APOLLO'S Fire
BAROQUE ORCHESTRA
jeannette sorrell

DISCOGRAPHY

"Apollo's Fire has forged a vibrant, life-affirming approach to early music."
BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

HEAVENLY BACH (AVIE 2022)

Releasing November 2022

O JERUSALEM! (AVIE 2022)

"Brims with energy and imagination... The disc is the brainchild of Jeannette Sorrell, who directs the celebrated period ensemble Apollo's Fire.... A highly atmospheric 'tour' of the city, with each quarter explored via a handful of intersecting musical vignettes. Sorrell combines the excellent Apollo's Fire with outstanding guest artists.... a mesmerising improvisation on the oud by Palestinian musician Ronnie Malley. Toward the end of the disc, radiant excerpts of Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 burst forth from the choir as a nod to the influence of Jewish and Arabic sacred chanting on the late Renaissance composer's music. Programmed with real vision and beautifully performed, this is a mesmerising portrait of Old Jerusalem reimagined through sound." BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

"Gripping immediacy... listen also for the mesmeric percussion in the table-grace song Tzur mishelo achalnu ('The Lord our rock'). ... makes this recording shimmer. In the section 'Mosque, Cathedral & Synagogue', the positioning of the 'Gloria Patri' from Monteverdi's Vespers is particularly prescient: intertwining chants run like a thread through this section. In short, a timely, sumptuous and refreshing vision of peace for 2022." GRAMOPHONE

VIVALDI: The Four Seasons (AVIE 2021)

Debuted at #2 on Billboard Classical Chart – October 2021
Chosen as #3 in the "10 Best Classical Albums of 2021"– The Sunday Times, London

"Sorrell and her dazzling period band from Cleveland commit Vivaldi's concertos to disc... and the musical results are revelatory. Sorrell's booklet notes... are as fascinating as her soloist Fullana's virtuosic playing, but it's her orchestra's incandescence – graphic in the "barking dog" movement of Spring, exhilarating in Summer's cascading rainstorm – that makes this essential listening." THE SUNDAY TIMES (London)

"Francisco Fullana reveals its poetry with effortless refinement. What I enjoyed most of all in the affectionate and carefully thought out playing of soloist and ensemble is their relaxed phrasing and crisp articulation which generate unflagging

interest. Terrific stuff!" BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

"An abundance of plucked playfulness from harpsichord, Baroque harp, theorbo and guitar. Resplendent... they lace an icy path [in Winter] with spectacular downwards glissandos. Sorrell's excellent liner notes... [contain] evocative descriptions, spiced with lovely historical detail." GRAMOPHONE

CHRISTMAS ON SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN (AVIE 2018)

"Festive Disc of the Year" –Gramophone Magazine, 2018
Debuted at #3, Billboard Traditional Classical Chart (Nov. 2018)

"If you buy just one Christmas CD this year, get this one... an electrifying sequence of folk songs, traditional Christmas tunes and foot-tapping dance numbers... The raw exuberance of the two medleys which Sorrell uses to illustrate the migrants' sea crossing... both feature a superb chorus of young singers. Performances are stunning, and Sorrell's attention to detail makes this an intensely vivid listening experience. Proceedings finish with dancing and a bittersweet farewell. It's all wonderful. An unconditional recommendation – buy this today." THE ARTS DESK (UK)

"Draws you deeper and deeper in... for all the breathless rollicking, there are tears under the surface that highlight a vital part of the Christmas story, enforced emigration and all. The quiet finale The Parting Glass reminds us that, sometimes, two beautiful voices entwined are powerful enough." GRAMOPHONE

"This disc's blend of polish and spirit is intoxicating.... one of the finest holiday albums I've ever encountered. Sorrell has crafted and polished her ensemble to world class. They have become adored by audiences wherever they go. Exquisite skill and daring abandon..." MUSICWEB INTERNATIONAL

SONGS OF ORPHEUS with Karim Sulayman, *tenor* (AVIE 2018)

GRAMMY® AWARD WINNER – Classical Solo Vocal Album
Debuted at #5 on the Billboard Classical Chart (USA) – April 2018

"Elegant and heartfelt... a pleasure in its own right. The journey is traced in vocal and instrumental works, rendered with stylishness and an easy grace." SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"Sulayman has a wonderfully resonant voice, and he contributes a sense of personal involvement with the story of Orpheus, mythology's most famous vocalist. The instrumental sonatas relate vividly to the stage of the story under discussion." ALLMUSIC.COM

BACH: St. John Passion (AVIE 2017)

