

March 2005

Dear

Guildford Philharmonic Choir Concert: New Contemporary Choral Classics series. War and Peace in our time. Guildford Cathedral, Saturday 14th May 2005 at 7.30 p.m.

Our last concert of the 2004/5 season will be the first in a new series to be called Contemporary Choral Classics. These concerts are to be given about once a year, and will combine an existing choral classic with a new work which looks destined to become a classic of the future. We have found that our most popular concerts are those which include works like these. It is clear that the musical public is looking for good and approachable new music and we are proud to give you the opportunity of hearing them.

This concert is themed to present music about war and peace. The hope is that humanity and particularly the many competing religions will manage to achieve peace and harmony during the 21st century.

The concert opens with Gustav Holst's Mars from The Planets suite, a dramatic reminder of what war involves. This is followed by Vaughan Williams' Dona Nobis Pacem, a cry for peace, in which he has set some of Walt Whitman's poems in juxtaposition with the Agnus Dei of the Mass and various well known biblical texts. This is a most beautiful work, not often performed and deserving to be heard more.

Finally we hear Karl Jenkins' The Armed Man, a Mass for Peace. This new work was commissioned for the millenium by Britain's Royal Armouries and dedicated to the victims of the Kosovo crisis. Jenkins is best known for Adiemus, and you can hear that The Armed Man is from the same composer, but it is very different in style and creates an extremely dramatic atmosphere.

Jenkins uses the medieval French song L'Homme Armé, set within the framework of the Christian Mass. There are many movements in the piece, each looking at war and peace from a different angle. For example one complete movement is the Muezzin, the Muslim Call to Prayers. The whole work is a heartfelt cry for the religions and the armies of the world to come together in the cause of peace not war, something greatly relevant to our time. The Armed Man has been a huge success and is being widely performed by many choirs across the UK. We are sure that Guildford audiences will find it most moving.

The orchestra will be the Forest Philharmonic, and the conductor will be Jeremy Backhouse.

Please bin this information if you are not interested or not available, and please do not feel in any way required to reply. However I would very much like to get tickets for you if you want to come. Ticket prices are £20 and £15. Student concessions £5. Alternatively you can obtain them from Guildford Tourist Office 01483 444334, the Cathedral Booking Office 01483 547870 or Michael Taylor on 07958 519741 or tickets@GuildfordPhilharmonicChoir.org.uk.

GPCPublicityMay2005