

**American Guild of Organists  
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and the possibilities it embraces. Surely this is a standard for others to emulate."*

**RECORDINGS: TRANSIENT GLORY II**

*Young People's Chorus of New York City, Francisco J. Nunez, artistic director and conductor; Jon Holden, piano; Perspectives Ensemble; Extension Ensemble; Tod Machover, computer; Lila Newman, Eli Bunzel, Mitchell Schor, and Emilia Hakes, soprano soloists. Vital Records VR2017; vitalrecords@nyc.rr.com.*

The Young People's Chorus of New York City is one of the most highly regarded, successful organizations of its kind in the world. Under the masterful leadership of Francisco J. Nunez, this superb ensemble has toured worldwide, and won numerous prestigious awards, including two gold medals at the 2004 Choir Olympics in Germany. Founded by Mr. Nunez in 1988, the ensemble has grown to 250 choristers ages eight to 18 (although the CD booklet lists only 61 members). Mr. Nunez initiated the Transient Glory concert series in 2001 "to spotlight the children's chorus as a serious, and indeed glorious, instrument for making music during that fleeting period of time when a child's voice - this transient, eternally selfrenewing instrument - endows the music with a particular poignancy and innocence."

This recording is the second volume in the series; it includes works commissioned by or for the chorus and premiered between 2002 and 2004. As "a celebration of living music and the momentary beauty of the young voice," it features fascinating, inventive, and challenging new works by Judith Weir, Tod Machover, Geoffrey Burgon, Nils Vigeland, Benjamin Lees, Bright Sheng, Jim Papoulis, Kevin James, Michael Nyman, Dominick Argento, and David Del Tredici, setting texts by e.e. cummings, William Blake, Peter Porter, Edward Leas, Robert Louis Stevenson, Robert Burns, and others. It is unfortunate that full texts are not provided in the booklet (although many of the sources are listed); though the choir's diction is excellent, some listeners would appreciate the opportunity to reflect on the printed texts. The subject matter addresses a wide range of secular and religious topics. As the YPC is known for its high musical standards and artistic abilities, these composers did not shrink from writing highly sophisticated music for them that would be challenging, even for many adult choirs. Yet these young singers joyfully and fearlessly tackle every challenge, from harmonic and rhythmic complexities to wide-ranging tessituras and tricky interpretive issues.

All of the parameters of exemplary vocal production are in evidence here: rhythm, pitch and intonation, diction, dynamics, and color. The group produces a homogenous, transparent sound. Although youthful, it has carrying power and focus. The soloists are likewise excellent. Many of the pieces are expertly accompanied by an assortment of instruments: piano, marimba, other percussion, synthesized computer sounds, bassoon, brass, and strings. This recording represents the cutting edge of the 21st-century youth chorus, and the possibilities it embraces. Surely this is a standard for others to emulate.

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