



The multi-faith theme of the story of the Crusades offers Harry Gregson-Williams diverse opportunities for colourful scoring. He alleviates (for the most part) the fusion of

orchestral, pop and rock all too prevalent in many contemporary soundtracks with an attractive melange of ethnic themes, played on a panoply of exotic percussion, with an electronic violin, in one instance, representing the King (track 9).

The composer has assembled an impressive line-up for this latest epic from Ridley Scott. Fretwork set the scene with a plaintive theme

that becomes the chief motif of the score, returning in a number of beguiling reprises and developed and extended in the cue 'Rise a Knight'. Parts of the Mass, sung by the Bach Choir, descend from the skies like shafts of light. The plangent, peculiarly English timbre of their voices brings a distinctive touch to the early cues where plainsong and a tune dancing along in the style of a medieval carol catch the ear. These early western musical forms are juxtaposed with those of the Muslim tradition represented by the Arabic musicians Kardes Türküler and Abdelkadar Harir, who has a new song over the closing credits. *Kingdom of Heaven* is a frequently compelling listen, well worth the second hearing offered by this handsomely recorded CD. **Adrian Edwards**