

# Mp3 Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum, Almeda Berkey, Conductor - Arma Lucis

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Classical, Vocal, Folk -- eclectic themes and styles with a unique combination of the ancient and contemporary in Berkey's own compositions plus the exceptional, pure beauty of Almeda Berkey's professional chorale. 14 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Vocal Music, SPIRITUAL: Spirituals Details: Almeda Berkey conducts the singers of Nebraska's Professional Chorale, Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum, in a beautiful sampling of music from different times and places in America. From Alice Parker's setting of New England's Wondrous Love to the Civil War's Tenting Tonight and the 19th Century's Amazing Grace, the Cantorum's rich vocal timbre soars. James Erb's gently rolling Shenandoah sets the stage for the African-American Spiritual Soon-ah Will Be Done by William Dawson. Then a jump to California for the rousing Sacramento-Sis Joe and back to the Midwest for Native American Phillip White Hawk's Hold On!. South Dakota Shadows opens with a beautiful love song that sets the stage for this extended choral tone poem. Berkey weaves a tapestry of words and music ranging from the Scandinavian choral tradition: Indian Summer and Evening Shadows - to Jazz: Mercy Song - Country: Turkeys and Badger's - and chorus with piano quintet: Requiem for a Pioneer Woman. As an instrumental centerpiece, Boxing with Snowflakes evokes powerful feelings. Almeda's sensitive, guiding spirit brings the Cantorum and The Cat's Meow (instrumental ensemble) to heights that surpass the hopes and aspirations of any composer. The corporate expression of the singers is far greater than any of its single parts and simply has to be heard to be fully appreciated! --- QUOTES REVIEWS "Arma Lucis is a super album! It was quite teary to hear Norman's arrangements so lovingly recreated." John Rutter "Highlights are Jackson Berkey's 'Arma Lucis' and Knut Nystedt's 'Kyrie'." CD Review "We don't carry many classical choral collections, but this one is quite special ... Impeccable taste and admirable subtlety." Primarily A Cappella "The Lotti Crucifixus and the Victoria O vos omnes are outstanding. The Nystedt Kyrie presented here is the best version I have heard." William O. Baker, Chorus! "As for the Norman Luboff arrangements, they are as close to the real thing as anyone could come." Gunilla Luboff "What a glorious experience it was to compete in the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in Wales at their 50th Anniversary. On this,

our first CD, we present the selections we chose.... The Detroit Concert Choir placed first in the mixed choir division which included a performance of Brazilian Psalm by American composer Jean Berger. We were then invited to enter the Choir of the World competition, the festival's highlight that determines the overall winner... After a stunning performance of the majestic Svte Tihy by Alexandre Gretchaninoff and the hauntingly ethereal Arma Lucis by Jackson Berkey, the Detroit Concert Choir was declared the Choir of the World by a panel of internationally renowned adjudicators. Gordon Nelson, from CD Book "Choir of the World" Detroit Concert Choir First, you probably haven't heard of this group, the Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum. Think of them as a midwestern "farm team" for Norman Luboff. The Berkeys, Almeda (the conductor), and her husband Jackson (composer of the title piece) were good friends of Luboff. They lived in Nebraska, and Luboff suggested they create their own choir to do the same kind of music (and have the fun) that Luboff did. The SDG Cantorum was the result Arma Lucis, the title cut of the recording, is a modern, but quite accessible work. Other selections included five spirituals, all arranged by Luboff, and a wide variety of other styles, from Lotti's Crucifixus from the early 18th century to a Kyrie by Knut Nystedt (circa 1970), and some early American music thrown in as well (Chester from the time of the American Revolution). The selections show off the versatility of the choir. They are well trained, with a solid tone, and are up to the demands of the wide range of music. Bruckner's Christus Factus Est and the spiritual Wade in the Water are especially thrilling....

