

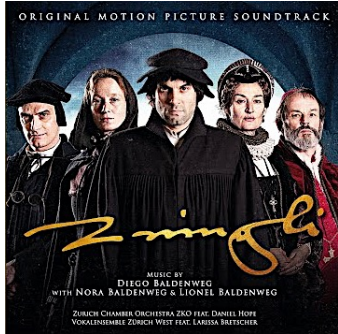


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## The Reformer - Zwingli: A Life's Portrait \*\*\*\*



DIEGO BALDENWEG, LIONEL BALDENWEG,  
NORA BALDENWEG  
Great Garbo Music  
20 tracks - 66:38

Swiss director Stefan Haupt, known for his many documentary films, explores in *The Reformer—Zwingli: A Life’s Portrait* the founder of the Swiss Reformation, priest and theologian Ulrich Zwingli, one of the many Renaissance reformers of the Catholic Church. Though Zwingli would have many adherents to his way of thinking, his ideas did not spawn their own Protestant church. The film has played in Switzerland, but does not seem to have a wider release set, though it has garnered some critical notice. The score is by the award-winning composing sibling team [the Baldenwogs](#) (*Zone Rouge*), performed by the Zurich Chamber Orchestra and featured violinist Daniel Hope.

The Baldenwogs create in their score a sense of religious piety and connection with the divine, expressed by a blend of vocalise, choral ideas, and a sense of reaching outward in several of the primary themes. The gorgeous “Prologus” is marked with Renaissance flavorings that address the film’s 16th century setting, and indeed, the melodic lines throughout the album often take cadential turns that suggest Renaissance era arrival points.

A captivating vocalise adds an angelic quality against static string writing in “Pura,” while “Adiuva Nos, Deus” involves Romantic elements and bridges the gap back to the Renaissance. A touch of Baroque string stylings emerges in tracks like “Tempus Fugit” and “Agitatio,” with a more modern take on the material in “Verbum Vivat.” Chant serves as yet another reference point for the composers, as evidenced in “MDXIX,” an ethereal piece boasting modern choral harmonies over pedal points.

The score’s choral elements prove to be versatile, and are sometimes used to evoke eeriness. Similarly, “Crypta,” the penultimate track, introduces a brief moment of dissonance and ramps up the tension with strange sounds, including a recessed pipe organ.

*Zwingli* delivers a rich tapestry of string and choral writing highlighted by solo voice, all of it coalescing into an engrossing album experience. This is a beautiful score that many folks won’t hear a peep about, but it’s well worth tracking down.  
—**Steven A. Kennedy**

Comments regarding this review can be sent to: [stev4uth@hotmail.com](mailto:stev4uth@hotmail.com).

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