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*Singers and orchestral players rehearse Britten's War Requiem in Auckland Town Hall.
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Auckland Arts Festival – Great Britten

The members of NZ Youth Choir and Voices NZ Chamber Choir, and Choirs Aotearoa's music and administration staff are still recovering from a busy week at the Auckland Arts Festival. Centred on the celebration of English composer Benjamin Britten's centenary there was a mid-week recital called (audaciously) 'Little Britten' which featured a *cappella* and organ accompanied Britten works performed by both choirs separately and jointly.

The grand finale of the Festival was a performance of Britten's monumental 'War Requiem' involving a large orchestra and chamber orchestra (Auckland Philharmonia), a large choir (NZ Youth Choir, Voices NZ Chamber Choir plus the Auckland Chamber Choir), a treble choir with choristers from Westlake Girls High School (Choralation – MD Rowan Johnston) and St Cuthbert's College (MD Megan Flint), three soloists and two conductors. A total of around 240 musicians packed onto the stage with a few on side balconies of Auckland Town Hall.

Extracts from the New Zealand Herald's reviews by William Dart:

LITTLE BRITTEN: HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL, PARNELL
7:00pm, Wednesday 20 March 2013
New Zealand Youth Choir and Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir
Conducted by Karen Grylls and David Squire
Organ: James Tibbles

Hymn to the Virgin: The New Zealand Youth Choir's young singers delivered warm and sonorous praise; conductor David Squire balanced them expertly against Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir, positioned high in a balcony, behind the audience....

Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir included Britten's Flower Songs in its town hall concert last year. Tonight, even more enjoyment was to be had as they reprised the work. Grylls swept them through the lilting Daffodils and ensured Ballad of Green Broom had the right earthy thrust.

These 16 singers also excelled in the composer's challenging Sacred and Profane, eight medieval lyrics set by Britten towards the end of his life....

The concert ended in full celebratory mode with a 1961 Jubilate Deo. When the singers gave out its fervent, generously phrased tune, one could almost imagine Britten, had he lived a generation or two earlier, may well have penned a Jerusalem or I Vow to Thee, My Country.

BRITTEN WAR REQUIEM: AUCKLAND TOWN HALL
8.00pm Monday, 25 March 2013
New Zealand Youth Choir, Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir, Auckland Chamber Choir
Choralation: Westlake Girls High School. St Cuthberts College Choir
Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra
Conductors: Eckehard Stier & Karen Grylls
Soprano: Orla Boylan
Tenor: Timothy Robinson
Baritone: Ivan Ludlow

Little surprise then that the 90 engrossing minutes of Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra's War Requiem resulted in a packed town hall. This was a magnificent undertaking - not only because of the indisputable quality of Britten's score, but for the way in which it brought together the city's young musicians with the APO in one of the monumental works of the last century. Watching Eckehard Stier on the podium, one

could sense Britten's music emanating from his baton....

The combined singers of Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir and the New Zealand Youth Choir, together with the local Auckland Chamber Choir, were splendid.

So too was the young treble choir, conducted by Karen Grylls, expertly navigating Britten's tricky lines over John Wells' pellucid organ sonorities.

For full reviews go to <http://www.choirsnz.co.nz/youth/reviews>.

START SPREADING THE NEWS – NZYC 2013 Tour

A flier is available giving information about the NZ Youth Choir's Tour to the USA and Canada at the end of 2013. It also seeks support for this major project and suggests ways to donate to the Trust and/or individual choir members. This can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.choirsnz.co.nz/news/start-spreading-the-news>. If you would like a hard copy of the flier, contact us on Tel (04) 499 0692 or choirs@choirsnz.co.nz.

DAVID SQUIRE
Music Director New Zealand Youth Choir

David Squire, Music Director of the New Zealand Youth Choir, is one of country's most prominent choral directors. He has completed undergraduate and postgraduate study at the University of Auckland and was appointed a national conducting mentor for the New Zealand Association of Choral Directors. He studied singing with Isabel Cunningham, Glense Blake and Beatrice Webster, and conducting with Karen Grylls and Juan Matteucci.

David frequently takes choral workshops around New Zealand, and conducts several choirs at secondary schools in Auckland. His mixed-voice chamber choir from Rangitoto College, The Fundamentals, won the platinum award at the national 2008 New Zealand Choral Federation's 'Big Sing' Finale in Wellington – the first time a mixed-voice choir had achieved this. In March 2011 he was awarded a New Zealander of the Year Local Heroes Medal for services to music education.

NEW ZEALAND YOUTH CHOIR
Tour of the USA & Canada 2013
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Donations to Choirs Aotearoa New Zealand Trust for the New Zealand Youth Choir's 2013 Tour to the USA and Canada can be found on our website www.choirsnz.co.nz

PHOTOGRAPHY: GRANT ARMISHAW

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