancy LeRoi Nickel play duo organ works by Tomkins, Carleton, Beethoven, Lachner, Wesley, Albrechtsberger, Schubert, Ferko and Leighton.

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