

Requiem and Psalm 130

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Short Description

The Exon Singers, Stephen Wallace (Counter-tenor)

Conducted by Mathew Owens

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The pencil scoring of the work was completed in January 1998, after which he was unable to work at all for some weeks, but he was able to produce the final score in ink by May of the same year, and he completed the proof reading in early June. He died 3 weeks later. George Lloyd adored singers and the expressive power of the human voice, and it was as a composer for the voice that he made his name with his opera *Iernin*, which had an exceptionally long run in London in the 1930s. He abandoned operatic writing after his traumatic experiences in the Second World War, but continued to compose and he went on to write symphonies and concertos, together with chamber works, all of which were performed and recorded.

The Lloyd Requiem is a setting of the standard Latin text. The usual end of a Requiem is the *Libera Me*, but this is not considered essential and Lloyd preferred to end the piece on a hopeful and positive note, so concludes with *Lux Aeternae*. Although Lloyd was known for his ebullient and energetic climaxes, this work by contrast is generally quiet in tone. It is Italian in style, and moves between modal and romantic idioms.

Reviews

This disc will be a compulsory acquisition for any Lloyd fan but it will also be lovingly appreciated by any admirer of the vocal music of Faure, Rutter or Holst. A lovely remembrance of a warm-hearted composer who wrote against the spirit of the times and whose music finally met success. His was a dazzling creativity that reached its apex in symphonies no. 4 to no. 7 and the Pervigilium Veneris. **Rob Barnett**

George Lloyd's **Requiem**, his final work, was completed in January 1998, seven months before his death at the age of eighty-five. It is a setting of the standard Latin text with the exception of the *Libera Me* because, characteristically, the composer wished to finish the piece on a positive note, which he does in style with one of his most memorable "big tunes" (as he liked to call them). Suffering from heart failure, Lloyd found he did not possess the necessary strength to score his Requiem for full orchestra and so chose the smaller-scale forces of solo counter-tenor, chorus and organ. Written in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales (the occasional use of chant-like declamatory passages for the soloist recalls the ending of Verdi's Requiem, a favourite work of Diana's), the Requiem is also a conscious leave-taking on the part of the composer. When the "big tune" finally steals in near the end of the concluding *Lux Aeternam*, it is hard to remain unmoved by the typically Lloydian combination of disarming simplicity and life-affirming optimism, especially in its poignant, valedictory context. **Paul Conway**

He knew when he wrote it that he didn't have long to live. It was begun in autumn 1997, finished in late January 1998, and the score proofed in May; two months later he was dead. Its composer being the man he was, the musical language is immediately accessible, and unashamedly melodic - his tunes melt in your ears. The harmonic world is less individual than much of the orchestral music, but I wonder whether that wasn't part of his design - a retreat of the individual before something larger and more important. And somehow the sentiment survives the relative anonymity of the language. Lloyd does use plenty of dramatic contrast, though: his chorus exclaim as well as whisper; soloists step forward from their ranks; the style ranges from richly Romantic to false-Medieval (in the *Hostias* and *Sanctus*); the organ subtly underpins here and thunders there. **Martin Anderson**

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