

Mozart Requiem Mass in D minor, K626.
Helen Donath (sop); **Yvonne Minton** (con);
Ryland Davies (ten); **Gerd Nienstedt** (bs);
John Alldis Choir; BBC Symphony Orchestra
/ Sir Colin Davis.
Speakers Corner/Philips © 802 862LY; rec.
9/67. From Philips SAL3649.

Colin Davis's 1967 recording of Mozart's Requiem might fairly be described as traditional and typical of its era. Some will regard it as old-fashioned. The female voices of the chorus have fairly constant vibrato and the 'blended' sound of the orchestra is no longer accepted in some circles. By any standards, however, the four soloists are excellent and expressive in an appropriate way, as is Davis's choice of tempi throughout. The effect, while solemn, never drags. The typical late-Mozart sound of the two basset horns is well heard at important points and the solo trombone – sometimes a cause of unintentional bathos when its music becomes chromatic – sounds as commanding as it should. This is, after all, the Day of Judgement.

The traditional Süssmayr completions are used and how conventional they sound in the "Hostias" and "Sanctus" after Mozart's masterly counterpoint and the pain and sharpness in some of his authentic melodies and accompaniments. Despite this, we have a performance that serves the music well, conveying vividly the impression of a uniquely anguished and tragically incomplete document. The recording is full and has consistently good detail.

These LP records are beautifully manufactured and presented. As many readers will know, even unplayed vinyl pressings can produce a crackly playback if they are electrostatically charged. Professionally cleaned – washed with an appropriate solution and vacuumed dry – the charge leaks away. All of these discs sounded as near to perfection as it is reasonable to expect. **Graham Silcock**