

Rorate Coeli - Music for Advent and Christmas in Baroque Prague (2009)

Written by bluesever

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Václav Karel Holan Rovensky 1. *Maria, pole vznešené (Maria, thou lofty field)* 2. *Ach Boze, kterak jsem zaslouzila (O God, how did I deserve)* Antonín Reichenauer

3. *Cantata ad Montem Sanctum "Quæ est ista"*

Václav Karel Holan Rovensky

4. *Maria, dej devolení (Mary, give your consent)* 5. *Rorate coeli, kdyz svatí proroci (Rorate coeli, when holy prophets)*

Antonín Reichenauer - Triosonata in D major

6. *Adagio* 7. *Allegro* 8. *Adagio* 9. *Tempo di Menuet*

Jan Dismas Zelenka - Alma Redemptoris Mater

10. *Alma Redemptoris Mater - Adagio un poco* 11. *Succurre cadenti* 12. *Virgo prius - Larghetto piano sempre*

Christmas Traditional / John Francis Wade

13. *Adeste fideles*

Antonín Reichenauer

14. *Aria de Adventu "O coeli, rorate"*

Václav Karel Holan Rovensky

15. *Ó duše má rozmilá (Oh my beloved)*

Johann Friedrich Fasch - Sonata in G major, for Flute, Two Recorders & Basso continuo

16. *Andante* 17. *Allegro* 18. *Affetuoso* 19. *Allegro*

Antonio Caldara

20. *Aria. "Quel pargoletto"*

Václav Karel Holan Rovensky

21. *K Jezíškovi (To little Jesus)*

Václav Karel Holan Rovensky

22. *Detátko rozkošné (A darling child)*

Hana Blažíková – soprano (2,4,10,11,12,14,20,21) Kamila Ševčíková – alto (5,22) Tomáš Král – baritone (3,15) Marián Krejčík – baritone (1) Collegium Marianum Jana Semerádová - artistic director (on period instruments)

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In the rich musical life of early 18th century Prague, the Advent and Christmas seasons formed a chapter unto themselves. Their specific repertoire consisted not only of the themes of this liturgical season (including a strong element of the Marian cult), but also of special liturgical and musical forms. In both songs and figural music Czech suddenly appeared side by side with Latin, along with elements of folk religion and culture. These are most to be heard in the charming Advent and Christmas poeticism of the songs of Holan Rovenský. Prague's archives also hold whole troves of pieces with more sophisticated forms, both those by composers who worked in Prague (A. Reichenauer, J.F. Fasch) and those brought in from elsewhere (A. Caldara, Dresden-based J. D. Zelenka, and others). All the pieces on this new recording by the outstanding Collegium Marianum share the atmosphere of expectation of the Savior's arrival and the spirit of peace and joy. And joy is precisely what shines through the thoughtful musicological and dramaturgical program of this "authentic" recording into the heart of the listener, whether during the seasons of Advent and Christmas or at any other time. ---supraphon.com

Apart from an arrangement of the Baroque carol "Adeste Fideles," for carillon, Rorate Coeli: Music for Advent and Christmas in Baroque Prague doesn't include the traditional holiday fare, but for the listener who wants to explore Christmas music from another time and place, this elegant album has much to offer. It includes both vocal and instrumental works, and the composers range from the somewhat obscure to the utterly unknown. This CD marks the first recordings of music by Antonín Reichenauer, including a delightful Italianate Trio Sonata and two graceful vocal works. Václav Karel Holan Rovensky is known to scholars for the massive collection of hymns, songs, and liturgical music he assembled late in the seventeenth century, and he is represented by seven exceptionally lovely hymns. The other Czech composer included is Jan Dismas Zelenka, whose Alma Redemptoris Mater is a marvel of late Baroque elegance and expressiveness. German composer Johann Friedrich Fasch served as a chapel musician in Prague and is represented by a lively and refined Sonata for flute, two recorders, and basso continuo. Italian Antonio Caldara is the only composer without a direct connection to Prague, but his nativity aria "Qual pargoletto," which has the character of a pastorale, was widely popular throughout Europe and may well have been performed in Prague, where Italian music was held in especially high regard. The performances are consistently excellent. Jana Semerádova leads Collegium Marianum in nuanced and spirited performances, and her realizations of accompaniments to Rovensky's hymns are especially effective. The vocal soloists are above reproach, singing with purity and energy, but baritone Marián Krejčík stands out for the resonance of his voice and the expansiveness of his performance. Supraphon's sound is clear, balanced, and nicely ambient. ---Stephen Eddins, Rovi

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