

13 Jun 2010: Brough's Requiem in Blue is emotional but his D-Day-inspired Valete in Pace trumps it, writes **Stephen Pritchard**

Harvey Brough: Requiem in Blue/Valete in Pace/I Carry Your Heart (SMU603)

Stephen Pritchard

The Observer, Sunday 13 June 2010



- . **Harvey Brough**
- . **Brough: Requiem In Blue**
- . Soloists; Choir of Clare College Cambridge; Choir of Portsmouth Cathedral; Britten Sinfonia; Harvey Brough/Andrew Parrott/Tim Brown, directors.
- . Smudged discs
- . 2010

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.

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Album: Harvey Brough, Requiem in Blue (Smudged Discs)

(Rated 4 stars/ 5)

Reviewed by Andy Gill

Friday, 18 June 2010

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.

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DOWNLOAD THIS Requiem in Blue; Valete in Pace

Bantock

A Pageant of Human Life. Three Choruses for Male Voices. Coronach. Darest thou now, O Soul! 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. Requiem. They that go down to the sea in ships.

Saint Louis Chamber Chorus/Philip Barnes with Washington University Concert Choir/John Stewart; Parkway North High School Choir/Brian 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 Hufker. 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 love to tell us about, who write symphonies at seven and are exploited gas-bags at fourteen. He dug and tilled 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 damning 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' stanza of the setting of Thomas More's *A Pageant of Human Life* (apparently it's marked 'sardonico' 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-

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painting and the dynamic and rhythmic contrasts bringing the poetry alive. The tolling bells and plodding 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 Goldman); and the beautiful, transparent *Lake Isle of Innisfree*, in which Emily Heslop's soprano soars on such phrases as 'in the bee-loud glade'.

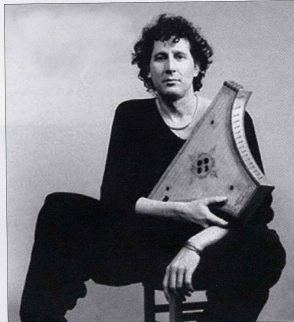
In conclusion, this is good rather than great music, impeccably sung. **Robert Levett**

Brough

Requiem in Blue. Valette in Pace. i carry your heart.

*Natacha Atlas (voice), *Liane Carroll (voice/piano), *Clara Sanabras (voice/archlute/Baroque guitar), *Mark Le Brocq (tenor), *Blaze Kidron (voice), *Tom Arthurs, *Gerard Presencer (flugelhorn), *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 SMU603 (full price, 1 hour 9 minutes). English texts included. Producers *Harvey Brough, **Alexander Van Ingen. Engineers *Andrew Mellor, **Mike Hatch. Dates December *3rd and *4th, 2007, **March 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 Abram 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 drunkie. 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 'Libera 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

Spoonface Steinberg, 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 *midlings*), but then returns again to a plea for eternal rest. 'In paradisu!', 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 anthem-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, unashamed melodic lushness and episodes of strong rhythmic drive. Highly recommended.

Ivan Moody

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Brough

Requiem in Blue

Valette in Pace

i carry your heart

Natacha Atlas (voice) Liane Carroll (voice and piano) Clara Sanabras (voice/

arch lute/baroque guitar) Mark Le Brocq (tenor) Blaze Kidron (voice) Tom

Arthurs, Gerard Presencer (flugelhorn) Mike Outram (electric guitar)

Hills Road Sixth Form College Chamber Choir

Choir of Clare College, Cambridge

Harvey Brough Tenor and Conductor (Requiem in Blue)

Andrew Parrott Conductor (Valette in Pace)

Tim Brown Conductor (i carry your heart)

I've heard a lot about the success of Harvey Brough's *Requiem in Blue*, which was written in memory of his older brother, but this is the first time I've actually heard it/ that success it 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.

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The divided quality of the work is most evident in the following 'Pie Jesu', in which the children reiterate the latin text, imploring God to give rest to the departed, while soloists sing a text from Lee Hall's *Spoonface Steinberg*, 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 *melange*), but then returns again to a plea for eternal rest. 'In paradisum' 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.

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