

pressquotes

CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

Recording: *Mozart Requiem: Realisations*

"This is one of those solid, balanced recordings that serves as a model of how the conscientious musician consults with the texts, history and performance traditions, crafting something that does justice to all."

"...there are little moments of pure magic that break through... It's these touches that make this album a keeper."

"Conductor Stephen Cleobury knows exactly where he wants everything to go."

John Terauds, *Musical Toronto*, April 2013

St Paul's Cathedral, Minneapolis-St Paul, USA

"the foremost upholders of the English choral tradition... having a conductor as skilled and respected as Stephen Cleobury makes them something like those college basketball programs that contend for the national championship every year: The team members may change, but the leader remains the same and the results are almost invariably a success."

"Thursday's concert was indeed a success, primarily because it was such an eloquent articulation of this group's raison d'etre"

"...this 29-voice male choir -- split about evenly in age between pre-teen boys and young men -- made it all flow together beautifully. The voices were rich in all ranges, the soloists strong, the dynamics captivatingly varied, the segues smooth between moods and volume levels"

"...the singers' diction and crisp, clipped deliveries were consistently admirable despite the music's strong emphasis upon long, soaring vowels"

Rob Hubbard, *Twin Cities*, April 2013

Recording: *Nine Lessons & Carols (EMI Classics)*

"...the level of achievement reached in these live performances is enviable"

BBC Music Magazine, December 2012

"The recording is full and warm, unmistakably that of King's College Chapel. If anything is to melt my inner-Scrooge and promote a festive atmosphere, this two-disc release is probably it."

Mark Pullinger, *International Record Review*, December 2012

Handel *Messiah* / Birmingham Symphony Hall

"At the heart of things was the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, and every one of its 30-odd boys and young men sang as if inspired. Clarity, focus, clean enunciation and passion were always apparent, from pure-toned trebles to firmly projected basses."

Norman Stinchcombe, *Birmingham Post*, December 2012

Dubrovnik Summer Festival

King's College Choir, Cambridge, cond. Stephen Cleobury

"The Dubrovnik Summer Festival audience had an evening that they won't forget for some time; glorious voices in stunning surroundings"

The Dubrovnik Times, August 2012

James MacMillan: *Seven Last Words from the Cross*

King's College Choir, Cambridge with Britten Sinfonia / cond. Stephen Cleobury

"...I was gripped by a superbly atmospheric performance under Stephen Cleobury. The work's formidable choral demands range from subterranean growls and eerie whispers to Gaelic inflections and shock discords that must be attacked with total confidence [:] the young choristers of King's College Choir never faltered."

Richard Morrison, *Times*, April 2012

Opéra de Dijon

King's College Choir, Cambridge, cond. Stephen Cleobury

"The remarkable precision of their vocal technique was quite simply, extraordinary.

His [Cleobury's] direction led the ensemble perfectly, with complete simplicity and fluidity.

As for the singers, they remained completely loyal to their conductor's gestures even though the second half of their programme brought formidable harmonic, rhythmic and melodic complexity! Hats off in particular to the youngest performers, who must be gifted with the finest of ears.

Some of the voices, whether child or young man, continued to resonate long after the concert ended, like treasures."

Le Bien Public, January 2012

Shanghai Concert Hall, China

King's College Choir, Cambridge, cond. Stephen Cleobury

"... the concert impressed the Shanghai audiences of the beauty and harmony of human voices in a traditional yet brilliant way.

Their meticulous gestures and expressions made the audience understand the level of their training and strictness. [The choir] immediately impressed the audience with a sound that was thorough and vivid and a sound which was also delicate and surprisingly quiet."

Shanghai People's Daily Overview, July 2011

Bach *St John Passion* / Cadogan Hall

King's College Choir, Cambridge with Kennedy, Thomas, Wilson-Johnson, Academy of Ancient Music / cond. Stephen Cleobury

"...the sound world that was created on the concert stage was vivid, beautifully controlled, subtle and always in balance.

Stephen Cleobury conducted a richly satisfying account of one of Bach's most glorious scores - aided by some wonderful playing and by vocal and choral forces that quickly found their feet in the Cadogan Hall environment. The result was a musical, and a spiritual treat.

The Choir obviously know their conductor's every nuance of expression and followed wherever he led.

... the sound of the Choir got better and better the longer the evening progressed: 'Wir haben ein Gesetz' was thrillingly articulated, 'Lasset uns den nicht zerteilen' was precise, rhythmically phrased and taken at a great tempo.

The first and second verses of the chorales were contrasted nicely, the rich and bright sonorities of the opening lines giving way to hushed echoes of what had just been said and sung.

...like a great wave of sound, we moved to that incomparable 'Herr Jesus Christ, erhöre mich/Ich will Dich preisen ewiglich!' and all seemed well with the world again."

Mike Reynolds, *Musical Criticism*, April 2011

The Northern Echo

"The Choir of King's College Cambridge presented a programme of music spanning 450 years, holding a capacity audience at The Sage Gateshead captivated throughout... Sung with lines of purity, the layering of the adults' and boys' voices was brilliant. And the soaring high Cs were delivered with

unflinching confidence... All round an inspiring experience."

The Northern Echo, January 2011

Beijing Music Festival, Beijing

"Their beautiful and refreshing voice impressed all the Chinese audience, and marked one of the most spectacular moments in the historic Wangfujing Catholic Church."

Beijing Youth Daily, October 2010

Halberstadt

"The choir captured the audience's heart with its perfect entries, precise conclusions, its marvellous voices and the singing which was full of warmth and vitality."

