Choral Secular Music through the ages

The Naxos catalogue for secular choral music is such a rich collection of treasures, it almost defies description.

All periods are represented, from Adam de la Halle’s medieval romp Le Jeu de Robin et Marion, the earliest known opera, to the extraordinary fusion of ethnic and avant-garde styles in Leonardo Balada’s Maria Sabina. Core repertoire includes cantatas by J.S. Bach, Beethoven’s glorious Symphony No. 9, and a “must have” (Classic FM) version of Carl Orff’s famous Carmina Burana conducted by Marin Alsop. You can explore national styles and traditions from the British clarity of Elgar, Finzi, Britten and Tippett, to the stateside eloquence of Eric Whitacre’s “superb” (Gramophone) choral program, William Bolcom’s ‘Best Classical Album’ Grammy award winning William Blake songs, and Samuel Barber’s much loved choral music.

Staggering emotional range extends from the anguish and passion in Gesualdo’s and Monteverdi’s Madrigals, through the stern intensity of Shostakovich’s Execution of Stepan Razin to the riot of color and wit which is Maurice Saylor’s The Hunting of the Snark. Grand narratives such as Handel’s Hercules and Martinů’s Epic of Gilgamesh can be found alongside tender miniatures by Schubert and Webern.

The Naxos promise of uncompromising standards of quality at affordable prices is upheld both in performances and recordings. You will find leading soloists and choirs conducted by familiar names such as Antoni Wit, Gerard Schwarz, Leonard Slatkin and Robert Craft. There is also a vast resource of collections available, from Elizabethan, Renaissance and Flemish songs and French chansons to American choral works, music for children, Red Army Choruses, singing nuns, and Broadway favorites – indeed, something for everyone.
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Cantatas, BWV 211-212
Ingrid Kertesi, Soprano / József Mukk, Tenor
István Gáti, Bass / Failoni CO / Mátyás Antál

BACH, Johann Sebastian (1685-1750)
Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd,
BWV 208, “Hunt Cantata”
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József Mukk, Tenor / István Gáti, Bass / Hungarian Radio Chorus
Failoni CO (Budapest) / Mátyás Antál

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Non sa che sia dolore, BWV 209
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María Sabina • Dionisio: In Memoriam
Orchestra and Chorus of the Comunidad de Madrid
José Ramón Encinar

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No-res (Nothing)
Denis Rafter, Narrator
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