

*the majestic, grand acoustic. Tell us about the venue in which this recording was made.*

The Notre Dame Children's Choir sings with a bright and forward vocal timbre; it is one that pierces through and permeates reverberant spaces. I learned from my colleagues in Europe that the sound of children laughing or shouting with delight on the playground is a strength and excitement that can be harnessed for soul-infiltrating music. The sound of a cathedral serves to magnify this sound; it creates a uniquely surround-sound experience. Hearing the Notre Dame Children's Choir in this environment envelopes the listener in sound. This encompassing sonic experience is the appeal of the Notre Dame Children's Choir's sound.

We recorded the Magnificat at Saint Meinrad Archabbey, a Benedictine monastery in southern Indiana, in its resonant sanctuary that dates back to the 19th century. Along with its robust Goulding and Wood organ, the Abbey's clear and warm reverberation made it a perfect match for our ensemble. The choir has visited the Archabbey in the past on tours, and the monks were generous to allow us to record over several days. The Notre Dame Children's Choir sings in several spaces on campus of the University of Notre Dame, including the Basilica of the Sacred Heart and the Church of Our Lady of Loretto, Saint Mary's College. The Notre Dame Children's Choir is part of a lineage of colleges and universities that train child choristers dating back half a millennium, and includes the Choir of King's College at Cambridge University and Christ Church Cathedral Choir of Oxford University.

*In addition to the Notre Dame Children's Choir, your collaborators on this recording include organist Trevis Young, and Assistant Conductor Abigail Helbling.*

The Notre Dame Children's Choir is a partnership between the community and the graduate program in sacred music at the University of Notre Dame. Abigail Helbling is a recent graduate of the Masters of Sacred Music program in choral conducting. She spent two years as my assistant conductor, leading the choir on tours, premiering new works, and recording two albums with me. Abigail believes in the mission of the Notre Dame Children's Choir, the right for all children and youth to access quality music education and performance. Abigail is now an educator in the Ohio public school system and is a testament to the idea that our best musicians are also our most important teachers.

Trevis Young is the organist for the Notre Dame Children's Choir and the Campus Minister for Music and Liturgy at Saint Mary's College, the partner women's college associated with the University of Notre Dame. Trevis has toured with the Notre Dame Children's Choir throughout the United States and England and plays for all our liturgical and concert performances. His creative registrations complement and enhance the ringing timbre of the Notre Dame Children's Choir.

*What future projects are on the horizon for you and the Notre Dame Children's Choir?*

The Notre Dame Children's Choir has commissioned a jazz setting of the Passion text from Grammy-winning pianist and composer J. J. Wright, who previously composed a jazz Advent and Christmas cantata for the choir. We will premiere this in April of 2020 and hope to tour the East Coast in the summer of 2021 as part of our album release tour.

**MAGNIFICAT: Evening Prayer with the Notre Dame Children's Choir** • Mark Doerries, cond; Notre Dame Children's Ch; Trevis Young (org) • ARSIS 183 (47:56)

**PARRATT Holy Father, Cheer our Way. JUSTIN Preces & Responses. Phos Hilarion. Psalm 24. Magnificat. Nunc dimittis. Lesser Litany, Prayers, Collects. MAWBY I will lift up mine eyes. TALLIS Praise to Thee (Tallis Canon). ANONYMOUS Introductory Verse. Short Responsory. DUGGAN O Gloriosa Virginum. Canticle. Magnificat. Ave Maris Stella. O Crux, ave**

Evensong is a magical service, a time dominated by the Magnificat and *Nunc dimittis*. A recent disc by St. John's College, Cambridge under Andrew Nethsingha on that choir's own label presents works in the great English cathedral tradition: Stanford, Kenneth Leighton, Sumsion, Gabriel Jackson, and Tippett are all present and correct. The present offering hails not from the relatively nearby Paris Notre Dame, but Notre Dame University, Indiana (also known as the University of Notre Dame du Lac). It presents a succession of commissioned Vespers and Evensong liturgies conducted by the acting Director of Sacred Music at Notre Dame, Dr. Mark Doerries. It's a pity there are no booklet notes whatsoever on the physical product, and nothing is up (yet, possibly) at the Arsis website.

