

PRESS RELEASE

To: The News Editor

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Message: Please publish week beginning February 23rd, if possible.

**GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR PERFORMS
ELGAR'S DREAM OF GERONTIUS
CIVIC HALL, GUILDFORD
MARCH 7th at 7.30pm.**

Edward Elgar's "The Dream of Gerontius" is one of the most thrilling masterpieces in English musical literature. The combination of Cardinal Newman's intense and dramatic poem about the dying Gerontius' search for spiritual fulfilment and Elgar's sublime music have made this work deservedly popular.

Yet it was not always so. Its first performance in Birmingham in 1990 was a disaster, with both chorus master and conductor failing to get to grips with the innovations of the music. It was a year later, in Düsseldorf, that Elgar received due acclaim and rapturous applause. Since then it has become a great favourite and is often performed in Lent and at Easter, when its inspirational qualities seem especially apt.

VERY modern!

Guildford Philharmonic Choir will be performing this work at the Civic Hall, Guildford on 7 March. The part of Gerontius will be taken by the tenor, Richard Braebrook. In his tenth season with the English National Opera, Richard is making a name for himself in this rôle. A recent performance at the Barbican with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Sarah Walker was widely acclaimed. The Angel will be sung by the soprano, Jeanette Ager, a member of the Glyndebourne Festival Chorus and Exhibitionist at the Royal Academy of Music. The bass, Jeffrey Carl, will take the part of the Priest and the Angel of Agony. He recently received rave reviews for his performance in "Tosca" at Holland Park Opera. For this he was awarded the American Express Prize for "best male singer".

The Choir are delighted to welcome the Vasari Singers, former winners of the Sainsbury Choir of the Year Competition, to perform the semi-chorus parts and the orchestra, the Guildford Philharmusica. The conductor for the evening will be the Chorus Director of the Guildford Philharmonic Choir, Jeremy Backhouse.

The performance will begin at 7.30pm and tickets, from £9 to £12, are available from the Guildford Civic Hall Box Office on 01483 444555.