

Christmas with The National Christian Choir
CD by The National Christian Choir
Thoughts on the CD and its contents
by Music Director, Dr. C. Harry Causey

There's a wonderful feeling beyond words when parents experience the birth of their first child. Some say that feeling doubles when it's your first grandchild. Well, this CD was our first.

When our Board of Directors asked me what I thought we should record, my first response was, "Well, Christmas and choirs go together." So the Birth of Christ became our theme.

The dollar was stronger than the British pound at the time. Most Christian recording artists went to London to record great orchestras. It made good sense, so off I went for my first trip to that great city and the heady privilege of conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra for this project.

Joy to the World – From the moment the trumpets herald the good news of His coming, you are swept into a grand statement of this beloved carol. I've heard many choral arrangements of this carol, and this version is still my favorite. Now picture this. On Sunday morning, December 25, 1986, The National Christian Choir and I stood in front of the empty tomb at sunrise in Jerusalem's Garden Tomb and sang this triumphant carol. What a great memory!

Worship Hymn – *A cappella* singing is the epitome of the choral art. It's not easy to do. When you wed unaccompanied voices to a devotional choral setting as worshipful as this, it's a "gourmet" moment of musical adoration.

Noel Celebration – Here we have a medley of well known carols such as "The First Noel" and "What Child Is This." That's great. But what I really love is the lesser known song in the middle called "Come Ye Rejoicing." It is truly a challenge for the ladies to sing it without getting tongue tied; but when that three-part round is completed, it is so very satisfying.

Peace, Peace – This has emerged through the decades as a Christmas classic. There's hardly a better way to hear "Silent Night" than this setting. The National Christian Choir now has an annual tradition of concluding one of our Christmas concerts in Salisbury, MD, with this song, joined by a choir of over 100 children. Add candles while surrounding the people, and the result is overflowing Christmas wonder.

O Little Town of Bethlehem – Bach's "Prelude in C" is the accompaniment for this lovely carol. I could say more about the musical setting, but I'd rather share something personal. This was one of the selections we sang in Manger Square in Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. It took on an entirely new, poignant meaning for all of us in that very special place.

Such a Small King – If I had to identify a favorite from my own pen, this would be my choice. There are a number of reasons. I'll focus on its inception. I received the inspiration for this anthem while driving in the car and listening to a radio preacher. When I arrived home, I rushed to my piano to capture on paper what was whirling in my head. "Such a Small King" was finished – text and music – in 10 minutes. In other words, this one was inspired. Thank You, Lord.

The Jesus Gift – Listen carefully for the poetic text that creatively asks important questions for all worshipers. Then do exactly what the text invites you to do.

Sweet Little Jesus Boy/Fairest Lord Jesus – The soloist is a former member of our choir who happened to be blind. Her sensitive singing and rounded tones were just what the song needed. Watching her sing to the Lord with her lovely smile made it all the more moving.

Hallelujah (MESSIAH) – I told you this recording was our first. Let us suppose we were never to have the privilege of making another recording. What would be the best selection for the final song on this project? This is it – a choral classic through the centuries. The word means “Praise the Lord!” The exclamation point is mine. May it be yours as well.