



Thomas Tallis Society Choir  
**ST PAUL'S SINFONIA**



# REQUIEM

# SCHÜTZ MOTETS

NAOMI QUANT - SOPRANO  
ALEX BOWER-BROWN - BARITONE

# BRAHMS

DIRECTED BY EAMONN DOUGAN



## Tonight's Programme

### Heinrich Schütz

*From Geistliche Chor-music 1648:*

No.4 Verleih uns Frieden, SWV 372

No.11 So fahr ich hin zu Jesu Christ, SWV 379

No.23 Selig sind die Toten, SWV 391

### Johannes Brahms

Dem dunkeln Schoß der heiligen Erde

Ein Deutsches Requiem, op.45

**This concert will run without an interval. Drinks will be served in the church hall after the concert. Please join us there.**

19 March 2023

## PROGRAMME NOTES

### Geistliche Chor-music, op.11 (1648)

Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672)

Schutz is widely regarded as the greatest German composer before Johann Sebastian Bach.

In 1599 he became a chorister at Kassel, where the landgrave of Hesse-Kassel provided him with a wide general education. In 1608 Schütz entered the University of Marburg to study law, but in 1609 he went to Venice, where for three years he studied music at the landgrave's expense; his chief teacher there was Giovanni Gabrieli. In Venice Schütz wrote his first known works, a set of Italian madrigals for five voices (published 1611).

In 1613 he returned to Germany and went to Leipzig to resume his legal studies. Shortly afterward the landgrave offered him the post of second organist at the court in Kassel. In 1614 he went to Dresden to supervise the music for the christening of the son of the elector of Saxony, and in 1617 the landgrave gave him a permanent post in the electoral chapel. In 1628 Schütz again visited Venice, where Claudio Monteverdi was now the chief musical figure; it is possible that Schütz studied with him.

Three years after his return to Dresden, Schütz left the elector's court, which was being seriously affected by plague and by the turmoils of the Thirty Years' War. From 1633 to 1635 he was chapel master to the royal court of Copenhagen. From 1635, apart from one further visit to the Danish court, he remained, in spite of his frequent pleas for dismissal, in the elector's service at Dresden.

After the early set of madrigals, almost all of Schütz's known works are vocal settings of sacred texts, with or without instruments. Of his known secular works, *Dafne* (performed 1627), the first German opera, and compositions for the marriage of Johann Georg II of Saxony in 1638 were lost. Schütz's special achievement was to introduce into German music the new style of the Italian monodists (as typified in Monteverdi's work) without creating an unsatisfactory hybrid.

His music remains extremely individual and German in feeling. After the Latin of *Symphoniae sacrae I* (published 1629), he used the vernacular. The first German requiem was his *Musikalische Exequien* (published 1636) for soloists and choir, in which the writing for solo voice or duet is often florid in the Italian manner, while the choral sections are firmly based on German chorale tradition. The final section is for double choir, recalling Schütz's studies with the earlier Venetian composers. Other principal works from the middle of his life are two sets of *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* (published 1636, 1639) for solo voice and continuo, *Geistliche Chormusik* (published 1648), and *Symphoniae sacrae II* and *III* (published 1647, 1650) for various combinations of voices and instruments. In all of these works, Schütz's strong dramatic sense has been noted. The three motets performed this evening all come from the 1648 *Geistliche Chormusik* collection.

### Dem dunkeln Schoß der heiligen Erde (c.1860)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Not all Brahms's works were published in his lifetime. Since his death, a modest amount of material that had been lost while he was still living or which he had not bothered to publish has come to light; the process still goes on. One of these works is *Dem dunkeln Schoß der heiligen Erde*, a partsong for mixed voices on words from Schiller's *Das Lied von der Glocke*. This was first printed in 1927 as part of the Complete Edition of Brahms's works. Writing in February 1880 to his friend J W von Wasielewski, who had requested music for the unveiling of the Schumann Monument in Bonn, Brahms mentioned that this chorus existed, only to dismiss it as unfit for the occasion. The verses are funereal, apt for a burial service, and Brahms's treatment is appropriately austere, but we do not know whether the piece was occasioned by the death of any particular friend. Its chorale-like main tune and smooth, imitative polyphony lend it the character of a brief motet.

