

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

A VIGIL FOR SHAFTESBURY SUNDAY

6.30pm Sunday 26th April 1998 - Southwark Cathedral, London

Entry is free to this NEO Vigil organised by the Shaftesbury Society to mark Shaftesbury Sunday

VIGIL FOR THE NATION

8.45pm Sunday 19th July 1998 - Centenary Square, Birmingham

Entry is free to this open-air event with music, dance and fireworks in this marvellous public space adjacent to the International Convention Centre and Symphony Hall.

THE NEO AND KENNEDY

Sunday 6th December 1998 - Stratford-upon-Avon

Details of an event to celebrate the testimonial year of the Warwickshire and England fast bowler, Tim Munton, a supporter of the NEO, are currently being finalised. Tim is also a friend of Nigel Kennedy who has also agreed to play at the event. It promises to be an exciting occasion, details of which will be published in the next newsletter in the Autumn.

1998 CHRISTMAS CONCERT TOUR

Friday 11th December - The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

Sunday 13th December - Her Majesty's Theatre, London (provisional)

Monday 14th December - Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Tuesday 15th December - Colston Hall, Bristol

Tickets for the NEO's Christmas Concert will be available on 14th September 1998
by ringing NEO Freephone 0800 018 2695



The NEO *Friends* was formed in 1994 with the primary purpose of supporting the NEO, to enable members to keep in touch, and to help those who would like to become more closely involved in the life and work of the NEO.

Membership includes :-

- 🎻 **The NEO *Friends* Magazine** – this high quality biannual publication is free to *Friends* and provides masses of useful and interesting information about every aspect of the NEO, including reports on events, interviews, family news, and light-hearted articles.
- 🎻 **Reduced concert ticket prices**
- 🎻 **Pre-public booking of concert tickets**
- 🎻 **Reduced recordings prices**
- 🎻 **Admission to final rehearsals**
- 🎻 **Special events such as pre-concert talks**

All this for £15 individual subscription, or £25 for a family with concessionary subscriptions also available.

If you are interested in joining the NEO *Friends* then please contact:

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ON OUR FREE MAILING LIST?

If so, please send your details to the NEO Friends address, above.



Newsletter

No.2

Spring 1998

“The best Morning Service I’ve had the privilege to produce”

This is what Philip Billson, Producer, BBC Religion, said of the New English Orchestra’s live broadcast from Studio 7 at the BBC in Manchester. It took place on Sunday 8th February 1998, the morning after the Vigil in Manchester Cathedral had taken place in front of a packed audience.

“You should be in no doubt about the success of this broadcast as a fine piece of radio” he went on to say. Such praise is most welcome, especially when one considers that the broadcast was entirely composed of contributions from the NEO. We hope that this recognition by the BBC will translate into them wanting to film the variegated splendour of an NEO concert so that the visual spectacle of the NEO can be enjoyed by an even wider audience.

Further observations on the broadcast were made by David Bridge in the Methodist Recorder, who commented, “The contributors to a recent Morning Service (Radio 4) from Manchester addressed people as if they were listening in ones and twos which of course they were. It had pace and variety with good music and clear teaching and the result was first class radio. We did not feel to be eavesdroppers but people for whom the service was intended. This act of worship came from Broadcasting House but there is no reason why churches should not match it for quality if they plan with the listener uppermost in their minds.”

VIGIL FOR THE NATION - CENTENARY SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM

8.45pm - 10.40pm, Sunday 19th July 1998

July is to see one of the NEO’s biggest events to date. Following on from several very well received Vigil tours in Cathedrals in different parts of the country, a major open-air event is planned in Birmingham’s Centenary Square. There will be music in a wide range of styles to suit all ages including popular and traditional songs from many countries, all culminating in a spectacular firework display.

This event was originally to have been held one day earlier in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral but, owing to practical considerations unique to that particular site, most notably the space constraints which could have led to many of the large numbers of people we now expect to attend being disappointed, we have now changed the location of the Vigil.

Centenary Square is a marvellous public space right next to the International Convention Centre and Symphony Hall which, according to the police, is capable of holding up to 100,000! The other great advantage is that you will be able to bring something to sit on. So please do come and bring your friends to this magnificent open-air event which, remarkably, is all free, although for those wishing to help us to offset the not inconsiderable costs a voluntary offering will be taken.

For those who are especially disappointed that we are not going to Coventry, please accept our apologies and do join us in Birmingham.

WHAT IS THE VIGIL?

The Vigil creates an opportunity for everyone in society to meet before God and present Him with our national needs. It contains no easy answers.

The Vigil encourages the idea of the meeting together of all ages, creeds, races and backgrounds. It stresses the importance of community. It encourages a re-evaluation of the good things from our past, as well as concern for the present and the future. It seeks to bring into focus the aspects of our national life which concern a majority of people.

The Vigil is based on the Lord's Prayer and uses music from the English choral tradition as well as from ethnic sources. It also contains music in modern popular styles to appeal to all ages.

The Vigil is non-political and interdenominational, and although it comes from a Christian perspective it is designed for the enjoyment and participation of all members of our society.

At Birmingham we will be bringing to God, in particular, everyone's concerns for the following areas:

- 🕯 Safety
- 🕯 Happiness at home
- 🕯 Drugs, disease and discontent
- 🕯 The value of the individual in 21st Century Britain

We very much look forward to your joining us.

NEW EUROPEAN ORCHESTRA

Nigel Swinford reports in March, "I am writing this just after having conducted the first concert in Switzerland of the New European Orchestra, led by Brigitta Hofer. It was especially exciting because of the brand new group of singers who were giving their first public performance anywhere. They were spectacularly good and soon had the audience in the palm of their hand. As you would expect from the NEO (whether in the UK or on the Continent) there was a good deal of powerful spiritual music, but the orchestra also played music by Bach, Respighi, and a scintillating rendition of the brilliant and outrageous Divertissement by Ibert. The concert was a great success, and we now move on to Wädenswil near Lake Zurich, and then to Hamburg in early May."

RECENT PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME

Since the last newsletter there have been many events. First, there was the spectacular Grand Christmas Gala which was completely sold-out in Symphony Hall and Bridgewater Hall, and with only a handful of tickets left in Colston Hall and Holy Trinity Brompton, London. The Bristol concert was preceded by a wonderfully perceptive talk into the Mozart Clarinet Concerto by Martin Powell, and in Birmingham there was another very well-attended free pre-concert talk for the NEO Friends on the dance, by Lizzie Swinford and Julia Myles. There is no doubt that these talks add considerably to the enjoyment of the events, judging by your responses, and hopefully we will arrange more this Christmas. These talks are just some of the benefits available to NEO Friends (see back page for details). 1998 then saw us start the year with three packed Vigils in Bradford, Manchester and Bristol with a further one being arranged by the Shaftesbury Society in Southwark Cathedral in April. The Vigils certainly do seem to be tapping into a need in our society to express our concerns before God. We are therefore very excited about the Vigil in Birmingham in July and hope to see you there.

**SELL-OUT
CHRISTMAS
TOUR**



ADVERTISE WITH THE NEO

Being associated with the NEO, we believe, could be beneficial for you and your company or organisation. We are currently exploring the possibility of adding to our list of sponsors by offering the following opportunities:

- 🎪 Sponsoring elements of the major Vigil for the Nation in Centenary Square, Birmingham in July
- 🎪 Advertising in the Christmas tour programme at high profile venues including Manchester's Bridgewater Hall and Birmingham's Symphony Hall etc.