

# BRITTEN'S WAR REQUIEM, OP. 66

CHRISTINE GOERKE, SOPRANO

ANTHONY DEAN GRIFFEY, TENOR

NATHAN GUNN, BARITONE

CAROLINA CHOIR AND UNC CHAMBER SINGERS | SUSAN KLEBANOW, DIRECTOR

THE RALEIGH BOYCHOIR | JEREMY TUCKER, DIRECTOR

UNC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA | TONU KALAM, CONDUCTOR

THU, MAR 5, 2015 • 7:30PM

WWI CENTENARY PROJECT

CPAIO ARTIST



Christine  
Goerke



Anthony  
Dean Griffey



Nathan  
Gunn

"A MASTERPIECE OF PEACE,  
AN UNMISTAKABLE REMINDER  
THROUGH VISCERALLY  
UNFLINCHING MUSIC AND  
POETRY OF THE FOLLY OF WAR."

- LA Times

## PERFORMANCE BENEFACTOR

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Student tickets for this performance are supported by Florence and James Peacock.

THU, MAR 5 • 7:30PM

PROGRAM

*War Requiem*, Op. 66 ..... Benjamin Britten  
*Requiem aeternam* (1913–1976)  
*Dies irae*  
*Offertorium*  
*Sanctus*  
*Agnus Dei*  
*Libera me*

PROGRAM NOTES

Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* was commissioned for the 1962 consecration of the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral in England, which had been bombed and essentially destroyed during the Second World War. The committee that approached Britten in 1958 wanted a large work for chorus and orchestra for this event, but was open to either a sacred or secular text. It was Britten's idea early on to set the Requiem Mass, but only gradually did he decide to intersperse it with verses by Wilfred Owen (1893-1918), who had served in the trenches of the First World War and who was killed shortly before the Armistice. Britten, a pacifist who had been a conscientious objector during World War Two, was well acquainted with Owen's anti-war poetry, posthumously published. Prior to the *Requiem*, those poems were known mainly by a small group of English intellectuals, but Britten's composition brought them to international attention. Indeed, Britten's *Requiem* brought the composer himself to even more international attention than his important operas *Peter Grimes*, *Billy Budd*, *Turn of the Screw* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* had done. It served the purpose of the Coventry commission, but much of its impact came from its historical position at the height of the Cold War, when there were many who had experienced the Second World War and still some who remembered the "Great War." Britten's juxtaposition of grim irony and transcendent beauty make it one of the most powerful oratorios of the 20th century, musically and politically. The work is dedicated to four men whom Britten knew: three who were killed in World War Two and another who had served as a soldier and committed suicide in 1959. Like so much of his music, it is deeply personal yet has a universal message that speaks to many.

Britten had been writing for chorus and solo voices since he was a precocious youth, and by mid-century had established himself as the composer most skilled in setting English text since Henry Purcell in the 17th century. Handel's oratorios are loved works of genius, but we mostly understand the words because we know them well already. This is never a problem in any of Britten's vocal music. Britten was also seen by that time as one of the great dramatists, in the league of opera composers like Verdi, whose own *Requiem* was also described as one of his "operas," even though it does not depart from the liturgical text. Britten's *Requiem* owes much to Verdi's dramatic model and to his own years of experience writing for the stage, large and small.

Britten's choice of three performing units is part of his effective dramatic structure. The full orchestra, choir and soprano soloist form one group that carries most of the Latin text and its expression. The boys choir and portative organ are instructed to be placed at a distance from the large ensemble. They too only sing in Latin, and not surprisingly Britten gives them the text lines of almost angelic innocence set in a style that is intentionally severe and objective. Finally, the two male soloists, singing the English texts by Owen, are accompanied by a chamber orchestra of roughly the size used for Britten's "chamber" operas of the 1950s. The tenor solos were written for Peter Pears, Britten's lifelong musical and personal partner, for whom he wrote many of his most vivid opera roles and solo music. Britten had planned for the baritone solos to be sung by the German singer Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau by the final stages of composition in 1961, and indeed that pairing of an Englishman and German is an important symbol in the work, as was the idea that the soprano part be sung by the Russian diva Galina Vishnevskaya. She was the spouse of the great cello virtuoso Rostropovich, for whom Britten had just written a cello sonata, and Britten was deeply moved by her voice. But Soviet authorities forbade her to return for the premiere in Coventry, so an English soprano learned the part at short notice. Vishnevskaya was, however, allowed to return for the recording in 1963.

The final movement of the *Requiem*, *Libera me*, incorporates Owen's poem "Strange Meeting" into the ancient prayer, "Save me now from eternal death on that dreadful day," that had been so vividly depicted in the *Dies irae*. Two soldiers meet in the afterlife: "I am the enemy you killed, my friend." Owen's line, "Let us sleep now" is sung alongside the Latin words *Requiem aeternam*, "Grant them rest eternal." The work had opened with an unsettling bell chime of a tritone F-sharp and C. That sound returns near the end of this final movement, but Britten allows the choir to sing its final Amen to an F Major chord that seeks peace.

