

Dona Nobis Pacem

Ralph Vaughan Williams

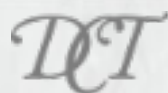
Some Corner of a Foreign Field

Cecilia McDowall

Eclogue for Piano and Strings

Gerald Finzi

and works by Britten and Elgar



The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust

Saturday 22 November 2025 7:30pm
St James Church, Muswell Hill

NIMROD
CAPITAL **N**



Goodman Jones

Nimrod Capital LLP

Switchboard: 020 7382 4565
www.nimrodcapital.com

With best wishes from

NIMROD 
CAPITAL

Nimrod Capital LLP is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

Some Corner of a Foreign Field

Cecilia McDowall

Serenade for Strings

Edward Elgar

Canticle V: The Death of St Narcissus

Benjamin Britten

Eclogue for Piano and Strings

Gerald Finzi

Interval

Dona Nobis Pacem

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Saturday 22 November 2025

St James Church, Muswell Hill

Jenny Stafford *soprano*

James Robinson *tenor*

James Cleverton *baritone*

Catherine Borner *piano*

Deian Rowlands *harp*

North London Chorus

Meridian Sinfonia

Murray Hipkin *conductor*

*There will be a collection on behalf of The David Nott
Foundation after the performance*

Please remember to switch off all pagers, mobile phones and digital watch alarms.
The use of video cameras or other unauthorised recording devices is prohibited.
Thank you for your cooperation.



CECILIA MCDOWALL

SOME CORNER OF A FOREIGN FIELD

Cecilia McDowall (b 1951): *Some Corner of a Foreign Field: Cantata for Solo Tenor, SATB (with divisions), String Orchestra and Harp (2015)*

<i>Job 37 v.9-10, Job 38 v.29-30</i>	Holy Bible King James Version
<i>Before Ginchy, September, 1916</i>	Dr Joseph Spence after Ernest Armine Woodhouse
<i>1914 V: The Soldier</i>	Rupert Brooke

Written as part of McDowall's tenure as Composer in Residence at Dulwich College, *Some Corner of a Foreign Field* was commissioned to mark the centenary of the First World War. A profoundly moving cantata, it draws on biblical texts associated with the acclaimed pupil of Dulwich College, Sir Ernest Shackleton, his 1914-16 Antarctic expedition and Rupert Brooke, the centenary of whose death fell in 2015. Inspired by war poetry and remembrance, it reflects directly on the legacy of conflict, particularly the First World War, and the yearning for peace, making poignant connections to themes of sacrifice and memory. With its lustrous harmonies and moving tenor solo, it offers an immensely rewarding choral experience. Yet parts of the text are so explicit and powerful – and so potentially distressing – that singing them needs careful negotiation of sufficient detachment in performance to deliver their sung impact effectively.

The work is structured in three continuous sections, each unfolding one from another without a break. It sets three contrasting texts, each of which is associated with the College in some way. The first section refers to Shackleton and his Antarctic Expedition. Shackleton's vessel, *Endurance*, became trapped in pack ice and over several months became submerged, finally disappearing beneath the ice in November 1915. As

the crew was forced to abandon ship, Shackleton ordered personal possessions to be limited to two pounds per person. Setting an example to his men, he tore out the flyleaf of the bible given by Queen Alexandra to Shackleton and his men for the voyage, as well as passages from *Job 37/38* which so clearly resonated with him. Dulwich College possesses the *John Caird*, the boat in which Shackleton and some of his crew rowed to Elephant Island and South Georgia to seek help.

A short orchestral introduction, marked 'sustained, expressive' opens the first section, for which the two pairs of verses from *Job* provide the text. In the first, Elihu proclaims God's majesty to Job, taking as examples His powers over the extremes of weather – the whirlwind from the south, the cold from the north, the frost that is His breath, all miseries much greater than those Job has endured. The chorus, followed by the tenor soloist, invoke their withering force through vocal weaving, reinforced by paralinguistic cries of 'ah', suggesting shock, awe and pain. The second pair of verses continue the proclamation, prefacing in God's own voice what will be, but not yet, His answer to Job, valorising and rewarding him for sustaining his faith and humility in the trials put upon him. The tenor soloist alternates in disparate rhythms with the chorus to

ask 'Out of whose womb came the ice and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?' Then, to elaborate Shackleton's fate as a prophetic metaphor: 'The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen', drawing the section to a hushed paralinguistic close with 'ah, mm'.

The second section of the work was inspired by the war poem, *Before Ginchy September 1916* by Ernest Armine Wodehouse who, along with his more famous younger brother, P G Wodehouse, was a pupil of the College. He was an early recruit to the First World War, becoming an officer in the Scots Guards. Dr Joseph Spence, Master of the College at the time of the commissioning of the work, excerpted and rearranged several lines from the first two verses of the much longer poem to provide a compelling text. It is linked to the preceding section by an orchestral passage marked 'intense, shimmering' – a rhythmic recurrence throughout the section – before the altos begin a *marcato* chant of 'Man is but carrion here', beneath repeated paralinguistic 'ahs' from the sopranos, while tenors and basses pick up rapid, irregular repetitions of 'Man is but carrion'. This section is the core of the work and develops an increasingly horrifying scenario of the foul inhuman wretchedness of war by exploring the ambivalence of a



Cecilia McDowall and Murray Hipkin. Photo by Tim Lutton

wounded soldier, unable to move, confronted by the corpse of a fallen comrade beside him. The dead man is reduced, in the opening of Wodehouse's poem, to 'Yon poisonous clod/...that lies/In the next ulcer of this shell-pock'd land/To that which holds me now'. The chorus elaborates the 'hideous enervation' which allows the narrator coldly – 'Untroubled, unperturbed' – to 'scan/ The fearsome relic of what once was a man'. The force of McDowall's insertion of paralinguistic utterances now becomes clear, as semiotic indicators of existential human reactions to experiences so dreadful as to defy verbal formulation: shock and awe in the opening section, at the sheer climatic might of the frozen world that scuppers Shackleton's expedition, and represents Job's realisation of divine power. Here, in the second section, they become part

of the music, despairingly ululated sighs and sounds of wretchedness at the utter awfulness of the reduction of human flesh to carrion for swarming flies. It is on this dire note that the section ends. But Wodehouse's poem later suggests that the very awfulness of the experience of war changes those who suffer it most acutely, and gives grounds for hope: 'They say we change, we men that come out here./But do they know how great.../The change is there; the change is true/And so, what wonder, if the outward view/Do to the eye of Love unroll/Some hint of a transformed soul?'.

Change thus becomes a strong underlying theme of the work. Job was changed through his recognition of the need for patience and humility in suffering the mysterious forces of Divine power; Shackleton, similarly, by recognising and successfully enduring

the irresistible natural forces of whirlwind, ice and freezing cold that Elihu and God proclaim metaphorically to Job. The closing section of the cantata makes this tacit theme clearer still. It sets the serene, patriotic poem by Rupert Brooke, *1914 V: The Soldier* with its evocative opening line, 'If I should die, think only this of me'. The cantata also marked the centenary of Rupert Brooke's death in 1915 and was performed at his alma mater, King's College, Cambridge, by Dulwich College Madrigal Choir and Chorus, Dulwich Concert Orchestra and James Oxley, tenor, conducted by Richard Mayo, Director of Music (to whom, together with the College and its musicians, the work is dedicated) on 25 March 2015.

The tenor soloist sings the opening lines of Brooke's poem softly: what is to be thought 'only' of the narrator is

‘That there’s some corner of a foreign field that is forever England’. To emphasise this the chorus quietly incant ‘England’ twice, as the soloist repeats ‘forever England’. After four bars of an orchestral interlude, and with a gentle but suggestive dynamic increase led by sopranos and altos, the chorus offer a distinct and explicit change from the substantive focus of the previous section: ‘There shall be/In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;/A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware’. No ‘poisonous clod’ nor ‘mess of festering rags’, ‘rotting in an ulcer of...shell-pock’d land’ here; but rather, as the soloist continues Brooke’s text, ‘A body of England’s, breathing English air,/Washed by the rivers, blest by the suns of home.’

