



SUMMARY OF WORLDWIDE REVIEWS OF *POLYHYMNIA* RECEIVED TO DATE (EXCERPTS) – to September 2012 (some in advance) (including: UK, USA, Spain, Italy)

PRE-RELEASE (prior to 28th February 2012)

- *“Polyhymnia conjures up a heart-rending panorama: it is immensely poetic, almost otherworldly, and employs an exceptionally hypnotic array of musical colour.”* – John Wheatley, in *Tempo* (CUP) (January, 2012) (UK)
- *“Slick and beautifully executed material”* – Dr. Don W. Seven, in *Babysue* (February, 2012) (USA)
- *“most impressed”* – The Hon. Richard Lyttelton, former President, EMI Classics and Jazz (February, 2012) (UK)
- *“Gorgeous, exciting, chilling and surprising ... an elegant gift to the ears. There are no words to describe this work ... superlative ... spine-tingling ... There is just no classification for this work ... Polyhymnia might be said to be the best to date in the extensive catalogue of Parma Recordings. Jonathan Little has rightly earned the recognition he is now receiving, and this album is a clear example of his talent. The versatility of the harmony, the complexity, the beauty, the elegance, the intensity ... A host of adjectives are insufficient to categorise this otherworldly recording, which astonishes the listener from start to finish. There are no words ... ”* – Alejandro Clavijo, in *Reviews New Age* (February, 2012) (Spain)
[5/5 STARS: ALBUM OF THE MONTH for FEB. 2012; NOMINATED FOR BEST ALBUM OF THE YEAR]
- *“a richness of coloration, dynamic shading and melodic inventiveness all his own. Small wonder that this Australian composer has gained several awards on both sides of the Atlantic.”* – Phillip Somerich, in *Classical Music* (25th Feb. 2012) (UK)

POST-RELEASE (28th February 2012 onwards)

- *“Modern classical music, which means roughly the compositions of the last 100 years, has developed a reputation with audiences – sometimes justifiably – as “difficult,” offering perhaps some intellectual enjoyment but not a great deal of emotional involvement or the sorts of attractions that would bring listeners back again and again. ... Now that we have reached the 21st century, it has become even more unusual to find contemporary music that will repay repeated attention and that people would actually want to hear more than once. That makes the works of Jonathan Little (born 1965) very rare indeed ... incorporating its modern elements into pieces that are as often lush and poetic as they are pointed and intense. ... Polyhymnia, for string orchestra in multiple parts, is as warm and fervent as religious poetry, its overall aural impression being of slow motion within near-stasis; while Terpsichore, for large orchestra, is a nine-section work that is*

percussion-filled and is dancelike mostly in an abstract sense – and is a sonic tour de force. Little is an expert orchestrator: his Fanfare for brass and percussion, which lasts less than a minute, displays as much forthright splendor as anyone could wish, while Kyrie ... is a moving work that looks back to older Mass settings and shows how well Little can write for voices a cappella. Also here is Sacred Prelude ... which lies very well on the instruments and very comfortably in the listener's ear, evoking just the right philosophical-religious mood. Little is clearly comfortable writing in multiple forms for many different instrumental and vocal combinations. And although no one hearing these works will confuse them with music of the 19th century or earlier, they are pieces in which the lessons of earlier times have been thoroughly absorbed, then reworked in a way that has visceral appeal to today's listeners ... – Dr. Mark J. Estren, “Modern but Accessible”, in *Infodad* (1st March, 2012) (USA)

- *“In composer Jonathan Little we have a voice. His music is tonal and filled with color ... there is a forward momentum that at times combines with mystical suspensions that remind a little of Arvo Part and John Tavener ... other times there's a folk element latent in the music that I suppose you could put in the lineage of Vaughan Williams ... the music [is] dynamic and dramatic ... This collection of works shows that he has much promise and potential. As it is the music puts one in a place worth being.”* – Grego Applegate Edwards, “Jonathan Little, Polyhymnia: String, Orchestral and Choral Works”, in *Gaplegate Classical-Modern Music Review* (12th April, 2012) (USA)
- *“Jonathan Little's Polyhymnia is a ‘lamentation’ for strings, full of rich string orchestra harmonies and based on some beautiful melodic ideas. The texture is rich, and the effect is quite moving ... Sacred Prelude is a beautiful serenade for string quintet, melodic and rather modal. It stands out with its sincerity. The Kyrie from the composer's Temporis Perditi Mass ... shows a real skill for choral writing.”* – Ira Byelick, “LITTLE: Polyhymnia; Terpsichore; Fanfare; Sacred Prelude; Kyrie”, in *American Record Guide* (May/June 2012), pp.244-5 (USA)
- *“We might classify this compilation of works ‘Futuro Antico’ (‘Ancient Future’). In fact, on every piece on this disc, you can hear the influence of ancient music – of its instrumentation, the use of modal harmonies, and sometimes the reprise of arias and dances with an unmistakable Renaissance flavour. Yet, the final product sounds modern too, as Little adds his own personal elements to these sonic foundations: bursting through the panorama he paints with sudden flashes of light or menacing thunderbolts, and so projects the past into the future”* – Filippo Focosi, “Jonathan Little ‘Polyhymnia’”, in *Kathodik* (16th April, 2012) (Italy)
- *“obviously [a name] that will make its mark: Little plainly knows what he is doing and does it well.”* – Martin Anderson, “Jonathan Little and the Importance of Ecstasy”, in *Fanfare*, Vol.36, No.1 (Sept/Oct 2012) (USA)*

N.B.: The music producer, publisher and founder/director of Toccata Classics and Toccata Press, Martin Anderson, conducted an in-depth interview with the composer entitled, “Jonathan Little and the Importance of Ecstasy” (3,300 words) for *FANFARE* (USA), Issue 36:1 (Sept/Oct 2012), pp.58-72 ISSN: 0148-9364.

