London Philharmonic Orchestra

BRITTEN
WAR REQUIEM

KURT MASUR *conductor*
CHRISTINE BREWER *soprano*
ANTHONY DEAN GRIFFEY *tenor*
GERALD FINLEY *baritone*
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA *and* **CHOIR**

BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S *WAR REQUIEM*

'My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity... All a poet can do today is warn.' Wilfred Owen's words stand at the head of the score of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, his great artistic statement of pacifism. Britten was a pacifist throughout his life. At school he had refused to join the Officers' Training Corps, and his anti-war attitudes were stimulated by long conversations with his composition teacher Frank Bridge about the First World War. In the 1930s he was actively engaged with the Peace Pledge Union, and he wrote several works promoting the cause of peace, notably the neglected *Ballad of Heroes*. On returning to England from the USA during the Second World War, he and his partner Peter Pears declared themselves conscientious objectors. In his statement to the tribunal (from which they both succeeded in obtaining exemption from war service), Britten declared: 'The whole of my life has been devoted to acts of creation... and I cannot take part in acts of destruction.'

The opportunity to express his deepest feelings about war came in 1958 when Britten was asked to compose a large-scale work for the consecration of the new Coventry Cathedral, built on the ruins of the medieval cathedral which had been almost entirely destroyed by bombs in 1940. Britten came up with a radically innovative scheme. He decided to intersperse the movements of the Latin Mass for the Dead, set for soprano, boys' and mixed chorus, and large orchestra, with poems by Owen - the most searingly subversive of the First World War poets - for tenor and baritone soloists, with chamber orchestra. Although Britten respected the teachings of the Church, he was not a Christian, and the Owen poems he chose sometimes implicitly criticise the Requiem texts. So, for example, the liturgical last trump in the *Dies Irae*, 'Tuba mirum, spargens sonum' ('the wondrous trumpet, scattering its sound') is followed by Owen's poem 'Bugles sang, saddening the evening air'; and, most tellingly, the confident claim of the *Offertorium*, 'quam olim Abrahae promisisti, et semini eius' ('which thou didst promise of old to Abraham, and his seed'), is undermined by Owen's devastating reinterpretation of the Abraham and Isaac story, ending with 'the old man would not so, but slew his son – And half the seed of Europe, one by one', lines that the solo tenor and baritone repeat over and over again while the boys' chorus impotently sing the words of the liturgy.

The opening *Requiem Aeternam* begins in the tragic world of D minor, recalling the early *Sinfonia da Requiem*. Its funeral march rhythms, punctuated by tolling bells, alternate with the ethereal sounds of boys' voices – Britten's innocent observers – accompanied by organ. The huge *Dies Irae* contains within it four of the Owen settings. Its main material is a halting quick march, a chilling musical image of the laden troops going 'over the top' and stumbling towards their deaths. After the *Offertorium*, the start of the *Sanctus*, with its harsh, brilliant bells and solo soprano flourishes, recalls Orthodox liturgy; then the freely chanting voices of the choir (Britten borrowing a sound remembered from Holst's *Hymn of Jesus*) lead the music into an explosively exultant D major, the work's only moment of triumph. In total contrast, the quietly undulating *Agnus Dei* interweaves the liturgy with Owen's poem 'At a Calvary near the Ancre' which makes telling references to the Crucifixion; at the end the solo tenor offers a clinching 'Dona nobis pacem'. The *Libera me* returns to the funeral march mood of the *Requiem Aeternam*. Its grinding climax melts away into the misty purgatory of Owen's 'Strange meeting', where dead German and British soldiers meet; the former confesses 'I am the enemy you killed my friend', and offers forgiveness. Their final 'Let us sleep now' is mingled with the 'In Paradisum' from the Requiem and the words are taken up by all the soloists and chorus in a great wave of benediction.

At the *War Requiem's* first performance in May 1963, Britten had hoped to have British, German and Russian soloists as a visible symbol of reconciliation, but the Soviets would not allow Galina Vishnevskaya to stand on the same stage as Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, so Heather Harper (who also appears on LPO-0002 *Haitink conducts Britten*) took her place. The final hushed 'Amen' was followed by a long, stunned silence (and a similar silence followed the live recording captured on this disc). Almost everyone in the audience realised they had witnessed the birth of that rare phenomenon, a modern classic. The first recording of the work, conducted by Britten, sold over 200,000 copies in the first year of its release. Almost no serious composer since has been able to communicate on such a wide scale, and on such an important theme. In the twenty-first century when, far from retreating, war rages feverishly around the world, the *War Requiem's* warning message is still urgently relevant.

David Matthews

WAR REQUIEM

Texts are taken from the Latin Requiem Mass and from the works of Wilfred Owen.

01 REQUIEM AETERNAM

Chorus
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Boys
Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion,
et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.
Exaudi orationem meam,
ad te omnis caro veniet.

Grant them eternal rest, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

A hymn becometh Thee, O God, in Sion,
and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer,
to Thee all flesh shall come.

Tenor
02 What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries for them from prayers or 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 good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of silent minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Chorus

Kyrie eleison.	*Lord have mercy upon us.*
Christe eleison.	*Christ have mercy upon us.*
Kyrie eleison.	*Lord have mercy upon us.*

03 DIES IRAE

Chorus

Dies irae, dies illa	*Day of wrath, that day*
Solvet saeclum in favilla	*Shall dissolve the world in ashes*
Teste David cum Sibylla.	*As David and the Sibyl testify.*
Quantus tremor est futurus	*How much trembling there will be*
Quando judex est venturus	*When the Judge has come*
Cuncta stricte discussurus.	*To weigh all things strictly.*
Tuba mirum spargens sonum	*The trumpet scattering its wondrous sound*
Per sepulchra regionum	*Through the graves of every land*
Coget omnes ante thronum.	*Will drive all before the throne.*
Mors stupebit et natura	*Death and nature will be astounded*
Cum resurget creatura	*When creation rises again*
Judicanti responsura.	*To answer the Judge.*

Baritone

04 Bugles sang, saddening the evening air,
And bugles answered, sorrowful to hear.

Voices of boys were by the riverside,
Sleep mothered them; and left the twilight sad.
The shadow of the morrow weighed on men.