The Soldier is the last of a series of five sonnets which Brooke wrote under the collective title *1914*. The critic John Drinkwater wrote of them at the time that their poetry is ‘as poetry must always be, independent of all factual experience, and comes from the deeper experience of the

imagination’. In the light of this it is interesting to compare *The Soldier* with the vigorous rhetorical nostalgia of his directly comparable and equally well-known poem *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester*, written in Berlin in 1912, which vividly conveys the post-romantic, nostalgic flavour of the Georgian age immediately before the First World War. Here he writes of England’s ‘peace and holy quiet’ but also, in strange anticipation of Wodehouse’s imagery and scansion, of ‘the thrilling-sweet and rotten/Unforgettable, unforgotten/River-smell’ of Grantchester. The thrust of the poem is clear, though: ‘For England’s the one land, I know,/Where men with Splendid Hearts may go;/...They love the Good; they worship Truth;/They laugh uproariously in youth;/(And when they get to feeling old,/They up and shoot themselves, I’m told)...’ It is difficult to imagine a more marked change in tone and substance between these two versions of England. For Brooke, the advent of war was a means of escape from the imaginative world of romantic nostalgia in *Grantchester*

into the equally imaginative life of heroic action, which he develops to its transcendent conclusion in the closing sestet of *The Soldier*. The chorus again alternates with the soloist to open and complete lines, echoing and repeating phrases for emphasis in a gentle rhythm. The robust, assertive rough and tumble of Englishmen in *Granchester* has been transformed, by the prospect of sacrificial death in warfare, into the more humble, self-effacing soldier as representing the essence of humanity itself – ‘this heart.../A pulse in the eternal mind, no less’ - who returns ‘the thoughts by England given’. Uproarious youthful laughter has matured into ‘laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness/...under an English Heaven’. Firmly repeating the transcendently hopeful message of these words, the chorus brings the work to its close.

Paul Filmer

With grateful acknowledgement to Paul Conway and Murray Hipkin.

II

Man is but carrion here,
Where his body, a poisonous clod,
Lies rotting in an ulcer of this shell-pock’d land;
A mess of festering rags,
From which a devil-swarm of flies
Scorns the silent protest of his stiff, raised hand.

What hideous enervation bids me sit
So stilly in the shelter of this pit –
Untroubled, unperturbed - and scan
The fearsome relic of what was once a man?

Before Ginchy: September 1916
Dr Joseph Spence, Master of Dulwich College,
(after Ernest Armine Wodehouse, OA, 1879-1936)

III

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there’s some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England’s, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by the suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

1914 V: The Soldier
Rupert Brooke (1887-1915)

Some Corner of a Foreign Field - libretto

I
Out of the south cometh the whirlwind; and the cold out of the north.
By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of waters straitened.
Out of whose womb came the ice and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?
The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

Job 37 vv.9-10 | Job 38 vv.29-30



Photo by Tim Lutton

EDWARD ELGAR

SERENADE FOR STRINGS

Edward Elgar (1857-1934): *Serenade for Strings in E Minor, Op 20 (1892)*

1 *Allegro piacevole*

2 *Larghetto*

3 *Allegretto*

I like ‘em (the first thing I ever did)...they’re really very stringy in effect

Elgar to August Jaeger, 1892

By the late 1880s, as he turned 30, Elgar had become clearly focussed on his ambition to compose as well as perform music. He was a recognised professional violinist as well as a valued teacher of the instrument in the area around Worcester but neither activity was sufficient to support his wife and family: he married Alice Roberts in 1889 and by 1892 they had two daughters. He had composed *Three Sketches for Strings*, entitled *Spring Song* (Allegro), *Elegy* (Adagio) and *Finale* (Presto), for performance at a concert of the Worcestershire Musical Union in May 1888 and although the scores are lost, most Elgar scholars conjecture that the *Serenade* is a reworking of them.

It was first performed privately in 1892 by the Worcester Ladies Orchestral Class conducted by Elgar himself, and published in Germany in 1893 – Novello having insisted that, although the work itself was ‘very good, this class of music is practically unsaleable’. They may well have been right about the British market at the time, since the first public performance was not until July 1896 and in Antwerp. Although the central slow *Larghetto* was performed on its own in Hereford in 1893 and two movements at the Grand Pump Room, Bath in January 1899, the British premiere of the full work was still later that year: April, in York. Elgar himself first conducted it publicly in July of the same year, in New Brighton. While the

published work was dedicated to the organ builder and amateur musician Edward W. Whinfield, who encouraged Elgar from the outset in his ambition to compose, Elgar wrote on the manuscript that Alice ‘helped me a great deal to make these little tunes’ and presented it to her on their third wedding anniversary. It was the first of a series of successful informal collaborations which continued with *Scenes from the Bavarian Highlands* (1895), *Variations on a Theme (Enigma)* (1898-9) and probably in the choice of some of the poetry set as *The Later Part Songs* (1902-27). The *Serenade* remains one of Elgar’s most popular and frequently performed and recorded works; like his later *Introduction and Allegro for Strings* (1905) it is as much a staple of the string orchestral repertoire as comparable works of Brahms, Dvorak and Tchaikovsky. Late in life he remarked that it remained a personal favourite and included it in the last of the recordings he made of his own works, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in August 1933.

Organised in three movements, the musical narrative of the work is a journey from E minor to E major and the opening *Allegro*, marked *piacevole* (pleasing or agreeable), features both tonalities. It consists of a series of lilting tunes underpinned by a restless, dotted-rhythm motif carried by the violas that recurs throughout the movement and reappears in the closing *Allegretto*, thereby giving a satisfying cyclical unity to the structure of the work. There is a wistful, almost melancholic character to the introduction of the main theme which is then contrasted by a livelier middle section of short solo passages by the principal violin – Elgar showing at the outset his sure, experienced understanding of the idioms and possibilities of violin performance.

This is reinforced in the lyrical, heartfelt poignancy of the long, central *Larghetto*, opened in a slow melody from the first violins before Elgar moves confidently to explore Wagnerian chromatics in C major and pays tribute to his Romantic predecessors. There is a clear foreshadowing here of what will become *Nimrod* in the *Enigma* variations at the end of the decade as well as anticipation of the slow movements of his symphonies. Some 10 years later he wrote to Ernest Newman, about the musical atmosphere of *The Music Makers* (1912), that it was ‘mainly sad; but there are moments of enthusiasm and bursts of joy occasionally approaching frenzy’ which describes well the particular yearning qualities of the conversation between first and second violins throughout this movement until its whispering conclusion.

The closing *Allegretto* is brief but lively, opening in G major with a wistful, new dance-like melody carried amongst the upper strings which then suggests an abbreviated reprise of the dotted-rhythm motif of the opening movement before restating its other themes, now in a harmonic E major, to end the work in a more relaxed conclusion, *come prima*.

Paul Filmer

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

CANTICLE V: THE DEATH OF NARCISSUS

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976): *Canticle V: The Death of Saint Narcissus, Op 89 (1974)*

The last Canticle is as moving as any in the set...As ever it succeeds not only because Britten was able to share the poet’s vision, but because he encompassed it in a musical organism of perfect aptitude.

