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BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Les Illuminations

Andrew Staples, Christopher Parkes, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Daniel Harding

1h14 1 CD HMM902267 August 2022

In these three song cycles, Britten draws his inspiration from the peaks of European poetry (Shakespeare, Blake, Shelley, Keats, but also Rimbaud), the better to push back the boundaries of the genre. He multiplies the relationship between voices and instruments, moving from strings alone (*Les Illuminations*) to a string ensemble featuring obligato wind instruments, harp and timpani (*Nocturne*), not forgetting the fascinating dialogue with the horn in the *Serenade*. A unique sound world is revealed here by artists at the top of their form!

Artists

- Chris Parkes
Horn
- Swedish Radio Symphony
Orchestra
- Daniel Harding
Conductor

Composers

- Benjamin Britten

Contents

BENJAMIN BRITTEN [1913-1976]

Les Illuminations op. 18

for high voice and string orchestra (1939). Poems by Arthur Rimbaud

· I. Fanfare (2'04)

· II. Villes (2'28)

· III a. Phrase (1'05)

· III b. Antique (2'15)

· IV. Royauté (1'32)

· V. Marine (0'58)

· VI. Interlude (2'49)

· VII. Being Beauteous (4'05)

· VIII. Parade (2'43)

· IX. Départ (2'47)

Serenade op. 31

for horn, tenor and strings (1943)

· I. Prologue (1'22)

· II. Pastoral (Charles Cotton)(3'05)

· III. Nocturne (Alfred Lord Tennyson)(3'39)

· IV. Elegy (William Blake)(4'25)

· V. Dirge (anonymous, XVth century)(3'22)

· VI. Hymn (Ben Jonson)(2'03)

· VII. Sonnet (John Keats)(4'02)

· VIII. Epilogue (1'31)

Nocturne op. 60

for tenor, 7 obligato instruments and strings (1958)

· 'On a poet's lips I slept' (Percy Bysshe Shelley) (3'10)

· 'Below the thunders of the upper deep' (Alfred Lord Tennyson)

Fredrik Ekdahl, bassoon (3'24)

· 'Encinctured with a twine of leaves' (Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

Lisa Viguier Vallgård, harp (2'40)

· 'Midnight's bell goes ting, ting, ting' (Thomas Middleton)

Chris Parkes, horn (2'24)

· 'But that night when on my bed I lay' (William Wordsworth)

Tomas Nilsson, timpani (3'01)

· 'She sleeps on soft, last breaths' (Wilfred Owen)

Sofi Berner, cor anglais (4'28)

· 'What is more gentle than a wind in summer?' (John Keats)

Anders Jonhäll, flute

Andreas Sundén, clarinet (3'57)

· 'When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see' (William Shakespeare) (4'39)