

Friday 14th November 2008, 7.30pm

Southwark Cathedral, London SE1

WIMBLEDON
CHORAL SOCIETY

Brahms
**German
Requiem**

Michael Ashcroft
Conductor

Elizabeth Weisberg
Soprano

Jacques Imbrailo
Baritone

Norman Harper & Michael Higgins
Piano

Tickets:

£15 (Main Nave), £10 (Side Nave, limited view), £10 (Students)

Box Office:

T: 020 8605 2266 or e-tickets: wimbledon-choral.org.uk/tickets

Brahms

German Requiem

Brahms' stated intention was to write a requiem to comfort the living, not one for the souls of the dead, and may have been prompted to write it by the death of his mother, or possibly that of his friend and mentor, Robert Schumann. Consequently the work focuses on faith in the Resurrection rather than fear of the Day of Judgment. Despite its unorthodox text, which is based on the Lutheran Bible rather than the Latin Bible, the *German Requiem* was recognised immediately as a masterpiece of exceptional vision, and it finally confirmed Brahms' reputation as a composer of international stature. The *Requiem* includes the well-known anthem 'How Lovely Are They Dwellings'.

An alternative version of the work was prepared by Brahms himself to be performed as a piano duet, four hands on one or two pianos, suggesting that it was intended as a self-contained version probably for at-home use. The first complete (excepting the yet-unwritten fifth movement) performance of the *Requiem* in London in 1871 at the home of Sir Henry Thompson and his wife, the pianist, utilised this piano-duet accompaniment, and was sung in English by a chorus of just 30 voices.

At almost five times that number, Wimbledon Choral Society is also singing it in English, though in the somewhat different venue of Southwark Cathedral, the main structure of which was built between 1220 and 1420. The Cathedral is perfectly suited to a performance of this type, being of a more intimate nature than many of our other great cathedrals.

The choir is delighted to welcome back Elizabeth Weisberg who graduated in 2004 from the Royal Academy of Music where she received the Dip.RAM, the Academy's highest award for performance and also won numerous prizes. She is joined by South African born Jacques Imbrailo, who was a finalist in the prestigious Kathleen Ferrier Competition and won the Audience prize in the 2007 Cardiff Singer of the Year.

Please note:

- Seats at the Cathedral are unreserved, except for the Friends of Wimbledon Choral Society.
- The refectory will be open until 7 pm for drinks and snacks.
- There is no interval in this concert.