Peter Evans, 1979

A canticle is literally a little song, often a hymn, although Britten’s are always settings of a secular poetic text of significant spiritual substance, some of which nevertheless have sacred referents. For him they were ‘a new invention in a sense – although modelled on Purcell’s *Divine Hymns*: the composer to whom Britten acknowledged he owed more than any other. They were not conceived as a set intended to constitute a single work, though that is how they are often now collated as a feature of his collected vocal compositions, within which they constitute a coherent group, as well as providing a narrative of his evolving style. Each was composed separately from the late 1940s in response to various events and issues in Britten’s career, yet they share several characteristics in common: each one is dedicated in name and spirit to one of Britten’s heroes – this to his close friend and collaborator William Plomer, the librettist of *Gloriana*, who had died in September 1973. Three of them are memorial works; all were composed following the composition of a much larger work and for performance by Britten’s partner and muse, the tenor Peter Pears. Their deeply evocative music draws on simple resources – usually the piano with sometimes other instruments and additional voices – generating a dramatic intensity expressing profound psychological conflicts and dilemmas.

Canticle V sets T S Eliot’s *The Death of St Narcissus*, an early poem, probably written around 1912/13, though actually published much later in 1967,

and so only relatively recently accessible to Britten when he came to compose this last of his *Canticles* in 1974. He was a fine judge of poetry and admired Eliot especially ‘for the clarity and security of his language’. For Canticle IV, in 1971, he had already set Eliot’s engaging humanist re-envisioning of *Journey of The Magi* as the three aged kings’ recollections of the mundane details of their revelatory expedition undertaken as young princes.

While convalescing from the life-changing illness and heart surgery of 1973, Britten had taken to reading Eliot more frequently and, though he claimed not to have ‘the faintest idea of what it’s about’, he must have been struck by the focus of the poem’s self-absorbed reflections on extreme metamorphosis, analogous to the extraordinary changes in his own life. An enigmatic and inconclusive work, Eliot himself referred to it as ‘that unfortunate fragmentary poem...which I very much regret not having destroyed at the time of writing it’. According to a note made some 40 years later by his widow Valerie, he did ‘not consider the verses very good, will not permit them to be printed in his lifetime and would prefer no quotations should be made from it’, adding that ‘the chief interest is the first seven lines, obviously recast, condensed and, in his opinion, vastly improved for *TWL*’ (*The Waste Land*). Ezra Pound, however, had sought publication of it as one of several ‘little jems’ (sic) - a view much closer to Britten’s.

Eliot intermingles the early Christian saint, the late second-century Bishop of Jerusalem and desert recluse, with his mythical namesake of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses III*, as well as invoking the martyrdom of St Sebastian. In a series of metaphysical conceits, Eliot introduces Narcissus as his ‘shadow sprawling over the sand...or/...leaping behind the fire...’, becoming physically aware of himself:

arms, breast, eyes, hands, fingers; yet ‘Struck down by such knowledge/He could not live men’s ways, but became a dancer before God.’ He remembers a sequence of active transitional metaphorical forms, feelings and conditions through which this final, embodied identity has emerged: ‘First he was sure he had been a tree,/ ...Then he knew he had been a fish/ ...Then he had been a young girl/...And he felt drunken and old/ So he became a dancer to God/...He danced on the hot sand/Until the arrows came/...Now he is green, dry and stained/With the shadow in his mouth.’ Although the shadow perhaps is of Sebastian, whose martyred ‘flesh was in love with the burning arrows’. That Narcissus is identified as a divine dancer provides a clear symmetry between the poem and the major work of Britten which preceded *Canticle V*, his opera *Death in Venice*. In this work, based on Thomas Mann’s novel, the central character Aschenbach is enchanted into an austere, self-reflective, transformational recitative watching the beautiful youth Tadzio dancing on a Venetian beach. The canticle seems almost to extend his expressive contemplations on the relations between dance and death.

One of the consequent complications of Britten’s heart surgery was the partial paralysis of his right arm which prevented him from playing the piano any longer to his own satisfaction. He turned therefore to the harp as accompaniment for this work – his affection for its sonorities evident already in his *Suite for Harp* and the harp variation in *A Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*. Here he uses it to provide more of a commentary than an accompaniment, relying originally on the virtuosic instrumental skills of his friend Osian Ellis to be able to perform what is a clear and complex example of his musically innovative late style. The vigorous lyricism of his score is responsive to the varied imagery of the poem in the

GERALD FINZI

ECLOGUE FOR PIANO AND STRINGS

agile vocal writing and the range of moods required of the horn – tolling as the narrator reveals to Narcissus ‘his bloody cloth and limbs/And the grey

shadow on his lips’, melodious as he becomes God’s dancer, sweeping high and strong as he embraces the burning arrows, in uneasy tremor over ‘a young

girl/Caught in the woods by a drunken old man’.

Paul Filmer

The Death of Saint Narcissus - libretto

Come under the shadow of this gray rock -
Come in under the shadow of this gray rock,
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow sprawling over the sand at daybreak, or
Your shadow leaping behind the fire against the red rock:
I will show you his bloody cloth and limbs
And the gray shadow on his lips.

He walked once between the sea and the high cliffs
When the wind made him aware of his limbs smoothly passing each other
And of his arms crossed over his breast.
When he walked over the meadows
He was stifled and soothed by his own rhythm.
By the river
His eyes were aware of the pointed corners of his eyes
And his hands aware of the pointed tips of his fingers.

Struck down by such knowledge
He could not live men’s ways, but became a dancer before God.
If he walked in city streets
He seemed to tread on faces, convulsive thighs and knees.
So he came out under the rock.

First he was sure that he had been a tree,
Twisting its branches among each other
And tangling its roots among each other.

Then he knew that he had been a fish
With slippery white belly held tight in his own fingers,
Writhing in his own clutch, his ancient beauty
Caught fast in the pink tips of his new beauty.

Then he had been a young girl
Caught in the woods by a drunken old man
Knowing at the end the taste of his own whiteness
The horror of his own smoothness,
And he felt drunken and old.

So he became a dancer to God.
Because his flesh was in love with the burning arrows
He danced in the hot sand
Until the arrows came.
As he embraced them his white skin surrendered itself to
the redness of blood, and satisfied him.
Now he is green, dry and stained
With the shadow in his mouth.

T S Eliot ca 1915, first published in *Early Youth* (1950, 1967)

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956): *Eclogue in F major, Op. 10* for Piano and Strings (1929 rev 1952)

Finzi conceived the idea of a piano concerto in 1927 for which this work, begun in 1929, was intended to be the central, slow movement. He had already completed a *Grand Fantasia*, heavily influenced by Bach, as a possible opening movement in 1928, but the concerto was never completed. He showed the two completed pieces to Vaughan Williams and Edmund Rubbra whilst attempting revisions during the 1940s, presumably still with the intention of composing a third movement, but both were adamant in insisting that they would not cohere, even with a third movement, into the proposed concerto. They suggested, however, that each might stand alone as single works for piano and orchestra. Finzi followed their advice, finalising them respectively as the *Eclogue*, which was first performed in 1957 at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and a *Grand Fantasia and Toccata*, the lively toccata being added in 1953. Neither work was so named until after Finzi’s early death, when his long-standing close friend Howard Ferguson, together with his widow and sons, began to edit his work for collection and performance.

An eclogue is an archaic, classical form of poem on a pastoral subject – the verses in Virgil’s *Bucolica* are referred to as eclogue – which often consists of conversations or competing dialogues in song between shepherds. Finzi structures this eclogic dialogue between piano and orchestra in baroque style, but the substantive musical influences are those of the English pastoral style in general and the nuanced simplicity of Vaughan Williams’s contribution to it especially. For all its apparent simplicity it is imbued with a strength and eloquence that gives a rich intensity of texture to its overall melancholic beauty.

upper strings. As the strings recede, the piano begins developing the melodic theme into a dialogue of call and response with the orchestra. Quietening to a soft *piano* dynamic, the focus returns to the central melody, but now in a more sombre, reflective and suggestively nostalgic tone as hints of dissonance appear in the orchestration. The piano restates the opening motif above delicate strings, moving slowly towards its conclusion in a final tonic chord.

