

Southbank Centre  
*Uncovering Classics*

BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S

# WAR REQUIEM



**SOUTHBANK  
CENTRE**



## **UNCOVERING CLASSICS**

Uncovering Classics is a Southbank Centre series which puts participants in the driving seat of exploring great cultural works of art, be they music, dance, visual arts or multi disciplinary. Through their exploration of the work, participants work with artists at Southbank Centre to create resources which are then available to you and your school online.

You can use ‘uncovering classics’ resources to:

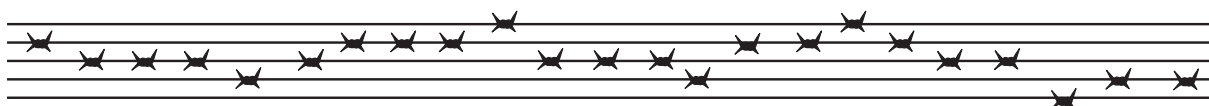
- Support your study of the particular piece (you may be planning a local visit to a performance)
- Spark imagination and exploration in the classroom by using an artistic medium to explore a subject area (eg. Music, literature, history)
- As a launch point for in depth study which can either feed to one discipline or across several subjects.
- To bring interviews with artists to your classroom study as a support to your topic work

Each project will have an overview and an outline of how you might want to use the resources.

## **BENJAMIN BRITTEN’S WAR REQUIEM UNCOVERED 2014**

To commemorate 100 years since World War One in Nov 2014, Southbank Centre staged a special performance of Benjamin Britten’s War Requiem featuring hundreds of young performers. The concert was conducted by Marin Alsop and featured an orchestra from the Royal Academy of Music, National Youth Choir, children’s chorus (specially formed by Southbank Centre, organist and soloists.

With a large number of young performers taking part, 8 students from Lilian Baylis School Technology school went on journey to uncover this masterpiece, find out why Britten wrote it and explore the themes of this piece through 3 chapters: War, Words and Music. Use their videos and the attached PDF’s with key facts and suggested exercises to create your own journey exploring this masterpiece.



# BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S WAR REQUIEM



## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

Welcome to our War Requiem Uncovered resource pack. We hope you will find the films and PDF resources an exciting springboard to spark your exploration of the piece.

To start, please watch the documentary video and read this sheet. You can then use the individual chapters on War, Words and Music supported by their accompanying worksheets in this pack to support your lessons. The worksheets contain key facts and suggested activities for each of the three chapters. To support your work in the classroom we have picked key curriculum aim links for English, History and Music that these exercises help to achieve which can be found below at the end of this pack with a full set of program notes from the performance.

Other resources you may need are:

- A full translation of the text which can be found in a score or online. You may find useful when studying the poetry and latin text.
- A recording of Benjamin Britten's War Requiem, we suggest working with the 1963 Decca Recording of War Requiem which can be found online.

The three chapters War, Words and Music, can each be used to enrich study and cover the themes of :

- War and pacifism ( History/ English)
- Poetry and texts ( English/ Music/ History)
- Music - This rich piece can be used in depth as a study or as a classroom aid critical listening and analysis to spark musical exploration through performance or discussion.

**We hope you enjoy this resource pack!**

# WAR



## Key Facts

- Benjamin Britten wrote War Requiem in 1962 to consecrate the new Coventry Cathedral after the original had been bombed during WW2.
- Benjamin Britten was a pacifist who had been a conscientious objector during World War 2.
- Britten used the poetry of World War 1 soldier Wilfred Owen in War Requiem. Owen's poetry conveyed the horror of war and mourned the death of many soldiers especially young recruits.
- In WW1 soldiers were either volunteers or were conscripted to fight for their country and (after 1916) had no choice in going to war. During WW2 it was possible to object however you had to have your case granted. Today, in the UK, soldiers are trained volunteers who choose this as their career.

## Teachers notes for outcomes

Discussion points and possible learning for students:

### 1. Empathy with soldiers

To appreciate the positions in going to war from WW1, WW2 and Current Day with reference to Wilfred Owen, Benjamin Britten and our current day soldier.

### 2. Consider their own opinion of war

To question their own opinion of war and how they would feel if they forced to go to war

### 3. Contrast Owen and Britten's experiences and artistic responses

To appreciate that Wilfred Owen and Benjamin Britten had different ways of expressing their view of war, Wilfred Owen expressed through poetry during his experience of War, Benjamin Britten who was not in service wrote the War Requiem to mourn the dead and as an anti war piece.