"This admirable St John Passion by Apollo's Fire has dramatic tautness tempered by musical finesse nurtured by Sorrell. Instrumental playing of elegant refinement, polished choral singing, and communicative delivery of the text.... Chorales convey textural clarity and poeticism... sculpted with deft harmonic shapeliness." GRAMOPHONE

"Nicholas Phan is a gritty, direct narrator on the fine set from Apollo's Fire, with a choir of 23 and uniformly excellent aria soloists in Amanda Forsythe, Terry Wey and Christian Immler." THE SUNDAY TIMES

"Splendid... and unlike any other performance of the work. The drama is as apparent in the choruses as in the solos. The soloists enter entirely into the spirit of the performance. Sample the scene with Pilate's interrogation for an impression of the thorough realization of this figure by baritone Jeffrey Strauss. This masterwork is simply being looked at through a wholly new lens. A genuinely fresh Bach recording, and an excellent choice for those interested in this consistently innovative American ensemble." ALLMUSIC.COM

SEPHARDIC JOURNEY: Wanderings of the Spanish Jews (AVIE 2016)

Debuted at #2 on the Billboard World Music Chart and #7 on the Billboard Classical Chart (USA) – February 2016

"Revelatory... convivially theatrical... The soloists and instrumentalists are first-class, and Sorrell's arrangements are full of zip and color." BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

"Recommendable right off the bat... Sorrell combines music of several centuries in a convincing thematic way that has rarely been matched, whether dealing with Jewish music or some other tradition. This is something of a heartland American counterpart to the thematic albums of Jordi Savall, and it works remarkably well." ALLMUSIC.COM

"Another impressive disc from Apollo's Fire... energy, colour, atmosphere and, indeed, fire. Impressively wrought, full of wonderful Middle Eastern inflections... beautifully shaped and full of life... Vividly recorded, with excellent booklet notes by Jeannette Sorrell." THE CLASSICAL REVIEWER (UK)

THE POWER OF LOVE: Arias from Handel Operas with Amanda Forsythe, *soprano* (AVIE 2016)

Debuted at No. 3, Billboard Classical Chart – November 2015

"At home equally in the passionate music for Almira or Armida, the dramatic depths and heights of Cleopatra and the teasing cynicism of Atalanta... Forsythe displays formidable technique... remarkable range of vocal colour... packs an overwhelming emotional punch. Apollo's Fire, under the able baton of Jeannette Sorrell, provide exquisitely-judged orchestral support." EARLY MUSIC REVIEW (UK)

"Forsythe is a superb singer with staggering agility. This is a knockout recital by a major American soprano. Sorrell leads the period instruments of Apollo's Fire... smoothly and expertly." CLASSIC TODAY

PRAETORIUS Christmas Vespers (AVIE 2015, previously KOCH 2007)

"Delectable... virtually made to herald the joy of the Christmas season. Succeeds admirably. Sheer delight." THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Charged with all Apollo's Fire's signature energy... a spark that grows into a blaze as the programme progresses: two soprano

soloists battle with ferocious elegance in the Gloria, a syncopated chorus leads us in a wild dance of rejoicing in Puer natus in Bethlehem, while Sorrell's instrumentalists shine in the orchestral dances from Terpsichore. What Apollo's Fire do so uniquely well here is capture the homespun spirit of music intended to unite a congregation. A disc that leads with its personality – generous and all-embracing…" GRAMOPHONE

"Homeliness and heart, and plenty of sparkle and Monteverdian blaze, too. Praetorius, a giant of Protestant church music, would surely have approved." THE IRISH TIMES

"Magnificent… a musical gift to treasure." THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

TELEMANN: Don Quixote and Other Suites & Concertos (AVIE 2015, previously KOCH 2005)

"A hugely entertaining and characterful disc… with a brilliant portrayal of episodes from Don Quixote. The playing under Jeannette Sorrell is unfailingly bright-eyed, alert, and quite brilliantly executed with flair and panache; it has also been superbly reproduced." FANFARE

"Enormous rhythmic zest and… poetic and elegant material." THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

"From the very opening, I was enthralled - there is a sort of communal ease about the band, a sense of humour and genuine enjoyment." EARLY MUSIC REVIEW (UK)

SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN: An Appalachian Gathering (AVIE 2015)

Debuted at #5 on classical crossover Billboard chart (USA) – June 2015

"Entirely compelling, by turns funny, tragic, and even grisly. This release should continue to gain international attention for this forward-thinking group. Sorrell, who came of age as a musician partly in the rural South, has a way with this music." ALLMUSIC.COM

"Authenticity and that most elusive of desirable qualities, exquisite taste… Every performer made marvelous contributions." THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

