

## CD REVIEW 133

FRICKER, PETER RACINE

BBC broadcasts

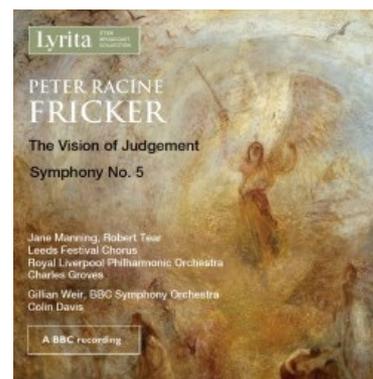
A Vision of Judgement Op29

Jane Manning, Robert Tear, Leeds Festival Chorus. Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Sir Charles Groves. BBC broadcast 14 October 1980

Symphony no 5 for organ and orchestra Op74

Gillian Weir, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, Broadcast 5 May 1976

Lyrity REAM 1124 (66' 48'')



At last, the finest British choral work of all time on CD.

When you think that Elgar's Dream of Gerontius has so many current recordings and there are about 1115 current recordings of Elgar's work available and this recording of Fricker's masterpiece is having its first recording, there is something wrong.

When Fricker moved to California in 1965, Britain seemed to lose interest in him.

Fricker who was born on 5 September 1920 in London and was one of a group of three individual British composers, the others being Humphrey Searle and Iain Hamilton. Fricker went to school at St Pauls School and then to RCM in 1937 studying with R O Morris, Ernest Bullock and Henry Wilson. Fricker became a radio operator with the RAF and in 1943 married the pianist Helen Church. He studied with his friend Matyas Seiber and from 1952 for twelve years, he taught at Morley College.

Some say that his own works showed influence of Bartok, Schoenberg and Stravinsky. His early works won prizes including the Koussevitsky Award for the Symphony no 1.

With the impressive Symphony no 4, Fricker turned his back on conventional form including the symphony not wishing to follow traditionalism and usual structure. In the USA, his music got leaner. In 1984, his impressive choral work Whispers at this Curtains was written in memory of his friend, Humphrey Searle.

I met Fricker several times and he was somewhat reticent and not narcissistic. In this, he was like Humphrey. They hated pomp and arrogance in music and in personality.

The opening of A Vision of Judgement depicts the Day of Judgement and is followed by Dona Nobis Pacem. Angels blowing summons on trumpets is followed by the tenor singing the Agnus Dei. The soprano heralds the coming of Christ.

This is all very impressive and shows the composers command of a large orchestra and the choral writing is superb and never dull. The work is not a patchwork quilt but a continuous and relevant picture of events.

There is the motet for tenor and male voices of Libera Me from the Mass. At one stage, the soprano line is in thirteen parts. The final part is a vision of ascending the hill to Heaven and the entry into Heaven itself. The music is simply gorgeous and triumphant. The joy is therapeutic.

There is no choral work better than this.

The superlative use of large forces is also to be heard in the Symphony no 5 commissioned by the BBC for the 25th anniversary of the Royal Festival Hall. There are three movements representing many of Fricker's friends or events associated with the Royal Festival Hall.

The sound is excellent as are Paul Conways notes

This CD is indispensable!

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