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NEWS RELEASE

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Marin Symphony performs Vaughan Williams' poignant call to peace and "Lark Ascending"

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San Francisco Ballet's Katita Waldo joins pre-concert to discuss Balanchine's adaptation of Bizet work

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SAN RAFAEL, CA—In concerts on Sunday, March 1 and Tuesday, March 3, music director Alasdair Neale will conduct the Marin Symphony, the Marin Symphony Chorus and Marin Symphony Youth Chorus in performances featuring two works by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Symphony No. 1 by Bizet.

The choral work on the concert program, **Vaughan Williams' cantata *Dona Nobis Pacem*** ("Grant us peace") was written in the mid-1930s as a warning against the rising drums of war heard throughout Europe. Vaughan Williams, who served a grueling stint as a stretcher bearer during World War I, recalled far too intimately the atrocities of war to want to see them repeated. For text, he turned to excerpts from the Latin mass and the Old Testament, a political speech, and three poems by Walt Whitman, the first of which, "Beat! Beat! Drums!", ironically was written as a patriotic rally call for the North as the Civil War broke out. Overcome by the suffering of those wounded during the Civil War, however, Whitman volunteered to serve as a nurse in army hospitals. There, his tolerance for violence evaporated. In Whitman's heartfelt, raw depictions of war's ravages, Vaughan Williams found the verbal vehicles real and poignant enough to serve his cautionary purposes. These texts, combined with the lush, folk-derived musical idioms and harmonies for which Vaughan Williams is known, make for a choral work stunning in its heart-wrenching potency; indeed, many believe that *Dona Nobis Pacem* is Vaughan Williams' finest choral work.

Soprano **Helene Zindarsian** and baritone **Matt Treviño** solo. A native San Franciscan and current resident of San Rafael, Ms. Zindarsian performs regularly throughout the Bay Area as a soloist and professional member of several distinguished ensembles including Philharmonia Baroque, American Bach Soloists, the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, San Francisco Opera Chorus, Carmel Bach Festival, and

more. Mr. Treviño, a leading young American opera singer, has been hailed as a "...bass of rare talent" (San Francisco Chronicle) whose voice "achieves nobility and sonorous resonance..." (Opera News). A Texas native and current resident of New York City, he has performed widely with opera companies nationwide. He has also been a prizewinner in numerous opera competitions, including the Loren L. Zachary Foundation Competition, Dallas Opera Guild Competition and McCammon Competition of Fort Worth Opera. Mr. Treviño soloed previously with the Marin Symphony in its 2006-07 performance of Duruflé's Requiem.

Stephen McKersie directs the Marin Symphony Chorus; Jenny Bent directs the Marin Symphony Youth Chorus. Alasdair Neale conducts in performance.

Marin Symphony concertmaster Jeremy Constant takes center stage for the other **Vaughan Williams** work on the concert program: *The Lark Ascending*, for solo violin and orchestra. *The Lark Ascending* was inspired by George Meredith's poem of the same name about a skylark attaining such lofty heights above a sunny down that the lark becomes barely visible. Vaughan Williams' progress on the composition, begun in 1914, was interrupted by the first World War. He took the work up again in 1920; it was premiered in June, 1921. Now immensely popular, *The Lark Ascending* was voted number one in the Classic FM Hall of Fame in both 2007 and 2008, winning over such favorites as Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto, Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2, Mozart's Clarinet Concerto and Vaughan Williams' other great work, *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*.

Jeremy Constant joined the Marin Symphony in 1994 and is a frequent violin soloist. He is first violin in the Navarro String Quartet, Concertmaster of the Sun Valley Summer Symphony (also under the direction of Alasdair Neale), Assistant Concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony, and a member of the San Francisco Opera orchestra. He has also been a member of the Lake Tahoe Summer Music Festival, the Donatello String Quartet, the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and served as Concertmaster of the Mendocino Music Festival. A native of Toronto, Canada, Mr. Constant was the Grand Prizewinner of the Du Maurier Competition in Canada. He was brought to California by the Carmel Bach Festival in 1979.

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How a great piece of music became a great ballet

Pre-concert, San Francisco Ballet principal dancer **Katita Waldo** joins Maestro Neale to discuss the third work on the concert program, Symphony No. 1 by Georges Bizet, best known for the opera *Carmen*. The Marin Symphony continues its "The Wind Beneath the Wings" 08/09 season spotlight on

the symphonic music of dance by exploring with Ms. Waldo George Balanchine's staging of the Bizet symphony into *Symphony in C*, a ballet she has performed numerous times with San Francisco Ballet.

Born in Madrid, Spain, Katita Waldo trained at Escuela de Danza Classica, North Carolina School of the Arts, Washington Ballet, and San Francisco Ballet School. After joining San Francisco Ballet in 1988, she was promoted to soloist in 1990 and to principal dancer in 1994. Principal classical roles include Odette/Odile in Tomasson's *Swan Lake*, Myrtha in Tomasson's *Giselle*, Aurora in Tomasson's *The Sleeping Beauty*, and Grand Pas de Deux Ballerina in Tomasson's *Nutcracker*; Sylph in Bournonville's *La Sylphide*; and Desdemona in Lubovitch's *Othello*. She received Isadora Duncan Dance Awards for best ensemble performance in 2001 and 2002.

Concerts made possible by Bank of Marin, Peter Levi Plumbing and Taddej, Ludwig & Associates.

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Sunday, March 1 and Tuesday, March 3, 2009 at 7:30pm

Alasdair Neale, conductor

Jeremy Constant, violin

Helene Zindarsian, soprano

Matthew Treviño, baritone

The Marin Symphony Chorus and Marin Symphony Youth Chorus

Vaughan Williams

The Lark Ascending

Vaughan Williams

Dona Nobis Pacem

Bizet

Symphony No. 1 in C Major

MARIN CENTER, 10 Avenue of the Flags, San Rafael

Tickets \$27 / \$50 / \$65 (students half price) at 415.499.6800 or click www.marinsymphony.org

Free pre-concert talk 3/1 and 3/3 with Maestro Neale and Katita Waldo 6:30-7pm in the concert hall.
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Jpg: Soprano soloist Helene Zindarsian. Photo credit n/a.