

Crecquillon - Missa Mort m'a privé - Motets – Chansons (2006)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Oeil esgaré* [2'45] 2. *Missa Mort m'a privé* 3. *Movement 1: Kyrie* [4'29] 4. *Movement 2: Gloria* [5'22] 5. *Movement 3: Credo* [8'32] 6. *Movement 4: Sanctus* [7'35] 7. *Movement 5: Agnus Dei* [6'43] 8. *Mort m'a privé a 5* [2'11] 9. *Caesaris auspiciis* [4'36] 10. *Mort m'a privé a 4* [2'36] 11. *Cur Fernande pater* [5'08] 12. *Le monde est tel* [1'58] 13. *Praemia pro validis* [7'37] 14. *Congratulamini mihi* [6'18] The Brabant Ensemble Stephen Rice (conductor)

When Isabella of Portugal died in childbirth in 1539, her husband, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, went into deepest mourning; in his profound grief, he commissioned posthumous portraits of Isabella from the Italian artist Titian, as well as several musical memorials from Flemish composer Thomas Crecquillon. Little is known of Crecquillon's career apart from his decade of service to Charles, but his body of works written at court was substantial, consisting of numerous motets, chansons, and masses. The pieces directly associated with Isabella's demise -- the *Missa Mort m'a privé*, two motets of the same title, and the chansons *Oeil esgaré* and *Le monde est tel* -- are prominently featured on this 2006 release from Hyperion; three other funeral motets, composed for other members of the royal family, are included, as well as a choral meditation on the Resurrection of Christ as the concluding track. Crecquillon's mannered style is smooth in line and translucent in texture, and surprisingly bright in tone for music commemorating the dead; except for his subtle use of modes and some plangent cross-relations, these works seem spiritually uplifting and quite soothing to modern ears, not at all gloomy or brooding. Crecquillon's music, like that of his near-contemporaries Josquin Desprez and Orlande de Lassus, has a serenity that only a practiced ensemble in this literature can deliver with satisfactory results, and the Brabant Ensemble, directed by Stephen Rice, does just that. Specialists in Renaissance music of the regions of Brabant, Burgundy, and the Netherlands, this British chamber choir is remarkably pure in tone and evenly blended, and its expressive performances offer a glimpse into the work of an unduly neglected composer (though greatly admired by Claudio Monteverdi as a master of counterpoint), as well as rare insights into the emotional life of one of Europe's most powerful monarchs. This album affords a sublime listening experience with exceptional sound quality and is highly recommended as one of the year's best. ---Blair Sanderson, Rovi

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