Paul Filmer

It opens with a simple piano motif, gently embellished and gradually developed, which sets the pastoral feel of its calm and nostalgic central melody, carried throughout by the pianist playing single notes with the right hand, accompanying chords with the left. Slowly and quietly strings pick up the opening motif as the piano rises above them, moving towards a first climax, the mood intensified by the cellos in a higher octave whilst basses support the

Interval

During the 20-minute interval, members of the audience are requested not to enter the performing area.

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

DONA NOBIS PACEM

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958): *Dona Nobis Pacem*
A Cantata for Soprano and Baritone Soli, Chorus and Orchestra arranged by the composer for piano and string orchestra (1936)

- I *Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi*
Dona nobis pacem
- II *Beat! Beat! Drums!* (Walt Whitman)
- III *Reconciliation* (Walt Whitman)
- IV *Dirge for Two Veterans* (Walt Whitman)
- V *The Angel of Death* (John Bright)
- VI *O Man Greatly Beloved*

An unconcealed warning of the dangers now brewing in Europe

Michael Kennedy

Unlike many of his contemporaries, instead of dwelling entirely on the ravages of war Vaughan Williams always left room for hope, “if not in this world or at this time, then in a time and place yet to come”.

Charles Edward McGuire, quoting Eric Saylor



Vaughan Williams did not write a Requiem, although in a letter of 1938 to Ursula Wood (who became his second wife in 1953), he confided that his widely misunderstood Second ('Pastoral') Symphony of 1922 was just that. It was the first major work that he completed after the First World War. He had chosen at the outset to serve as a stretcher bearer, despite being well over the age at which he could have been exempted. It was soon followed by his oratorio *Sancta Civitas* (1926), composed between 1923-5 and set to texts drawn principally from the *Book of Revelation* and Taverner's (1539) Bible. This clearly shows the room for

hope in Vaughan Williams that Saylor remarks on, with the victory of the forces of righteousness, led by the Angel of the Lord in the battle between good and evil, over the forces of despair embodied in the armies of earthly kings.

A decade later, however, the composition of *Dona Nobis Pacem* makes clear from its title that any room for hope is fast contracting. Just as the completion of the Second Symphony had preceded *Sancta Civitas*, so this was composed following the completion, in 1935, of another symphony, the Fourth in F minor, whose harsh, dissonant

polyphonies were later thought to indicate what would follow from the rise of fascism. Yet he began work on it in 1931, two years before Hitler came to power, and though some critics suggested it might have been subtitled 'Europe 1935', Vaughan Williams later stated: "...it is what I wanted to do *at the time*...I wrote it not as a picture of anything external – e.g. the state of Europe – but simply because it occurred to me like this". Yet given that it is what he said he wanted to do *at that time*, it is not unreasonable to suppose that his sense of the structures of feeling of the 1930s led him to reflect on fears of a forthcoming global conflict in

these works, much as he had earlier reflected on the disastrous consequences of the First World War in those of the 1920s. And there is no doubt, as Kennedy has noted, that *Dona Nobis Pacem* 'was intended as a warning at a time when Europe was moving towards another major war'.

There is an angel in *Dona Nobis Pacem* also, but it is the Angel of Death who, at the beginning of the penultimate, fifth section 'has been abroad throughout the land'. Vaughan Williams drew for this threatening image on the nineteenth-century corn-law reformer John Bright's most famous parliamentary speech in 1855, opposing British involvement in the carnage of the Crimean war, in which 22,000 British soldiers died, but only 4,000 of them in action. The remainder perished from malnutrition, exposure and disease. Bright's text is supplemented by verses from the Book of Jeremiah, mourning the devastations of war, and the final section continues to set a miscellany of texts from both Old and New Testaments. All are clearly indicative of how Vaughan Williams regarded the threateningly unstable European political situation of the time.

For texts in the three sections at the heart of the work Vaughan Williams sustains the underlying theme of death in warfare and the consequent yearning for peace, returning to Walt Whitman, that 'very great poet of the end of life', as D H Lawrence called him. He had carried Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* anthology with him constantly from the early 1900s: "I never tired of him, thank God!". He had already set some of the verses in 1907 for his mystical choral orchestral piece *Towards the Unknown Region* and the *Three Nocturnes* of 1908, whilst simultaneously composing his spectacular First Symphony, first

completed in 1909. This imaginatively matched Whitman's free-verse indulgence in the intrinsic rhythms of verbal language with his own rhythmic musical sensibility. Whitman's poetic response to the transforming experience of the American Civil War, in which he had also served as a medical ancillary, was clearly a significant resource for Vaughan Williams's own experience of the 1914-18 war. He was remembered by one soldier as spending 'a lot of such spare time as he had in getting up concerts, vocal, by and for the troops', convinced as he later wrote, that music is 'an essential part of the soldier's equipment'.

The work's six continuous sections open with a two-bar chromatic orchestral prelude to a *pianissimo* plea for the divine gift of peace from the soprano soloist, echoed by the chorus before they join the soloist in fervently transforming her plea into a fearful, discordant prayer. She repeats her prayer, again *pianissimo*, to close the first section. Drums begin to beat, leading the music into the short second section, 'Beat! beat! Drums!', marked *allegro moderato*. This sets text from Whitman's American Civil War poem *Drum Taps*. Trumpets sound over the drums, invoking the blowing bugles of the verse and a harsh orchestration underwrites strident, repetitive choral declamations of war's destructive effects on all forms of human society. After a final agonised *fortissimo* cry of 'So strong you thump, O terrible drums, so loud you bugles blow' the section sinks to a quieter close, moving into the *andantino* orchestral introduction to the third section, 'Reconciliation'. The baritone soloist calls for peace and reconciliation, again to text from *Drum Taps*: 'Word over all, beautiful as the sky/Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage

must be utterly lost/That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly, softly, wash again and ever again, this soiled world'. Softly, the chorus repeat these words before the soloist continues: 'For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead'. The chorus repeat their earlier passage as the soprano soloist again invokes the plea of 'Dona nobis pacem' to close the section. This is as fine an example as any of the interrelation between words and music that is choral singing at its best, the fundamental humanism of Whitman's sensitive text matched by the exquisite music of Vaughan Williams's setting for soloists and chorus.

The fourth section, 'Dirge For Two Veterans', again sets a text from the same poem. Vaughan Williams had already attempted a setting of these specific verses of Whitman in 1911, shortly after the premiere of *A Sea Symphony* but apparently considered that it did not stand well as a single work. Its reflective narrative on the cruel miseries of war is effectively contextualised as an integral feature of this work, however. Marked *moderato alla marcia*, a solemn rhythmic tune above steady drum beats introduces the chorus's description, under setting sun and rising moon, of what will be a nocturnal burial. To a new tune, the 'sad procession' approaches the site of interment to the 'sound of...full-keyed bugles...great drums pounding/ And the small drums steady whirring...In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell/Two veterans, son and father, dropped together/And the double grave awaits them'. The sounds invoked in the text also dominate the orchestration as the chorus announce, with the fall of darkness, 'the strong dead-march enwraps me' and fall silent themselves, whilst the orchestra

continues to resound with the march in C major. The chorus returns, quietly welcoming the rising of a soothing moon, now announcing ‘O strong dead-march you please me!’ In sorrowful reconciliation to the ‘veterans passing to burial’ they sing ‘The moon gives you light/And the bugles and drums give you music/ And my heart...gives you love’. The march tune returns, fading softly to a close.

The baritone soloist opens the fifth section in quiet *parlando*, to a still quieter accompaniment, allowing Bright’s despairing oratory to set the mood for the chorus and soprano soloist’s resurrection of their fearful cry for peace. The chorus then

develop Jeremiah’s narrative of despair, loudly over the ravages of war and the lack of balm in Gilead, more quietly over the failure of peace and of the harvest, closing the section softly with the unanswered question: ‘Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?’

