the seven
last words
of Christ

recorded in Boston Symphony Hall with Mac Morgan, baritone, Carl Nelson, tenor, Margot Stagliano, soprano, Reginald Foort, F. R. C. O., organ, and the Boston Chorale conducted by Willis Page
The Seven Last Words Of Christ

This performance is dedicated to a true musician and good friend, Macklin Marrow.

the sound —

In BOSTON SYMPHONY HALL, we have the finest acoustics in the country . . . perhaps the best anywhere. The Hall is as big as most cathedrals. With its vast expanses of wood and carpet, its extreme length from front to back, its high ceiling — it has the elusive gift of "fine acoustics." As a framework for Dubois' THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST and Reginald Foort's two solo organ records, Symphony Hall is the perfect setting.

about 16 cycles on records —

The new Aeolian-Skinner organ there has two ranks of 32 foot pipes, giants which speak in tones below the lowest depths of sound sensation . . . 16-32 cycles to be exact. When in the Hall, the tones can actually be felt rather than heard — as a chest vibration.

We have put these "32 foot" tones ON THE RECORD — for the first time. This may be a technical achievement for microgroove recordings, but it is more than that: it is a musical landmark too. One might say for the first time, "Now it can be heard," (with the right equipment).

The tenor solo after the Seventh Word ("It is Finished") is a case in point. Melodically airy and soaring, the music is underscored with a tragic and ominous feeling — contributed in part by the 32 foot pedal tones in the accompaniment. The 32" sensation is a vital part of this passage as heard in Symphony Hall. The rare 32 pipes may also be detected in the Handel Aria ( #1055) and Bach's magnificent Toccata ( #1054).

the score —

This album is a musical "first" as well as a technical achievement. THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST has never before been recorded.

With a theme basic to mankind — the last utterances of Christ upon the cross, — Dubois has projected an emotional experience beyond the scope of mere words. The result is a dramatic work of large proportions, which explores and consummates the full resources of soloists, large chorus and organist. This is a composition which may best be judged by its consistent record of continued performance.

the performance —

Like fishing and photography, recording often lets the big ones get away. Results are often "almost." Call is superstition, luck, or what you will. In THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST everything "clicked."

Reginald Foort made the pilgrimage by plane from Chicago to the organ console. Mac Morgan was released from contract by special permission to sing the baritone solo. Carl Nelson manipulated his European operatic schedule to sing the tenor role. Margo Stagliano was especially selected for the soprano part. The Boston Chorale is noted for its past performances of this work, and finally, Ralph Judko was on hand as musical advisor (the acknowledged expert on this score). Equipment and acoustics cooperated.

Here was a group that moved into new realms of recording.

the program —

INTRODUCTION

SURENO SOLO

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, atendite, et videte si est dolor sicur dolor meus. Ponet me Dominus delatum, tota die moorete confeciam; ne vocetis me Noemi, sed vocate me Mara. (For the Lord Almighty hath dealt bitterly with me. Call me now no more Naomi, from today call me Mara.)

FIRST WORD

BARITONE, TENOR AND CHORUS

Pater, dimitte illis, non enim sciant quid faciant. Et dicens omnes: Reus est mortis; rolle, rolle, crucifige eum. Sanguis ejus super nos et super filios nostros! Crucifixus est Jesus et latrones, unum a dextra et alterum a sinistra. (Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.)

SECOND WORD

DUET, TENOR AND BARITONE

Hodie commioet in Paradiso, amen, dico tibi. Domine, memento mei cum veneris in regnum tuum. ( ... Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.)

THIRD WORD

SURENO, TENOR, BARITONE AND CHORUS

Miserery, ece flitus tuae. Stabat Mater dolorosa. Justa Crucem lacrymosa. Dum pendebat Filius. Quis est homo, qui non feret, Christi Mattrem si videret? In tanto supplicio? (Woman, behold thy son!)

the binaural edition

In the 3-D edition, with the monaural limitation removed, the character, voices and art of the music spring alive as never before. The interplay between massed chorus and soloists, the duets of the 2nd and 3rd words are indeed startling. The binaural medium draws aside the curtain and projects this work into truly heroic proportions.

FOURTH WORD

BARITONE SOLO

Deus meus, ut quid deerveliquisti me? Omnes amici mei dereliquerunt me; praevaluerunt insidantes mihi; tradidit me quem diligebam. Vinea mea electa, ego te plantavi; quod modo conversat eam in amaritudine ut me crucigereris? (My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?)

FIFTH WORD

TENOR, BARITONE AND CHORUS

Sita! Judaei praetercuntes blasphemabant eum, moventes capita et dicentes: Vah! qui deestrum templum Dei, si tu es Christus, Filius Dei, descendere nunc de cruce, ut videamus et credamus tibi. Si tu es rex Iudorum, saluvm te fac. (I thirst!)

SIXTH WORD

TENOR AND CHORUS

Pater, in manus tuas commend6 spiritum meum. Pater meus es tu, Deus meus, susceptor salutis meae. In manus tuas commend6 spiritum meum. (Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.)

SEVENTH WORD

SURENO, TENOR, BARITONE AND CHORUS

Et clamans Jesu voce magna dixit: Con-sacramentum est! Et inclinato capite, tradidit spiritum. (It is finished!)

RECITATIVO

TENOR SOLO

Erat autem hora sexta; obscuratus est sol, et tenebrae factae sunt in universum terram; velum templi scissum est; omnis terra tremuit; petrae scissae et monumenta aperta sunt. (And it was about the sixth hour . . .)

PRAYER

CHORUS

Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi, quia per sanctam Crucem tuam redemistimmundum.

CAUTION

This record contains frequency components down through 16 cph (32 pipe), and to realize the full recorded quality the best equipment must be used. Failure to track these low-pitched sounds may ruin the record which has been tested here using "high-compliance" cartridges. Any such cartridge should play the record successfully.

In making records for the best current techniques of playback, failure to track is the fault of the equipment, not the record, and damaged pressings cannot be accepted in return.

Willis Page, Conductor

Margo Stagliano, Soprano

Mac Morgan, Baritone.

Carl Nelson, Tenor

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