

EVENTS GUIDE



The NEO Vigils are to be performed in the following venues at 7.30 p.m.

Great St. Mary's Church, Cambridge	Saturday 26th January
Bristol Anglican Cathedral	Saturday 2nd February
Rochester Cathedral (Kent)	Saturday 9th February
Bradford Cathedral	Saturday 16th February
St. Mary's Church, Church Street, Watford	Saturday 23rd February
St. Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham	Friday 1st March
Worcester Cathedral	Saturday March 2nd
Manchester Cathedral	Saturday March 16th

Attendance at the Vigils (including a high quality programme) is, remarkably, free, and an offering will be taken to offset the inevitable costs.



Friends

One of the most important ways that people who are interested in the NEO can keep in touch is through NEO Friends. Since taking over administration of the Friends membership it has given me an opportunity to get to know what many of you think and feel about the work and vision of NEO. It is vital to the work of the NEO to know the views of so many people and I warmly invite those of you who are not already Friends to seriously consider joining in order to forge a closer link to the NEO family. The support of the Friends is especially encouraging and appreciated by all in the NEO.

If you would like information on the benefits of becoming an NEO Friend please write to:



Newsletter

WINTER
2001/02

Vigils – A Place of Prayer, Contemplation and Hope

Our consideration of an appropriate response to the events of September 11th and its aftermath means that 2002 will now see the New English Orchestra hold its sixth series of Vigils throughout the country. The Vigils aim to provide a forum for all sections of the community to come together to express solidarity, mutual compassion, prayer and the sharing of hope in a darkening world. It is a format pioneered by the NEO throughout the 1990s in Cathedrals, Abbeys, Churches and in the open air in Britain and Europe. Whilst profoundly Christian in form and content, they aim to provide a hospitable environment in which people who have no faith or indeed those of a different belief system can pray or silently contemplate as they wish.

The NEO regards these as civic events in the sense that leaders of all types, both political and religious are invited to represent their communities. The programme of music, prayer and silence lasts approximately an hour and three quarters. The Vigils use the traditional Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus and Agnus Dei as a template which provides the basis for three broad sections – adoration, confession and supplication. In between these movements (settings could be by anyone from Haydn to Preisner) a wide variety of music is used.

In the Vigil of 2002, the music features flavours from several continents. The New English Orchestra will have a new look about it with the sound of the tabla, the tambura and African drums mingling with its traditional classical strings and wind instruments. Some of the poignant yet joyful music of Sting and Paul Simon (Graceland) will stand beside Duke Ellington's Psalm 150, together with beautiful modern European church music. Special dances will be composed to enhance the occasion.

We are delighted to have with us special guests from each of the cities we shall be visiting, including the Regius Professor of Divinity of Cambridge University, Dr. David Ford, Bishops, Church leaders and Pall Singh of East + West Ministry, who will take part in readings and prayers, and we welcome as resident guest for the tour, one of the foremost exponents of the meaning of prayer in Britain today, Bob Dunnett.

The NEO has found the Vigils to have been greatly appreciated over the years, and is convinced that events such as these could have a crucial role in our national life during the coming times; a place where people can focus their anxieties about the future – space to pray and time to think.

Details of the venues can be found on the back page of the newsletter.

PUBLICITY FOR THE VIGILS – do you want more?

We will be preparing A4 and A5 posters to publicise the Vigils, as well as printing extra copies of this newsletter. We find that word of mouth is one of the most effective methods of publicising our events so, if you would like to tell your friends about these events then please write to us at either of the addresses on the back page requesting further copies of the publicity or the newsletter. If you are already on our mailing list you will automatically receive copies of the publicity late in December/early January.

AMONG THE NATIONS RECORDING – a new CD

We are delighted to announce the re-release, on CD, of our popular Among the Nations recording. The timing of its release is particularly appropriate as we launch a new series of Vigils at a time of so much unrest in so many nations in the world.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the New English Orchestra's repertoire is the great variety of differing musical styles. It is not only the treasury of Western European music that provides this musical tapestry, but also highly idiosyncratic music from the Russian, African and Jewish nations.



Music from 'Among the Nations' seeks to illustrate the great wealth of vocal music at the NEO's disposal, and, in order to heighten the contrasts, juxtaposes music of different nationalities. The movements from Rachmaninov's *Vespers* which, sonorously scored for 12-part choir, are entirely suited to the all-embracing acoustic of a Russian Orthodox cathedral. The same dark timbres are captured in the setting of *How Great Thou Art* for 4-part male chorus. Although the melody originates from Sweden, the song first came to Western ears in the 1950's via Russia. The setting used seems to convey the deep religious fervour of believers in Stalinist Russia at that time.

The music from Africa relies on different principles for its life. In place of Russian sonority and texture comes the use of a single vocal line, often passed, question-and-answer fashion, between soloist and choir. Another equally characteristic feature is the extensive use of repetition. Both of these aspects are to be found in *Many Ocoro*, (The Army of the Lord is Coming). In *Ama Zi Ama*, (Let us Hide under His Wings) the vocal writing is accompanied by characteristic African drumming, whereas in *Moto*, (Fire), the soloist's 'question' is answered

by 3-part chorus. *What Can Separate Us*, although African in origin, shows also the influences of Western harmony, and provides a tranquil but fascinating fusion of the two cultures. The texts for all these African songs, and none more so that *What Can Separate Us* speak of a deep Christian conviction which has flourished despite the presence of oppressive political regimes.

The music of the Jews is presented by *Horse and Rider* and *Great and Wonderful*. Although sung in English, they each have a characteristic Jewish flavour; *Horse and Rider* uses a traditional folk melody whereas *Great and Wonderful* is perhaps more overtly Jewish with its minor key, gypsy-style violin solo and compelling accelerando towards the end.

As a complete contrast to the exuberance of the Jewish music, the music of England is represented by the peaceful seventeenth century setting of the prayer *O Lord Increase my Faith*. In similar vein is *O the Love that drew Salvation's Plan*; the style of this simple inspirational hymn owes much to the music of the New World from a bygone era.

To complete the collection and further develop the theme of variety, two virtuoso duos for violin and viola are included.

Copies of the CD, price £12 + 70p postage and packing are available, together with all other NEO recordings from:

NEO CHRISTMAS CARDS

Based on the very popular design of the publicity for the Looking Forward to Christmas tour these cards are available in colour from:



***Cheques should be made payable to
New English Orchestra***

Quantity	Price (inc. P&P)
10	£4.00
25	£9.00
50	£16.00