Nevertheless, this is clearly a well-disciplined choir. The disc is divided into two, an "Evensong

for Candlemass” and “Vespers for Our Lady.” We begin with a hymn by Walter Parratt (1841–1924) from the *New English Hymnal*, *Holy Father, Cheer our Way* to the tune *Huddersfield*. The recording is placed just a touch too far back, resulting in a slightly swimmy experience. The choir has a lovely sound, though, fresh and with extremely well-drilled upper voices (it appears to be a mixed choir as opposed to a pure boys’ choir). There follows a succession of music by Daniel Justin, whom I take to be the Daniel Justin who is Organist at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, Norwich, UK. His music is expertly crafted, his Magnificat joyous yet sophisticated. A dissonant flourish from the organ, which seems to generate the choir’s material, sets the scene for a variegated setting. The music softens beautifully, with the choir clearly having a full understanding of the harmonic processes at work and the melodic lines being beautifully smooth. The opening out for the *Nunc dimittis* is glorious, a compact blaze of light. The mystery of Colin Mawby’s *I will lift up mine eyes* works beautifully in this context. The so-called “Tallis Canon,” appearing as *All Praise to Thee*, has words by Thomas Ken.

The bulk of the “Vespers for Our Lady” is by John Duggan; only a short section of Gregorian chant precedes this sequence of pieces. Duggan’s music is generally calm and serene, making the more active Magnificat all the more striking in context and giving the *Ave Maris Stella* an added layer of luminosity. The choir again responds to the harmonic shadings and brightenings intelligently and musically.

All in all, this is a short but enjoyable disc of evening liturgical music. **Colin Clarke**

\* \* \*

Both the University of Notre Dame and its Sacred Music Academy have long been at the forefront of liturgical music in the United States, from training church musicians to cutting edge research. Founded in 2013, the Notre Dame Children’s Choir is one of the flagship ensembles of the academy, which serves as the community engagement arm of Sacred Music at Notre Dame, the university’s interdisciplinary community for Roman Catholic church music. Now under the direction of Mark Doerries, the choir presents of two evening liturgies on this recording, an Evensong for Candlemas, and a Marian Vespers.

Evensong opens with Parratt’s setting from the *New English Hymnal* of the 19th-century hymn *Holy Father Cheer Our Way*. For the most part, the remainder of the service uses music by Daniel Justin, currently Master of Music at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Norwich (East Anglia). The choir produces a lovely unison sound, pure and unforced; they maintain this quality in polyphonic settings as well. Among the highlights of the service is Justin’s setting of the hymn *Phos Hilaron*. As befits the theme of Candlemas, the music and the choir’s performance is iridescent. Justin’s gentle *Nunc dimittis* follows a joyful Magnificat; again, the singers are well prepared. The diction is clear and Doerries offers an interpretation that is nuanced and informed by a deep understanding of the text and its theological implications. Tallis’s familiar *All Praise to Thee* closes the Evensong. The first verses are sung in unison with organ accompaniment, but the final one is a hauntingly beautiful canon *a cappella*.

The second half of the program is a Marian Vespers, a combination of plainchant and choral music by John Duggan, beginning with his setting of the hymn *O gloriosa virginum*. As with the Evensong, the choir is in fine form here. They sing with a quiet, understated confidence that is particularly moving in the short responsory, performed in unaccompanied plainchant. Moving among rollicking figurations, poignant moments, and gravity, Duggan’s Magnificat setting seems to capture the complexity of the text and its message vividly, the music serving as a subtle exegesis. The choir renders these affects superbly, brimming with joy and then pulling back and turning inward. This work and its performance are, for me, the centerpiece of the recording. Choral settings of *Ave maris stella* and *O crux ave* round out the service.