As if in response, the baritone soloist opens the final section commandingly with a message of peace and hope: ‘O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong’, followed by the chorus singing harmoniously to warm orchestral accompaniment of peace between nations. As the divine scriptural visions of ‘the new heavens and the new earth’ are promised for eternity, voices and orchestra enter

alike into musical counterpoint as the sound of pealing bells supplants the loud bugles and thumping and whirring drums of the earlier sections. The chorus repeatedly declaim the Christmas message of peace on earth, goodwill toward men, eventually descending to a quieter chant beneath the soprano soloist, who returns to close the work with the plea of ‘Dona nobis pacem’ that opened it, now in almost inaudibly hushed diatonic form, and echoed by the chorus on the closing repetition of ‘pacem, pacem’ to a marking of *niente*, which Deryck Cooke has noted is ‘Vaughan Williams’s favourite word for a final fade-out of any kind’.

Paul Filmer

Beat! beat! drums! – blow! bugles! blow!
Make no parley – stop for no expostulation,
Mind not the timid – mind not the weeper or prayer;
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties,
Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the hearses,
So strong you thump O terrible drums – so loud you bugles blow.

Walt Whitman

III Reconciliation

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly, softly, wash again and ever
again this soiled world;
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin - I draw near,
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

Walt Whitman

Dona Nobis Pacem - libretto

I

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi
Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,

Dona nobis pacem
Grant us peace

II

Beat! beat! drums! – blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows - through the doors - burst like a ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation;
Into the school where the scholar is studying;
Leave not the bridegroom quiet - no happiness must he have now with his
bride,
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field, or gathering in his
grain,
So fierce you whirr and pound you drums – so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums! – blow! bugles! blow!
Over the traffic of cities - over the rumble of wheels in the streets;
Are beds prepared for the sleepers at night in the houses?
No sleepers must sleep in those beds,
No bargainers' bargains by day – would they continue?
Would the talkers be talking? Would the singer attempt to sing?
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums – you bugles wilder blow.

IV Dirge for Two Veterans

The last sunbeam
Lightly falls from the finished Sabbath,
On the pavement here, and there beyond it is looking
Down a new-made double grave.

Lo, the moon ascending,
Up from the east the silvery round moon,
Beautiful over the house-tops, ghastly, phantom moon,
Immense and silent moon.

I see a sad procession,
And I hear the sound of coming full-keyed bugles,
All the channels of the city streets they're flooding
As with voices and with tears.

I hear the great drums pounding,
And the small drums steady whirring,
And every blow of the great convulsive drums
Strikes me through and through.

For the son is brought with the father,
In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell,
Two veterans, son and father, dropped together,
And the double grave awaits them.

Now nearer blow the bugles,
And the drums strike more convulsive,
And the daylight o’er the pavement quite has faded,
And the strong dead-march enwraps me.

In the eastern sky up-buoying,
The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumined,
'Tis some mother's large transparent face,
In heaven brighter growing.

O strong dead-march you please me!
O moon immense with your silvery face you soothe me!
O my soldiers twain! O my veterans passing to burial!
What I have I also give you.

The moon gives you light,
And the bugles and the drums give you music,
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
My heart gives you love.

Walt Whitman

V

The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear
the beating of his wings. There is no one as of old...to sprinkle with blood the
lintel and the two side-posts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on.

John Bright

Dona nobis pacem

We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold
trouble!
The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan; the whole land trembled at the
sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured
the land...and those that dwell therein...
The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved...
Is there no balm in Gilead?; is there no physician there? Why then is not the
health of the daughter of my people recovered?

Jeremiah 8 vv15-22

VI

'O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.'
Daniel 10 v19

'The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former... and in this
place will I give peace.'

Haggai 2 v9

'Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.
And none shall make them afraid, neither shall the sword go through their land.
Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven,
Open to me the gates of righteousness, I will go into them.
Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled; and let them hear, and
say, it is the truth.
And it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues.
And they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and they shall declare my
glory among the nations.
For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, so shall your
seed and your name remain for ever.'

Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

*(Adapted from Micah 4 v3, Leviticus 26 v6, Psalms 85 v10, 113 v19,
Isaiah 43 v9, 46 vv18-22, and Luke 2 v14)*

Dona nobis pacem

DAVID NOTT FOUNDATION

The David Nott Foundation's vision is a world where safe, skilled surgical care is available to all. We
train medical professionals to become multi-skilled surgeons who save lives in countries impacted by
war and catastrophe. Since the David Nott Foundation was created in 2015, we have trained over
2,300 surgeons and anaesthetists, delivered 77 courses and visited 18 countries. These countries
include Ukraine, Palestine, Syria and many more. We are creating a network of skilled, surgical
lifesavers in some of the world's most dangerous corners, wherever people have been affected by
calamitous events.

<https://davidnottfoundation.enthuse.com/NorthLondonChorus>





Forthcoming concert
at St James Church, Muswell Hill

Dvořák Stabat Mater

Saturday 21 March 2026
7.30pm

Elinor Rolfe Johnson soprano
Amy Holyland mezzo-soprano
Christian Joel tenor
Alaric Green bass





Forthcoming concert
at St James Church, Muswell Hill

Mozart Davide Penitente

Fanny Hensel
Hiob

Schubert Mirjam's Siegesgesang

Saturday 4 July 2026
7.30pm



BIOGRAPHIES

Pablo Strong Photography



JENNY STAFFORD SOPRANO

Jenny Stafford is one of the brightest talents on the UK opera stage. In March 2018 she made her major house debut with Dutch National Opera, as Sarah in James MacMillan's *Clemency*. Bachtrack.com praised how her 'soprano soared in Sarah's ecstatic music with dramatic intensity'.

Jenny Stafford trained at King's College, London and the Royal Academy of Music, winning the Isabel Jay Operatic Prize and Dame Eva Turner Award, and at ENO Opera Works and the Georg Solti Accademia di Bel Canto.

In the UK, Jenny Stafford has appeared with Buxton International Festival as Prima Donna *Viva la Diva*; at the Cadogan Hall as Vitellia *La Clemenza di Tito*; with English Touring Opera as Despina *Così fan tutte*, Manon *Manon Lescaut*, Melissa *Amadigi*, Musetta *La bohème* and soprano soloist *St John Passion*; Nevill Holt as Musetta; Theatre Royal Bath as Miss Jessel *Turn of the Screw*; Welsh National Opera as Pamina and Papagena *Die Zauberflöte*; West Green House Opera as Nedda *Pagliacci*, Suor Angelica *Suor Angelica* and Tatyana *Eugene Onegin*; and Wild Arts as Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*.

Rupert Christiansen, reviewing her 2024 Manon Lescaut for The Daily

Telegraph, wrote: 'It was Jenny Stafford as Manon who really commanded the stage, with impressive ringing top Cs for declarations of undying passion, and interestingly subtle moments when you could feel a dawning, regretful awareness of her own flightiness.'

Season 2024/25 engagements include Jenny's debut with English National Opera as Mary Seton (cover Mary Stuart) in Thea Musgrave's *Mary Queen of Scots*; her BBC Proms debut as Prima Cercatrice Suor Angelica with the LSO under Sir Antonio Pappano; cover Ellen Orford *Peter Grimes* for Welsh National Opera, and *Suor Angelica* with Opera Bohemia at the Perth Festival.

Season 2025/26 engagements include Female Chorus *The Rape of Lucretia* with English Touring Opera, the world premiere of Elena Langer's *To Die For* at De Nederlandse Reisopera and cover Mimì *La bohème* for Royal Ballet and Opera.



JAMES ROBINSON TENOR

James Robinson graduated with distinction from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2018, having done his undergraduate degree in music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. He is currently a lay clerk in Westminster Cathedral Choir.

James was named one of Tenebrae's Associate Artists for 2016/17; he has subsequently worked with many of the country's top ensembles. Recent projects include work with Exaudi, Dunedin Consort, Solomon's Knot, Ex Cathedra, Carice Singers, Tenebrae, BBC Singers, The Sixteen, Monteverdi Choir, Polyphony, and Siglo de Oro. A permanent member of Ars Nova Copenhagen from 2022-2024, he has also worked with other vocal groups in Europe including Le Concert D'Astrée, Theatre of Voices, and Mogens Dahl Kammerkor.

