



## **Programme Notes: Songs of Peace** **By Will Todd**

Written in memory of the composer's mother, Will Todd's *Songs of Peace* is a six-movement work about love and loss.

Although it is not a conventional Requiem, in many ways it is a very 'life-affirming' work, characterised by Todd's recognisable jazz-infused harmonic language, memorable melodies, and powerful and personal texts.

*Songs of Peace* is designed as a work which may be performed complete, as separate movements (two of which are scored for upper voices) or as a selection.

It can be accompanied by piano alone or together with bass and drums as a jazz trio.

### **Composer's Note:**

The overall structure of *Songs of Peace* gradually made sense as I worked on individual movements; I didn't originally set out to write a six-movement piece, but these various choral songs seem to work very well together and share a certain atmosphere.

The themes are peace, eternity and love. It is a work in which I remember my mother, Iris Todd, for all the wonderful things she gave me, especially a lifelong interest in choral music and worship.

She adored the *Ave verum* text which I set in the fourth movement, and also the hymn *Just as I am*, which she always said she would like at her funeral, and indeed this version in a solo piano arrangement was what I played on that occasion. The voices feel like a natural addition.

There is a carol for the second movement, and a soft, ethereal 'In paradisum' section at the end, entitled *Into the stars*.

The first movement is the opening section of the Requiem Mass, and the *Song of Peace* (movement five), like the second and sixth movements, is a setting of my own text.

## 1. Requiem

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine:  
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord:  
And let perpetual light shine upon them.  
Roman Missal

## 2. Precious Moment

A gift so pure, life so precious,  
gifted to me.  
Touched by your love, I am awakened  
in this precious moment of peace.  
Wild is the storm surrounding me,  
but here love drives out the cold.  
Precious gift, gift of forgiveness,  
precious moment of peace.

I am alone, but you hold me  
closely to you.  
Your endless love is my protection  
in this precious moment of peace.  
Fear within and fear without,  
but you are the light in my dark.  
Precious gift, gift of forgiveness,  
precious gift of peace.

And this love is endless,  
Endless moment of peace.

Will Todd

## 4. Ave Verum

Ave verum corpus natum de Maria  
Virgine, vere passum immolatum  
In cruce pro homine, cuius latus  
perforatum fluxit aqua et sanguine: esto  
nobis praegustatum in mortis examine.  
O Jesu dulcis, O Jesu pie, O Jesu, Fili  
Mariae, miserere mei.

Hail true body born of the Virgin Mary,  
Truly suffered and slain on a cross for  
man, whose pierced side poured forth  
water and blood: be to us a foretaste in  
the agony of death. Sweet Jesus, kind  
Jesus, Son of Mary, have mercy on me.  
attrib Pope Innocent VI (1282-1362)

## 5. A Song of Peace

Even though your eyes are closed,  
I will sing this song to you. This is a  
song of peace, a song of love endless  
in beauty, an endless song for love  
remembered. O may I sing to you of memories  
so cherished and sustaining.  
And though you have left me, in my heart there  
is an everlasting light and a song of peace.

Will Todd

## 3. Just as I am

Just as I am, Thy love unknown  
Hath broken every barrier down;  
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
Yea all I need, in thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come.

Charlotte Elliot (1789-1871)

## 6. Into the stars

Peace  
Look into the stars.  
They are eternal.  
Light all across the heavens.  
Love, reach into the stars:  
You are eternal.

Will Todd