

## Gramophone December 2009

### Rütti Requiem

Olivia Robinson *sop* Edward Price *bar* Jane Watts *org* The Bach Choir; Southern Sinfonia / David Hill

Naxos 8 572317 (55' DDD)

### **Rütti's new requiem is one to relish and it is passionately performed here**

The music of Swiss composer Carl Rütti seems to have gained considerable ground in the repertoires of British and American choirs in recent years, and this setting of the Requiem shows just why. He has a gift for finding a memorable “hook” to trigger a section – and, in this case, the entire work, which begins with a haunting soprano solo, beautifully sung by Olivia Robinson – and a clear connection to the English choral tradition (he studied in London, in fact). The orchestration is the same as that of the Fauré Requiem, and that is not the only resemblance between the two works: there is frequently a wistful gentleness here that any admirer of the French composer's work will respond to. Rütti also does not, of course, include the “Dies Irae”, but does set the “In Paradisum”.

While gentleness is far from being the end of the story, however, as the Elgar-meets-John Adams style of the opening of the Kyrie, for example, or the Nymanesque moments of the “In Paradisum” demonstrate, the tone is definitely predominantly elegiac and consoling. The Bach Choir under David Hill respond to this with warmth and passion, and soloists Olivia Robinson and Edward Price are outstanding, but I wonder how well the work would fare with less competent performers: the sense of pulsing urgency present here is definitely necessary to hold the work together. The recording, made in St John's, Smith Square, is wonderful, responding to the wide sonic and dynamic range of the music in every detail.

Ivan Moody