### 4. How does art (music / poetry) influence our understanding of war

What effect has Britten and Owen's work had on people's understanding of War and do you think that music can make a difference – what might you write to give your opinion of War?

## Provocations

- Why do countries go to war and is it ever the right solution?
- What would you feel if you were called up to fight in a War today?
- What artistic form would you use to express your view on war?

## **EXERCISES**

### **Action** (History)

- In pairs or individually research World War 1 and WW2 propaganda posters:
- What message are the posters giving about War and how do you think the public would respond to these?
- Design your own WW1 or WW2 propaganda poster, you can either choose to design one to recruit soldiers to sign up or a message for those still at home to support the effort.

### **Writing** (English/ History)

- Imagine you are a World War One soldier who has been sent to fight in the war. Write a letter home to your family or to a friend to tell them of your experience so far and how you are feeling. ( Teacher: Suggest playing the music passages below for this exercise )

### **Listening** (Music)

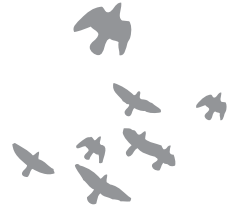
Listen to an extract from the following pieces:(suggested recording: 1963 Decca recording of War Requiem)

- Track 1: Requiem Aeternam
- Track 2: Requiem Aeternam “What passing Bells” ( follow the poem on the full text if desired)
- Track 3: Dies Irae “Dies irae”
- What instruments and voices can you hear?
- What are the moods of the pieces – how do they make you feel/ remind you of?
- What do they make you feel that the composer was saying about War?

### **Reflection** ( Debate /discussion)

- As a group discuss how you think our perception of War has changed from WW1, WW2 to current day war.
- Do you think that music, words and art have the power to make people think about the consequences of War?
- If you could express your opinion of war how would you do it?

# WORDS



**'My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity. All that a poet can do is warn.'**

Wilfred Owen

## Key Facts

- In War Requiem Benjamin Britten brought together the poetry of World War 1 soldier Wilfred Owen and traditional Latin Requiem Mass.
- The poetry of Wilfred Owen was written from personal experiences of war in WW1.
- The Requiem Mass, also known as 'Mass for the dead', is a traditional text used in the Catholic faith to mourn the dead.
- Britten condenses the War Requiem into six sections with nine poems from Wilfred Owen interspersed throughout. The six sections / movements are:
  - Requiem aeternam      *Eternal Rest*
  - Dies irae                *Day of wrath*
  - Offertorium             *Bringing offerings*
  - Sanctus                 *Holy*
  - Agnus Dei              *Lamb of God*
  - Libera me               *Deliver me*

## Teachers notes for outcomes

Discussion points and possible learning for students:

- To appreciate and explore the content and themes of Wilfred Owen poems. To consider how he felt when writing them.
- To understand the concept of the Requiem Mass and where it is traditionally used and that it is an ancient text.
- To understand why Benjamin Britten chose to bring these two texts together and what affect this has on the music and the listener.
- To think / consider what is the effect of combining two texts that are:
  - One in English and the other in Latin
  - Contemporary and ancient
  - Personal and institutional (the church)
  - Time specific (poetry in WW1) and timeless (the Mass)

### Provocations:

- What are key themes of Wilfred Owen's Poems in this piece?
- What is a Requiem Mass ?
- Why did Britten bring Owen's poems and the Requiem Mass together?

## EXERCISES

### Action (RE)

- In groups come up with a list of traditional ceremonies (religious or non) that you know of or have attended.
- List the key elements of these ceremonies that make them communal experiences and list them in the same manner as the key movements in the War Requiem listed above. ( eg Christmas and the advent story)

### Listening (Music and Literature)

Listen and follow the texts below with the corresponding track numbers. Think about how the English and Latin texts work next to each other. What effect do you think they have in the following movement?

#### Track 8: Dies Irae " Be slowly lifted up"

##### **Baritone**

Be slowly lifted up, thou long black arm,  
Great gun towering toward Heaven, about to curse;  
Reach at that arrogance which needs thy harm,  
And beat it down before its sins grow worse;  
But when thy spell be cast complete and whole,  
May God curse thee, and cut thee from our soul!

#### Track 9: Dies Irae: "Dies Irae"

##### **Chorus**

Dies irae, dies illa,  
Solvat saeculum in favilla:  
Teste David cum Sibylla.  
Quantus tremor est futurus,  
Quando Iudex est venturus,  
Cuncta stricte discussurus!

##### **Chorus**

This day, this day of wrath  
Shall consume the world in ashes,  
As foretold by David and Sibyl.  
What trembling there shall be  
When the judge shall come  
To weigh everything strictly.

For more work exploring this text we advise you have a copy of the score or a full text and translation which can be found online

## Writing

Read through the first poem in the piece by Wilfred Owen below:  
(optional listen to Track 2: Dies Irae “What Passing Bells”)

### **Anthem for Doomed Youth**

Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons.  
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;  
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—  
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;  
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.  
What candles may be held to speed them all?  
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.  
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;  
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,  
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

- What was Wilfred Owen saying in this poem about his reality of War and why do you think the composer chose to use it?
- Write your own poem reflecting what you think life might be like in the trenches.

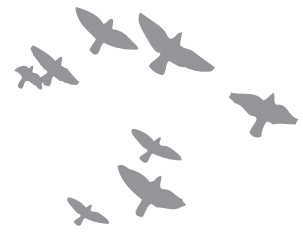
## **Reflection** ( Literature/ Music)

As a group discuss:

- What effect do you think using two different texts together can have and what you think Benjamin Britten has achieve in using them.
- Is using two different styles together effective and can you think of other current examples in music or writing?



# MUSIC



## Key Facts

- Benjamin Britten was born in 1913, one year before the start of WW1 and was the pre-eminent British composer of the mid 20th century.
- The War Requiem is a big piece of music in every way: 85 minutes long, requires a couple of hundred performers, has big themes and is a key work of the twentieth century.
- In War Requiem the musical forces involved are:
  - Baritone, Tenor, Soprano, Choir, Children's choir, Full Orchestra, Chamber orchestra, Organ
- Britten divides these forces into three groups and separates them into three different areas of the performance space:
  - Tenor and baritone soloists and the chamber orchestra are closest to the audience and they sing Wilfred Owen's words representing the personal perspective of war.
  - Behind them are the solo soprano, choir and full orchestra singing the Latin Mass and representing the establishment.
  - Furthest away are the boys' choir and organ representing the otherworldly
- The piece was written as a commemoration for the dead, and an anti-war statement.
- As a pacifist, Britten wrote War Requiem as an act of healing and reconciliation symbolised perhaps most tellingly by Britten's choice of the trio of soloists – Peter Pears, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Galina Vishnevskaya, leading singers from Britain, Germany

## Teachers notes for outcomes

Discussion points and possible learning for students:

- To absorb the scale of the musical forces in the War Requiem, how they are grouped together, where they are placed in the performance and the symbolism of this.
- To appreciate the different sound, textures and the role of contrast that shapes the piece through the 6 movements.
- To think/ explore and appreciate creating different moods using tempo, dynamics, and the colours and textures of instruments and voice.
- To provoke thoughts about how you write music for effect – this could lead to a class exercise either musically or on critical listening.

## Provocations

- What musical forces are there in there in the War Requiem?
- How are these forces employed by the composer?

- How is the piece structured?
- How has the composer achieved the shifting moods?

## **EXERCISES**

### **Listening** (Music)

Listen to the following extracts from each movement of the War Requiem (Teacher note: you can choose a smaller selection of tracks or listen to all of them and follow the final task):

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • Requiem aeternam / Eternal Rest  | Track: 2 Requiem Aeternam 'What passing Bells'<br>(at 2mins 15 – end)   |
| • Dies irae / Day of wrath         | Track3: Dies Irae ( 1 min - 2mins)                                      |
| • Offertorium / Bringing offerings | Track 13: Offertorium ( start – approx 2.35)                            |
| • Sanctus / Holy                   | Track 14: Sanctus ( start – 1minute)                                    |
| • Agnus Dei / Lamb of God          | Track 16: Agnus Dei ( start – 1 min 30)                                 |
| • Libera me / Deliver me           | Track 17: Libera Me 'let us sleep now' (start to 1.30 &<br>4.30 to end) |

For each piece:

- What musical forces are being used and to what effect? (Identify the instruments/voices you can hear and what they add to the piece).
- Tell us the mood/s and dynamics of the piece and how it makes you feel/ if it reminds
- Does the tempo of the piece help to create the mood? i.e tempo, pulse, metre,
- Does the music make you think of a particular time in history or place?
- What contrasts do you notice between the extracts?

