
Carolyn Sampson

Selected Reviews

HANDEL Messiah

Orchestra of St Luke's, Carnegie Hall & Bernard Labadie (April 2022)

"Joshua Blue, a tenor stepping in for the ill Andrew Staples, had a consistent brightness — much like his fellow soloist, the soprano Carolyn Sampson, who after warming up bounded through runs with skillful control and enunciation."

- Joshua Barone, *New York Times*

HANDEL Messiah

Handel & Haydn Society, Boston & Harry Christophers (November 2021)

"Soprano Carolyn Sampson cast an angelic vocal presence in her featured moments. She managed the quick vocal turns of "Rejoice greatly" with dexterity, her smooth tone bringing soft repose in the middle section. "I know that my redeemer liveth" was just as affecting, her warm, glowing voice conveying a sense of self-assuredness in the text's statement of faith."

- Aaron Keebaugh, *Boston Classical Review*

"Carolyn Sampson delivered perfectly supported and well-projected vocalisms over a wide dynamic range, angelic and consoling and prophetic by turns."

- Lee Eiseman, *The Boston Musical Intelligencer*

CD: CANTELOUBE: Chants d'Auvergne

Tapiola Sinfonietta & Pascal Rophé, BIS Records (released Oct 2021)

"...few can match Sampson's overall sense of exuberant joy in these wonderful songs [...] Her characterisation is superb, elated in 'Lo calhe' (The Quail), playfully coquettish in 'Tchut, tchut' (Shush, shush), yet unaffectedly tender in 'Brezairola' (Lullaby)."

- Michael Beek, *BBC Music Magazine*

"Sampson's soprano is bright and coquettish, [...]. There is plenty of character and expression to her singing, notably in the Trois Bourrées [...]. Sampson gets her tongue around the notoriously difficult-to-learn Auvergne dialect, derived from Occitan, nimbly."

- Mark Pullinger, *Gramophone*

"Chanteuse rompue à tous les genres musicaux et à l'aise du baroque aux répertoires du XXe siècle, l'Anglaise Carolyn Sampson séduit par la plastique superbe de son timbre et sa musicalité naturelle. Elle incarne, sans surjouer ces chansons traditionnelles si magnifiquement harmonisées et orchestrées par Canteloube."

Translation: "A singer familiar with all musical genres and at ease from baroque to 20th century repertoires, the Englishwoman Carolyn Sampson seduces with the superb plasticity of her tone and her natural musicality. She embodies, without overplaying these traditional songs so magnificently harmonized and orchestrated by Canteloube."

- Pierre-Jean Tribot, *Crescendo Magazine*

"Carolyn Sampson [...] aborde ce répertoire avec une évidente sincérité, beaucoup de probité, un respect fidèle des indications, un timbre lumineux et une maîtrise impeccable des grandes lignes mélodiques que Canteloube recueillit sur le terrain avant de les sertir dans une instrumentation virtuose."

Translation: "Carolyn Sampson [...] approaches this repertoire with obvious sincerity, a lot of probity, a faithful respect for indications, a luminous timbre and an impeccable mastery of the main melodic lines that Canteloube collected in the field before setting them in a virtuoso instrumentation."

- Charles Sigle, *Forum Opera*

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"Carolyn Sampson is on terrific form. Her diction is excellent and the sheer sound of her voice gave me consistent pleasure. Set 1 opens the disc in winning fashion. In 'La pastoura als camps' (The Shepherdess in the Fields) she gaily relates the story, singing characterfully but with a pleasing lightness of touch. [...] Equally persuasive is her account of 'La delaissado' (The Deserted One). [...] Ms Sampson captures the melancholy of the music perfectly. This is one of the outstanding performances in the programme.

Carolyn Sampson is a delightful and highly engaging soloist. She sings the slow, lyrical songs beautifully, investing words and music with great feeling. She's just as successful in the quick, witty numbers; in these you can tell that she's singing with a smile on her face. Her diction is admirably clear and though I'm no expert in the pronunciation of the Auvergnois dialect, what I heard corresponded with what I expected to hear as I followed the texts in the booklet. Ms Sampson's partnership with Pascal Rophé and the Tapiola Sinfonietta is a conspicuous success."