There is a great deal to recommend here. The choir is responsive and the singers have been trained meticulously. The choral sound is exemplary and the soloists are consistently secure. In addition to fine performances, the music itself is well crafted and stirring, a reminder that the liturgical choir is a vital medium for new music. Within a relatively traditional framework, both Justin and Duggan have found ways to sound fresh and to set these texts in a way that amplifies their effective-

ness as part of the liturgy. Surely this disc will be received warmly by liturgical musicians, but it deserves a wider audience. **James V. Maiello**

## Become a Glass Cup: An Interview with Pianist Jeeyoon Kim

BY JACQUELINE KHAROUF

Pianist Jeeyoon Kim first began to study the piano at age four. Originally from South Korea, Kim earned her undergraduate degree in her home country, but then earned her Master's and Doctoral degrees in piano performance from Indiana University's Jacob School of Music. She has also earned another Master's degree in Music Education Piano Pedagogy from Butler University. Following the release of her album *10 More Minutes* in December of 2016, Kim debuted at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in 2017. (It was a sold-out performance.) And in December of 2018, she released *Over. Above. Beyond.*, with an accompanying concert project and music video. In fact, the video for *Over. Above. Beyond.* was selected for several film festivals, such as Red Wood Film Festival, and won Best Music Video Platinum Award from the Independent Short Awards in Los Angeles, CA.

As the first part of a pair of interviews (stay tuned for Robert Schulslaper's interview on her second album *Over. Above. Beyond.*), I asked Kim about her background, her work as an advocate for classical music, and about her stellar debut album *10 More Minutes*.

*I wonder if you would first tell me a little bit about your background and how you came to study piano. What was the moment or time in your life when classical music made an impact on you and was that part of the reason why you wanted to study piano?*

I grew up in Korea and I started to study the piano when I was four. In fact, three or four years old is fairly normal age to start as a musician. If you ask any pianist, any violinist, it's like, yeah, so did I! It's the norm. Some audiences ask, "Really, how can that be possible?" For me—I mean for others too—it's not surprising that I started at that age. So first I remember going to the institute in Korea. How it works in Korea is that you go to the institute every day. My mom signed me up when I was four, but she didn't have to worry about me. I went to the institute on my own every day. Right now that I'm thinking about it, it's kind of bizarre being just four years old and walking around the town, just getting to the institute every day, saying hello to the vendors and going out and about. I remember my first lesson, actually. My teacher taught me a few notes, C-D-C-B-C—or something like that—and then at the end she said, "Let's play together." She played the accompaniment, which sounded so gorgeous and I always felt that I was the one making that music. I was enchanted by sound of music and piano, and it was so much fun!

Regarding how classical music impacted me, I think this analogy might make sense to you. When I first came to Germany, that was the first time I realized that I am Asian. As I was growing up, I was Kim Jeeyoon. I never thought of myself as Asian. When I grew up, I never distinguished between different types of music: classical music or folk music or pop music. To me, it was just music. I was totally into music; I was that musical kid. Then later on I realized that, at college, oh, I guess that maybe I am majoring in classical music. But it was as if I was growing up in 1750 or 1800 at the time of Bach or Beethoven, when there was no sense of "classical" music. I mean, there's some separation with sacred and secular music, but there is no clear line between classical music and other genres. I felt the same way, growing up. I really always was a musical kid. The choice was already made for me. I'm not a big fan of the notion of talent because I feel like there's so much discipline required to polish talent in order to make it work. But if I have a talent at all, it's the crazy love for music. I think that seed was always there; I was always singing in the classroom and happy, and I was always the musical kid that loved to be doing music. The only thing I guess I could contribute to what I did when I was young is that I continued playing piano. There were a lot of times that it was difficult, but I followed through with what my heart said, which is all about music.

*Was your family at all musical?*

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.