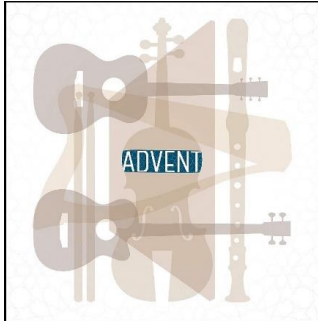


Erwilian  
Advent



Appropriately enough **Advent**, the melodious Christmas offering by the band **Erwilian** opens like a present. Intricate papercutting and whimsical unfolding garners you an instrumental EP of six awe-inspiring acoustic gifts with the Deluxe Edition. This enchanting music is completely different from the traditional jingle bell tirades we're used to. Warm, soft, gentle music that delights the young and comforts the not so young is what you'll find all wrapped up in guitar, celesta, harp, violin, recorders and more.

First off, Erwilian tenders an intricate, but very special version of the Wexford Carol simply entitled **Wexford**. Traditionally a popular Irish tune that dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the band revives it with their infusion of warmth and a newfound intricacy.

The fire crackles, the wind blows, and the snow falls and in no time everything is a blanket of white. Now we just need appropriate music. The tune **Whiteout** is perfect for the occasion. It is light, cheerful, and quirky in just the right way. The recorder notes dance in between snowflakes. It is quite a sight to see and hear. It is clean, crisp, and fun. One of my favorites of all time is **Carol of the Bells**. The dulcimer adds a tinny, old world charm to this paean from the Ukraine. The flow is marvelous, the melody memorable.

Adoration of the Birth of Jesus is a respected part of Christian religion and the next two songs, **Animaux: La Crèche** and **Animaux: La Faune** voice an intimacy, a knowledge, and a reverence of the event. Animaux is French for, you guessed it, animals. La Crèche is the manger, so both songs pertain to the Birth of Jesus and that very special night. Dulcet recorder and gentle guitar soothes the soul on both tracks, but with different rhythms and different approaches. Excruciatingly beautiful violin and recorder penetrates the spirit like musical grace.

The bells ring out in the final tune called **Nova**. It is the new. It is the star. It is that Night. Erwilian uses the song, "Il est né, le Divin Enfant", a song I sang in the choir as a child as a basis for Nova. Theirs is a bit livelier than I recall, but the sentiment is just as strong and just as reverent.

This is the definitive Christmas album. Erwilian's gentle, serene, contemporary/New Age music comes from a different time and a different place even though it is a recent creation. No cell phones or computers to harangue you. Just peacefulness. The music is, if anything, anachronistic and for that reason alone I truly like it. Highly recommended. – R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews