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## Classical music reviews

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*There is an unexpected bounty of fresh choral recordings out there. Here are three Canadian highlights:*

**VICTORIA SCHOLARS** *Distant Voices* (victoriascholars.ca): ★★★★★ (out of 4)  
This Toronto all-male choir has produced a fabulous all-Canadian disc under music director Jerzy Cichocki. It's a generous 69 minutes tilted in favour of accessible sacred settings by composers such as Denis Bédard, Peter Togni, Imant Raminsh and Srul Irving Glick. The vocal balance is superb and the music beautifully shaped. The booklet includes plenty of background information and all the texts.



**ELEKTRA WOMEN'S CHOIR** *Elektra's Garden* (elektra.ca): ★★★ Vancouver's all-female choir has assembled a breezy survey of art and folksongs from Europe and Canada. The group sounds great and co-conductors Morna Edmundson and Diane Loomer move everything along breezily, but there's a cohesion missing in the disc's sound that detracts from an otherwise fine release.

**ST. MICHAEL'S CHOIR SCHOOL** *From Courts on High* (smcs.on.ca): ★★★ The kids of Toronto's only school where music is as important as math sound fantastic in 25 vocal settings and musical interludes that evoke its close ties with St. Michael's Roman Catholic Cathedral. Unlike many school discs, there is much more here than just a keepsake for relatives. Conductor Jerzy Cichocki opts for discipline instead of fire, but there are no disappointments from the current wards of an underappreciated Toronto institution.

*John Terauds*