David A. Beamer, Clawson Michigan --- ALMEDA BERKEY CONDUCTOR / SINGER Almeda Berkey; conductor, lyric soprano, and lyricist; co-founded Nebraskas Professional Chorale Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum in 1988 and continues to direct its artistic endeavors. Forty-five years conducting credits include the Cantorum recordings: Arma Lucis, Gaudete, The Mountains and The Sea, Arvo The Magnificat, American Shadows, Cantorum Christmas, and Norman Luboff Remembered:. Her Master of Music degree in voice was augmented by much conducting study, and her choral conducting style is derived from such diverse sources of inspiration as Americas Norman Luboff and Swedens Eric Ericson. Ms. Berkey was the American jurist for the annual International Folksong Choir Festival in Barcelona, Spain, where she conducted the Cantorum in the opening and closing concerts in 1999. For nine years Almeda served on the Board of Directors of Chorus America, an organization representing North American professional and independent choral ensembles, and on the international ChoralNet board. After having sung many American-Canadian tours with the Norman Luboff Choir, she was Director of Choral Activities at the University of Nebraska at Omaha for

four years. For Berkey Meets Horowitz on the 503, she recorded Jacksons Voices from the Earth song cycle with her husband playing the Horowitz Steinway. She sang the 1990 premiere of two Berkey songs with the Omaha Symphony Chamber Orchestra, Bruce Hangen, conducting. She has also sung with the Scott Air Force Band, Captain Philip Waite, conducting. Playing keyboards with Mannheim Steamroller in concerts since 1973 has taken her across America, Canada, and Europe. As a lyricist (ASCAP), Almeda has written texts for several choral and solo works by Jackson. She maintains a private voice studio. As the century turned, she conducted a Berkey piece for the Omaha Millennium Choir (2000 voices, trumpets, and snare drums). Ms. Berkey continues to guest conduct, including the 3379th telecast of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in May 1994. She conducts Berkey premieres for choir and orchestra at Carnegie Hall for Mid-America Productions. She conducted 350 voices at the premiere of Berkeys LUltima Amor for the AmericaFest 2001 International Womens Choir Festival in Seattle. Being comfortable in all styles of music, Almeda is especially gifted at creating a diversity of tonal color and a full range of emotional intensity of the choral ensemble as she develops its complete performance potential. --- Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum Nebraska's Professional Chorale, is the product of the creative imagination of Almeda and Jackson Berkey, performing artists of Mannheim Steamroller fame. For years the Berkeys envisioned a choral group versatile in many styles of music and comfortable in a variety of performance and recording settings. The Cantorum's fulfillment of that vision has surpassed even their own expectations. The inspiration that led to forming the 28-member group can be traced not only to the Berkeys' sense of devotion to music, but to the influence of the late Norman Luboff as well. Almeda and Jackson Berkey met prior to a national tour with the famed Luboff choir -- Almeda as a singer, Jackson as a tour pianist. This combination of rare talents has lifted their musical accomplishments to heights which neither could have achieved individually. The three words, Soli Deo Gloria, mean "to God alone the glory" and were penned as a postscript by Johann Sebastian Bach to many of his manuscripts. Cantorum represents "singers." Not all of the group's music is of the sacred genre, however. Nor is it all classical. The versatility of the singers and the Berkeys' own musical backgrounds have allowed the group to perform a remarkably diverse array of music. The Cantorum repertoire encompasses sacred works, chamber music, folk songs, contemporary pop tunes, and original works composed by the Berkeys. The group also performs instrumental chamber music with a number of the singers doubling as instrumentalists. It is the goal of the Cantorum to offer professional choral performances of the highest

merit. The Omaha World-Herald said this about the group: "The ensemble brought to its singing an unerring purity of tone, well-defined articulations, and an ability to respond to the music's ever-changing nuances of colors and textures" and "Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum provides a showcase for...the best voices in the Omaha area..." The chorale has received international recognition for its seven recordings: Arma Lucis, Gaudete, The Mountains and the Sea, Arvo the Magnificat, American Shadows, Cantorum Christmas, and Norman Luboff Remembered. Selecting singers for such versatile performances was no easy task. In a relatively small group, it is necessary to sing with the bravura of a soloist, yet possess tonal qualities that also allow the voice to blend harmoniously as a chorister. Another unique requirement of the Cantorum singers is the ability to interpret how a composer intended his music to be performed. Certainly the execution of a 15th Century folk madrigal is far different from a chamber piece by Brahms or a symphonic work of Handel. It is a rare treat to the ear when style and interpretation combine in the masterful manner of the Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum. --- Recordings by Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum

The unique talents and backgrounds of Almeda and Jackson Berkey led to recording the Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum in the summer of 1989 at St. Cecilia's Cathedral. Their first recording, Arma Lucis, highlights the first season of performances. Digitally recorded on location, it features great a cappella literature from the Renaissance, stunning arrangements by Norman Luboff, and the world premiere recording of "Arma Lucis", Jackson Berkey's 11-minute a cappella work based on the texts inscribed on the walls of St. Cecilia's Cathedral. The piece was written for the Centennial Celebration of the Cathedral parish in November of 1988. The Cantorum's second recording, Gaudete!, was also recorded in St. Cecilia's Cathedral. This digital recording offers the first professional American recording of the "Gaudete" by Anders hrwall; and sensitive performances of selections from the Rachmaninoff "Vespers"; compositions by Tschesnokoff, Vittoria, Hovland, Bruckner, and Sweelinck. Gaudete! also features the premiere recording of several "Anniversary Carols", contemporary settings of traditional Christmas carols by Jackson Berkey. The Cantorum's third recording, The Mountains and the Sea, was post-produced at Sound Recorders, Omaha, Nebraska, the studio home of Mannheim Steamroller. The combination of Jackson Berkey's instrumental score, natural sounds from the Great Smoky Mountains and the Olympic National Parks, and the wonderful singing by the Cantorum transports us sensitively and sublimely into the world of nature. A fourth recording, Arvo the Magnificat, features the Cantorum performing Arvo Prt's "Magnificat", the August Soderman "Sacred Songs" and Berkey's "Native American Ambiances".

American Shadows, November 1996, is an historic portrait of American choral music, and features 10 of Jackson Berkey's choral compositions, including his South Dakota Bicentennial work, "South Dakota Shadows", as well as his Amazing Grace, Sacramento-Sis Joe, and Hold On! Cantorum Christmas followed with the Cantorums stunning capture of Jackson Berkeys Anniversary Carols. Ten fabulous arrangements of familiar carols for choir, harp, bass, and percussion are joined with two harp arrangements masterfully played by Kathy Bundock Moore of Greeley, CO. The Cantorum's latest release, Norman Luboff Remembered, features Luboffs exciting arrangements sung by the Cantorum and some members of his original touring choir. Orchestrations are written and performed by Normans tour pianist, Jackson Berkey. A delicious sampling of his folk songs, popular songs, gospel and folk hymns, and spirituals immortalizes a bit of the genius of Norman Luboff. Almeda and Jackson Berkey strive to see that others may experience the beauty, the enjoyment, and the inspiration of great music. Under the direction of Almeda Berkey and combined with the keyboard artistry of Jackson Berkey, the Cantorum has taken audiences on journeys across the oceans and through time using the languages and music of the world as transport. --- JACKSON BERKEY COMPOSER / PIANIST Jackson Berkeys artistry encompasses that of an acclaimed pianist, an inventive and highly creative composer, a meticulous producer and recording artist. His range of accomplishments in music combine with a depth of talent that is formidable indeed. His New York Town Hall Debut in 1969 launched a remarkable and highly varied career. First known as touring pianist for the Norman Luboff Choir, Jackson has recorded and toured as Featured Keyboard Artist with Chip Davis and Mannheim Steamroller for the past 30 years. With his advanced degree in performance from New Yorks Juilliard School, Berkeys musical foundation lies in the classical, sacred, and chamber genre. His earlier American Gramophone releases Sunken Cathedral, Ballade, and 109 featured compelling performances of classical piano works by Scriabin, Beethoven, Debussy, Rachmaninoff and Persichetti. That pursuit now continues with performances of works by Scarlatti, Debussy, Beethoven, Chopin and Liszt. American Gramaphones Holiday Musik series offers Berkeys performances of Harpsichord works by Domenico Scarlatti and J. S. Bach. On SDG Records, Jacksons solo CD, Facets, includes stunning performances of many signature works throughout his career, including classical pieces by Rachmaninoff, Debussy, Sibelius, Beethoven, Chopin, and Faur. On that label the artist has also released The Mountains and The Sea, Berkey Meets Horowitz on the 503, Cape May Preludes, Harpsichord Carols, and in 2004, Atlantic Fantasy. All CDs offer performances of