1. Selig sind, die da Leid tragen
2. Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras
3. Herr, lehre doch mich
4. Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen
5. Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit
6. Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt
7. Selig sind die Toten

It is known that Brahms studied and deeply admired the works of Schutz, especially the *Musikalische Exequien* referred to above, and it is likely that Brahms' *Deutsches Requiem* is at least partly influenced by the earlier work.

For some years Brahms had been considering various ideas for a Requiem, but it was not until 1866, when he was 33, that he began work on it seriously. It was completed the following year with the exception of the fifth movement, which he added later in order to achieve a more balanced structure. In its incomplete form *Ein Deutsches Requiem* was first heard in Bremen Cathedral on Good Friday 1868. The final version was performed the following year at Leipzig's famous concert-hall, the Gewandhaus.

Brahms may have written the *Requiem* in memory of his mother, who died in 1865; it is equally possible that he had in mind his great friend and mentor, Robert Schumann, whose madness and tragic death had profoundly affected the young Brahms. The composer himself gave no indication of whose memorial the *Requiem* might be, if indeed it was any one person's. As with all great music, the universal message of its vision transcends the circumstances of its conception.

The work's title reflects Brahms' use of the Lutheran Bible rather than the customary Latin one. He compiled the text himself from both Old and New Testaments, and from the Apocrypha. It has little in common with the conventional Requiem Mass, and omits the horrors of the Last Judgement - a central feature of the Catholic liturgy - and any final plea for mercy or prayers for the dead. It also makes only a passing reference in the last movement to Christian redemption through the death of Jesus. Not surprisingly, the title of "Requiem" has at times been called into question, but Brahms stated intention was to write a Requiem to comfort the living, not one for the souls of the dead. Consequently the work focuses on faith in the Resurrection rather than fear of the Day of Judgement. Despite its unorthodox text, *Ein Deutsches Requiem* was immediately recognised as a masterpiece of exceptional vision, and it finally confirming Brahms' reputation as a composer of international stature.

The similarity of the opening and closing movements serves to unify the whole work, while the funeral-march of the second is balanced by the triumphant theme of the resurrection in the towering sixth movement. Similarly, the baritone solo in the third, *Herr, lehre doh mich*, is paralleled in the fifth by the soprano solo, *Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit*. The lyrical fourth section, *Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen*, is therefore at the heart of the work, framed by the solemnity of the first three movements and the transition from grief to the certainty of comfort in the last three.

This carefully balanced architecture is matched by an equally firm musical structure based on two principal ideas which Brahms skilfully uses in a variety of subtle guises throughout the work. The most important of these occurs at the opening choral entry and consists of the first three notes sung by the sopranos to the words 'Selig sind'. Brahms uses this musical cell as the main building block of the whole piece, subjecting it to a variety of transformations, including upside-down and back-to-front versions, both of which play as significant a role as the original form. The other important musical idea is a chorale-like melody played by the violas at the very beginning. Its most obvious re-appearance is in the second movement, now in a minor key, as an expansive

melody sung by the choir in unison. Brahms had recently discovered the cantatas of JS Bach, and there seems little doubt that this theme was derived from a very similar chorale melody in Bach's Cantata No.27.

The opening movement, the text of which is one of the beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount, begins in hushed and sombre mood, reflected in the orchestration by the temporary absence of the violins. As the music proceeds, however, mourning is transformed into comfort.

The second movement, in the dark key of B flat minor, is centred on the heavy rhythms of a funeral-march, with the chorus proclaiming the inevitability of man's fate, 'Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras' (Behold, all flesh is as the grass). A lighter central episode provides some brief respite before the funeral-march returns. Eventually, at 'Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet' (But yet the Lord's word endures), an energetic *allegro* emerges, once more transfiguring darkness into light and leading to a glorious conclusion.

