

Penderecki: Complete Choral Works

Album: Penderecki: Complete Choral Works

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For fans of Polish post-Modernist Krzysztof Penderecki, this disc of his complete a cappella choral music, performed by Polski Chór Kameralny under the direction of Jan Lukaszewski, will be mandatory listening. Penderecki's music has been performed and honored in his native country for more than four decades, and these artists bring both enthusiasm and authority to their performances. Instead of being presented in chronological order, the pieces are mixed, so that the composer's many styles are juxtaposed. The extreme expressivity of the *In pulverem mortis* from his 1965 St. Luke Passion, for example, appears alongside the intense austerity of the *Agnus Dei* from his 1981 Polish Requiem. This strategy works to the composer's advantage since it continually surprises the listeners, keeping them constantly alert and involved. The Polski Chór Kameralny sings with impeccable intonation and flawless diction despite the music's extraordinary demands, and Lukaszewski directs them with consummate mastery and interprets the music with complete sympathy. Recorded in startlingly vivid digital sound, this disc is in its way ideal.

~ James Leonard, All Music Guide