Maurice Duruflé – Requiem - Suite for Organ (2005)

Requiem For Soloists, Choirs, Orchestra And Organ, Op.9 *1 - Introit et Kyrie 2 - Domine Jesu Christe 3 - Sanctus 4 - Pie Jesu 5 - Agnus Die 6 - Lux Aeterna 7 - Libera Mei 8 - In Paradisum* Suite for Organ Op. 5 *9 - Prelude 10 – Sicilienne 11 – Toccata*
Kaaren Erickson - Soprano Arthur J. Jr. Fiacco - Cello Nancianne Parrella – Organ Choir of St. Ignatius Loyola Kent Tritle - Conductor, Organ

The Requiem, op. 9, by Maurice Duruflé was commissioned in 1947 by the French music publisher Durand and is written in memory of the composer's father. The work is for SATB choir with mezzo-soprano and baritone soloists. It exists in three orchestrations: one for organ alone, one for organ with string orchestra and optional trumpets, harp and timpani, and one for organ and full orchestra. At the time of commission, Duruflé was working on an organ suite using themes from Gregorian chants. He incorporated his sketches for that work into the Requiem, which uses numerous themes from the Gregorian "Mass for the Dead." Nearly all the thematic material in the work comes from chant.

Duruflé's Suite, Op. 5 represents one of the high points in the composer's substantial output for the organ. As with his other works for the instrument, it makes considerable demands on the player. The first movement, a Prelude in E flat minor, is constructed as a large arch. It opens with a funereal theme that exploits the organ's darkest, most brooding colors. As the movement progresses, the brighter organ stops slowly overcome the darkness of the opening until the grand sound of the full instrument bursts forth. From this great expanse of sound, Duruflé gradually returns to the contemplative mood of the opening.

The second movement is a graceful Sicilienne. The plaintive theme is isolated in various solo stops, accompanied by an eighth note figuration; these episodes alternate with a chordal texture played on string stops. The final Toccata, one of the most difficult pieces in the organ literature, is a sonic whirlwind that eschews the sort of consistent pattern of fast notes that characterizes many French organ toccatas; rather, it unfolds in a more improvisatory spirit. --- Darren Wong, Rovi

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