[*Fanfare* is a leading American Classical and Jazz record review magazine: www.fanfaremag.com]

- *‘It's obvious ... that Jonathan Little issues from a similar school of sensibility to that of the “holy mystics” of Eastern Europe, composers like Arvo Pärt and Pēteris Vasks. ... [Terpsichore is] an exuberant orchestral essay somewhere between Respighi's evocations of ancient Rome and Villa-Lobos's representation of the Brazilian jungle. ... The Sacred Prelude is dignified and sober, moving without being emotional ... it is clear from this CD that his fine command of atmosphere and orchestral color ought to command a decent fee in Hollywood.’* – Martin Anderson, “Polyhymnia ...”, in *Fanfare*, Vol.36, No.1 (Sept/Oct 2012) (USA)
- *‘The notes quote one unnamed commentator as stating that the music is “completely novel, yet hauntingly familiar.” This seems a fair assessment, in that no other composer among the thousands whose music I've heard immediately comes to mind ... Perhaps Górecki in certain of his more tonal works comes closest, although Little's music is about seven notches above the quality of that of the Polish composer ... The disc's closing work, the Kyrie from Little's Missa Temporis perditi, is my favorite on the CD. Soaring lines in the sopranos, taking them up to high C, suggest the majesty of the words of the Kyrie. ... Harmonies shift around a good bit, but the direction of the work is never in doubt as it moves to its dramatic conclusion. The spacious acoustic of the recording venue adds to the otherworldly effect.’* – David DeBoor Canfield, “Polyhymnia ...”, in *Fanfare*, Vol.36, No.1 (Sept/Oct 2012) (USA)

- “[In Polyhymnia] melodic figures coalesce into an enormous tapestry of musical color. It’s excellent music for dreaming! This music can waft the listener back to a pastoral scene in ancient Greece, where the gods spend lazy days basking in the sun on Mount Olympus. ... Sacred Prelude can put the listener in the mood for meditating on deep ritualistic mysteries. Little leaves the best for last. The highlight of this disc is the Kyrie from his *Missa Temporis Perditi* ... It is an eloquent and expansive work sung here by the Thomas Tallis Chamber Choir, a large a cappella group from which conductor Philip Simms draws opulent sonorities. Little composes with a great array of technical skills and his works are both harmonically and contrapuntally pleasing. He knows how to bring out all the colors of the choral palette, and that is what makes the Kyrie such a fascinating piece.” – Maria Nockin, “Polyhymnia ...”, in *Fanfare*, Vol.36, No.1 (Sept/Oct 2012) (USA)
- “When I first encountered Jonathan Little’s music in 2008, I gave it an enthusiastic review. He is quite obviously an excellent composer, in fact a composer difficult to pigeonhole because his works span a wide and interesting array of styles. ... I found it [Polyhymnia] to be the spiritual cousin of Strauss’s *Metamorphosen* for 23 strings ... I liked Polyhymnia better, overall, than Strauss’s *Metamorphosen*, and I was interested to learn that it is No. 6 in a series of pieces by Little titled *The Nine Muses*, of which *Terpsichore* is No. 7. As an introduction (so to speak) to *Terpsichore*, it works very effectively ... for *Terpsichore* is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating pieces I’ve ever heard ... as the music weaves its way through 14 utterly fascinating minutes. In my original review (May-June 2008 issue), I indicated that Little’s music sounds like no one else’s, and that is still true of this piece and the ones that follow. Perhaps someday, Little will be fortunate enough to present us with his complete *Nine Muses*, so we can judge the broader scope of his obviously fine talent. – Lynn René Bayley, “Little, *The Nine Muses* ...”, in *Fanfare*, Vol.36, No.2 (Nov/Dec 2012) (USA)
- “His music has a dense tonal clarity, apparent in the layers of string sound that slowly climb from the powerful low A that introduces the twenty-one-minute *Polyhymnia* and fades away into the distance. The climbing and diminishing gesture repeats several times, each with a variant route until halfway through the upper strings play repeatedly with fragmentary strands that continue to its close, winding themselves like ivy around a central C major treillage. It is a piece that maintains its single-minded purpose throughout, an impressively robust structure. ... The final piece on the disc is a beautifully performed *Kyrie* ... requiring massed divided voices (there are sixty in this performance) creating effective choral textures not unlike those of the *Polyhymnia*. Little certainly fixes his trademark textural style, sticks to his focal points, and has the technical skill to create vivid contrasts when needed.” – Patric Standford, “Tonal Clarity: Music by Jonathan Little”, in *Music and Vision* (25th September, 2012) (UK)

Another article by Jeff Kelly about the composer, his writings, and *Polyhymnia*, entitled “The John Clementi Collard Fellowship – Jonathan Little 2011”, may be found in *Preserve Harmony*, ed. Adrian Mumford [London: Journal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians], Issue 44 (Spring, 2012), pp.10 & 16.

Little’s previous disc was a Record of the Year in America in 2008; his present release has so far been nominated for “Best Album of the Year” 2012 in Spain.

Further reviews are still pending from the UK (*Musical Opinion*, *Gramophone* + national newspapers), and Germany, France, Norway, Canada and Australia.