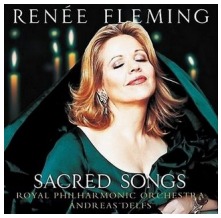
Renee Fleming – Sacred Songs (2005)



01. Ave Maria 02. Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben, Cantata BWV 147 - Jesu bleibet meine Freude 03. Dank sei dir, Herr 04. Ave Maria, D839 05. Mass in C minor, K.427 "Grosse Messe" - Laudamus te 06. Panis Angelicus 07. Messiah , Part 1 - Air: "He shall feed his Flock" 08. Mass - Simple Song 09. Requiem, Op.48 - Pie Jesu 10. Gloria - Domine Deus 11. Vesperae solennes de confessore in C, K.339 - Laudate Dominum omnes gentes 12. Messiah , Part 1 - Air: Rejoice greatly, o daughter of Zion 13. Hänsel und Gretel , Act 2 - "Abends will ich schlafen gehn" 14. L'Enfance du Christ, Op.25 - Arr. Chris Hazell - L'Adieu des bergers 15. Mariä Wiegenlied, Op.76,52 16. Amazing Grace Renée Fleming – soprano Susan Graham – mezzo-soprano Mark O'Connor – violin Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Andreas Delfs – conductor

Renée Fleming, a.k.a. "The Beautiful Voice," is in fine form here, the voice gleaming with radiance in a November 2005 concert in Mainz Cathedral. With an orchestra under the baton of early music guru Trevor Pinnock, she opens with an abundantly embellished "Rejoice greatly," from Handel's Messiah and ends with Adolphe Adam's Christmas staple, "O Holy night" in a soupy arrangement by Chris Hazell. The musical highlights are the "Laudamus te" from Mozart's Mass in C minor and "L'Adieu des bergers" from Berlioz's L'Enfance du Christ, the former exciting for its coloratura, the latter a touch fussy, while in other selections, tonal beauty is bought with mushy diction. Chorus and orchestra get several selections for themselves, but the spotlight's on Fleming, very much the décolleté gowned diva. Mainz Cathedral is a handsome structure whose graceful columns and vaulted ceiling make for interesting visuals that complement the music. Added bonus songs include Bernstein's "A Simple Song" from his Mass, and a pair of traditional items including "Silent Night," these shot in front of a crèche and a Christmas tree with singer and accompanists wrapped in winter clothes. Extras include still photos and a film about the cathedral. Fleming's fans will snap this up. ---Dan Davis, amazon.com

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