

War and Peace

Saturday, October 3, 2015 • 7:30 PM
First Free Methodist Church

Orchestra Seattle
Seattle Chamber Singers
Clinton Smith, conductor



GEORG FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)
Music for the Royal Fireworks, HWV 351

Ouverture: Adagio — Allegro
Bourée
La Paix
La Réjouissance
Menuet I
Menuet II



PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840–1893)
Festival Overture in E \flat major ("The Year 1812"), Op. 49

Largo — Poco più mosso — Andante — Allegro giusto — Largo — Allegro vivace

—Intermission—

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)
Dona Nobis Pacem

"Agnus Dei" (*Lento*)
"Beat! Beat! Drums!" (*Allegro moderato*)
Reconciliation (*Allegro moderato*)
Dirge for Two Veterans (*Moderato alla marcia*)
"The Angel of Death Has Been Abroad"
"O Man Greatly Beloved"

Elizabeth Zharoff, soprano
Joo Won Kang, baritone

This performance of the Royal Fireworks Music commemorating the 25th anniversary of the reunification of Germany is presented in partnership with the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Please silence cell phones and other electronics, and refrain from the use of cameras and recording devices during the performance.

Special thanks to First Free Methodist Church for all of their assistance in making OSSCS's 46th season possible, and for providing refreshments during intermission. Donations left at the refreshments tables help support FFMC and its programs.

Orchestra Seattle • Seattle Chamber Singers
Clinton Smith, music director • George Shangrow, founder
PO Box 15825, Seattle WA 98115 • 206-682-5208 • www.osses.org

Program Notes

Georg Frideric Handel

Music for the Royal Fireworks, HWV 351

Handel was born in Halle, Germany, on February 23, 1685, and died in London on April 14, 1759. He composed this work in early 1749; it debuted in London on April 14 of that year. The version heard this evening calls for 3 oboes, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 3 horns, 3 trumpets, timpani and strings.

The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, signed on October 18, 1748, ended the War of Austrian Succession. To celebrate the cessation of hostilities, King George II of England planned a festive evening the following April in London's Green Park, to feature music specially written for the occasion, accompanied by a massive fireworks display. George II was the king who purportedly began the tradition of standing during the "Halleluiahs Chorus" of Handel's *Messiah*, and from this composer he commissioned music for the outdoor festivities. Handel immediately (albeit somewhat reluctantly) acquiesced and even followed the monarch's edict not to include any stringed instruments in his orchestra, assembling a massive band of double reeds, brass and percussion.

Handel's work begins with a grand overture in the French style, with a regal introduction leading to a vigorous fugal allegro in triple meter, all in glorious D major. There follows a suite of shorter dances: a bouree in D minor, a movement celebrating "the peace" and another the "rejoicing" made possible by the treaty. The work closes with a pair of minuets, the first in D minor and the second providing a resounding conclusion in D major.

Handel resisted a public dress rehearsal, but the occasion resulted in a great success: an estimated 12,000 people flocked to the Spring Gardens at Vauxhall, causing one of London's first traffic jams when carriages bottle-necked at London Bridge. At the official premiere, Handel's music was overshadowed by the pyrotechnics display, during which one of the adjoining pavilions caught fire. The composer conducted the work's first indoor performance — for which Handel rescored the work to include strings — on May 27, 1749, at a benefit for Thomas Coram's Foundling Hospital.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Festival Overture ("The Year 1812"), Op. 49

Tchaikovsky was born May 7, 1840, in Votkinsk, Russia, and died in St. Petersburg on November 6, 1893. He composed this overture between October 12 and November 19, 1880; Ippolit Altani conducted the first performance in Moscow on August 20, 1882. The score calls for pairs of woodwinds (plus piccolo and English horn), 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion and strings.

The three works on this evening's program are all "occasional" pieces (commissioned for a specific event) that have enjoyed widespread success beyond their initial performances — none more so than Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, which became his most familiar and popular composition even though he described it as "very loud, noisy" and "probably of no artistic worth."

In June 1880, Tchaikovsky received a request for a work "15 to 25 minutes long, with or without a chorus . . . with a hint of church music," celebrating the defeat of Napoleon at Moscow in 1812, to be premiered at an Exhibition of Industry and the Arts . . . or Tsar Alexander II's silver jubilee . . . or the opening of Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

While occupied with his *Serenade for Strings* during the fall of 1880, Tchaikovsky quickly composed the overture, sketching a piano score in just seven days. The March 1881 assassination of the tsar delayed the exhibition (and construction issues postponed the cathedral's opening), pushing the premiere to August 1882, in an exhibition hall near the cathedral. For outdoor presentations, Tchaikovsky included parts for brass band, church bells and live cannon fire (Orchestra Seattle's brass and percussion sections will safely supply the necessary firepower this evening).

The battle Tchaikovsky depicts bears little relation to actual historical events. Disease weakened Napoleon's forces as they approached Russia, the Battle of Borodino resulted in massive casualties on both sides, and the French arrived in Moscow to find the city nearly abandoned and set ablaze.