Voices of old despondency resigned,
Bowed by the shadow of the morrow, slept.

05 LIBER SCRIPTUS

Soprano and chorus

Liber scriptus proferetur	*A book of writings shall be brought*
In quo totum continetur	*Containing everything*
Unde mundus judicetur.	*For which the world will be judged.*
Judex ergo cum sedebit,	*Therefore when the Judge sits,*
Quidquid latet apparebit,	*Whatever is hidden will appear,*
Nil inultum remanebit.	*Nothing will go unavenged.*
Quid sum miser tunc dicturus,	*What shall I, wretch that I am, say then,*
Quem patronum rogaturus	*Whose patronage shall I ask*
Cum vix justus sit securus?	*When the righteous are hardly safe?*
Rex tremendae majestatis,	*King of dread majesty,*
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,	*Who freely savest the redeemed,*
Salve me, fons pietatis.	*Save me, fount of piety.*

Tenor and baritone

06 Out there we've walked quite friendly up to Death;
Sat down and eaten with him, cool and bland -
Pardoned his spilling mess-tins in our hand.
We've sniffed the green thick odour of his breath -
Our eyes wept, but our courage didn't writhe.
He's spat at us with bullets and he's coughed
Shrapnel. We chorused when he sang aloft;
We whistled while he shaved us with his scythe.

Oh, Death was never enemy of ours!
We laughed at him, we leagued with him, old chum.
No soldier's paid to kick against his powers.
We laughed, knowing that better men would come,
And greater wars; when each proud fighter brags
He wars on Death - for Life; not men - for flags.

07 RECORDARE

Chorus

Recordare, Jesu pie,
Quod sum causa tuae viae,
Ne me perdas illa die.

Remember, merciful Jesus,
That I am the cause of Thy journey,
Let me not be lost on that day.

Quaerens me sedisti lassus,
Redemisti crucem passus,
Tantus labor non sit cassus.

Seeking me Thou didst weary Thyself,
To redeem me didst suffer on the cross,
Let not such travail be in vain.

Juste judex ultionis,
Donum fac remissionis
Ante diem rationis.

Just Judge of vengeance,
Grant me the gift of remission
Before the day of reckoning.

Ingemisco tamquam reus,
Culpa rubet vultus meus,
Supplicanti parce, Deus.

I groan as one guilty,
My countenance blushes with guilt,
Spare the suppliant, O God.

Qui Mariam absolvisti
Et latronem exaudisti
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.

Thou who didst absolve Mary
And listen to the robber
Hast given me hope also.

Preces meae non sunt dignae,
Sed tu, bonus fac benigne,
Ne perenni cremer igne.

My prayers are unworthy,
But Thou, good Lord, have mercy,
Lest I burn in everlasting fire.

Inter oves locum praesta,
Et ab haedis me sequestra,
Statuens in parte dextra.

Allow me a place among the sheep,
And from the goats divide me,
Setting me upon Thy right hand.

08 Confutatis maledictis
Flammis acribus addictis,
Voca me cum benedictis.

When the wicked are confounded
And consigned to the bitter flames,
Call me with the blessed.

Oro supplex et acclinis,
Cor contritum quasi cinis,
Gere curam mei finis

I pray, a kneeling suppliant,
My heart contrite as ashes,
Take into Thy care my end.

Baritone

09 Be slowly lifted up, thou long black arm,
Great gun towering towards 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!

Chorus and soprano

Dies irae... *Day of wrath...*

10 LACRIMOSA

Lacrimosa dies illa *Sorrowful that day*
Qua resurget ex favilla *When rising from the ashes*
Judicandus homo reus. *Sinful man goes to be judged.*
Huic ergo parce, Deus. *Therefore spare him, O God.*

Tenor

11 Move him into the sun,
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown.
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.
Think how it wakes the seeds,
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.
Are limbs, so dear-achieved, are sides,
Full-nerved - still warm - too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?
O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?

Chorus

Pie Jesu Domine,	*Merciful Lord Jesus,*
Dona eis requiem. Amen.	*Grant them rest. Amen.*

CD2

01 OFFERTORIUM

Boys

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,	*Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,*
libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum	*deliver the souls of all the faithful departed*
de poenis et de profundo lacu.	*from the pains of hell and from the deep pit.*
Libera eas de ore leonis,	*Deliver them from the lion's mouth,*
ne absorbeat eas Tartarus,	*that hell may not swallow them,*
ne cadant in obscurum.	*and they may not fall into darkness.*
Chorus	
Sed signifer sanctus Michael	*But let the holy standard-bearer Michael*
repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam;	*bring them into the holy light;*
quam olim Abrahae promisisti,	*which Thou didst promise of old*
et semini ejus.	*to Abraham, and his seed.*

Baritone and tenor

02 So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
And builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretched forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! an angel called him out of Heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad.
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son -
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

Boys

Hostias et preces tibi, Domine, laudis offerimus.	*We offer Thee, Lord, sacrifice of prayers and praise.*
Tu suscipe pro animabus illis quarum hodie memoriam facimus.	*Receive them for those souls whom this day we commemorate.*
Fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam.	*Make them, Lord, to pass from death to life.*

Chorus

Quam olim Abrahae...	*Which Thou didst promise...*

03 SANCTUS

Soprano and chorus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,	*Holy, holy holy,*
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.	*Lord God of Hosts.*
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.	*Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.*
Hosanna in excelsis.	*Hosanna in the highest.*
04 Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.	*Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.*
Hosanna in excelsis.	*Hosanna in the highest.*

Baritone

05 After the blast of lightning from the East,
The flourish of loud clouds, the Chariot Throne;
After the drums of Time have rolled and ceased,
And by the bronze West long retreat is blown,
Shall life renew these bodies? Of a truth,
All death will He annul, all tears assuage? -
Fill the void veins of Life again with youth,
And wash, with an immortal water, Age?
When I do ask white Age he saith not so;
'My head hangs weighed with snow'.
And when I hearken to the Earth, she saith:
'My fiery heart shrinks, aching. It is death.
Mine ancient scars shall not be glorified,
Nor my titanic tears, the sea, be dried'.

