

City of
London
Choir

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MUSIC IN TIME OF WAR

Finzi *Requiem da Camera*

Haydn *Missa in Tempore Belli (Paukenmesse)*

Tippett *Five Spirituals (from A Child of our Time)*

Butterworth *The Banks of Green Willow*

City of London Choir

London Mozart Players

Hilary Davan Wetton *conductor*

Mary Nelson *soprano*

Wendy Dawn Thompson *mezzo-soprano*

Matthew Long *tenor*

William Berger *baritone*

Thursday 13th November 2014, 7.30pm

St John's Smith Square



ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE
LONDON SW1P 3HA
Tel: 020 7222 1061

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LONDON SW1P 3HA

The Box Office is open for
advance bookings from 10am
to 5pm (until 6pm on concert
days) Monday to Saturday.

Tickets £28, £22, £18, £14
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Tickets available from the Box
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IMAGE: *Hills and Ploughed Fields*
near Dresden (oil on canvas),
Caspar David Friedrich
(1774–1840), Hamburger
Kunsthalle/Bridgeman Images

... These homes, this valley spread below me here,
The rooks, the tilted stacks, the beasts in pen,
Have been the heartfelt things, past-speaking dear
To unknown generations of dead men,

Who, century after century, held these farms,
And, looking out to watch the changing sky,
Heard, as we hear, the rumours and alarms
Of war at hand and danger pressing nigh ...

John Masefield, *August 1914*

Requiem da Camera is Gerald Finzi's elegy to friends killed in action during the First World War. Newly completed by Christian Alexander, this beautiful and deeply poignant work sets contemporary poems by Masefield, Hardy and Gibson which lament the loss of a generation of young men against an evocative rural backdrop. We present the first opportunity in London to hear Finzi's minor masterpiece in its new edition, which the City of London Choir, with Hilary Davan Wetton and the London Mozart Players, has recently recorded for release by Naxos in November 2014.

The fearfulness and sorrow of the *Requiem* are reflected in contrasting ways by the rest of the programme. George Butterworth was killed in action at the Somme, aged 31, shortly after writing his lyrical idyll *The Banks of Green Willow*. Michael Tippett's *Five Spirituals*, inspired by events in 1939, are a visceral and emotive cry for reconciliation. Troubled times in Europe two centuries earlier inspired Haydn's stirring *Paukenmesse*, permeated by ominous drumbeats and culminating in a potent prayer for peace.



Baritone William Berger – “a strong yet tender timbre” (*Herald Scotland*) – will perform Finzi's setting of Hardy's poem *Only a man harrowing clods*.