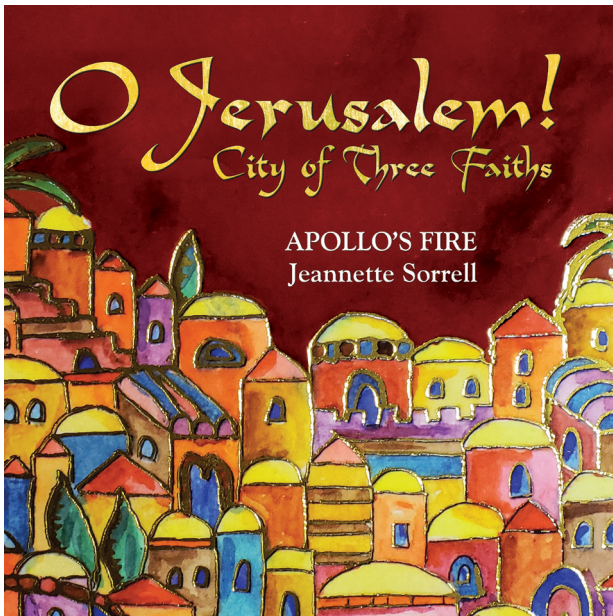


Edinburgh, Scotland | Thursday, 10th February 2022

CLASSICAL



O Jerusalem! City of Three Faiths (Avie) *****

Jerusalem has long been a hotbed of political, religious and racial conflict. In this thought-provoking exploration of its transient musical identity, the American early music group, Apollo's Fire, and singers take us on a whistle stop "musical tour",

sacred and secular, of the old city's Four Quarters: Jewish, Armenian, Muslim and Christian. From searing Sepharic chant and ballads, a soulful Armenian hymn and red-hot Turkish/Arabian Longha dance, to the sumptuous Catholicism of Monteverdi Vespers' extracts (illuminating the perceptible Middle-Eastern inspirations in his settings), and concluding with exuberant "party numbers" that imagine joint feasting by the various communities, the story is as much one of rich singular identities as shared cultural expression. Jeanette Sorrell directs a heady mix of performances, ranging from soulfully supplicant to lusty abandon. The instrumental playing is gutsy and colourful, the singing movingly visceral. Who'd have thought this would be such a hit? **Ken Walton**