The overture opens with a string sextet intoning a Russian Orthodox chant ("Save Us, O Lord"), later incorporating "La Marseillaise" (not actually in use during Napoleon's time) to represent the French, the Russian national hymn "God Save the Tsar" (composed several decades after 1812), a Russian folksong ("By the Gates") and a melody taken from Tchaikovsky's 1869 opera *The Voyevoda*.

— Jeff Eldridge

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Dona Nobis Pacem

Ralph (pronounced "Rafe") Vaughan Williams was born October 12, 1872, in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire, England, and died August 26, 1958, in London. He composed the cantata Dona Nobis Pacem in 1936 on a commission from the Huddersfield Choral Society, who gave the premiere on October 2, 1936 with the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. In addition to soprano and baritone soloists and chorus, the work calls for 3 flutes (one doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion and strings.

After military service during World War I, first in the Royal Army Medical Corps Territorial Force, where he assisted in evacuating the wounded, and later as an Officer in the Royal Artillery, Ralph Vaughan Williams became professor of composition at the Royal College of Music. Always deeply interested in the English choral tradition, he conducted local choruses at the Leith Hill Music Festival and composed choral works for such events.

Vaughan Williams' cantata *Dona Nobis Pacem*, a precursor of sorts to Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, appealed powerfully for peace as war's thunderclouds gathered threateningly over England. Vaughan Williams biographer Simon Heffer observes that the composer's "main inspiration is drawn not from the soil of England, but from the whole world going mad around him."

“Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace!” the solo soprano implores as the short opening movement begins, and soon the chorus takes up the plea’s painful dissonance — will another conflict demonstrate once again, and add to, the world’s sinfulness?

In the second movement, a setting of a Walt Whitman poem from the collection *Drum-Taps* that arose from his “nursing” experiences during the American Civil War, mercilessly militaristic percussion and brass answer the first movement’s agony-colored outcries as chromatic, triplet-studded choral calls for an inevitable war drown the preceding movement’s entreaties for peace.

“Reconciliation,” a setting of another Whitman poem from *Drum-Taps*, follows in the third movement, Death and Night gently washing away war’s horrors with music for baritone solo and chorus (divided into as many as seven parts) that is “beautiful as the sky” and bathes wounded eyes and hearts with cleansing tears. A baritone soldier tenderly kisses his dead enemy in his coffin, and the solo soprano again begs for peace for the war-soiled world.

Vaughan Williams had composed the somber funeral procession “Dirge for Two Veterans,” a setting of a third Whitman poem from *Drum-Taps*, prior to the First World War, but it had remained unpublished and unperformed prior to its repurposing as the fourth movement of *Dona No-*

bis Pacem. Recurring solemn tattoos of four sixteenth notes followed by two quarter notes accompany a mother’s (and our own) march to the double grave of her fallen husband and son — what can we give them but our love? The sorrows of previous wars are thus brought into the composer’s present — and into ours. Will we learn nothing from such suffering?

The solo baritone refers at the beginning of the cantata’s fifth movement to the Angel of Death (who killed the first-born sons of Egypt’s people and cattle during the last of the Ten Plagues) as Vaughan Williams sets to music a brief excerpt from John Bright’s eloquent 1855 anti-Crimean War speech to the House of Commons. The soprano soloist and chorus go on to plead for a peace that appears impossible. Hope begins to rise, however, with the baritone solo in the cantata’s last section, as a number of Biblical quotations, chiefly from the Old Testament, look toward the eventual triumph of God’s universal “peaceable kingdom.” Christmas bells and the angels’ promise of “peace on Earth” combine with the solo soprano’s final but still-unfulfilled prayer — the cantata’s refrain now cleansed of its initial chromaticism and whispered above the susurrant of the eight-part unaccompanied chorus — as the work closes, with God’s peace being humanity’s only hope.

— Lorelette Knowles

Violin

Susan Beals
Dean Drescher
Karen Frankenfeld
Alexander Hawker
Susan Herring
Jason Hershey
Manchung Ho
Maria Hunt
Fritz Klein*
Flora Lee
Mark Lutz
Gregor Nitsche
Stephen Provine**
Davis Reed
Theo Schaad
Lily Shababi
Janet Showalter
Kenna Smith-Shangrow
Nicole Tsong

Viola

Lauren Lamont
Stephanie Read
Rebecca Rodman
Sam Williams*

** *concertmaster*

* *principal*

+ *section leader*

Cello

Peter Ellis
Priscilla Jones
Max Lieblich
Patricia Lyon
Katie Sauter Messick
Annie Roberts
Valerie Ross
Carrie Sloane
Matthew Wyant*

