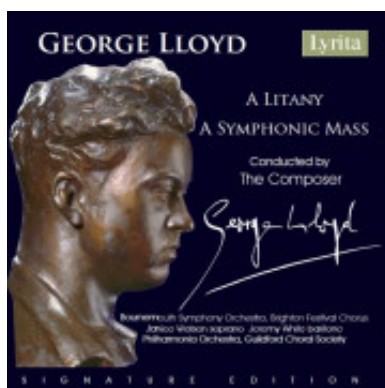


George Lloyd: A Litany & A Symphonic Mass



Catalogue Number: SRCD2419

Short Description

- available to download and stream from all Digital Platforms

Conceived on a grand scale, Lloyd's late choral works build fruitfully upon his previous experience in other genres. They share with his operas an innate lyricism, natural affinity with the human voice and feeling for the long line, while their structural balance, intensive working out of motifs and rich orchestral palette owes a significant debt to his prolific symphonic output.

Chris de Souza writing in *The Independent*, 1998, described the Brighton Festival commission of *A Symphonic Mass* as 'perhaps the climax' of Lloyd's 'astonishing career'. In his review of the original release of the present recording, Ivan March was moved to describe the Mass as 'one of the finest pieces of English choral writing of the twentieth century'.

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Description

Manufacturer: Wyastone Estate Limited, Wyastone Leys, Monmouth, NP25 3SR
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"Is it recommended?"

Indeed, not least as these reissues come with full texts and detailed notes from **Paul Conway**. Inherently unoriginal while unequivocally sincere, Lloyd's late choral works are far removed from the facile disingenuity of much current choral music and are the more appealing for this." Richard Whitehouse, *Arcana* [Full review here](#)

"This latest release of choral music continues the excellent partnership between the Wyastone Estate and the George Lloyd Society which will see all of the old Albany discs released under the Lyrita

label... Like all of Lloyd's music it is in late Romantic style untouched by the horrors of serialism or the avant-garde. It is a heartfelt utterance that welcomes the listener in from the start and bids a fond farewell at the end. The highlight for me is the sixth movement which merges the Sanctus and Benedictus. The inclusion of a virtuoso part for sleigh bells is inspired and the sound of the boys' choir sing multiple Osannas will, I guarantee, stay with you long after the end of the work.

A Litany of 1995 was commissioned by the adventurous and excellent Guildford Choral Society. I am sorry to say it is the only work of his which escaped my CD collection, and I was bowled over listening to it. It is another large-scale work, but this time with extensive parts for solo soprano and baritone...

These works are as good as anything by Vaughan Williams or Walton. Why, oh why are they not performed?!" **Paul RW Jackson, *British Music Society***

Lyrta are issuing with commendable speed all the recordings of his own music which George Lloyd made; I believe it's the intention to release everything during 2024. They've already issued all twelve of his symphonies in two four-disc sets... The present set includes two substantial choral works which Lloyd composed in the last few years of his life... A Symphonic Mass is a work conceived on a grand scale. It's long – this performance plays for 60:44 – and it's scored for substantial forces...

The Kyrie contains a great deal of dramatic writing for the chorus; within a couple of minutes, I'd scribbled in my notes that the choir was being challenged in terms of their stamina. That said, here and elsewhere there are lots of occasions when the choir sings at a quiet volume – though without sacrificing intensity. It's noticeable that, for all the drama in the movement, it has a subdued conclusion. The Gloria follows a similar trait; there is a good deal of drama but also passages of reflection and poetry. I like the way that Lloyd brings the movement to a quiet, mysterious close. His approach to setting the text of the Credo is somewhat unconventional at times – and none the worse for that...

Though I collected a lot of recordings of George Lloyd's music when they were first issued, *A Litany* is a piece that has eluded me until now, but I'm glad I've now heard it. It's an impressive piece. Once again, as in the Mass, the vocal writing – for soloists and for the chorus – is challenging, not least in terms of the stamina required. I think the vocal writing is effective and, if anything, Lloyd's response to the text he is setting is even more acute than was the case in the Mass. It's hard to imagine that the music could be better served than by this impassioned performance under the composer's direction. Again, I think we benefit from the fact that the recording was made hot on the heels of the first performance and by largely the same performers.

The recording of *A Symphonic Mass* was engineered by Harld Barnes and Alan Mosley; for *A Litany* Tony Faulkner was in the control room. Both recordings are very good. Lyrta's presentation is admirable: Paul Conway's booklet essay is predictably excellent.

Anyone who likes the music of George Lloyd should hear these fine recordings, especially if you only know his purely orchestral music." **John Quinn, *MusicWeb International***

"Symphonic Mass premiered at the Brighton Festival in 1993, and an operatically charged *Litany* for soprano and baritone soloists, chorus, and orchestra introduced at London's Royal Festival Hall in March, 1996. Lloyd died in 1998, so all were written near the end of his life. Indeed, the annotator tells us that the decision to set Diana's Requiem for organ accompaniment alone reflected Lloyd's concern for his fleeting stamina and strength. (It proved to be his final work and wasn't performed until after he died.) Smaller in scale and less complex than the others, that Requiem is the most accessible of these major works. I really like the sad but uplifting *Lacrimosa*, the evocative trumpet calls (on the organ) in his 'Tuba mirum', and the 'Dies Irae' that manages to shimmer a bit despite

the forbidding nature of the text. Most affecting of all is Lloyd's writing for his soloist, which is set low in the counter-tenor's range, cancelling out the hollow, reedy timbre we often hear when such a voice is on duty. The singer is allowed to veil his tone, darkening it to allow an 'In gemisco' or 'Quid sum miser' to speak with some appealing resonance. This is very classy writing, in short, and counter-tenor Stephen Wallace lives up to its demands... These performances are viscerally exciting, with the orchestras sounding especially good under the composer's baton. Chorally, though, there was more to achieve with color, balance, dynamic contrasts and—oh my goodness— diction, which was abysmal for everyone except that first-rate counter-tenor. Chandos, Harmonia Mundi or one of the other big boys (which these days would include Naxos) would really be onto something were they to make that happen." **Greenfield, *AmericanRecordGuide***