

Press Invite

St-Martin-in-the-Fields launches Music for Mindfulness concert: Tenebrae blends choral masterpieces with guided meditation from Michael McCaffrey



Thursday 10 October, 19:00

Tenebrae: Meditation – Music for Mindfulness

Sandström / Praetorius *Es ist ein Ros entsprungen*

Donna McKevitt *Lumen*

Rachmaninov *We Hymn Thee*

Gibbons / Forshaw *Drop, drop slow tears*

Chilcott *The Last Invocation*

Kedrov Otche *nash*

Rachmaninov *Rejoice, O Virgin*

Lobo *Versa est in luctum*

Allegri *Miserere*

Stanford *The Blue Bird*

Golovanov *Cherubic Hymn*

Chilcott *Even Such Is Time*

Howells *Requiem aeternum II*

In a new initiative that combines well-being and musical excellence, **St Martin-in-the-Fields** presents an evening of **Music for Mindfulness** with award-winning vocal group **Tenebrae** and mindfulness coach Michael McCaffrey. Tenebrae's Artistic Director **Nigel Short** has devised a sequence of beautiful and calming vocal masterpieces by **Lobo, Allegri** and **Rachmaninov** and others, while Michael McCaffrey will guide the audience towards deeper listening through a focus on the breath. No previous experience of meditation or mindfulness practice is required, and in the inspiring candlelit surroundings of **St Martin-in-the-Fields**, the unbroken sequence of music and mindfulness invites the audience to take an hour at the end of the day to relax and centre themselves.

Nigel Short explains,

"I've wanted to experiment with this format ever since I conducted a similar concert in Denmark several years ago. We all know that people are living increasingly busy lives, and the constant stream of information we receive through our phones is making it harder and harder to switch off. Music has always been something that people have turned to for comfort and solace, and arguably we need this now more than ever. We hope that this combination of beautiful music and guided breathwork will allow everyone a small bit of time and space to take some time out and slow down."

Reversing the emotional arch of a standard concert programme, Short and McCaffrey have worked together to shape the evening to guide the audience towards deeper tranquillity at the midpoint of the concert, before gently bringing them back to the present moment. The concert will include choral masterpieces such as Allegri's Miserere, and extracts from Rachmaninov's Vespers and Howells' Requiem. Analysing their social media, Tenebrae noticed that many listeners discovered their recordings through YouTube searches for music to aid relaxation and sleep, and wanted to create a live concert experience that would help people to switch off and slow down.

Michael McCaffrey says,

"As both a musician and experienced mindfulness teacher, the power of music as a tool to tap into deeper states of being is apparent. Music speaks to those same states that meditation often guides us into. A sense of calm, a present moment consciousness, the alive, immediate 'now' of each moment. It is no coincidence that ancient practices that encourage these states often use sound as a direct means by which to enter the stream of calm that mindfulness delivers."

Michael McCaffrey is a dedicated **meditation, mindfulness** and **breathwork guide**, passionately committed to making the transformative benefits of these practices accessible to all. With a rich background in these various techniques, his teachings focus on demystifying mindfulness, offering clarity and guidance to beginners while providing depth and insight for seasoned practitioners. It is his belief that anyone can take something positive from these practices and achieve an overall sense of wellbeing. Michael creates an inclusive space where individuals can embark on a journey of self-discovery and inner peace. Over the last decade he has built up a dedicated following for his sessions, working with individuals and also with companies such as Chelsea FC, NBC Universal, Amazon and Google.

Described as *"phenomenal"* (The Times) and *"devastatingly beautiful"* (Gramophone Magazine), award-winning choir **Tenebrae** is one of the world's leading vocal ensembles, renowned for its passion and precision.

Under the direction of **Nigel Short**, **Tenebrae** performs at major festivals and venues across the globe, including the BBC Proms, Wigmore Hall, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Rheingau Musik Festival and Sydney Festival. The choir has earned international acclaim for its interpretations of choral music from the Renaissance through to contemporary masterpieces, and has commissioned new music from composers including Judith Bingham, Joanna Marsh, Owain Park, Josephine Stephenson, Joby Talbot and Roderick Williams. Tenebrae has enjoyed collaborations with some of the UK's leading orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, Aurora Orchestra, the Academy of Ancient Music and Britten Sinfonia. The choir also undertakes regular session work, having contributed the vocals for Max Richter's Voices (2020), Jean-Jacques Annaud's Notre Dame brûle (2022), and blockbuster sci-fi movie Avatar: The Way of Water (2022) among others. Its extensive recording catalogue comprises a wide range of music on labels including Signum, LSO Live and Warner Classics, and has earned the choir two BBC Music Magazine Awards, an Edison Classical Award and a Grammy nomination.

Alongside its performance schedule, the choir runs a thriving **Learning & Connection programme** encompassing activities with London Youth Choirs, Tenebrae Effect workshops with amateur choirs, and Tenebrae Schools. In partnership with Ealing Music Service, this programme aims to embed a long-lasting culture of singing activities in local primary schools which might otherwise face barriers to music-making. Through its Associate Artists programme, Tenebrae also provides talented young professional singers with vital experience and support in the early stages of their careers.

'Passion and Precision' are Tenebrae's core values. Through its continued dedication to performance of the highest quality, Tenebrae's vision is to inspire audiences around the world through dramatic programming, flawless performances and unforgettable experiences.

***"For purity and precision of tone, and flawless intonation, Nigel Short's chamber choir Tenebrae is pretty much unbeatable."* The Times**

St Martin-in-the-Fields is a landmark church, concert venue and visitor attraction on London's Trafalgar Square. It is a friendly and forward-thinking community and the building itself is steeped in beautiful Georgian architecture. With a huge programme of services, concerts, events, exhibitions and lectures, St Martin's welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world each year.

A strong musical tradition flourishes at St Martin's. Their concerts series includes over 350 performances and gigs every year, featuring some of the UK's finest ensembles, chamber orchestras, choirs and musicians. An outstanding music programme is provided by the Choir and Choral Scholars of St Martin-in-the-Fields, some of London's finest voices who are regular performers on the BBC and

in concert. In the Crypt you can find St Martin's award-winning Café, Shop, Brass Rubbing Centre and a number of excellent spaces available for hire for meetings, celebrations and corporate events.

For more information on any of the above, please contact:

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