



Wells Cathedral
Saturday 2nd August • 7pm

Rachmaninov *Vespers*

(All-night Vigil) Op 37

John Tavener

Svyati • Chant • Thunder Entered Her



Somerset Chamber Choir

"Has a deserved reputation for excellence"
Somerset County Gazette

Andrew Kennedy *tenor*
Louise Mott *mezzo-soprano*
Richard Pearce *organ*
Naomi Williams *cello*

Graham Caldbeck *conductor*

B o x O f f i c e

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SOMERSET CHAMBER CHOIR

is one of the South West's leading young choirs.

'Over the years the choir has firmly established itself as among the best'
(Somerset County Gazette)

Rachmaninov's Vespers is one of the most substantial works for unaccompanied choir ever composed and is widely acknowledged to be a masterpiece. In an intensely moving musical and spiritual journey lasting just over an hour, Rachmaninov's setting of the Russian Orthodox all-night liturgical sequence of Vespers, Matins and First Hour draws upon the richly distinctive tradition of Russian Orthodox chant and is a spectacular *tour-de-force* of choral writing.

Rachmaninov's sumptuously varied textures range from ethereal passages for solo voice to sonorous multi-layered chords built upon the extremely low bass notes so characteristic of Russian Orthodox choirs. There are several unforgettable moments where the soloists sing with the choir - the composer's own particular favourite being the beautiful setting of the *Nunc Dimittis* that he requested to be sung at his funeral. From whispered *Alleluia* refrains to full-blooded operatic climaxes, Rachmaninov's *Vespers* never fails both to impress and to engage.

Soloists **Louise Mott** and **Andrew Kennedy**, two of the UK's most distinguished and versatile young singers, have established enviable reputations for their opera, concert and recital appearances.

Choral music from the Orthodox tradition has, in turn, exerted a considerable influence on the British composer, **Sir John Tavener**. Tavener shot to international fame when his *Song for Athene* was performed at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales in Westminster Abbey and broadcast worldwide. He will be much in the news again during the next few months as the result of his latest commission, an enormous seven-hour Vigil entitled *The Veil of the Temple*, which will be performed from dusk to dawn in the Temple Church, London on several occasions in June and July.

Three of Tavener's most communicative short works have been chosen to complement the Rachmaninov. Scored for choir, organ and tenor soloist with a distant male voice semi-chorus and handbell, ***Thunder entered her*** has rapidly become a modern 'classic'. Organ virtuoso, **Richard Pearce**, will conjure up the musical storm from the organ loft, as he did in our previous performance in 1997.

Naomi Williams is the brilliant young soloist in Tavener's ***Chant*** for solo cello and joins with the choir to perform the hauntingly beautiful ***Svyati***, originally written for the world-famous cellist, Stephen Isserlis.

If ever there were choral works ideally suited to fill the magnificent acoustic of Wells Cathedral, these are they. We hope that you will join us for this evocative and memorable summer evening's concert which promises to be an unforgettable experience.

Friends booking from 5th May, Public booking opens 9th June

Tickets: £22, £18, £14, £10 (nave reserved), £7 (side aisles unreserved)

Call 01275 349010 - ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

or write to SCC Box Office, 19 Coleridge Vale Road East, Clevedon, Somerset BS21 6NS

Somerset Chamber Choir • Regd Charity 1003687 • President: Lady Gass

The right is reserved, without incurring liability, to substitute artists and to vary the programme for reasons beyond our control, although these