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Elusan Gofrestig Rhif 701990/ Registered Charity No. 701990

**Saturday 9 March 2024**

**Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre, NMW Cathays Park, Cardiff  
at 10.30am**

**Benjamin Britten: War Requiem**

**A talk by Geraint Lewis**

When Benjamin Britten was commissioned to compose a major choral work for the consecration of the iconic new Coventry Cathedral in 1962 at the height of the Cold War, he was painfully aware - as a life-long pacifist - that the world was never free from the scourge of human violence. In our own desperately troubled times we see yet again that the painful warning of the 'War Requiem' is as relevant now as ever, if not even more so. In puncturing the fixed Latin text of the Catholic Requiem Mass with eight strategically-placed poems by the Great War poet Wilfred Owen, Britten provides a devastating critique of the certainties of established religion, directly - as it were - from the trenches, where Owen was killed just a week before the Armistice of November 1918. With an all-embracing sweep which is both operatic and symphonic, Britten's profound masterpiece provides ample food for thought which this talk will attempt to present and process.

Born in Cardiff, Geraint has previously presented talks to the Friends Amgueddfa Cymru on Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams. While at school in Rhydfelen he also studied at the RWCMD, and then read music at St John's College, Cambridge where he was a pupil of the legendary George Guest. He has lectured and broadcast extensively on a wide range of music and is best known for his published work on Tippett, Hoddinott and Mathias, with all of whom he collaborated personally. Having been director of the North Wales Music Festival 1992-2004 he was appointed director at Lower Machen Music in 2018. He writes regularly for *Gramophone* and *Barn* magazines and his many compositions include the anthem 'The Souls of the Righteous' which was included in the national memorial service televised live from St.Paul's Cathedral on the evening following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022.

**The cost is £10. Please pay on the day. This includes coffee and biscuits in the Oriol Suite after the talk.**

Please pay on the day preferably by cash (notes) or by cheque for £\_\_\_\_ in favour of Friends National Museum Wales.

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BACS Sort Code: 30-96-26 Acct no. 83447260. Use Reference Benjamin Britten and your name initials.

Signed\_\_\_\_\_ For further enquires contact: Richard Carter: 02920620687 or

07921811996 or richard.carter@friendsmuseumwales.org.uk