

JONATHAN DAVID LITTLE (b.1965; Nationality: British)

Kyrie, Op.5 (from *Missa Temporis Perditi*) [4'56]

Thomas Tallis Chamber Choir, conducted by Philip Simms

Sung with 60 voices, at the Royal Peculiar Church of St. Alfege, Greenwich (November, 2005)

This *a cappella* setting for SATB double choir and soloists of the first section of the traditional Latin Mass – “Kyrie eleison” – is based around permutations of one central motif. The eight main vocal lines are sometimes further divided for fullness of texture and motivic completeness. At least 21 voices are required to perform the work (choir: SSAATTBB, SSAATTBB + soloists: SSA, SA). The short central section of this ternary form composition (“Christe eleison”) features high C’s in both treble parts, and requires extra soprano and alto soloists to be present offstage (or situated in a gallery), a little removed from the main body of the choir.

Kyrie was first performed in November 2005, during the historic Thomas Tallis 500th anniversary concerts held at Waltham Abbey, Essex (where Tallis worked) and St. Alfege, Greenwich (his burial place), and then performed at the Good Friday “Tenebrae” concert in Wells Cathedral in 2007, with the Bath Camerata, conducted by Nigel Perrin (and not performed since). This work was first heard alongside such grand, 40-part polychoral motets as Tallis’s *Spem in alium* and Striggio’s *Ecce beatam lucem*. In 2007, *Kyrie* was poignantly featured in Thierry Donard’s French DVD release, “Nuit de la Glisse” (Uppercut Entertainment).

SEE and HEAR at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdV7eKZiGhg>

SEE ALSO: <http://www.jonathanlittle.org/> OR
<http://www.powerpresskits.com/PPKs/indexC.aspx?PPK=5816>

SCORE OF “KYRIE” ATTACHED AS PDF

BIOGRAPHY:

On the strength of the excellence of his musical compositions, Jonathan David Little was awarded the John Clementi Collard Fellowship in 2011, one of the most prestigious awards of The City of London’s ancient Worshipful Company of Musicians (est.1500). He was also the first composer to receive a Professional Development Award from the UK music business’s own charity, the Musicians’ Benevolent Fund. In March 2016, he is to be Featured Composer at the CNU Contemporary Music Festival – including a showcase concert of his works in the Music and Theatre Hall, Ferguson Center for the Arts, Virginia, USA.

Little’s works have won multiple ASCAP and critics’ choice awards in the USA, as well as PRS, Bliss and Leighton Trust Awards in the UK. His first major album was one of US *Fanfare* magazine’s top recommended recordings for 2008 – acclaiming “a major new, original and quite brilliant classical voice” – while his 2012 album, *Polyhymnia*, featuring several European orchestras, was nominated in Spain for “Best Album of the Year”.

From 2001 to 2005, Little was Principal of the UK’s Academy of Contemporary Music, which was, at that time, Europe’s leading institution for students of contemporary music and the first music education institution to win the Queen’s Award for Enterprise (Innovation Category). He was subsequently appointed to the unique dual title of Reader in Music Composition and Music History at the University of Chichester. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and a Fellow of the Incorporated Society of Musicians.

Little’s choral music has been praised by critics worldwide, but relatively few of works have been performed or recorded. His music tends to feature multi-part, multi-divisi, and unusual spatial effects – *i.e.*, different sections of the choir placed in various arrangements around and above the audience: this technique pioneered in “Kyrie” for 21 individual vocal lines, some placed in a gallery and at a distance (recorded with 60 voices in the version you hear). In this there were two main, separate (and separated) double choirs (SSAATTBB x 2), with 2 additional groups of soloists (SSA set at some distance away, and SA positioned above and behind the audience, in a distant gallery).

Little’s musical aesthetic concentrates upon “mystical beauty, intensity and richness”. His compositional style has been variously described as “Ecstatic Minimalism” or “Archaic Futurism” – blending art music, folk/Celtic, and other sacred and secular musical influences, from as far back as the fourteenth century, with new and innovative textures and orchestration.

Jonathan David Little’s choral works have been greeted with universal critical (and audience) acclaim – from the likes of renowned choral conductor, Stephen Layton, to the former Head of EMI Classics, Richard Lyttelton. “Kyrie” was singled out for praise in 5 separate reviews in US *Fanfare* in 2012. It has not been performed since 2007.



Kyrie, op.5

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Worldwide critical reaction to this one choral work (UK, USA, Australia, Italy and Spain):

- ***“a richness of coloration, dynamic shading and melodic inventiveness all his own. Small wonder that this composer has gained several awards on both sides of the Atlantic.”*** – Phillip Somerich, in *Classical Music* (25th Feb. 2012) (UK)
- ***“An inspired creation voluptuous sonorities ... beautifully expansive”*** – Patric Standford, *Music and Vision* (16th May, 2009) (UK)
- ***“immense creativity and innovation while remaining accessible to new listeners”*** – ASCAP Playback Magazine (Summer, 2006) (New York, USA)
- ***“innovative and accessible to both musicians and audiences”*** – Keith Lowde, former Deputy to the Managing Director and Company Secretary, Music-Copyright Protection Society [MCPS] (London, UK)
- ***“very well crafted ... very effective”*** - Stephen Layton, Choral Conductor and Director of Music, Trinity College, Cambridge (October 2009) (UK)
- ***“most impressed”*** – The Hon. Richard Lyttelton, former President, EMI Classics and Jazz (February, 2012) (UK)
- ***“mightily impressed”*** – Martin Anderson, Founder and Managing Director, Toccata Classics (January, 2009) (UK)
- ***“magnificent”*** - Richard Cameron-Wolfe, Broadcaster and Director, Friends of American Music (New Mexico, USA)
- ***“highly gifted ... of unusual ability”*** – Professor Ronald Farren-Price, AM, Concert Pianist, and former Dean and Ormond Professor of the Conservatorium of Music, Melbourne University (Melbourne, AUSTRALIA)
- ***“Kyrie ... is a moving work that looks back to older Mass settings and shows how well Little can write for voices a cappella.”*** – Mark J. Estren, “Modern but Accessible”, in *Infodad* (1st March, 2012) (USA)
- ***“The Kyrie from the composer’s Temporis Perditi Mass ... shows a real skill for choral writing.”*** – Ira Byelick, “LITTLE: Polyhymnia; Terpsichore; Fanfare; Sacred Prelude; Kyrie”, in *American Record Guide* (May/June 2012), pp.244-5 (USA)
- ***“In composer Jonathan Little we have a voice. His music is tonal and filled with color ... there is a forward momentum that at times combines with mystical suspensions that remind a little of Arvo Part and John Tavener ... the music puts one in a place worth being.”*** – Grego Applegate Edwards, “Jonathan Little, Polyhymnia: String, Orchestral and Choral Works”, in *Gaplegate Classical-Modern Music Review* (12th April, 2012) (USA)
- ***“The final piece on the disc is a beautifully performed Kyrie ... requiring massed divided voices (there are sixty in this performance) creating effective choral textures not unlike those of the Polyhymnia. Little certainly fixes his trademark textural style, sticks to his focal points, and has the technical skill to create vivid contrasts when needed.”*** – Patric Standford, “Tonal Clarity: Music by Jonathan Little”, in *Music and Vision* (25th September, 2012) (UK)
- ***“We might classify this ... [as] ‘Futuro Antico’ (‘Ancient Future’). ... you can hear the influence of ancient music ... Yet, the final product sounds modern too, as Little adds his own personal elements to these sonic foundations: bursting through the panorama he paints with sudden flashes of light or menacing thunderbolts, and so projects the past into the future”*** – Filippo Focosi, “Jonathan Little ‘Polyhymnia’”, in *Kathodik* (16th April, 2012) (ITALY)
- ***‘Yet even this beauty is surpassed by the piece that concludes the album – “Kyrie, Op.5 (from Missa Temporis Perditi)”. Sixty ethereal voices of the Royal Peculiar Church of St. Alfege in Greenwich, in the United Kingdom, blend to create one of the finest vocal groups that I have ever heard. Without a doubt, from when the music starts, until it ends, there are magnificent and uplifting passages; the voices produce the most amazing, spine-tingling effect. There is just no adequate way to describe this work.’*** – Alejandro Clavijo, in *Reviews New Age* (February, 2012) (SPAIN)

• Fanfare (USA)

36: 1 (Sept-Oct 2012)

- ***‘The notes quote one unnamed commentator as stating that the music is “completely novel, yet hauntingly familiar.” This seems a fair assessment, in that no other composer among the thousands whose music I’ve heard immediately comes to mind ... Perhaps Górecki in certain of his more tonal works comes closest, although Little’s music is about seven notches above the quality of that of the Polish composer ... The disc’s closing work, the Kyrie from Little’s Missa Temporis perditi, is my favorite on the CD. Soaring lines in the sopranos, taking them up to high C, suggest the majesty of the words of the Kyrie. ... Harmonies shift around a good bit, but the direction of the work is never in doubt as it moves to its dramatic conclusion. The spacious acoustic of the recording venue adds to the otherworldly effect.’*** – David DeBoor Canfield, “Polyhymnia ...”, in *Fanfare*, Vol.36, No.1 (Sept/Oct 2012) (USA)
- ***“The highlight of this disc is the Kyrie from his Missa Temporis Perditi ... It is an eloquent and expansive work sung here by the Thomas Tallis Chamber Choir, a large a cappella group from which conductor Philip Simms draws opulent sonorities. Little composes with a great array of technical skills and his works are both harmonically and contrapuntally pleasing. He knows how to bring out all the colors of the choral palette, and that is what makes the Kyrie such a fascinating piece. I want to hear the rest of the Mass.”*** – Maria Nockin, “Polyhymnia ...”, in *Fanfare*, Vol.36, No.1 (Sept/Oct 2012) (USA)