

# Mp3 The Marionettes Chorale - A Christmas Album



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Favourite Christmas carols, plus a little Trinidadian parang and Handel's Messiah from the Marionettes Chorale, Trinidad and Tobago's leading choir, and guest appearances by the Renegades Steel Orchestra and St Monica's Prep School Choir 21 MP3 Songs WORLD: Caribbean, CLASSICAL: Choral Music Show

all album songs: A Christmas Album Songs Details: Summary Led by conductor Gretta Taylor, the Marionettes Chorale is one of the Caribbeans leading choral groups and a household name in Trinidad and Tobago. The first choir to be formed in newly independent Trinidad and Tobago in 1964, it quickly distinguished itself in Trinidad and Tobagos Music Festival. The Chorale has performed regularly both at home and overseas. In 1995, it launched the Marionettes Youth Chorale, and the two groups regularly share the stage together at home. Beginnings In the middle of 1963, a notice appeared in the Talk of Trinidad column of the Trinidad Guardian, announcing the formation of a new choir and inviting singers to come for an audition. The response was tremendous. A few days later, outside a small house on Warner Street, a crowd of hopeful singers turned up to have their voices assessed. The small room with the big piano was soon crowded; latecomers stood outside on the sidewalk and, when their turn came, sang through the window. As the new choirs director was the music teacher at St Josephs Convent (Port of Spain), Jocelyn Pierre, many of the young singers were past pupils. For male choristers, Jocelyn turned to her counterpart at Fatima College, Father Tim Corcoran, and recruited graduates from his Dominic Savio choir and to keen young voices from elsewhere. And so the Marionettes Chorale was born, led by Jocelyn and co- director, June Williams-Thorne. Jocelyn and June ran the choir together until 1968 when June left. Jocelyn departed in 1974 to go to Canada to further her education. After a brief crisis of succession, singing member Gretta Taylor was chosen to assume the role of conductor, with fellow member Susan Dore as her assistant, and founder member Joanne Mendes as secretary. The three have

run the choir together ever since. All the choir members and leaders are part-time, non-professional, and unpaid. They come from every sector of Trinidad and Tobago society, devoting two evenings a week throughout the year to rigorous rehearsals, plus plenty of extra work as production time approaches. Membership averages 80 in both the senior and junior groups. A National Icon The Chorale competed intermittently in the biennial festivals between 1964 and 1980, when it retired unbeaten from local competition. After 1980, the choir was busy gaining respect on the international scene. Competing against the big names like Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, England, Ireland, Wales, Poland, Romania, the Philippines, Cuba, and the United States, the Marionettes won four major prizes from the three International Choral Festivals in which they participated: in Llangollen, Wales (1981); Cork, Ireland (1984); and Middlesbrough, England (1992). In the process, such distinguished musical figures as John Rutter, Philip Ledger, Andrew Carter and Gwyn Arch were high in their praises of the Chorales performances. In addition to Britain, the Chorale has toured extensively in the West Indies (Curaao, Grenada, St. Vincent, Barbados, Jamaica), and in North America and Central America (New York, Toronto, Montreal, Miami, Philadelphia, Washington DC, and Costa Rica). It has received standing ovations from capacity audiences at such prestigious venues as St Martin-in-the-Fields in London, the Assembly Rooms in York, and the Hall of the Americas in Washington. Over the years, it has performed for internationally acclaimed personalities such as Lord Browne and Colin Powell, and has entertained international delegates from the OAS and the Commonwealth, Caricom Heads of Government, and Commonwealth magistrates. In Trinidad and Tobago the Marionettes present full-length annual concerts at Christmas time, which usher in the Christmas season for capacity audiences and cover a wide range of music. These are supplemented with full-length performances, guest appearances, and fund-raising performances throughout the year. They have performed all over Trinidad and Tobago, and regularly take part in charity and community performances. Since 1974, The Marionettes have been directed and conducted by Gretta Taylor, assisted by Susan Dore and a committee headed by founder member Joanne Mendes. In 1987, the 25th anniversary of Trinidad and Tobagos independence, the Chorale was awarded the Humming Bird Medal (Gold) for its outstanding contribution to music. Its director, Gretta Taylor, was honoured with a similar award in 1990. The Chorale received the keys to the city of Port of Spain in 1992; the Port of Spain Corporation Achievement Award for sterling contribution to the field of music in 1999; and the Trinidad Tobago Icon (History Makers) Award for distinguished service to

