



Billericay, Maldon & Witham
Choral Societies
and the Anglia Singers
present



The Armed Man

A Concert for Peace

Saturday 15th November 2025

5.30 pm

Jenkins - The Armed Man

Goodall - Eternal Light

Director Ed Cooke-Sutton

*with instrumental
accompaniment*

**LIFT New Rickstones Academy
Conrad Road
WITHAM CM8 2SD**

Retiring Collection in aid of the Royal British Legion Charity No 219279

WELCOME

A warm welcome to Members of Parliament, Councillors, religious leaders of all faiths, and to the performers and audience members who have travelled from across Essex to be with us this evening for our Concert for Peace.

Choral music in Essex has for many decades been on a trajectory away from competition and towards ever-greater collaboration. In 2023 three of tonight's groups (Maldon, Witham and Billericay) came together to perform Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at Christ Church URC in Chelmsford, under my baton. Since then Anglia Singers have suffered the sad loss of their founder, Professor Emeritus Christopher Green OBE, at the age of 82. I was appointed Director of Music in his place, in addition to my roles conducting Maldon and Witham Choral Societies. This then paved the way for Anglia joining the massed forces you see on stage tonight. All four choirs welcome new adult singers to join them without auditions.

Indeed, it is refreshing to be able to bring groups together in this way and thus to keep the more large scale choral works in the locally performed repertoire.

But of course, tonight is about so much than the gratification of performing large scale choral music. As recently as ten years ago I was conducting a personal friend and colleague of Sir Winston Churchill every week in a local choir, but in 2025 very few of us personally know a WW2 veteran, and the youngest of the survivors is now around 98 years of age.

As recent events have shown, the peace Jenkins's music calls for is scarcely the stuff of ever-distancing memories.

Ukraine, Gaza, the Synagogue attack in Manchester, and the largely forgotten civil wars and unrest in DR Congo, South Sudan, Sudan, Haiti and Syria, highlight right up to the present day and beyond what human beings are only too capable of doing to each other.

Choral music in the Western world remains dominated by Christian Masses, Requiems, Te Deums, Glorias and other sacred texts. Whilst Jenkins is far from the only composer to add texts to a Requiem Mass from outside the usual movements, his is perhaps the most enduring setting which embraces multi culturalism.

To this end, we are delighted to welcome Bilaal Allison, a Muezzin from the local community, to lead the call to prayer in the second movement of The Armed Man.

We hope that whatever your beliefs or lack thereof, you are able to join us in dedicating this concert to the memory of those who lost their lives in the hope of creating a more peaceful world.

Accordingly, we are pleased to offer an opportunity to donate to the work of the Royal British Legion in a retiring collection this evening.

Ashley Thompson

PROGRAMME NOTES

Reflecting on the end of War World Two and the 80 years since, we draw together a collection of modern pieces focusing on different elements of conflict. At the core of our performance today are two requiems. The requiem is the mass said for the dead, and traditionally focuses on divine judgement and damnation. Our requiems tonight adopt a different philosophy: Goodall's *Eternal Light* focuses on loss and remembrance, providing solace to the grieving; Jenkin's *Armed Man* describes the destruction of war and calls for peace. Britten's *Fanfare to St Edmundsbury* hints at the militaristic theme that permeates this commemoration, where Cooke-Sutton's *For the Fallen* reminds us of the importance of acts of remembrance and acknowledging the sacrifice made for us by so many over many conflicts before and since.

Howard Goodall: *Eternal Light: A Requiem*

IV. Hymn: *Lead, kindly light*

Goodall uses the familiar, comforting text of this poem by John Henry Newman to provide a core of hope and faith at the heart of his requiem. This is a hopeful prayer for guidance through the darkness: "Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom, lead thou me on! The night is dark, and I am far from home, lead thou me on".

V. *Lacrymosa: Do not stand at my grave and weep*

Over the slow choral setting of the *Lacrymosa* (weeping) from the traditional Latin requiem, Goodall sets Mary Elizabeth Frye's poem. The poem asserts that the dead are not contained by the

grave (“Do not stand at my grave and weep, I am not there, I do not sleep”) but live in the memories of the living (“I am the child that yearns to sing, I am in each lovely thing. Do not stand at my grave and cry, I am not there, I did not die”).

IX. Agnus Dei

Taken from the traditional requiem and Latin mass. Sung in Latin the words translate to “Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.”

X. In Paradisum: Lux Aeterna

The finale to Goodall’s requiem combines two Latin texts: In Paradisum (May the angels lead you into paradise); and Lux Aeterna (May light perpetual shine upon them).

The movement acts as a musical summary, reprising themes from earlier movements to bring the entire requiem to a unified and peaceful close, focusing on the comforting idea of everlasting peace for the departed.

