

NEWS RELEASE



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Vanier College welcomes composer Ruth Fazal whose *Oratorio Terezin* will be produced by Vanier Music in the spring

Vanier College is proud to announce that the Vanier Music Department will produce the Montreal premiere of composer Ruth Fazal's monumental *Oratorio Terezin* in a benefit concert on May 4, 2008 at 3PM in Salle Wilfrid Pelletier at Place des Arts. Some twenty-five people gathered to meet and welcome Ruth Fazal to Vanier College on November 12, 2007, at a reception held in her honour at the college.

Oratorio Terezin is a powerful full-length work for symphony orchestra, two choirs – children and adults – and three soloists. The Vanier College Choir and the McGill Conservatory Youth Choir both directed by Vanier Choir Director Erica Phare, will be joined by two other prominent Montreal choirs, Concerto Della Donna and Le Choeur des enfants de Montréal to perform this outstanding choral work. They will be accompanied by Ensemble Amati. In all more than 270 performers will grace the stage at Place des Arts under the baton of guest conductor, Iwan Edwards. Tenor, Colin Ainsworth, baritone, Nathaniel Watson, and soprano, Teresa Maria Gomez will be the guest soloists.

In *Oratorio Terezin* Ruth Fazal has taken poems written by children held captive in the Terezin concentration camp, and woven them together with Hebrew Scriptures in an attempt to portray the heart of God in the midst of the awful suffering of the Holocaust.

Inspired by reading a book entitled *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* consisting of poetry and art by children of Terezin during the years 1941-44, Ruth Fazal responded to what she calls "A Divine Commission" to compose a work dedicated to peace. The result was *Oratorio Terezin*. The work was premiered in Toronto in November 2003 and has since been performed in Europe, March 2004, Israel, May 2005, and at Carnegie Hall in New York City in February 2007.

Planning for the Vanier College production of *Oratorio Terezin* began more than three years ago when Vanier Music teacher, Erica Phare, participated in the European tour of the *Oratorio*. "I was so enthralled by this magnificent work that I thought Vanier just had to perform it," indicates Erica. Subsequently Music Coordinator Dr. Nadia Turbide travelled to Toronto to see a performance of the work and meet with the composer. "I soon became totally committed to bringing this work to Montreal," says Dr. Turbide. Ruth Fazal is very excited to see that her work is finally coming to Montreal. "I think it is wonderful that Vanier students will be performing the *Oratorio*," indicates Fazal. "This will be the first time I turn the *Oratorio* over to someone else to produce. I know it is in very good hands here at Vanier."

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