



REQUIEM IN BLUE | Harvey Brough

HARVEY BROUGH - REQUIEM IN BLUE

2010

SMUDGED DISCS

HARVEY BROUGH: COMPOSER, PRODUCER, CONDUCTOR

INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW - SEPTEMBER 2010 - IVAN MOODY

Vocal

Bantock
A Pageant of Human Life. Three Choruses for Male Voices. Coronach. Darest thou now, O Soul^o. The Golden Journey to Samarkand. The Happy Isle. In the silent west. The Isles of Greece. The Lake Isle of Innisfree. The Mermaid's Croon. One with eyes the fairest. A Pageant of Human Life^o. Requiem. They that go down to the sea in ships.
Saint Louis Chamber Chorus/Philip Barnes with ^oWashington University Concert Choir/^oJohn Stewart; ^oParkway North High School Choir/^oBrian Reeves.
Regent REGCD310 (full price, 1 hour 17 minutes). English texts included. Website www.regent-records.co.uk. Producers Gary Cole, Martha Shaffer. Engineer Barry Huffer. Dates November 10th-13th, 2008.

In his highly detailed and engagingly written booklet notes, St Louis Chamber Chorus director Philip Barnes quotes the January 1909 issue of *The Musical Times*, in which one of Granville Bantock's former teachers says "I do not think I have ever had a pupil who worked so hard. He was none of your born geniuses that the hallpenny papers lose to tell us about, who write symphonies at seven and are exploded gas-bags at fourteen. He dug and siled his field like an honest labourer, and it was many years before the crop was good. But now he can look with pride upon the just results of good studentship."

Which seems like dazzling with faint praise, a suspicion borne out by the superbly crafted yet mostly unadventurous unaccompanied choral works included here. This is respectable Edwardian music through and through, and it receives better performances at the hands of the excellent St Louis Chamber Chorus, with the occasional help from the Parkway North High School Choir and members of the Washington University Concert Choir, than it probably deserves.

Yes there is, as Barnes points out, "much that is original and inspired" – such as, for instance, the "Death" stanzas of the setting of Thomas More's *A Pageant of Human Life* (apparently it's marked "sardonic" in the score and the performers bring this out nicely in the final line especially: "Vouchsafe to lend (though it be to your pain) / To me, a fool, some of your wise brain.") and the superb Whitman setting with which the disc ends, *Darest thou now, O Soul* – but for the most part this isn't music to set the world on fire.

That said, the disc makes for a wholly enjoyable listening experience, with the well-deployed contrasts between imitative and homophonic writing, the skilful word-

painting and the dynamic and rhythmic contrasts bringing the poetry alive. The tolling bells and glidding feet in the sixth stanza of *The Golden Journey to Samarkand*, the convincing chiaroscuro of "Paracelsus" for men's chorus (which performance features some fine solo work from tenor David Goldstein), and the beautiful, transparent *Lake Isle of Innisfree*, in which Emily Heslop's soprano soars on such phrases as "In the bee-loud glade".

In conclusion, this is good rather than great music, impeccably sung. **Robert Levent**

Brough
Requiem in Blue^o. Valette in Pace^o. I carry your heart^o.
Natasha Atlas (voice); **Liane Carroll** (voice/piano); **Clara Sanabras** (voice/archlute/baroque guitar); **Mark Le Brocq** (tenor); **Blaze Kidron** (voice); **Tom Arthurs**, **Gerard Presencer** (flute/viola); **Mike Outram** (electric guitar); **Hills Road Sixth Form College Chamber Choir**; **Portsmouth Cathedral Choir**; **Britten Sinfonia**; **Choir of Clare College, Cambridge**; **Harvey Brough** (tenor); **Andrew Parrott**, **Tim Brown**.
Smudged Discs SMU503 (full price, 1 hour 9 minutes). English texts included. Producers Harvey Brough; ^oAlexander Van Ingen. Engineers ^oAndrew Mellor; ^oMike Hutch. Dates December ^o3rd and ^o14th, 2007; ^oMarch 15th, 2008.

Harvey Brough Smudged Discs

I've heard a lot about the success of Harvey Brough's *Requiem in Blue*, which was written in memory of his elder brother, but this is the first time I've actually heard it. That success seems to me, on the basis of this

excellent recording, entirely deserved. Brough mixes, as he himself notes, all kinds of music about which he cares and with which he has been involved professionally, so it is in that sense a cross-over work, but since there is a guiding hand and brain in charge of the process, its coherence is guaranteed.

