

Te Deum

Giuseppe Verdi (1813 - 1901)

Verdi is recognised as one of the greatest of all opera composers, with an astonishing succession of masterpieces spanning fifty years, from *Nabucco* in 1841 to *Falstaff* in 1893. Other than operas and the magnificent *Requiem*, he wrote little else - a string quartet, a handful of songs, and the *Four Sacred Pieces* which were published in 1898, only three years before his death. Though published as a collection, they all began life at different times and for different reasons, and are consequently very diverse. Two of them are short, unaccompanied pieces - one of them for female voices only – whilst the other two are much more extended and scored for full orchestral accompaniment. Verdi had been working intermittently on one or other of them for nearly ten years, and was evidently not completely satisfied with the finished result, since he tried to withdraw them. Fortunately for us his publisher, Ricordi, and his friend and librettist, Boito, refused to hear of such a thing and publication went ahead as originally planned. The *Te Deum* is the last and grandest of the four pieces.

programme notes by John Bawden

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