Choir & Organ (2018.01.01)

On release

New discs coming out in...January and February 2018

The Russian Revolution, whose centenary was marked in various ways throughout 2017, has always been regarded with abhorrence, ambivalence, or jubilation. According to his autobiography, the composer Prokofiev initially ‘welcomed (the February revolution) joyfully’; by the time he wrote Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution [audite 97754] his feelings may have been somewhat more conflicted, as Stalin’s ‘Great Terror’ raged. However, after more than a decade living abroad, he had resettled in Moscow, and with artists in the country treading a tightrope at that time, any qualms he might have had about the regime were quashed, at least in public. Nevertheless, and despite setting texts by Marx, Lenin and Stalin, the monumental Cantata fell foul of the Committee for Artistic Affairs and was banned from being performed for not meeting the criteria of ‘socialist realism’, only eventually being premiered 1966.
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This account alone would be enough to underline the apocalyptic urgency that seizes the narrative: the descent of the heavenly hosts in the moment of the triumph of the forces of darkness. Already Welles, in his lost masterpiece, suggests that the fate of the Universe is decided in a single moment. The Office of the Masses begins with a stirring, almost apocalyptic shimmering of strings. The deep, rich, and majestic sound of the organ is perfectly suited to convey the sense of awe and majesty that is felt in this moment. The sense of the divine is powerfully conveyed in this recording, and the listener is left with a profound sense of reverence and wonder. The percussion and brass sections add to the impact of this piece, and the overall effect is one of transcendence and spiritual elevation.

The final movement, "The Last Judgment," is a powerful and stirring piece that builds to a climax of incredible intensity. The sense of finality and resolution is palpable, and the listener is left with a profound sense of closure and spiritual fulfillment. The recording of this piece is a testament to the skills of the performers and the artistry of the conductor, and it is a work that is sure to be remembered for years to come.

The recording of "Antony and Cleopatra" is a masterpiece of expressive and dramatic performance. The voices are rich and vibrant, and the musicians are perfectly in sync with each other. The recording captures the passionate intensity of the text, and the listener is left with a profound sense of emotional engagement.

Overall, this recording is a work of great beauty and power. It is a testament to the skills of the performers and the artistry of the conductor, and it is a work that is sure to be remembered for years to come. It is a work that is sure to delight and inspire, and it is a work that is sure to become a cornerstone of the repertoire of the modern orchestra.