



## PÄRT

### Babel

Wilten Boys' Choir/Johannes Stecher  
*Col legno* WWE 1CD 20427 57:26 mins

**BBC Music Direct** £15.99

Commentators can be quick to dismiss Pärt's music as too simple or sentimental. Yet such claims belie the complex musical and political process that saw Pärt arrive at his 'tintinnabulatory' approach amid the iron strictures of communist Estonia. This fine collection of choral works gathers together a rich array of Pärt's works for voice, featuring a number of surprisingly strident, urgent works amid Pärt's otherwise controlled musical expression. The disc is also notable in being the first recording of Pärt's vocal music performed by children's voices.

The collection ranges from the plaintive Magnificat of 1985 to two spirited world premiere recordings, including *Drei Hirtenkinder aus Fátima* (2015), where the setting of *Matthew* 21: 6 ('out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?') is all the more affecting for the young voices here performing. Composed to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Pope Benedict's ordination, the syrupy *Vater unser* for boy soprano and piano still baffles, but is rendered with warmth and maturity (although the sleeve notes do not say by whom). The disc otherwise captures Pärt's

profoundly gentle musical sensibility and his remarkable capacity to build restrained yet beguiling harmonies from the simplest of materials, all handled with skill and confidence by the Wilten Boys' Choir. *Kate Wakeling*

**PERFORMANCE**

★★★★

**RECORDING**

★★★★



## PÄRT

### Te Deum; Wallfahrtslied; Berlin Mass; After the Victory

Bavarian Radio Choir; Munich Radio Orchestra/Peter Dijkstra  
*BR Klassik* 900511 67:06 mins

**BBC Music Direct** £13.99

The album *Te Deum* offers powerful performances of four mid-period works by Pärt for choir and orchestra. Composed in 1985, the disc's title work is a bold 30-minute piece for three choirs, prepared piano, string orchestra and an aeolian harp or 'wind' harp (heard here on tape recorder), blending echoes of early European polyphony with homophonic passages based on Gregorian Chant. The work exemplifies the intensity and delicacy of the composer's signature restraint, with a single D triad standing as the harmonic basis of the entire work, and is here performed with sensitivity and poise. *Te Deum* is teamed with the *Berliner Messe* (Berlin Mass) of 1990, composed for voices and organ in honour of the 90th Catholic Day in Berlin and subsequently rearranged for choir and string orchestra in 1992