Recording: *Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols* (EMI Classics)

"This is a live recording of King's 2008 Christmas Eve service (readings included), the 80th since the BBC began broadcasting it. King's College Chapel is a sizeable acoustic, but what's specially striking is the intimacy of these performances, the choir under Stephen Cleobury excelling in the difficult art of dynamic restraint and truly gentle singing. Vaughan Williams's *Wither Rocking Hymn* is a fine example, and includes some lovely solos. The purity of treble tone in Taverner's *The Lamb* and the flexibility of the phrasing are also special."

BBC Music Magazine, five stars, December 2009

St. Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York

"The Choir of King's College, Cambridge, at St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue on Friday, confirmed what many listeners think they know about the British choral tradition, but then gave listeners other things to think about too. The 30 men and boys led by Stephen Cleobury were scrupulously prepared, well tuned and musically alert.

Treble voices gave off a deep, full color a little at odds with the cliché of thin, white-light British choirboy tone. Noticeable to the ear as well as the eye was how young all these choristers seemed, even the tenors and basses. Singers just past or at the end of their teenage years had the tough sound of bodies not quite filled out; the tone, if a little raw, was also appealingly fresh."

New York Times, April 2008

Recording: *I Heard A Voice* (EMI Classics)

"The Choir of King's College, Cambridge has been an EMI mainstay for many years, and Stephen Cleobury has admirably kept the torches held very, very high."

Audiophile Audition, December 2007

"The programme begins and ends in splendour. Weelkes's anthem *Alleluia, I heard a voice* is a dramatic setting of a visionary text from Revelation; the final item, Tomkins's *O sing unto the Lord* culminates in a sequence of "Alleluias" so that the recital comes round full circle...The famous choir sings with full-bodied tone and unflinching precision."

Gramophone, December 2007

York Early Music Festival

"For half a century or more, "King's" has meant only one thing in musical circles: the choir of King's College, Cambridge. But when it ventures out of Cambridge, it is more likely to be found overseas than at home. So its visit on Thursday promised something rich and rare. It delivered on both counts."

The Press, Yorkshire, July 2007

Lufthansa Festival

"For a festival that boasts Rolls-Royce as its principal sponsor there could be no more appropriate opening act than the Choir of King's College, Cambridge.

King's has always been the sleekest, most flawless of the Anglican collegiate choirs and under Stephen Cleobury they brought immaculate voicing and seamless phrasing to this programme of Spanish and English Renaissance music."

Evening Standard, May 2007

Recording: Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (EMI Classics)

"The choral component is superbly sung and beautifully balanced, Stephen Cleobury directing the King's College voices with an unerring sense of long line and the sustained building of paragraphs.... a triumph."

BBC Music Magazine, November 2006

Mahler Symphony No.3 / London Symphony Orchestra / cond. Paavo Jarvi

"...the boys of King's College Choir, Cambridge ... sounded bright and fresh."

Financial Times, June 2006

Recording: *Music for Queen Mary* (EMI Classics)

"the music he wrote for Queen Mary's funeral in 1695 transcends everything else. Has there ever been such music for drums? It strikes into the soul, as do the Sentences and the anthem 'Though knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts.' And King's know the secrets of this music."

Daily Telegraph, April 2006

"In the repertoire on this new disc... Cleobury, King's College, and the AAM prove currently unbeatable."

BBC Music Magazine, May 2006

Recording: *On Christmas Day* (EMI Classics)

"When it comes to Christmas commissions..., the palm goes to Stephen Cleobury, who had the excellent idea, on his appointment as the Organist of King's College, Cambridge, of commissioning a carol each year for the famous Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols...The list reads like a *Who's Who* of English composers."

Gramophone, January 2006

"This is the one unmissable seasonal issue this Christmas."

BBC Music Magazine, December 2005

"The diversity of texts and musical language in the carols is stimulating, the choir's performance of them exceptional."

Daily Telegraph, December 2005

King's at Christmas / St. John's Smith Square

"If ever there is such thing as a collective choral tear in the voice, King's produced one for Howell's carols...The Bruckner miniature was exquisitely shaped and resoundingly fervent ... Taverner's much-loved.. *Little Lamb*, emerged from a magical aural haze, and it was followed up by equally ardent renditions of *The Annunciation* and *Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God*."

Times, December 2005

Christmas Tour of the USA / Church Of St. Ignatius Loyola, New York

"In Poulenc's Four Christmas Motets...the unaccompanied choir sang with its trademark impeccable pitch, luminous sound and unmannered directness...It was affecting to hear the sweet voices of these angelic little choristers as they grappled so gamely with the complex canons and stark imagery of spiritual battles in one agitated hymn from Britten's work '*The Little Babe*'."

New York Times, December 2004

Recording: Frank, Poulenc & Alain (EMI Classics)

"...a day of three very different choral offerings, and the eloquence with which each is delivered is a fine testimony to the musicianship of Cleobury and his boys."

Gramophone, October 2004

Recording: Rachmaninov *Liturgie Of St John Chrysostom* (EMI Classics)

"The men sound much deeper and richer than one would expect, but then under Stephen Cleobury's masterful direction the entire choir manages to shake off its Anglican constraints without losing its famous precision to give a limpid performance full of peaceful introspection."

BBC Music Magazine, June 2004

"Anyone at King's College choir's recent performance of this work in St John's, Smith Square will have heard the spine-tingling effect of handing the soprano line to boy's voices – especially trebles as well-drilled as Stephen Cleobury's Cambridge protégés...A mighty contribution to the catalogue, benefiting hugely from the lofty acoustic of King's College Chapel."

Observer, March 2004

Robin Holloway, Brahms, Cornelius & Wolf / Cambridge Music Festival

"I would happily sit in King's College Chapel listening to this choir sing for the rest of my days."

Times, November 2003

Recording: Scarlatti *Stabat Mater* (EMI)

"Austere but elevating, this is church music at its most resplendent, a spring reminder that King's isn't just for Christmas."

Observer, May 2003