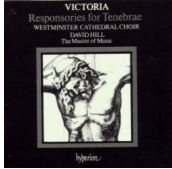


Tomas Luis de Victoria - Responsories for Tenebrae (1987)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 01 April 2012 20:03 - Last Updated Tuesday, 17 June 2014 09:15

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1. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Amicus meus 3:05 2. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Iudas mercator pessimus 2:28 3. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Unus ex discipulis meis 3:47 4. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Eram quasi agnus 3:16 5. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Una hora 2:50 6. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Seniores populi 4:30 7. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Tamquam ad latronem 3:33 8. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Tenebrae factae sunt 4:01 9. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Animam meam dilectam 7:00 10. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Tradiderunt me 2:43 11. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Iesum tradidit impius 3:01 12. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Caligaverunt oculi mei 5:43 13. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Recessit pastor noster 3:02 14. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: O vos omnes 2:48 15. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Ecce quomodo moritur 4:53 16. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Astiterunt reges 2:07 17. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Aestimatus sum 2:28 18. Victoria: Tenebrae Responsories: Sepulto Domino 4:34 Westminster Cathedral Choir David Hill - Master of Music

Following their Victoria Requiem (9/87), the Westminster Cathedral Choir have recorded that composer's Responsories for Tenebrae. Bruno Turner, in his excellent note, points out that, contrary to the impression created by these recent recordings, Victoria wrote plenty of joyful music, but I suspect that the intensely austere, lamenting quality of these Responsories is precisely what will attract the modern listener. Victoria worked for much of his life in Rome, where the Responsories were published in 1585, but his powerful and exquisitely balanced polyphony belongs firmly to the Spanish tradition in its profound sense of drama.

This inherent dramatic quality is brought out to perfection in these magnificent performances which, all too unusually in modern interpretations of renaissance polyphony, take the text—the narration and contemplation of the events leading up to the Crucifixion—as the springboard for the pacing and projection of the music. Although each of the 18 Responsories follows the same simple repetition scheme, the music is full of contrast, both in terms of vocal scoring and the constantly shifting textures. All these nuances are picked up by the Choir who, when in full cry,

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make a simply thrilling noise. The 'tingle factor' is also to the fore in the magical stillness of the opening of "Una hora" (track 3), or the high treble entry at the words "Si est dolor" (track 12), a good example of the blend of inspiration and control that characterizes this recording.

Master of Music David Hill (now at Winchester Cathedral) is to be congratulated for bringing together the discipline of the British choral tradition and an altogether more passionate, direct sound, particularly distinctive in the boys, but also the product of careful balancing of chords and a sustained singing style that allows the poly phonic strands to interweave with a natural tension. The Turner/Tryggvasson recording team has captured the atmospheric acoustic of Westminster Cathedral well, without compromising on clarity, and at over 75 minutes this has to be good CD value. Enthusiastically recommended to anyone interested in renaissance polyphony—and everyone else besides. ---Tess Knighton, gramophone.net

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