In the third movement, the baritone soloist and chorus begin by pondering the transience of human existence. The soloist then asks 'Nun Herr, wess soll ich mich trösten?' (Now, Lord what do I wait for?) and the reply, 'Ich hoffe auf dich' (My hope is in thee), wells up from the depths in a rising crescendo of affirmation. This leads seamlessly into a broad, imposing fugue, remarkable for its omnipresent pedal D which, whilst creating considerable tension during the fugue itself, also provides an unshakable foundation for the final resolution.

After the intensity of the first three movements, the pivotal fourth, a serene pastorale, provides the opportunity for contemplation and rest. This is music of exceptional beauty, and it is hardly surprising that this movement is so widely known and loved.

The fifth movement features a sublime soprano solo accompanied by woodwind, horns and muted strings. The chorus, too, plays an accompanying role. Whereas the baritone soloist in the third movement sung of grief and doubt, the soprano's message here is one of maternal consolation.

Brahms reserves his most dramatic music for the imposing sixth movement. It begins in reflective mood, but soon the baritone soloist introduces the familiar verses 'Wir werden nicht alle entschlafen, wir werden aber alle verwandelt werden .....zu der Zeit der letzten Posaune' (We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed ..... at the sound of the last trumpet), at which point the music explodes into a blaze of sound and energy. The intensity builds up until 'Tod, wo ist dein Sieg?' (Death, where is thy victory?) where a majestic fugue ensues. In the middle of this fugue two *fortissimo* climaxes grow out of an exhilarating orchestral Jacob's ladder that reaches up to heaven as it passes from the bass instruments right up to the flutes and violins. The movement ends with a final powerful statement.

The last movement begins with a radiant melody from the sopranos, followed by the basses. The moving final section is a subtle reworking of music from the very opening, and the *Requiem* reaches its peaceful conclusion at the same word with which it began: 'Selig' (Blessed).

A note on the arrangement by Iain Farrington:

Although originally scored for symphony orchestra, Brahms made a version for piano duet which has found popularity in recent years. Performances with piano lack the richness, colour and sustain of the long lines in Brahms' work. This arrangement for chamber ensemble has the piano at the core, while adding other instrumentalists to create a satisfying and Brahmsian texture, retaining much of the original orchestration. It is ideal for choirs wanting to perform the work on a smaller scale, but with the variety and fullness of the orchestral version.

*Programme notes by Amy Tikkanen, Calum MacDonald and John Bawden.*

## EAMONN DOUGAN



Eamonn Dougan is an inspirational conductor and renowned vocal coach and baritone. He is Associate Conductor of The Sixteen, founding Director of Britten Sinfonia Voices, Music Director of the Thomas Tallis Society, and Chief Conductor for Jersey Chamber Orchestra.

Recent conducting debuts include Handel's *Semele* at Sibelius Summer Academy and Haydn's *Seven Last Words of our Saviour on the Cross* with the English National Opera. Forthcoming conducting engagements include performances as part of the Royal Academy of Music's Bach European series, Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* with University of York Choir and Orchestra, return visits to the Cumnock Tryst Festival, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, VokalEnsemblet and KoncertKor, Jersey Chamber Orchestra, and a new disc series with De Profundis.

Further highlights have included the world premiere of James MacMillan *All the Hills and Vales Along* at the Cumnock Tryst Festival, he assisted Sir Mark Elder for the world premiere concert and recording of Puccini *Le Villi* with Opera Rara and the London Philharmonic Orchestra; and conducted the off-stage chorus for Berlioz *L'Enfance du Christ* with The Hallé, Britten Sinfonia Voices and Genesis Sixteen for BBC Proms 2019 at the Royal Albert Hall. With Britten Sinfonia Voices he has conducted several world premieres including Sir John Tavener *Flood of Beauty*, Esenvalds *Aqua*, Nico Muhly *Looking Forward* for the Britten Sinfonia's 20th birthday and the choral premiere of Jóhann Jóhannsson *Orphée* at the Barbican.