### **Music making exercise**

This exercise could be in small groups depending on what instruments you have, perhaps some percussion, bell and instrumental/ vocal, depending on the musical ability of the students. You can either let the groups create their own version of a mood and then listen to Britten's music or vice versa:

- |                     |                    |                     |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| • Despair – Track 1 | • Anger- Track 3   | • Empathy – Track 4 |
| • Sorrow - Track 10 | • Peace – Track 19 |                     |

\*suggested recording: 1963 Decca recording

Perform back to each other end the end of the session and ask the other groups to reflect what they have heard in each performance in terms of texture and mood.

**Action** (Music critique)

- In groups research anti war songs/ songs of protest from the 1960's/ 70's eg
  - John Lennon – Imagine or Give Peace a Chance
  - Joan Baez – We Shall Overcome
- Choose one song and pick out the lyrics and think about the message the artist is trying to give.
- Now choose a modern pop song that you like, think about the message it is giving and compare this with the anti war song. Think about the music in each song, the instruments used and how the songs make you feel. Does the music enhance the message of the song?
- Present back to the class and discuss.

**Reflection** (Debate /discussion)

- Discuss as a group how you think music can be made to make a message.
- Can you think of current musicians who reflect their views in their music?
- Do you think that music has the power to make a change?
- What effect do you think Benjamin Britten's piece had on the audience of the day

For more information about the composer and listening notes please see the programme notes on page 12.

# CURRICULUM LINKS NOV 2014

## **ENGLISH**

### **Summary of applicable Curriculum aims 2014**

- Appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- Are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

### **Reading**

- Reading poems and plays with a wide coverage of genres, historical periods, forms and authors.
- Understand increasingly challenging texts through:
- Making inferences and referring to evidence in the text
- Knowing the purpose, audience for and context of the writing and drawing on this knowledge to support comprehension
- Read critically through recognising a range of poetic conventions and understanding how these have been used

### **Writing**

- Writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including: poetry and other imaginative writing
- Applying their growing knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and text structure to their writing and selecting the appropriate form

### **Grammar and vocabulary**

- Drawing on new vocabulary and grammatical constructions from their reading and listening, and using these consciously in their writing and speech to achieve particular effects

### **Spoken English**

- Giving short speeches and presentations, expressing their own ideas and keeping to the point
- participating in formal debates and structured discussions, summarising and/or building on what has been said
- improvising, rehearsing and performing play scripts and poetry in order to generate language and discuss language use and meaning, using role, intonation, tone, volume, mood, silence, stillness and action to add impact.

## **MUSIC**

### **Summary of applicable Curriculum aims 2014**

- Perform, listen to, review and evaluate music across a range of historical periods, genres, styles and traditions, including the works of the great composers and musicians
- Learn to compose music on their own and with others
- Understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated, including through the inter-related dimensions: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations.
- play and perform confidently in An ensemble contexts using their voice, playing instruments musically, fluently and with accuracy and expression
- improvise and compose; and extend and develop musical ideas by drawing on a range of musical structures, styles, genres and traditions
- listen with increasing discrimination to a wide range of music from great composers and musicians
- develop a deepening understanding of the music that they perform and to which they listen, and its history.

## **HISTORY**

### **Summary of applicable Curriculum aims 2014**

- Know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world
- Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses
- Understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed
- Gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.
- Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day
- The First World War and the Peace Settlement
- The Second World War and the wartime leadership of Winston Churchill

# PROGRAMME NOTES

SOUTHBANK CENTRE PRESENTS

## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY: BRITTEN'S WAR REQUIEM

Marin Alsop and the Royal Academy of Music

Royal Festival Hall

Sunday 9 November 2014, 3pm

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### Performers

Royal Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra

Marin Alsop *conductor*

Natalia Tanasii *soprano*

Ben Johnson *tenor*

Johannes Kammler *baritone*

National Youth Choir of Great Britain

Voicelab Children's Choir

### This Afternoon's Programme

Film: War Requiem Uncovered

Benjamin Britten: War Requiem, Op.66 (1962) 85'

1. Requiem aeternam
2. Dies irae
3. Offertorium
4. Sanctus
5. Agnus Dei
6. Libera me

Sung texts from Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* can be downloaded from [southbankcentre.co.uk/warrequiem](http://southbankcentre.co.uk/warrequiem)

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World War One was a transformative experience affecting everything from national identities across the globe to the smallest family groups. Its huge effects still haunt geo-politics and allow us to remember the war and reflect on its impact. This opening concert is the central work around which our other events are gathered.

Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* was written in the aftermath of the World War Two which followed all too soon after the First World War. Britten combined the poetry of Wilfred Owen, perhaps the greatest of all World War One poets, with the ancient words of the Latin *Requiem Mass*: his aim was to honour the dead and to provide a moment of national reflection the pity of war.

Most of the people who fought and died in World War One and in conflicts throughout history were young. In recognition of this, Marin Alsop has gathered hundreds of young people around her for this performance: as singers, as instrumentalists, as film-makers and as hosts for the rehearsals which were held at Lilian Baylis School. In this context we see that Britten's *War Requiem* remains a powerful and relevant outpouring about the tragedy of armed conflict.

Jude Kelly

Southbank Centre's Artistic Director

### Programme notes

#### Before the performance

Southbank Centre is delighted to screen a selection of imagery from Robert Wilson's *Helmand*, 2008, and *Helmand Return*, 2014, prior to this afternoon's performance. (The exhibition *Helmand Return*, presented by Gallery One and a Half in London, runs until 30 November 2014.)

#### Film: War Requiem Uncovered

Students from Lilian Baylis Technology School in Lambeth have been working together with Southbank Centre's Education team to explore the context, the music and the poetry of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*. Using today's performance as their inspiration, their film is their own exploration of what they think Britten's *War Requiem* means to audiences today.

#### Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)

War Requiem, Op.66 (1962)

1. Requiem aeternam
2. Dies irae
3. Offertorium
4. Sanctus
5. Agnus Dei
6. Libera me

### The Composer

Benjamin Britten, born in 1913, was the pre-eminent British composer of the mid 20th century. Although some works mark major public occasions – the opera *Gloriana* was written in celebration of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth and the *War Requiem*, which we will hear today, in commemoration of the dead from the two world wars – Britten did not easily fit the mould of establishment figure, being a gay man, a pacifist and a person of the left.

He burst into public prominence just after the Second World War with *Peter Grimes*, an opera about a troubled outsider pitted against the community of Aldeburgh, the Suffolk coastal village which Britten made his home. The huge success of *Peter Grimes* propelled Britten into the position of major international public figure, but the sense of being rooted in a community became increasingly essential to Britten's life as an artist. In a famous speech in 1964 in Aspen, Colorado (USA), Britten said: 'I believe in roots, in associations, in backgrounds, in personal relationships. I want my music to be of use to people, to please them, to enhance their lives... I do not write for posterity – in any case the outlook for that is somewhat uncertain. I write music, now, in Aldeburgh, for people living there, and further afield, indeed for anyone who cares to play it or listen to it. But my music now has its roots, in where I live and work.'

Britten's ambition to write music which was 'of use to people' was perhaps most publicly achieved in the *War Requiem*, commissioned for the 1962 dedication of the new Coventry Cathedral after the destruction of its predecessor in the Blitz. This combination of the *Requiem* Mass with Wilfred Owen's anti-war poems was a poignant act of healing and reconciliation from the pacifist Britten, symbolised perhaps most tellingly by Britten's choice of the trio of soloists – Peter Pears, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Galina Vishnevskaya, leading singers from Britain, Germany and Russia respectively.

Closer to his beloved home, Britten created the Aldeburgh Festival and a spectacular concert hall and educational spaces at Snape, all of which continue to play a major part in British musical life today. He died as the result of a chronic heart condition at the age of 63 in 1976.

### The Work

Britten based the *War Requiem* text partly on the traditional *Missa pro defunctis* (or *Requiem* Mass) and partly on the writings of the celebrated First World War poet Wilfred Owen, who had been tragically killed in action just a week before the Armistice was declared. The *Requiem* therefore provided a link not only between the two World Wars, but also with Britten's own pacifist tendencies. He headed the score with some striking words by Owen: 'My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity. All that a poet can do is warn.'

