



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

April 2006

American Choral Classics: Tuesday 4 July 2006 7.30pm
St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 4JJ

This July, St Martin-in-the-Fields is celebrating American Independence Day with an evening of **American Choral Classics**. On Tuesday 4 July at 7.30pm **Canticum**, one of the UK's leading chamber choirs, will celebrate this annual occasion with a journey through American classical, folksong and popular songs from the 17th century to the present day.

The programme includes works by American composers Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland, Charles Ives, William Albright, William Hawley and Steven Stucky and a selection of uplifting spirituals and popular songs by Gershwin, Porter, Kern, Bernstein and Billy Joel.

Tuesday 4 July
7.30pm
American Choral Classics

Barber - *Adagio Agnus Dei*
Copland - *In the beginning*
De Lenias - *Credidi 17th Century American*
Ives - *Psalm 67*
Albright - *Chichester Mass: Sanctus, Benedictus, Angus Dei*
Hawley - *Labbra Vermiglie e belle*
Byrd - *Ave Verum*
Stucky - *Whispers*
Folksongs - *Gift to be simple, Shenandoah*
And a selection of spirituals & popular songs from Gershwin, Porter, Kern, Bernstein, and Billy Joel

Canticum
Mark Forkgen Conductor

Tickets: £15 £12 £8

Concert tickets can be bought online at www.smitf.org or via the Box Office on 020 7839 8362.

ENDS

For further information, interviews or photography, please contact Quintilla Hughes at quintilla.hughes@smitf.org or on 020 7766 1130

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS

Notes to Editors

- **St Martin-in-the-Fields** has had a long association with the US. James Gibbs' 18th century design for this iconic church was copied much throughout the New World.
- St Martin's also has current links with the US, through its American Foundation based in Philadelphia. Further information can be obtained from our Campaign Director on 020 7766 1131.
- **Concert Programme:** With over 350 concerts a year, it is one of the busiest music venues in the country. St Martin's concerts draw in visitors from all over the world who are attracted by St Martin's superb acoustics, intimate yet impressive surroundings and outstanding musicians. Concerts take place on some Tuesdays and every Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 7.30pm and include Early and Baroque Music, chamber and world music, song and piano recitals. For more information on St Martin-in-the-Fields go to www.smitf.org.
- Now in its sixteenth season, **Canticum** has established itself as one of the leading chamber choirs in the country. As well as performing major works, the choir has gained a reputation for exploring new areas of repertoire, with the first UK performances and the commissioning many new works.

In addition to the choir's main season, it has performed Bach's Mass in B minor with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at St John's, Smith Square; Mozart's Requiem with OAE at the Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; the première of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' *Step by Circle*, dedicated to Mark Forkgen and the choir; Vivaldi's Gloria and Haydn's *Little Organ Mass* with the City of London Sinfonia.

Last season's highlights included the 60th Anniversary Recital for the City Music Society, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' 70th birthday celebrations, Rachmaninov's *Vespers* at the Temple Church, the Samaritans' 50th Anniversary Concert at St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Canticum has toured in Italy, performing in St Peter's and Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome as well as Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Handel's *Messiah* in Siena and Bolsena with the Orchestra da Camera di Orvieto. Last August the choir opened the Viterbo Early Music Festival with a sell out performance of Handel's *Israel in Egypt*.

The choir has recorded two highly acclaimed solo CDs for the Meridian label: 'A Hymn to the Virgin' featuring works by Victoria, Poulenc and Panufnik; and 'A Christmas Carol' in aid of the Samaritans. Canticum's latest release on Craft Music features music by Colin Riley, Fraser Trainer and Keith Roberts. The live recording of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' *Step by Circle* and *Two Latin Motets* is now available on MaxOpus.

Concerts last season included: Stravinsky's *Les Noces* with Kokoro, Arvo Pärt's *Passio* in Bournemouth and London, Semi-chorus in Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* with London Concert Choir and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, as well as concerts in Avon and Norfolk.

- **Mark Forkgen** has been Music Director of Canticum since 1995. He is also the Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of Kokoro (the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's contemporary music group) and Music Director of London Concert Choir, Ealing Youth Orchestra and Dorset Youth Orchestra.

He was Organ Scholar of Queens' College, Cambridge, before winning a scholarship to study conducting at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama under Christopher Seaman and Michael Tilson Thomas. During this period he also worked as assistant conductor to Mstislav Rostropovich. From the Guildhall, Mark went on to become Assistant Conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra for two highly productive years before deciding to further his career as a guest conductor. Since then he has worked with a number of leading orchestras, including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, the English Chamber Orchestra, the English Northern Philharmonia and the Composers' Ensemble. He has given the first performances of over eighty works including stage works with the Trestle Theatre Company and Britten Sinfonia, and contemporary opera with the Unicorn Theatre Company with an ensemble from the Philharmonia, in Cardiff, Poole and at the Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Last year he was Conductor and Artistic Advisor for *Take it to the Max* celebrating Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' 70th Birthday, which was shortlisted in this year's Royal Philharmonic Society awards.

2005 highlights include: works by Maxwell Davies, Martin Butler and Thomas Ades with Kokoro, as well as song cycles by Knussen and Birtwistle; Dorset Live at the Royal Albert Hall; Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, *A Soldier's Tale*, *Orchestral Suites*, *Four Norwegian Moods*, *Mass* and *Octet* for the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's Stravinsky Festival; Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and London Concert Choir at the Royal Festival Hall; Verdi's *Requiem* at the Barbican; Mozart and Vivaldi with the English Sinfonia; and Shostakovich's *Fifth Symphony* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

