

Richafort - Requiem in memoriam Josquin Desprez (2002)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 03 March 2018 13:20 -

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Requiem [In Memoriam Josquin Desprez] 1 *Introitus - Requiem Aeternam* 4:20 2 *Kyrie* 4:39 3 *Graduale - Si Ambulem* 6:25 4 *Offertorium - Domine Jesu* 8:31 5 *Sanctus* 3:27 6 *Agnus Dei* 3:36 7 *Communio - Lux Aeterna* 3:35

Motets

8 *Laetamini In Domino À 4 Voix* 3:10 9 *Sufficiebat Nobis Paupertas À 4 Voix* 6:08 10 *Salve Regina À 5 Voix* 8:35 11 *Ne Vous Chaille Mon Cœur À 4 Voix* 2:12 12 *Tru Tru Trut Avant À 3 Voix* 1:56 13 *Il N'est Si Douce Vie À 4 Voix* 4:14

Huelgas-Ensemble (Choir) Alto – Marnix De Cat Baritone – Jasper Schweppe, Lieven Termont, Marius Van Altena Bass– Marc Busnel, Stephen Macleod Soprano Vocals – Julie Cooper, Katelijne Van Laethem, Marie-Claude Vallin Tenor Vocals – Jan van Elsacker, Marcel Beekman, Matthew Vine, Nick Todd Paul Van Nevel - conductor

Who knows what creative force drove 16th-century French composer Jean Richafort (c.1480-c.1547) to write music of such sublime power and soothing sensuality. But the fact is, the Requiem and several of the motets leave you wondering not only why this composer isn't better known (he was highly respected in his time and many of his works have survived) but also just a little emotionally drained. The opening eight or ten minutes of the Requiem move with the majesty of the spheres, harmonies unfolding upon harmony, lines building on line, and by the time we reach a true cadence we're looking upward for the certain appearance of some heavenly host or other. A little "over the top", you say? Well, I suggest you reserve judgment until you've heard a few minutes of this marvelous music. The mood is interrupted--or some might say, relieved--by a faster-moving, more rhythmically complex section midway through the Gradual, nearly 12 minutes into the Requiem. The textural and temporal intensity picks up further in the following Offertory, a lengthy (eight and a half minutes) yet continually engaging setting. By now you've noticed that Richafort loves to interject an occasional startling, clashing harmony into the mix, just enough to grab our attention but not enough to become a mere tiresome gimmick.

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The Huelgas Ensemble's performances give us far more than a taste of Richafort's genius; by disc's end we feel immersed, baptized, and perhaps saturated, a little dazzled by all the color and walls of sound created by the various voices and voicings--and the singers' near-perfect intonation. Among the motets, the five-part Salve Regina is touted as a masterpiece--and it is, but its musical impact still gives way to that of the Requiem's opening sections. And just what is a drinking song doing in the middle of all of this--a chanson called "Tru tru trut avant" for three male voices? Who cares--when you hear this catchy little gem, you'll just want to hear it again, and if you sing in a group you'll be wishing for your own copy of the score. The only thing that keeps this disc from a top rating is the sound--a bit too much resonance overwhelms the most densely textured sections and obscures some of those lovely lines we just want to hear more clearly. But this is a relatively minor complaint, one that my professional duty requires me to make, but that itself is quickly subsumed with each resounding cadence (or with each replay of "Tru tru trut avant"). ---David Vernier, ClassicsToday.com, arkivmusic.com

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