06 AGNUS DEI

Tenor
One ever hangs where shelled roads part.
In this war He too lost a limb,
But His disciples hide apart;
And now the Soldiers bear with Him.

Chorus
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
grant them rest.

Tenor
Near Golgotha strolls many a priest,
And in their faces there is pride
That they were flesh-marked by the Beast
By whom the gentle Christ's denied.

Chorus
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
grant them rest.

Tenor
The scribes on all the people shove
And bawl allegiance to the state,
But they who love the greater love
Lay down their life; they do not hate.

Chorus
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem sempiternam.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
grant them rest.

Tenor

Dona nobis pacem.	*Grant us peace.*

07 LIBERA ME

Soprano and chorus

Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna	*Deliver me, Lord, from eternal death*
in die illa tremenda, quando coeli	*on that dreadful day, when the heavens*
movendi sunt et terra, dum veneris	*and earth shall be moved, and Thou shalt come*
judicare saeculum per ignem.	*to judge the world by fire.*
Tremens factus sum ego et timeo	*I am seized with trembling and fear*
dum discussio venerit atque ventura ira,	*when I reflect on the trial and wrath to come,*
quando coeli movendi sunt et terra.	*when the heavens and earth shall be moved.*
Dies irae, dies illa calamitatis et miseriae,	*Day of wrath, that day of calamity and misery,*
dies magna et amara valde.	*a great and exceeding bitter day.*

Tenor

08 It seemed that out of battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites where titanic wars had groined.
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands as if to bless.

And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.
‘Strange friend’, I said, ‘here is no cause to mourn’.

Baritone
‘None’, said the other, ‘save the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world.

For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something had been left,
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.

Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress,
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.
Miss we the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled.
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells.
Even from wells we sunk too deep for war,
Even the sweetest wells that ever were.

I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark; for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.’

Tenor and baritone

09 'Let us sleep now...'

Boys, soprano and chorus

In paradisum deducant te Angeli;
in tuo adventu suscipiant te Martyres,
et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem.
Chorus Angelorum te suscipiat,
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere aeternam
habeas requiem.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Requiescant in pace. Amen.

May the Angels lead you into paradise;
and Martyrs welcome your coming,
and lead you into Jerusalem, the heavenly city.
May the choir of Angels welcome you,
and where Lazarus is poor no longer, there may
you have eternal rest.
Grant them eternal rest, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen.

Photo: Link Harper. Courtesy of The Britten-Pears Library, Aldeburgh.

Benjamin Britten observing a rehearsal of *War Requiem* in Aspen, Colorado, August, 1964.

CHRISTINE BREWER *soprano*

Christine Brewer was born in Illinois and began her professional career with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. She has sung the roles of Countess Almaviva (New York City Opera, Royal Opera); Donna Anna (Edinburgh Festival and in London, New York and Florida); Ariadne (English National Opera, Opéra de Lyon, Santa Fe Festival and the Metropolitan Opera); and Leonore in *Fidelio* (Lisbon, San Francisco) as well as making appearances in Weber's *Oberon* (London); Strauss' *Die Aegyptische Helena* and Britten's *Peter Grimes* in Santa Fe. Miss Brewer has also appeared in the title role of *Tristan und Isolde* (BBC Symphony Orchestra and Donald Runnicles, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and Esa-Pekka Salonen, and at the Edinburgh Festival with Jonathan Nott); as Chrysothemis in *Elektra* (Cleveland Orchestra and Franz Welser-Möst); and in *Gloriana* (Aldeburgh Festival with Richard Hickox). In concert Miss Brewer has appeared with the major American and European orchestras under Sir Roger Norrington, Michael Tilson Thomas, Kurt Masur, Christoph von Dohnányi, Andrew Litton, John Nelson, Sir Neville Marriner, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Zubin Mehta, Antonio Pappano and Sir Simon Rattle. Her recordings include *Don Giovanni* under Sir Charles Mackerras; Barber's *Vanessa* under Leonard Slatkin; *Fidelio* with David Parry; Mahler's Symphony 8 under Sir Simon Rattle; and recitals of music by Schubert and Strauss.

ANTHONY DEAN GRIFFEY *tenor*

Anthony Dean Griffey, a graduate of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Programme, made his Met debut as the First Knight in *Parsifal*, and has since appeared there in several roles, including the title role in *Peter Grimes*, which he has also performed at Glyndebourne, the Paris Opera, and Santa Fe Opera. Additionally, he has performed with the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Sam in *Susannah*, and with San Francisco Opera in the world première of André Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Mr Griffey is one of the leading soloists of his generation in the symphonic/choral repertoire. He has made regular appearances with the leading orchestras in the United States and Europe. These include the orchestras of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Saint Louis, Minnesota, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Houston, Detroit, Baltimore and Saint Paul. Internationally, he has sung with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Münchner Symphoniker, the NHK Symphony in Japan, and the Hallé Orchestra. He has collaborated with many of today's most prestigious conductors, including James Levine, Seiji Ozawa, André Previn, Michael Tilson Thomas, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Kurt Masur, Donald Runnicles, Sir Colin Davis, Christoph Eschenbach, Mariss Jansons, Neeme Järvi, Charles Dutoit, Robert Spano, Andreas Delfs and Mark Elder, among others.

