life and death. It is beautifully written for the chorus, occasionally quite thrilling, with lovely lyrical touches along the way, but it is a shade more anonymous than such large-scale self expressions need to be. Perhaps that explains why, although the Requiem was premiered in May 1958 at the University of California, Berkeley, which had commissioned it, and then presented again in 1959 at Harvard, it took until 2014 for the first complete recording to be made.

Thompson set his music to 18 Biblical verses in the form of a nominally dramatic dialogue between choruses of mourners and faithful; and though there are several sections that require each choir to divide again, to a maximum of 16 parts, the music largely flows gracefully along muted emotional parameters, suggestive of the Italian Renaissance madrigal cycles Thompson said were his inspiration.

After waiting more than half a century, this first recording, by the 32-voice Philadelphia Singers conducted by David Hayes, is not only technically superb but exceptionally warm and passionate; the singers, who are now Resident Chorus of the Philadelphia Orchestra, know both the music and the words, and claim to have given the first-ever live performances of the Requiem by a professional chorus.
Laurence Vittes

'Songs of Struggle & Redemption'

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child. My Lord, what a mornin'. Go down, Moses. Wade in de water. Nobody knows de trouble I've seen. I want to be ready. Joshua fit de battle of Jericho. Steal away. Deep river. Go tell it on de mountain! Give me Jesus. Ride on, King Jesus! I've been in de storm. Were you there. He never said a numberlin' word. Don't you weep after me. Keep your eyes on the prize. We shall not be moved. This train. If you miss me from the back of the bus. Freedom in de air. We shall overcome.