

## HANDEL CHORALE

A great collection of the best choral moments of the Anglo-German genius on BIS

Mariano Acero Ruilopez  
Diverdi July/August 2009

“The Bach Choir acts like a precision instrument, displaying admirable agility and cohesion.”

Many are the recordings of recitals of Handel’s arias. Which soloists worth the name (sopranos, mezzo-sopranos, counter-tenors preferentially) do not wish to offer the public their own selection of the Saxon composer’s works, the better to show off their qualities and vocal ability? Albums of choral works, however, are much rarer. And not because there is nowhere to choose them from. To be precise, in one of his great contributions to the history of music, the English oratorio, Handel conferred an important role on the choir to emphasise or comment upon certain passages of the work or to participate in it directly. He also left rare jewels in the genre, which formed one of the pillars of his popularity in Victorian England, when they were performed in all the festivals with the most diverse and massive groups imaginable, coming to be considered as just one more demonstration of the eternal (as was then believed) British imperialism. In a certain way, BIS captures that tradition, offering us a most beautiful selection of these fragments, among which, together with some of the most popular, “The Hallelujah Chorus”, “See the conquering (hero)” and “The Nightingales’ Choir”, there appear some less well-known ones which have a common sublime quality.

The illustrious Bach Choir, initiated more than is usual in chronicled interpretations, takes the leading role in this recording. Beneath the baton of its Director in Chief, David Hill, it acts like a precision instrument, showing admirable agility and cohesion and supported by the English Concert. It includes the occasional participation of the counter-tenor, Robert Blaze and the soprano Carolyn Sampson, who performs splendidly the popular “Let the Bright Seraphim”. It is a really beautiful recording, which will please everyone.

English translation by Sylvia Herbert