Bass

Jo Hansen*
Kevin McCarthy
Steven Messick
Chris Simison

Flute

Virginia Knight
Shari Muller-Ho*

Piccolo

Melissa Underhill

Oboe

Rebecca Rice*
Derek Stephenson

English Horn

David Barnes

Clarinet

Steven Noffsinger*
Chris Peterson

Bassoon

Coltan Foster
Judith Lawrence*

Contrabassoon

Jeff Eldridge

Horn

Barney Blough
Laurie Heidt*
Jim Hendrickson
Carey LaMothe

Trumpet

Rabi Lahiri
Jared Sessink
Oscar Thorp
Janet Young*

Trombone

Cuauhtemoc Escobedo*
Chad Kirby
Randall Ruback

Tuba

David Brewer

Percussion

Ginny Bear
Eric Daane
Jeff Eldridge
Kathie Flood
Dan Oie*
Amy Vandergon

Harp

Naomi Kato

Soprano

Barb Anderson
Ann Bridges
Sue Cobb
Crissa Cugini
Olivia Davis
Kyla DeRemer
Joan Dirska
Cinda Freece
Kiki Hood
Jill Kraakmo
Peggy Kurtz+
Kathleen Sankey

Alto

Sharon Agnew
Julia Akoury-Thiel
Cheryl Blackburn
Jane Blackwell

Deanna Fryhle
Rose Fujinaka
Pamela Ivezič
Ellen Kaisse
Jan Kinney
Lorelette Knowles
Theodora Letz
Lila Woodruff May
Laurie Medill+
Annie Thompson
Brittany Walker

Tenor

Ron Carson
Alex Chun
Ralph Cobb
Jon Lange+
German Mendoza Jr.
Tom Nesbitt
Victor Royer
Jerry Sams
David Zapolsky

Bass

Timothy Braun
Andrew Danilchik
Daniel Hericks
Stephen Keeler
Steven Tachell
Richard Wyckoff+

Vocal Texts

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows — through [the] doors — burst like a ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation;
Into the school where the scholar is studying;
Leave not the bridegroom quiet — no happiness

must he have now with his bride;

Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field,
or gathering in his grain;

So fierce you whirr and pound you drums — so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!

Over the traffic of cities — over the rumble of wheels in the streets;

Are beds prepared for the sleepers at night in the houses?

no sleepers must sleep in those beds,

No bargainers' bargains by day — no brokers or speculators —
would they continue?

Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?...

Then rattle quicker, heavier drums — you bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!

Make no parley — stop for no expostulation,

Mind not the timid — mind not the weeper or prayer;

Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,

Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties,

Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the hearses,

So strong you thump O terrible drums — so loud you bugles blow.

— Walt Whitman

Word over all, beautiful as the sky!

Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage, must in time be utterly lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly

wash again, and ever again this soil'd world;

For my enemy is dead — a man divine as myself is dead;

I look where he lies, white-faced and still in, the coffin — I draw near;

[I] bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

— Walt Whitman

Dona nobis pacem

The last sunbeam

Lightly falls from the finish'd Sabbath,

On the pavement here — and there beyond it is looking

Down a new-made double grave.

Lo! the moon ascending!

Up from the east the silvery round moon,

Beautiful over the house tops, ghastly phantom moon,

Immense and silent moon.

I see a sad procession,

And I hear the sound of coming full-key'd bugles,

All the channels of the city streets they're flooding

As with voices and with tears.

I hear the great drums pounding,

And the small drums steady whirring;

And every blow of the great convulsive drums,

Strikes me through and through.

For the son is brought with the father;

In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell;

Two veterans, son and father, dropt together,

And the double grave awaits them.

Now nearer blow the bugles,

And the drums strike more convulsive;

And the day-light o'er the pavement quite has faded,

And the strong dead-march enwraps me.

In the eastern sky up-buoying,

The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumin'd;

('Tis some mother's large transparent face,

In heaven brighter growing.)

O strong dead-march, you please me!

O moon immense, with your silvery face you soothe me!

O my soldiers twain! O my veterans, passing to burial!

What I have I also give you.

The moon gives you light,

And the bugles and the drums give you music;

And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,

My heart gives you love.

— Walt Whitman

The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land;
you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no
one as of old . . . to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two
side-posts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on.

— John Bright

Dona nobis pacem

We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of
health, and behold trouble! The snorting of his horses was
heard from Dan; the whole land trembled at the sound of
the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have
devoured the land . . . and those that dwell therein . . . The
harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not
saved . . . Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician
there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my
people recovered?

— Jeremiah 8:15–16, 20, 22

O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be
strong, yea be strong.

— Daniel 10:19

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former . . . and in this place will I give peace.

— Haggai 2:9

Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall
they learn war any more.

— Isaiah 2:4

And none shall make them afraid . . . neither shall the sword
go through their land.

— Leviticus 26:6

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace
have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the Earth;
and righteousness shall look down from Heaven.

— Psalm 85:10

Open to me the gates of righteousness, I will go into them.

— Psalm 118:19

Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people
be assembled . . . and let them hear, and say, it is the truth.

— Isaiah 43:9

And it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues.
And they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign
among them . . . and they shall declare my glory among the
nations. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I
will make, shall remain before me, so shall your seed and
your name remain forever.

— Isaiah 66:18–19, 22

Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, good will
toward men.

— Luke 2:14

Dona nobis pacem