



# TESTAMENT

## STEREO NEW RELEASE

### Previously unreleased



SBT2 1454 (2 CDs)

Release Date:

December 2009

It was the composer and BBC producer Dr. Robert Simpson who took up the cause of Brian's music in the early 1950s, starting with Brian's Eighth Symphony – the first of his symphonies that the composer had ever heard – which Sir Adrian Boult conducted for a BBC broadcast in February 1954. Over the years Simpson worked towards a performance of *The Gothic*, the ultimate goal by reason of its huge dimensions and the forces involved. The symphony's world première was a semi-amateur performance at Central Hall, Westminster on 24 June 1961 conducted by Bryan Fairfax. But its first fully professional rendition was the performance captured on these discs, mounted by the BBC Third Programme, broadcast live and – accompanied by a considerable fanfare of publicity including a short film about Havergal Brian shown on BBC2 – given in the Royal Albert Hall under Sir Adrian Boult on 30 October 1966, in the presence of the 90-year-old composer.

The final rehearsals for this historic performance were held in the BBC's Maida Vale

Studio 1. As Sir Adrian Boult wrote afterwards, he "had never before seen [the Studio] ... set out as it was for our rehearsals with every inch of floor space covered with players and singers, and no room for any audience, if anyone besides Dr Simpson, armed with another copy of the monumental score, had wished to be present".<sup>4</sup> As for the performance itself, Boult recalled, "I used a stick an inch or two longer than usual (and the usual is pretty long!) and it was remarkable how clearly the Albert Hall platform allows even the most distant people to see the beat. There was a moving scene at the close ... many were deeply excited not only by the circumstances, but by the power of the music, and when [the composer] came on to the platform, and the audience stood up to applaud him, it seemed a fitting close to it all. It was an evening that none of us will ever forget." With the release of this recording it is an evening we can all relive.

from the booklet note © Malcolm MacDonald

#### Havergal Brian 1876-1972

Symphony No. 1 in D minor (1919-1927) *The Gothic*

**Compact disc 1** 52.09

1	I	Allegro assai	11.30
2	II	Lento espressivo e solenne	10.44
3	III	Vivace	11.49
4	IV	Te Deum laudamus: Allegro moderato	18.03

**Compact disc 2** 55.58

1	V	Judex crederis: Adagio molto solenne e religioso	14.16
2	VI	Te ergo quaesumus: Moderato e molto sostenuto	34.42

BBC broadcast: 30 October 1966, Royal Albert Hall, London

**Honor Sheppard** – soprano · **Shirley Minty** – contralto

**Ronald Dowd** – tenor · **Roger Stalman** – bass

BBC Chorus · BBC Choral Society · City of London Choir

Hampstead Choral Society · Emanuel School Choir · Orpington Junior Singers

**BBC Symphony Orchestra** (Hugh McGuire – leader)

conducted by/Dirigent/direction: **Sir Adrian Boult**

3	Havergal Brian Interviewed for the BBC by J. Behague on 1 January 1966	6.48
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### TESTAMENT

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