Benjamin Britten: Fanfare for St Edmundsbury

Britten wrote this as a herald to the start of the Pageant of Magna Carta in the grounds of St Edmundsbury Cathedral in 1959. Britten specified that the three trumpeters “should be placed as far apart as possible, even when the Fanfare is played indoors”. Each trumpeter takes it in turns to play their contrasting fanfare, then they play their individual fanfares simultaneously.

Ed Cooke-Sutton: For the Fallen

Our conductor today wrote this piece in 2016 for the choir of St James Abinger Common. He felt there was not an approachable musical setting of this famous poem.

The recurring reprise “They shall grow not old...” hints at the annual repetition of the act of remembrance; the changing “At the going down...” sections demonstrate that the act is always subtly different, as the world moves on with more conflict, as more names are added to the roll. The major key and calm but driving rhythm symbolise positivity and hope; the final lengthened assertions that “we will remember them” emphasise the need of the act of remembrance itself for all of us.

Karl Jenkins: The Armed Man

Karl Jenkins’ *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* merges portions of the traditional Latin mass with a dramatic narrative on the nature and consequence of war. Commissioned by the Royal Armouries Museum to mark the millennium, it was explicitly dedicated to the victims of the Kosovo crisis. This context is key: the piece an urgent, contemporary plea for peace, confronting the fact that human conflict continues into the new millennium.

Through the work, Jenkins builds a dramatic journey exploring humanity’s enduring fascination with, and simultaneous destruction by, war. Its eclectic libretto incorporates texts from diverse cultural and historical sources, underscoring that conflict is a cycle that transcends era, geography, and religion.

The work unfolds in thirteen distinct movements, tracing a continuous arc from the call to arms, through the trauma of conflict, to the hope for global reconciliation.

I. The Armed Man

*The armed man should be feared.
Everywhere it has been proclaimed,
That each man shall arm himself with a coat of iron mail.
The armed man should be feared.*

Anonymous folk song, c.1450 (sung in French)

The piece opens with this relentless, drum-driven warning, setting the stage for militarism. Jenkins uses the tune, a popular basis for Renaissance masses, to highlight the historical omnipresence of military mobilisation.

II. The Call to Prayer (Adhan)

*God is the greatest
I bear witness that there is none
worthy of worship except God
I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God
Hasten to Prayer, Hasten to salvation
God is the greatest
There is none worthy of worship except God*

Islamic Call to Prayer (Adhan) (sung in Arabic)

By incorporating the Adhan (the Muslim Call to Prayer), Jenkins broadens the cultural and religious scope, illustrating that the impulse to gather for a cause, whether spiritual or military, is universal.

III. Kyrie

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Traditional Latin Mass (sung in Greek)

Set for the full choir, the music is quiet and searching, reflecting a moment of profound uncertainty and a universal plea for divine intervention before the outbreak of violence.

IV. Save Me From Bloody Men

*Be merciful unto me, O God:
For man would swallow me up.
He fighting daily oppresseth me.
Mine enemies would daily swallow me up.
For they be many that fight against men.
O thou Most High.
Defend me from them that rise up against me.
Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,
And save me from bloody men.*

Psalm 56 and Revelation

This unison setting sets a strong contrast to passages around it. The music expresses a desperate cry against violence and a mounting sense of chaos, anticipating the ultimate judgement and destruction of battle.

V. Sanctus

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Traditional Latin Mass (sung in Latin)

It is impossible to miss the military style of this movement: the slow march with measured repetitive bass, driving rhythmic percussion and trumpet fanfares accompanies the solemnity of the Latin text. The atmosphere of martial tension and unease suggests that even in the pursuit of the divine, the sounds of conflict are not far away.

VI. Hymn Before Action

*The earth is full of anger, / The seas are dark with wrath,
The Nations in their harness / Go up against our path:
Ere yet we loose the legions / Ere yet we draw the blade,
Jehovah of the Thunders, / Lord God of Battles, aid!
High lust and froward bearing, / Proud heart, rebellious
brow
Deaf ear and soul uncaring, / We seek Thy mercy now!
The sinner that forswore Thee, / The fool that passed Thee
by,
Our times are known before Thee / Lord, grant us strength
to die!*

Poem by Rudyard Kipling (1896)

Kipling's text conveys the mindset of soldiers preparing for battle, seeking both courage and forgiveness from God while acknowledging the destructive, yet necessary, task ahead.

