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8.557202

Playing Time  
66:47



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

Philip Langridge, Tenor<sup>1</sup> • Jean Rigby, Contralto<sup>2</sup> • Gerald Finley, Baritone<sup>3</sup>  
Derek Lee Ragin, Counter-tenor<sup>4</sup> • Dame Judi Dench, Narrator<sup>5</sup>  
Steuart Bedford, Piano<sup>6</sup> • Frank Lloyd, Horn<sup>7</sup> • Osian Ellis, Harp<sup>8</sup>

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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