Eamonn is a Visiting Professor to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, where he teaches ensemble singing and directs the Guildhall Consort. During the Autumn 2020 term, Eamonn was Acting Director of Music - Choir of The Queen's College, Oxford. Eamonn read music at New College, Oxford, before continuing his vocal and conducting studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Eamonn Dougan is managed worldwide by Percius.

[www.percius.co.uk](http://www.percius.co.uk)

## NAOMI QUANT - SOPRANO



As well as a regular member of the TTS soprano section, Naomi Quant is a dramatic coloratura soprano with a number of leading roles under her belt. Most recently she has performed the role of Violetta in *La Traviata* with Brent Opera and Abigaile in *Nabucco* with Southgate Opera.

Naomi gained her MMus from Trinity Laban Conservatoire in 2016 and has since had the pleasure of singing several famous roles such as the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Magic Flute*, Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Santuzza (*Cavalleria Rusticana*), and the eponymous *Norma* as well as performing the soprano solos in oratorio works such as Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and Brahms's *Requiem*.

All this is a long way from her day job as a VAT consultant - as they say, it isn't over until the VAT lady sings!!

## ALEX BOWER-BROWN – BARITONE



Alex Bower-Brown is a British baritone, currently studying with a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music. Alex studies with the professors Glenville Hargreaves and Iain Ledingham. Whilst at the Academy, Alex has been a regular performer in the Royal Academy Bach consort, performing with some of the best conductors of our age including Philippe Herreweghe, John Butt and Jane Glover. A highlight of the series was singing 'Pilate' in a production of Bach's *St John Passion*, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe. In 2020 Alex performed the title role in Michael Finnissy's new opera *Mankind* in a series of premier performances around Norfolk.

Alex has performed as a soloist in a wide variety of works including Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Brahms' *Requiem* and Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*. He was also part of the chorus for Hurn Court's production of *Dido and Aeneas*. As a member of professional choirs Alex has toured much of the USA and Europe, singing in some of the most illustrious venues in the world including the Royal Albert Hall, the Royal Festival Hall, the Sheldonian Theatre, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and St Thomas' 5th Avenue in New York.

## THOMAS TALLIS SOCIETY CHOIR

The Thomas Tallis Society, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in the 2015-16 season, takes its name from the 16th century composer who worked in the Royal Court in Greenwich and is buried in the crypt of the Parish Church of St Alfege. The choir was founded by Philip Simms, who was organist and choirmaster at the church from 1964 to 2000, and our links with the church continue to the present.

Philip was succeeded by Stephen Dagg, Director of the Centre for Young Musicians at Morley College, London and organist at St Alfege Church, in 2006. During our 50th anniversary year we were delighted to appoint Eamonn Dougan as our new Musical Director.

With around 60 auditioned voices TTS presents four or five concerts a year in the beautiful setting of St Alfege Church. Although many of the choir members live locally in Greenwich, TTS attracts musicians from all over London owing to the high standards it maintains. All singers are required to have very good sight-reading abilities as the choir works on a few concentrated rehearsals before each concert.

We are always keen to recruit new voices. If you are interested, please contact our membership secretary Kathryn Strachan [strac157@ntlworld.com](mailto:strac157@ntlworld.com).

You can follow us on:



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And look out for updates on our website [www.thomas-tallis-society.org.uk](http://www.thomas-tallis-society.org.uk).

