

philharmonia orchestra

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA LAUNCHES VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: THE PIONEERING PILGRIM

Choral works, opera and a complete symphony cycle commemorating the 50th Anniversary of his death

The Philharmonia Orchestra is mounting the UK's most significant commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the death of Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958). Under artistic advisor Michael Kennedy and conductor Richard Hickox the series includes choral works and a complete symphony cycle at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, two semi-staged performances of *The Pilgrim's Progress* at Sadler's Wells (directed by David Edwards) and concerts in Bedford, Leicester, Chichester, Truro and Tewkesbury.

Soloists include Susan Gritton and Gerald Finley (*A Sea Symphony*), Anthony Marwood (*The Lark Ascending*), Lisa Milne (Symphony No. 3, *Pastoral* and *Dona nobis pacem*) and Alan Opie (*Dona nobis pacem*). Roderick Williams (*The Pilgrim*) heads a brilliant cast of singers in *The Pilgrim's Progress* including Matthew Brook, Neal Davies, Sarah Fox, James Gilchrist, Robert Hayward, Andrew Kennedy, Matthew Rose, Pamela Helen Stephen and Sarah Tynan.

Other resources and events in the Series include Study Days led by specialists in London, Bedford and Leicester exploring Vaughan Williams' life and times, a touring exhibition, specially commissioned articles and interviews with artists, players and Vaughan Williams specialists and a major web resource at www.philharmonia.co.uk/vaughanwilliams, from mid-April.

Richard Hickox, Conductor of the Series, commented:

"The music of Ralph Vaughan Williams has spoken strongly to me for the last fifty years when, as a child, I first played his stirring hymns and wonderful arrangements of traditional carols. His nine symphonies represent an extraordinary range of human experience. Each and every symphony, in Michael Kennedy's words, 'is a necessary and inevitable extension of the composer's personality – a momentous personal statement.'"

Michael Kennedy, Artistic Advisor of the Series:

"It begins to look as if the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the death of Ralph Vaughan Williams may turn out to be the biggest and most significant turning-point in a wider appreciation of his stature as a composer. It is only now that he is being recognised as a composer not just for England but for the civilised world and it can at last be seen that in liberating others, he liberated himself."

David Whelton, Philharmonia Orchestra Managing Director, said:

"It is with great pleasure that we embark on this Series to commemorate Vaughan Williams, one of England's greatest composers, 50 years after his death. We are extremely grateful to Mr Vincent Meyer, the Orchestra's President, who has enabled this to take place through the generous support of The Meyer Foundation."

A full schedule of dates, repertoire and booking information for the Series is attached. More detailed information is available at www.philharmonia.co.uk/vaughanwilliams.

ENDS

For further information, interviews, biographies and photographs please contact Emma Peters on 020 7921 3932 or emma.peters@philharmonia.co.uk or Lisa Tolliday on 020 7921 3930 or lisa.tolliday@philharmonia.co.uk.

Philharmonia Orchestra
Vaughan Williams: The Pioneering Pilgrim
21 May – 6 November 2008

Wednesday 21 May 7.30pm

Bedford Corn Exchange

Box Office 01234 269519

Richard Hickox *conductor*

Anthony Marwood *violin*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 8*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *The Lark Ascending*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 2, London*

Thursday 22 May 7.30pm

Royal Festival Hall, London

Box Office 0800 652 6717

Vaughan Williams: The Elements

Richard Hickox *conductor*

Susan Gritton *soprano*

Gerald Finley *baritone*

London Symphony Chorus

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 7,*

Sinfonia Antartica

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 1,*

A Sea Symphony

Friday 23 May 7.30pm

De Montfort Hall, Leicester

Box Office 0116 233 3111

Richard Hickox *conductor*

Alina Ibragimova *violin*

Susan Gritton *soprano*

Gerald Finley *baritone*

London Symphony Chorus

MENDELSSOHN *Overture, The Hebrides*

BRUCH *Violin Concerto No. 1*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 1,*

A Sea Symphony

Saturday 31 May 7.30pm

Royal Festival Hall, London

Box Office 0800 652 6717

Vaughan Williams: Colour and Landscape

Richard Hickox *conductor*

Anthony Marwood *violin*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 8*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *The Lark Ascending*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 2, London*

Friday 20 June 7.30pm

Sunday 22 June 4.00pm

Sadler's Wells, London

Box Office 0800 652 6717

Richard Hickox *conductor*

David Edwards *director*

Roderick Williams *The Pilgrim*

Philharmonia Voices

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *The Pilgrim's Progress*

Tuesday 8 July 8.00pm

Chichester Festivities, Chichester Cathedral

Box office 01243 785718

Richard Hickox *conductor*

Alina Ibragimova *violin*

RAVEL *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

BRUCH *Violin Concerto No. 1*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 5*

Wednesday 9 July 7.30pm

Truro Cathedral

Box Office 01872 262466

Richard Hickox *conductor*

Alina Ibragimova *violin*

RAVEL *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

BRUCH *Violin Concerto No. 1*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 5*

Friday 11 July 7.30pm

Tewkesbury Abbey

Box Office 01242 227979

Richard Hickox *conductor*

Alina Ibragimova *violin*

Susan Gritton *soprano*

Ladies of the London Symphony Chorus

RAVEL *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

BRUCH *Violin Concerto No. 1*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 7,*

Sinfonia Antartica

Sunday 2 November 3.00pm

Royal Festival Hall, London

Box Office 0800 652 6717

Vaughan Williams: The Visionary

Richard Hickox *conductor*

Philharmonia Voices

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 9*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Three Shakespeare Songs*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 6*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 5*

Tuesday 4 November 7.30pm

Bedford Corn Exchange

Box Office 01234 269519

Richard Hickox *conductor*

Lisa Milne *soprano*

MOZART *Overture, Idomeneo*

MOZART *Exsultate Jubilate*

STRAUSS *Morgen*

STRAUSS *Befreit*

STRAUSS *Zueignung*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 3, Pastoral*

Thursday 6 November 7.30pm

Royal Festival Hall, London

Box Office 0800 652 6717

Vaughan Williams: Response to War

Richard Hickox *conductor*

Lisa Milne *soprano*

Alan Opie *baritone*

London Symphony Chorus

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Dona nobis pacem*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 3, Pastoral*

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Symphony No. 4*

Study Days

Saturday 17 May 2.00-5.00pm

Richard Attenborough Centre, University of Leicester

Sunday 18 May 2.00-5.00pm

Harpur Suite, Bedford Corn Exchange

Saturday 31 May 10.30am-4.30pm

Conference Centre, British Library, London

Including a keynote speech by Artistic Advisor Michael

Kennedy.

Free pre-concert events

Wednesday 21 May 6.15pm

Bedford Corn Exchange

Richard Hickox discusses his Vaughan Williams series with Malcolm Singer.

Thursday 22 May 6.00pm

Royal Festival Hall, London

A recital by the Soloists of the Philharmonia Orchestra exploring chamber music by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Thursday 6 November 6.00pm

Royal Festival Hall, London

Richard Hickox discusses his Vaughan Williams series with broadcaster Anthony Burton.