original solo keyboard and instrumental works from his published catalog. An accomplished composer, Jackson Berkeys publications include music for solo voice, solo instruments, chamber ensemble, orchestra, symphonic band, and choir. His Chamber Concerto for Organ, Winds, Percussion, and Strings and his Conversations for Harp and Chamber Orchestra were both premiered in 2004. From solo musicians to full orchestra and multiple choirs, Berkeys compositions create excitement through brilliant rhythmic patterns, metric modulations, and intense dance rhythms. His sensitivity to text and to both joyous and tender melodies give pleasure to every performer, including those oft-neglected players of the inner lines in ensemble music. Every musical force interacts with its musical partners, whether they be solo or duet melodies or a percussion ensemble with organ. His writing reveals careful attention to structure, form, and performance success; even with difficult-to-balance entities such as harp and orchestra. Highly evident in his intelligent and expressive solo piano works is Berkeys unique ability to shape phrases and draw extraordinary color from the instrument. Jackson and his wife Almeda - herself a distinguished conductor, singer, and librettist - have documented their work with SDG Records, which also records the professional choir, Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum. Almeda conducts pristine performances of many of Jacksons compositions, as well as beautiful music from all periods of classical music and folk music. A beautiful sampling of Luboff choral arrangements is showcased on their nostalgic Norman Luboff Remembered. Six other Cantorum CDs include Berkey compositions among other classical works. Also recording two CDs of Jacksons treble choral music on SDG Records is the internationally recognized Seattle Girls Choir conducted by Dr. Jerome Wright. An ASCAP award-winning composer, Jacksons catalog of over 300 works is enjoying hundreds of fine performances across the United States and abroad. Recent honors include First Prize in the New Music for Young Ensembles Composition Contest in New York City for his Piano Trio Kassarian; the Alienor Harpsichord Festival at Hilton Head, S.C; and the Nebraska Individual Artist Fellowship for Performing Arts, Distinguished Achievement in Composition Award. Jackson Berkey appeared on the artist roster of Baldwin Piano and Organ Company for more than two decades. Performances of several of Jacksons longer works have been conducted by Almeda in New Yorks Carnegie Hall. She also conducted the world premiere of his LUltima Amor for triple womens choirs, commissioned for the 400 voices of the AmericaFest 2001 International Womens Choir Festival. Some works have been set to film and to dance, such as Arma Lucis, performed at Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. --- About SDG Records and SDG Press Soli Deo Gloria - "To God, alone, the

glory." J.S. Bach used this phrase as a signature at the end of many of his works. One sees it over doorways and music instruments in Europe. SDG Press was founded in 1985 to publish the compositions and arrangements of Jackson Berkey. For many years, both Almeda and Jackson toured and performed with Norman Luboff, the extraordinary choral performer, composer, and publisher. It was at Norman's suggestion that the Berkeys formed "Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum" which Almeda conducts. SDG Records was first established as the record label for the Cantorum. Jackson Berkey also has many works published by Walton Music Corporation, Norman Luboff's highly regarded publishing company. Berkey's entire published catalog may be viewed at [berkey.com](http://berkey.com). Click "Official Website" above.

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