Trinidad Tobago in 2002, in honour of the 40th anniversary of the nations independence. Repertoire The Marionettes Chorales repertoire spans a wide range of musical styles, from 16th-century Gabrielli to 20th-century Messiaen, as well as opera, spirituals, Caribbean and international folk songs, and calypso. It has always championed Trinidad and Tobagos music, which it has performed extensively on overseas tours. The Chorale also has had the honour of having work dedicated to it by composers including the late Dr. Havelock Nelson, Stewart Hylton Edwards and Alma Pierre. The Marionettes were one of the first to blend voices with steel in the 1960s, and have been accompanied by many top steel orchestras Pan Am North Stars, Trinidad All Stars, Renegades, Renegades Youth Orchestra, Desperadoes and Skiffle Bunch. They have introduced many contemporary choral works to audiences in the Caribbean, including Carl Orffs Carmina Burana; Fanshawes African Sanctus; Vaughan Williamss Five Mystical Songs, Brittens Ceremony of Carols; Poulencs Gloria; and Leonard Bernsteins Missa Brevis and Chichester Psalms. Some of the other major classical works the choir has undertaken under conductor Gretta Taylor include: A. Gabriellis 3 Choir Magnificat; G. Gabriellis 2 choir Magnificat; Handels Messiah; Bizets Carmen; Haydns Mass in Minor (Nelson Mass) and Te Deum; Schuberts Mass in G; Faures Requiem; Mendelssohns Hear My Prayer; Bachs Christmas Oratorio and Magnificat; Beethovens Choral Symphony (No.9, Ode to Joy); Brahms Liebeslieder Waltzes and Gypsy Songs; and Mozarts Solemn Vespers and Coronation Mass. The Marionettes have provided the chorus for several opera productions, including Mozarts The Magic Flute and The Marriage of Figaro, and have staged substantial segments of Broadway musicals and operettas including Bernsteins West Side Story,; Gershwins Porgy and Bess; Schoenbergs Les Miserables; Bock/Harnicks Fiddler on the Roof; Lloyd-Webbers Phantom of the Opera and Jesus Christ Superstar. The choir is well-known internationally for their performance of Caribbean calypso, folksong and steelband favourites. They have commissioned choral arrangements of Caribbean and national folk songs, calypso and other music, to perform both at home and overseas, including the work of: David Rudder, Andr Tanker, Len Boogsie Sharpe, Ken Professor Philmore, Ray Holman, Lord Kitchener (Aldwyn Roberts), and Desmond Waithe. Legacy In 1995, the junior arm of the choir, the Marionettes Youth Chorale, was launched. In 2005, the same year as the Youth Chorales tenth anniversary, the Marionettes took another step to ensure its longevity and its ability to serve the national community. It first completed the process of becoming an incorporated non-profit organization in Trinidad and Tobago. Furthermore, through the Marionettes Property Fund, into which the proceeds of fundraising

events supported by the national community were channeled, the Marionettes completed the acquisition of a plot of land in Port of Spain on which it will construct a performance and rehearsal space. . In January of 2006, Murchison Brown Mayor of Port of Spain and a founder member of the Marionettes Chorale presented the Chorale with the deed. After over 40 years, the group will finally have its own home, and a rehearsal and performance space it can share with the national cultural community. Crucial to the longevity of the organization and its contributions to the community is the support of bpTT (formerly Amoco), which has sponsored the choir for over 30 years. Secretary Joanne Mendes, says: Without that support, the challenge of sustaining the choirs over a long period would have been a hundred times harder. This has been a model of thoughtful, well-targeted cultural support by a major corporation. Tours 1965: Grenada; Barbados; and St Vincent 1967: Curaao; Jamaica; New York, U.S.A (United Nations); Toronto and Montreal (Carifta Expo 67) in Canada 1969: Grenada (Carifta Expo 69) 1981: London, England (Commonwealth Institute); Llangollen, Wales (International Eisteddfod) 1984: London, England; Cork, Ireland (Cork International Choral Festival) 1992: London (sold-out concert at St. Martin-in-the-Fields), Middlesbrough (International Choral Festival), York, and Cambridge in England; Edinburgh and Glasgow in Scotland 1997: Miami, Mansfield College (Pennsylvania), Philadelphia, Washington DC (Hall of the Americas), Princeton University, New York (Medgar Evers College) 2004: San Jose and Limon, Costa Rica Recordings To Music (1972) The Marionettes Live at Queens Hall (1989) Voices Steel, with All Stars Steel Orchestra (1995) Christmas with the Marionettes (1998) Good News (2002) Sing Noel (2007)

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