GERALD FINLEY *baritone*

The Canadian baritone Gerald Finley has become one of the leading singers and dramatic interpreters of his generation, performing to critical acclaim at major opera and concert venues in a wide variety of repertoire. His collaborations with leading conductors including Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Antonio Pappano and Sir Simon Rattle have been part of a flourishing career. Gerald Finley's work in opera has been founded on Mozart and Handel, but he has also received great acclaim for his portrayal of *Owen Wingrave* in the Channel 4 film of Britten's opera, in addition to creating numerous leading roles including Harry Heegan in Mark-Anthony Turnage's *The Silver Tassie* and J. Robert Oppenheimer in John Adams' *Doctor Atomic*. His concert and recording work is equally prestigious, and he has premièred new works by Mark-Anthony Turnage (including *When I Woke* as heard on LPO-0007), Kaija Saariaho and Julian Philips. He works regularly as a recitalist with Julius Drake, with whom his recordings include a solo disc of Ives songs for Hyperion Records. Gerald Finley began singing as a chorister in Ottawa, Canada, and continued his musical studies in the UK at the Royal College of Music, King's College, Cambridge, and the National Opera Studio, before continuing his singing training with Armen Boyajian in New York.

KURT MASUR *conductor*

Kurt Masur is well known to orchestras and audiences alike as both a distinguished conductor and humanist. Since September 2000 he has been Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra – inaugurating the Orchestra's newly formed record label in 2005 with live performances of Shostakovich's Symphonies 1 and 5 (LPO-0001) – and, in September 2002, he also became Music Director of the Orchestre National de France in Paris. From 1991-2002 he was Music Director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra before being named its Music Director Emeritus, the first New York Philharmonic Music Director to receive that title. For many seasons, Maestro Masur served as Gewandhauskapellmeister of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, a position of profound historic importance. Upon his retirement from that post in 1996, the Gewandhaus named him its first-ever Conductor Laureate. A professor at the Leipzig Academy of Music since 1975, Kurt Masur has received numerous honours, including Commander of the Legion of Honour from the Government of France and New York City Cultural Ambassador from the City of New York in 1997; Commander Cross of Merit of the Polish Republic in 1999 and the Cross with Star of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2002; and an honorary doctorate from London's Royal College of Music in 2005. He is also an Honorary Citizen of his hometown Brieg.

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has long established a high reputation for its versatility and artistic excellence. These are evident from its performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, its trail-blazing international tours and its pioneering education work. Kurt Masur has been the Orchestra's Principal Conductor since September 2000, extending the line of distinguished conductors who have held positions with the Orchestra since its foundation in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham. These have included Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Franz Welser-Möst. Vladimir Jurowski was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor in March 2003. The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been resident symphony orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall since 1992 and there it presents its main series of concerts between September and May each year. In summer, the Orchestra moves to Sussex where it has been the resident symphony orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera for over 40 years. The Orchestra also performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous tours to America, Europe and Japan, and visited India, Hong Kong, China, South Korea, Australia and South Africa.

NEVILLE CREED *conductor (chamber orchestra) and chorus master*

Neville Creed studied music and conducting as an award holder at Trinity College Cambridge and the Guildhall School of Music, where he won the Ricordi Conducting Prize. He has also won prizes for choral conducting in Italy and orchestral conducting in the Leeds Conductors' Competition. He was appointed Chorus Director of the London Philharmonic Choir in 1994 and took on the role of Artistic Director - a post created for him - in 2002. He has frequently conducted the London Philharmonic Choir both at home and on their extensive tours abroad. Other appointments have included Director of the Tiffin Boys' Choir which performed with all the major London orchestras and contributed to the renowned recording of Mahler's Eighth Symphony with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Klaus Tennstedt. In addition to his work as Director of Music at St Edward's Oxford, he was for some time Chorus Director of the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus, winning a Grammy Award for their recording of Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and several Gramophone Awards. He has given concerts with many British orchestras and choirs, conducted the première of Richard Blackford's *Voices of Exile* and made several recordings, including the best-selling recording of David Fanshawe's *African Sanctus*.

LONDON PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

The London Philharmonic Choir was founded in 1947 as the chorus for the London Philharmonic Orchestra. It is widely acclaimed as one of the nation's finest choirs and consistently meets with critical acclaim. Continuing to perform regularly with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Choir also works with many other orchestras throughout the United Kingdom and makes annual appearances at the BBC Proms. It has performed under some of the world's most eminent conductors – among them Pierre Boulez, Mark Elder, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Bernard Haitink, Kurt Masur, Sir Roger Norrington, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Georg Solti and Klaus Tennstedt. The London Philharmonic Choir has participated in more than seventy recordings, including a Gramophone Award winning performance of Mahler's Eighth Symphony under Klaus Tennstedt. The Choir often travels overseas and in recent years it has appeared at the Canary Islands and Lucerne music festivals, and given concerts in Europe, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Australia.

TIFFIN BOYS' CHOIR
SIMON TOYNE *director*

Tiffin Boys' Choir has been at the forefront of the choral music scene in Britain since its founding in 1957. Made up of pupils from Tiffin School in Kingston-upon-Thames, the choir has given the première performances of works by John Gardner, Christopher Brown, Elizabeth Poston and Anthony Pitts, and has appeared extensively at the Royal Opera House, working with conductors including Sir Colin Davis, Bernard Haitink, Lorin Maazel, Sir Simon Rattle and Antonio Pappano.
On record, Tiffin Boys' Choir appears on Mahler's Eighth Symphony with Klaus Tennstedt for EMI; Puccini's *Il Trittico*, Massenet's *Werther* and Puccini's *Tosca* with Antonio Pappano for EMI; Britten's *Billy Budd* with Richard Hickox for Chandos; Mahler's Third Symphony with Benjamin Zander for Telarc; and Lesley Garrett's album *The Singer* for EMI. The Choir is also busy commercially, making television and event appearances and recording for film soundtracks.

