

Social Band CD Pure Delight

By Dan Wolfe

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Social Band is one of several choruses that ply the local roads and highways, going to and from rehearsals and/or performances. They are a community chorus, but with one exception: Vermont is their community.

They have always before programmed a good deal of music by Vermont composers, some of whom sing with the group, but last year they outdid themselves by commissioning 24 Vermont composers to write 24 new works based on texts that the composer wanted to set. The result has been heard throughout much of the state over the last six to nine months, and now it's available on CD.

What will you hear when you buy the disk? You'll hear music by people writing choral music for the first time to experienced Vermont composers. Each of the composers set a favorite text, and their setting is as important as the text itself. Some of the settings are simple, based on shape note singing, but they have their own vocal resonance that no other style approximates and their own acoustical properties. Then there are works that are simple in their words, but more complex in their settings. There are settings mostly for soprano alto tenor bass, but there are several that are written for men's voices only. The whole company does not sing on every cut, but there is a great deal of forward motion at all times in the singing, with no unbearable lack of uncertainty about where the next note is going to come from. This is a chorus – albeit a community chorus – that sings with fervor and most of the time with exactitude of line and pitch. It is an album of pure delight, and I hope they will publish the full 24 works, as I understand they are thinking of doing. Then Social Band's particular delight can be shared with the rest of the country.