The premiere was accorded what was then the rare distinction of a live outside broadcast by the BBC and received the most spectacular critical reception of Britten's career. Audience and performers alike were left emotionally shell-shocked – indeed, so overwhelming was the experience that the normally stoic German baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau was reduced to tears. Britten's classic recording of the *War Requiem* sold a remarkable 200,000 copies in less than six months.

### Listening Guide

Britten divides his forces into three main groups, the first of which – full chorus and orchestra with solo soprano – sings the words of the traditional *Requiem* Mass. By contrast, a boys' choir intones parts of the *Requiem*, while Owens' poems are hoisted aloft by tenor and baritone soloists with the support of a small chamber orchestra.

The hushed intensity of the opening *Requiem aeternam* ('Grant them eternal rest') erupts in an overwhelming climax before we hear the sound of boys' voices chanting the *Te decet hymnus* ('Thou who art praised').

The *Dies irae* ('Day of wrath'), with its militaristic fanfares and drum rolls, is the most wide-ranging section, offsetting traditional Latin scripture with Owen's evocative prose to mesmerising effect.

The *Offertorium* opens with a distant boy's chorus intoning *Domine Jesu Christe* ('O Lord Jesus Christ').

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus* ('Holy, Holy, Holy') evokes Medieval music-making, with its ritualistic use of vibraphone, glockenspiel, antique cymbals, bells and piano, while a radiant solo tenor crowns the choral *Agnus Dei* ('O Lamb of God') with a rising line of sublime beauty.

The final *Libera me, Domine* ('Deliver me, O Lord') builds inexorably towards a glorious climax before the music drifts away to the sound of a final *Amen*.

### Young people involved in this concert

Recognising that many of the soldiers in the First World War were young adults, participants in our new 1521 courses for young people have been working to devise a piece of music inspired by Britten's *War Requiem*.

The piece is premiered on The Clore Ballroom at Royal Festival Hall before the concert. Alongside this, students from Lilian Baylis School, in Lambeth, have been developing a film project exploring the context and themes of the *War Requiem* (see above). Over the half term a group of primary children have attended workshops at Southbank Centre, and they sing as the children's choir in tonight's performance of Britten's great work.

**Henry Ward**

**Southbank Centre's Head of Education**

### Biographies

#### Royal Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra

**Principal: Jonathan Freeman-Attwood**

The Royal Academy of Music was founded in 1822, and since then the music profession has been filled at all levels with Academy alumni, including classical giants Sir Simon Rattle and Sir Harrison Birtwistle and pop stars Sir Elton John and Annie Lennox. Every year talented young musicians from over 50 countries come to study at the Academy, attracted by renowned teachers and a rich artistic culture that broadens their musical horizons, develops their professional creativity and fosters their entrepreneurial spirit. As the Academy approaches its bicentenary it has recently been rated the best conservatoire for research and the second-highest rated institution in the country for student satisfaction, and it regularly tops national Higher Education league tables for music.



### **Marin Alsop – conductor**

Born in New York, Marin Alsop was the first woman to be awarded the Koussevitzky Conducting Prize from the Tanglewood Music Center, where she studied with Leonard Bernstein. She has since held positions as Principal Conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (2002 to 2008), where she is now Conductor Emeritus, and Music Director of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra (1993 to 2005), where she remains Music Director Laureate. Since 2007 she has been Music Director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and, after taking up the post of Principal Conductor of the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra in 2012, became Music Director last year. She has also been Music Director of California's Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music since 1992. She is an Artist in Residence at Southbank Centre and an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music. A regular guest with the world's major orchestras, last year she made history as the first female conductor of the Last Night of the BBC Proms. Marin Alsop's numerous awards include the USA's prestigious MacArthur Fellowship and she has recorded an extensive discography.

### **Natalia Tanasii – soprano**

Natalia Tanasii was born in the Republic of Moldova. She attended the National School of Music and currently studies with tenor Mihai Muntean at the Republican Academy of Music and Arts in Chisinau. Already a recipient of numerous prizes in national and international singing competitions, she was also awarded the Presidential Grant, a national scholarship given to students of extraordinary talent and academic achievements. Last year, at the age of just 21, Tanasii made her professional debut in the role of Contessa *Le nozze di Figaro* on the main stage of the Moldovan National Theatre. She was later awarded the National Award for Outstanding Achievement in Arts. After her graduation in summer 2014, Tanasii joins the young ensemble of Den Norske Opera & Ballet.

