

Sound advice

Ars Choralis' 'We Dream A World' inspiring

ARTIST: Ars Choralis
ALBUM: "We Dream A World"

AN important choral group in Woodstock for a half-century, and under the guidance and leadership of artistic director Barbara Pickhardt for half of that time, Ars Choralis has a spectacular release called "We Dream A World."

Recorded at the Clubhouse Studios in Rhinebeck, and produced by famed songwriter Johanna Hall, these songs and hymns are majestic musical prayers, truly inspiring and moving to say the least.

The group meets Sunday nights at Christ's Lutheran Church in Woodstock, and this representation of their work starts off with Felix Mendelssohn's "Da Nobis Pacem Domine" as meaty cellos and forceful piano prepare the way for the glorious voices to come.

The stunning "Prayer For Peace" and dramatic "I Dream A World"

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soon follow, the voices blend impeccably, and the arrangements allow the sound true grace and gravity.

The true test of a timeless song is to drop it in a different setting or genre and see if it still works. Two brilliant examples live on the CD, Pink Floyd's "On The Turning Away," and former Woodstock resident Bob Dylan's "Blowing in the Wind," both work well beyond belief here, with clever arrangements and passionate voices.

The cast is large worth mention-

ing. The sopranos are Barbara Bambina, Maria Brown, Leeta Damon, Sheila France, Christina Gardner, Amy West Martin, Holly McCabe, Polly Martensen, Lynn Peck, Anita Shamansky, Sue Ellen Sheeley, Paige Stoothoff, Carolyn Wolz and Ginny Workstus.

Altos are Janis DeWitt, Karen Garner, Johanna Hall, Laurel Herdman, Sarah Kessenich, Bernice Leonard, Mary Leonard, Wendy Lowe, Mary Noecker, Cathy Roth, Renee Samuels, Marla Ulrich and Sue Ulrich.

Tenors are Mark Josefski, Rebecca Lowe, Jim Noecker, Chuck Snyder, Matt Ulrich, Cynthia

Werthamer and Bill Wolz.

Bass singers are Ray Cocks, Gregory Dinger, Keith Langston, Brian Lowe, Myles Putman, Rob shear, Jim Ulrich and John Wolfe.

Instrumentalists Kristen Tuttmann (piano), Erica Pickhardt (cello), Abby Newton (cello), Gregory Dinger (guitar) and Karen Levine (percussion) round up the ensemble.

Forget any preconceived notions of what a choir is, and rush out to get this amazing CD. It'll make your world better, I promise.



David Malachowski is a guitarist, producer and freelance journalist living in Woodstock. The Freeman seeks CDs by local artists or artists appearing locally for review. Please send all CDs (please no CD-Rs or demo CDs) to Daily Freeman c/o Preview, 79 Hurley Avenue, Kingston, NY 12401.