- Brent Wissick is a professor of music at UNC-Chapel Hill.

## CHRISTINE GOERKE, SOPRANO

Soprano Christine Goerke has appeared in many of the most important opera houses of the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Royal Opera House, Paris Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Teatro Real in Madrid and the Saito Kinen Festival. She has sung much of the great soprano repertoire, beginning with the Mozart and Handel heroines and now moving into dramatic Strauss and Wagner roles.

Ms. Goerke has also appeared with a number of the leading orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Radio Vara, BBC Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms, and the Sydney Symphony.

Ms. Goerke's recording of Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony* with Robert Spano and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra won the 2003 Grammy Award for Best Classical Recording and Best Choral Performance. Her close association with Robert Shaw yielded several recordings, including Brahms' *Liebesslieder Waltzes*, Poulenc's *Stabat Mater*, Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, and the Grammy-nominated recording of Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*. Other recordings include the title role in *Iphigénie en Tauride* for Telarc, and Britten's *War Requiem*, which won the 1999 Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance.

This season, Ms. Goerke returns to the Washington National Opera as the title role in *Florencia en el Amazonas* and to the Michigan Opera Theater as the title role in *Elektra*, and sings her first fully staged performances of Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* at the Canadian Opera Company and the Houston Grand Opera. Future plans include the full *Ring* cycle at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Metropolitan Opera and Houston Grand Opera.

Ms. Goerke received the 2001 Richard Tucker Award and was named *Musical America's* 2015 Vocalist of the Year.

## ANTHONY DEAN GRIFFEY, TENOR

Four-time Grammy Award-winning tenor Anthony Dean Griffey's engagements this season include the US premiere of Kurt Weill's *The Road of Promise* with the Collegiate Chorale at Carnegie Hall and concerts with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, at the University of North Carolina, and the Desert Song Festival in Tucson.

Mr. Griffey has appeared in the world's most prestigious opera houses. His critically acclaimed portrayal of the title role in *Peter Grimes* was broadcast live in the Metropolitan Opera's *Met: Live in HD* series and released on DVD (EMI Classics), and his portrayal of Lennie in Carlisle Floyd's *Of Mice and Men* won a Helpmann award for Best Male Performer in an Opera when he performed it at Opera Australia. A supporter of new works, Mr. Griffey created the role of Mitch in the world premiere of André Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* at the San Francisco Opera and premiered Christopher Theofanidis' *The Gift* with the Pittsburgh Symphony.

A celebrated concert performer, Mr. Griffey appears regularly with many distinguished international orchestras. He has also appeared at the BBC Proms and the Tanglewood, Ravinia, Aspen Music, Edinburgh, Lanaudière and Saito Kinen festivals.

Mr. Griffey has appeared in recital under the auspices of San Francisco Performances and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts,

and made appearances with Music for a Great Space in Greensboro, North Carolina with long-time pianist and collaborator Warren Jones. He debuted at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall in 2004, accompanied by André Previn on a song cycle Previn had written and dedicated to him.

Mr. Griffey holds degrees from Wingate University, the Eastman School of Music and The Juilliard School and was a member of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artists Program. He was awarded the Doctorate of Humane Letters from Wingate University in 2012 and was inducted into the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame in 2011.

## NATHAN GUNN, BARITONE

One of the most exciting and in-demand baritones of the day, Nathan Gunn has sung leading roles in the most renowned opera houses of the world. A supporter of new works, he created the roles of Clyde Griffiths in Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*, Father Delura in *Love and Other Demons*, Alec Harvey in André Previn's *Brief Encounter*, Paul in Daron Hagen's *Amelia* and James Dalton in Iain Bell's *The Harlot's Progress*. A distinguished concert performer, he has appeared regularly with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra. He has also presented recitals in the US and Europe.

Mr. Gunn appeared in *Camelot* and *Carousel* with the New York Philharmonic (both broadcast on PBS's *Great Performances*); in *Showboat* at Carnegie Hall and the Lyric Opera of Chicago; with Mandy Patinkin; in cabaret shows at New York's famed Café Carlyle; and in *Christmas with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square*.

Recordings include the 2010 Grammy Award-winning *Billy Budd* with Daniel Harding and the London Symphony Orchestra; his solo album *Just Before Sunrise*; Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Allegro; Il Barbiere di Siviglia*; and his debut album *American Anthem*.