VII. Charge!

*The trumpet's loud clangor excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger, and mortal alarms.
How blest is he who for his country dies
The double, double beat of the thund'ring drum
Cries, Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.*

Poem by John Dryden and Jonathan Swift

In this dramatic climax of the conflict section, Jenkins uses brass fanfares, driving percussion and glissando voices to create a terrifying and chaotic musical depiction of the battle – the ultimate expression of the horror and futility of war. The movement ends with a period of silence, followed by the last post. (continued on page 10)

PROGRAMME

PART ONE

Howard Goodall

Excerpts from Eternal Light:

- IV. Lead, kindly light
- V. Lacrymosa: Do not stand at my grave and weep
- IX. Agnus Dei
- X. In Paradisum: Lux Aeterna

**A message from Malcolm Taylor, Royal British Legion Essex
County Chairman**

Benjamin Britten

Fanfare for St Edmundsbury

Ed Cooke-Sutton

For the Fallen

INTERVAL

PROGRAMME

PART TWO

Karl Jenkins

The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace

- I. The Armed Man
- II. Call to Prayers
- III. Kyrie
- IV. Save Me from Bloody Men
- V. Sanctus
- VI. Hymn Before Action
- VII. Charge!
- VIII. Angry Flames
- IX. Torches
- X. Agnus Dei
- XI. Now the Guns have Stopped
- XII. Benedictus
- XIII. Better is Peace

VIII. Angry Flames

*Pushing up through smoke
From a world half darkened by overhanging cloud.
The shroud that mushroomed out
And struck the dome of the sky,
Black, red, blue, Dance in the air,
Merge, scatter glittering sparks already
tower over the whole city.
Quivering like seaweed
The mass of flames spurts forward.
Popping up in the dense smoke,
Crawling out wreathed in fire,
Countless human beings on all fours
In a heap of embers that erupt and subside,
Hair rent, rigid in death, There smoulders a curse.*

Poem by Tōge Sankichi

Sankichi witnessed the bombing of Hiroshima. The sections of the choir take it in turns to recite the poem with the barest accompaniment, occasionally hinting at the military theme. Drawing out the word-painting, the only words set in harmony are 'merge', 'fours' and finally 'death'.

IX. Torches

*The animals scattered in all directions,
screaming terrible screams.
Many were burning, others were burnt.
All were shattered and scattered mindlessly,
their eyes bulging.
Some hugged their sons, others their fathers
and mothers, unable to let them go,
and so they died.*

*Others leapt up in their thousands, faces
disfigured and were consumed by the fire,
everywhere bodies squirming on the ground,
wings, eyes and paws all burning.
They breathed their last as living torches.*

Excerpt from The Mahābhārata, Sanskrit epic poem

Another exotic source conjuring the universality of the theme. A simple chant-like recitation gets more adventurous in pitch and rhythm until a final unison exclamation of 'torches'.

X. Agnus Dei

*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.*

*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.*

Traditional Latin Mass (sung in Latin)

The mood shifts sharply to deep mourning and reflection. The movement is slow, intensely emotional, offering a lament for the dead and a quiet plea for peace in the face of suffering.

XI. Now the Guns Have Stopped

*Silent, so silent now,
Now the guns have stopped.
I have survived all,
I who knew I would not.
But now you are not here.
I shall go home, alone;
And must try to live life as before
And hide my grief.
For you, my dearest friend,
who should be with me now,*

*Not cold, too soon,
And in your grave, Alone.*

Poem by Guy Wilson

Written for the introduction to a photography book (The Great War: Britain's Effort and Ideals), the poem captures the quiet, devastating emptiness immediately following the fight. The music, set for lone alto voices, is sparse and haunting, focusing intensely on the human cost of conflict and the fragile, necessary process of grief and recovery.

XII. Benedictus

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Traditional Latin Mass (sung in Latin)

One of the most beloved sections of the piece and often featured on its own, the Benedictus is set as an extended, serene melody, featuring a soaring solo cello against a gentle choral and orchestral background. It is a moment of profound, fragile beauty, acting as a pivotal plea for calm and a melody of hopeful, sustained faith amidst the persistent memory of war, but be careful, the triumphant 'hosannas' hint at something more militaristic.

XIII. Better is Peace

*Better is peace than always war,
And better is peace than evermore war.
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.
Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;*

*Ring out the false, ring in the true.
Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.
Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true*

Poems by Thomas Mallory and Alfred Tennyson

*God shall wipe away all tears
And there shall be no more death,
Neither sorrow, nor crying,
Neither shall there be any more pain. Praise the Lord.*

Revelation 21:4

A transition toward optimism begins here. The finale draws on these powerful texts to affirm everlasting peace. It reprises the central L'homme armé theme one last time – not as a march, but as a quiet, elegiac reflection – before building to a massive, triumphant affirmation of hope and renewal. After the jubilant peak with full forces of choir and orchestra, the piece closes with a chorale-like passage assuring the listener that God shall remove all pain and sorrow and praising the Lord. The work ends cautiously meditative, reminding us that after the struggle and devastation, the possibility for healing and peace remains our most vital mission.

