

Well-drilled choir brought new meaning to Requiem

Three Spires Singers
Truro Cathedral

THERE is undoubtedly a high level of expertise and humanism in Brahms' German Requiem, but this has rarely been sufficient for it to achieve the same degree of popularity as those, for example, by Verdi, Mozart or Fauré. But this quite sublime performance by Three Spires Singers and Orchestra very much brought a new sense of meaning to the work, and especially to those who felt they were already familiar with it.

Conductor Christopher Gray's approach sought to address the complex nature of the work's duality - on the one hand sacred and classically-restrained, yet non-liturgical and full of romantic outpouring at the same time. But to achieve such a wholly-convincing reading on the night, he adopted the simplest of means - by faithfully observing the composer's intentions and communicating these with such clarity and simple sincerity to the performers, and to which they wholeheartedly responded. Here were no unnecessary gestures or extrovert flamboyance per se, yet the performance still retained the stamp of individuality.

The well-drilled choir was in superb voice, particularly the strong and accurate lead from sopranos, with soloists Naomi Johnston and Christopher Dollins providing matching support.

The outstanding orchestra, under the assured leadership of Pauline Lowbury, also made a telling, yet never overpowering contribution here, while having earlier given an especially well-studied and idiosyncratic performance of the composer's Second Symphony

PHILIP R BUTTALL

(July 8th 2016, Plymouth Herald)