For Immediate Release

University of Minnesota School of Music Presents
Benjamin Britten’s War Requiem: A 50th Anniversary Remembrance Concert, 3/1

School of Music Students and Faculty Travel to Detmold, Germany as Part of International Collaboration;
School of Music Collaborates with 2012 Nobel Peace Prize Forum: The Price of Peace

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (2/12/2012)—The University of Minnesota School of Music will present Benjamin Britten’s contemporary masterpiece War Requiem on Thursday, March 1, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at Ted Mann Concert Hall. This concert is part of the School of Music’s Britten Peace Project, an unprecedented international collaboration, which celebrates the 50th anniversary of the premiere of the Britten’s War Requiem, a large-scale, non-liturgical setting of the Requiem Mass (Mass for the dead) with nine poems by English poet and fallen World War I soldier Wilfred Owen interwoven throughout the piece.

This ambitious concert will feature the University of Minnesota School of Music Orchestra, Choirs, William Ferguson (tenor), Philip Zawisza (baritone), Mark Russell Smith, conductor, and Kathy Saltzman Romey, chorus master; members of Detmold Hochschule für Musik Orchestra, Choir, Caroline Thomas (soprano), Karl-Heinz Bloemke, conductor and Anne Kohler, chorus master (Detmold, Germany); Macalester College Concert Choir, Matthew Mehaffey, director; Kantorei, Axel Theimer, director; Minnesota Boychoir, Mark Johnson, director; and members of Quad City Choral Arts, Jon Hurty, director (Davenport, Iowa). Media Sponsor: Classical Minnesota Public Radio.

A pre-concert talk with U of M School of Music conductors Mark Russell Smith and Kathy Saltzman Romey will take place from 5 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. at Ted Mann Concert Hall.

Tickets $35/$29/$21; $11 U of M students | Reserved Seating | 612/624-2345 or tickets.umn.edu

The School of Music’s Ted Mann Concert Hall (2128 Fourth Street South, Minneapolis, MN 55455) is located on the U of M’s West Bank campus. Convenient parking is available at the University's 19th Avenue and 21st Avenue parking ramps; you must pay a fee to park in these ramps.

Britten Peace Project Brings School of Music Students and Faculty to Detmold, Germany and the Quad Cities

As part of an international exchange, a cohort of School of Music students and faculty will travel to Detmold, Germany to perform Britten’s War Requiem on February 18 and 19 at the Hochschule für Musik. This trip marks the School of Music’s first foray into international performance. School of Music students and faculty will also perform with the Quad City Symphony Orchestra in Davenport, Iowa on March 3 at the Adler Theatre and in Rock Island, Illinois at Centennial Hall, Augustana College on March 4.

School of Music director David Myers shares, “This project presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for School of Music students and faculty to perform a 20th century masterpiece for audiences in four cities across the globe. We are also eager to host 31 students from the Hochschule für Musik for the March 1 War Requiem performance at Ted Mann Concert Hall.”

School of Music students are studying the War Requiem's historical and artistic relevance through their coursework, dialog, rehearsal, and performance and will document their adventures and discoveries while on tour on the Britten Peace Project Blog (music.umn.edu/britten).

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School of Music Collaborates With 2012 Nobel Peace Prize Forum: The Price of Peace

The War Requiem concert at Ted Mann Concert Hall on March 1 is a part of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize Forum (NPPF), March 1-3, and will take place on the NPPF’s Arts & Music Day. The 2012 Nobel Peace Prize Forum explores the theme “The Price of Peace,” including Britten’s reflection on the human cost of war in his epic work War Requiem.

As part of the NPPF’s Arts & Music Day, U of M School of Music professors will lead workshop sessions including Scott Currie’s “AvantJazz for Peace” and Scott Lipscomb’s “Iraqi Body Count.” School of Music alumna and renowned composer Libby Larsen will lead a workshop titled “8000 Years to Peace.” Author Adam Hochschild will give the Arts & Music Day’s keynote address “The Price of War 1914-1918: Who Tried to Prevent the Carnage?” and will lead a workshop titled “Writing as a Tool for Peace and Justice.” To register for Nobel Peace Prize Forum workshops, visit nobelpeaceprizeforum.org.

School of Music Professor Mark Russell Smith Celebrates a Historic Moment

The Britten Peace Project is the brainchild of the School of Music’s director of orchestras, Mark Russell Smith. A self-proclaimed “anniversary guy,” Smith had the idea to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the premiere of Britten’s War Requiem in a big way. The concept of exploring the prospect of peace in the midst of conflict was a poignant one to Smith, and he believes that the timeless significance and message of the War Requiem would be an inspiration to students.

Britten was commissioned to compose the War Requiem for the reconsecration of Coventry Cathedral in Coventry, England on May 30, 1962. The original 14th century Coventry Cathedral was destroyed by the German Air Force in a World War II bombing raid. Britten, a pacifist, was inspired to write a work that not only dealt with the tragedy and human cost of war, but also invoked a spirit of international unity.

The historical significance of the War Requiem’s premiere is not lost on Smith. He shares, “The piece has broad shoulders and comes at the tragedy of war and the human price of war from so many different perspectives that I thought it was the perfect piece for the students to study on many levels in addition to performance.”

Established in 1902, the University of Minnesota School of Music offers a dynamic, comprehensive program to more than 550 music students in undergraduate and graduate programs, led by a world-class faculty of more than 75 artists, scholars, and teachers. The School of Music presents more than 400 free concerts per year. For a complete schedule of events, visit www.music.umn.edu or call (612) 626-1094 for a brochure.

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