SACRUM MYSTERIUM: A Celtic Christmas Vespers (AVIE 2012)

Debuted at #11 on classical Billboard chart (USA) – December 2012

"A mixture of passion and reverence… Sorrell and Bergeron deploy their forces with a real ear for drama, assisted in no small part by the brilliant soprano Meredith Hall. Glows with an almost profane energy… If there's one Christmas CD I'd be asking Santa for, this would be it." INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW (UK)

"Lovingly prepared… the Christmas myth is brought to vivid life; vernacular reels and lullabies stand alongside carols and the Mass proper… with intimate, you-were-there sonics." LISTEN Magazine

"Magical... an exquisite program, adroitly mixing joy, solemnity and the sacred. The performances are all that one could wish for." AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

"Cheerful and improvisationally spirited... astonishingly true to Celtic character and energy." GRAMOPHONE

"Meredith Hall is luminous-voiced in this Renaissance-centred, pan-Celtic musical party... Shaped around an evening celebration of light, borrowing material from a Medieval Glaswegian vespers service... it is really an excuse to make merry in music – something even an atheist can appreciate." THE TORONTO STAR

HANDEL: Dixit Dominus, Ode for Queen Anne, Zadok the Priest (AVIE 2012)

"Apollo's Singers tackle the Dixit Dominus with aplomb. There's a rich, malty flavour to the ensemble's strings throughout, while trumpeter Barry Bauguess provides a showstopping moment." THE INDEPENDENT, London

"Divinely striking... perfect pitch and innocent harmony. Every voice enters with razor precision... grand testimony of Apollo's Fire's excellence in delivery, blend and interpretation." CONCERTONET.COM

COME TO THE RIVER: An Early American Gathering (AVIE 2011)

Top 10 Best-seller, classical Billboard chart (USA) – June/July 2011

"Wonderfully exuberant...simply delightful. Here we have music that offers life, and does so abundantly. FANFARE

"A vibrant American sampler... one of the most joyous releases, intoxicated by the sheer joy of being alive. Brilliant engineering clinches the deal." AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

"A rich folk culture of Anglo-American music was developing in New England and the South – as the excellent Cleveland group Apollo's Fire makes delightfully clear. The disc is evidence of the maturation of 'crossover'." THE NEW YORKER

"First-rate - a sheen of artistry . . . and the ensemble lets its hair down in a really amazing way." CLEVELANDCLASSICAL.COM

VIVALDI & FRIENDS: La Folia & Other Concertos (AVIE 2011)

"Under the inspired direction of Sorrell, Apollo's Fire has become one of the pre-eminent period-instrument ensembles, causing one to hear familiar baroque material anew.... The showstopper is the vivid "La Folia," building to dizzying whirls..." THE INDEPENDENT, LONDON

"An outstanding collection, performed by a terrific early instrument orchestra." AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

"Vivid, earthy and ardent... Be prepared to sit straight up. Baroque chestnuts sound utterly new in the crisp, vital performances that Sorrell shapes." CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

MONTEVERDI VESPERS OF 1610 (AVIE 2010, previously ECLECTRA 1999)

Top 10 best-seller, classical Billboard Chart (USA), October 2010

"Exultant...instrumental colours blaze brilliantly." THE SUNDAY TIMES, London

"A stunning achievement....Wins out handily over William Christie's versions and other recent issues." FANFARE

"Sorrell and her fine young choir lavish attention on every phrase and inflexion. The exhilaration and sense of discovery is utterly infectious...an unanticipated delight." INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW (UK)

"A resplendent account, brilliantly motivated by Sorrell and performed with vibrant attention to dramatic detail. In short, a thriller from first note to last." THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

BACH: Brandenburg Concertos & Concertos for Harpsichord and Violin (AVIE 2010, previously ECLECTRA 2000)

Top 10 best-seller, classical Billboard Chart (USA), May 2012

"A swaggering version... The most is made of the instrumental colours Bach so exhilaratingly put on show. The keyboard part in the 5th Brandenburg is brilliantly played by Sorrell." THE SUNDAY TIMES, LONDON

"One word – wow! Where has this recording been? Nothing short of spectacular." AUDIOPHILE AUDITION

"Ineffably cheerful... Musicians playing zestfully and with obvious understanding of Bach's virtuoso works. Appealing, intelligent and well played." FANFARE

"Sorrell delivers a brilliant take-no-captives rendition of the big solo in No. 5. In all, these performances are lively and unfailingly attractive–the best in what historical performance can be.... an impressive treasure." AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

