Christmas Vespers

An album for an evening of calm before the storm! Ages old sounds ring around the cloister, of plainchant sung by the choir, of bells and small harp, their beautiful sounds filling the air with tranquillity and calm.Vespers hymns and Christmas mass movements are combined in a very relaxing and spiritually uplifting programme.

1 *Puer Natus est*
2 *Christe Redemptor*
3 *Veni Redemptor*
4 *Kyrie Deus Creator*
5 *Gloria in Excelsis*
6 *Quem Vedistis*
7 *Viderunt Omnes*
8 *Alleluia - Dies Sanctificatus*
9 *Angelus ad Pastores*
10 *Celeste organum*
11 *Credo*
12 *Facta est cum Angelo*
13 *Sanctus*
14 *Agnus Dei*
15 *Verbum Caro*
16 *Hodie Christus*
17 *Viderunt Omnes*

The Monks & Novices of Saint Frideswide
with **Jon Banks**, harp

The Gift of Music®

CCL CDG1042
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Image: Rose window from the North wall of Chartres Cathedral/Bridgeman Art Library, London
Made in Great Britain

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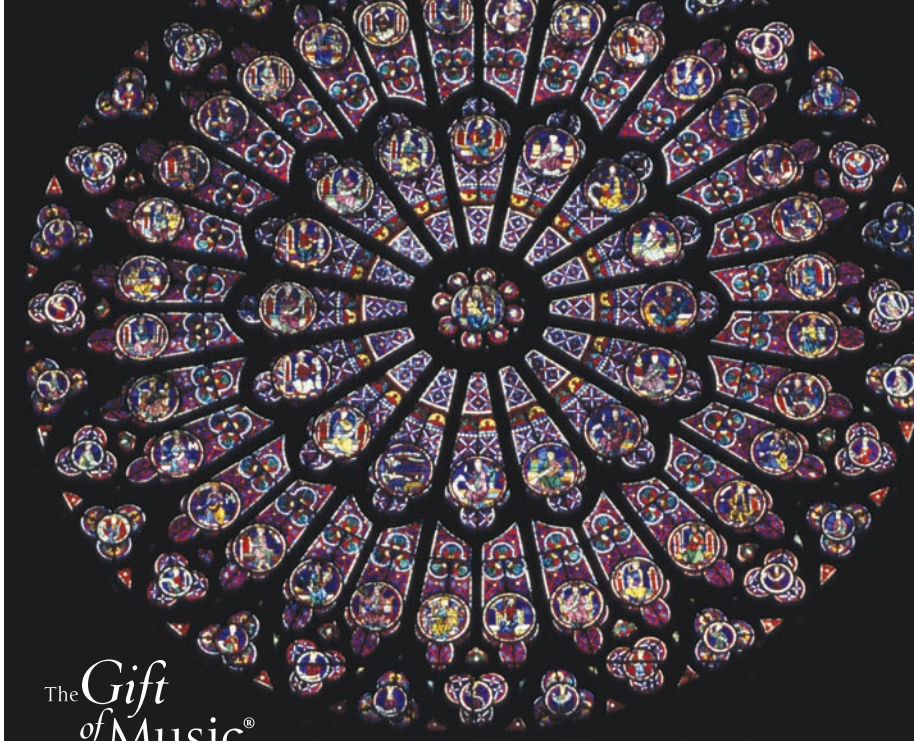

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The coloured light through the stained glass filters through the cloister and alights on the lone harper, who plays plainchant hymns for Christmas vespers. At times he improvises freely, the richness of his musical elaborations providing a perfect foil to the single musical lines of the monks, as they intone the hymns and chants of the Christmas services. A stillness settles on the cloister, the music of harp and voices creating a special atmosphere of tranquillity and peace.

Here is a programme of rare power and beauty, designed to still the busy mind in the Christmas season. A quiet hour or so with this album may help to create a space in time for reflection and thought about the true meaning of Christmas. The singing has its roots in some of the earliest surviving music in the Western world: the music of the early church. Wherever possible, versions of the hymns and chants have been chosen with medieval English origins, to provide a uniformity of style which is soothing and calming. No voices are raised high in bellowing tones: instead we have music of contemplation, gently sung with care and attention, creating a truly special atmosphere. Songs and instrumental music both are carefully chosen and performed to preserve this feeling. Of course, all the pieces were composed for use in the Christian church, but, for Christian and non-Christian alike, the music still has plenty to say. It radiates calm, and expresses absolute spiritual values, of peace, of joy. Its flowing lines can seem ecstatic and otherworldly. They point to some other spiritual level, a level that we find only in our inner lives, separate from our outer concerns of such things as work, commuting, politics: the general hassle of our modern daily lives! All this is here in this music, and it is there for all to experience.

We hope that you enjoy this album and that your pleasure in listening to it will be as great as the pleasure we have had in creating it.

'For unto us a child is born, unto is a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.'