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RADIO



## Press Release

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### Winning works announced for Encore Choral

**Works by Oliver Knussen, Robert Saxton and Jonathan Lloyd amongst hidden gems of contemporary British choral music to be broadcast and performed live across the UK in 2016/2017.**

**BBC Radio 3's *The Choir* becomes broadcast home of "Encore Choral".**

**The only choral work written by one of the UK's most influential composers, Oliver Knussen, unperformed for almost 30 years, is set for a revival thanks to *Encore Choral*, a Royal Philharmonic Society and BBC Radio 3 project which breathes new life into exceptional contemporary music that deserves to be better known and heard more often.\***

Too often newly commissioned works receive only one or two premiere performances and are not given the opportunity to establish a place in the repertoire. The outstanding selection for **Encore Choral** is a clear demonstration of this harsh reality, featuring choral music by some of the UK's most respected composers, **Robin Holloway, Jonathan Lloyd, Robert Saxton, David Matthews, Jonathan Little** and **Paul Patterson**. The list includes concert and liturgical works, pieces for professional singers and works easily suited to amateur choirs, works for female and young voices, and for chamber choir and mass voices. None of the pieces have been performed since 2007, and three have not been heard for over 25 years.

The selected works, chosen from a shortlist of 30 works nominated by publishers and musicians, will be performed nationwide by professional choirs and outstanding amateur choral groups during 2016/2017, and broadcast on BBC Radio 3, with special **ENCORE** features and interviews on *The Choir*, BBC Radio 3's weekly celebration of singing together. Integral to **ENCORE** is a programme of creative development work, which brings the composer, the music and the audiences together to share and explore the chosen works more fully.

Rosemary Johnson, Executive Director of the RPS comments:

*"Choral music is enjoying a renaissance in the UK; we boast some of the world's finest professional choirs. There is also a huge interest in amateur music making, with an estimated 25,000 choirs all over the country. Whilst traditional repertoire predominates, many embrace contemporary repertoire, enjoying the dynamism of performing music that can be both unfamiliar and challenging. The chosen **ENCORE Choral** composers each bring something new to choral writing, and it is tremendously exciting to be able to bring these wonderfully inventive works to a new audience of listeners and performers.*

*The RPS not only commissions new music, but works hard to widen opportunities for its performance. ENCORE Choral has put the spotlight on the difficulty that even our most distinguished composers can experience in finding a regular place in the performance repertoire. Sometimes the practicalities and complexity of individual works make a live performance particularly challenging, but not always, and of course, it is often these very challenges that make a work so rewarding. ENCORE indicates that we are sitting on a treasure trove of wonderful 'hidden' works; these shouldn't be allowed to simply disappear from view."*

Alan Davey, Controller, BBC Radio 3 comments:

*"I believe BBC Radio 3, as a cultural institution, should play its part in developing and shaping the 'classical music canon'. We often uncover hidden or rare works in our day-to-day distinctive programming, through our commitment to commissioning new classical works, through focusses like our International Women's day weekend and through partnerships with organisations like the RPS for Encore Choral. I'm delighted BBC Radio 3 will be bringing hidden choral gems back to life and broadcasting them and the context around them on air in The Choir in the next two years. This is a significant commitment from us to developing the breadth of choral music on offer for our listeners and all those who love choral music."*

### ENCORE Choral – The Works

**Robert Saxton – Five motets – written 2003; last performed 2003**

*"Renaissance music through a contemporary prism"* – The Guardian

**Robin Holloway – Christmas Carol – written 2002**

Commissioned for one of the UK's favorite seasonal celebrations, *Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* at Kings College Chapel, Cambridge in 2002, its only performance to date

**Jonathan Lloyd – Mass – written 1983; last performed 1992**

An impressive, experimental work for six solo voices breathing new life into a liturgical text, commissioned and premiered by the London Sinfonietta Voices

**Paul Patterson – Gloria – written 1972; last performed 2005**

Influenced by Polish music, *Gloria, Op. 21* is a diverse, multi-textured and expressive work for mass choir that explores the full spectrum of sound that can be produced by both a choir and a single piano.

**Oliver Knussen – Frammenti da 'Chiara' – written 1986; last performed 1986**

Cryptically described by the composer as having *"something to do with St Clare, angels and canons"*, Knussen's only choral work, for two female choirs, is hauntingly elusive, luminous and quietly reflective.

**David Matthews – The Company of Lovers – written 1980/1983; last performed 1992**

In the rich tradition of English part song writing, David Matthews's work is an exquisite response to the writings of Australian poets David Campbell and Judith Wright.

**Jonathan Little – Kyrie – written 2005; last performed 2007**

An ambitious setting for double choir, soprano and off-stage soloists of the Latin mass *Kyrie Eleison*.

The ENCORE Choral works were selected by a jury including soprano **Juliet Fraser** from Exaudi, conductor **Christopher Finch** and BBC Radio 3 producer **Jeremy Evans**.

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\* Notes to Editors: About Encore

Over the past decade, the Royal Philharmonic Society and BBC Radio 3's *ENCORE* project has brought to light little known orchestral and chamber works by living British composers through nationwide performances, learning events and broadcasts. *ENCORE Choral* is the third installment of the project.

Since 2005, *ENCORE Orchestral* and *ENCORE Chamber* have presented 'lost' orchestral and chamber works by some of the UK's most distinguished composers, including **Simon Bainbridge, Judith Bingham, Diana Burrell, Gary Carpenter, Philip Cashian, John Casken, James Dillon, Brian Ferneyhough, Michael Finnissy, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Alexander Goehr, Jonathan Lloyd, Steve Martland, Colin Matthews, David Matthews, George Newson, Nigel Osborne, Anthony Payne, Robert Saxton, Giles Swayne and Hugh Wood.**

## About the Royal Philharmonic Society

The Royal Philharmonic Society unites the music profession and its audiences to create a vibrant future for music: supporting and working creatively with talented young performers and composers, championing excellence, and encouraging audiences to listen to, and talk about, great music. The Society has been at the heart of music for over 200 years, with direct links to Beethoven (it commissioned the composer's Ninth Symphony), Mendelssohn, Wagner and many of the iconic figures of classical music.

**CHAMPIONS OF EXCELLENCE:** The Society sets the standard and lets the world know about the finest classical music making. From its historic Gold Medal to the annual RPS Music Awards for live music, recognition by the RPS is a guarantee of outstanding music achievement.

**YOUNG MUSICIANS:** The RPS invests in talented young performers at the start of their careers, offering much needed funding to buy instruments, teaching tailored to their individual needs, or the chance to be mentored by an experienced, established performer.

**COMPOSERS:** The Society supports new music through commissioning new work, repeat performances, workshops, residency schemes and encouraging interaction between composers and audiences.

**AUDIENCES:** The RPS is a voice for music, putting music at the centre of cultural life. Whether a regular listener or just beginning to explore classical music, the RPS encourages people to listen and talk about music through a series of events, talks and debates.

## About BBC Radio 3

Radio 3 broadcasts high-quality, distinctive classical music and cultural programming, alongside regular arts and ideas programmes, jazz and world music. The station features more live classical music programming than any other and is the home of the BBC Proms - broadcasting every Prom live and more than 600 complete concerts a year - alongside daily speech programming, 90 full-length operas, over 25 drama commissions and over 20 new BBC music commissions a year. Radio 3 is the most significant commissioner of new musical works in the country and is committed to supporting new talent, from composers to writers and new young performers, through schemes such as New Generation Artists and New Generation Thinkers. [www.bbc.co.uk/radio3](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3)