



ASPR PRESS RELEASE

JANUARY 2006

Choir of London launch Naxos CD and new Bursary Scheme with two concerts in March 2006

In March 2006 the **Choir of London** will launch both its first recording for **Naxos** and its new **Bursary Scheme** with two concerts, one at St John's Smith Square in London and the other at St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh.

March 2006 sees the release on the **Naxos** label of **Sir John Tavener's *Lament for Jerusalem***, performed by the **Choir of London** under the direction of **Jeremy Summery**. This is the *world première* recording of the "Jerusalem version" of the piece, a reduced version reworked by the composer for the Choir of London's debut tour to Jerusalem and the West Bank in December 2004. This tour, which involved 60 visiting musicians working alongside over 100 local performers in a series of joint concerts, is thought to have been the largest collaborative project of its kind to be staged in the Palestinian Territories and Israel in the post-1967 era.

The **Choir of London's** relationship with Israel and the Palestinian Territories continues, with the establishment of a **Bursary Scheme** to enable talented young **Palestinian** music students to participate in summer programmes in the UK. Opportunities to study abroad are currently almost non-existent for the vast majority of Palestinian student musicians: financial hurdles combine with the severe difficulty of securing a visa to make travel all but impossible. The Bursary Scheme, which is to be operated in conjunction with the **British Council**, will enable four students each year to take an intensive period of specialist tuition in the UK.

The **Choir of London** will use their two forthcoming concerts to launch both the Bursary Scheme and the Naxos disc. The first is at **St John's, Smith Square**, London, on Thursday **March 9**, and the second at **St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh**, on Saturday **March 11**. Alongside Tavener's *Lament for Jerusalem* will be settings of some of the same texts by William Byrd and Philippe de Monte, and the world première of *Triptych*, for choir and strings, by the prominent young British composer **Tarik O'Regan**. (The Edinburgh concert is part of the 3rd Annual Edinburgh Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace, which runs from February 8 – March 12.)

The **Choir of London** was established in 2003 as a unique vehicle for UK-based professional singers dedicated to putting their musical skills to effective charitable use. Members volunteer their time and energies for a number of days each year to stage special collaborative projects both in the UK and abroad. These projects are underpinned by a belief in the capacity of music to transcend national, religious and social frontiers; and an attendant conviction that professional musicians can – even in a modest way – act as bridge-builders.

www.choiroflondon.org

Choir of London – UK engagements: March 2006

9 March 2006, 7.30pm

The Choir of London, Jeremy Summerly – conductor

St John's, Smith Square, London

TAVENER: *Lament for Jerusalem*

de MONTE: *Super flumina Babylonis*

BYRD: *Quomodo cantabimus*

O'REGAN: *Triptych*

Box Office (St John's Smith Square): 020 7222 1061 or www.sjss.org.uk

11 March 2006, 7.30pm

The Choir of London, Jeremy Summerly – conductor

St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Palmerston Place, Edinburgh

TAVENER: *Lament for Jerusalem*

de MONTE: *Super flumina Babylonis*

BYRD: *Quomodo cantabimus*

O'REGAN: *Triptych*

Box Office (Queen's Hall): 0131 668 2019

Choir of London on CD

NAXOS (8.557826)

Sir John Tavener, *Lament for Jerusalem*

Choir of London, Jeremy Summerly

(Released March 2006)

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