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California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California

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Cal Poly Choirs and Symphony to Perform Music by Handel and Vaughan Williams May 26

SAN LUIS OBISPO – The Cal Poly Choirs and Cal Poly Symphony will perform music by two of England's greatest composers – George Frederick Handel and Ralph Vaughan Williams – at 8 p.m. Saturday, May 26, in Harman Hall of the Performing Arts Center's Christopher Cohan Center.

Titled "Rule Britannia," the concert will open with Handel's coronation anthem "Zadok the Priest." First performed for the coronation of King George II in 1727, this boisterous work has been performed at every subsequent British coronation service.

Following the Handel piece will be two works by Vaughan Williams. The Cal Poly Symphony strings will play the well-known "Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis." Composed in 1910, it was first performed at the Three Choirs Festival held at Gloucester Cathedral in September of that year. The main theme of the work comes from one of nine hymn tunes Thomas Tallis contributed to the 1567 Psalter for the Archbishop of Canterbury.

After intermission, the combined groups will perform one of Vaughan Williams' most loved works, the cantata "Dona nobis pacem." Composed in 1936, the texts are taken from the Mass (Agnus Dei: "Grant Us Peace"); Walt Whitman poems "Beat, Beat Drums and Reconciliation" and "Dirge for Two Veterans"; the Bible; and a political speech by John Bright in an attempt to prevent the Crimean War. Vaughan Williams wrote this work as a plea for peace by speaking of recent wars and the growing fears of a new one.

Baritone Paul Tipton will be the guest soloist. A native of Nashville, Tenn., he has been described by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution as a "dignified and beautiful singer." He enjoys an active career in opera, oratorio and chamber music and has performed and recorded throughout the United States. Tipton has worked with conductors Masaaki Suzuki, Helmuth Rilling, Nicholas McGegan, Ton Koopman, Leonard Slatkin, Ted Taylor, Paul Hillier and Craig Hella Johnson.

He has recently performed with the symphonies of San Antonio, Grand Rapids, Lincoln and Stamford, as well as with the Yale Camerata, New Trinity Baroque, The Rose Ensemble, Seraphic Fire, Ensemble Florilege, the Yale Collegium Players, Lyra Baroque, Conspirare and Oregon Bach Festival.

Thomas Davies conducts the Cal Poly Choirs, and David Arrivée conducts the Cal Poly Symphony.

Tickets are $13 and $15 for general admission, $12 and $14 for seniors and $8 for students. They are on sale at the Performing Arts Ticket Office 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. To order by phone, call SLO-ARTS (805-756-2787). Discounts are given to patrons who buy tickets to four or more Music Department events.

The concert is sponsored by Cal Poly's College of Liberal Arts, Music Department, and Instructionally Related Activities program. For more information, call the Music Department at 805-756-2406 or go to http://music.calpoly.edu.

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