

DUNSFORD SINGERS  
DARTMOUTH ORCHESTRA

Conductor Tim Pithers

Fauré Requiem

(dedicated to the memory of Steve Armstrong)



and other beautiful choral and  
orchestral music

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**Choir and Orchestra: Gabriel Fauré *Pavane* 1887** A 'pavane' is a stately, processional dance form, dating from the 1600s. It was used to open ceremonial balls at the royal court of Spain, where dancers displayed their beautiful costumes. Fauré's popular *Pavane* was originally just orchestral; the choral part was added a little later. The elegant music and flirtatious words combine to offer a wistful and elegiac piece about 'the romantic helplessness of man'. Contemporary performances included coquettish female dancers and sighing male dancers, with an invisible choir!

**Orchestra: Anton Dvorak *Symphony No 8 Movements 1* 1869**

This sunny, cheerful and optimistic symphony was written whilst the composer was on holiday at his summer residence at Vysoka, southwest of Prague. It draws upon the beauty of nature and the lyrical Bohemian folk music that he loved so much. The first movement is *Allegro con Brio* (listen out for the bird call melody in the flute).

**Choir and Orchestra: Gabriel Fauré *Cantique de Jean Racine* 1865** The text is a French translation by dramatist Jean Racine (1639 -1699) of the medieval Latin hymn "Consorter paterni luminus". This was traditionally sung by monks at Matins, the nighttime liturgy ending at dawn. *Word of the highest ... we break the silence of the peaceful night. Divine Saviour, cast your eyes upon us; pour on us the fire of your powerful grace, that all hell may flee at the sound of your voice ... Christ, look with favour upon your humble people ... receive their hymns ... may they go forth filled with your grace.* Aged just nineteen, Fauré set the words to music for a competition; not surprisingly, it won first prize, much admired for its 'dignity and simplicity. The long, sweeping melodies and exquisite harmonies make this piece a firm favourite in the Dunsford Singers' repertoire. With a native French speaker in the sopranos, and a conductor with a joint Music/French degree we are kept on our toes!

**Choir**

**Sergei Rachmaninoff: *Bogoroditsye Dyevo* 1915**

The text is *Ave Maria* in Old Church Slavonic, the liturgical language of the Eastern Orthodox Church (in the same way that Latin is the universal language of the Roman Catholic liturgy). Rachmaninoff wrote it as part of the fifteen a capella pieces that form his *All-Night Vigil*. Dramatic and emotional, with an incredibly powerful climax, it moves our hearts and souls when we sing it. Tonight, we dedicate it to all Ukrainians suffering from the horrors of war.

**Josef Rheinberger: *Abenlied* 1873** *Bide with us, for evening shadows darken and the day will soon be over. Lord, O bide with us.* What a beautiful prayer for the Teign Valley on a summer's evening! Rheinberger was from Liechtenstein but lived in Germany as a music teacher, church organist and conductor. He dedicated this composition to a choral society in Berlin. Its Romantic expressiveness and reflective mood make it a really memorable piece to sing.

**Felix Mendelssohn: *Verlieh uns Frieden* 1831** *Lord, in thy mercy, grant us peace throughout all generations. Thou art alone our sword and shield. Lord who dost guide the nations, defend us, O God, we pray thee.* In 1830 Mendelssohn received a copy of a Lutheran hymnal which inspired him to compose several works, including this heartfelt hymn. Robert Schumann said of it: "The small piece deserves to be world-famous and will become so".

**INTERVAL**

## **Choir and Orchestra:**

### **Fauré Requiem**

Gabriel Fauré (1845 -1924) was one of the most influential French composers, linking the end of Romanticism with the beginnings of the modern era. Most likely created as a musical tribute to the composer's father, this timeless, elegant piece was first performed in Paris in 1888. Fauré continued to develop it, adding the *Offertorium* a year later, followed by the *Libera Me*. By 1900 the score was reworked for full orchestra. Fauré's work is on a smaller and more intimate scale than some of the other famous *Requiems*. It is graceful and calm, generous with its rich melodies. For Fauré, a requiem is a preparation for eternal rest and consolation for the bereaved. He chooses to focus on solace, so there is no daunting or menacing atmosphere; even the powerful *Libera Me* is handled with a sense of restraint, and the music finally climbs out of tense darkness to a brighter key. Fauré declared: "*Everything I managed to entertain by way of religious illusion I put into my Requiem, which moreover is dominated from beginning to end by a very human feeling of faith in eternal rest*". It was performed at the composer's own funeral at the Église de la Madeleine, Paris, in 1924, and first performed in England in 1936.