DAS "WAR REQUIEM" VON BENJAMIN BRITTEN

„Mein Thema ist der Krieg, und das Leid des Krieges. Die Poesie liegt im Leid... Das einzige, was ein Dichter heutzutage tun kann, ist: warnen." Mit diesen Worten von Wilfred Owen ist die Partitur von Benjamin Brittens *War Requiem* überschrieben, diesem großen künstlerischen Zeugnis des Pazifismus. Sein ganzes Leben hindurch war Britten Pazifist. In der Schule hatte er sich geweigert, dem *Officer's Training Corps* beizutreten. Seine Anti-Kriegs-Haltung wurde durch lange Gespräche über den Ersten Weltkrieg mit seinem Kompositionslehrer Frank Bridge bestärkt. In den dreißiger Jahren war er in der *Peace Pledge Union* aktiv, und in einigen seiner Werke trat er für den Frieden ein, so in der wenig aufgeführten *Ballad of Heroes*. Als er im Zweiten Weltkrieg aus den USA nach England zurückkehrte, erklärten er und sein Freund Peter Pears sich als Verweigerer aus Gewissensgründen. In seiner Aussage gegenüber dem Gericht (das sie beide vom Kriegsdienst freistellte) erklärte Britten: „Mein ganzes Leben habe ich dem Schaffen gewidmet... und ich kann nicht an Akten der Zerstörung teilnehmen."
Eine einzigartige Gelegenheit, seinen tiefinnersten Empfindungen zum Thema Krieg Ausdruck zu verleihen, ergab sich 1958, als Britten den Auftrag erhielt, ein großes Werk anläßlich der Weihe der neuen Kathedrale von Coventry zu schreiben, die auf den Ruinen der 1940 von Bomben fast vollständig zerstörten mittelalterlichen Kathedrale erbaut worden war. Britten entwickelte ein radikal neues Schema. Er entschloß sich, zwischen die einzelnen, für Sopran, Knaben- und gemischten Chor gesetzten Sätze der lateinischen Totenmesse Gedichte von Owen einzuschieben, gesetzt für Tenor- und Baritonsolo und Kammerorchester. Owen war zur Zeit des Ersten Weltkriegs unter den Dichtern der leidenschaftlichste Verfechter des Friedens. Obwohl Britten die kirchlichen Lehren respektierte, war er kein Christ, und die von ihm ausgewählten Owenschen Gedichte üben gelegentlich implizite Kritik an den Texten des Requiems. So folgt z.B. auf die liturgische letzte Trompete des *Dies Irae*, ‚Tuba mirum, spargens sonum' (‚die wunderbare Trompete, ihren Klang verbreitend') Owens Gedicht ‚Trompeten bliesen, erfüllten die Abendluft mit Trauer'; oder, sehr deutlich: der vertrauensvolle Satz des *Offertoriums* ‚quam olim Abrahae promisisti, et semini eius' (‚wie Du es einst dem Abrahm versprochen hast und seinem Samen') wird unterminiert von Owens vernichtender Neuinterpretation der Geschichte von Abraham und Isaak, die mit den Worten endet: ‚the old man would not so, but slew his son - / And half the seed of Europe, one by one' (‚der alte Mann wollte es nicht, aber er tötete seinen Sohn - / Und die halbe Saat Europas, einen nach dem anderen'). Diese Verse werden vom Solotenor und Solobariton immer und immer wieder gesungen, während der Knabenchor dazu machtlos die Worte der Liturgie singt.

Das einleitende *Requiem Aeternam* setzt in der tragischen Welt des d-Moll ein und erinnert

damit an die frühe *Sinfonia da Requiem*. Die Rhythmen des von Glockenschlägen akzentuierten Trauermarschs alternieren mit den ätherischen, von der Orgel begleiteten Knabenstimmen - Brittens unschuldige Beobachter. Innerhalb des mächtigen *Dies Irae* finden sich vier Owen-Vertonungen. Das Hauptthema ist ein zögerlicher, rascher Marsch, eine schreckeneinflößende Illustration von schwer beladenen Soldaten, die ihrem Tode entgegenstolpern. Nach dem *Offertorium* kommt das *Sanctus*, dessen harte, klirrende Glocken und fanfarengleicher Sopran an die orthodoxe Liturgie denken lassen. Danach leiten die frei gesungenen Chorstimmen (Britten orientiert sich hier an einem Klangbild, das er aus Holsts *Hymn of Jesus* kannte) zu einem jubelnd ausbrechenden D-Dur über, dem einzigen Augenblick des Triumphs im ganzen Werk. In schärfstem Kontrast dazu wird das ruhig schwingende *Agnus Dei* der Liturgie mit Owens Gedicht ‚At a Calvary near the Ancre' (‚Auf einem Kalvarienberge nahe dem Flusse Ancre') verwoben, mit deutlichen Bezügen zur Kreuzigung. Am Ende singt der Solotenor das *Dona nobis pacem*. Das *Libera* me nimmt die Stimmung des Trauermarsches des *Requiem Aeternam* wieder auf. Sein leiernder Höhepunkt löst sich im nebelverhangenen Fegefeuer von Owens ‚Strange Meeting' (‚Seltsame Begegnung') auf, wo zwei deutsche und britische Soldaten, beide tot, aufeinandertreffen. Der deutsche Soldat gesteht ‚Ich bin der Feind, den Du getötet hast, mein Freund' und bietet Vergebung an. Das abschließende ‚Let us sleep now' (‚Laßt uns jetzt schlafen') vermischt sich mit dem ‚In Paradisum" des Requiems; die Worte werden von allen Solisten und dem Chor in einer gewaltigen Woge der Segnung aufgenommen.

