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Website Context and Research

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Acoustic Composition 13

Kyrie (2017)

Single Movement for four solo Voices (SATB)

As the title suggests, this is a setting of a short Latin text taken from the Catholic Mass composed for four solo voices (SATB). The text contains three short lines (with one repeated) and only three words; it reads as a simple vertical palindrome:

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison;
Christe eleison;
Kyrie eleison

This score evolved from a pedagogical study conceived with the hope of demonstrating how one could follow conventions of plainchant within tonal stasis (without accidentals or modulations), but maintain internal motion through the linear interaction of modality (instead of species counterpoint) and hopefully produce contemporary music that sounds timeless instead of being overtly modernistic or retrospective.

The opening plainchant is written in Phrygian mode and the subtle presence of a grace note contemporises the rhythmic (and modal) character of the phrase. The compound-interval in the bass for the first chorus is another contemporising influence, along with the use of fourth-based harmony and the linear use of whole-tones. One was not aiming to 'reinvent the world' here! Subtle 'smudges' (for this piece at least) ...

The movement was arranged for string quartet in May 2020.

Contact:

For further information and resources contact the composer at: contact@ianpercy.me.uk