



## Press Release

For release: 10 January 2013

**A major new commission to mark the Bicentenary of the Royal Philharmonic Society and Benjamin Britten's centenary in 2013 has been announced:**

***Innocence and Experience*: a songbook for young voices, with new songs by Sally Beamish, Charlotte Bray, Anna Meredith and Thea Musgrave, will be premiered at Aldeburgh Festival in June 2013.**

**Taking texts from William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, Sally Beamish, Charlotte Bray, Anna Meredith and Thea Musgrave** have each contributed two new songs, which will be premiered by the **New London Children's Choir** conducted by Ronald Corp in Aldeburgh. Inspired by Britten's own *Friday Afternoons* song collection, it is hoped *Innocence and Experience* will similarly capture the imaginations of young singers.

The work is one of a series of major co-commissions from The Royal Philharmonic Society [RPS] and The Britten-Pears Foundation [BPF] to mark the RPS's bicentenary and Britten's centenary in 2013. *Innocence and Experience* is dedicated to composer Richard Rodney Bennett, one of the original composers commissioned for this series who sadly died in December 2012 before completing his work. RPS Trustee **Colin Matthews**, who is also BPF's Music Director comments: "*Writing music for children's voices was such a vital part of Britten's musical output and it therefore feels fitting to continue the tradition of both Britten and Richard Rodney Bennett, who himself wrote a wonderful body of music for young performers, by creating a songbook to enliven and inspire singing well beyond the concert hall.*"

The RPS/BPF commissions involve leading international composers who have been asked to write works for different ensembles to reflect the range of Britten's composition output, including symphony orchestra, children's choir and tenor with piano. All six works will be performed at the 2013 Aldeburgh Festival in June, with five receiving their world premiere.

**In addition to the Song Book, Wolfgang Rihm** will write for symphony orchestra (premiered by the **Hallé**), **Judith Weir** for chamber orchestra (**Britten Sinfonia**), **Magnus Lindberg** for large-scale ensemble (**Birmingham Contemporary Music Group**), **Poul Ruders** for string quartet (**Vertavo Quartet – world premiere – 9 March, Barbican**) and **Harrison Birtwistle** for tenor and piano (with words by **David Harsent**, premiered by **Mark Padmore and Till Fellner**)

### Further press information from:

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### World Premiere Performances:

**9 March** – World Premiere – Poul Ruders – Vertavo Quartet – Barbican

**8 June** – World Premiere – Judith Weir – Britten Sinfonia – Aldeburgh Festival

**9 June** – World Premiere – Sally Beamish, Charlotte Bray, Anna Meredith and Thea Musgrave – New London Children's Choir – Aldeburgh Festival

**13 June** – World Premiere – Harrison Birtwistle – Mark Padmore / Till Fellner – Aldeburgh Festival

**22 June** – World Premiere – Magnus Lindberg – BCMG – Aldeburgh Festival

**23 June** – World Premiere – Wolfgang Rihm – Hallé – Aldeburgh Festival