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Advance Australia Fair (The Australian National Anthem)

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Advance Australia Fair
Various artists
ABC Classics 476 7172

Reviewed by Michael Hannan

An opportunity is presented here to critique different arranging approaches for the same songs. There are seven versions of “Advance Australia Fair”, two of “Song of Australia”, four of “Waltzing Matilda” and one of “I Still Call Australia Home”. The compilation is dominated by Tommy Tycho’s conservative arrangements of all four songs. Tycho’s three renditions of “Advance Australia Fair” reveal that he may have been responsible for the widespread dubious practice of doubling the note values of the last two bars. The versions by Sculthorpe and Dreyfus prove the folly of trying to force the tune onto inappropriate chord progressions, while Carl Vine’s lush adventure even dares to change the tune. David Stanhope’s non-nonsense arrangement for military band is ironically the most effective. The artistic highlight of the CD is Alan John’s inventive orchestral version of “Waltzing Matilda” while the wooden spoon goes to Tycho’s plodding choral arrangement of Peter Allen’s cheesy ballad.