



LITTLE Woefully Arrayed

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The best way to experience the works by Jonathan David Little on this disc may not be through the recording, though by all means partake of it. The Australian-born composer has cast his resplendent sacred and secular pieces in the polychoral style of the Renaissance and early Baroque, calling for choral forces to be placed in various configurations and spaces to achieve the intended sonic and expressive effect. Although much of the impact can be discerned through speakers or earbuds, hearing them in an actual acoustic environment would add even more lustre.

The booklet notes include drawings of the different placement of voices, helping greatly to convey what Little intends. For example, in the disc's most expansive piece, the 25-minute Woefully Arrayed – its title drawn from the text attributed to John

Skelton, not a comment on the unusual arrangement of singers – some altos and tenors and all basses are aligned up front, while sopranos and other altos sing from behind them or above in galleries.

What is most important is the music itself, which sounds at once ancient and modern. Little shows masterly command of the choral idiom in the luminous interweaving of voices and occasional solo flights. Aside from Woefully Arrayed, which includes organ accompaniment, the works are a cappella settings. The repertoire is performed by Vox Futura (Boston), The Stanbery Singers (Cincinnati) and the Thomas Tallis Society Choir (Greenwich, London), all of whom sound mesmerised by Little's engaging music.

Author: Donald Rosenberg



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That Time of Year

Kyrie

Gloria

Wasted and Worn

Woefully Arrayed

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