His recent solo work has included Britten's *St Nicolas*, Handel's *Messiah*, Monteverdi's *Vespers*, and Mozart's *Requiem*. James is increasingly in demand as an Evangelist of Bach's *Passions*, recently performing the *St Matthew Passion* in London with the Britten Sinfonia, and the *St John Passion* with Nivalis Barokk in Norway, as well as in Birmingham Symphony

Hall with Ex Cathedra and Birmingham Baroque. This season's projects include solos with the London Bach Society in the 1725 version of Bach's *St John Passion*, Evangelist in Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* at Birmingham Town Hall, and solos in Rachmaninoff's *Vespers* at the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester Cathedral.

His operatic roles include both Damon and Acis in Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Shepherd and Sailor in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, and The Madwoman in Britten's *Curlew River*. Other recent solo projects include a recording of Michael Haydn's *Requiem* with the Academy of Ancient Music. He fills his spare time by playing Dungeons and Dragons, attempting to beat his father at tennis, and following the misfortunes of Charlton Athletic. His last performance with NLC was Bach Mass in B Minor in March 2025

BIOGRAPHIES



JAMES CLEVERTON
BARITONE

James Cleverton’s repertoire ranges from Handel and Wagner to contemporary opera. Highlights include roles at the Royal Opera House, Salzburger Festspiele, Zürich Opera, ENO, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, WNO, Scottish Opera and Opera North.

Operatic engagements include: Alberich *Das Rheingold*, The Protector *Written on Skin*, Johann Werther, Mathieu *Andrea Chénier*, Starek *Jenufa*, Gregorio *Roméo et Juliette*, Pablo *The Exterminating Angel* (ROH); John Sorel *Der Konsul*, Count Asdrubale *La pietra del paragone* (Opernhaus Zürich); J. Robert Oppenheimer *Doctor Atomic*, Aristaeus *The Mask of Orpheus*, Horemheb *Akhnaten*, Kallenbach *Satyagraha*, First Officer *The Death of Klinghoffer*, Photographer *Jack the Ripper*, First Apprentice *Wozzeck* (ENO); Marco *Gianni Schicchi*, Papageno *Die Zauberflöte*, Dulcamara *L’elisir d’amore* (Scottish Opera); title role *Jakob von Gunten*, Papageno (Theater Saint Gallen); Chou En-lai *Nixon in China* (Irish National Opera); Sharpless *Madama Butterfly*, Marcello *La bohème* (Royal Albert Hall); Barone Douphol *La Traviata* (ROH, WNO, Opera North); Gusmano *Alzira* (Buxton International Festival); Angelotti *Tosca*, Frank *Die Fledermaus* (WNO); Kyoto *Iris* (Opera Holland Park), Ford *Falstaff* (Grange Park Opera), Commerzienrat

Intermezzo (Garsington). He can regularly be seen performing with leading orchestras such as The Hallé Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta de la Comunidad de Madrid, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under illustrious conductors such as Sir Mark Elder, Sir Antonio Pappano, Sir Donald Runnicles, Jakub Hruša, Daniel Oren, Marc Albrecht, Martyn Brabbins, Edward Gardner, Franz Welser-Möst, Carlo Rizzi, George Benjamin, Thomas Adès and Karen Kamensek.

Future plans include returns to Glyndebourne Festival, the Royal Opera House and WNO with concerts including Britten’s *War Requiem*, Elgar’s *The Kingdom* and a concert performance of Janaček’s opera *The Spectre’s Bride*.

His last performance with NLC was A Sea Symphony in April 2023.



CATHERINE BORNER
PIANO

Catherine Borner studied piano and flute from the age of 10 at the junior department of the Royal Academy of Music. After graduating from the University of York, she trained on the

répétiteur courses at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Catherine has performed concertos with York University Chamber Orchestra and James Allen Community Orchestra and, for her 10th NLC anniversary, the Meridian Sinfonia, as well appearing on BBC Radio 3 *In Tune*. She has also played *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* and *Petrushka* with Bromley Symphony Orchestra. Répétiteur work includes *Aida* (Kentish Opera), *Anna Bolena* (Tower of London Festival 2005), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Roméo et Juliette* (British Youth Opera) as well as *The Gondoliers*, *La traviata* and *The Marriage of Figaro* while trainee répétiteur at English National Opera.

Catherine joined NLC as their accompanist in September 2005. She teaches piano privately, for Bromley Youth Music Trust and at the James Allen Saturday School for the Performing Arts. From 2004-2022, Catherine helped run the piano section of the Beckenham Festival where she was also the official accompanist for the strings section. Her most recent performance with NLC was Verdi’s *Requiem* in June 2024.

Tonight’s performance by Catherine Borner is to mark 20 years of her fantastic accompaniment of North London Chorus!



DEIAN ROWLANDS
HARP

Welsh harpist Deian Rowlands has performed as a soloist and chamber musician all over the UK, Europe and the USA. He has performed as a soloist with the London Chamber Orchestra and BBC Concert Orchestra, as well as recording *Concerto for Clarinet, Harp and Orchestra* by Rudolph Dolmetsch with clarinetist Peter Cigleris and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. In 2006 he was invited by HM King Charles III, when Prince of Wales, to perform for HM Queen Elizabeth II’s 80th Birthday at Kew Palace.

Deian regularly performs with the country’s leading orchestras, including the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Philharmonia and the CBSO with whom he has toured the majority of Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Central and North America. He has also held the harp seat for West End productions of *South Pacific* and *42nd Street*. In the recording studio, he has worked on many TV, film and commercial soundtracks, and featured on recordings with Renée Fleming (Decca) and Emma Johnson (Nimbus).



MURRAY HIPKIN
CONDUCTOR

Murray Hipkin studied at York University, the Guildhall and the National Opera Studio before joining English National Opera (1983–1988 and 1995-present). There he has conducted *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, *The Gondoliers*, *Kismet*, *Carousel*, *Chess* and *Man of La Mancha*, and was associate conductor of *The Duchess of Malfi* (ENO/ Punchdrunk). As répétiteur his productions over 36 seasons have included Phyllida Lloyd’s *Ring Cycle* and Terry Gilliam’s *The Damnation of*

Faust and he has appeared in *Mahagonny*, *The Silver Tassie*, Leoncavallo’s *La bohème*, *The Rake’s Progress*, *Trial by Jury* and *The Magic Flute*; as assistant conductor, recent projects include *Sweeney Todd*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *Akhnaten*, *Iolanthe*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *HMS Pinafore*. In 2013 he played the solo piano in the ENO film of *Death in Venice* and recently played the solo piano in *The Turn of the Screw* and *Albert Herring* (at the London Coliseum and the Lowry). In 2022 he appeared as Music Supervisor and coach in the ENO reality series *Anyone Can Sing*.

Elsewhere he has conducted *La bohème* (Surrey Opera, Opera Box); Salieri *Falstaff*, Haydn *La vera costanza*, Mozart *Apollo and Hyacinth*, Gluck *Le cinesi* (Bampton Classical Opera), and worked for Opéra de Lyon, La Monnaie, Opera Factory, Scottish Opera and Opera Brava.

Other highlights include assisting the composer John Adams both for the C4 film *The Death of Klinghoffer*, and for

Nixon in China at the Proms and in Berlin; *Pierrot Lunaire* with Björk at the Verbier Festival and *Sweeney Todd* for Bergen National Opera. In February 2009 Murray completed an eight-month sabbatical from ENO as Musical Director of *The Sound of Music* at the London Palladium, conducting over 170 performances.