**Sopranos** Phoebe Clapham, Alana Clark, Imogen Clark, Julia Corfe-Press, Pippa Jackson, Claire Jones, Philippa Kent, Chloe Lam, Rachel Lethbridge, Caroline Molloy, Rosemary Naylor, Nelly Nickerson, Jill Pollock, Naomi Quant, Bethan Rose, Becky Ryland-Jones, Ley Spicer, Kathryn Strachan, Anne Whyte, **Emma Wilkins**

- Altos** Caitlin Brooks, Rosemary Burch, Joanna Clark, Susan Dean, Sian Evans, Moira Fitzgerald, Bryony Ford, Sally Hughes, Emma Humphries, Emily John, Philippa John, Sonia Johnson, Jo Merry, Sophy Miles, Katherine Pile, Ruthie Smith, Anna Townsend
- Tenors** Andrew Green, Andrew Lang, Alexander MacLaren, Chris Moody, Adam Oliver, Paul Renney, Joe Timmons, Graham Voke
- Basses** Richard Brooks, Cyril Cleary, Quentin Evans, Andrew Harper, David Houghton, Daniel Jaffé, Will Kendal, Jonathan Louth, Antonio Oliveira, Nigel Press, John Sutton, Geoff Woodhouse

**Bold denotes TTS Ambassadors**

## ST PAUL' S SINFONIA

St Paul's Sinfonia was founded in 2004 and spent the first seven years of its life performing at the beautiful St Paul's Church in Deptford. The current concert seasons are divided between St Alfege Church in Greenwich and St Margaret's Church in Blackheath. We are thrilled to be working with the Thomas Tallis Society Choir for the first time this concert!

The Sinfonia's next concert takes place here at St Alfege Church, on **Friday 21 April**, with a stunning programme including Berg, *Seven Early Songs* with soprano soloist Justine Viani, Vaughan Williams blissful pastoral idyll *Five Variants on 'Dives and Lazarus'*, and Sibelius Symphony No. 6.

Tickets are already available from Eventbrite, or available on the door from 7.00 p.m. Check out our website [www.stpaulssinfonia.com](http://www.stpaulssinfonia.com) [[stpaulssinfonia.com](http://stpaulssinfonia.com)] for further details.

### Violin 1

James Widden (Leader)  
Elona Laurie

### Violin 2

John Haworth  
David Wallace

### Viola

Toby Deller  
Ariane Alexander  
Sebastian Brooks

### Cello

Will Rudge  
Madeleine Ridd

### Double Bass

Helen Neilson

### Flute

Ian Judson

### Oboe

Alex Birchall

### Clarinet

Helen Pierce

## REMAINING TTS CONCERT DATES & PROGRAMMES in 2023

**Saturday 24 June, 7.30pm**

**Sunday 17 Sept, 7.30pm**

A Little Jazz Music, including Bob Chilcott's A Little Jazz Mass & George Shearing's Songs and Sonnets

**Saturday 11 November, 7.30pm**

Tallis Spem in alium & Celebration of 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of William Byrd

**Saturday 2 December, 7pm**

Handel Messiah with baroque orchestra

## FRIENDS AND PATRONS

We are very grateful to our faithful group of Patrons and Friends that have been loyally supporting us for a number of years. Their generosity and support have really helped the Society to keep going. A reliable yearly income is a huge benefit in planning programmes and means we can budget more accurately.

**We are very keen to increase the number of Patrons and Friends to help us go forward in a sustainable manner and we would love your support as either a Patron or Friend.**

A Friend contributes £30 per year and this special relationship with the choir is recognised by:

- A newsletter with early notification of concerts
- An invitation to the annual Friends and Patrons party
- Recognition of support in TTS programmes.

As a Patron of the Society you receive additional benefits in recognition of an annual donation of £150:

- A complimentary top price ticket to all concerts
- Free concert programmes
- Separate interval or pre-concert complimentary drinks table
- Acknowledgment of support of the Society in the programme
- An invitation to the annual Friends and Patrons party.

Please consider whether you could support TTS by becoming a Patron or a Friend of the Society. Speak to Carole tonight or contact her at [carolelowe@rocketmail.com](mailto:carolelowe@rocketmail.com).

**We would like to recognise the important contribution of the following TTS Patrons:**

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With thanks to the Churchwardens of St Alfege for their continued support.