



ORCHID CLASSICS

Christopher Wood
REQUIEM



Christopher Wood

REQUIEM

Christopher Wood (b.1945)
Requiem

1.	Kyrie eleison / Requiem aeternam – soprano and chorus	7.09
2.	Dies irae / Tuba mirum / Liber scriptus – soprano and chorus	7.19
3.	Quid sum miser tunc dicturus? / Rex tremendae – alto, tenor, bass and chorus	8.03
4.	Recordare / Ingemisco – bass and chorus	6.27
5.	Confutatis / Lacrimosa / Pie Jesu – soprano, alto and chorus	7.17
6.	Offertorio: Domine Jesu Christe – alto, tenor, bass and chorus	5.35
7.	Sanctus / Benedictus – chorus	4.08
8.	Agnus Dei – soprano, alto, tenor, bass and chorus	4.37
9.	Lux aeterna – chorus	3.25
10.	Libera me – soprano, alto, tenor, bass and chorus	6.55
Total time		60.55

Rebecca Bottone, soprano

Clare McCaldin, alto

Ed Lyon, tenor

Nicholas Garrett, bass

L'Inviti Sinfonia & L'Inviti Singers

Paul Brough, conductor

“When Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother died in 2002 there was an extraordinary show of emotion in Britain, with a real sense of national mourning. Thousands of people queued for hours to file past the coffin to pay their respects, with a mixture of sentiments that was hard to define. There was clearly grief but it was tinged with other emotions, perhaps even patriotic pride; there was sadness but also honour and gratitude, and all for someone most of the people standing in line had never met. But the Queen Mother had been for so long a symbol of the nation and had helped shape the character of Britain in their lifetime. I wondered at the time that if the people filing past the coffin were a choir, what would they sing? More to the point, what music would I have sung to capture the emotions of that moment? So, I thought I would try to express, in music, that sentiment - which is how the idea was born for the composition of this *Requiem*.”
Christopher Wood

Christopher Wood: Requiem

It occasionally happens that composers have extra-musical careers. Charles Ives was an insurance agent; Alexander Borodin was a noted chemist; and Eric Whitacre, a current superstar of the choral world, even moonlights as a male model. But it's pretty rare to come across a pharmaceutical entrepreneur who adds composition to his medical activities. Christopher Wood, a former cancer surgeon who now develops cancer drugs, brings the total in this category up to one - although this increase is complicated by the fact that he chooses not to call himself a composer.

How can that be? A man who has written a work which has been exponentially building in popularity since its first performance in 2012 - a work which has touched a profound nerve with choral societies up and down the country, and which has been recorded with stellar soloists and a superb orchestra... how is it that the creator of that piece is not a composer? The answer to that riddle lies further on, and offers a fascinating insight into both Wood's talent and the story behind his *Requiem*.

The initial flash of inspiration took place in 2002, during one of Wood's regular business trips to America, when he witnessed images of the funeral of the Queen Mother on his hotel television. 'What struck me was the number of people who'd queued for hours to file past and pay their respects. They'd never met the lady, but somehow needed to be there. It wasn't like a family funeral – they weren't in tears, they hadn't lost someone close – and I felt it was somehow more than grief. There was a sense of national pride, of honour. And I thought: if those people were a choir, what would they sing? What would capture that mix of emotions? The choral society I sing in was performing Verdi's *Requiem*, so I knew which words to choose. And I thought, well, if Verdi can do it...' He breaks off to laugh throatily at his own hubris.

Hubris indeed. For up to this point, Wood had never composed a note of music. His ambitions had lain squarely within the world of medicine and medical research – and it's worth taking a detour here into his primary career, since the passion and dedication which have driven his professional life have also fed his love of music. 'I was eight when I knew very clearly I wanted to be a surgeon,' he says. 'My aunt showed me a gallstone, cut in half. There was a parasite in the middle, with expanding rings of calcification round it, like the rings of a tree. I was mesmerised. From that moment on, I didn't have images of pop stars and footballers on my walls – I had pictures of hearts and livers.'

After studying medicine at the University of Wales, Wood rose to become a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, and a consultant surgeon at the Hammersmith Hospital in London, where he led the breast and colon cancer clinics. (During his time there, he also participated in two episodes of the TV programme *Your Life in Their Hands*, which were presented by fellow Hammersmithonian Robert Winston.) But research was as important to him as the physical aspects of surgery. 'I wanted to develop drugs, make them available to patients, to change lives.'

In the mid 1980s, after a chance meeting with a potential backer, he was given the opportunity to develop a new drug in a start-up biotechnology company, which proved enormously successful. In 1997 he left surgery behind, and entered the pharmaceutical industry full-time. He has since started several companies, and successfully developed a range of new medicines, including a breakthrough drug for children with leukaemia. 'When a patient comes to you with cancer, and you are able to operate and remove the cancer, and you give them the all clear... or when a woman calls to tell you that her son, who'd been given just six weeks to live, is now in remission and playing basketball in the garden – the emotion of those moments is something you can't describe.'

This delight in other people's happiness, and this passion for the possibility of changing lives, brings us back to the genesis of a *Requiem* which has already given hundreds of people enormous pleasure.

Music has always been a fundamentally vital part of Wood's life. Partly he ascribes his early contact with song to growing up in Wales 'where everybody sings', and partly to his weekly participation in the choir of his local church. (He is still a strongly religious person, and this is another cornerstone of his music.) But more concretely, his love of the lyric arts can be ascribed to the fact that his mother was a soprano in the chorus of Welsh National Opera. 'My earliest memories are of her teaching me to sing. She instilled a love of singing in the whole family – and I've sung in choirs and choral societies for my whole life.' (His voice is a bass-baritone.)

Although music has taken a secondary role, it has always been present in his imagination in some form or other, every hour of the day. So when he saw the Queen Mother's funeral, and the idea arose of giving voice to the emotion which he witnessed there, it was as if all the foundations were ready for his work.

After the initial light-bulb of inspiration, it took about eight years to write. 'There was no deadline: it was just for my own pleasure. I was running a company in America, and so would finish my day around 9 or 10 at night. And the first thing I'd do would be to go to the piano, and write a few lines. And then when I went to bed, I'd imagine a choir, and how they might sing '*Confutatis*' or '*Recordare*'.'

He describes it as the hardest thing he's ever done. 'I realised my stupidity when I began to do it. But it was never intended for performance. I have plenty of ways of making a fool of myself, but I wasn't planning to do that in public with my first major composition. This was an exercise, purely for my own pleasure, to try to distil an emotion into music.'

After a chance meeting with David Guest – a professional musician whose company specialises in musical event production and management – Wood asked Guest if he might show him the Requiem 'to find out where my mistakes are, to see what I can improve.' Guest put him in touch with orchestrator Jonathan Rathbone. 'We met in the Harvey Nichols coffee shop. I nervously pulled out the *Kyrie*, expecting to be savaged and bracing myself for a good kicking. But he looked at it and said: "I can see harps there... I'd bring in an oboe here". He saw the potential not just to edit it, but to orchestrate it.'

Wood reminded Rathbone that the work was most definitely not intended for performance. 'But he said he'd do a deal. He would orchestrate it, if I would allow it to be performed. Secretly I thought it would never happen, but I agreed. I imagined I'd be able to listen to it on my computer, and that would be the end of it.'

The orchestration took around two years, squeezed around Rathbone's busy schedule. Wood was thrilled with the results. 'The orchestration was just stunning - Jonathan turned a pig's ear into a silk purse.' As each section came back, Wood's enthusiasm grew and grew, and he eventually suggested performing

and recording it. 'It would be just for my own gratification. It was a dream. I imagined the CD would be just for my wife and me.

Guest invited Paul Brough, principal guest conductor of the BBC Singers, to conduct the work, and also organised a superb team of professional soloists, choir and orchestra. The work was recorded at St John's, Smith Square on December 12, 2012, and the first live performance took place at Smith Square the same evening. Despite a deafening buzz of chainsaws during the afternoon rehearsal (the council had chosen that day to prune the trees immediately outside) the evening performance was a triumph. 'A friend of mine, for whom this really wasn't his sort of music, came to me with tears in his eyes, and said he'd been really moved. I couldn't quite believe it could have that effect. And even now, I still have to pinch myself to realise that people quite like it.'

Now that the ball had been set rolling, David Guest was keen that there should be further performances. He suggested promoting a series of workshop-style study events around the country, and writing to choral societies to see if they would be interested in workshopping the piece over the course of a single day. This offer has been taken up by choral societies across the country – from Newcastle to Jersey and Norwich to Newbury - with many more events planned. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and further live performances, including in a major London venue, are in the pipeline.

This *Requiem* sets the full text of the Latin Requiem Mass. Most other settings – except Verdi's – make subtractions or additions to the poetry. 'I actively went against what Verdi had done, because I was anxious not to copy such a celebrated work. Verdi's *Dies Irae* ('Day of wrath, day of judgement') is loud and stormy. But I felt that on the Day of Judgement, I'm not going to be shouting. I'm going to be quaking in my boots. So there's a quiet, shocked gasp in the middle of the words '*Dies Irae*'.'

The *Kyrie Eleison* ('Lord, have mercy') is also very personal. 'I have in my mind's eye the mourners filing past the Queen Mother's coffin... the soldiers standing guard, the quietness of the abbey.'

The close of the *Requiem* is rather unusual. 'Every setting I've ever sung fades out into quiet at the end. So I composed two endings: one fading away, and one with all four soloists, full choir, full orchestra, and all going at full blast. I asked my wife which she preferred, and she didn't hesitate. 'Give them a climax they'll remember,' she said. 'You want them to leave the performance saying "That was some ending"'. So naturally I chose that one.'

Wood has subsequently written and recorded *Holy Week* (an oratorio based on the story of Easter); his *Missa Brevis* has been performed at St Paul's Cathedral; and his work for string orchestra – *Requiescat Aberfan* - was premiered at the Welsh Proms in July 2016. But he still remains bemused by his success, and rather diffident in describing his abilities.

For the work of a supposed non-composer, his affirmative, lavishly melodic *Requiem* hasn't done badly. And long may his non-compositional career continue to flourish and give as much pleasure as it has already.

© Warwick Thompson, 2016

REQUIEM – CHRISTOPHER WOOD

1. KYRIE ELEISON & REQUIEM AETERNAM

Kyrie eleison.

Christe eleison.

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine,

Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion

Et tibi reddetur votum in

Jerusalem.

Exaudi orationem meam;

Ad te omnis caro veniet.

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine,

Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,

And let perpetual light shine on them.

You are praised, O God, in Zion

And homage will be paid to you in

Jerusalem.

Hear my prayer;

To you all flesh will come.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,

And let perpetual light shine on them.

2. DIES IRAE / TUBA MIRUM / LIBER SCRIPTUS

Dies irae, dies illa,
Solvat saeculum in favilla,
Teste David cum Sibylla.
Quantus tremor est futurus,
Quando iudex est venturus,
Cuncta stricte discussurus.
Tuba mirum spargens sonum
Per sepulchra regionum,
Coget omnes ante thronum.
Mors stupebit, et natura,
Cum resurget creatura,
Judicanti responsura.
Liber scriptus proferetur,
In quo totum continetur,
Unde mundus judicetur.
Iudex ergo cum sedebit,
Quidquid latet apparebit:
Nil inultum remanebit.

Day of wrath, that day
When the world will dissolve in ashes,
As foretold by David and the Sibyl.
Great trembling there will be,
When the judge comes forth
To pass judgment on everything.
The trumpet will send its wondrous sound
Throughout earth's sepulchres
And gather all before the throne.
Death and nature will be silenced
When all creation rises again,
To answer the judgement.
A book will be brought forth,
In which all will be written,
By which the world will be judged.
When the Judge takes his place,
What is hidden will be revealed:
Nothing will remain unavenged.

3. QUID SUM MISER TUNC DICTURUS? / REX TREMENDAE

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Cum vix justus sit securus?
Rex tremendae majestatis,

What is a wretch like me to say?
Who shall intercede for me,
When even the just ones need mercy?
King of great majesty,

Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salva me, fons pietatis.

4. RECORDARE / INGEMISCO

Recordare, Jesu pie,
Quod sum causa tuæ viæ:
Ne me perdas illa die.
Quærens me, sedisti lassus,
Redemisti crucem passus.
Tantus labor non sit cassus.
Juste Judex ultionis,
Donum fac remissionis,
Ante diem rationis.
Ingemisco, tamquam reus,
Culpa rubet vultus meus,
Supplici parce, Deus.
Qui Mariam absolvisti,
Et latronem exaudisti,
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.
Preces meæ non sunt dignæ,
Sed tu, bonus, fac benigne,
Ne perenni cremer igne.
Inter oves locum præsta,
Et ab hædis me sequestra,
Statuens in parte dextra.

Who freely saves the deserving ones,
Save me, O fount of mercy.

Recall, kind Jesus,
That my salvation caused your suffering:
Do not forsake me on that day.
Faint and weary, you have sought me,
Redeemed me, by your suffering on the cross.
May such suffering not be in vain.
Righteous Judge of vengeance,
Grant me the gift of absolution,
Before the day of retribution.
I moan, as one who is guilty,
Red-faced, admitting my shame,
Suppliant before you, O Lord.
You, who absolved Mary
And listened to the thief,
Give me hope also.
My prayers are unworthy
But, good Lord, have mercy
And rescue me from eternal fire.
Provide me a place among the sheep,
Separate me from the goats
And guide me to your right hand.

5. CONFUTATIS MALEDICTIS / LACRIMOSA / PIE JESU

Confutatis maledictis,
Flammis acribus addictis,
Voca me cum benedictis.

Oro supplex et acclinis:
Cor contritum quasi cinis.

Gere curam mei finis.
Lacrimosa dies illa,

Qua resurget ex favilla
Judicandus homo reus.

Huic ergo parce, Deus.

Pie Jesu Domine, pie Jesu Christe,
Dona eis requiem. Amen.

When the accused are confounded
And doomed to flames of woe,

Call me among the blessed.

I kneel with submissive heart:

My contrition is like ashes.

Help me in my final condition.

That day of tears and mourning,

When, from the ashes, shall arise

All humanity to be judged.

Spare us by your mercy, O Lord.

Gentle Lord Jesus, gentle Jesus Christ,

Grant them rest. Amen.

6. OFFERTORIO: DOMINE JESU CHRISTE

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriæ,
Libera animas omnium fidelium
Defunctorum de pœnis inferni
Et de profundo lacu.

Libera eas de ore leonis,
Ne absorbeat eas tartarus,
ne cadant in obscurum:

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,

Free the souls of the faithful,

Departed from the pains of hell

And from the bottomless pit.

Deliver them from the lion's mouth,

Lest hell swallow them up

And they fall into darkness:

Sed signifer sanctus
Michael
Repræsentet eas in lucem sanctam,
Quam olim Abrahæ promisisti
Et semini ejus.
Hostias et preces tibi, Domine,
Laudis offerimus;
Tu suscipe pro animabus illis,
Quarum hodie memoriam facimus.
Fac eas, Domine,
De morte transire ad vitam.

7. SANCTUS / BENEDICTUS

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth,
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine
Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Instead, let the standard-bearer, holy
Michael,
Bring them into the holy light,
As was promised to Abraham
And his descendants.
Sacrifices and prayers of praise, O Lord,
We offer to you;
Receive them on behalf of those souls
We commemorate today.
Let them pass, O Lord
From death to life.

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Glory to God in the highest.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

8. AGNUS DEI

Agnus Dei, qui tollis
peccata mundi,

Dona eis requiem.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis
peccata mundi,

Dona eis requiem sempiternam.

O Lamb of God, who takes away the
sins of the world,

Grant them rest.

O Lamb of God, who takes away the
sins of the world,

Grant them everlasting rest.

9. LUX AETERNA

Lux æterna luceat eis, Domine,
Cum sanctis tuis in æternum,

Quia pius es.

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine,
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Let eternal light shine on them, O Lord,
As on your saints in eternity,

Because you are merciful.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
And let perpetual light shine on them.

10. LIBERA ME

Libera me, Domine, de morte
æterna,

In die illa tremenda,

Quando cœli movendi sunt
et terra,

Dum veneris judicare sæculum
per ignem.

Tremens factus sum ego et timeo

Dum discussio venerit atque
ventura ira,

Quando cœli movendi sunt
et terra.

Dies illa, dies iræ, calamitatis
et miseriæ,

Dies magna et amara
valde.

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine,
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal
death,

On that awful day,

When the heavens and the earth
shall be shaken,

And you shall come to judge the
world by fire.

I am seized with trembling, and fear

The trial to come and the wrath
which may follow,

When the heavens and earth shall
be shaken.

That day, the day of wrath,
calamity and misery,

A great and exceedingly bitter
day.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
And let perpetual light shine
on them.

Christopher Wood, composer, has had a life-long interest in music, especially choral music and is on the Trustee Council of the Royal College of Organists. He started his professional life as a surgeon and for some years was a consultant surgeon at the Hammersmith Hospital, London and Senior Lecturer in Surgery at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School. He was a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and held an honorary Professorship at Imperial College, London. He left surgery to embark on his present career in the pharmaceutical industry, starting several companies and successfully developing a range of new medicines. Wood's *Requiem* has been performed across the UK by numerous choral societies and its popularity has encouraged Wood to compose other choral works including the Easter Oratorio *Holy Week*.

Jonathan Rathbone, orchestrator, was a chorister at Coventry Cathedral and, later, a choral scholar at Christ's College Cambridge, where he read mathematics. He gained a second degree at the Royal Academy of Music where he studied composition with John Gardner. He sang with St Bride's Choir, Fleet Street and the BBC Singers before joining the Swingle Singers in 1984. He was musical director of the group for eight of the twelve years he sang with them, during which time he created the majority of their arrangements, both a cappella and with orchestra. He has worked with many of the world's leading musicians including Pierre Boulez, Luciano Berio, John Dankworth, Stephan Grappelli and Beatles producer George Martin.

Paul Brough, conductor, is Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC Singers and a Professor in conducting and academic studies at the Royal Academy of Music. His conducting has taken him to the BBC Philharmonic, BBC Concert Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Manchester Camerata, St James's Baroque and Ulster Orchestra. His ongoing schedule of broadcasts and concerts with various BBC ensembles has included the live Radio 3 60th anniversary performance of





Britten's *St Nicolas* with the BBC Concert Orchestra which was televised and released on CD. He has premiered over 30 works including Judith Bingham's *Actaeon* and John Tavener's *Butterfly Dreams*.

Rebecca Bottone, soprano, has appeared at the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, English Touring Opera and The Classical Opera Company where her ability to bring to life roles across the widest repertoire has met with considerable acclaim. Rebecca's operatic career has seen her working with conductors including Sir Colin Davis, Sir Charles Mackerras, Richard Hickox and Marc Minkowski. Rebecca appears on disc in Britten's *Albert Herring*, and on television in BBC Two's documentary *The Genius of Beethoven* with the English Chamber Orchestra.

Clare McCaldin, alto, read Modern Languages at Clare College, Cambridge and initially had a career in advertising before turning to singing. Since then she has appeared as a soloist all over the UK and in Europe. In addition to her reputation presenting established repertoire, Clare is recognised for her advocacy of new work and has given numerous world premieres. She has an extensive discography and recently recorded Miss Tina in Michael Hurd's *The Aspern Papers* (Ulster Orchestra/Vass).

Ed Lyon, tenor, studied at St. John's College, Cambridge, the Royal Academy and the National Opera Studio. His concert engagements include the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Mozarteum Orchester Salzburg under Ivor Bolton, Musikkollegium Winterthur under Douglas Boyd, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Early Opera Company and the New London Consort as well as concerts at the Proms, Aldeburgh and Edinburgh Festivals. Recordings include Handel's *Alexander's Feast* with Ludus Baroque and Grandi's *Vespers* with Bach-Collegium Stuttgart.

Nicholas Garrett, bass, studied voice and piano at Trinity College of Music and is a Wolfson award winner. Initially a member of the Swingle Singers, Nicholas's operatic work includes performances at the Royal Opera House, Opera National de Paris, Scottish Opera, Opera North, English National Opera, Théâtre du Châtelet, Opera de Nantes and English Touring Opera.

The L'Inviti Sinfonia comprises some of the finest soloists, chamber musicians and orchestral players in the UK. Selected from The London Symphony Orchestra, The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, The London Philharmonic Orchestra, The Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields and The English Chamber Orchestra, the players provide a wealth of experience and musicianship of the very highest order.

The L'Inviti Singers are a professional choir, hand-picked from the very best singers from the country's top choral foundations such as those of St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, from internationally renowned chamber ensembles such as the Monteverdi Choir, the King's Consort and The Sixteen, and from leading opera companies including The Royal Opera, Covent Garden and English National Opera.

David Guest, coordinator, was a chorister and later a choral scholar at St John's College, Cambridge. After working as a singer for a number of years (Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Les Arts Florissants, Academy of Ancient Music etc.), he embarked on a career in event management and production, chiefly with his own organisations (Guest Artists, L'Inviti Music Management and Music for Business) but also as a specialist supplier, primarily of classical musicians, to production companies and individuals across the UK.

Recorded by Floating Earth Ltd.

Sound engineers: Mike Cox, George Pierson

Recorded on 12 December 2012 at St John's, Smith Square, London

Orchestrator: Jonathan Rathbone

Coordinator: David Guest

For more information on Orchid Classics please visit

www.orchidclassics.com

You can also find us on iTunes, Facebook, Twitter
and on our YouTube channel

Made in the EU ® and © 2017 Orchid Music Limited