The opening movement brings together Irish folk-song, some outstanding jazz work from Gerard Presencer – it made me think of Terence Blanchard's powerful *A Tale of God's Will (A Requiem for Katrina)* – and a choral setting of the "Introit" and "Kyrie" of the Latin Requiem. The second continues the scheme but also brings in, over an insistent setting of the "Offertorium", gospel music (*Sometimes I feel like a motherless child*) and children singing the grim round *Old Adam Brown is dead and gone*. The "Sanctus" really pulls at the heart-strings, with the children's choir intervening with an affecting rendition of *Flow gently, sweet Afton*, before breaking down into a cadenza for drinkit. The "Benedictus" similarly breaks down, with sanctus bells, jazz trumpet and children introducing a hypnotically reiterated "Hosanna in excelsis", and mysterious strummings that introduce the "Agnus Dei", which creates its own private world of grief even while being a public celebration. Though it has beautiful moments, I find the following "Liberia me" to be the least successful movement of the work: perhaps because its material seems too familiar, perhaps because it is too sectional.

The divided quality of the work is most evident in the following "Pie Jesu", in which the children reiterate the Latin text, imploring Christ to give rest to the departed, while soloists sing a text from Lee Hall's *Spenceface Striding*, which states unambiguously that "all of us will end up being one – and that is nothing – and it is endless" and a verse from the Book of Revelation (which I cannot honestly discern in the multi-textual setting), but then returns again to a plea for eternal rest. "In paradysum", the penultimate movement, powerfully brings back the opening folk-song, its last verse, to end in a blaze of consolatory glory. The concluding "Lux aeterna" has over its choral setting of the Latin another text from Hall, most movingly recited by Blaze Kidron.

All is not over, however, because the disc also contains the impressive choral-orchestral cycle *Valette in Pace*, again to words by Hall, and the arthem-like Cummings setting *I carry your heart*. Both make use of more sophisticated choral writing than the *Requiem*, which is intended for different kinds of performance circumstances, but both evince the same qualities of immediate emotional appeal, unshamed melodic lushness and episodes of strong rhythmic drive. Highly recommended.

Ivan Moody

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OBSERVER - 13/06/2010 - MARTIN LONGLEY

This recording is a rollercoaster ride. Harvey Brough's now-familiar Requiem in Blue welds jazz singers and musicians with traditional choirs and wonderful children's voices to produce a collage of sound and emotion. More reflective, and altogether more successful, is his searing Valete in Pace, written for the 60th anniversary of D-Day and featuring Portsmouth Cathedral Choir, which gave it its premiere. Tenor Mark Le Broq is a stunning soloist, tearing at our hearts with Lee Hall's disquieting text.

AMG ALLMUSIC GUIDE TYO CLASSICAL MUSIC - STEPHEN EDDINS

British musician Harvey Brough -- a tenor specializing in early music, a pop album producer, a jazz and rock guitarist, a world music performer -- is also a composer whose music draws unabashedly on his diverse experiences. Requiem in Blue, written in 1998 in memory of his brother, uses nine Latin texts from the traditional requiem (omitting the Dies Irae), but intersperses them with folk songs and with his settings of contemporary poetry. It is scored for choir, children's chorus, an ensemble made up of a mix of classical, jazz, and world instruments, and a number of vocal soloists from various traditions. Given the wide spread of its disparate elements, it's perhaps surprising that Brough is able to pull them together so convincingly. Some sections are fully integrated, and in others, the different styles are dramatically juxtaposed, but the effect of the whole is never less than compelling. The piece flows organically within each movement, and from movement to movement without coming across as a pastiche, and its cumulative impact is powerfully moving. Valete in Pace, a setting of traditional Latin texts related to the monastic hours as well as a contemporary libretto by Lee Hall, is scored for more traditional forces -- soloists, choir, childrens' choir, and orchestra -- but it's no less skillfully executed or effective. The vast array of performers, including the Choir of Clare College Cambridge, Portsmouth Cathedral Choir, and the Britten Sinfonia, are all top-notch. They are utterly invested in the music and their enthusiasm comes across unambiguously. The sound is clean and present.

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INDEPENDENT - 18/06/2010 - ANDY GILL

Requiem in Blue is an ambitious, multi-disciplinary work in tribute to the composer's late brother, featuring sections of the Latin Mass in alliance with folk and jazz elements: in the opening "Introit & Kyrie", for example, Natacha Atlas's rendition of "Black Is the Colour of My True Love's Hair" presages the Latin text.

Likewise, the blues spiritual "Motherless Child" offers counterpoint to the ensuing "Offertorium", while "Sanctus" features both adult and children's choirs over waltz-time theorbo, rolling Latin-jazz percussion and the flugelhorn of Gerard Presencer. The requiem is accompanied here by Brough's earlier "Valete in Pace", commissioned for the 40th anniversary of D-Day.