The Armed Man must be feared;
Everywhere it has been decreed
That everyman should arm himself
With an iron coat of mail
Anon, c1450-1463

Swansea born, Karl Jenkins started his musical career in jazz. He became well-known through his association with the progressive rock band *Soft Machine* before moving to a successful career in composition for media and classically inspired music. *The Armed Man: A Mass For Peace* was commissioned by the Royal Armouries in Leeds to mark the passing of the 20th century, "the most war-torn and destructive century in human history". It was first performed in London in 2000 and dedicated to the victims of Kosovo, whose tragic conflict moved the composer whilst he worked on the score. In a manner reminiscent of Britten's *War Requiem*, The *Armed Man* interpolates a wide range of sacred and secular texts from around the world, all set within the framework of the Christian mass: sacred texts from the Bible and Koran and the Mahàbharata, a 6th century Hindu poem; secular texts by Malory, Dryden, Tennyson, Swift, Kipling, Togi Sankichi (a survivor of Hiroshima who later died of leukaemia caused by radiation exposure) and Guy Wilson, Master of the Royal Armouries, who also selected many of the texts set by Jenkins.

The opening chorus sets the stage for a dramatic and moving musical representation of wars from the last two millennia. *L'Homme Armé* was written in France as the Hundred Years War between England and France drew to an end in 1453. Christian and Muslim traditional texts and from the Hindu epic poem The Mahàbharata, are interspersed with texts on war from some of the finest names in literature. A eyewitness account of the first atomic bomb at Hiroshima, by the poet Toge Sankichi, portrays the shocking devastation of 20th century armoury. There is a progression of conflict throughout the work culminating in the battlefield *Charge*. Jenkins' scoring is every bit as exhilarating and dynamic as you would expect from a film score composer. The point that one death is one too many is made by the *Agnus Dei* but it is left to the *Benedictus* to heal the wounds of the survivors. Jenkins ends with a text from Revelations 21:4 *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.*

Ring out the false, ring in the true,
Ring out old shapes and foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold:

Ring out the thousand years of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace,
Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand:
Ring out the darkness of the land;
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

God shall wipe away all tears (Revelations 21.4)
And there shall be no more death
Neither sorrow nor crying,
Neither shall there be any more pain.
Praise the Lord.