This season, Mr. Gunn returns to the Metropolitan Opera for a new production of *The Merry Widow*, the Theater an der Wien for *The Pearl Fishers*, and the Houston Grand Opera for the title role in *Sweeney Todd*. He also appears in concert at Notre Dame and the University of North Carolina and appears in recital at the Schubert Club in St. Paul, Brigham Young University, and the Lone Tree Arts Center in Colorado. In the summer of 2015 he returns to the Santa Fe Opera for the premiere of Jennifer Higdon's *Cold Mountain*.

Mr. Gunn is director of the American Repertoire Council at the Opera Company of Philadelphia; professor of voice at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and general director of the Lyric Theater @ Illinois.

## CAROLINA CHOIR AND UNC CHAMBER SINGERS

Carolina Choir and the UNC Chamber Singers are the University of North Carolina Music Department's highly select choral ensembles, made up of music majors and non-majors from many departments. Carolina Choir's repertoire ranges from a *cappella* music of all periods to the choral/orchestral masterworks. The 26-voice Chamber Singers perform a wide range of vocal chamber music, with emphasis on Renaissance, Baroque and 20th-/21st-century music. In recent seasons the ensembles have performed music from Dufay, Josquin and Gesualdo to Stravinsky, Elliott Carter and Allen Anderson.

The two ensembles often join forces for important musical occasions. Under the direction of Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities Susan Klebanow, they have recently performed together Schoenberg's *Friede auf Erden*, the Monteverdi *Vespers*, Tallis' *Spem in alium*, Brahms' *German Requiem* with the UNC Symphony, and J. S. Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with Ensemble Courant, UNC's original instrument ensemble.

Carolina Choir and Chamber Singers have each premiered numerous new works and have performed with renowned conductors Vladimir Ashkenazy and the European Union Youth Orchestra (Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*), Dennis Russell Davies and the Bruckner Orchestra of Linz (Philip Glass' *A Toltec Symphony*), Rachael Worby and the Wheeling Symphony in Wheeling, WV (Verdi's *Requiem*), David Berger and the North Carolina Jazz Repertory Orchestra (Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert*), and numerous works with the North Carolina Symphony conducted by Gerhardt Zimmerman, William Henry Curry, Andrew Litton and James Gaffigan.

## SUSAN KLEBANOW, CONDUCTOR

Susan Klebanow is professor of music and director of choral activities at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she conducts the Carolina Choir and Chamber Singers and teaches courses in conducting. She is a recipient of UNC's Tanner Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and of a Chapman Family Teaching Award from UNC's Institute of the Arts and Humanities. She holds degrees from Brandeis University and the New England Conservatory of Music.

With her UNC ensembles, Klebanow has commissioned and conducted many new works, most recently Stephen Anderson's *Isaiah* and Marjorie Merryman's *Beauty, Grief, and Grandeur*. Also devoted to period instrument performance, Klebanow is the regular guest conductor of Ensemble Courant, the UNC faculty's historical performance ensemble, with whom she has led Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Creation*, and numerous cantatas of J.S. Bach, Telemann and Buxtehude, among others.

Professor Klebanow is in high demand as a clinician and has led choral festivals and workshops throughout the US and in Mexico, China and Italy. She has guest-conducted numerous vocal and instrumental ensembles including the North Carolina Symphony, the Emmanuel Church of Boston Bach Cantata Series, the Mallarmé Chamber Players, Boston University's Opera Theatre, and the University of Veracruz Baroque Festival Chorus in Xalapa, Mexico.

A performing pianist and accomplished vocalist, Klebanow has recorded and performed extensively with contemporary music and early music groups based in Boston, North Carolina and Mexico. With the Boston Camerata she recorded on the Harmonia Mundi, Erato and Artista labels, and she has appeared as soprano soloist with the Greensboro Oratorio Society, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Community Chorus, and Mexico's renowned Baroque ensemble, La Fontegara. She currently sings with the North Carolina Symphony Chamber Choir, for which she serves as chorus master under the direction of Grant Llewellyn.

## THE RALEIGH BOYCHOIR

The Raleigh Boychoir is a long-established choral group in Raleigh, NC that educates and trains boys aged seven to 18 in the art of singing and performing the finest music in the boychoir tradition. The boys and young men who participate have an opportunity to learn and perform some of the world's great choral music. The choristers, conductors

and musicians of The Raleigh Boychoir contribute generously with their talents to the musical and cultural life of Raleigh, the greater Triangle area and beyond.

The Raleigh Boychoir was established in October 1968 by Thomas E. Sibley with 20 boys and a \$50 contribution from the Woman's Club of Raleigh. Sibley, then coordinator of music for Raleigh public schools, founded the choir because of his concern about the lack of choral experiences and performance opportunities for boys whose voices had not changed. He also believed in developing the etiquette of young boys. The Raleigh Boychoir is committed both to artistic excellence and to developing each boy's confidence and character.

The Raleigh Boychoir's rich repertoire includes sacred and secular classics, selections from musical theater and an assortment of American folk music and patriotic music. The Raleigh Boychoir has performed at the White House, Carnegie Hall and the National Cathedral and has toured throughout the US and Europe. The Raleigh Boychoir is composed of the following choirs: Performing Choir, Millennium Singers, Resident Choir, Training Choir, Alumni Choir and Raleigh Young Men's Ensemble.

The Raleigh Boychoir holds fast to many of the same traditions that were established more than 45 years ago, yet continues to evolve and grow with each generation of choristers it serves. Highly regarded in the arts community, The Raleigh Boychoir maintains the same vibrancy, professionalism and quality that have set it apart since its introduction in 1968.

## JEREMY TUCKER, CONDUCTOR

Jeremy Tucker holds BM and MM degrees in choral music education and a degree in drama from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In 2009 he became recognized as a nationally board certified teacher in music education. After serving as assistant musical director for the national Broadway tour of *Oliver! The Musical* in 2003, Mr. Tucker taught elementary music for seven years in the Wilson County school system, where he was named Teacher of the Year for Wells Elementary School. He remains active in community theatre, having musically directed 22 community theater productions across North Carolina. He has conducted 10 All County choral festivals in North Carolina and has also directed elementary, middle and high school festivals. He was the development director for the now annual North Carolina Glee Club Competition. Tucker has been serving as choral director at James B. Hunt High School for the last five years. This spring he will lead his groups in performances at Carnegie Hall in New York City. This year, Mr. Tucker was honored by the North Carolina Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission with the Share the Dream Educator of the Year Award. Mr. Tucker is currently the Teacher of the Year for the North Central region of North Carolina.

## UNC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The UNC Symphony Orchestra (UNCISO) is a 100-member ensemble that rehearses twice weekly throughout the academic year and performs two major concerts each semester. Approximately 55% of the orchestra consists of music majors, but enrollment is open by audition to anyone – music majors, minors, non-majors, graduate students and recent graduates.

The UNCISO was honored to be named the 2012 first-place winner of The American Prize in Orchestral Performance – College/University Division for their live performance of Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic*

*Dances*. Many of the orchestra's recent concert performances, including the Rachmaninoff, are available for viewing on YouTube by searching for "UNC Symphony Orchestra."

Led by its music director and conductor Tonu Kalam, the orchestra often presents faculty and student musicians as concerto soloists and has regularly collaborated with UNC opera and choral ensembles, including recent full productions of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Brahms' *German Requiem*.

Major standard orchestral works performed in past years have included symphonies by Beethoven, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, Mahler, Sibelius and Shostakovich; Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique* and *Harold in Italy*, Elgar's "Enigma" Variations, Mussorgsky-Ravel's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, Respighi's *Pines of Rome*, Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, Strauss' *Death and Transfiguration*, and suites from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*.

The UNCSCO has also performed numerous works by significant 20th- and 21st-century composers including Barber, Copland, Bernstein, Hovhaness, Hindemith, Britten, Walton, Bloch, Milhaud, Poulenc, Khachaturian, Christopher Rouse, John Harbison, Jennifer Higdon, Christopher Theofanidis, Michael Torke, Arvo Pärt, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Peter Lieberson, Michael Gandolfi, Lowell Liebermann, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich and John Corigliano, as well as UNC faculty composers Allen Anderson, Roger Hannay, Ingrid Arauco, Lynn Glassock and Stephen Anderson.

## TONU KALAM, CONDUCTOR

Tonu Kalam is currently in his 27th year as music director and conductor of the UNC Symphony Orchestra. During that time he has conducted the ensemble in over 250 works, including 11 world premieres. Under his leadership, the UNCSCO was named the 2012 first-place winner of The American Prize in Orchestral Performance – College/University Division.

Born of Estonian parents, Mr. Kalam was trained as a conductor, pianist and composer at Harvard University, the University of California at Berkeley and the Curtis Institute of Music. His summer credits include fellowships at Tanglewood and Aspen as well as many years at the Marlboro Music Festival.

A prizewinner in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Young Conductor's Competition, he has guest-conducted orchestras across the US and Europe and he has led over 135 staged opera performances. He has been a faculty member at the University of Illinois and for 13 years was an administrator and artist-faculty member at the renowned Kneisel Hall summer chamber music festival in Blue Hill, Maine.

Presently Mr. Kalam is a professor of music at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and for 25 years he concurrently held the position of music director and conductor of the Longview Symphony Orchestra in Texas. In addition to his conducting activities, he performs regularly as a pianist and chamber musician, and he is also a member of the Advisory Council and former president of the Conductors Guild, an international organization devoted to serving the artistic and professional needs of conductors.

**2015/16 SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT**

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