

Stella natalis

This album, *Stella natalis*, comprises two works, *Stella natalis* itself and *Joy to the World*. 'Stella natalis' (Latin) means 'star of birth' or 'star of origin' and the music conveys the Christmas message of peace, goodwill, compassion and a new beginning while using a wider palette of inspiration than is usual in such treatments. Zulu texts, Hindu gods and the Old Testament all make an appearance. The libretto (for the most part) is by Carol Barratt, complemented by some established texts in Latin and English. *Joy to the World* is a collection of well-known carols from around the globe.

It has been a privilege to feature the talents of fellow EMI artists, Kate Royal (soprano) and Alison Balsom (trumpet) and also introduce the BBC Radio 2 Young Chorister of the Year 2008, Alice Halstead. The choir is *Tenebrae*, and as a counterpoint to their 'classical' sound, I have revisited my past and re-introduced the ethnic sound of *Adiemus*, featuring Mary Carewe, who sang on the first *Adiemus* album *Songs of Sanctuary* and Mae McKenna.

The orchestration has my usual mix of classical sounds and ethnic percussion, the latter being played by Jody K. Jenkins and Zands. The orchestra is the *Marylebone Camerata*, a hand-picked group of the finest young players in London, assembled by cellist Jonathan Byers.

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