Zur Uraufführung des *War Requiem* im Mai 1963 hätte Britten es gern gesehen, wenn die Solistenpartien, als ein Zeichen der Versöhnung, mit Sängern aus Großbritannien, Deutschland und Rußland besetzt worden wären. Die Sowjets gestatteten es aber Galina Vishnevskaya nicht, auf einer Bühne mit Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau zu stehen, und so nahm ihren Platz Heather Harper ein (die auch in der Aufnahme LPO-0002 *Haitink* conducts *Britten* zu hören ist). Auf das hingehauchte Schluß-‚Amen' reagierte das Publikum mit einem langen, benommenen Schweigen (vergleichbar demjenigen der Live-Aufnahme auf der vorliegenden CD). Beinahe jeder im Publikum hatte gespürt, daß er bei einem ganz seltenen Vorgang dabeigewesen war: der Geburt eines modernen Klassikers. Von der ersten, von Britten selbst dirigierten Einspielung wurden noch im Veröffentlichungsjahr mehr als 200.000 Exemplare verkauft. Seitdem hat kaum mehr ein Komponist ernster Musik mit einem so bedeutenden Sujet ein so breites Publikum erreicht. Im 21. Jahrhundert, da auf der ganzen Welt Kriege wüten, ist die warnende Botschaft des *War Requiem* aktueller denn je.

David Matthews
Übersetzung Martina Gottschau

CHRISTINE BREWER *sopran*

Christine Brewer stammt aus Illinois und begann ihre berufliche Laufbahn am Opera Theatre in Saint Louis. Zu ihren Rollen gehörten die Gräfin Almaviva (New York City Opera, Royal Opera), Donna Anna (Edinburgh Festival sowie an Bühnen in London, New York und Florida), Ariadne (English National Opera, Opéra de Lyon, Santa Fe Festival und Metropolitan Opera) und Leonore in Fidelio (Lissabon, San Francisco). Weiterhin trat sie in Webers *Oberon* (London), Strauss' *Die Ägyptische Helena* und in Brittens *Peter Grimes* in Santa Fe auf. Christine Brewer war weiterhin als Isolde zu hören (mit dem BBC Symphony Orchestra unter Donald Runnicles, dem Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra unter Esa-Pekka Salonen und beim Edinburgh Festival unter Jonathan Nott), als Chrysothemis in *Elektra* (Cleveland Orchestra unter Franz Welser-Möst) und in *Gloriana* (beim Aldeburgh Festival unter Richard Hickox). Auf dem Konzertpodium wurde sie von den wichtigsten amerikanischen und europäischen Orchesters begleitet und arbeitete mit Dirigenten wie Sir Roger Norrington, Michael Tilson Thomas, Kurt Masur, Christoph von Dohnányi, Andrew Litton, John Nelson, Sir Neville Marriner, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Zubin Mehta, Antonio Pappano und Sir Simon Rattle zusammen. Es liegen verschiedene Einspielungen von ihr vor, darunter *Don Giovanni* unter Sir Charles Mackerras, Barbers *Vanessa* unter Leonard Slatkin, *Fidelio* mit David Parry, Mahlers Achte Symphonie unter Sir Simon Rattle sowie Rezitals mit Werken von Schubert und Strauss.

ANTHONY DEAN GRIFFEY *tenor*

Anthony Dean Griffey ist Absolvent des Lindemann Young Artist Development-Programms der Metropolitan Opera. Sein Debüt dort hatte er als erster Ritter in Parsifal. An der Met ist er seitdem in mehreren Rollen aufgetreten, u. a. in der Titelrolle von *Peter Grimes*, die er auch in Glyndebourne, an der Pariser Oper und der Oper in Santa Fe gesungen hat. Außerdem hat er an der Lyric Opera Chicago als Sam in *Susannah* gastiert und war an der Oper von San Francisco bei der Welturaufführung von André Previns *A Streetcar Named Desire* („Endstation Sehnsucht") dabei. Anthony Dean Griffey gilt in seiner Generation als einer der führenden Sänger des symphonischen und Chorrepertoires. Er tritt regelmäßig mit den bedeutendsten Orchestern der Vereinigten Staaten und Europas auf, so mit den Orchestern von New York, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Saint Louis, Minnesota, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Houston, Detroit, Baltimore und Saint Paul. Auf internationaler Ebene ist er mit dem London Philharmonic Orchestra, dem London Symphony Orchestra, den Münchner Symphonikern, dem NHK Symphony Japan und dem Hallé Orchestra aufgetreten und hat mit vielen der angesehensten Dirigenten gearbeitet, so u. a. mit James Levine, Seiji Ozawa, André Previn, Michael Tilson Thomas, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Kurt Masur, Donald Runnicles, Sir Colin Davis, Christoph Eschenbach, Mariss Jansons, Neemi Järvi, Charles Dutoit, Robert Spano, Andreas Delfs and Mark Elder.

GERALD FINLEY *bariton*

Der kanadische Bariton Gerald Finley ist inzwischen einer der führenden Sänger seiner Generation; er tritt mit großem Erfolg in einem weitgefächerten Repertoire auf den wichtigsten Opernbühnen und Konzertpodien der Welt auf. Die Zusammenarbeit mit Dirigenten wie Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Antonio Pappano und Sir Simon Rattle sind Teil einer florierenden Karriere. Gerald Finley hat vor allem mit Mozart und Händel brilliert, aber auch seine Darstellung von *Owen Wingrave* in der Verfilmung von Brittens gleichnamiger Oper auf Channel 4 erhielt begeisterte Kritiken. Zudem war er in zahlreichen Uraufführungen zu hören, so als Harry Heegan in Mark-Anthony Turnages *The Silver Tassie* und als J. Robert Oppenheimer in John Adams' *Doctor Atomic*. Auch auf der Konzertbühne und im Plattenstudio ist Gerald Finley sehr aktiv; so hat er Ersteinspielungen von Mark-Anthony Turnage (darunter *When I Woke* auf LPO-0007), Kaija Saariaho und Julian Philips vorgelegt.
Als Liedsänger wird er regelmäßig von Julius Drake begleitet, so z. B. für eine Einspielung mit Liedern von Charles Ives für Hyperion Records. Gerald Finley startete seine Karriere als Chorknabe in Ottawa/Kanada und setzte seine Ausbildung in Großbritannien am Royal College of Music, King's College/Cambridge und am National Opera Studio fort, bevor er sein Gesangsstudium bei Armen Boyajian in New York vervollkommnete.

KURT MASUR *dirigent*

Kurt Masur ist bei Orchestern und Publikum in aller Welt als herausragender Dirigent und Humanist bekannt. Seit September 2000 wirkt er als Chefdirigent des London Philharmonic Orchestra, dessen neues Plattenlabel er im Jahre 2005 mit Liveaufnahmen von Schostakowitschs Symphonien Nr. 1 und 5 (LPO-0001) lancierte. Seit September 2002 ist Kurt Masur auch Musikalischer Leiter des Orchestre National de France, Paris. Zwischen 1991 und 2002 hatte er den gleichen Posten beim New York Philharmonic Orchestra inne. Als erstem Leiter des Orchesters überhaupt wurde ihm bei seinem Ausscheiden der Titel eines Musikdirektors Emeritus verliehen. Lange Jahre diente Maestro Masur dem Leipziger Gewandhaus als Kapellmeister - es ist dies ein Titel von grö_tem historischen Gewicht. Als er sich 1996 aus Leipzig verabschiedete, ernannte ihn das Gewandhaus zum ersten Ehrendirigenten seiner Geschichte.

Seit 1975 hat Kurt Masur eine Professur an der Leipziger Hochschule für Musik inne. Ihm wurden zahlreiche Auszeichnungen zuerkannt: so verlieh ihm die französische Regierung den Titel eines Kommandeurs der Ehrenlegion; die Stadt New York ernannte ihn 1997 zum Kulturbotschafter von New York City; von der Republik Polen erhielt er 1999 das Kommandeursverdienstkreuz und von der Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Jahre 2002 das Bundesverdienstkreuz mit Stern; 2005 erhielt er den Ehrendoktorhut des Royal College of Music, London. Er ist zudem Ehrenbürger seiner Geburtsstadt Brieg/Schlesien.

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Dank seiner Vielseitigkeit und herausragenden künstlerischen Qualität genießt das London Philharmonic Orchestra seit langem einen ausgezeichneten Ruf, den das Orchester immer aufs Neue unter Beweis stellt: Durch seine Aufführungen im Konzertsaal und in der Oper, durch seine zahlreichen, immer wieder mit Preisen bedachten Plattenaufnahmen, auf erfolgreichen Tourneen und dank seiner Pionierarbeit auf dem Gebiet der Musikerziehung. Seit September 2000 ist Kurt Masur der Chefdirigent des Orchesters. Er fügt sich damit würdig in die glanzvolle Reihe seiner Vorgänger ein, die seit seiner Gründung durch Sir Thomas Beecham im Jahre 1932 an der Spitze des Orchesters gestanden haben - u. a. Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt und Franz Welser-Möst. Im März 2003 berief das Orchester Vladimir Jurowski als Ersten Gastdirigenten.

Seit 1992 hat das London Philharmonic Orchestra seinen Sitz in der Royal Festival Hall, wo es jedes Jahr zwischen September und Mai verschiedene Konzertreihen anbietet. Im Sommer kann man das Orchester in Sussex hören: Seit über vierzig Jahren begleitet es die Opernfestspiele in Glyndebourne. Das Orchester gastiert auch in ganz Großbritannien und hat zahlreiche Tourneen in den USA, Europa und Japan unternommen; dazu gab es Gastspiele in Indien, Hong Kong, China, Süd-Korea, Australien und Südafrika.

NEVILLE CREED *dirigent (kammerorchester) und chorleiter*

Als Stipendiat studierte Neville Creed Musik und Dirigieren am Trinity College in Cambridge und an der Guildhall School of Music, wo er mit dem Ricordi-Dirigentenpreis ausgezeichnet wurde. Er hat weiterhin Preise für Chorleitung in Italien und für Orchesterdirigat beim Internationalen Dirigentenwettbewerb in Leeds gewonnen. 1994 wurde er zum Chordirektor des London Philharmonic Choir ernannt und übernahm 2002 den extra für ihn geschaffenen Posten des Künstlerischen Leiters. Er hat den London Philharmonic Choir vielfach dirigiert, sowohl in England als auch auf den ausgedehnten Auslandstourneen des Chors. Neville Creed hat außerdem den Tiffin Boys' Chor geleitet, der mit allen wichtigen Londoner Orchestern gesungen und bei der berühmten Einspielung von Mahlers Achter mit dem London Philharmonic Orchestra unter Klaus Tennstedt mitgewirkt hat. Zusätzlich zu seiner Arbeit als Director of Music an St Edward's in Oxford war Neville Creed eine Zeitlang Chordirektor des Bournemouth Symphony Chorus, der für seine Aufnahme von Waltons *Belshazzar's Feast* einen Grammy und diverse Gramophone Awards erhalten hat. Er hat die Konzerte zahlreicher englischer Orchester und Chöre geleitet, die Uraufführung von Richard Blackfords *Voices of Exile* dirigiert und zeichnet für einige Schallplatteneinspielun gen verantwortlich, so für die sehr erfolgreiche Aufnahme von David Fanshawes *African Sanctus*.