**Our performance tonight is dedicated to the memory of our friend Steve Armstrong, a dearly-loved and much-missed member of the choir who sang in the bass section.**

**Introit et Kyrie:** a plea for attention to prayer

**Offertorium:** a prayer for the liberation of souls and an invocation of God's promise to Abraham

**Sanctus:** a vision of Heaven

**Pie Jesu:** a prayer to Christ to grant eternal rest  
*Soprano soloist **Julie Cooney***

**Agnus Dei et Lux Aterna:** a soulful plea to the Lamb of God to grant eternal rest, with the vision of Heaven's perpetual light.

**Libera Me:** a contemplation of Judgement Day  
*Baritone soloist **Joe Ward***

**In Paradisium:** an assurance that the soul will be received in Heaven by angels.

### **The Choir**

**Sopranos:** Jane Boulton Angela Cameron Soizig Chadwick Julie Cooney Jeanie Honey Phillida Lawes Daphne Leversedge Sarah Maybin Jan Middleton Diana Petit Mary Sansom Mari Turner

**Altos:** Jo Anderson Bryony Bushell Helen Harding Julie Janota Jo Jenkin Erica Lee Audrey Pritchard Liz Robin Juliet Speed Toria Wimpenny

**Tenors:** Steve Cook Lorraine Hart Francis Leversedge Ray Mallett Carla Prior Mike Wimpenny Li-Li Williams

**Basses:** Gerald Battersby Antony Galton Peter Goodchild Oleksandr Karnaukh Jan Traylen Don Oliver

**Musical Director: Tim Pithers**

Tim began conducting in his teens and went on to read Music and French at the University of Exeter. He studied violin with Mary Eade, and composition with Joe Duddell. Subsequent to his graduation with a double first-class degree, he has conducted a wide variety of vocal and instrumental ensembles and has recently participated in the internationally recognised George Hurst Conductor's Course at Sherborne Summer School of Music, studying with Rodolfo Saglimbeni, Denise Ham and Dominic Grier. Tim particularly enjoys working with ensembles of varying degrees of experience and is a firm believer that classical music should be made as accessible as possible to both performers and the wider audience. In addition to the Dunsford Singers, Tim is Musical Director of the Exeter University Symphony Orchestra, the Dartmouth Orchestra, orchestra+ (the South West's first LGBT symphony orchestra) and the EX4 Chamber Orchestra, which he founded in August 2015.

We are delighted that Tim has been the Dunsford Singers' Musical Director since January 2017. During this time the choir has tackled a diverse programme of classical and modern works. Tim's great sense of humour and unfailing support for the choir help to make all our rehearsals enjoyable and stimulating.

**The Orchestra: Leader Brenda Willoughby** We are a small but ambitious chamber orchestra, making music in the glorious South Hams and keen to take it to new venues and new audiences, Our ethos is to enjoy playing together while exploring varied programmes of music, and give pleasure to our audiences. We present three or four concerts annually and are actively looking for more players, especially in the string sections. We rehearse in Totnes on a Friday evening. To encourage skills in young musicians we offer the opportunity to play alongside us in rehearsals. For more details contact [info@dartmouth-orchestra.co.uk](mailto:info@dartmouth-orchestra.co.uk) Tonight, the orchestra is augmented by some guest instrumentalists. The keyboard player is Carol Galton.

**The Choir:** The Dunsford Singers hail from all of the Teign Valley villages, and beyond. Our aim is to sing beautiful music, as best we can, in a spirit of friendship. We are a non-auditioning choir, and not everyone can read music. We meet on Monday evenings in Dunsford Village Hall at 7.30 pm. If you would like to join us in September 2022, to sing in our Christmas Concert, contact Secretary Jan Middleton [janmiddleton29@gmail.com](mailto:janmiddleton29@gmail.com)

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

Find us on Facebook [@dunsfordsingers](https://www.facebook.com/dunsfordsingers)

The second performance of this concert will be held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June 7.30 pm at St Clement's Church Dartmouth TQ6 9SN. Tickets on the door or online at

[www.dartmouth-orchestra.co.uk](http://www.dartmouth-orchestra.co.uk)

The photograph on the front of the programme is of Doddiscombsleigh Church in the valley mists. Copyright Jan Traylen [www.jantraylen.com](http://www.jantraylen.com)