"Stunning. Each [concerto] is a perfectly polished little gem. A fabulous harpsichord cadenza played with gusto by Sorrell. Bubbles like fine champagne..." EARLY MUSIC AMERICA MAGAZINE

MOZART: Symphony no. 40 & Ballet Music (AVIE 2010)

"The Midwest's best kept musical secret is finally reaching British ears. Sorrell presents an elegantly proportioned Symphony no. 40... vividly characterized." THE INDEPENDENT, London

"Bright, winsome, terrifying and brilliant by turns, with the Apollo's Fire strings demonstrating that they can so dazzle." SAN FRANCISCO CLASSICAL VOICE

HANDEL: MESSIAH (AVIE 2010 – 2CD+DVD)

"The players take their namesake 'Fire' to heart." THE NEW YORK TIMES

"First rate... a winning, distinctive new version." ST. LOUIS DISPATCH

"Over the years, Jeannette Sorrell has rethought and refined her vision of the piece to the point where Handel is both the most subtle and explosive of composers. Sorrell leads the score as if she were sharing artistic secrets or basking in the passionate content that flows from the page. Every phrase is shaped with a keen blend of fidelity and imagination. The musicians... show how intimacy brings the drama into tight, blazing focus.... This is a "Messiah" that tells its story with sometimes fierce power. Yet Sorrell also is a conductor who adores nuance.... Choral clarity of this sort is almost unheard of today." THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

"A lively and buoyant presentation... fine attention to dramatic and poignant moments in the narrative. A pleasure to hear from Overture to Amen. The chorus does most of the heavy lifting in this work, and Apollo's Singers make it seem effortless. Singing with... power and brilliance. Sorrell draws brilliance and grandeur from her musicians, and makes the entire oratorio sound healthy and natural." CLEVELANDCLASSICAL.COM

MOZART Haffner & Jupiter Symphonies (KOCH INTERNATIONAL 2004)

"I am in little doubt that Sorrell is an outstanding Mozartian... Her Mozart achieves a near-perfect combination of real dramatic cogency and the ability to sing.... The dark, dramatic fervor of Sorrell's performance [of the Don Givonanni Overture] receives really first-rate playing by Apollo's Fire." FANFARE

"Sorrell captures the grandeur and intimacy in the masterpieces, finding new ways to phrase and clarify. Intriguing nuances, a crystalline sense of texture and balance... Boldness and sensitivity bring the "Haffner" to majestic life and invest the "Don Giovanni" with a blend of menace and charisma many conductors miss."
THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

SCARBOROUGH FAYRE: Tunes from the British Isles & the New World (KOCH 2004)

"Dazzling fiddle playing. Great spirit and brio." FANFARE

"One of its most buoyant releases yet. Obscure items leap from the page or caress the ears lyrically in these exceptional renditions." THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

NOELS & CAROLS from the Olde World (KOCH 2004/ECLECTRA 1999)

"Stunning examples of early music performance." EARLY MUSIC AMERICA MAGAZINE

"The excellent period-instrument ensemble... performs with such style and commitment that you'll feel close to even the most obscure music on first hearing. Warm and cozy." THE BALTIMORE SUN

"Refreshing exuberance and thorough-going finesse... gorgeous recorded sound." THE DETROIT NEWS

"Performed magically by Apollo's Fire... uniformly excellent and above all supremely musical. The attention paid to detail renders each carol a jewel-like quality." AUDIOPHILE AUDITION

MOZART Requiem and Exsultate Jubilate (KOCH 2006)

"Thoroughly enjoyable... a glorious sound." EARLY MUSIC REVIEW (UK)

MOZART Piano Concertos no. 20 and 23 (KOCH 2005)
with John Gibbons, fortepiano

"A most appealing performance, characterized on Gibbon's part by the limpid fluidity of his fingerwork, and on that of Sorrell by the loving phrasing she draws from her orchestra." FANFARE

MONTEVERDI L'Orfeo (ECLECTRA 2001)

"A high achievement.... Bears comparison with the finest performances of the work. Tenor Gareth Morrell brings liquid sound and exquisite taste to the title role. Much of the credit belongs to Sorrell's constantly alert direction. Hardly a moment goes by when an insight is not being conveyed. Highly recommended." FANFARE

"Sorrell has developed one of the most enterprising and plucky early-music ensembles in the nation today." AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

"Apollo's Fire is a stellar advocate of Monteverdi and baroque music. Sorrell conducts a performance of remarkable elegance and dramatic thrust, and the instrumental playing is crisp, noble and beautifully balanced."
THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

J.S. BACH St. John Passion (NPR/ECLECTA 1999)

"An interpretation of persuasive intelligence and musicality." AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE