**Three Spires Singers and Orchestra**

**Verdi Requiem  1/04/23**

An expectant and enthusiastic crowd poured into Truro Cathedral on Saturday 1st April to witness conductor Christopher Gray front the Three Spires Singers and Orchestra for the very last time before taking up his new post as director of music at St. John’s College, Cambridge. The concert featured just one work, Verdi’s Requiem, a piece whose vast emotional canvas from sombre reflection, through despair, to hope and redemption felt entirely appropriate for the occasion.

This work is a tried and tested favourite of the group, with choir, orchestra and soloists alike rising impressively to the challenge. It was probably the best performance this reviewer has heard from the Three Spires Singers: spot on with pitch and timing and exuberant in their delivery, their sound rising to the rafters and easily matching the power of the orchestra while at the same time balancing and supporting the more delicate solo lines. The orchestra too was on top form. The famous off-beat pounding rhythms that open the Dies Irae literally shook the air. If this is most people’s favourite episode, it was clearly a sentiment shared by Verdi himself, managing as he did to manipulate the text so as to afford two further statements of this thunderous music during the course of the movement.

Soloists Claire Rutter (soprano), Samantha Price (mezzo), David Webb (tenor) and David Stout (baritone) made a strong team, whose sound blended easily for ensemble work and contrasted effectively for solos and duets.

Despite a duration just short of two hours, the Requiem was presented without an interval. This may have been something of a challenge for certain audience members and perhaps a short break after the Dies Irae would have been an option. All the same, nobody was in any hurry to leave after the gentle closing chords had died away. A standing ovation followed, with soloists and Chris Gray in particular meeting numerous demands for their return to the platform to accept the tumultuous applause.

It is a great sadness to lose Chris after fifteen years at the helm, but we anticipate the Three Spires going forward into exciting new territory under the directorship of his successor, whose appointment will be announced in due course. Before then*,*we look forward to welcoming guest conductor Patrick Bailey to July’s programme of Scarlatti, Mozart and Bach.

Chris Best 17/04/23

Chris Best is a Cornwall based composer and writer. More info can be found at [www.chrisbestmusic.com](http://www.chrisbestmusic.com/)

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