

# THE JOURNAL

of the ASSOCIATION OF ANGLICAN MUSICIANS



VOLUME 20, NUMBER 5 + MAY/JUNE 2011

## Recording Reviews

JONATHAN E. DIMMOCK

### *Journey On...Passport to a World of Music.*

The American Boychoir; Fernando Malvar-Ruiz, Litton-Lodal Music Director (Albemarle Records AR1007; [www.americanboychoir.org/themusic/recordings-videos.php](http://www.americanboychoir.org/themusic/recordings-videos.php)), \$17.

The American Boychoir, celebrating seventy-five years of training boys' voices, has produced a CD of nineteen selections from countries around the world. Estonian music is intermingled with German, Japanese, African-American Spirituals, Spanish, Mexican, South African, and French. The effect is like taking a tour of world cultures. The purpose in producing a recording like this is to show the enormous breadth of styles this choir is capable of producing. Arrangements of folk tunes are uniformly interesting, well-crafted, and well-chosen. But it's not just a tour of the modern world either; we also venture as far back as the Renaissance for music of Victoria (*O vos omnes*), forward to Brahms (*Ave Maria*) and Fauré (*Tantum ergo*), and contemporary composers Morten Lauridsen, Sarah Hopkins, Harri Wessman, Dante Andreo, and Stephen Hatfield.

I'm impressed with the recording's capability to impart pathos to this music—not always easy in recording sessions. The boys really take off in the five and a half minute South African medley (clearly a favorite of theirs), but their ability to be subtle and sing softly is also well represented here. Intonation is impeccable.

The skill of the director and the boys is apparent on every track. For my personal taste, I don't like formal cathedral-English annunciation when listening to American spirituals; and I think the mics were set

too close to the boys in several of the pieces, lending more breathiness than one would hear in a concert hall. But these objections are minor compared to the very fine achievement of this recording. Anyone taking an interest in the training of boys' voices will find this recording useful. It shows one of the country's best and oldest examples of this tradition and does so with a relevance to where choral music is "moving" on the concert stage.

