



Capriol Films Presents

Benjamin Britten – Peace and Conflict

Written and Directed by Tony Britten

Produced by Tony Britten, Katja Mordaunt and Anwen Rees Myers

"*Peace and Conflict* is a beautiful and touching evocation of Britten's schooling at Gresham's and the values there inculcated, which remained with him for life. Rubbing shoulders with Donald Maclean and with the the ghosts of the young Gresham's soldiers killed in the First World War swirling through the quads, the young Britten develops from a hesitant, watchful student into a steely young man. This is a moving and engrossing film, with terrific performances and tender appreciation of Britten's music."

Paul Kildea, author of *Benjamin Britten: A Life in the Twentieth Century*



THE FILM This moving and thought provoking drama documentary for cinema explores the pacifism that was such a powerful influence on composer Benjamin Britten's life and work. The story begins in 1929 at Gresham's School in Norfolk, England. Our young actors take us into a world where pupils are encouraged to address social and political issues and Benjamin Britten's hatred of all things militaristic is formed. We learn that partly as a reaction to the treat of fascism many of these boys became communists, notably Donald Maclean, later to attain notoriety as one of the Cambridge spies.

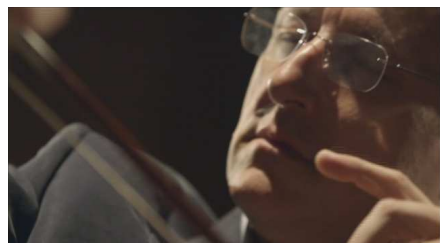
As we explore the music that illustrates Ben's growing pacifism, illustrated by performances and unique observations from experts and friends, we frequently return to these dramatic interludes at Gresham's, which cement the narrative – spoken by legendary actor **John Hurt**. It's clear that Ben has already decided that he will become a professional composer and that school and Music College are in way obstacles, to be got past in order to achieve that ambition.

Contemporary performances of 'Oh My Blacke Soule' from the Holy Sonnets of John Donne and a section of the second string quartet illustrate Ben's anguish at having witnessed the horrors of Belsen, which profoundly influences his adoption of a 'pure' pacifism. The transcendent music of the War Requiem accompanies the climax of the film, before we return to Gresham's School 2012.

THE ACTORS We have assembled a group of outstanding young actors at the start of what will undoubtedly be highly successful careers, who join their older peers and many Gresham's School drama students. This group, **Mykola Allen, Bradley Hall, Jeremy Lloyd, Jake Mann** and **Christopher Theobald** is headed by the uniquely talented, seventeen year old **Alex Lawther**, making his screen debut as young Ben Britten.



THE CONTRIBUTORS We include fascinating in depth observations from: Composer, **Joseph Horowitz**, who has been Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music for over fifty years; **Simon Kinder**, the inspirational Head of History at Gresham's School; Cellist **Anita Lasker Wallfisch**, Auschwitz Women's Orchestra survivor and founder member of the English Chamber Orchestra; and **Sue Phipps**, niece of Peter Pears and agent to Pears and Britten.



THE PERFORMERS We feature specially filmed performances from celebrated tenor, **James Gilchrist** as well as some of the UK's most exciting young talent: counter tenor **Jake Arditti**, Baritone **Gerard Collett** and the award winning **Benyounes String Quartet**. As well as performing, pianist and broadcaster **Iain Burnside** and international cellist **Raphael Wallfisch** provide insightful personal comments to camera. Also featured are the Gresham's Senior Choir and brass group.

THE MUSIC Unsurprisingly, at the heart of the film is Britten's music, elements of which are used to illustrate, accompany and underpin the narrative throughout: *War Requiem*, *Bagatelle*, *Noyes Fludde*, *Simple Symphony*, *The Wind Song*, *Russian Funeral*, *Night Mail*, *Our Hunting Fathers*, *First Cello Suite*, *Ballad of Heroes*, *Sinfonia da Requiem*, *The Holy Sonnets of John Donne*, *String Quartet no 2*, *Winter Words*, *Owen Wingrave*, *Canticle 2 – Abraham and Isaac*, *Hymn to the Virgin*.



LOCATIONS All of the dramatic scenes in the film were filmed in and around Gresham's School, Holt in North Norfolk. The Auden Theatre at Gresham's also played host to the musical performances. We also shot around London and Aldeburgh, where we visited Britten's home; the Red House. We were granted permission to film Turner Prize nominated artist Simon Patterson's extraordinary 'La Maison Forestière' installation at Ors, Northern France, where poet Wilfred Owen wrote his last letter home before being killed at the nearby Sambre-Oise canal, a week before the end of the First World War.



To complete this emotive final sequence, accompanied by the last section of the *War Requiem*, we travelled to Passchendaele in Belgium, filming and reflecting on the twelve thousand graves and thirty five thousand names at the Tyne Cot war cemetery.

PARTNERS Gresham's School were de facto production partners in the film, along with presales from broadcasters SBS Australia, YLE Finland and NRK Norway. We were also supported by the Britten Pears Foundation, generous crowd funding and private equity. Television sales are proliferating worldwide and the UK theatrical release in selected Picturehouse Cinemas and other independent venues is Friday 24th May 2013.

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