



Teddington Choral Society

PRESS RELEASE

21st March 2013

Teddington choir sings of war and peace

Dona Nobis Pacem on Saturday 23rd March at Waldegrave School

In a break from tradition, this year's spring concert from Teddington Choral Society (TCS) will be on a secular but universal theme. The choir will perform powerful works by three composers - Vaughan Williams, O'Regan and Vasks - dealing in different ways with the horrors of war but ultimately expressing a redemptive message of hope and optimism.

The choice of contrasting works reflects TCS Musical Director Patrick Martin's efforts to broaden the choir's repertoire to include outstanding modern music alongside the established classics.

Rather than the language barrier of a Latin Mass or Requiem, these compositions feature stirring English texts set to music that is by turns exuberant, calming, aggressive, searching and joyful.

The concert will open with *Dona Nobis Pacem* by Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks (born 1946) in which the choir repeats these words – a call for peace – in serene and beautiful harmonies.

This will be followed by the thrill and rhythmic vitality of Tarik O'Regan's *Triptych*, whose theme is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the desperate need for peace. O'Regan sets words by English poets Blake, Milton, Wordsworth and Hardy together with texts from Jewish, Islamic and Christian writers in three movements. The first movement, *Threnody*, was commissioned for the inaugural concert of the Choir of London in December 2004. The second and third movements were written and first performed as a separate commission from Portsmouth Grammar School in 2005, but were planned at the outset to connect eventually with *Threnody*.

The concert finale, Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Dona Nobis Pacem*, reflects the composer's concerns about the increasingly disturbing political scene of the 1930s. As a stretcher bearer during the First World War, he saw some horrific sights and lost good friends, including George Butterworth. In contrast to the lyrical style so familiar from Vaughan Williams, the collector of folk songs, this stirring, achingly beautiful and ultimately hopeful work represents the dread of a man who desperately wants to avoid war but fears its inevitability. In this profound cantata, Vaughan Williams sets words by the American Civil War poet, Walt Whitman (1819-1892), and part of a parliamentary speech by the Liberal statesman, John Bright, (1811-1889), which have been described as a "Poetic anti-war masterpiece", alongside passages from the Bible.

In another break from tradition, the concert will be held in **Waldegrave School** (rather than St James's Church, Hampton Hill).

TCS will be joined by professional soloists Miranda Johnson (Soprano) and Martin Johnson (Bass-Baritone), a string orchestra and pianist Geoffrey Bowyer. Miranda sang in the first performance of *Threnody* with the Choir of London in 2004.

- Tickets for Saturday's concert are available, price £12 (£10 concessions), from [Teddington Choral Society | Order Tickets](#) or from Albert's Music Shop, Twickenham, or on the door. The concert starts at 7:30pm. For further details, please visit www.teddingtonchoral.co.uk.

About Teddington Choral Society

Founded in 1951, Teddington Choral Society rehearses on Mondays from 7:45-9:45 pm at the United Reformed Church, First Cross Road, Twickenham Green. We are always on the lookout for new members – particularly men!

For more information visit our website at www.teddingtonchoral.co.uk or call:

Kate Livingston, Chair

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