Murray has been with NLC since January 2003 and from 2010 until 2023 was MD of the Pink Singers, Europe’s longest-running LGBT+ choir. He conducted *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Gondoliers*, *The Mikado*, *The Sorcerer* and *The Yeomen of the Guard* at the 2023 and 2024 International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in Buxton and in spring 2024 he worked on the Deutsche Oper production of *Nixon in China*. Plans include his return to the role of saloon pianist in Kurt Weill’s *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* at ENO.

Murray Hipkin is a member of English National Opera, and appears by permission.

NORTH LONDON CHORUS

SOPRANO

Gloria Arthur Helena Beddoe Deborah Brown Michaela Carlowe Jess Cattley	Laetitia Dimitriu Bernadette Gillespie Debbie Goldman Rhona Graham Amanda Horton	Enid Hunt Susan Kempster Amanda Lebus Alison Liney Ros Massey	Helena Michaels Ann Perkins Verity Preest Jacqueline Robarts Jennifer Somerville	Judith Suissa Patricia Whitehead
---	--	---	--	-------------------------------------

ALTO

Marianne Antonis Eloise Beckles Jessica Bendell Vivienne Canter Lucy Ellis Sarah Falk	Eleanor Flaxen Helen Ford Megan Greene Viv Gross Kate Hodgkin Jo Hulme	Mary Instone Helen Jones Kathryn Metzenthin Catherine Mkhize Judith Moser Tessa Padel	Isobel Pick Joan Reardon Mehrnoosh Sadrzadeh Alison Salisbury Julia Tash Pauline Treen	Catherine Whitehead Rachel Winton Clare Winton Alam
--	---	--	---	---

TENOR

Chloe Bedford Eileen Battye	Gary Bilkus Alan Chandler	Pasco Fearon Elizabeth Hewitt	Keith Maiden Nigel Royden	Wilhelm Skogstad
--------------------------------	------------------------------	----------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------

BASS

Tom Asher* Marcus Bartlett Norman Cohen	Shaun Davies Michael Derrick Paul Filmer	David Hastings Peter Knight Yoav Landau-Pope	Tim Lutton Dan Newman Henry George Page*	Tom Pedder John Rattenbury David Stone
---	--	--	--	--

* Guest Performer

MERIDIAN SINFONIA

Leader Eleanor Gilchrist	2nd Violin Emma Penfold Karen Anstee Daniel Lewis Tetiana Sapozhnikova	Cello Ruth Alford Hannah Lewis Clélia Le Bret	Harp Deian Rowlands	Orchestral Management Richard Thomas
1st Violin Gavin Davies Peter Hembrough Sue Hedger Alistair Legg	Viola Charlie Cross Henri Rigeon Chris Beckett Ariane Alexander	Double Bass Kenneth Knussen Adam Precious	Piano Catherine Borner	



NLC is a registered charity (no 277544) and is a member of Making Music, The National Federation of Music Societies

NORTH LONDON CHORUS



Photo by Tim Lutton

We are a talented and versatile amateur choir and have established a reputation for performances of a high standard since our first concert in 1977 under the direction of the late Alan Hazeldine. Our musical director since 2003 has been Murray Hipkin. His considerable experience, enthusiasm and skills as teacher and conductor of choral music and opera have enabled NLC to flourish through the development of an exciting and ambitious programme of performances drawn from the choral repertoire of the 16th to 21st centuries, as well as works commissioned from contemporary composers.

The choir benefits greatly from working with our vocal coach Yvette Bonner, who gives all members at least two small-group tuition sessions each year. We are privileged to have as our patrons the renowned operatic soprano Janis Kelly, Professor and Chair of Vocal Performance at the Royal College of Music, and the baroque musicologist and Handel scholar and performer Laurence Cummings OBE, currently music director of the Academy of Ancient Music, both of whom have performed with us.

We give public concerts in Autumn, Spring and Summer at St James Church in Muswell Hill, and continue to explore performing at larger venues in Central London, such as Milton Court at the Barbican Centre and on occasional overseas visits, most recently at the Berliner Konzerthaus and the City Church of St Jakob, Staffauer in Zurich.

We regularly explore unusual repertoire and styles of performance: in December 2020 (during lockdown) many members participated in the London Handel Festival's

Messiah Reimagined, broadcast live on YouTube, as part of a pre-recorded digital choir. Our first live post-lockdown concert was Britten's *Saint Nicolas* in November 2021, in partnership with Finchley Children's Music Group, with an additional relaxed afternoon performance for families with children and audience members with special needs. We repeated this successful venture at our July 2023 concert *A Night at the Opera*. This evening's programme includes the cantata *Some Corner of a Foreign Field* by the contemporary English composer Cecilia McDowall, who attended one of our rehearsals to discuss her work with us.

Every year we hold a weekend workshop, enabling us to work intensively on vocal technique and choral repertoire under expert specialist tuition. It also includes a relaxed Saturday evening concert of cabaret-style performances of music, song and humour displaying the considerable range and variety of our members' talents.

As a registered charity, one of whose aims is the promotion, maintenance and improvement of public appreciation of choral music, we have been successful in raising funds to help subsidise our work. Through our own concerts and participation in local events we also support a number of other charities.

We rehearse weekly on Thursday evenings from 7.45pm to 10pm at Martin School in East Finchley. We welcome new members and invite interested singers of all voice parts to attend one or two rehearsals prior to auditioning. Details are available at: <https://www.northlondonchorus.org/joining/>.



To mark our 40th Anniversary **Friends of North London Chorus** was launched in the summer of 2017, with a performance by our late **Friends of NLC** patron and renowned soprano Sally Silver.

We would be delighted to welcome more **Friends** to the scheme. Donations support and fund special projects, workshops, new commissions and similar activities within our charitable goals, and will also enable us to provide additional support to members in need who would otherwise find it difficult to sing with the choir.

The suggested donation is £40 per year (you are welcome to give more!) and you are warmly invited to join. Membership of Friends of NLC will entitle you to the following:

- Acknowledgement of your generous support in our concert programme (unless you prefer to opt out).
- Complimentary programmes.
- Complimentary interval drink from our range of wine and soft drinks (one per concert).
- Being amongst the first to know about our concerts and events via our mailing list.
- Priority booking for concerts.

If you would like to become a friend of the NLC, please join the scheme via our website

www.northlondonchorus.org/friends

Ann Beaton
John Davies
Julia Fabricius
Vivienne Gross

Vivienne Mitchell
Harvey Ratner
Laura Sabbadini
Phyllis White

Jack Whitehead
Windsor Castle, N2
and those who wish
to remain anonymous.

Come and sing with North London Chorus and enjoy:

A friendly welcome ♦ A wide repertoire of classical choral music
Expert guidance under Musical Director Murray Hipkin
Support from vocal coaches ♦ Regular performances in Muswell Hill

We rehearse weekly on Thursday from 7.45pm to 10pm at Martin School in East Finchley.
We welcome new members – especially basses – and invite interested singers of all parts to attend one or two rehearsals prior to auditioning.

Try us out before you join! www.northlondonchorus.org/joining/join@northlondonchorus.org

SMARTPHYSIO

HOME VISITS

PHYSIOTHERAPY

- CARE OF THE OLDER PERSON
- ACUTE BACK/NECK PAIN ● POST SURGERY
- FALLS/LOSS OF CONFIDENCE
- NEUROLOGICAL REHABILITATION
- CHEST INFECTION
- SPORTS INJURIES REHABILITATION
- RECOGNISED BY INSURANCE COMPANIES
- EMERGENCY APPOINTMENTS

**HAMPSTEAD
PHYSIOTHERAPY**
444 FINCHLEY ROAD
LONDON
NW2 2HY

**HIGHGATE
PHYSIOTHERAPY**
244 ARCHWAY ROAD
LONDON
N6 5AX

SAME DAY HOME VISITS IN YOUR AREA

T: 030 7435 4910

WWW.SMARTPHYSIO.CO.UK



CHANNING

Girls enjoying success

At Channing, musical excellence is encouraged and celebrated, with over 27 musical group activities each week and over 40 concerts each year.