- **John Quinn, Music Web International**

PERGOLESI Stabat Mater & STRAVINSKY Pulcinella BBC Proms (August 2021)

"...we were rewarded with some remarkably beautiful singing: [...] Sampson and Mead have great reserves of sweetness in their voices and the ability to make long notes bloom as they progress."

- **David Karlin, *bachtrack***

"Her voice was, as always, a model of beauty combined with style...[...] possibly the most beautiful moments came in Sampson's 'Sancta mater', her slurs astonishingly accurate."

- **Colin Clarke, *Seen and Heard***

Recital with Roderick Williams & Joe Middleton Leeds Lieder (June 2021)

"Soprano Carolyn Sampson and baritone Roderick Williams intelligently and humorously challenged perceptions (perhaps by people of a certain age) that it's not possible for music written for one gender, to be performed by another. It is, and they did. Brilliantly."

- **Colin Petch, *Northern Soul***

"It was a cleverly devised, beautifully polished programme."

- **Andrew Clements, *The Guardian***

SCHUBERT Elysium with Joe Middleton, Wigmore Hall (May 2021)

"Sampson sang with a silvery purity, producing some lovely line alongside fine words [...]. Sampson was able to give us many different incarnations of joy and wonder, along with a sense of essential goodness and almost simplicity, yet the result when combined with Middleton's piano created a complex mix."

"The sheer joy which both artists seem to have in performing this music to a live audience really conveyed itself."

- **Robert Hugill, *Planet Hugill***

CD: SCHUMANN Album fur Die Frau with Joseph Middleton, BIS Records (released April 2021)

"Sampson's light bright timbre touches the heart..."

- **Hugh Canning, *The Sunday Times* (Album of the week)**

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"Sampson audibly delights [...] her voice retains its brilliant clarity throughout, but runs through various shades in line with the narrative."

- *Art Muse London*

"Amid formidable recorded competition, Sampson is close to the top of the *Frauenliebe* pantheon."

- **Richard Patrick Stearns, *Gramophone* (This Week's Essential New Albums)**

"Carolyn Sampson is an amazing artist in full bloom, with the confidence not to over-interpret and to let simpler elements speak for themselves. There is ardour when necessary, but also the freshness of youth as appropriate. She has the wonderful gift of making nothing routine, while not imposing on the music but showing forth its own merits."

- **Michael Wilkinson, *MusicWeb International***

"Sampson produces a gorgeous sound and reduces the Frau's feelings exceptionally well eager anticipation, bliss, and despair. [...] This program is so carefully planned and so superbly performed that even hard-core purists might admit that nothing is taken from *Frauenliebe und leben* and much is added to enlarge and enrich its narrative. I found it captivating."

- **R. Moore, *American Record Guide***

BACH B Minor Mass

Academy of Ancient Music and VOCES8, London Spring Festival (March 2021)

"There are many ways to tackle Bach, although in the Covid era leaner forces are inevitably favoured [...] Carolyn Sampson [...] bolstered some of the choruses, blending seamlessly yet adding welcome firepower when needed."

- **Rebecca Franks, *The Times***

PERGOLESI Stabat Mater

Arcangelo, Wigmore Hall, streaming (March 2021)

"Sampson relished individual details of the hymn's text [...]. Musing on Jesus yielding up his spirit, her vocal strength movingly faded alongside but was always secure with pitch and precision. She was equally lovely in the final duet, shutting her eyes on the word "paradise" as if channelling some private vision of the afterlife."

- **Geoff Brown, *The Times***

"The highlight of Carolyn Sampson's singing was in the fifth movement, where here razor-sharp tuning and brilliantly introduced vibrato was masterful."

- **Bernard Hughes, *The Arts Desk***

CHERYL FRANCES-HOAD Six Songs of Melmoth

with Joseph Middleton, Oxford Lieder Festival (October 2020)

"Sampson travelled carefully through various bodies and centuries, singing securely against jumpy, brittle lines from the piano, carefully etched out by Middleton [...] the climactic Serenade, with Sampson appearing both as the seducer and the seduced, leaves a satisfying chill."

- **Neil Fisher, *The Times***

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CD: BACH St Matthew Passion

Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki, BIS Records (released February 2020)

"Carolyn Sampson is excellent for Suzuki, her *"Aus Liebe"* in Part 2 one of the set's highlights."

- Graham Rickson, *The Arts Desk*

"Carolyn Sampson floats a gloriously gravity-free *'Aus liebe'*."

- Paul Riley, *BBC Music Magazine*

"...there's excellent work from Carolyn Sampson (*Aus Liebe*)."

- Hugh Canning, *The Sunday Times* (Album of the Week)

"English soprano Carolyn Sampson's lucid, agile tone is a delight (*Ich will dir mein Herze schenken*)."

- Tony Way, *Limelight Magazine*

DUTILLEUX Correspondances

BBC Scottish symphony Orchestra (Donald Runnicles), Glasgow City Halls (February 2020)

"Sung with luminous perfection and beautiful diction by Carolyn Sampson."

- Keith Bruce, *Herald Scotland*

"In her first performance of these, Sampson embraced this counterpoint of brooding introspection and flights of ecstasy with probing versatility, echoed in Runnicles' unsentimentally fluid shaping of the orchestral canvas. [...] gloriously visceral performance."

- Ken Walton, *The Scotsman*

CD: MAHLER Symphony No. 4

Minnesota Orchestra, Osmo Vänskä, BIS Records (released December 2019)

"This is one of the finest Mahler Fours I've ever heard. [...] In the final movement, Carolyn Sampson judges the mood well: as Jeremy Barham notes this is an adult's view of a child's view of heaven, but it sounds knowing but never arch (as Schwarzkopf does occasionally for Klemperer). Heavenly!"

- Greg Keane, *Limelight Magazine*

"In the fourth movement, Carolyn Sampson is the star. Her tone is clear and honest, as Mahler requests, yet we can hear strains of the leisure she is supposedly enjoying in heaven."

- Jonah Pearl, *The Classic Review*

"Carolyn Sampson in the finale sings fabulously, making the movement the true climax of the entire work."

- David Hurwitz, *Classics Today*

MOZART Mass in C minor, K. 427

St Louis Symphony Orchestra, Masaaki Suzuki (November 2019)

"Singing Constanze's music as Soprano I was the amazing British soprano Carolyn Sampson. Sampson's voice manages to be both pure and rich simultaneously, with a flawless production throughout; she communicates a world of meaning with every phrase."

- Sarah Bryan Miller, *St Louis Today*

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CD: PURCELL King Arthur
Gabrieli Consort, Signum Classics (released October 2019)

“Carolyn Sampson is a stand-out performer [...] Singers’ additions, which stand out gloriously against a plucked-string-only accompaniment, cause amorous solos to ooze desire; Carolyn Sampson’s timbral purity and curvaceous diminutions are an especially heady mix.”

- Berta Joncas, *BBC Music Magazine* (5* / Opera Choice)

“Sampson’s gossamer-like ‘Ye gentle spirits of the air’ [and] Sampson’s heart-rending singing of the *Plaint* is a sublimely attuned dialogue with Christopher Palameta’s soulful oboe.”

- David Vickers, *Gramophone Magazine*

“Carolyn Sampson sings a radiant invocation to the “*Fairest Isle*” that provides a fitting paean to the nation.”

- Richard Fairman, *Financial Times*

“The best-known soloists are baritone Roderick Williams and soprano Carolyn Sampson — she is lovely in the two finest arias, *The Plaint* and *Hark The Echoing Air*.”

- Adrian Thrills, *Daily Mail* (5*)

HAYDN Creation
Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Matthew Halls (May, 2019)

“Carolyn Sampson's soprano glowed on top, and she sang most expressively.”

- Scott Cantrell, *Dallas News*

CD: ‘REASON IN MADNESS’
with Joseph Middleton, BIS Records (released April 2019)

“[...] a brilliantly assembled exploration of how female madness has fascinated male poets and composers. Their programme takes in responses to Shakespeare, Goethe and others by composers including Strauss, Schumann, Brahms, Koechlin, Wolf and Duparc, all performed with Sampson’s wonted freshness of tone, superb control and subtle sensuality, with Middleton offering vibrant support.”

- Erica Jeal, *The Guardian*

“[...] this repertory suits Sampson wonderfully well. Her silvery tone suggests fragility from the outset, while her restrained way with words admirably conveys the vagaries of desire, distress and confusion. She makes a fine Ophelia, both in Strauss’s manic-depressive songs and in Brahms’s lesser-known Ophelia Lieder, with their eerie snatches of half-remembered folk music. The ease and brilliance of her upper registers, meanwhile, are heard to fine effect in her passionate performance of ‘*Gretchen am Spinnrade*’, while Koechlin’s ‘*Hymne a Astarté*’ genuinely startles with its fearsome ascents into the stratospheres.”

- Tim Ashley, *Gramophone Magazine*

BERLIOZ Les nuits d’été
Scottish Chamber Orchestra, François Leleux (February 2019)

“The soprano Carolyn Sampson made a marvellous soloist for Berlioz’s *Les nuits d’été*, her purity of tone matched by her dramatic ability to inhabit the spirit of each song in the cycle as though it were a perfectly contained world.”

- Simon Thompson, *The Times*

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HANDEL "Abbandonata: Italian Cantatas" **The King's Consort, Robert King, Vivat (December 2018)**

"Her instrument is glorious and her readings exquisitely crafted [...] This new recording exemplifies Sampson's rare sensibility, as both performer and intellectual. [...] in Abbandonata Sampson plumbs fresh expressive depths."

- **Berta Joncus, *BBC Music Magazine***

"The highlight comes early: Sampson is hard put to better the stunning intensity of the disc's second track, Ah! crudele, from the best-known cantata, Armida abbandonata, though the drama of the longer Agrippina condotta a morire runs it close, full of vicious recriminations, as the empress is led to her death, which elide the differences between arias and recitatives with passionate conviction."

- **Nicholas Kenyon, *The Guardian***

"Sampson is superb and invokes sympathy and awe, especially when vainly attempting to convince the elements to wreak revenge upon the man she loves. [...] Agrippina condotta a morire is the most ambitious and elaborate cantata here, Sampson's portrayal of a ruthless Roman empress as witty as it is exciting. She can do it all, invoking fear, fury and sympathy, her voice retaining its allure even when she's singing at full tilt."

- **Graham Rickson, *The Arts Desk***

"Carolyn Sampson remains one of the UK's finest singers; she has recorded Handel successfully for BIS and Vivat, and this most recent Vivat release is a clear winner. The sadness of the aria "Ah! Crudele" from Armida abbandonata HWV105 is remarkable. [...] Sampson's decorations of line in the opening aria include perfect trills, anticipating Handel's extensive use of them in the instrumental parts of the central part of this da capo aria. Her legato, too, matches any instrument who dares to double her. [...] Carolyn Sampson is magnificent, raw in "Rendo cenere il tiranno," infinitely touching in "Come, O Dio!" where her plangent vibratoless sustained notes speak volumes. Sampson's breathless way with the brief aria "Su lacerate" is brilliantly exciting [...] this is a prime release."

- **Colin Clarke, *MusicWeb International***

MAHLER Symphony No.4 **Minnesota Orchestra, Osmo Vänskä (June 2018)**

"The symphony's finale is a song depicting a child's idyllic experiences of heaven, often performed in ways that seem either too knowingly adult or exaggeratedly infantile. The soprano Carolyn Sampson walked that particular interpretive tightrope with insouciance. Stationed in an unorthodox position on a rear-stage riser beside the trumpets, she looked and sounded ethereal [...]"

- **Terry Blain, *Star Tribune***

"Smoothly gliding between openness and restraint, Sampson helped bring the season's final program to a sweet conclusion. To borrow from the movement's text, her angelic voice gladdened my senses."

- **Rob Hubbard, *St Paul's Pioneer Press***

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CD: SCHUBERT 'A Soprano's Schubertiade'
BIS Records (released May 2018)

"There can be no argument with the statement that Carolyn Sampson is one of the great singers of our time [...] This is a wonderful recording, demonstrating from both performers their customary probing intelligence and sensitive insight. Carolyn Sampson is blessed by the rare combination which blends such thoughtfulness with beauty of voice and diction. [...] If this does not figure highly as a disc of the year, there is no justice. It is one that will move the listener beyond admiration to love."

- **Michael Wilkinson, *MusicWeb-International***

"It's a sign when you have to finish listening a complete disc of single songs because each one makes you long for the next. And because the singing is so wonderful, even the most celebrated pieces seem so much more beautiful than you remembered them. The British soprano Carolyn Sampson – crystal-clear timbre, each syllable audible – has made a name with recital discs that are more than a compilation of songs. A Soprano's Schubertiade too is such an intelligent album. [...] It doesn't take more than piano and voice to tell everything. Schubert knew that and this is stressed with a golden pen on Sampson's first Schubert album."

- **Micha Spel, *NRC Handelsblad***

BACH/HANDEL

Helsinki Baroque Orchestra (January 2018)

"Three and a half minutes of bliss. [...] the soprano Carolyn Sampson and the trumpeter Nicholas Emmerson breathed into the long, radiant phrases of Handel's Eternal Source of Light Divine, gliding effortlessly over the summer meadow haze of the strings of the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra. [...] Sampson's unforced agility, smiling tone and exquisitely spun phrasing in Bach's cantata Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen (BWV51) gave pep and brilliance."

- **Anna Picard, *The Times***

PURCELL

The King's Consort (October 2017)

"Sampson looked and sounded the epitome of elegance and expressiveness. Her smoothly polished soprano is a perfect fit for Purcell's melodic fecundity. The tone was clear as a bell, the diction superb: the words seemed to float on the melody. And, the purity and easefulness of Sampson's sound production is wonderfully suited to Purcell's rhythmic shifts and quirks which were pliantly absorbed into the flowing phrases. Moreover, while Sampson's tone is unblemished it is never colourless: she imbued the clean line with judicious expressive radiance."

- **Claire Seymour, *Opera Today***

PURCELL/SCHUMANN/QUILTER/MENDELSSOHN Lost is My Quiet

with Iestyn Davies, Joseph Middleton, BIS Records (released September 2017)

"The art of vocal duetting is exemplified at its best in this recital by two of today's finest British singers [...] applying considerable judgement to their task, the voices of Carolyn Sampson and Iestyn Davies are well matched here in terms of colour and vibrancy – an accomplishment they deliver throughout. [...] highlights include Sampson moving around the notes of Purcell's If music be the food of love with impeccable skill, while she makes time stand still in Schumann's Stille Liebe."

- **BBC Music Magazine (5* Choral & Song Choice)**

"Carolyn Sampson and Iestyn Davies make a symbiotic partnership in these assorted duets, their tone (not least their control of vibrato) and style ideally matched [...] Amid the duets, Sampson sings 'If music be the food of love' with an easy fluidity and grace. [...] With Middleton always an animated partner, the singers blend mellifluously in all those caressing thirds and sixths, with refined

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phrasing and an unselfconscious charm [...] Sampson's touching simplicity in 'Drink to me only with thine eyes', and her exuberance and ardour in 'Love's Philosophy', with the voice soaring gloriously to the song's climax. [...] Here is a captivating, unhackneyed programme, presented by singers – a double act in a thousand – and pianist with a style and allure it would be hard to beat.”

- **Richard Wigmore, *Gramophone* (Editor's Choice)**

“Sampson's and Davies's voices blend perfectly, and they sing Britten's realisations of *Sound the Trumpet* and *Lost Is My Quiet* stylishly, but the fleetier Mendelssohn numbers are the real delight.”

- **Hugh Canning, *The Sunday Times***

“Carolyn Sampson's soprano sparkles and Iestyn Davies's countertenor glides through the air in this compilation, individually and in duet. [...] Early in the opening duet, Purcell's *Sound the Trumpet*, Sampson throws out a blingy octave leap that stands out a mile – but it's a moment of exuberance, not a sign of liberties to come.”

“From the beautifully interwoven Purcell title track to the mellifluous, dirndl-wearing duets by Mendelssohn and Schumann to the bittersweet drawing-room melodies of Roger Quilter, what's on offer here is beautifully judged, the two voices playing off each other and sharing nuanced expression. They shine in the solos, too, [...] Sampson making something poignantly lovely of Quilter's *Drink to Me Only*.”

- **Erica Jeal, *The Guardian* (5*)**

“This is an enchanting recital, combining songs and duets using both English and German texts, by two wonderful British singers and a warmly sensitive accompanist. [...] [Iestyn Davies] blending in seamless rapport with the shinningly elegant lyric soprano of Carolyn Sampson [...] while this isn't a competition, Sampson does give him a run for his money in Schumann's *Stille Liebe* and in the more mercurial *Aufträge* and Mendelssohn's *Neue Liebe*. [...] As a final *bonne bouche*, everyone lets their hair down for the catchy and kitschy operetta waltz *Love Calls Through the Summer Night*, bringing this absolutely delicious recording to an upbeat conclusion.”

- **Rupert Christiansen, *The Telegraph* (5*)**

CD: JS BACH Cantatas for Soprano

Freiburger Barokorchester, Petra Müllejäns; Harmonia Mundi (released April 2017)

“Carolyn Sampson is arguably the most experienced, assured and wide-ranging of current Bach sopranos. With this latest recital she does not disappoint. Sensitivity to the evolving line and projection of text, both of which she manages with warmth and dark-hued reflection, forms a consistent part of her delectable armoury. [...] This is really worth waiting for.”

- **Jonathan Freeman-Attwood, *Gramophone Magazine***

“...Mein Herze schwimmt in Blut, its remorseful, lamenting powers wonderfully expressed here by the English soprano Carolyn Sampson. It's a tribute to her linguistic as well as bright-voiced musical talents that she is the chosen soloist with the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra.”

- **Fiona Maddocks, *The Guardian***

“The soprano Carolyn Sampson and the Freiburger Barokorchester (FBO) interpret soprano cantatas Johann Sebastian Bach on CD. How sensitive and passionate it is! [...] Carolyn Sampson's soprano has the virtuosic quality of a star: which never struggles in the height. A very natural voice which has its base in the lyric center perfectly suited to Bach.”

- **Johannes Adam, *Badische Zeitung***

“A jewel of a disc.”

- **Jesús Vega, *El Nuevo Herald***

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BEETHOVEN Missa Solemnis

Orchestra of the 18th Century, Daniel Reuss (July 2017)

“The soprano Carolyn Sampson sings with a rare mixture of power and purity.”

- Damian Thompson, *The Spectator*

FLEURS

USA Recital tour (May 2017)

“Sampson’s approach to the songs reflected her pedigree as one of our finest early music sopranos. While her technique itself was remarkable — the trills in Britten’s arrangement of Purcell’s “Sweeter than Roses” were as unpretentious, effortless, and wondrous as the act of breathing itself — she chose to communicate primarily by tone rather than word painting. [...] Sampson’s strength and security lower in her range, freshness on high, and delight in singing showed her the rightful successor of the great lieder artists of the past, a great and treasurable artist in her own right.”

- Jason Victor Serinus, *San Francisco Performances*

“Through the roughly hour and a half recital, the duo painted an exemplary picture of all that artistry is capable of. From some subtle seeming sprechgesang in Schumann’s “Röselein, Röselein” to a sultry breathiness in tone in Venezuelan composer Hanh’s “Offrande,” Sampson is a true artist, painting picture after picture from her palate of varying tonal colors and vivid musicality.”

- James Monroe Števkó, *OperaWire*

DEBUSSY Pelleas and Melisande (title role)

Scottish Opera (February 2017)

“Sampson’s delicately coloured tone gets every word across in a wonderfully nuanced way.”

- Andrew Clements, *The Guardian*

“...both Andrei Bondarenko and Carolyn Sampson give performances of consummate sensibility and grace.”

