

Strange Storms and Symphonies.

I'd never heard of George Lloyd, a Cornish composer whose life spanned the 20th Century from almost the outbreak of the First World War, to almost the millennium. And he could have been called the almost man, as I discovered last night when I had the privilege to see the beautiful new film on his life by the Indy filmmaker, Diana Taylor. I'd seen one of Diana's previous films that she made with her sister Anthea Page, *Severn and Somme*, on the life of the Gloucestershire poet, Ivor Gurney, so I knew I was in for a well-researched and well-told tale on an undeservedly lesser known English artist, clearly something of a passion for Diana.

Diana's skills as a filmmaker made me feel safely in the hands of someone who can weave a story and illustrate it even when the source material is scarce. Gorgeous Cornish seascapes and moorland served as visual clues to Lloyd's inspiration, with recorded interviews that he gave over the years providing a rich context for his life. But the inevitability of the decline he suffered after returning shell-shocked from World War Two was made more deeply poignant by his neglect at the hands of the BBC because of his kind of music having fallen out of 'fashion'.

A relationship with the Brass Band Movement, amply illustrated with performances from recent concerts, played a large part in the revival of his fortunes, and thankfully his story ended with renewed success in the latter part of his life, aided by the staunch love and devotion of his Swiss wife, Nancy. He died in 1998, his final composition, completed just weeks before his death, a Requiem for Diana, Princess of Wales. The musical accompaniment to the film throughout was atmospheric and moving, and I intend to seek out his works and explore them at depth.

I am delighted to have been introduced to his life and music by the competent hands of Diana Taylor, who is going from strength to strength. I look forward to seeing what nook or cranny of British culture she turns her magic to next.