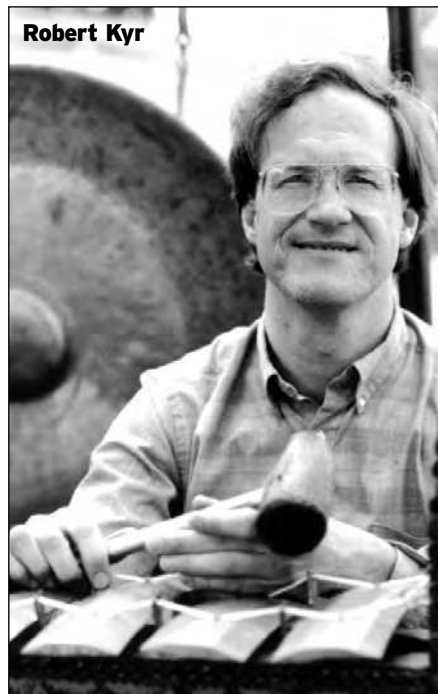


A Celebration of Peace

ECC's *Give Us Peace* Festival still timely



Robert Kyr

Three weeks ago, on the third anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Michael Stipe, Bright Eyes and Chuck D came together to perform at the Bring 'Em Home concert in New York. The musicians joined peace activist Cindy Sheehan to raise awareness of the tragedies of our present war.

Using music to spread a message of peace in the midst of war is no new concept. There was, of course, Woodstock, and that generation's songs of peace that flew in the face of the brutalities of Vietnam.

But English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*, written in the mid-1930s as World War II loomed in Europe, is possibly the 20th century's most passionate and beautiful musical elucidation of the futility of war and the power of peace.

The Eugene Concert Choir will feature Vaughan Williams' masterpiece at its season-ending performance *Grant Us Peace* — *Dona Nobis Pacem*, as the culmination of the Festival of Peace, April 18 to April 22.

"I planned this concert three years ago," says Diane Retallack, ECC's artistic and executive director. "I was hoping that by the time we got to this concert we wouldn't need a peace concert. But I see we need [it] now more than ever."

Vaughan Williams himself knew the tragedies of war. He fought in World War I, during which he lost many friends. Shortly thereafter, he began compiling a scrapbook of quotations meant to bring some relevance to what he had seen while at war in

France. In his scrapbook were Civil War-era poems by Walt Whitman, Biblical passages and an excerpt of John Bright's famous speech lambasting the Crimean War ("The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land"), all of which are integrated into *Dona Nobis Pacem*.

Soprano soloist Carmen Pelton and baritone soloist James Bobick will join ECC for Vaughan Williams' cantata, and the *Grant Us Peace* concert will include works by Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff and Eugene's

own Robert Kyr.

The concert will begin with the choir singing, "Lord, make me an instrument of peace," from Kyr's "Voices of Peace," which is based on the text of St. Francis of Assisi. In a time of war such as now, sometimes music can be the plea for peace the world needs to hear.

Give peace a chance 8 pm Saturday, April 22 at the Silva Hall, Hult Center. Adults: \$15/\$23/\$28. Students/seniors: \$10/\$18/\$24. **ew**

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