LONDON PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

Der London Philharmonic Choir wurde 1947 als Chor für das London Philharmonic Orchestra gegründet. Er gilt als einer der besten Chöre Großbritanniens und erntet stets hervorragende Kritiken. Der London Philharmonic Choir arbeitet weiterhin mit dem London Philharmonic Orchestra, aber auch mit vielen anderen englischen Orchestern; zudem ist er jedes Jahr bei den Promenadenkonzerten der BBC dabei. Der Chor hat unter einigen der bedeutendsten Dirigenten gesungen, z. B. Pierre Boulez, Mark Elder, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Bernard Haitink, Kurt Masur, Sir Roger Norrington, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Georg Solti und Klaus Tennstedt. Der London Philharmonic Choir hat bei mehr als siebzig Schallplatteneinspielungen mitgewirkt, darunter bei der mit einem Grammy ausgezeichneten Aufnahme von Mahlers Achter Symphonie unter Klaus Tennstedt. Der Chor ist oft auf Tournee; in den letzten Jahren war er auf den Kanarischen Inseln und beim Lucerne Festival und hat Konzerte in Europa, Hong Kong, Malaysia und Australien gegeben.

TIFFIN BOYS' CHOIR
SIMON TOYNE *dirigent*

Seit seiner Gründung im Jahre 1957 steht der Tiffin Boys' Choir an vorderster Front der englischen Musikszene. Er besteht aus Schülern der Tiffin School in Kingston-upon-Thames und hat Werke von John Gardner, Christopher Brown, Elizabeth Poston und Anthony Pitts zur Uraufführung gebracht. Er ist vielfach am Royal Opera House Covent Garden unter Dirigenten wie Sir Colin Davis, Bernard Haitink, Lorin Maazel, Sir Simon Rattle und Antonio Pappano aufgetreten.
Der Knabenchor kann diverse Schallplattenein spielungen vorweisen, so die Achte Symphonie von Gustav Mahler mit Klaus Tennstedt (EMI), Puccinis *Il Trittico*, Massenets *Werther* und Puccinis *Tosca* mit Antonio Pappano (EMI), Brittens *Billy Budd* mit Richard Hickox (Chandos), Mahlers Dritte Symphonie mit Benjamin Zander (Telarc) und Lesley Garretts Album *The Singer* (EMI). Auch im kommerziellen Sektor ist der Chor sehr gut im Geschäft - z. B. tritt er im Fernsehen und bei großen Events auf und spielt Soundtracks von Spielfilmen ein.

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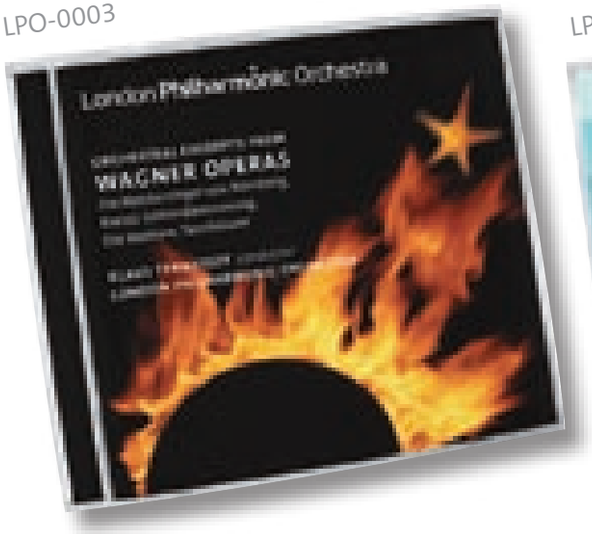

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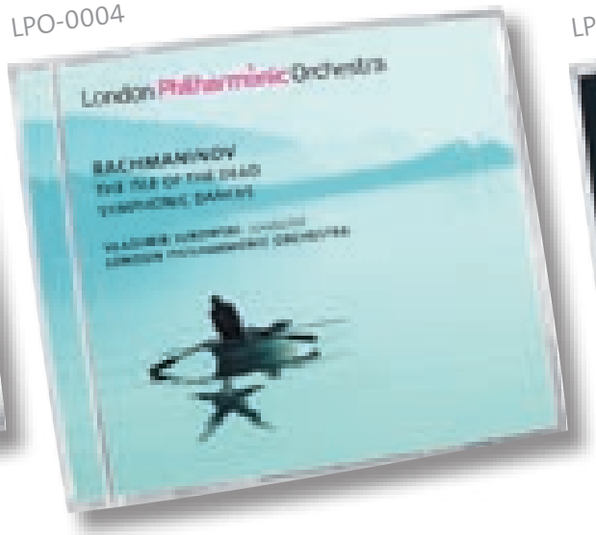

LPO-0005

LPO-0006

LPO-0007

LPO-0008

BENJAMIN BRITTEN 1913 – 1976

War Requiem Op. 66

CD1	***37:17***	
01	*6:43*	Requiem aeternam
02	*4:03*	What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
03	*3:33*	Dies irae
04	*3:01*	Bugles sang
05	*3:23*	Liber scriptus proferetur
06	*1:40*	Out there, we've walked quite friendly up to Death
07	*3:24*	Recordare
08	*1:06*	Confutatis maledictis
09	*3:06*	Be slowly lifted up, thou long black arm
10	*2:04*	Lacrimosa
11	*5:05*	Move him into the sun

CD2	***46:15***	
01	*3:46*	Offertorium
02	*6:30*	So Abram rose, and clave the wood
03	*3:06*	Sanctus
04	*3:03*	Benedictus
05	*3:53*	After the blast of lightning from the East
06	*3:41*	Agnus Dei
07	*6:58*	Libera me
08	*8:37*	It seemed that out of battle I escaped
09	*6:26*	'Let us sleep now...'

KURT MASUR *conductor*
NEVILLE CREED *conductor (chamber orchestra) and chorus master*
CHRISTINE BREWER *soprano*
ANTHONY DEAN GRIFFEY *tenor*
GERALD FINLEY *baritone*
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA *and* **CHOIR**
BORIS GARLITSKY *leader (chamber orchestra)*
PIETER SCHOEMAN *leader (symphony orchestra)*
TIFFIN BOYS' CHOIR
SIMON TOYNE *conductor (Tiffin Boys' Choir)*

LPO – 0010