

American Encounters at St Martin-in-the-Fields: 1 and 2 July 2010

St Martin-in-the-Fields goes American in the lead up to Independence Day with a two day American Encounters festival featuring the best of the classical music from the United States. On Thursday 1 July Canticum, one of the country's leading chamber choirs, opens the festival with Aaron Copland's In The Beginning. Works by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Steven Stucky, Samuel Barber's famous Agnus Dei and popular classics by Jerome Kern, Gershwin and Billy Joel..

Prodigiously gifted (The Classical Source) pianist Maria Marchant performs on Friday 2 July in a free lunchtime concert at 1.00pm. The Concordia Foundation and Tillett Trust young artist performs works for solo piano by Barber, arrangements of Gershwin songs by Earl Wild, the great American virtuoso who died earlier this year, and China Gates by American's greatest living composer John Adams.

Later the same evening a superb programme of American classics is performed by James Pearson from the Ronnie Scotts All Stars, and his elite chamber group. The group will feature Lizzie Ball (violin and vocals) who recently led the Orchestra of Life for Nigel Kennedy alongside jazz stars Andy Wood and Matt Skelton.

With over 360 lunchtime, evening, early evening, late-night and afternoon concerts, St Martin-in-the-Fields is one of the busiest concert venues in Britain which also has a long association with the United States. James Gibbs' 18th century design for this iconic church was much copied throughout the New World and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields (founded at the church in the 1950s by Sir Neville Marriner) continues to tour widely through America as one of the most famous Chamber Orchestras in the world.

Tickets from £6 to £22 are available from St Martin-in-the-Fields Box Office 020 7766 1100 or online www.smitf.org

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