Ed Cooke-Sutton

ED COOKE-SUTTON

Ed received his first organ training under Kenneth Ryder as Diocesan Organ Scholar at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich. He was simultaneously major music scholar at the King's School, Ely. He read music at the University of Edinburgh and continued his studies at the University of Exeter, where he was Ouseley Senior Organ Scholar, researching the choral music of Giovanni Paolo Cima. Since then Ed has held various organist and choir director positions.

Ed currently directs the Harsnett Choir, Gibbons Ensemble, and Billericay Choral Society, and plays for various groups including Keepsake, and Maldon Choral Society.

In addition to his musical career, Ed currently works in underwriting and product development in the City of London.

He lives in Essex with his wife, daughter and miniature schnauzer. He enjoys quizzes and gin, often in combination.

ASHLEY THOMPSON

Ashley Thompson is a busy choral director, accompanist and organist who trained as a Choral Scholar at Chelmsford Cathedral under Peter Nardone. He has since acted as Director of Music to St James the Great Colchester, Holy Trinity Rayleigh, Stock Music Society Choir and St Nicolas' Witham.

Ashley has conducted Choral works including: Britten Ceremony of Carols, Elgar Spirit of England, Mozart Requiem and Missa Brevis in D, Faure Requiem, Stainer Crucifixion, Maunder Olivet to Calvary, Vivaldi Gloria, Stanford Last Post and Six Irish

Folksongs, Rutter Sprig of Thyme, Duruflé Requiem, Ravel Trois Chansons, Poulenc Quatre Motets Pour Le Temps De Noel, Chilcott Christmas Oratorio, Handel Four Coronation Anthems, Mendelssohn Elijah, Vaughan Williams Five Mystical Songs and Arthur Sullivan's The Pirates of Penzance, Trial by Jury, HMS Pinafore and The Gondoliers.

Away from music, Ashley was elected to Chelmsford City Council in May 2023, and also serves as Vice Chair to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Trumpets

Ewan Parker

Clive Miller

Martyn Tubb

Percussion

Tom Plumridge

Connor Chambers

Dom Daggett

Flute

Kerry Bassil

Cello

Paul Lockyer

Piano

Emma Nash

Synthesiser/organ

Ashley Thompson

Anglia Singers

Musical Director: Ashley Thompson

Accompanist: Horacio Lopez

Anglia Singers comprises about 30 friendly singers of varying ages from the Chelmsford and Braintree locality.

Set up by the late Emeritus Professor Christopher Green OBE, we sing a range of styles because we enjoy it and often raise funds for good causes at our concerts in March, June & November.

Come along to a rehearsal, held at Anglia Ruskin University's Chelmsford campus (Sawyer's Building) on Wednesdays from

5.15-6.45pm. Or email Chair Barry Crawford:

barry.crawford@sky.com

Billericay Choral Society

Director: Ed Cooke-Sutton: Accompanist: Philip Prior

Rehearsals: Billericay Methodist Church,

Western Road, Billericay, CM12 9DT

Term-time Tuesdays 7.30 – 9.30 pm

All adult singers welcome- no auditions!

Christmas Concert- Tuesday 16th December,

8pm, Billericay Methodist Church

Vivaldi and Italian Music- Saturday March 28th, 2026, afternoon
-venue tbc

Summer Concert – Saturday June 20th time & venue tbc

www.billericaychoral.co.uk

or find us on Facebook, Billericay Choral Society

Maldon Choral

Director: Ashley Thompson

Accompanist: Ed Cooke-Sutton

All Saints' Primary, Highlands Drive, Maldon CM9 6H

Term-time Thursdays 7.30 – 9.30 pm

– a warm welcome guaranteed -

Christmas Concert:

Sat 13th December, All Saints' Church Maldon 6pm

Haydn: The Creation Sat March 28th 2026

Maldon URC 7.30pm

Choral Workshop Sat April 25th 2026

Maldon URC to be led by James Davey

maldonchoralsociety.co.uk

Witham Choral

Witham Choral has been in existence since 1957, making the choir 68 years old this year. We are a friendly and welcoming choir, with many members from the surrounding area and we meet weekly, on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm, in St Nicolas Church Hall, Witham, generally performing 3 concerts each year, (Mar/April, June/July, November/December) all with a varied content ranging from well-known choral works to more light hearted content, for example our last concert in July this year was a celebration of works by the Lloyd Webber family. Find out more at – **withamchoral.org.uk**

