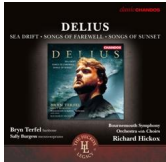


Delius: Sea Drift - Songs of Farewell - Songs of Sunset (2015)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 03 December 2017 12:51 -

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1 Sea Drift for baritone, chorus and orchestra Songs of Farewell for double chorus and orchestra
2 How Sweet the Silent Backward Tracings! *3 I Stand As On Some Mighty Eagle's Beak* *4 Passage to You! O Secret of the Earth and Sky!* *5 Joy, Shipmate, Joy!* *6 Now Finale to the Shore*
Songs of Sunset for mezzo-soprano, baritone, chorus, and orchestra
7 A Song of the Setting Sun! *8 Cease Smiling, Dear! A Little While Be Sad* *9 Pale Amber Sunlight Falls* *10 Exceeding Sorrow Consumeth My Sad Heart!* *11 By the Sad Waters of Separation* *12 See How the Trees and the Osiers Lethe* *13 I Was Not Sorrowful, I Could Not Weep* *14 They Are Not Long, the Weeping and the Laughter*
Bryn Terfel - baritone Sally Burgess - mezzo-soprano Southern Voices Bournemouth Symphony Chorus Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra Richard Hickox - conductor

This set of Delius's masterpieces conducted by Hickox was recorded in 1993 and won a Gramophone Award in the choral category the following year, also the Penguin Guide ranking it in the 1000 Greatest Classical Recordings, stating that 'in this second recording of Delius's masterpieces Hickox finds even more magic, again taking a spacious view - which keeps the flow of the music going magnetically'. Both *Sea Drift* (1903-04) and *Songs of Sunset* (1906-07) belong to the fertile decade following the turn of the century when Delius had assumed complete maturity and was producing a string of masterpieces. If in *Sea Drift* it is the emotions of bereavement in the wake of tragedy that are explored, in *Songs of Sunset* it is the brevity of life as epitomised by the work's original title, *Songs of Twilight and Sadness*. By the time he created *Songs of Farewell* (1929-30), Delius was blind, crippled and helpless. As a composer he had been mute since the early 1920's, until the offer from a young musician, Eric Fenby, to be his amanuensis kindled the sparks of creativity once more. *Songs of Farewell*, for double chorus and orchestra, was the finest achievement of this late harvest. ---Notes, chandos.net

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This disc was an award-winner when it first appeared in 1993, and rightly so. These are among Delius's finest and most consistent works, and Hickox directs them with an authority and atmosphere that recalls Beecham or Barbirolli. Bryn Terfel, as soloist in Sea Drift, contributes one of the finest and most deeply-felt performances of his now extensive discography, and this is one of the most restrainedly expressive interpretations this outpouring of wild pathos has received on disc. Throughout the three works the choirs are ideally responsive to the beauty of the poetry, coming into their own in the late Songs of Farewell. If Songs of Sunset doesn't quite efface the memory of Charles Groves's 1968 account with Janet Baker and John Shirley-Quirk, this is still a splendid account of a subtle work that offers far more than mere fin-de-siècle languor. Altogether a notable release which it's a pleasure to welcome back to currency. -- Calum MacDonald, BBC Music Magazine

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