

A diagonal painting of a war-torn landscape. In the foreground, a soldier in a trench looks towards the viewer. In the background, another soldier is visible near a stone cross. The landscape is desolate with tall, thin trees and a cloudy sky.

# Cleveland Philharmonic Choir

Saturday 10 November 2018, 7.30pm

Sage Gateshead

Benjamin Britten

# WAR

# REQUIEM

Soloists:

**Roderick Williams**

**Mark Padmore**

**Rachel Nicholls**

With:

Newcastle Choral Society

Northern Spirit Singers

Choristers of Durham Cathedral

Cleveland Philharmonic Junior Choir

Choristers of St Peter's Church Stockton

## The Mowbray Orchestra

Conductors: John Forsyth MBE,

Gary Matthewman, Daniel Cook

**Tickets: £20 (Adult), £18 (Concession), £5 (Child)**

From [www.sagegateshead.com](http://www.sagegateshead.com), 0191 443 4661



# Benjamin Britten: *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.*

These words by Wilfred Owen are at the head of the score of the *War Requiem*, and set the atmosphere for this intensely moving work, to be performed on the eve of the centenary of the Armistice which ended the First World War. The *War Requiem* was written in 1961-2 for the consecration of the new Coventry Cathedral in May 1962, the original fourteenth century building having been destroyed in a bombing raid in September 1941. The work's dedication is to late friends of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears lost as a result of WW2 either during it or afterwards.

Britten, a sincere pacifist, was greatly enthused by this commission which came with a great deal of freedom for its execution. It was his choice of text. He wanted the soloists to be Russian soprano Galina Vishnevskaya, English tenor Peter Pears and German baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, to demonstrate a spirit of unity. However, politics intervened and Heather Harper had to be substituted as the soprano just 10 days before the premiere.

Settings of Owen's poignant poetry are woven throughout the work and are sung for our performance by tenor Mark Padmore and baritone Roderick Williams, with a chamber orchestra conducted by Gary Matthewman.

Cleveland Philharmonic Choir, with guest choirs Newcastle Choral Society and Northern Spirit Singers, form a chorus over 200 strong. Together with soprano Rachel Nicholls, they sing words from the Latin Requiem Mass, set in wonderfully imaginative ways. They are partnered by the Mowbray Orchestra conducted by John Forsyth. High above the massed choirs, and accompanied by a chamber organ, is a choir of 40 boys and girls from Cleveland Philharmonic Junior Choir, Durham Cathedral choristers and the choir of St Peter's Church, Stockton-on-Tees. Daniel Cook, Master of the Choristers at Durham Cathedral, is their conductor.

In a weekend of remembrance, *War Requiem* speaks directly and powerfully to us all.

*"I hope it'll make people think a bit ..... the message is what counts."*

(Benjamin Britten 1962)

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## Important Booking Information

There is no booking fee for any method of purchase and tickets can be posted to you free of charge. **Newcastle Choral Society audience members should use the NCS price types when booking online or in person at Sage Box Office so that the purchase is credited to the choir.**

**Teesside audiences** can travel by coach from Teesside Park, leaving at 5pm. Booking essential, early booking advised. Fare £7. Full details at [www.clevelandphilharmonicchoir.com](http://www.clevelandphilharmonicchoir.com), or from 01642 782009 or email [tickets@clevelandphilharmonicchoir.com](mailto:tickets@clevelandphilharmonicchoir.com)