### **Ben Johnson – tenor**

Ben Johnson represented England in BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2013 and won the Audience Prize. Winner of the Kathleen Ferrier Awards in 2008, Johnson is currently an English National Opera Harewood Artist and a Wigmore Hall Emerging Talent.

Highlights in 2014/15 include Oronte (Handel's *Alcina*) with the English Concert, Alfredo (Verdi's *La Traviata*) at English National Opera (ENO), Evangelist in Bach's *St John Passion* and *St Matthew Passion* with the Choir of King's College, Cambridge and The Bach Choir respectively, and Belmonte (Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) at the Berlin Staatsoper.

Recent opera engagements include Tamino (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*), Alfredo (*La Traviata*) and Nemorino (Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*) for ENO, and Don Ottavio (Mozart's *Don Giovanni*) for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, ENO and Opéra National de Bordeaux. Recent concert highlights include a Mozart programme with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Residentie Orkest, Mendelssohn's *Lobegesang* with the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Britten's *St Nicolas* with the Britten Sinfonia and Britten's *Serenade* for Tenor, Horn and Strings with the Residentie Orkest and the English Chamber Orchestra at the BBC Proms.

In recital he works regularly with Graham Johnson and James Baillieu, performing at the Wigmore Hall, Aldeburgh Music, the City of London Festival, Rosenblatt Recitals and Kings Place.

### **Johannes Kammler – baritone**

Johannes Kammler, born in 1988, started his musical career at the age of five with the Augsburger Domsingknaben. From time to time they still perform concerts together, including Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, which they sang in the Sistine Chapel (Rome) before Pope Benedict XVI in 2009. Since 2009 Johannes has been a member of the Concert Choir of the Bavarian Radio in Munich. He also gives concerts all over Europe as a lieder, oratorio and opera singer. He recently sang at the Easter Festival 2014 in Baden-Baden (Germany) in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* with the Berliner Philharmoniker under Sir Simon Rattle. After his undergraduate studies in Germany and Canada Johannes is now doing his postgraduate studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London with Rudolf Piernay.

### **National Youth Choirs of Great Britain**

The National Youth Choirs of Great Britain (NYCGB) provides the widest of musical experiences for over 600 young people aged nine to 25, within its eight constituent choirs.

- Boys' Choir (trebles) and Cambiata Voices (boys undergoing voice change): school years five to ten
- Junior and Senior Girls' Choirs: school years six to ten
- Training Choirs North and South: mixed voices in school years nine to 13
- National Youth Choir: mixed voices, age 16 to 22
- Chamber Choir: young professionals and those studying to become professional singers, age 18 to 25

The choirs meet twice each year, during the spring and summer holidays, for residential courses ranging from five to ten days. We hold courses in a variety of venues around the country. As a national organisation, we aim to cover as many parts of the country as possible.

The courses aim to develop performance skills at the highest level, challenging young singers to embrace a broad and diverse repertoire and to develop a flexible and creative approach to musical performance. Each course culminates in concerts across the UK. Over the past 18 months performances have taken place at Leeds Town Hall, Birmingham Town Hall, Worcester Cathedral, Derry City of Culture Festival, BBC Proms, Snape Proms, Edinburgh Fringe Festival plus further concerts in Cardiff, Oxford, Rochester and Gateshead.

### **Voicelab Children's Choir**

Voicelab Children's Choir is a specially-formed, non-auditioned ensemble who participated in Voicelab's Half-Term Singing Course (27 to 31 October). They spent an intensive week learning the children's chorus part to Britten's *War Requiem* in preparation for this concert. This is the choirs' second performance, having previously performed a devised piece in Southbank Centre's The Clore Ballroom on Friday 31 October. The course was led by vocal animateur, Suzi Zumpe, who directs them for this concert, with movement director Clare Whistler and repetiteur Emily Leather. Voicelab is Southbank Centre's vocal initiative, which invites everyone to explore their voice and participate in festivals, workshops and performances throughout the year. To find out more and to join in, visit [southbankcentre.co.uk/voicelab](http://southbankcentre.co.uk/voicelab)

### **Lillian Bayliss School**

Lilian Baylis Technology School is an 11 to 19-year-old school based in Vauxhall, South London. Southbank Centre has worked in partnership with Lilian Baylis Technology School (LBTS) for over 20 years on a wide range of projects.