Come and hear us at one of our Open Days.

Highgate, N6 5HF | www.channing.co.uk

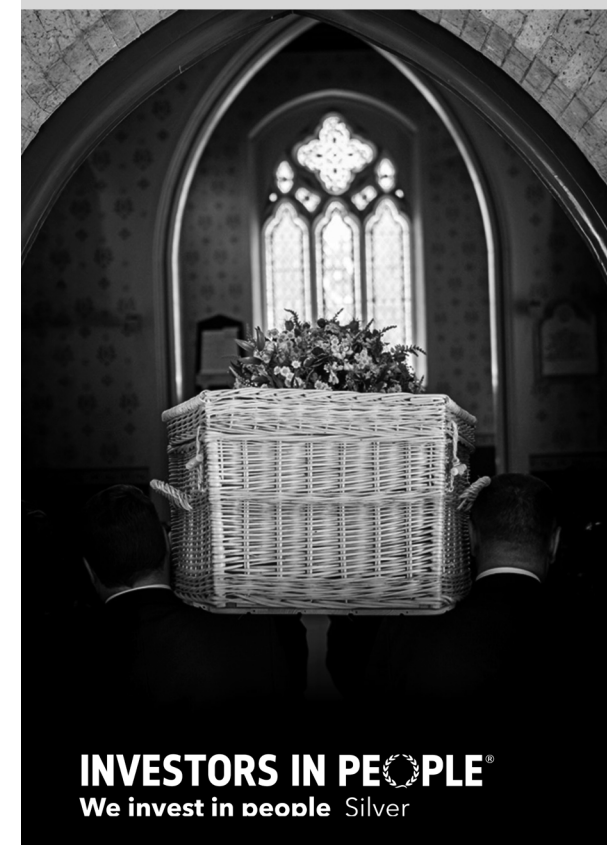


Scan the QR code to book your visit:



LEVERTON & SONS LTD

Independent Family Funeral Directors since 1789



We proudly support The North London Chorus.
Enjoy the concert

**We are your local funeral director
in North London.**

Contact our Muswell Hill branch

020 8444 5753

levertons.co.uk

info@levertons.co.uk

Camden • Golders Green • Hampstead • Kentish Town • Muswell Hill



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Silver



**WINDSOR
CASTLE**

**Supporters of the
North London Chorus**

The Walks / East Finchley / N2 8DL

Open Tuesday to Sunday

Seasonal British Menu served:

Wednesday to Friday: 5pm to 9pm

Saturday: 12-noon to 9pm

Sunday (Roasts): 12-noon to 7pm

*Craft Beers / Cask Ales
European Wines / Premium Spirits*

BOOK NOW:

020 3649 7513

www.windsorcastlen2.com

PAST CONCERTS - THE LAST TWELVE YEARS

20 Apr 2013	J S Bach <i>Mass in B Minor</i>	25 Mar 2017	Dove <i>The Passing of the Year</i> Brahms <i>Liebeslieder, Neue Liebeslieder</i>	2 Jul 2022	Cherubini <i>Mass in C minor</i> Bach <i>Cantata 51 Jauchzet Gott</i> Mendelssohn <i>Wie der Hirsch schreit</i>
29 Jun 2013	Various <i>Summertime</i>			3 Dec 2022	Handel <i>Dixit Dominus</i> Charpentier <i>Messe de Minuit pour Noël</i>
21 Nov 2013	Britten <i>War Requiem</i>	1 Jun 2017	Mozart <i>Requiem</i> King <i>Out of the Depths</i>	22 Apr 2023	Vaughan Williams <i>A Sea Symphony</i>
15 Mar 2014	Schubert <i>Mirjams Siegesgesang</i> Korngold <i>Passover Psalm</i> Mendelssohn <i>Hear My Prayer</i> Bernstein <i>Chichester Psalms</i>	25 Nov 2017	Mendelssohn <i>Die erste Walpurgisnacht</i> Vaughan Williams <i>In Windsor Forest</i> Dähler <i>Byzantium</i>	22 Jul 2023	A Night at the Opera <i>Arias and choruses from favourite operas and operettas</i>
14 Jul 2014	Mendelssohn <i>Verleih uns Frieden</i> Brahms <i>Nänie</i> Brahms <i>Ein deutsches Requiem</i>	17 Mar 2018	Haydn <i>The Creation</i> <i>Insanae et vanae curae</i>	25 Nov 2023	Bach <i>Magnificat, Gloria in Excelsis Deo.</i> Handel <i>Laudate pueri</i>
22 Nov 2014	Beethoven <i>Mass in C</i> Haydn <i>Te Deum</i>	14 Jul 2018	Salieri <i>Requiem</i> Puccini <i>Messa di Gloria</i>	16 Mar 2024	Smyth <i>The Prison</i> Beethoven <i>Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt</i> Brahms <i>Nänie</i>
21 Mar 2015	Fauré <i>Requiem Mass</i> Kodály <i>Missa Brevis</i> Liszt <i>Die Seligkeiten</i>	17 Nov 2018	Britten <i>The Company of Heaven</i> Haydn <i>Nelson Mass</i>	22 Jun 2024	Verdi <i>Requiem</i>
16 May 2015	Britten <i>War Requiem</i>	9 Mar 2019	JS Bach <i>St John Passion</i>	23 Nov 2024	Durufié <i>Requiem</i> Poulenc <i>Gloria</i>
4 July 2015	Handel <i>Acis and Galatea</i>	22 Jun 2019	Rutter <i>Magnificat</i> Vaughan Williams <i>Flos campi</i> Dyson <i>Hierusalem</i>	29 Mar 2025	Bach <i>Mass in B minor</i>
28 Nov 2015	Bach <i>Magnificat, Christmas Oratorio Parts 1,2,3</i>	30 Nov 2019	Rossini <i>Petite Messe Solennelle</i> Verdi <i>Ave Maria, Va pensiero</i>	12 Jul 2025	Brahms <i>Schicksalslied</i> Elgar <i>The Music Makers</i>
12 Mar 2016	Mendelssohn <i>Elijah</i>	27 Nov 2021	Britten <i>St Nicolas</i>		
11 Jun 2016	Bernstein <i>Mass (Choral Suite)</i> Whitacre <i>Five Hebrew Love songs</i> Copland <i>Old American Songs</i>	9 Apr 2022	Brahms <i>Ein deutsches Requiem, Geistliches Lied</i>		
20 Nov 2016	Verdi <i>Requiem</i>				

Please visit www.northlondonchorus.org for the full list dating back to the first concert in 1977

Patrons

Janis Kelly
Laurence Cummings OBE

Musical Director

Murray Hipkin

Rehearsal Accompanist

Catherine Borner

Vocal Consultant

Yvette Bonner

Our special thanks go to Jeremy Jackman for deputising for Murray Hipkin on several occasions this term, and to Cecilia McDowall for taking the time to visit us in rehearsal and talk about her composition.

Concert Management

Marcus Bartlett
Gary Bilkus
Shaun Davies
Pasco Fearon
Bernadette Gillespie
Debbie Goldman
Amanda Horton
Yoav Landau-Pope
Tim Lutton
Keith Maiden

Programme Production

Lucy Ellis
Paul Filmer
David Hastings
Murray Hipkin
Jo Hulme

Advertising

Alan Chandler

Publicity

Alan Chandler
Lucy Ellis
Rhona Graham
David Hastings
Jo Hulme
Tim Lutton

Ticketing

Gary Bilkus
Kate Hodgkin

Committee

Gary Bilkus (Chair)
Alan Chandler (Treasurer)
Alison Salisbury (Secretary)
Viv Canter
Shaun Davies
Rhona Graham
David Hastings
Tim Lutton
Tessa Padel
David Stone

Thanks to our sponsors:

GOODMAN JONES Chartered Accountants
NIMROD CAPITAL Financial Services

This concert has been financially supported by a generous grant from
The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust