

8.557202

BRITTEN: Canticles I-V

NAXOS

Britten's five *Canticles* are marvellously vivid, intensely dramatic works. Although they were not designed to be performed together – they span virtually his whole career, from the early 1940s to the mid-1970s, and were composed for a variety of forces and singers – they form a remarkably effective sequence. Each is in some way inspired by religion and takes the form of an extended song, scena, miniature cantata or even, in the case of *Abraham and Isaac*, virtually a mini opera. All five were composed for the tenor voice of Peter Pears, and chart the personal and creative relationship between Britten and his most important muse.

Benjamin
BRITTEN
(1913-1976)

- | | | | |
|------|---|-------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Canticle I, Op. 40 - My Beloved is Mine | 1 ⁶ | 7:11 |
| 2 | Canticle II, Op. 51 - Abraham and Isaac | 12 ⁶ | 16:10 |
| 3-7 | The Heart of the Matter (rev. Peter Pears, 1983) | 17 ⁶ 5 | 24:56 |
| 8 | Canticle III, Op. 55 - Still Falls the Rain | | 11:31 |
| 9-10 | The Heart of the Matter (cont.) | | |
| 11 | Canticle IV, Op. 86 - Journey of the Magi | 4 ¹ 3 ⁶ | 10:50 |
| 12 | Canticle V, Op. 89 - The Death of Saint Narcissus | 1 ⁸ | 7:39 |

Philip Langridge, Tenor¹ • Jean Rigby, Contralto² • Gerald Finley, Baritone³
Derek Lee Ragin, Counter-tenor⁴ • Dame Judi Dench, Narrator⁵
Steuart Bedford, Piano⁶ • Frank Lloyd, Horn⁷ • Osian Ellis, Harp⁸

Recorded at All Hallows, Gospel Oak, London, on 19th, 20th, 23rd and 24th March, 1996
Narrations recorded at Floating Earth, on May 16th, 1996 • **First issued on Collins Classics in 1996**
Producer: John West • Engineer: Mike Hatch (Floating Earth) • Booklet Notes: Malcolm MacDonald
For a complete track list please see the booklet • Publishers: Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. (1-10);
Faber Music Ltd. (11-12) • Cover Picture: *Crucifixion with darkened sun* by Egon Schiele (1890-1918)
(Christie's Images, London, UK / Bridgeman Art Library)

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Playing Time
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