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# EXAUDI

## Selected Reviews

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### **Michael Finnissy: vocal works 1974-2015**

#### **Winter & Winter No. 910 246-2**

"Their breathtaking stamina never dies, no matter what contemporary composers hurl their way. Such as Michael Finnissy, a master of jagged onslaughts and the dissonant labyrinth, but a master too of the ruggedly expressive, certainly in his madrigal cycle Gesualdo: Libro Sesto, the new album's highlight. Such is the power of these performances that after each work I felt I ought to plunge my head under a tap, then sit in silence for ten minutes." – **Geoff Brown, The Times**

"Exaudi prove once again what a skilled ensemble they are, bringing vividly to life contemporary music of complexity, enabling listeners to understand and appreciate the composer's vision" – **Martin Cullingford, Gramophone Editor's Choice**

"This is one of those recordings where composer and performers seem uniquely matched. One senses a degree of commitment that is rare even from an ensemble that isn't known for pulling its punches...the interplay of these sonorities really is extraordinary. That the essential character of all seven pieces can be recalled after just one hearing testifies to their impact and cogency. The cycle also shows that Exaudi's virtuosity doesn't just hit you between the eyes; it runs deep" – **Fabrice Fitch, Gramophone**

### **BBC Proms: Open Ear, Tanks at Tate Modern (September 2017)**

"Standing head-and-shoulders above everything was Cassandra Miller's Guide, which was inspired by a 1960 recording of a Southern Baptist hymn. The eight voices of the choir Exaudi recreated the hymn, each in their own way, creating a beautiful and moving sense of multitudes of voices raised in rapt, quiet praise." – **John Allison, The Telegraph**

### **James Weeks: Mala Punica, Walled Garden**

#### **Winter & Winter**

"finespun music by James Weeks, performed by his peerless vocal ensemble Exaudi and the excellent instrumentalists of the Netherlands-based Hortus Ensemble...There's a refinement and definition to the writing that sounds just right in Exaudi's chiselled-but-definitely-not-chaste delivery" – **Kate Molleson, The Guardian**

### **Wigmore Hall (February 2015)**

"a remarkable evening of vocal virtuosity in extreme music, very old and very new. No one does it better than the eight-voice ensemble Exaudi" – **Hilary Finch, The Times**

### **BBC Proms, Birtwistle with Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (September 2014)**

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"As Oliver Knussen observes in Fiona Maddocks's deftly illuminating new book *Harrison Birtwistle*, even a tiny piece like *Dinah and Nick's Love Song*, written on a single sheet of paper, 'casts a spell out of all proportion to its dimensions'. And so it did when he conducted it plus two other Birtwistle classics, with contralto Hilary Summers, EXAUDI, and the Birmingham Contemporary Music group. This made a fascinating hour." – **Michael Church, The Independent**

### Aldeburgh Festival, Earthquake Mass (June 2014)

"this was a fascinating juxtaposition between early and contemporary music. Aldeburgh is still feeling the after shocks." – **Claire Jackson, Early Music Today**

### Tectonics Festival Glasgow (May 2014)

"while Exaudi's astoundingly well-sung programme included Christopher Fox's heady tangle of voices in *Preluding* and the mesmeric keening of Cassandra Miller's *Guide*. [...]" – **Kate Molleson, The Guardian**

## EXPOSURE

### HCR

"EXAUDI is one of the most interesting vocal groups working today. The range of the group's commissioning of both established and younger contemporary composers is extensive. Its skill in the execution of those commissioned compositions, which tend to the experimental and the complex, is invariably high, with its interpretative style being imaginative, musical and alive to conceptual exploration." – **Stephen Graham, Tempo**

### Wigmore Hall, 'O Tenebroso Giorno: Gesualdo Then and Now' (November 2013)

"One emerges from an Exaudi concert as if from a Finnish sauna, rigorously scrubbed and massaged, all lingering harmonic sludge swept away. You feel healthy, pure and courageous — though not as courageous as James Weeks's vocal group in choosing their repertoire. Only the dangerously contemporary will do, or the prickliest old masters, sung unaccompanied with scorching force and no safety net." – **Geoff Brown, The Times**

### Wigmore Hall, Tenth Anniversary Concert (October 2012)

"the excitement lay in forthright voices scaling pitches where only supersonic jets should fly and treating all complexity as a stroll in the park." – **Geoff Brown, The Times**

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"the programme juxtaposed old and new, with madrigals taken from the third and fourth books by Monteverdi, and the fifth and sixth by Gesualdo, performed with the same fastidious attention to detail, one singer to a part, that the group brought to each contemporary work." – **Andrew Clements, The Guardian**

"Throughout, the singers, sometimes directed by Weeks, sometimes not, demonstrated that vocal purity needn't override expression, while precision doesn't preclude individuality: every voice made its presence felt within the group identity." – **The Evening Standard**

"The most moving of the new works was Michael Finnissy's adaptation of a Gesualdo madrigal, his three added vocal parts adding a mournful commentary to Gesualdo's original. Here, as elsewhere, the performances were a marvel." – **Ivan Hewett, The Telegraph**