

The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace

Composed by Karl Jenkins

Llewellyn Choir

Chorale Les Alizes

Conducted by Rowan Harvey Martin and Nathalie Delcourt

Anzac Memorial Chapel of St.Paul, RMC Duntroon

3 October 2015

‘The Armed Man’ by Welsh composer, Karl Jenkins, premiered in England in 2000. Dedicated to the victims of the Kosovo crisis, it is a ‘Mass For Peace’ which describes the horrors of war but ends on a note of optimism for a world at peace. Using the words of Rudyard Kipling, John Dryden, Jonathan Swift, Toge Sankichi and words from religious texts, Jenkins creates a strikingly dramatic musical vision of the horrors of war followed by an exquisitely emotional finale of hope for a future without war.

Canberra’s Llewellyn Choir joined with New Caledonia’s Chorale Les Alizes to present this extraordinary work. The performance was conducted by Rowan Harvey-Martin. It’s a lengthy, complex work that demands great skill from everyone involved to be successful. The combined choirs sang confidently and clearly throughout and the Llewellyn Sinfonia played the music superbly. Mezzo Soprano, Christina Wilson, and treble, Charlie Barnes, sang the solo passages with great feeling and accuracy. The tension and colours in the work were maintained throughout by Rowan Harvey-Martin’s expert conducting.

Also on the program was a selection of works by the individual choirs. Of the works chosen by the Llewellyn Choir, ‘Magnificat’ by Herbert Howells was particularly well sung. ‘Ave Maria’ by Giulio Caccini and ‘Tant que vivray’ (So long as I live) by Claudin de Sermisy were beautifully sung by the Chorale Les Alizes, who were conducted by Nathalie Delcourt. The works were nicely accompanied by Anthony Smith.

The Anzac Memorial Chapel of St. Paul at RMC Duntroon with its great acoustics was a perfect venue to hear this concert. The two choirs, soloists, orchestra and conductors gave Canberra a particularly exciting and memorable music evening.

Len Power

4 October 2015