



The Choral Music of Twentieth-Century Women

Composers: Elisabeth Lutyens, Elizabeth Maconchy and Thea Musgrave

Catherine Roma

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This book brings to light the choral works of three contemporary British women composers: Elisabeth Lutyens (1906-1983), Elizabeth Maconchy (1907-1994), and Thea Musgrave (1928-). Earning solid reputations in Britain through their varying compositional styles, their music has revealed them to be substantial, prolific composers who are representative of major trends in twentieth-century British choral composition. Lutyens, often described as a musical pioneer, incorporates a highly personal and imaginative style in her use of twelve-tone technique, and her departures from the strict practice of serial writing are always highly personal and imaginative. Maconchy describes her own technique as 'impassioned argument,' using compositional tools such as contrapuntal textures in both her instrumental and choral works, resulting in a high degree of chromatic color. Musgrave encompasses many modes of expression, from her early choral works featuring tonal diatonic writing, to a free chromatic style with imprecise tonality at times. Complete with historical perspective, musical examples, and reproductions of choral texts, this resource of important and little known contemporary choral works demonstrates the diverse approaches used by these and other contemporary composers, and contributes to the growing literature on women in music.

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