

Maxine Thévenot

Review of **Winter: An Evocation** by **Charles H. Parsons**
– **The American Record Guide** (Nov/Dec 2012)

Although billed as ‘music for the winter season for women’s voices, harp and organ’, this really is music for the Christmas season. The ubiquitous Ceremony of Carols opens the program, followed by two traditional English carols for solo harp and the just as ubiquitous ‘Silent Night’. But in between come eight most unusual and new selections: music by Andrew Ager (2), Miklos Kocsar, Sean Og Tuamo (solo harp), Cary Ratcliff, Tarik O’Regan, Patrick Hadley, and John Tavener. The music is quite lovely-soothing and tranquil. The performances are the same. Texts are included.

Review of **Winter: An Evocation** by **David Steinberg** –
The Albuquerque Journal (23 Dec 2011)

Though the title doesn’t hint at it, this is mostly an album of religious Christmas music performed by the otherworldly female voices of Polyphony. The centerpiece is a gorgeous rendition of Benjamin Britten’s “A Ceremony of Carols.” There also are tracks of carols by

John Tavener, Franz Gruber and Tarik O’Regan, among others.

What captured my attention were Cary Ratcliff’s “Were we Dreaming?” and the title track, an eight-minute secular, seasonal piece by Canadian Andrew Ager. Polyphony, which commissioned it, premiered the work two years ago. It moves from Lynn Gorman DeVelder’s opening harp solo to the first of several choral segments, and closes, after a pause, with another harp solo. What is so hypnotic about the work is Polyphony’s and the harpist’s talents and Ager’s genius for translating snowy winter scenes in nature into music. Polyphony is a treasure.