

Sunday 14 February 2016 at 3pm
King's College Chapel, Taunton

BRAHMS

REQUIEM

SCHÜTZ

Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener
Selig sind die Toten

BACH

Fantasia & Fugue in G minor

ARVO PÄRT

The woman with the alabaster box
Littlemore Tractus

Mary Bevan *soprano*

Morgan Pearse *baritone*

Anita D'Attellis *piano*

Richard Pearce *piano & organ*

Graham Caldbeck *conductor*



Somerset Chamber Choir

'One of the finest groups of singers in the region' Somerset County Gazette

TICKETS: £18 & £15 (reserved), £11 (unreserved)

From Taunton Visitor Centre, Market House, Fore Street, Taunton, TA1 1JD, 01823 340470 and at the door.

www.somersetchamberchoir.org.uk

Somerset Chamber Choir - Registered Charity 1003687

BRAHMS REQUIEM

Brahms's '*German Requiem*' (1868) is one of the pinnacles of the choral repertoire. Lyrical and dramatic by turns, deeply felt and vividly expressive, the work's long development began with the death of Brahms's close friend Robert Schumann in 1856, and was given renewed impetus by the death of his mother in 1865. Brahms chose not to set the traditional Latin text of the Requiem Mass, but instead selected passages from the German Lutheran Bible. He thus created a personal reflection upon mortality and a tender consolation to the living.

Ein deutsches Requiem is presented by Somerset Chamber Choir in the composer's own intimate arrangement for piano duet accompaniment.

Brahms was unusual among composers of his time in taking a keen interest in the works of his precursors in the German choral tradition – notably **Heinrich Schütz** (1585–1672) and **JS Bach** (1685–1750). Brahms not only performed their music, but also drew upon their influence in his composition. Schütz had previously set three texts chosen by Brahms for the Requiem; musical ideas from several Bach cantatas also appear, and **Handel's** influence, too, is felt in the fugues.

In the first half of our programme, three motets by Schütz, and Bach's magnificent *Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor* BWV 542 for organ are presented alongside two wonderful short works in English by the Estonian composer, **Arvo Pärt** (b1935) – *The woman with the alabaster box* (1997) and *Littlemore Tractus* (2001). Pärt, like Brahms, has made a close study of earlier composers and during his compositional and existential crisis in the 1960s and 70s he composed a number of works based upon Bach's music. After this turning point, Pärt underwent a creative silence of eight years as he developed his new, distinctive musical style known as *Tintinnabuli* (from the Latin for 'bell').

For this concert, **Somerset Chamber Choir** is joined by two impressive young vocal soloists – the sparkling soprano **Mary Bevan**, a winner of the Royal Philharmonic Society's Young Artist award and UK Critics' Circle Award for Exceptional Young Talent in music; and the brilliant Australian baritone **Morgan Pearce**, gold medallist in the Royal Overseas League's Music Competition in 2013 and winner of the prestigious Lies Askonas prize in 2014. Two virtuoso pianists, **Anita D'Attellis** and **Richard Pearce**, complete the team – Richard is also the continuo player and organ soloist.

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