- Rupert Christiansen, *The Telegraph* (5*)

“The leads respond with subtle performances. [...] Sampson sings with a quiet intensity that belies her character’s ethereal appearance.”

- Allan Radcliffe, *The Times*

“Mélisande – a vocally and dramatically triumphant Carolyn Sampson.”

- Susan Nickalls, *The Scotsmen*

“As Melisande, Carolyn Sampson offers tonal delicacy and a credible suggestion of childlike innocence.”

- George Hall, *The Stage*

“Dressed in white, with a voice that (like Debussy’s score) seemed lit from within, she trod a remarkably controlled line between impassive and impulsive; the unignorable focus of every scene in which she appeared.”

- Richard Bratby, *The Spectator*

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MONTEVERDI motets

Academy of Ancient Music, Richard Egarr (December 2016)

“Both singers sang throughout with piercing accuracy and clarity, though only Sampson had that warm sensuous quality which really brings Monteverdi to life.”

- **Ivan Hewett, *The Telegraph***

“But this superb evening belonged to two sopranos – Carolyn Sampson and Rowan Pierce – whose duets and solos reflected Monteverdi at his most gravely serene. Pierce, being younger, may not yet possess Sampson’s super-refined control of phrasing and dynamics, but their voices made a lovely meld. Monteverdi’s music maintained a graceful equality between them, letting them interlace, echo each other, and at climactic moments soar off solo into the empyrean.”

- **Michael Church, *The Independent* (5*)**

CD: MOZART Mass in C minor

Exsultate, Jubilate CD Bach Collegium Japan/Suzuki, BIS Records (released December 2016)

“...in ‘Et incarnatus est’, the sweetest of the disc’s many ravishing moments, Carolyn Sampson arabesques effortlessly up to the stratosphere in a slow dance with solo woodwinds [...] On what other recording of the Mass do the principal vocalists alter their timbres on demand to perfect their blend? Yet Sampson takes the palm. [...] Sampson’s suave coloratura[...] shows us that Mozart, like Bach, took inspiration from praising God.”

- **Berta Joncus, *BBC Music Magazine* (“Recording of the Month” - 5*)**

“...above it all, the crystalline beauty of soloist Carolyn Sampson’s soprano, floating like a ministering angel [...] an exhilarating Exsultate, Jubilate with Sampson on top form.”

- **Stephen Pritchard, *The Guardian* (5*)**

CD: A Verlaine Songbook

with Joseph Middleton, BIS Records (released October 2016)

“The performances are breathtakingly beautiful. As expected from the impeccable Sampson there is some astonishingly pure and precisely controlled vocalism, but lest she be typecast as an early music specialist there has been a perceptible increase in richness and colour over the last few years. Her delivery is mostly intimate and confessional, the full voice used sparingly so at key moments when it opens out and expands the result is spine-tingling. [...] Another first-class release from a dedicated artist with one of the loveliest voices of our time. This is something to savour.”

- **Warwick Arnold, *Limelight Magazine* (5*)**

“Sampson’s pure, shining tone matches the finesse of this repertoire and her lower range sometimes has the softness and subtle qualities of a deep flute [...] the early Debussy settings are splendidly etched, with a fine mix of deep feeling and objectivity.”

- **Jessica Duchon, *BBC Music Magazine* (5*)**

“Sampson and Middleton are very much at home in this repertoire, frequently functioning as an indivisible unit with sound and sense beautifully fused [...] texts are scrupulously delivered. She’s in excellent voice too, her tone clear and silvery, her upper registers exquisite [...] Very fine.”

- **Tim Ashley, *Gramophone Magazine***

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“Sampson adores these songs, caressing the text with her beautiful, pure soprano, particularly those that dwell on the correlation between nature and the emotions. Her partnership with Middleton is inspired.”

- **Stephen Pritchard, *The Observer***

“Ms Sampson is a richly endowed guide with a beautiful lyric voice well suited to French melodies: it is flexible, she has a sure feeling for the poetry and she is careful with nuance. [...] Like everything else on this disc, Carolyn Sampson sings them with excellent diction and deep involvement. A garland of roses to everyone concerned.”

- **Göran Forsling, *MusicWeb International***