

HEBRIDES ENSEMBLE
co-commission a new work from
JAMES MACMILLAN: “*Since it was the Day of Preparation...*”

Premiere: Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh International Festival: 22 August 2012

King’s Place, London: 29 September 2012

Amsterdam: 21 March 2013

Howard Assembly Room, Leeds: 23 March 2013

Perth, Scotland: April 2013

Hebrides Ensemble is leading the commission, along with partners Edinburgh International Festival, King’s Place and Soli Deo Gloria, of a new work by James MacMillan to be premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival at 5.45pm on Wednesday 22 August 2012 in Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh. This will be followed by a second performance at King’s Place, London, on 29 September 2012 before touring in 2013 to Amsterdam on 21 March, Leeds on 23 March and to Perth (UK) on a date in April 2013.

The new work is entitled *Since it was the Day of Preparation...* in which James MacMillan tells one of the greatest stories ever told, that of The Resurrection. It follows on from his setting of The St John Passion, which takes the narrative up to the death of Christ. As well as being recognised as one of the country’s leading composers, James MacMillan has continually demonstrated, across the breadth of his compositions, his commitment to sacred music.

MacMillan’s new piece is dedicated to William Conway, cellist and artistic director of Hebrides Ensemble who has led the commission. Artistic director William Conway describes this very lyrical and dramatic work as, “*music and drama of real depth from a master craftsman*” . James MacMillan says, “*I have wanted to write a big work for the Hebrides Ensemble for years. I have known William Conway since we were young and I have always had great respect for all he has done in chamber music. To combine his players with voices was an extra special attraction. When I completed my St John Passion some years ago, it felt like an unfinished story, and I wanted to get back to it quickly. By taking up St John’s narrative from the death of Christ through to the end of the Gospel was an exciting musical and spiritual journey for me.*”

Since it was the Day of Preparation... will be a showcase for outstanding chamber musicians. Scored for a small chamber ensemble and singers, with just five instrumentalists and five singers,

it will be performed by Hebrides Ensemble and Synergy Vocals, featuring bass Brindley Sherratt, under the artistic direction of William Conway. The line-up of instruments is very unusual (clarinet, French horn, cello, harp and theorbo with soprano, alto, tenor and bass, plus bass soloist) and throughout the piece, MacMillan writes interludes where each of the five instrumentalists have solo moments of real virtuosity.

Synergy Vocals' association with Steve Reich, Luciano Berio and Louis Andriessen is well-known, and most of the group's repertoire involves amplification, so this is an exciting departure from their norm. For Synergy Vocals, the attraction of this new work by James MacMillan lies in its transparency and small scale, allowing for an intimate approach to performance similar to that of close-microphone singing.

Commissioning partners:

Hebrides Ensemble is renowned for quality of performance, diversity of programming and its commitment to supporting new composers and commissioning new works. It is a collective of outstanding musicians, performing chamber music, music theatre and chamber operas in new and interesting ways. www.hebridesensemble.com

The Edinburgh International Festival is hosting the world premiere of *Since it was the Day of Preparation...* with the support of the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund as part of a series of early evening concerts in Greyfriars Kirk. www.eif.co.uk

Soli Deo Gloria is an international arts organisation based in Chicago that has gained recognition as a distinctive, behind-the-scenes advocate of sacred music. James MacMillan serves as an Advisory Board member to Soli Deo Gloria. www.sdgmusic.org

Kings Place is a hub for music, art, dialogue and food, housed in an award-winning building in Kings Cross, London. Since opening to the public in September 2008, a diverse and open minded programme has established it as one of Europe's leading cultural landmarks. www.kingsplace.co.uk

TICKETS: £10, £20 online: www.eif.co.uk tel: 0131 473 2000

PERFORMANCE: Wednesday 22 August, 5.45pm, Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh

For additional press information please contact:

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